



**Programa de doctorado**

DOCTORADO FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORADO

**Facultad**

CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

**Initial English Language Teacher  
Training: Reflective Teaching/Learning.  
The Case of the Unknown Language  
Teaching (ULE) at the University of Las  
Palmas de Gran Canaria 2011-2013**

Tesis Doctoral

Daniela Cecić Mladinić  
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

2015

















**UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA**

Facultad de Ciencia de la Educación

Programa de doctorado: Formación del Profesorado

Título de la Tesis

**Initial English Language Teacher Training: Reflective Teaching/Learning. The Case of the Unknown Language Teaching (ULE) at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 2011-2013**

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Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, noviembre de 2015



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my dissertation tutors Gina Oxbrow and Carolina Rodriguez Juarez for their constant encouragement, guidance and support. This work would still be in progress without their insightful and thought provoking comments which made me work even harder.

Secondly, to my fellow colleagues, friends and family who have helped me see the light at the end of the (dissertation investigation and writing) tunnel. I do hope you will forgive me for not mentioning your names, but I am sure you know who you are.

Thirdly, I would like to acknowledge once more my tutor Gina Oxbrow who is not only the best mentor I could ever wish for, but is also responsible for me doing the CELTA course in the UK (a life changing decision) and recommending me for several teaching and teacher training jobs. Even more importantly, Gina has let me use her students for the research, thus without her willingness and unconditional help, the work you are about to read would have been unattainable.

Also, I wish to thank to my 2003 Trinity College of London students for retrieving the journals and questionnaires and for recalling a lot, something or very little about their Unknown Language Experience.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my closest family members who have taught me that hard work does pay off and for being my role models since an early age. It is unfair to pick one member of my family as the quintessential, but I am particularly grateful to my mother whose words throughout my university studies will remain embedded in my mind forever: "You are my best investment and joy."





I dedicate this work to my family.  
*Mojima.*



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AL</b>	Audio-lingual Teaching Method
<b>CA</b>	Conversational Analysis
<b>CELTA</b>	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (by the University of Cambridge, the UK)
<b>CRP</b>	Critical Reflexive Practice
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>EFLM</b>	English as a Foreign Language Methodology
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>FL</b>	Foreign Language
<b>GT</b>	Grammar Translation
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language

<b>MOLT</b>	Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching
<b>NHLP</b>	Natural Human Learning Process
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PISA</b>	Program for the International Student Assessment
<b>PCK</b>	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
<b>TPR</b>	Total Physical Response
<b>SLA</b>	Second Language Acquisition
<b>TESOL</b>	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
<b>ULE</b>	Unknown Language Experience
<b>WM</b>	White Matter

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### FIGURES AND GRAPHS

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## **PREFACE**

*My confidence grew when I realised both the position of the teacher and the student. I have also managed to get tips on classroom etiquette.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Learner diary questionnaire 2013.

As you are reading these words, you are taking part in one of the wonders of the natural world. For you and I belong to a species with a remarkable ability: we can shape events in each other's brains with exquisite precision. (Pinker,1994:1)

I cannot think of any better words with which to start this academic research journey into the world of learning and teaching foreign languages, during which I aim to reflect upon and analyse the processes within it. I consider the ability to learn languages the most astonishing and puzzling skill human beings have. It has always made me wonder 'how' we learn languages and it also became the reason behind my wanting to be a language teacher, which, as unbelievable as it may sound, was at the age of ten when I taught my first foreign language lesson. I would like to share this experience with the reader, as it has influenced my life and the direction I took in my studies.

At our primary school in my home country of Croatia, we had the chance to have French lessons as a second language at the age of ten, not to the liking of most of my classmates who complained and even cried as they wanted to learn English above any other language. Consequently, the Head of Studies offered free English lessons to those students who wanted to attend. I was not keen on going, because I had the impression that only by watching television in the original version and listening to music in English was more than enough to be able to learn this language. However, my mother forced me to go to these English lessons; to this day, I have never regretted it and will always be grateful she insisted so much. My classmates still hated their French lessons and were getting poor marks. I loved French, so I offered to help. I would spend hours at home teaching my classmates French (at that time, French lessons were taught using an Audio-Lingual (AL) method and it was extremely demanding for many students as the exams were mainly oral<sup>2</sup>. These students who came to me passed the subject, which sparked the teacher's curiosity. After the initial surprise when discovering it was I who had been helping them, she

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<sup>2</sup> The Audio-Lingual (AL) method is a foreign language teaching method that stresses listening and speaking over reading and writing. Students first listen to a dialogue, and then they repeat it in chunks until they know it by heart. Afterwards, the teacher gives them the dialogue in writing. To convey meaning images and mime are used. There is no first language use (L1). The pronunciation is considered to be important as well.

proposed that I helped out students on Saturdays at school for an hour. Although at first the idea was daunting, yet challenging, I accepted immediately. It was quite strange teaching my own classmates, but I spent hours preparing lessons or thinking of games and activities, and I must admit that I enjoyed every minute of it. This experience lasted for some three years. My classmates respected me and they achieved very good results. Back then, even at such an early age, I felt that rewarding sensation we teachers feel when we witness our students' progress and effort.

When the time came to choose a degree, my first thought was French language and literature, but interestingly enough and due to life's quirky turns I ended up studying English Language and Literature (*Filología Inglesa*) at the Universidad of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Once I finished my degree, I went to the United Kingdom to do a course in English as a Foreign Language EFL<sup>3</sup> Methodology offered by the University of Cambridge: CELTA<sup>4</sup>. It was at this moment when I started to consider the prospect of investigating the processes inherent in foreign language learning as well as exploring practical techniques for teaching.

My first intentions to investigate and write about teaching and learning languages started some fifteen years ago when I did the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) in Brighton, in the UK. One part of the course consisted of a component called Unknown Language Experience<sup>5</sup> (henceforth ULE) that was aimed at showing the participants how absolute beginners feel and what problems they face when learning a new, unknown language. The chosen language for us to try and learn was Swedish, which in my opinion was not the most appropriate choice as it has too many similarities with the English language. Nevertheless, the experience was extremely interesting and rewarding. Fifty per cent of us participated as students and the other half were observers of the lesson being taught. Once the lesson was over, there was a feedback session, during which we

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<sup>3</sup> EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language. It refers to English lessons for people who do not live in an English speaking country. It can be used as a synonym for ESL (English as a Second Language).

<sup>4</sup> The University of Cambridge Certificate is an ESL certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of other languages (TESOL). It is a 120 contact hour course with 80 hours of reading, research, lesson preparation, assignments and post-session tasks.

<sup>5</sup> Unknown Language Learning Experience is a compulsory part of the CELTA course which is not assessed and lasts for one hour including feedback.

spoke about what we had learnt and why. It was at that particular moment where I thought that the Croatian language would have been a much better choice, for none of my classmates had any knowledge of Slavic languages except me, of course.

Two years later, I was given the opportunity to train future teachers from Australia, the UK, Scotland, and Spain for the Trinity College of London in Gran Canaria (Cert TESOL)<sup>6</sup>. I was initially hired to give four hours of Croatian in a similar unknown language component to the trainees, which was a compulsory and assessed part of the course and the first lesson was taught using the Communicative approach.<sup>7</sup> During each lesson, the students participated as such and commented on what was going on during the lesson and after the lesson we had a feedback session. The assessment consisted of answering a semi-structured questionnaire and writing a semi-guided learning diary about the ULE<sup>8</sup> and of slowly building the structure of a lesson plan by taking into account what was going on in the class. The ULE had been planned to feed into the theoretical lessons on language teaching methods during the course. Moreover, the activities and practice exercises done during the Croatian sessions adapted perfectly to the content of the theoretical lessons. For instance, if the trainees had had a lesson on how to pre-teach or revise vocabulary, during the Croatian lessons, that theory would be put into practice. Apart from that, they had to write a journal about their ULE.<sup>9</sup>

After the first ULE experience in 2002, I was appointed teacher trainer, and trained over sixty future teachers during a three-year period. Another significant reason that motivated me into investigating how we learn languages was the book I

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<sup>6</sup> Trinity College Diploma Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of other languages Cert TESOL is a 130 hour timetabled course and 15 non-timetabled course (See Appendix 1). The timetable input includes 90 hours of supervised input and a minimum of 10 hours of teaching and observation. It consists of 5 units, one of which is the unknown language journal, with the objective to introduce teaching methodology and activities suitable for beginners and it also shows how to do lesson plans and contrastive analysis.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix I and II.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix I, page 25 of the original document, Unit 5 (Unknown language).

<sup>9</sup> The Unknown Language Journal is a compulsory part of the course and it is weighted as 20% of the total mark; this mark is further broken down into 20% for the perceived lesson plan, 20% for the observations on methodology and teaching techniques, 20% for the observations on the feelings of beginner learners, 20% for observations on comparative/contrastive L1/L2 features, and 20% for concluding observations (See Appendix I).

was given at the Trinity College course, *The Language Instinct* by Steven Pinker (1994). I have reread this book at least ten times and I always come across something interesting. For example, in the words of Pinker:

Language is so tightly woven into human experience that it is scarcely possible to imagine life without it. Chances are that if you find two or more people together anywhere on earth, they will soon be exchanging words. When there is no one to talk with, people talk to themselves, to their dogs, even to their plants. In our social relations, the race is not to the swift but to the verbal—the spellbinding orator, the silver-tongued seducer, the persuasive child who wins the battle of wills against a brawnier parent. Aphasia, the loss of language following brain injury, is devastating, and in severe cases family members may feel that the whole person is lost forever. (1994:17)

Pinker speaks about the power of language and the innate human need to communicate and to be a member of a community. This necessity should be applied to teaching and especially foreign language teaching: *The method she applied was called "Communicative Method"*<sup>10</sup> *and I personally have to say that it was a quite effective method because I still remember what I learnt that day*<sup>11</sup> (See Appendix IV, contribution, 2011.A.)<sup>12</sup>.

There was subsequently a long gap of time between the teacher training course and writing about this experience, mostly due to work commitments. Once I enrolled in a doctorate program<sup>13</sup> at the Universidad of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) in 2011/12 and discovered I had to do an internship at an educational centre, I immediately thought of the ULPGC and trying out exactly the same ULE. The chosen subject for this internship was *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II*, An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>11</sup> Learner diary entry contribution 2011.( Reproduced verbatim.)

<sup>12</sup> Each student contribution (years 2003, 2014/15 and 2011- 2013) has been labeled. 2011 in this case means year 2011 and A is a student A.

<sup>13</sup> The doctorate program (*Doctorado de la Facultad de Formación de Profesorado, Psicología de la Educación, 2011-2012*) at the Teacher Training Faculty at the ULPGC is a two-term course (60 credits) related to pedagogy, psychology and methodology. One of the subjects is directly related to my research interest (Foreign Language Methodology, a six-credit course in the second term) and to the topic I chose for of the final project assignment (dissertation), which is related to the same topic of this doctoral thesis: *Reflective Teaching and Learning; the Case of the Unknown Language Experience at ULPGC*.

Language, Semester 2 (February - May 2011) <sup>14</sup> since it was the only subject that dealt with language teaching methodology in the degree offered at the time in 'English Language and Literature' (*Filología Inglesa*). This subject offered a short but comprehensive insight into EFL teaching methodology including psychological and linguistic theories behind language learning as well as lesson planning and classroom management. The course content was perfect for the Unknown Language Experience and the lecturer in charge kindly accepted to carry out a trial with her students from 2011 to 2013. The students did not know which language they were going to learn, nor were they given any explanation regarding the trial. Every single lesson was recorded<sup>15</sup>. In 2011, we did a complete ULE trial (following the pattern of two Communicative Approach lessons, one Grammar Translation lesson and one Audio-lingual lesson), whereas in the following years due to time constraints we only did one Communicative Approach lesson with the same input and same semi-open questionnaire for feedback. As a result, we considered gathering and grouping a three-year study into a single individual research project.

We have considered that a brief thesis chronology would help the reader to comprehend the reasoning behind the current research investigation and to have more insight into the time frames for two research periods as well.

Thesis chronology:

2000- 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teacher Trainer for Trinity College of London.</li> <li>✓ 23 teachers from Australia, the UK, Scotland,</li> </ul>
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<sup>14</sup> See Appendix III.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix VII. We have recorded the ULE at the ULPGC (2011- 2013). You can see three video files titled: 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively.

	<p>and Spain each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teaching the Unknown Language Experience (ULE).<sup>16</sup></li> <li>✓ Diary entries, questionnaires and feedback sessions.<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>
2011- 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Teacher Training Doctorate course at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.</li> </ul>
2011- 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Trial with 65 students at the Universidad of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.</li> <li>✓ Subject <i>Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II</i>, An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language, Semester 2 (February - May 2011)</li> </ul>
2013- 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Retrieving the diaries from the years 2000-2003.</li> <li>✓ Contacting the students from the years 2000-2003 to ask them the same questions eleven/ twelve years after the ULE.</li> </ul>

Parts of the thesis that you are about to read have been accepted at the following conferences and published in the *El Guiniguada* journal.

- a) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2012). "Effective Language Teaching: affective filter in pre-service teaching." *II International Congress International*

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix VI, Trinity College Diploma 2003 course timetable.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix VII, sample of 2003 ULE diary.



*Institute of Social and Economic Sciences, Praga University, Faculty of Economics.*

- b) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2012): "Reflective Teaching/Learning In Initial English Teacher Training: A Case Study Among Pre-Service Teachers - Unknown Language Teaching And Learning." *XII Congreso Internacional de Formación del Profesorado, AUFOP 2012*, Universidad de Valladolid.
- c) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2013). "La enseñanza/aprendizaje reflexivo: el caso del idioma desconocido." *Revista El Guiniguada*. Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, vol. 21. 9-22.
- d) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2013) "Audio- Lingual Method and Reflective Learning:students' perceptions." *7th International Association of Technology, Education and Development*, Valencia, España.
- e) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2013) "The Case of the Unknown Language Experience at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria." *2nd Annual Belgrade International Conference on Education*, Belgrade, Serbia.
- f) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2014) "Forgetting hypothesis vs Grammar Input in Pre-Service Teacher Training." *7th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation (ICERI)*, Seville, Spain.
- g) Cecic Mladinic, Daniela. (2015). "Pre- Service Teacher Training: Second Language Acquisition" *International Academic Conferences*, Budapest, Hungary.







**1. INTRODUCTION**

*I hoped to learn a bit of Croatian as well as some useful teaching methods, and I did learn all of those (I've forgotten most of the Croatian now, sadly!). I found the bad methods of teaching particularly useful as an example of "what not to do" in a lesson. Overall, I found the whole Unknown Language element very interesting and useful - it was one of the most enjoyable parts of the course.<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>18</sup> Learner's diary 2003.(Reproduced verbatim)

The current doctoral dissertation focuses on the on-going search for an appropriate and eclectic methodology for the teaching and learning of foreign languages, and, more specifically, on the practice of reflective teaching and learning as a pedagogical tool for teachers as learners, in this case for pre-service teachers. Recent investigation projects in the field of foreign language pedagogy within the research area of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)<sup>19</sup> have focused on the search for more effective, communicative, student-centred and purposeful approaches in language learning contexts, as well as greater reflection on the second language teaching and learning process itself, which has, in consequence, triggered a renewed interest in teacher and learner beliefs about learning and teaching (e.g. Weimar, 2013; Wright, 2011; Pollard and Collins, 2005; Stronge, 2002). There is little doubt that a learner's interpretations and conceptualizations influence their learning achievements, and this is a premise that will form the basis of the current study revolving around the pedagogical practice of reflecting on learning and teaching. Sometimes students' beliefs do not coincide with those of their teachers, creating dissatisfaction and lack of interest on both sides and, frequently, these ideas are very difficult to change, since these predetermined conceptions as well as misconceptions mostly consist of both good and bad previous language learning experiences.

Therefore, initial teacher training in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Methodology might be the perfect opportunity to start developing critical reflection upon successful or ineffective teaching practice, and it might even be more effective if pre-service teachers could participate in a foreign language learning context as reflective and critical learners themselves, in which they can experience those processes or feelings their own future students might undergo in their own future teaching contexts. In consequence, we propose that teacher trainees should begin to master their reflective and critical skills during their initial training in order to further support their on-going professional learning and development.

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<sup>19</sup> SLA is a research discipline that started investigating the way we learn languages in the 1960s. Before SLA, there was solely a need to encounter a pedagogical tool to help students learn languages other than the first language (Gass,2015:24).

The case study reported here of the inclusion of an Unknown Language Experience (ULE)<sup>20</sup> with students at the Universidad of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from 2011 to 2013 measured and defined these learners' beliefs about foreign language and learning and teaching after a series of classes in Croatian by using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire<sup>21</sup> and learner diary entries in order to analyse our subjects' reported conceptions, perceived strategies and preferred teaching methods in depth. We have decided to quote the diary entries verbatim in each part of this reported research study to support the theoretical background and to support the quantitative data analysis. The participants, possibly pre-service teachers themselves as many will probably go on to become teachers or do further training,<sup>22</sup> later reflected upon their own learning experience after a series of four lessons in which they actively participated as language learners of a previously unfamiliar language. They also expressed their previous experiences and beliefs about foreign language learning and compared them to this new language exposure. The main purpose of this study is the analysis of these beliefs in order to show that reflection about one's own learning processes, especially important for future teachers, leads to a more effective learning process and productive teaching practice. Due to the success of this project in 2011,<sup>23</sup> two further trials were carried out in 2012 and 2013 with the only difference being that in the two last experiments only a Communicative Approach type lesson was included.<sup>24</sup>

We have based our investigation project on the research questions which we wished to address after reviewing recent pertinent research in order to inform our

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<sup>20</sup> We remind the reader that an ULE refers to the use of classes in a previously unfamiliar language for teacher trainees for guided reflection purposes.

<sup>21</sup> The open-ended question questionnaire has been taken from the Trinity College London TESOL Certificate (See Appendix X ).

<sup>22</sup> The subjects in this project were final-year undergraduate students of 'English Language and Literature' (*Filología Inglesa*), which is a degree taken by many prospective teachers as part of their academic preparation. For more information on the subjects see chapter 3, section 3.3.1. Subjects.

<sup>23</sup> The 2011 data was used for the final research project for the Master's degree in Foreign Languages for Secondary Schools, Vocational Training and Official School of Languages at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 2012/2013.

<sup>24</sup> In 2011 we have used Audio- Lingual and Grammar Translation methods too. One lesson for each method, after the lesson students have answered a semi- guided questionnaire and wrote about the experience in their diaries.

own insights. We also set out to explore the relevant theoretical background issues about foreign language teaching or learning processes.

In summary, our objectives with this investigation were the following:

- to explore the effectiveness of Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training
- to demonstrate the validity of CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better and more efficient professionals
- to establish the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) in teacher training courses in promoting teachers as reflective practitioners.

Anyone can find an unanswered, empirically answerable question for which the answer is not worth knowing; as Thoreau said “[...] it is not worthwhile to go around the world to count cats in Zanzibar” (Maxwell, 2012:23). The research questions that we have chosen to address here are directly related to the results of the reactions experienced and reported during the ULE experience, as well as the hands-on search for more effective teaching strategies and techniques, or the pedagogical usefulness of guided reflection.<sup>25</sup> The chosen research questions have helped us to understand better the following pillars of the process of learning languages: motivation, interest, effective teaching strategies or techniques and teaching objectives. Moreover, we have also explored the following issues: how do we learn languages? Is CRP an effective tool in foreign language teacher training? Does ULE offer solutions to the lack of reflexivity in teacher training courses and in classroom research?

Maxwell states that it is important to establish the type of goals we wish to achieve before we initiate the investigation itself as well as whether these are personal, practical or scholarly (Maxwell,2012:24). As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, my aims in this research project are mainly personal since I have long had a desire to improve foreign language teaching practice and it has always been my main curiosity to discover how we learn languages and to find more effective

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<sup>25</sup> See subsection 3.3.2. Research Instruments.



ways of teaching or learning them. Practical and scholarly aims have a lot in common with the personal goals in this research and they do not necessarily have to clash. The strong desire to investigate and work on foreign language learning has motivated me to draw up the three practical and scholarly goals which are mentioned above. In order to achieve these goals and hereby prove that our research in general and research goals in particular are nothing like counting cats in Zanzibar, we have conducted an experiment by teaching an unknown language to sixty-five students in three different years in their last year of the Degree in English Language and Literature at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and have compared those results to the 2003 Trinity College of London Diploma trainees 'answers who have replied the very same questions eleven/ twelve years later.

With reference to the theoretical underpinning of this study which accompanies the personal drive behind it, we need to remember that the analysis of the learning processes inherent in any foreign language, in this case second or foreign language teaching, needs to refer to several academic disciplines and fields of investigation due to the complexity of the phenomenon: for example, Applied Linguistics, Psychology, Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics. Each discipline provides perspectives about the learning process and these findings complement each other, but sometimes they also conflict, since it is impossible to explain such a manifold phenomenon by taking into account only one approach. For example, if we only take into consideration psychological perspectives, then we are only going to partially discover what happens when we learn a language in terms of the mental and cognitive process involved in acquisition<sup>26</sup> and the representation of languages in the brain (Saville-Troike, 2011:3). As a result, psycholinguistic studies are more appropriate for exploring factors such as language aptitude, innate learner characteristics, motivation, and learning strategies. These will be the traits which are mostly focused on in the current dissertation.

The current work consists of a preface and five chapters including the introduction and conclusion. Chapter 2, entitled "Current Research in Foreign

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<sup>26</sup> Acquisition and learning will be used as synonyms in this paper accepting the general current SLA terminology that does not make a distinction between the terms (Ortega, 2014b:245).

Language Teaching and Learning: An Overview”, explores different aspects related to Second Language Acquisition Research in subsection 2.1. ,. subsection 2.1.1. describes theories behind first language acquisition; section 2.1.2. explains and portrays relevant research in Psycholinguistics with an emphasis on Cognitivism and Section 2.2. examines practical implications for language teaching, with three subsections: Language Learning Beliefs (2.2.1.), Metacognition and Learning to Learn (2.2.2.), and Teaching Methodology and Teacher Training (2.2.3.). Section 2.3. provides a summary of the main reflective teaching and learning theories and 2.4. gives an insight into Critical Reflective Practice, which is the core of this current study.

In Chapter 2, the reader can find reasons why knowing more about the learning and teaching process is so essential in order to become more effective teachers. Effectiveness is closely related to motivation and interest and therefore we need to comprehend the underlying issues behind foreign language learning. This chapter sums up the different sciences that have investigated and tried to explain the complex language learning process: Semantics, Applied linguistics, Psychology and Cognitive Psychology. Another issue that has also been taken into account is the way individuals approach language learning as well as the aspects which determine the learning process such as their own personalities, motivation, skills and learning styles. Moreover, in this chapter the reader is going to learn about the relationship between first and second language learning. We have tried to answer some questions about language learning, too. For example, do we all have the same ability to learn a language? What is the most efficient way of learning and teaching foreign languages, taking into account diverse variables such as motivation, interest, effective techniques and methodology? Does learning languages have more benefits apart from fostering the human need to communicate? How can this cognitive process affect our brains? Is motivation is one of the strongest pillars or the only one when learning a second language? Can the knowledge about one’s learning style improve academic results and help students and trainees to address weaker points and boost the stronger ones? Does the innate ability to learn languages persist when we learn L2? Is there a right way to learn languages given the fact that there is no such thing as homogeneity of our brains? Is Krashen (1980) right when he claims

that we are all able to learn a second language in the very same way as we acquire our first language? How can Gardner (year?) help us to be more effective teachers thanks to his Multiple Intelligences Theory? How is metacognition and learning to learn connected to Critical Reflective Practice and the ULE?

In the very same Chapter 2 we introduce the reader to two TESOL courses: the CELTA certificate and the Trinity College of London diploma. In both courses, there is an ULE, but only in the latter one is it a compulsory and assessed part of the course. The ULE offers us the opportunity to develop more effective learning and teaching techniques by exploring learning processes and being aware of the fact that learning is a highly individualised process since learners differ in relation to their own personalities, motivation, skills and learning styles. Therefore, we can affirm that the teacher's main task is to transform not only understanding, but also skills and attitudes for better learning. Teachers can do this only if they use Critical Reflective Practice, which is an extra feature of the process of reflection as it enables teachers to think upon and act on broader issues in education such as the educational system and question the *status quo*. Since teaching entails not only methods and strategies but also materials, activities and the development of intelligences, teacher training courses and reflection upon the teaching process itself are essential.

Chapter 3, entitled "Research Methodology and Procedure", presents the research context, the research questions and the design of the research, as well as a description of the subjects and instruments of the current investigation. Section 3.1. presents the specific research context, which includes the current Master's degree offered at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and the offer of methodology training in the Degree in Modern Languages at the ULPGC, as well as the PISA report on the Canary Islands. Section 3.2. contains the aims of this research project formulated as three research questions, which we will try to answer by analysing this investigation project. These research questions are related to language acquisition, motivation and validity of the ULE. Section 3.3. shows details of our research design: 3.3.1. describes our research subjects in two different time frames, but within a similar context and study purpose and 3.3.2. lists and explains the choice of research instruments. Section 3.4. describes the methodology used in this

current work: 3.4.1. gives an overview of the quantitative analysis procedure whereas 3.4.2. presents the qualitative analysis procedure; finally, (3.4.3.) describes our triangulation which was the main way of assessing the data on both occasions.

Chapter 3 begins with an insight into Spanish teacher training courses at graduate and postgraduate levels for foreign language teachers-to-be with special reference to the Canary Islands. Thus, the methodology subjects offered in the Degree in Modern Languages at the ULPGC and the Master's degree in teacher training, which enables students to teach in Spanish secondary public schools, are presented. In order to offer an objective point of view on Canarian learning outcomes and teaching context we offer a brief summary and the recommendations given by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 2012 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) report. PISA reports students' low motivation, limited interest in learning, the limited education of parents and lack of aspirations. Another topic that has been considered as a crucial one is the secondary school curriculum that lacks problem solving, critical thinking and learning to learn. Given this context we wonder about the following issues: can the ULE provide at least a partial solution since it enables trainees in awareness of methodology issues and promotes empathy? Do the Canary Islands schools and teacher training courses need reflective practitioners or experts in methodology and pedagogical skills in order to enhance disappointing results? Is being a student-centered teacher one of the keys for being a more efficient professional and therefore obtaining more encouraging results?

In this chapter, subsection 3.2. we introduce our research questions listed below:

1. How effective is Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training?
2. How valid is CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better, and more efficient, professionals?
3. What might the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) be in teacher training courses for the promotion of teachers as reflective practitioners?

In order to address the research questions we have decided that our research design had to be three-fold: qualitative, quantitative and mixed. In our opinion, only

one type of research design would have been deficient, for it would have failed to give a full vision about the learning or teaching processes and the role of reflection. For example, the answers collected in the questionnaires and the diary entries have helped us to develop measurements or recommendations for further study about foreign language teaching or learning processes. As we have mentioned before, teaching and learning are complex processes so the analysis method has to be a multi-layered one, and triangulation corresponds to qualitative investigation that assesses validity from different data sources.

In order to show that communication is the key and the main purpose of any foreign language learning, we have used the Communicative Approach in our ULE research contexts and this chapter shall describe the lessons which were given.

Chapter 4, entitled "Results", shows the quantitative and qualitative data analyses in two time periods. The section Data Presentation (4.1.) deals with the first research period 2010- 2013 (4.1.1.) and the second research period 2003- 2014/ 2015 (4.1.2.). In 4.1.2. we show the quantitative data for the above mentioned period and in 4.1.3. we present qualitative data for the same period. 4.2.1. is the second research period dating back in 2003 with its 4.2.2. quantitative data and its 4.2.3. qualitative data. Then in 4.3. we compare both time frames and draw up some initial conclusions and triangulate the data in 4.4.

As a general analysis of the culled data, we can affirm that the subjects in both periods, without being conscious of their cognitive processes, have showed awareness about language learning and teaching. In addition, we prove that reflective practice and the ULE offer a unique opportunity for teacher trainees to analyse themselves and others while learning foreign languages. These aspects show that an ULE should be a compulsory part of any foreign language teacher training. In this chapter our main concern was the question once posed by Gardner and Lambert: "How is it that some people can learn a second language or a foreign language so easily and do so well while others, given what seem the same opportunities to learn, find it almost impossible?" (1972:130).

Chapter 5, entitled "Conclusions", offers the main outcomes of this current research project by comparing the 2003-2014/2015 results with those obtained in

the research period 2011-2013; we also establish a comparison between the 2003 and 2011-2013 results and the 2003 and 2015 results. The final sections in this chapter present the limitations of this study (Section 5.2. "Study Limitations and Further Research") and suggest some possible areas for further research and sums up the findings and conclusions related to our research questions.

Unfortunately, by the end of this research project we are not going to be able to offer definitive answers to the reader since language learning is a highly complex phenomenon and the research discipline Applied Linguistics<sup>27</sup> has too many layers and sub-systems that impede it from having clear and definite answers. Moreover, it is extremely complicated to grasp the whole learning or teaching phenomenon since we understand that teaching is a heterogeneous process that entails, for example, choosing and preparing activities or tasks, checking understanding, offering feedback, preparing exams, and assessing. All these aspects make the possibility of having only one answer to our research questions almost far-fetched, but we can affirm that motivation is the key to any successful language learning. This aspect needs to be fostered and encouraged by the teacher by using appropriate techniques and suitable contexts for their teaching contents and aims. Moreover, the two different time frames for the ULE experiments show us that (i) interest, motivation and curiosity are solid pillars, as Krashen has claimed (1980) (ii) stress is not necessarily a hindrance in the learning process, as Csíkszentmihályi (2013) has affirmed; and (iii) it is possible to recreate a perfect context in class where students feel as if they were visitors in Croatia therefore confirming the very same author's concept of 'flow'. CRP has allowed them a unique and highly valuable experience of being able to observe themselves and their classmates during the learning process. I wish to finish this introduction by using one of my 2003-2014/15 subjects' words:

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<sup>27</sup> Applied Linguistics is a field of linguistics that researches into language structure and its acquisition. It also deals with communication and language related problems and issues. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (by Richards and Schmidt), it is the study of foreign language learning and teaching, and it entails using information from other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and information theory. The main purpose of Applied Linguistics is to germinate theoretical models about language and its usage, and this knowledge is then applied in syllabus design and language development (2013:29).

*I have a much better understanding of what it feels like being the student. I remember this when I have vacant looking faces in the classroom and quickly evaluate my method. As a teacher I always have additional support resources at hand for each lesson plan again because having experienced what it us like first hand to be in the foreign language students shoes. I think anyone training to be a language teacher should experience this. (Q4.2014/15.B)*

These comments perfectly summarize our aims for this current study and also show the validity of the ULE in teacher training programmes. Here, I would also like to highlight that any weaknesses and errors in this current project are mine and mine alone.





## **2. CURRENT RESEARCH IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW**

*I felt very surprised because we have learnt a lot about Croatian in only one hour. It is incredible how beneficial it is to learn a language when applying the suitable methods and strategies.<sup>28</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> Learner diary entry contribution 2011 (with author's correction).

The process of learning or acquiring foreign languages has been causing interest and curiosity for generations, and consequently a number of theories about the way we learn languages have been put forward, which have been further supported by means of empirical investigation. Yet, as Ellis reminds us, "There is, however, considerable disagreement about a need for a single model or, at least, the need for some principled selection among the theoretical positions on offer" (Ellis, 1997:89). There seems to be no single theory that can account for the complexity of the language learning process, so there is no one answer to this question. A further problem is that since language learning does not only occur in school contexts, but also in informal learning environments such as social networks or interaction with English speaking friends, it is also difficult to define 'learning' or delimit the conscious and unconscious processes involved.

By way of introduction to the current chapter, which will provide a brief overview of relevant research from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as well as a description of the role of guided critical reflection in foreign language teacher training, we have chosen the following quotation by Van Manen, whose seminal work on reflective practice has, in fact, has done much to inspire the current dissertation:

Beginning teachers often seem to feel the tension or the poor fit between what they learned about teaching and what they discover is required in the practice of teaching. Teacher educators have generally become quite aware that the tried "knowledge into practice" model of teacher training falls short of effective professional preparation. (1995:4)

The research project reported in the current dissertation focuses on the nature of pre-service teaching, and the above quotation encapsulates one of our three main aims, which is that of demonstrating the validity of Critical Reflexive Practice (CRP)<sup>29</sup> as a means for FL teacher trainees to become better and more

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<sup>29</sup> In relation to the term 'critical reflexive practice', there seems to be a dichotomy which might be "either generic (Ennis, 1985; 1997; Kuhn 1991) or subject-specific" (Atkinson 1997; McPeck, 1992; Moore, 2011; cited in Szenes, Tilakaratna, & Maton, 2015:4.) For the purposes of our research, it is generic, since it has been 'self-reflective' and 'collective reflective', [because] it chooses something significant to know more about or to do something with, and which is directed and energized by interest and insight" (Ghaye, 2010:35).

efficient professionals. A great number of us have experienced the mismatches highlighted by Van Manen (*ibid*) as novice instructors and this feeling can, in fact, hamper pre-service teachers because of their lack of the awareness of the crucial role of reflection in combination with their limited knowledge about the learning/teaching process. As a response to this, this research project aims to prove the value for trainee teachers of understanding the way Foreign Language (FL) students learn, those methodologies that help these students learn and how we can enable them to feel at ease when in a formal learning context. Moreover, we consider that guided reflection during and after pre-service teaching training should form a compulsory part of official programmes as a means to further enable trainees to become more effective future language teachers. SLA research findings have furthered our comprehension of learning and teaching processes, and consequently we are aware that there are certain methods and techniques that might seem to encourage learning, but more is needed to help teachers to be more successful in their daily teaching practice.

Yet, much recent research in the multi-faceted area of SLA has undoubtedly contributed considerably to a more comprehensive understanding of foreign language learning and teaching processes by underpinning key issues such as learner interest or beliefs, motivation, guided reflection, metacognition and learning styles or teaching strategies. Since these notions are among the main aims of SLA investigation in its attempt to enhance the teaching process, SLA research findings strive to shed light on success and lack of achievement when learning a foreign language. This is essential, especially when adopting a more learner-centred approach.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, SLA research also addresses practical factors such as the optimal age to start learning foreign languages, or the length of time we might need to master a language. Above all, SLA insights can help teachers to plan and deliver

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<sup>30</sup> A learner centered approach enables students to decide about their learning goals, and means to achieve them, students can also negotiate the content and the goals to match their needs (Hannafin, *et al.*,2015:641). It is a challenge to the traditional teacher centered approach, and as well as giving students greater power in the classroom in relation to learning decisions, it also caters for individualized learning styles, techniques and needs.

lessons in a more efficient way. Thus, relevant findings from the huge number of investigations undertaken within the well-established discipline of SLA need to be reviewed in any research project such as the one presented here, since a theoretical framework is necessary to be able to bring much-needed expertise into the classroom. This orientation is crucial nowadays, maybe more than ever since many European countries are gradually moving towards bilingual teaching contexts,<sup>31</sup> while the majority of foreign language teachers are still experimenting with the range of traditional teaching methods and technique<sup>32</sup> available in most formal foreign learning contexts within the restrictions of their curricula, but without reflecting on the learning/teaching process. Therefore, more research such as the current project reported here can help to facilitate more appropriate training techniques which include reflection on learning processes for pre-service teachers that should provide more efficient language teaching techniques. When addressing teaching approaches, we should also mention the importance of individual teaching goals, which should also inform English as a Second Language (ESL) methodologies and play an

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<sup>31</sup> The European Union (EU) is fostering multilingualism with the aim that each European citizen should possess practical language skills in two languages apart from their native tongue (*European Commission, 2012:4*). This objective seems to be a realistic one since already 54% Europeans are able to communicate in at least one additional language (*ibid,7*). It is also interesting to mention here that the main reason given by the EU for not speaking a foreign language is lack of motivation (*ibid, 10*). The European Commission claims that "multilingualism enhances skills like creative thinking, learning, problem solving and communicating in general (European Commission, 2009, cited in Müller, 2015:1). Therefore, this should lead to a greater need for qualified second language teachers throughout Europe and the rest of the world. In addition, research in SLA is also under the influence of parallel studies in bilingualism and the strategies and techniques that foster successful competence in more languages than L1 (Ortega, 2014:4). Moreover, according to Richards and Rodgers, bilingualism and multilingualism are nowadays more "[...] a norm, rather than an exception" (2014:4). Thus investigation about bilingualism can support SLA research in order to help teachers to be more efficient instructors, which is, of course, the main aim of our current study.

<sup>32</sup> To illustrate what a traditional method is we might cite Richards and Rodgers, who link methods with disciplines such as applied linguistics, linguistics and psychology: "Although learning languages has a very long history, the foundations of the contemporary approaches to language teaching were developed during the early part of the twentieth century, as applied linguists' and others sought to develop principals and procedures for the design of teaching methods and materials, drawing on the developing field of linguistics and psychology" (Richards and Rodgers, 2014:3). Before the appearance of the research area of Applied Linguistics, mainly traditional methods were used in language teaching contexts such as Grammar Translation (GT) or Contrastive Analysis, influenced by the instructional processes used when teaching Latin or Greek, and they are those whose main goal is not communication or spoken interaction. Among the wide array of FL methods and approaches that have been suggested, by way of example, we could mention the Direct Method (later to become the Natural Approach), the Audiolingual Method (ALM), humanistic approaches such as Suggestopedia, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and, more recently Task-Based Learning, or the Lexical Approach.

important role when deciding which technique we should use in relation to the language items we wish to present or practice, with no one single method, approach, or even methodology ever suitable for all contexts:

The method concept in teaching – the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning – is a powerful tool though a controversial one and the quest for better methods was a preoccupation of many teachers and applied linguists throughout the twentieth century. (Richards and Rodgers, 2014:3-4)

However, existing theories about language learning and teaching do predetermine and shape the way teachers teach, despite the individualized nature of any teaching situation. Thus, findings or techniques arising as practical implications from insights within the research discipline that is Applied Linguistics can offer solutions for language based problems; we designed the ULE experiment described in this project with students from the EFL methodology-based subject *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II* (Applied Linguistics II) An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language Semester 2 (2011- 2013) included in the degree in English Language and Literature (*Filología Inglesa*) offered by the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria as a means to raise awareness of the differences between method-based teaching approaches for trainee teachers in order to enable them to make their own informed teaching decisions.<sup>33</sup> In order to comprehend the learning process better, we also need to take into account the interaction between Applied Linguistics theory and the complexity of learning and teaching processes which do not necessarily complement each other.

In relation to this, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008:201) also place emphasis on the importance of language adaptive systems that involve interaction at any level; these systems should be measured in order to understand the learning process better. They also affirm that the research discipline of Applied Linguistics is, in fact, a complex system containing many sub-systems, one inside the other:

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<sup>33</sup> See Appendix II *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II* , An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language Semester 2 (February - May 2011).

Complexity theory works at the system level and explanations in terms of the system's behaviour not at the level of individual agents or elements. Because many complex systems are interconnected and coordinated, it is not always possible to explain behaviour due to their separate components. (Clark, 1997:104, cited in *ibid*, 2008:201)

This phenomenon is called 'componential explanation' (*ibid*), meaning that it is not enough to just know each part of a complex system since this knowledge cannot help us to understand complex systems. It is only possible to comprehend this kind of system if we observe the interaction between the parts. Larsen-Freeman (2011) also mentions that SLA is "[...] a process of constructing complex, adaptive systems" (cited in Ellis, 2014:182). Thus, we can affirm that the complexity of the learning process cannot be explained only by one research discipline; therefore knowledge about the multi-faceted nature of the learning process itself, as well as the integration of its different elements, is essential. Research undertaken within the discipline of SLA is, in fact, supported by findings from several other sciences such as Sociology, Linguistics, Psychology, Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics, which has enriched and widened its scope even further:<sup>34</sup>

The boundaries between the different disciplines are getting permeable and blurred. In order to broaden our professional knowledge base and understanding, we need to look into different disciplines that are relevant to foreign language education in the changing world. We need to put together the developments in a number of related fields of research, such as philosophy, epistemology, linguistics, applied linguistics, learning psychology, intercultural learning, evaluation, the teacher's professional growth, society reconstruction and the culture of schools and other teaching institutions." (Kohonen *et al.*, 2014:1)

In the current investigative study, in order to establish our theoretical background we have addressed research mainly in the realms of Applied Linguistics and that conducted on teachers' professional growth (within teacher training contexts). We have also focused on educational institution practice and syllabus

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<sup>34</sup> Ortega claims that that research areas of Language Teaching, Linguistics, Child Language Acquisition and Psychology gave rise to the field of SLA. Later on, it built further connections with Bilingualism, Psycholinguistics, Education, Anthropology and Sociology (2014:7).

design, in this specific case the introductory EFL Methodology subject offered by the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria within the framework of its degree in English Language and Literature '*Filología Inglesa*'. In order to design and structure our research and the subsequent dissertation, we have applied Maxwell's constructs of "goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity" (2012:4)<sup>35</sup>. Thus, the current chapter details our conceptual framework by dealing with current studies on language learning, and research on effective and reflective teaching as well as this researcher's first-hand experience in two different time frames: one in 2003 and 2014, and the other one from 2011 to 2013.<sup>36</sup>

Our overview in this chapter consists of the following sections: the first section (2.1.1.) is titled First Language Acquisition Research and it deals with a summary of the relevant theories behind learning and teaching and the processes and traits relevant to the aims of the current research. Since this area of research is a complex one we have divided it into the following sub-sections: a brief review of relevant of research in Psycholinguistics (2.1.1); the contribution to this debate of Cognitivism, and particularly the contributions of Chomsky and Krashen and the benefits of foreign language learning for our brains ; (2.2.) shows us Practical Implications (2.2.2) is about the practical implications of these theoretical insights in language learning and teaching contexts in line with the role of language learning beliefs (2.2.1), metacognition and learning to learn (2.2.2); teacher training concerns (2.2.3) including teaching methodology and the design of internationally-recognised teaching certificates in TESOL<sup>37</sup> in order to emphasise the role of our own Unknown Language (ULE) experiment in teacher education. We shall then move into the core research area relevant to the research project we present here which is that of

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<sup>35</sup> To see the entire quote and characteristics see Chapter 3, Research Methodology and Procedure.

<sup>36</sup> We will deal with the rationale behind this in Chapter 3, where we describe the research methodology.

<sup>37</sup> As explained previously, 'TESOL' is an acronym that stands for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Regulated training in TESOL includes the option of gaining internationally recognized teaching certificates such as the CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) offered by Cambridge ESOL and the Trinity Teaching Diploma in TESOL, among others.

Reflective Teaching and Learning (2.3.) and ( 2.4.) our own exploration of the role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner<sup>38</sup> and the value of this practice in 'action research' (henceforth AR) which teachers should be encouraged to carry out in their own classrooms as a means to constantly renew and enhance the foreign teaching and learning process.

## **2.1. Second Language Acquisition Research**

This sub-section offers general notions about language learning and language acquisition and the human ability to learn taken from key insights in SLA research. It also depicts the search for the most efficient way of learning and teaching foreign languages by taking into account diverse variables such as motivation, interest, effective techniques and methodology. Moreover, we also aim to highlight the benefits of language learning due to its positive effect on the brain. The concept of factors affecting learning such as motivation or the individualised nature of learning will also be explored and presented as a key to successful language learning. We shall conclude this section with an exploration of the nature of teaching and the role of the teacher. The following authors offer an explanation regarding acquisition and learning by stating that adults and children acquire L2 after the acquisition process which is an unconscious one the same one that children go through when they learn their L1. The L2 learning process it also a conscious one since it entails metalinguistic knowledge too. (Byhram and Hu, 2013:4)

We cannot deny that one of the most fascinating aspects of human development is the innate ability to learn. Features of the general learning process have been described as the following:

[...] a change in behaviour as a result of experience or practice, the acquisition of knowledge, knowledge gained through study, to gain knowledge, or skill in, something through study, teaching, instruction or experience, the process of gaining knowledge, a process of constructing understanding based on experience from a wide range of sources. (Pritchard,2013:1)

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<sup>38</sup> See Section 2.4. (Critical Reflective Practice) for further detail.



As well as this sample description of learning in general, we can also refer to a wide variety of more specific definitions about foreign language learning such as the following, which highlights the procedure of producing and using language: "Language acquisition is the process by which human beings acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language, as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate" (David, 2007:325; cited in Ling, 2014:97). Also, from the wide array of quotations about what a language might be, we have chosen the following one as an illustrative example for our purposes here, as it reflects the traditional view that language learning is just the same as learning any other skill, a view which we shall see is totally inappropriate for our own teacher training proposal:<sup>39</sup>

[...] language is essentially spoken communication, with a hierarchical structure shared with other motor abilities such as dancing. In this view, the rules for hierarchically organizing lexical items are acquired through associative motor learning, just as humans learn how to walk or use cutlery. (Bolhuis et al., 2015:2)

This definition of language, of course, contradicts Chomsky's Cognitivist perspective about how children naturally and universally acquire their first languages, which forefronts the role of creativity and experimentation; this will be further explored in sub-section 2.1.2.

As we have mentioned previously in the introduction to this chapter, the unique human ability to acquire a language, and the process of acquiring it, are the principal issues addressed within SLA research as well as the influences and aspects that make learning languages possible, rather than the promotion of prescribed language teaching methods, with supporting contributions from other social sciences.<sup>40</sup> Yet, the quest to discover the most efficient method of foreign language

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<sup>39</sup> This is a Behaviorist definition of how we learn languages. For further information, see sub-section 2.1.2. Relevant insight from Psycholinguistics: Cognitivism.

<sup>40</sup> Gass (2013:2) has claimed that the SLA research discipline is not pedagogy, unless it affects the way we acquire a language. According to her, the main goal of SLA is to determine linguistic limits

teaching and learning has been a constant cumbersome issue for SLA researchers. For instance, De Groot *et al.*, (2014:4) claim that the quintessential variable resides in the aspect of 'consciousness' within the SLA process since learning, or acquiring, a second or foreign language has been seen from two very dissimilar points of view: as a teacher-led deductive process going from exposure to grammatical patterns followed by practice, or as an implicit one in which structural patterns are automatically deduced from exposure, in which learners are guided to making their own discoveries. The former approach concentrates on teaching formal rules (especially syntactic ones), whereas the latter stresses the importance of providing 'comprehensible input' or helping learners to acquire language from 'comprehensible input'.<sup>41</sup> SLA research data thus yield conflicting support and prescribed practice suggestions for foreign language teachers, as illustrated in the quotation below:

[...] SLA is one important source of information that would help teachers set appropriate expectations for themselves and their students. A number of sometimes conflicting positions can be identified, ranging from a super-cautious "don't apply" to a confident "go ahead and apply" while also claiming that the relationship should not be one-way but symbiotic.  
(Behzadi and Sayadian,2015: 20.)

As well as identifying an appropriate approach to adopt when teaching, we also need to take into account several other factors which might affect learning such as the age. During our lives, most of us learn a second language, some at an early age, some at an older age, but no matter the age we might affirm that attentiveness and curiosity both influence formal and informal acquisition. According to Mitchell *et al.*, SLA research can " [...] also contribute to more general understanding about the nature of language, of human learning, and intercultural communication, and thus about the human mind itself [...] in order to be able to account for both success and

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when forming second language grammars. This is, naturally, not relevant for our research purposes as we shall focus on learning and not the learning content.

<sup>41</sup> 'Comprehensible input' is a concept coined by Swain (1985) who was inspired by Krashen's comprehensive theory: "[...] language acquisition could happen only when the language learner acquires accepted "Comprehensible Input", that is, second language input slightly higher than his current language skill level, and he could focus attention on meaning understanding rather than formal understanding" (Hu,2015:519). See 2.1.2.

failure in L2 learning [...]” (2013:22). Hence, the crucial aim of SLA research should be to help foreign language teachers in their day-to-day classroom practice and arouse learners’ curiosity for learning in a teaching context where communication, rather than structural manipulation, should be the essential element towards succeeding in L2 and achieving communicative competence. This is the case of the rationale behind the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) used in our Unknown Language Experience (ULE).<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, we use language to communicate and to describe the world and our reality with the main purpose of attracting our listener’s attention; thus it can be said, as we have pointed out above, that attention as well as interest or curiosity determine and underpin the learning process in a broad sense. One of the most puzzling learning processes is learning languages, for we still do not have an all-embracing definitive theory to explain it. In fact, Ortega offers ten theories that explain how we learn languages: “Universal Grammar Theory, Usage-Based Approaches, Skills Acquisition Theory, the Declarative/Procedural Model, Input Processing Theory, Processability Theory, the Concept- Oriented Approach, the Interaction Framework, Vygotskian Socio-Cultural Theory and Complexity Theory”<sup>43</sup> (2014b:255). Each of these theories present compelling reasons claiming to be the theory about how we learn languages.

Nevertheless, one issue is certain in relation to this human phenomenon of language learning or acquisition; it has numerous advantages apart from the obvious one of being able to communicate, as this cognitive process affects our brains in a positive way by boosting the brain’s white matter structure, therefore helping us to be more efficient pupils in other fields of study.

Therefore, we might wonder about the following questions, among many others which populate the research literature. How do we really learn languages?

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<sup>42</sup> CLT is based on acquiring language in meaningful contexts replete with ‘comprehensible input’ and opportunities for production.

<sup>43</sup> These ten theories will not be explained in detail, except Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory in 2.1.2 and Vygotsky’s Socio-Cultural theory in the same sub-section , as the most relevant ones for the current research.

How does it affect our brains? Do we learn a second language (L2) in the same way as we learn our first language (L1)? Does age matter when we learn languages? Is language aptitude essential for foreign language learning? Can SLA investigation offer a definitive theory about language learning? Is motivation the only key to success in language learning?

In relation to this last concept, unquestionably, motivation can be said to be a factor of great importance in language learning and teaching contexts as well as SLA research, and "[...] provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Dörnyei, 2005:65). From the multitude of published research into this complex concept which affects the learning process, we can confirm that motivation is one of the strongest pillars when learning a second language. Moreover, Dörnyei also states that "factors underlying motivation can override the aptitude effect on the individual variability in language learning achievement"(cited in Öz, 2015:3). It would seem logical that the essential aim of SLA research should be to assist teachers in their daily practice in the classroom by exploring the role of factors affecting learning such as these. Unfortunately, we might suggest that some SLA investigation does not contribute much towards teaching practice unless it includes the multiple cognitive and affective factors affecting learning.

One of the authors who claims that SLA findings do not offer enough practical solutions is Vivian Cook (e.g.2014b), who stresses the fact that much of SLA research is purely study for its own sake and not for teaching purposes, and it might be said that many investigations have been used mainly to simply prove linguistic theories. Language teaching in the past fifty years has depended mostly on linguistic theory; for example, in the sixties and seventies teachers were trained by using contrastive analysis which consisted of analysing a part of the grammars of two or more languages (Eckman *et al.*, 2013:7). This process was also called descriptive comparison since it described grammar and phonological phenomena by comparing same sentence structures between languages. The objective was to help students and teachers when learning/teaching a foreign language by comparing L1 with L2, and thus anticipating possible difficulties. We shall attempt to explore the usefulness of this strategy in our own research project, and in particular the insights provided by

our subjects as they compare both their first language and English to Croatian, in an attempt to try to find patterns that might help them understand the unknown language:<sup>44</sup>

There are, no doubt, situations in which contrastive analysis has to play this predictive role, as when a text-writer is called upon to produce L2 teaching materials for students of an L1 group with which he has had no teaching experience. In such a case, contrastive analysis of the L2 and the students' L1 may be the only source he has for the prediction of problem areas. (Catford, 1968:159).

This teaching model was, however, soon found to be inadequate and it was consequently forgotten and considered invalid, although nowadays there is still a lot of research in contrastive analysis outside the educational realm, co-existing with conversational analysis (CA),<sup>45</sup> which contemplates spoken interaction and the patterns that occur when we interact as a means to aiding teaching.

The objective of this area of SLA investigation is not to construct structural models, but to investigate interaction and the patterns that happen when there is natural spoken interaction. Applied CA offers integrated theory and a methodology of interaction: "Applied CA brings the principles, methods, and achievements of basic CA to bear on these concerns" (Kasper and Wagner, 2014: 186). CA investigation is relevant to SLA research since it analyses second language natural production as well. The importance of analysing natural speech by SLA is also highlighted by Ionin, who narrowed the SLA field into experimental methodologies "[...] production, grammaticality judgment tasks and interpretation tasks" (cited in Celik, 2015: 2).

Another teaching method that emphasises natural communication and lexis is the Lexical Approach: "It is well known that students who have been taught the common collocates of words, since the first stages, use them far more naturally and have a

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<sup>44</sup> Interestingly enough some claimed that Croatian compared to Spanish and English has a lot in common with these languages. This will be commented on in more detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>45</sup> CA is an approach where language and social interaction are analyzed. This stemmed from the works of sociologists in the 1960's such as Harvey Sach, Emanuel Schelgoff and Gail Jefferson (Wong and Waring, 2010, cited in Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015:5).

better command of ready-made language, which contributes to fluency improvement” (Ramirez, 2015:18). This might confirm that language is grammaticalised lexis rather than lexicalized grammar. This is precisely what we have done with our ULE experiment as we have concentrated on lexis in the form of language chunks, and oral communication rather than on grammar and writing in our teaching session.

Another key aspect for SLA research is to attentively observe the language learning process within the real classroom setting; in contrast, “Traditional psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics and cognitive approaches to SLA operate by observing linguistic behavior in experimental, clinical and naturalistic settings, and based on patterns in those data, mechanisms are inferred” (Schuman *et al.*, 2014: 1).<sup>46</sup>

Schmidt aptly characterized L2 development in terms of the synergy between awareness at the level of ‘noticing’ and at the level of ‘understanding’. He has argued that while noticing is a necessary and sufficient precondition for learning, understanding, which includes metalinguistic awareness, is facilitative, though not required (Schmidt, 1990, 2001, 2012, cited in Jackson, 2014: 1). Comprehension, as a concept of metalinguistic consciousness, has to be developed as a means to facilitate teachers’ practice. Mere investigation in SLA does not have much validity if it does not improve teaching performance.

Each person also has their own individual way of gathering and processing information, and solving problems in day-to-day situations. These personal cognitive abilities, acquired in the course of a long socialization process are called ‘learning styles’ (Sywelem *et al.*, 2012: 10). Knowledge about one’s learning style can improve academic results and help address weaker points and boost the stronger ones. Not only should students know their own learning style, but teachers should also be aware of them in order to increase learning achievements in general. There are

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<sup>46</sup> In our case, we have observed the processes of language learning on four different occasions in a real experimental and natural classroom context in order to discover whether the subjects’ impressions and conclusions about the experiment were similar on both occasions. (see Chapter 3 for more detail of the design of our project).

several groups of learning styles and their equivalent approaches (Sadler – Smith, 1997; Kolb, 1984). These learning styles:

[...] which converge on the fact that learning styles represent personal cognitive characteristics about dependence or independence in give area, styles deal with specific learning preferences, approaches combining elements of cognitive and personal learning preferences and styles by processing the information. (Sywelem et al., 2012: 10)<sup>47</sup>

Kolb's (1984) has defined four learning styles that describe the learning process as something cyclical and continuous which entails active experience in a new situation, reflecting on what has happened and stating theories according to reflection and then preparing for the next step. Kolb names the 4 main stages:

[...] accommodative, divergent, convergent and assimilative among others being the concrete experience ( feeling) , diverging ( feeling and watching) , reflective observation ( watching) , assimilation ( watching and thinking) , abstract conceptualization ( thinking) converging ( thinking and doing) active experimentation ( doing) and accommodating ( feeling and doing) . (Sywelem et al. 2012: 12).

All these concepts show how we do things in a continuum or a cyclical process starting at any point of this circle and then going clockwise:

Convergers are good at finding practical use of theories, making decisions and solving problems. These learners prefer technical kind of tasks. Divergers are best at seeing concrete situations from different points of view and therefore they favor brainstorming. Assimilators are best at understanding a wide range of information and organizing it in a concise and logical way. They

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<sup>47</sup> Several questionnaires have been developed in order to label common characteristics that individuals have which can help learners to improve and teachers to be aware of these styles when teaching. For instance, in 1993 Curry regarded learning styles as a metaphorical onion (the outer/cognitive personality layer). In 1992, Fleming and Mills produced the VARK (Visual, Oral, Read/Write and Kinaesthetic) questionnaire. The same year the Style Analysis Survey was created by Oxford with the following categories: Intuitive random, Concrete sequential, Closure- Oriented/ Open and Global/Analytic .Willing, in 1987 used a twin axis framework (passive – active, holistic- analytic). Honey and Mumford in 1982 invented their Learning style Questionnaire with new categories such as: Reflector, Theorist, Pragmatist and Activist.

prefer abstract ideas and concepts. Accomodators learn from hand- on experiences and act on feelings rather than on logic. (Kolb, 1984:56).

This means that each one of us develops a specific way of learning, so some integrate all 4 styles while others do not and in this latter case one style predominates the other styles.

One of the first well known applications of the style concept was by Reid in 1987, who developed the Perceptual learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) which was based on 5 modalities: " (i) Visual learner (learning by seeing); (ii) Auditory learner (learning by hearing); (iii)Tactile (learning by touching); (iv) Kinaesthetic (learning by moving, and (v) Individual versus group preference." (Griffiths, 2012:155).

Although SLA research might make valuable theoretical contributions, if we do not understand the processes of language learning in a practical classroom setting, then effective teaching/learning is highly difficult to achieve. Pre-service courses should, therefore, be the most suitable place and time to explore learning theories, as well as the role of individualised factors in language learning such as learning styles and strategies as well as more general concepts such as motivation:

By being familiar with the mental process involved in producing L2 speech, teachers can understand that their learners have to face when learning to speak, course book writers can produce more efficient teaching materials and language testers can develop instruments that can measure oral language competence in a more valid way. (Kormos,2014:23)

The main reason behind this assumption is that if we understand the learning process ourselves, then we know what we expect our students to be able to achieve. For example, if our aim is to prepare our students to pass an examination, then this will affect the way in which we plan our teaching. On the contrary, if we see foreign language learning as a lifelong process having social and cultural implications, then we will take a different approach to teaching it. Moreover, learning is an interactive exchange between those who are teaching and those who are learning. The assumption of knowing does not imply



understanding and being able to apply that new knowledge on our students. Most teachers know their subjects and they are experts in their own fields, but they also often forget about their students' learning processes and needs. Therefore, being aware that language acquisition happens due to the combination between interaction and innate linguistic ability should be taken into account when teaching foreign languages:

After decades of research, most scholars generally agree that language acquisition is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the interaction of innate biologically based mechanisms devoted to language, other non-linguistic cognitive and social mechanism, linguistic input and information about the social and physical world. (Tager-Flusberg,2014:1)

In relation to this, and connected to this idea of the understanding of the nature of language learning from an individualised perspective as a prerequisite for effective teaching, theorists such as Krashen (e.g.1988) claim that meaningful, contextualised exposure to 'comprehensible language input' is essential and that the most effective processes of second language acquisition do not happen intentionally or consciously, although it is still true to say that foreign language learning usually takes place in formal educational contexts. In many countries, studying a second language is compulsory as well as part of the core curriculum, and due to the fact that we live in a globalised society, English is often the main second or foreign language in most of the world's communities. Therefore, more and more trained language teachers are needed to answer this demand for learning English as a foreign language. In addition, they need to know the main characteristics efficient teachers should apply in their daily teaching practice. Moreover, any teacher who is going to teach foreign languages should have a broad knowledge about first and second language acquisition processes.

### 2.1.1. First Language Acquisition Processes

As we have clarified in the previous section, empowering or giving greater responsibility to students in relation to their own learning in a Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP) encourages successful learning/teaching and can also be applied to both L1 and L2 learning contexts. Before we go into depth as to why first language learning is closely connected with foreign or second learning, we should explore the nature of 'language' and how it might be defined as a means to begin the following sub-section.

In the first place, from the wide array of definitions for the word 'language' we have chosen one given by Lenneberg and Lenneberg due to its highlighting of communicative features:" [language is] the expression and reception of ideas and feelings" (2014:13). Parallel to this focus on language as a tool of communication, it is impossible to discuss language acquisition issues without mentioning the cognitivist linguist Pinker, who claims (after Chomsky) that language, and its acquisition, is not a cultural product but "[a product of the biological make-up of our brains" (2014:4), also stating that it is a complex ability that develops spontaneously with no conscious attempt, and quality-wise the process is exactly the same one for any individual. Thus, he labels language and the innate processes of its acquisition as an 'instinct' ( *ibid*).<sup>48</sup> Like Pinker, according to Saviile-Troika, all of us are born with the ability to learn languages, and any one part of a structure of a language is therefore genetically granted (2012:24). Whether this innate ability persists when we learn an L2 is still not clear enough, due to the fact that it is further complicated depending on the perspective that we adopt when we analyse the teaching/learning process. There is only one statement that we believe everybody should agree with; in order to be able to speak an L2, there must usually be prior knowledge of our L1, which is responsible for the transfer from L1 to L2 during L2 development. In the case of

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<sup>48</sup> This will be further explored in the data we have gathered from our subjects in Chapter 4. In our current research we have tried to trigger that instinct to learn, or acquire, language naturally by encouraging our subjects to reflect upon the nature of the acquisition process on their own.

bilingual children who learn both languages there is a recent study by Pliatsikas *et al.*, that state the benefits of being bilingual at an early age:

García-Pentón and colleagues suggested that the additional cognitive demands that are imposed by the simultaneous use of two languages result in neural subnetworks that are more capable of transferring information between different language-related brain areas, especially networks that are involved in tackling phonological, semantic, and syntactic competition between languages, as well as in word recognition and semantic processing. ( 2015: 1335)

Littlewood (1984:4) highlighted how investigation into first language acquisition (L1) processes had an enormous influence on the study of second language contexts as the discipline of SLA began to rapidly expand in the seventies and early eighties in the last century. On a practical level, L1 researchers have developed new techniques for analysing and collecting children's speech, and these same techniques, together with others, have also been used in the field of L2 learning research. In order to tackle the issues of both first and foreign (or second) language acquisition, we also need to define the complex phenomenon that is the process of acquiring language. As Rowland reminds us:

In fact, language has many facets, so when we talk about acquiring a language we talk we are actually talking about learning a whole range of different skills and acquiring many different types of knowledge. Thus, in order to understand what it means 'to acquire a language' the first key question we have to consider is this: **Key question what skills and knowledge do children have to master in order to acquire a language?**<sup>49</sup> (Rowland, 2013: 2).

According to the same author, these skills and knowledge are the following: "the ability to distinguish and recognize sounds, and produce combined speech sounds into meaningful words, work out how words fit the sentence, learn changes in meaning due to sequencing, and link thoughts to be able to ask, respond and

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<sup>49</sup> Bold parts of the quotation are found in the original text.

communicate.” (*ibid.*) Not only do children need to become very skilled and knowledgeable when acquiring a language, but also there are other more linguistic notions that should be taken into account when exploring factors that might influence language acquisition processes. For instance, Rowland (2013:3) mentions the differences between English and Turkish children when acquiring their L1. English is a word order language meaning that when we change the SVO<sup>50</sup> order we change the sentence meaning. Turkish (as well as Croatian) has a SOV order meaning so we can shuffle the words within the sentence without changing the meaning.<sup>51</sup>

When we learn a foreign language, we might wonder about many other aspects inherent in the process such as the nature of vocabulary learning, which might even affect the definition of L1 and L2 language acquisition according to Lennenberg and Lennenberg (2014:19); for example, when children learn words, they have to discover the correlation between the word and the object at the same time, as shown, for example, by the utterance “ Is this a table? “. Moreover, the same authors define the word ‘acquisition’ (*ibid.*) by saying that this is “an association between a visual and an auditory pattern.”

As Essay and Marmalova (2015:1) have said, knowledge about vocabulary is an initial stage towards language proficiency, since children at the age of two know some 100- 600 words and by learning an average of 9-10 words daily at the age of 6 they should know some 14,000 words (the present example is for English-speaking children). Thus, it is not surprising that this amazing ability to acquire lexis has been researched for centuries, trying to find an accurate and reliable theory behind such

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<sup>50</sup> SVO is subject, verb, and object order in utterances: “Modern European Languages including Romance and Germanic and Modern Greek languages have a little flexibility in the word order” (Tomlin, 2014:4). English-speaking children say their first sentences by combining bare stem words such as two chair/ sit chair. (*ibid*) There is a lack of inflections and articles, determiners and prepositions in L1 English acquisition, whereas Turkish children and Croatian children first form simple sentences already with inflections. This might affect the approach we adopt when teaching. In our case students have naturally acquired the word order in Croatian and did not feel daunted by the inflection and flexible word order hurdles.

<sup>51</sup> This will be further explored in the data we have gathered from our subjects in Chapter 4.

an incredible phenomenon, and the subsequent role of structurally- versus lexically-based approaches when thinking about how to teach.<sup>52</sup>

### *2.1.2. Relevant Insights from Psycholinguistics: Cognitivism*

In order to attempt to explore learning theories it is essential to refer to psycholinguistic studies. One of the main tasks of psycholinguists is to find out how children learn languages in L1 acquisition contexts. In order to be able to explain this phenomenon, investigators make a clear distinction between speech production and speech comprehension. To be able to produce language, children obviously need to comprehend language items first. Nevertheless, there is no comprehension whatsoever if utterances are not related to objects or the environment, as children acquiring their first language need to relate speech with objects or events. This is necessary for two reasons:

- 1) A learner must first hear speech sounds before the person knows what sounds to make and
- 2) A learner must hear the speech sounds in coordination with the experience of objects, situations, or events in the environment or the mind before the person can assign a meaning to the speech sound. (Steinberg, 2013:35)

If we do not know the language item, we can use other strategies or ways of conveying meaning such as descriptions, synonyms or antonyms and test our hypotheses where language patterns are concerned.

Further to this, Cook and Singleton remind us that: "A crucial element in human language is the arbitrary link between the meaning of words and their actual sounds or spelling." (2013: 8). They affirm that people who speak a foreign language are more aware of the arbitrariness of language and this helps L2 speakers to acquire a language in a more efficient way.

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<sup>52</sup> This type of language learning awareness such as the nature or the role of vocabulary learning is that which we wish to achieve in the critical reflective practice for pre-service teachers promoted in the current project.

Unlike a child acquiring a first, or native, language, the second-language acquirer brings to the learning situation an already-fully-assembled set of (L1) grammatical categories. The way in which these features have been combined and configured in the native language will to some (presumably non-arbitrary) extent differ from that of the target L2. ( Lardier, 2009:175). In the last 30 years Cognitive and Corpus Linguistics have had a huge influence on SLA. The premise behind these assumptions claim that people construe the world in large part through conceptual metaphors, which enable them to understand abstract concepts using knowledge of superficially dissimilar, typically more concrete concepts. (Landau and Meier, 2010:1045)

Thus, there is no right way to teach a language due to the fact that there is no homogeneity in the human brain: "The major thesis of this chapter is that all brains are different as different as faces. The differences in the human brain are genetic "(Edelman, 1987, 1989 and 1992, cited in Schuman, 2014:7). Our brain is a result of the genetic and epigenetic <sup>53</sup>information and the environmental influence. This finding leads us to a conclusion that in foreign language classes we should cater for individual differences. There is not a magic formula that is going to work for any student and this fact is scientifically proven, thus a foreign language classroom is a perfect context to research SLA and to establish more efficient ways for learning/teaching processes.

Cognitivism describes how people interact with stimuli and construct their own learning by means of the mental processes of thinking or reasoning, and cognitivism is one of three main perspectives on learning in the SLA literature:(i) the Behaviourist perspective of learning as a process of conditioning by means of responses to external stimuli; (ii) the Cognitivist perspective and learning as a mental operation; and (iii) the Constructivist perspective, empowering learners to think for themselves and build on previous knowledge (Larsen- Freeman, 2012: 3).

Instead of considering these theories or perspectives separately, we can regard them as a range of possibilities that might all form part of the learning

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<sup>53</sup> Epigenetic refers to developmental selection, experiential selection and environmentally generated neutral growth. (Schuman, 2014:13).

experience. Firstly, the Behaviourist position states that language learning is a matter of imitation and habit formation of fixed language patterns which are gradually built up and reinforced. Behaviourist theories of language learning are concerned with modelling suitable behaviours, or creating environments that stimulate or condition students to answer in an appropriate way: "Positive responses are rewarded and learning happens through repetition and the reinforcement of correct utterances" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012:4). The resulting teaching methods based on this theory of learning, such as the Audiolingual Method, are highly controlled and teacher-centred, thus leading to passive roles for students and the profusion of highly controlled repetition practice. In an Audio-lingual approach, students merely repeat dialogues, first without seeing the text, and at the end of the lesson the text is shown and once again the dialogue is repeated. In contrast, Cognitivism focuses more on the underlying mental process of learning and states that the human mind can be examined and observed, whereas the Behaviourist position viewed language learning as merely a physical process. Therefore we can make assumptions about how mental processes work, and how learners both acquire and use knowledge. As Aro claims, [Within] a Cognitivist framework, learner beliefs are viewed as mental representations that learners can access and verbalise" (Aro, 2009:7), and this ability is innate rather than learned, or conditioned, relying on the input of data. Also, according to Elman "[...] innate means that the outcome is significantly constrained at one or more levels, given the input from the environment" (McWhinney, 1999:2). Hence, these elements interact among each other and on multiple levels. In the words of Gebhardt:

Cognitivism combines the idea of innate ability, as there has to be something innate to work with, and the observation that communication itself is a way of interaction that leads to gathering of language data (or input) which is then turned into intake and can be analysed cognitively (Gebhardt, 2007:14).

Constructivist theories are concerned with the social features of learning; how learners create their own conceptual structures to make sense of the world. For

instance, social-constructivism directs its attention towards the cognitive process that happens as people learn through social interaction: "The emphasis is placed upon interaction between the learner and the others" (Pritchard, 2008:24). Therefore, the teacher-student relationship is considered to be essential. These kinds of learning theories are more student-centred; some examples of learning tasks are problem solving and simulation, as well as collaborative work and dialogues.

As Hoff highlights, "The social approach starts from the premises that languages are essentially a social phenomenon and language development a social progress, and seeks to describe the social progress that produces language acquisition." (Hoff, 2013:13). This author also mentions that language acquisition is as an outcome of the interaction between the child's innate characteristics and experience, and in this case, input plays an important role. For example, social interactionism is the fact that:

We on the other side think that learning language is a long slog, which requires from the child a lot of work. And the child is working as hard and he can, fifteen, sixteen hours a day. We think it requires a relationship with an adult, and a whole set of cognitive abilities. (Snow, quoted in Rymer, 1993: 37, cited in Hoff, 2013: 17)

According to constructivists we learn languages by building meaning thanks to the child's innate ability and the information that the child receives from the environment.

Gardner quoted in Hoff (1980) summarised constructivist opinions about language learning:

Piaget saw the human child - and his mind - as an active, constructive agent that slowly inches forward in a perpetual bootstrap operation. Chomsky viewed the mind as a set of essentially programmed units, each equipped from the first to realize its full complement of rules and needing only the most modest environmental trigger to exhibit its intellectual wares. ( 1980:23).

This, children are seen as agents able to construct meaning since they possess intellect and programmed units that can deliver complex language as they develop.



Within the term of constructivism another term emerges and it is called emergentism that affirms that knowledge happens due to biological and environmental interaction. This is also labelled connectionism, meaning parallel distributed processing or neural network models (Bates and Goodman 1999: cited in Hoff 2013).

In the 1960's, the study of language development changed from the previous Behaviourist perspective to a more Cognitivist perspective thanks to Noam Chomsky and his book *Syntactic Structures*:(2002)

Before Chomsky's work, linguists concentrated on describing the regularities of languages. Linguists could study their own language or, better yet a little known language, but the job was the same: to find the patterns in what speakers do. Chomsky caused a revolution by saying that what speakers do is not as interesting as the mental grammar that underlies what speakers do. Since Chomsky's writings, the work of linguists consists of trying to describe what is in the mind of speakers that explains how speakers do what they do. (Hoff, 2013: 11)

Chomsky's vision of language and the processes involved in learning it focused on his concept of linguistic competence, and the innate knowledge of language, or internal focus. Pinker points out the ability of children to speak using perfect grammar constructions without having ever studied them formally:

A pre-schooler's tacit knowledge of grammar is more sophisticated than the thickest style manual or the most state-of-the art computer language system, and the same applies to all healthy human beings, even the notorious syntax-fracturing professional athlete and the, you know, like, inarticulate teenage skateboarder. Finally, since language is the product of a well-engineered biological instinct, we shall see that it is not the nutty barrel of monkeys that entertainer-columnists make it out to be. (Pinker, 2014:19).

In order to explain language acquisition processes, Chomsky posed three questions about the knowledge of language use and its origin (1986:3):

1. What constitutes knowledge of languages?
2. How is knowledge of language acquired?

### 3. How is knowledge of language put to use?

In Chomsky's terms, the answer to the first question is generative grammar, the answer to the second question is universal grammar (UG) and the answer to the last question would be a theory of how the language we acquire becomes the expression of thoughts, and later on transforms itself into communication.<sup>54</sup> From the viewpoint of language acquisition processes, Universal Grammar can be seen as a part of an in-built biologically equipped system of language ability. This is defended by Chomsky (e.g. 1981), and later Pinker (e.g. 1994) who state that UG constrains grammars in its form and functioning, and explains the reasons behind the phenomenon of learners seeming to know grammar items and functions beyond provided input.

The well-known cognitivist linguists Stephen Krashen, revolutionized Second Language Acquisition theory in the 1980s, inspired by Chomsky's insights into first language acquisition processes, by saying that we are all able to learn a second language in the very same way as we acquire our first language. He was the first to make- the well-known distinction between 'acquisition' and formal classroom-based 'learning', the former being a process that happens unconsciously by mean of the provision of 'comprehensible input' and meaningful communication solely in the target language. He regards acquisition as the most suitable way to learn, or rather 'acquire', a second or foreign language. He claims that we learn our first language (L1) in this natural way, and he based the subsequent teaching approach he created with Tracy Terrell', the 'Natural Approach' on this premise. This method centres on the use of the same strategies and techniques as when we learn our first language, so for example, there is no L1 translation, students are immersed in the target language from the beginning, and they observe and participate. This method is not based on grammar analysis or manipulation, but instead is based on authentic communication in the target language and the provision of 'comprehensible input' as

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<sup>54</sup> There has been a lot of controversy about UG since the 1980's, since it is a system that explains: "Linguistic universals are as they are because of properties of the human mind, and grammars (hence language) are as they are because of the universal principles." (Doughty and Long, 2008:19).

the best way to acquire a language. In addition, Krashen has stressed the importance of listening before being able to speak, form phrases or sentences. As Saville-Troike points out, "It is possible for some individuals to reach a fairly high level of proficiency in L2 even if this have input only from such physically or temporally more remote sources such as radios, television or written texts." (2012: 20). This is, of course, the case of highly motivated individuals, and it does not happen very often.

Of relevance to the experiment in foreign language acquisition explored in this research project, Krashen also mentions the 'forgetting hypothesis', which is as an outcome of the exchange of interesting and compelling messages, and it is the moment when student forget that they are studying in another language (2013:2). The Forgetting Hypothesis is influenced by the concept of 'flow,' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, cited in Krashen, 2013:2). 'Flow' is a state people can reach when they are deeply, but effortlessly, involved in an activity. In flow, the concerns of everyday life and even the sense of self disappear - our sense of time is altered and nothing but the activity itself seems to matter.<sup>55</sup>

Also, as a consequence of Krashen's so-called 'Silent Period' (2014:7) we can observe students in language learning contexts first listen, then analyse input, trying to notice or find patterns before experimenting with language production (or 'comprehensible output'). This shows that comprehensible input might also be assimilated by means of repetition and/or imitation, from a more Behaviourist perspective, allowing us eventually to make sense of phrases and sentences in context. The way we do that depends on the person; it can be done by trying to find common traits between two languages (contrastive analysis) or by internalising vocabulary and grammar items. However, if the teacher applies a contextualised communicative methodology then the learner's mental effort will be greater, and, at the same time, teachers engage learners more effectively and realistically.

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<sup>55</sup> In chapter 4 you can see the results and their relation to the concept of 'flow'; students have enjoyed so much the activity that one of them said that he had felt as if he was an immigrant in Croatia. See Table 1 and Figure 1 for more information about student's feelings during the experiment.

From a Cognitivist perspective, it is also essential to take into account a number of other issues that might affect the language learning process — learners' cognitive styles, learning styles, the multiple nature of our intelligences and the learning environment itself. As Riding and Rayner (2013) clearly summarise,

The style construct appears in psychology and it can be developed in several areas such as personality, cognition, communication, motivation, perception, learning and behaviour. The style in the case of educational psychology is an enabling essential construct that makes differences in learning contexts. This context is the learner himself/herself and the environment. The individual psychology refers to the following aspects: feeling, behaviour and cognition. (2013:6).

According to Lightbown and Spada (1993:77) key factors affecting learning are intelligence, aptitude, personality, attitudes, learning styles and age of acquisition. These characteristics are the basic elements of individual psychology, and we use a combination of strategies and cognitive style to build our own personal learning style.<sup>56</sup> Is there such thing as a talent or a perfect aptitude for learning languages, are some people language gifted? According to De Groot *et al.*:

A main focus in learning- strategies studies is on the fit between a particular language – learning environment and the way the learner approaches this environment. Finding the best match between these two may enhance learning; mismatches may hamper learning ( 2014: 5).

In recent years, there is has been a lot of investigation about individual difference (ID) or learner variables (Dörnyei 2005, Bygate, Swain and Skehan, 2013 and DeKeyser, 2012) mainly because it has been proven that IDs have a great influence on leaning learning success. Jaeggi *et al.* ( 2013) Segalowitz ( De Groot *et al.*, 2014) advocated the reasons why individual users of L2 differ so much in L2 proficiency levels by listing the following factors: age of acquisition, instruction method, aptitude, motivation, learning strategies and language learning outcomes.

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<sup>56</sup> As we will see in Chapter 4, during the experimental periods described in this research project, our subjects have discovered a lot about their own learning styles and this metacognitive knowledge seems to have a positive effect on the learning experience.

In addition, Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory has played an important role. His model of measuring intelligence is based on cognitive science and neuroscience. Gardner defined intelligences with the following words: "[...] a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that of a value in a culture." (1999:33-34, cited in Schumann, 2014:10). The most relevant factor regarding his MI theory is that these potentials can be activated or not depending on the culture and the environment (teachers, individuals, parents). With this assertion, he has stated that there is no mind exactly the same, as each mind is an unparalleled, something that should be taken into account when investigating the learning/teaching process.

He believes that human cognitive competence is better described in terms of skills, abilities, talents or labelled intelligences. Moreover, motivation for learning languages cannot only imply target orientation, but also the combination of effort and the wish to achieve goals while developing positive attitude towards learning the language.<sup>57</sup> "All three aspects are necessary to be able to reflect motivation. To sum up a motivated learner is a student who works hard, likes the activity and wishes to obtain aims with L2 for example." (Gardner,1983: 33).

In *Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner (1983) argues that learners have strengths in certain types of intelligence rather than a level of intelligence based on their IQ. This classification originally had eight groups of skills and abilities:

- linguistic intelligence
  - logical- mathematical intelligence
  - visual- spatial intelligence
- 

<sup>57</sup> The MI approach is also related to the principles of accelerated learning. This concept suggests that by developing all these kinds of intelligences a teacher is able to contribute to lifelong learning. For example, the Audiolingual method focuses on visual and auditory strategies. One appropriate technique for learners with high levels of visual-spatial intelligence is mind mapping and the usage of concept maps, as well as the display of key words. It is essential to know that students have these different kinds of intelligence in order to cater for each one of them. Additionally, it is crucial for students to know what type of dominant intelligence they might have, so they can learn better and in a more effective way if they have this knowledge about their own learning process. Teachers also need to think about this too, hence the link between reflective learning and teaching as proposed in the current study.

- bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence
- musical intelligence
- interpersonal intelligence
- intrapersonal intelligence
- naturalistic intelligence

Gardner in 2006 has introduced a ninth intelligence called existential or spiritual intelligence that reflects an individual's capacity for considering 'big questions' about life, death, love, and being. As he has called it, the "intelligence of big questions: Why do we live? Why do we die? Where do we come from? What is love?" ( Gardner, 2006:20).

The above- mentioned list of proposed intelligences is not a finite one, and the balance between different intelligence types affects the way the individuals learn or these categories define their preferred way of learning, thus highlighting the individual nature of learning and the need for variety in the language learning classroom rather than just one prescribed method. This theory has been widely accepted and has led to the possibility of identifying one or more dominant types of intelligence in learners, helping them to cope with and maximise the learning process with appropriate learning tasks.<sup>58</sup>

There are many factors that can affect foreign language learning or acquisition, and one of the main ones that affect the learning process is motivation which, undoubtedly, has a huge an influence on both learners and teachers. Moreover, this highly complex concept is one of the most important influential traits in second language learning and has been widely researched. (e.g. Gardner: 1972, Dörnyei, 2002 and Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009). As Dörnyei has famously said: "Motivation is the key learner variable and nothing much happens without it. "(2002:7). Alderman (2013) highlights that for many years motivation has been described having three physiological functions:

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<sup>58</sup> In our own research, we have noticed that students often refer to themselves as visual learners and they have expressed their preferences when learning a foreign language, because they have analyzed their own reactions and feelings towards the unknown language experience.

[...] energizing or activating behaviour, b) directing behaviour and c) regulating persistence of behaviour. In our research, the trainees were engaged in towards learning (they have expressed this features by using the following words: very motivated, interested, enjoyable, comfortable, I wanted to learn more and enthusiastic).Some of them felt lost at the beginning of the lesson and were afraid to make mistakes but they persisted in the attempt to participate actively and at the end of the lesson they become confident. (2013: 88)

Motivation has an effect on the degree of learner's effort; therefore motivation is the main priority whether the students are willing to learn what is being taught in class. According to Dörnyei (cited in Hunston and Oakey, 2009: 72) language teacher tend to identify motivation to success or failure and there is no doubt that motivation is one of the main reasons for (un)successful learning. Due to this fact there has been a lot of investigation about motivation, but, for example, Dörnyei criticises the dichotomy between integrative and instrumental motivation. The first one refers to the human need to belong to a group and the latter one is related to L2 benefits in studies and careers. These concepts were ascribed to Gardner who was really more interested in interpersonal /emotional aspects of motivation in terms of integrativenesses; the wish to belong to a language community as a real interest in that L2. Integrativeness was used by Gardner back in the 1980,s to explain the cause of motivation and the other were attitudes. During the search of that genuine interest, Dörnyei has come up with a new construct (2005): ' L2 Motivational Self-System '.<sup>59</sup>

The main reason why people study L2 is to be able to communicate based upon a strong motivation to do so. Motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon that can be defined in terms of two factors:

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<sup>59</sup> This new concept is a result of a longitudinal study of over 13,000 learners in Hungary where students were asked to talk about their attitudes towards 5 target languages, later on the same study was carried out in East Asia and the results showed a strong correlation between integrativenesses and ideal L2 self .

[...] learners' communicative needs and their attitude towards the second language community. Moreover, depending on the learners' attitudes, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or of resentment. (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:40).

One way of catering for this necessary ingredient in successful learning might be through stimulating materials and activities that can trigger student's motivation. There has also been a lot of research into the role of motivation and the individualised nature of learning. For example, Tudor (e.g. 1996) claims that students are the ones who should decide upon the content given in class, as well as the way of teaching through consultation and negotiation among students and teachers.

Several authors such as Gardner and Lalonde (1985), Lightbown and Spada (1993), Harley and Hart, Kaufman *et al.*, and Dorneyi (cited in Granena, 2013, 1997 and 2010 respectively) contemplate the issue of aptitude along with other traits such as motivation, intelligence, personality, learning styles and the age of acquisition. Gardner and Lalonde (1985) claim that the language aptitude and motivation are the key factors or variables in succeeding in language learning. They also wanted to explain why motivation in oral contexts has a stronger bond compared to the language aptitude. In order to find the cause Gardner and Lalonde used causal modelling technique called LISREL<sup>60</sup>. The outcomes were the following ones:

Motivation and integrative attitudes were the major determinants of whether or not student took advantage of the opportunity to learn French when it was optional. Integrative motive is important for language study, because it orients individuals to play a more active role in the language learning process. Rate of learning was faster for subjects classified as high in integrative motivation. (1985:7-13)

This study shows how motivation is affected by integrative attitudes in second language learning. Some other factors such as anxiety and willingness to accept the

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<sup>60</sup> LISREL is a software program that allows you to examine latent variables and the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. It is an acronym that stands for Linear Structural relationship, it was developed by Karl G. Joreskog and Dag Sorbom to calculate covariance structure analysis .It combines factor analysis and econometric modelling to analyse hypothesized relationships. Diamantopoulos and & Siguaw, (2013)



other (foreign) language should be taken into account too by teachers and especially by novice teachers. If these concepts are taken into consideration then the learning of L2 is more efficient and motivation is higher on both sides' teacher's and student's. Rubin (1975) suggested that " [...] knowledge of the makings of "successful learners" could be included in classroom instructional strategies for poorer learners to maximize their performance" ( Vrettou,2014:1). According to Dörnyei (1990:4) integrative motivation is a multi-faceted dimension consisting of the following items: interest in foreign languages, culture and people, desire to broaden one's views, desire for new stimuli and challenges, desire to integrate into a new community, need for achievement (academic contexts) and attribution to past failures: "Learners with a high level of instrumental motivation and need for achievements are more likely than others to attain an intermediate level of proficiency in the target language." ( 1990:7). Attention to motivation, along with to how we learn languages, are crucial in order to have a positive learning experience.

Several psycholinguistic studies have shown how learning is a beneficial process; in fact, it has been proven that learning foreign languages modifies our brains positively<sup>61</sup>. Pliatsikas *et al.*, explain that knowing a second language benefits our brain since the brain areas become better connected and add the fact that thanks to knowing more than one language we can have a so-called ' cognitive reserve' for old age (2015:1334). They also claim that:

Here we show that similar WM [white matter] effects are also found in bilingual individuals who learn their second language (L2) later in life and are active users of both languages. This finding presents a strong argument for the general benefits of additional language learning and the importance of language learning and use in a naturalistic environment. (*ibid*)

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<sup>61</sup> They mention the work of García Penton *et al.*, (Pliatsikas *et al.*,2015) who claim that bilingualism makes people's brains: "[...] more capable of transferring information between different language-related brain areas, especially networks that are involved in tackling phonological, semantic, and syntactic competition between languages, as well as in word recognition and semantic processing" (1335).

Additionally, they stress that L2 immersion influences WM<sup>62</sup> heavily García Pentón and colleagues also confirmed that:

[...] the additional cognitive demands that are imposed by the simultaneous use of two languages result in neural subnetworks that are more capable of transferring information between different language-related brain areas, especially networks that are involved in tackling phonological, semantic, and syntactic competition between languages, as well as in word recognition and semantic processing (2015:1335).

This research seems to show how relevant psycholinguistic investigation is for SLA research by revealing these benefits for the brain of language learning, and thus it seems that studying foreign languages has numerous cognitive advantages as well as the well-known social or communicative ones.

There are other investigations that correlate the learning of foreign languages with the brain development. Cook and Singleton (2013) affirmed that when you learn another language your way of thinking changes, since language learning develops the brain. Klein *et al.* (2014) investigate the effects of L2 on brain structure by working with monolingual and bilingual individuals. The results of this study have shown that when an individual studies an L2 simultaneously with their L1 in the case of bilinguals, it does not have any effect on the brain. Nevertheless, if the L2 is learnt after being proficient in L1 then the brain structure suffers a modification.

## **2.2. Practical Implications for Language Teaching**

When teacher and learners meet for the first time, they usually bring with them different beliefs about the learning process itself and about the content that will be learned and how it will be learned based on their previous experiences, learning context, or even cultural background. In educational psychology this is labelled aptitude and this is one of the definitions of aptitude offered by DeKeynes

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<sup>62</sup> White matter is a part of the brain central nervous system. It affects the way we learn and it develops until the middle age.

and Koeth: “[...] characteristics that the learner brings to the learning process (cognitive, affective, emotional, conative and motivational).” (2011:395). These expectations and experience influence teachers as well as students. Therefore, it is necessary to define learners’ assumptions and teachers’ practices in order to match them as close as possible to students’ expectations. If this is not done, it is very likely that mistrust and misunderstandings will arise on both sides. In order to avoid the lack of confidence it is crucial to study the main factors influencing learning and teaching process.

If we consider that learning is the product of teaching and that teaching solely depends on the teacher’s performance and behaviour, then we do not offer a holistic idea about learning and teaching practical implications. (Borg, 2015:6). There are some further issues that should be taken into account such as practical knowledge and coping with and solving problems in the educational context. Also, the teacher’s insight into the teaching practice offers a valuable insight into practical implications.

According to Elbaz teacher’s knowledge is practical because much of what teacher’s know originates in practice and is used to make sense of and deal with practical problems. Elbaz’s work was seminal at the time when the dominant conceptualization of teacher’s remained firmly behaviourist, her work connected with the emerging in the teacher thinking, but presented a different holistic perspective [...] ( Borg,2015:14).

The aim of any teacher and student should be the achievement of successful learning, therefore research such as the following offer suggestions for discovering the most efficient ways to do this. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2009:144) proposed their Motivational Orientation of Language Teaching ( MOLT) , in which the following variables have been contemplated: time, activities, participant organisation, generating, maintaining, and protecting situation-specific task motivation, , encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation and learners’ behaviour.

### 2.2.1. Language Learning Beliefs

The learners' belief system involves many issues and it influences motivation; more importantly, it affects perceptions about what is easy or difficult as well as the type of learning, or teaching, strategies that students approve of or require. These beliefs have the power of affecting both learners' and teachers' performance and overall behaviour, and even learning outcomes. The main problem regarding this issue is that: "Beliefs do not have to be demonstrable and they do not need verification. Beliefs may be subconscious, which makes eliciting or identifying them challenging. This might also constitute strong emotional components"(Lefrancois, 2000; cited in Cephe and Yalcin, 2015:1).<sup>63</sup>

One of the most common questionnaires used to detect learner's beliefs about the language learning process is the 'Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory' (BALLI) and it is still used to evaluate these beliefs and to analyse conceptions in order to solve problems towards more effective teaching/learning. The BALLI is a quantitative self-report questionnaire that addresses thirty-four learner's beliefs. (Horowitz,1988). Here are some examples of the statements used in the BALLI questionnaire:

If beginner students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. People from my country are good at learning languages. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. Some languages are easier than others. (Horowitz, 1988:22)

These statements tackle conventions and ideas about language learning in general, as well as some (mis) conceptions and stereotypes. For example, the first of the statements cited above is clearly a reference to the stereotype about some countries being better at learning languages than others. Also, age is another bone of contention: "The best age for successful acquisition is a trait that needs to be

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<sup>63</sup> In our ULE research we have dealt with beliefs and emotions confirming that beliefs are difficult to change on both sides teacher's and student's and these pre- established conceptions can hinder or facilitate the learning process.

addressed and it is an issue of many debates about language learning.” (Lightbown and Spada, 1993: 39).

Efficiency does not necessarily have to be closely linked to age; we believe that when motivation is strong enough, the critical age factor can be overcome. Also, another aspect that should be taken into account is knowledge and strategies that students use to curb and self-adjust their learning process. (Peña- Ayala, 2015:40). Students are able to decide what they know and use that knowledge to carry out tasks and to closely observe their own learning progress and outcome. This ability is metacognition and/or the capacity of learning to learn which will be briefly explored in the following section.

### *2.2.2. Metacognition and learning to learn*

Metacognition<sup>64</sup>, or knowledge about the process and strategies of language learning will be considered in the following sub-section as a crucial factor in language learning success. The role of awareness of language learning processes can be traced to the mid 1970's and Flavell's, according to whom:

[...] metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive process and products or anything related to them, e.g. the learning- relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition (metamemory, metalearning, metattention, metalanguage, or whatever) if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double check C before accepting it as a fact. (Flavell, 1976:232, cited in Anderson, 2012).

Peña-Ayala also highlights the fact that:

Metacognition is a term used to identify a kind of cognition oriented to monitor and oriented to monitor and regulate cognition engaged in a given mental activity. [...] Human beings

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<sup>64</sup> Metacognition involves knowledge about oneself and what is being done (the task) as well as the strategies used to be able to do so ( Baker and Brown, 1984, cited in Yen, 2015). These characteristics have been present in our ULE experiment, since the students have been able to analyse their own participation in tasks and note down the strategies that they have used. See Chapter five for more information.

consciously, even unconsciously, acquire and exploit metacognitive knowledge, and develop metacognitive skills every day to produce complex cognitive duties [...] (Peña- Ayala, 2015:3).

This is also supported by Papeleountion-Louche cited in Peña-Ayala and Cárdenas (2015, stating that metacognition has several layers or subgroups:

[...] if first ordering cognition FOC concerns understanding, memorizing and so for the, then, metacognition implies being aware of one's comprehension, memory [...] Thus diverse cognitions about cognitions might be named: metacomprehension, metamemory, [...] with metacognition remaining the superordinate term. ( 2015:1).

Thus, metacognition is the ability to reflect on what one knows and how is it done, and on what one does not know and how not to do it. It is not simply thinking back on an event, describing what happened and how one felt about it. The search to find the patterns of good language learners cannot be explained without the means of metacognition.

[...] all the early "good language learner" studies (Naiman, Frölich, Stern, and Todesco 1978; Stern 1975) identify the language learner characteristics which are conducive to success: attention to both form and meaning while communicating, active involvement in language learning, awareness of the learning process, and use of metacognition so as to assess progress and needs as well as to control one's learning (Ellis, 1994 cited it Verttou,2014:1)

### *2.2.3. Teaching Methodology and Teacher Training*

Language teaching approaches in the last fifty years have heavily depended on the promotion of a variety of teaching methodologies, and not all of them are the result of research in SLA. The only exception was the Communicative approach in the nineteen sixties and seventies, based on the notion that language teaching should be tailored according to student's real world communication needs. (Cook, 2013: 11)

Communicative language ability centrally involves the ability to use formal linguistic resources (vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, grammatical features, and phonological features) to express ideational, interpersonal and discoursal meanings

in order to achieve communicative goals in real contexts. (Bygate, Swain and Skehan, 2013: 23). Communicative Approach to foreign language teaching promotes real contexts and interpersonal and discoursal features above all, which is the main reason why students prefer or take most advantage of this kind of teaching.

Giving the students practice in form within a communicative context can help them in making the 'leap' from form-focused accuracy to fluency in production (Ur 2003; cited in Vrettou,2014:5).

Yet, personal learning style refers to the manner a person in which usually faces or responds to a learning task. It has two basic components: cognitive style (the way a person thinks) and learning strategies (the processes used by a person to respond to a learning activity). Riding and Rayner have stated the following:

A person's cognitive style is probable an in- built and automatic way of responding to information and situations[...] A person's cognitive style is relatively fixed aspect of learning performance and influences a person's general attainment or achievement in learning situations. (2013:7).

Undoubtedly, knowledge about personal learning style for teachers is crucial to understand how lessons should be taught, for cognitive style affects the learning performances. Although style is inherently physiological and difficult to change, strategies can be learned and developed in order to respond to task demands. Therefore, when learning to embrace and use appropriate strategies, according to learning style, the teacher's role is essential. For instance, Hamblin describes that the teacher's role is:

[...] encouraging pupils to engage in a long term process of building a style of learning which is meaningful and productive. Pastoral care embodies the ethic of a profound respect for individuality. To try to impose a learning style is the pedagogic equivalent of imposing a phase upon someone – an act which is inevitably as destructive in long run. (1981:21 cited in Riding and Ryner, 2013:7)

Also, learning relies on special needs too and is influenced by cultural backgrounds. (Gebhardt, eg. 2007). The learning process depends both on learners'

and teacher's expectations and beliefs. Gow and Kember propose that most approaches to learning can be subsumed under any of the following points:

- a quantitative increase in knowledge
- memorisation
- the acquisition of facts and procedures which can be retained and / or used in practice the abstraction of meaning
- an interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality some form of personal change (1993: 45)

It is important to bear these characteristics described above in mind when teaching adults since they influence the way that students behave in specific learning tasks as well as their approach to learning. Knowing and understanding different ways of learning can ensure effective teaching and therefore learning as well; this is of special importance in the current project which focuses on the role of reflection in teaching.

The diagram below shows the relationship between increasing competence and reflective practice as novice and as expert. There are five main traits involved in this process: (i) learning (explicit and implicit); (ii) metacognition (planning and evaluation); (iii) motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic); (iv) knowledge (declarative and procedural); and (v) thinking (creative and critical). All these traits are interrelated in order to achieve a higher competence as we can see below:



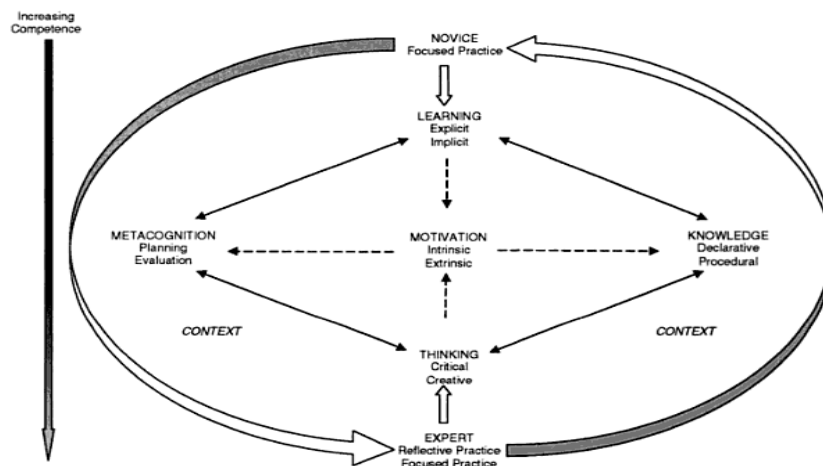


Figure 1. The developing of abilities into competences and competences into expertise (Elliott and Dweck, 2005:17)

We are going to pay special attention to the aspects of learning, thinking, and metacognition skills in this model. Explicit learning is when students make an effort to learn something and implicit learning is when you pick up information informally, in our case a foreign language.

Thinking skills are divided into critical, creative and practical according to Elliott and Dweck (2005:18). Metacognitive skills have seven elements: problem recognition, problem definition, problem representation, strategy, formulation, resource allocation, monitoring of problem solving and evaluation of the problem. As Ellis points out:

Successful learners use metacognitive knowledge to choose suitable cognitive explicit learning strategies appropriate to the task of vocabulary acquisition. We as teachers should cater to these needs by using appropriate strategies or techniques in the classroom and above all try boosting their motivation to participate and to do tasks in a nutshell to learn. (1994:51)

In the 1960s, John Haycraft pioneered TESOL teacher training courses in the United Kingdom. Nowadays, Cambridge ESOL<sup>65</sup> and Trinity College Diploma<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Here we refer to the CELTA course.

provide some 400 courses per year, accrediting more than 10,000 teacher trainees per year. Sometimes, these initial training courses last for one month (full-time) or for six months (part-time) and they represent a perfect opportunity for a career change and to obtain a certificate that allows you to teach all over the world. These TESOL courses (approximately 120 hours) consist of input, tutorials, feedback, supervised teaching practice, and observation of experienced teachers. Trainees also teach a minimum of 6 hours supervised by a tutor. There is no formal examination and the assessment is continuous. (Macpherson, 2003:2).

Both courses incorporate an Unknown Language Experience (ULE); in the case of the Cambridge ESOL certificate, it is only one session with feedback, and in the case of the Trinity certificate there are 4 hours of teaching and after each session there is a one hour of feedback. Moreover, students have to keep a diary about their experience as learners and reflect upon the Unknown Language Experience. The journals are very specific and guided,<sup>67</sup> so for example trainees have to write down each lesson objectives in terms of grammar, lexis and functions. In addition, they describe methods and techniques used by the teacher to achieve learning objectives and comment on the use of materials, interaction patterns and classroom management. In their journals, students describe the learning experience from their perspective as learners, describing the emotions, feelings and attitudes that were most helpful during the ULE. Moreover, trainees can reflect and compare this experience with their previous language learning experiences, and reflect on whether they would use the same strategies in their own teaching. The ULE represents trainees' first encounter with teaching and it raises awareness of teaching and learning processes thanks to the process of analysing why and how the learning process took place.

It seems that the ULE is only present as such as a component in teacher training courses in order to obtain a diploma in TESOL. As it is a compulsory part of

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<sup>66</sup> Trinity College Diploma is a teacher training course and the training usually lasts for four weeks. It certifies and allows attendees to teach English abroad. It is not an official teaching certificate.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix number VII.

the course and therefore is assessed. In fact, the 'CELTA'<sup>68</sup> Certificate in Teaching English for Adults offered by Cambridge ESOL includes this experience, but it is not evaluated and it is only taught for one session. The importance of this kind of pre-service training was highlighted by Borg (2015:36) who studied 3 categories of teacher's belief about knowledge: (i) about teachers and teaching; (ii) about learners and learning; and (iii) about learning to teach.<sup>69</sup>

In contrast, the Trinity CertTESOL requires participants to take part in a ULE class, teaching them a new foreign language in the position of absolute beginners, and of course the target language has to be a language that is not spoken by any of the trainees; above all it has to be very different from their own first language. Trainees, apart from participating in the lesson as learners, also observe different methodologies and approaches in action, with the main objectives being to subsequently use these strategies in their own teaching contexts. The four ULE classes are taught using three different approaches: Communicative Language Teaching, the Grammar Translation Method and the Audiolingual Approach. The first and the last lessons use a Communicative Approach, the second incorporates Grammar Translation techniques and the third is a class based on the Audiolingual Approach. As the final lesson learners have another communicative approach experience where everything they have learned so far is revised and some new vocabulary and grammar items are introduced as well.

### **2.3. Reflective Teaching and Learning**

There is no doubt that learning and teaching should be closely united, therefore it is essential to highlight that successful and effective teachers should

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<sup>68</sup> CELTA stands for Certificate in English Language Teaching for Adults. is accredited by Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England) at level 5 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework .The syllabus covers 5 topics: (i) about learners and teachers and the teaching context, (ii) language analysis and awareness, (iii) language skills, (iv) planning and resources and (v) teaching skills. It consists of classroom observation (6 hours), peer- observation, teaching (6 assessed hours) and handing in 4 assignments. Candidates have to spend some 80 hours researching, preparing and reading.

<sup>69</sup> After the ULE, students rejected the aspect of didacticism in training and embraced learners' active participation and also developed the sense of reflection.

continue learning throughout their teaching years as well as reflect upon their previous and current teaching practice. Since we cannot separate learning from teaching, teachers can only really be considered competent if they are aware of the complexity of learning. The main reason for this assumption is that if we begin to understand or explore the language learning process, as well as the factors that might affect it, then we know what we can expect our students to achieve.

The breadth of available options and the peculiarities of particular learners in particular social and cultural contexts provide teachers and learners with the challenge of eclecticism in the classroom procedures they follow in order to promote success in language learning. Hence, teachers should be flexible, adaptable and creative in order to enhance their students' learning efficacy. As there are many ways to learn a language well, good language learners, on the other hand, can flexibly employ the methods which are most appropriate for them to achieve their goals (e.g. Griffiths, 2008d, cited in Verttou, 2014:4).

Reflective teaching and learning is much more than just thinking about the process itself; it deals with asking searching questions about experiences and it is both a state of mind and an on-going type of behaviour. (Loughran and Russell, 2012:13). It also implies a constant critical look at teaching and learning. It is true to say that reflection is highly instinctive for most teachers, especially novices. They tend to concentrate on problems or dilemmas in relation to their teaching sessions. Evaluation forms or checklists can help teachers to identify what went wrong or not according to plan in their lessons, too. The next step would be to think about what needs changing or identify what can be done in future sessions as a means of improvement, thus this process starts as a technical reflection and moves towards a more practical one.

According to Hatton and Smith:

"[... ] a language teacher is considered to be reflective when he or she seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is he/ she doing in the classroom (**method**)?
2. Why is he/ she doing this (**reason**)?
3. What is the **result**?

4. Will he/ she change anything based on the information gathered from answering the first two questions (**justification**) ?  
(1995:35, cited in Farrell, 2015:10)<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, Pollard and Collins establish seven features of reflective practice which we consider highly relevant for the current project:

1. Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.
  2. Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiralling process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously.
  3. Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of evidence based classroom enquiry, to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching.
  4. Reflective teaching requires attitudes of open mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness.
  5. Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgement, informed by evidence based enquiry and insights from other research.
  6. Reflective teaching, professional learning and personal fulfilment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.
  7. Reflective teaching enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning.
- (2005: 31).

The highest level of reflection is the critical one according to Van Manen, (1995) since it encourages us to reflect on the ethical and political dimensions of educational aims and their ends. He cites Dewey who says: “[...] thinking is the accurate and deliberate institution of connections between what is done and its consequences” (1973:505; cited in Van Manen, 1995:1). The practical and the critical levels are not so instinctive for initial teacher trainees; therefore deeper reflection becomes an important characteristic of reflective practice. Reflection should never

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<sup>70</sup> Bold parts of the quotation are found in the original text.

stop at the technical level, since it restricts the assessment of teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. (Van Manen, 1995:34).

Life-long learning has been linked to the concept of reflection by Ryan (2015:4) since it entails advantages towards employability and gives a sense to students what they know and what they need to know. The way of obtaining the benefits of life-long learning is through reflection. Benade (2015:1) highlights the need to teach young people to reflect upon the learning process in order to be able to adapt and live in the globalized world, as well.

## 2.4. Critical Reflective Practice

As we have highlighted above, in order to be able to develop more effective learning/teaching techniques, we need to explore learning processes and be aware of the fact that learning is a highly individualised process since learners differ in relation to their own personalities, motivation, skills and learning styles. It is also worth mentioning the fact that, for example, in the United Kingdom<sup>71</sup> teachers are required to obtain qualified teacher status (QTS)<sup>72</sup> to be able to teach, but the curriculum of that qualification does not include much theory about learning although the Department for Foreign Education<sup>73</sup> in 2012 published the following requisites for future teachers, stating that they should “[...] demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching (Pritchard, 2013:3). We have highlighted this insistence of not including critical reflection as a compulsory part of official

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<sup>71</sup> We have considered this information relevant, since our 2003 Trinity College students were UK citizens. All of them had a degree, but not an official teaching qualification as primary or secondary teachers. CELTA and Trinity College Diploma enables them to teach abroad in non- state schools.

<sup>72</sup> See chapter 3 to find out about the Spanish qualification system to be able to teach in state funded schools.

<sup>73</sup> According to the Department for Education in the UK, in order to become teachers and obtain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) teachers-to-be need to complete an initial teacher training (ITT) course. These courses last either one year full-time or up to two years part-time if you already have a degree. If you do not have a degree than you have to both finish a degree and at the same time complete ITT which could take up to 5 years.

secondary teacher training, although it does indeed form part of several foreign language teaching certificates and undergraduate subjects in language-based degrees (e.g. Aberystwyth), since our ULE experiment reported here was inspired by a TESOL diploma course (Trinity College of London) which does include reflection as a mandatory and assessed part of the course. Future teachers who do this course continue reflecting on the learning process after their training, as we have seen by analysing the semi-structured questionnaire completed by the 2003 Trinity College Diploma course participants which will be further analysed in Chapter 4.

In relation to the role of the teacher, another way of describing the learning process is that it is a dynamic phenomenon, where the teacher is knowledgeable, and therefore s/he mediates and influences students, but, at the same time, students influence this learning/teaching process by asking questions or by simply participating. According to Smilkstein:

The brain learns because and as the learner is experiencing the natural stages of learning. When the students have the opportunity to learn through the natural stages of learning – the natural human learning process (NHLP) in any subject, at any level, their brains will be motivated, engaged, and will naturally learn (2011:11).

The important shift from teacher-centred lessons to learner-centred ones has also established some paradigms to help nurture the NHLP in the classroom:

1. The brain actively constructs its own knowledge.
2. Real learning happens when the teacher gives the students the opportunity to be active learners.
3. If the teacher does this and the student cannot still understand then perhaps the student needs more background and information." (*ibid*: 4).

Moreover, the same author offers the most suitable sequencing in order to achieve successful learning; firstly, there is active learning for learners to find out on their own, and if there are any knowledge gaps then the teacher can intervene. The newly-acquired knowledge should then be tested in an

examination. Teachers need to make right decisions in the classroom according to results or attainments. (*ibid*).

As we know, teaching is one of the oldest professions, and requires more than theoretical knowledge. To be able to teach, teachers have to understand. In a nutshell, the teacher knows something that students do not know about, or can do something they do not know how to do, or where to find information about how to do it. The teacher's task is, therefore, to transform not only understanding, but also skills and attitudes in order to improve learning. Thus, teaching should start with the teacher's understanding about what is going to be learnt and how is it going to be taught, with the teacher introducing activities with specific instructions in order to foster the opportunity to learn. However, this is an incomplete definition of teaching, since according to Shulman, teaching involves "perspective on content and pedagogy." (1987; cited in Nuangchalerm, 2012:1) The same author stresses the importance of transforming content so that students can understand what is going on in class:

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is defined as the ability to combine knowledge of a specific discipline along with the teaching of that discipline. PCK is also like how do teachers take content and transform their understandings of it into instruction that their students can comprehend." (*ibid*).

Teaching is also the use of particular analytical knowledge by reviewing teaching. Teaching is a complex process that entails, for example, choosing and preparing activities or tasks, checking understanding, offering feedback, preparing exams and assessing. Once these tasks have been done, then teachers should reflect upon the levels of success of these tasks and their outcomes and, by doing so, teachers can improve their own teaching practice and help other teachers with better practices and with advice.

In order to understand how teachers deal with the above-mentioned dimensions, it is essential to observe carefully the beliefs and thinking processes which support teachers' classroom decisions. This kind of teaching involves a cognitive, an affective and a behavioral dimension. Teachers do what they do as a result of their own reflection and beliefs. Moreover, teachers' knowledge and thinking form a



framework which guides teachers' classroom actions (Richards & Lockhart, 1994: 4). It is based on the belief that teachers reflect on what they know. Teachers' knowledge and thinking contribute to the essential framework which guides classroom actions. Thus, teacher's beliefs are responsible for the methodology used in the classroom. According to Kindsvatter, Willen and Ishlerthese, beliefs derive from different sources: "[...] their own experience as language learners, experience of what works best, established practice, personality factor, educationally-based or research-based principles, [or] principles derived from an approach or method." (1988:97) Smith also claims that:

All teachers do good things some of the time and all good teachers do bad things some of the time. The differences among teachers lie not only in the proportions of the good and the bad, but also in their awareness of the effects of what they are doing and their readiness to share this awareness with their students. (1995:590; cited in Gurney, 2007:1).

Ziechner wisely said that: "There is no such thing as an unreflective teacher." ( 207; cited in Gore, 2015:69) Thus we can affirm that every single teacher reflects upon the teaching practice before, during and after the learning/teaching process. Critical Reflective Practice adds an extra feature to the process of reflection, as it enables teachers to reflect and act on broader issues in education such as the educational system and question the *status quo*. CRP stands for change and improvement; prior to CRP we need to analyse and understand the thinking process.

Clark and Peterson (1986) cited in Borg (2015) drew up teacher thinking processes in 3 categories: (i) teacher planning (pre-active and post-active thoughts); (ii) teacher interactive thoughts and decisions and (iii) teacher's theories and beliefs. What teachers know and how is that language acquired was outlined by Carter in 1990: "(a) teacher's information processing, including decision making and expert-novice studies, (b) teacher's practical knowledge including personal knowledge and classroom knowledge and (c) pedagogical content knowledge." (*ibid*:29). This list varies when Borg details the pre-service teacher's knowledge, beliefs, thinking and decision making: "(a) the influence of prior language learning, experience on pre-

service teacher's cognitions; (b) pre-service teacher's belief about language teaching; (c) cognition in relation to practicum experiences and (d) pre-service teacher's instructional decision making and practical knowledge. This list is a result of having analysed the works of the following authors: Bailey et al. (1996), Brown and MacGannon (1998), Cumming (1989), Farrell (2001), Golombek (1998), Johnson (1992, 1994 and 1996), Numrich (1996), Tsang (2004) and Warford and Reeves (2003), who have in total analysed 131 pre-service teacher's conceptions about learning and teaching. The most significant findings were given by Bailey *et al*, stating the following about pre-service teacher's opinions about positive learning and teaching:

teacher's personality and style mattered more than methodology, (2) teachers were caring and committed, and had clear expectations of their students, (3) teachers respected and were respected by the students, (4) as students their motivation to learn enabled them to overcome inadequacies in the teaching and (5) learning was facilitated by a positive classroom environment. (*ibid*:60).

Since teaching entails not only methods and strategies but also materials, activities and the development of intelligences, teacher training courses and reflection upon the teaching process itself are more necessary than ever. It is important to highlight what Schon said about teaching (1987) and that is still very relevant; professionals do not know and act as in two separated processes, but they "know in action." In addition, he claimed that teachers: "are not 'technical experts', but 'reflective practitioners'".<sup>74</sup> (1987:332). Teachers, thanks to the process of reflection and reframing, understand their teaching practices. Schon makes a difference between 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action'. (Scaife, 2014:5.) The latter term refers to reflection that can happen from short to a very long time after the action itself happened, whereas the latter happens on the spot and is considered to be extremely challenging by the same author due to its high emotional charge. If teachers only concentrate on the technical levels, then they are neither

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<sup>74</sup> Among many definitions of reflective practice/ practitioners we have chosen the one given by Scaife as the one that sums up in a few words the essence of the process "[...] when the critical reflection shapes future actions." (2014:2).

going to be able to evaluate their own teaching nor comprehend how they students learn.

Dewey, in his ground-breaking book *"How We Think"* (1933), stated that reflective action originates in the need to solve a problem: "Reflection thus implies that something is believed in (or disbelieved in), not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is, as ground of belief"(1933:47). To this definition, Benade adds the following:

To these principles, I would add a further four: that reflective activity have a temporal character and focus on practice, occurring before, during and after practice episodes; that it be intellectually unsettling; that reflective practices necessarily include an ethical dimension; and that the outcome of reflection must be changed practice, with a social justice focus. ( 2015:3)

Dewey is responsible for the five step model of problem solving that includes (i) suggesting solutions; (ii) posing questions; (iii) hypothesizing; (iv) reasoning; and (v) testing. These items form a process for reflective thinking. Dewey uses the term "thinking animal" (Dewey,1933:45) to describe humans and he stresses the importance of training thoughts. Moreover, he connects teaching with learning as correlative and correspondent processes, as if the teacher was selling something that the student is buying. Therefore, schools are perfect places to train thoughts. For instance, in the UK, the main document which led towards the 2007 framework for performance management of teachers explained: "We want to encourage teachers, as reflective practitioners, to think about what they do well, to reflect on what they could share with colleagues, as well as identifying their own learning needs." (DfEE, 2001: 12).

This framework describes the professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skill of teachers in five progressive career stages:

Q – qualified teacher status (QTS)

C – core standards for main scale teachers who have successfully completed their

I - induction

P – post-threshold teachers on the upper pay scale

E – excellent teachers

A – advanced skills teachers (ASTs)

(Pollard and Collins, 2005: 30)

Gore (2015) stresses the importance of the Qualified Teacher Status QTS which in Australia has 18 elements and is labelled Quality Teaching Model. Some of the factors included are deep knowledge and understanding, higher order thinking, metalanguage, engagement and high expectations. Engagement makes teachers reflect whether the students are interested and attentive during the lessons and high expectations is about communicating learning outcomes by stressing the effort in achieving the highest possible score/ knowledge about the given class topic.

The first point QTS stresses the importance of establishing objectives and values within government policies, but still being guided by their own moral and ethical principles. The second point emphasises the process of reflective teaching as a basis for teacher's actions. The fourth point is about necessary attributes for precise reflection, and the teacher should have a desire to reflect upon themselves and to challenge our own knowledge. The fifth point describes the importance of collaboration between teachers, researchers and politicians. The sixth point highlights the importance of collaborative work by talking, experimenting and reflecting with others. The final and seventh point contemplates the interpretation of the external conditions by the teacher in a particular context by taking into account values and educational pillars. Pollard & Collins, offered a diagram in 2005 explaining the reflection process (reflect, plan, make provision, act, collect evidence, analyse evidence and assess evidence). They identify four skills related to (i) planning; (ii) reviewing relevant, existing research, (iii) gathering new evidence and (iv) analysis and evaluation.

Teacher's beliefs are responsible for the methodology used in the classroom: "Teachers do what they do due to reflection and beliefs. Moreover, teachers' knowledge and thinking form a framework which guides teachers' classroom actions." (Richards & Lockhart, 1994:71). This process has a cognitive, affective and behavioural dimension, and it is based on the belief that teachers reflect on what they know. Teacher's knowledge and thinking contribute to the essential framework

which guides their classroom actions. According to Kindsvatter, Willen and Ishler these beliefs derive from different sources:

- their own experience as language learners
  - experience what works best
  - established practice
  - personality factor
  - educationally based or research-based principles
  - principles derived from an approach or method
- (1988: 44)

Flowerdew proposed that: “[...] reflecting on foreign language learning develops a clear and deep perception into the language learning process.” (1998:19). He came to this conclusion by reversing roles; teachers became students, as in the current study, and although it was a one-off experiment designed to give teacher the opportunity to develop their personal knowledge, it offered a perfect model to investigate reflection and effective teaching. Even more importantly the experiment can be reproduced anywhere as a part of teacher training course or any stage of teaching development. The experience of learning a language that nobody knows encourages analysis and the adaptation of one’s own learning strategies, thus guiding us to a re-evaluation of theory thanks to our learning experiences.

Moreover, McDonough affirmed that: “[...] language learning experiences (LLE) encourages perspectives that “are quite discrepant, even dissonant [...] from the perspectives of the ‘teacher-persona’” (200:406-407). There are several studies that have used unknown language or artificial language to measure awareness and help teachers to become more efficient professionals.

The present study utilized artificial language input as the basis for investigating language learners’ metalinguistic awareness. While the extent to which artificial language studies can be compared to language learning in instructed or naturalistic settings is limited, there are several advantages to this approach. Among others benefits, the use of artificial languages enables L2 researchers to examine learning under conditions where the amount and type of exposure are identical across participants. (Jackson, 2014:2).

Similarly, Peter Burden (2007) conducted an experiment teaching Japanese at the University of Okayama Shaka to a group of teachers. The main objective of his study, as in the current one, was to analyze teachers' personal experiences when learning an unknown language and how they can be applied to teaching languages. His focus was on the value of reflection on the language learning experiences (LLEs) as a means of gaining perception into the participants' future students' learning processes and, thereby, ultimately, shaping their approaches to teaching. Richards and Lockhart have also stated that: "[...] the teacher who has a more extensive knowledge and deeper awareness about the different components and dimensions of teaching is better prepared to make appropriate judgments and decisions in teaching" (1994:3).

In the case of Burden (2007), some strong emotions such as frustration, stress and intolerance emerged after the lessons. The questionnaire he used with his subjects contained questions ranging from the influence of the Japanese learning experience on their teaching to any positive or negative feedback from the experience that they found useful. Burden's conclusion about the experiment was the following:

This study has shown that teachers had grown more empathetic to learners, more engaged to their students and more receptive to new ideas through their formal study of Japanese: "[...] the "definite benefit" of looking at classrooms from different perspectives and now as a result of his classroom learning encourages teachers to visit each other's classes." (2007:176).

Since teaching entails not only methods and strategies but also materials, activities and attention to learner-centred factors such as learning style, multiple intelligences, or affective factors teacher training courses and reflection upon the teaching process itself are becoming more necessary than ever. It is important to highlight what Schon said about teaching which is still relevant: "[...] professionals do not know and act as in two separate processes, but they "know in action." (1987:64). As a way of summarizing chapter 2, we have chosen this quotation by Van Manen:

Researchers have studied the behaviors, reflections, memories, and meaning constructs of “excellent” teachers in order to determine what are the knowledge forms that underlie their exemplary practices. ( 1995:15)

This search for excellence in teaching is still a highly important ongoing process since it could explain, or at least help, teachers to become more efficient professionals. Also, the importance of teachers and their teaching methods has to be looked upon in more detail: “Attitudes towards the learning situation refer to the language learners' evaluation of the language teacher, the course and curriculum” (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Hashimoto, 2002; cited in Öz, 2015:2). These convictions are complex ones and closely connected, influencing each other at any level of language learning since they influence mostly motivation. Thus, it is highly necessary for pre-service teachers to explore and reflect on their (pre)conceptions) about the theory and practice of effective language learning:

Articulating and examining their perceptions may contribute to a better understanding of how they view teaching as well as the skills they need to acquire to become a competent educator. As previously demonstrated (Lasley, 1980), if students do not examine their perceptions they will not be open to current research-based practices. This is unacceptable given that the field of education is a vibrant, rapidly growing field and many of the perceptions the students hold may be counterproductive to good teaching (Gargiulo, 2003) ( Fayet *et al.*,2005:725).





### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

*I can only say thank you Daniela for showing us this in an effective and motivating way too. And I hope that I am going to remember the way I felt in this session when I start to teach some students, who do not know anything about the language that they are going to learn.<sup>75</sup>*

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<sup>75</sup> Learner diary entry contribution 2011. ( Reproduced verbatim)

In the following chapter Research Methodology and Procedure, we shall describe our experimental survey design in order to assess the relevance of reflective critical practice for the training of more effective, foreign language teachers. To carry out our research project, we have chosen to analyze an Unknown Language Experiment (henceforth ULE) in two time frames, the first one done with teacher trainees doing a course for Trinity College of London in 2003 and the second one with undergraduate students of '*Filología Inglesa*' (English language and Literature) in three separate years at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria ULPGC from 2011- 2013. As we have previously mentioned in Chapter 1, an investigation of the effect of ULE has been the main foundation of this current study, and diaries, questionnaires and classroom observation are the research tools we have used to explore the effectiveness of reflective practice for pre- service teachers.

Chapter 3 consists of several sub- sections listed as follows: (3.1.) Research Context , (3.2.) Research Questions, (3.3.) Research Design, (3.3.1.) Subjects, (3.3.2.) Research instruments, (3.4.) Methodology, (3.4.1.) Quantitative research instruments: Administration, (3.4.2.) Qualitative research instruments: Administration, ( 3.4.3) Triangulation.

The main goals of Chapter 3 are as follows. In 3.1. (Research Context), we shall analyze teacher training programmes currently existing in Spain as well as highlight teachers' and students motivational levels based on the PISA educational report on Spain and the Canary Islands published by the OECD<sup>76</sup> (2012) as a means to provide contextualization for our study , and in 3.2. (Research Questions), we shall highlight and explain the reasoning behind the choice of the research questions which we have used to attempt to prove that our objectives are valid and relevant for future foreign language teachers. In 3.3. (Research Design), we shall describe

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<sup>76</sup> PISA stands for the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' and it belongs to the 'Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development' (OECD), comprising a study that examines fifteen-year-old school children in areas such as Maths, Science and Reading. The main objective is to improve education policies. In 2012, Spain scored below average in all tests, and it was claimed that teacher's morale was very low. The average score was 496 whereas the top country, China (specifically, Shanghai), received 580 points.

the design of our research project and the rationale behind our selection of qualitative and quantitative research instruments for triangulation: in 3.3.1 (Research Subjects), we describe the profile of the subjects participating in our study and in 3.3.2. (Research Instruments), we shall describe the research tools used to collect data in both research periods, 3.4. Methodology where we show the layout of the Communicative approach lesson, 3.4.1. (Quantitative Research Instruments: Administration) describes the questionnaire design and choice of questions adapted from the Trinity College Diploma course and 3.4.2. (Qualitative Research Instruments: Administration) describes the elicitation of learner diary entries. In 3.4.3. we describe the procedure we have followed in order to gather our data and the research project design and the use of triangulation.

The current research has a span of 12 years with a gap of 8 years between the first to the last one. In 2003 the main researcher has done the experiment with future teacher trainees who were attending the Trinity College of London Diploma TESOL certificate in La Garita, Las Palmas province. In 2011- 2013 the same researcher has repeated the experiment at the ULPGC. In 2014/15 we have retrieved the diaries from some of the 2003 course attendees and asked them the very same questions some 12 years after the initial experiment.

King *at al.*, ( 2014) describe the longitudinal study as a research with repeated collection of data over a time period and as a strong point of this kind of study life course has been mentioned. Longitudinal study allows us to follow a group of individuals in different time intervals and analyze the changes and similarities. Moreover, it is said that it strengthens the combination of quantitative and qualitative research.

Before we go into more depth about our research design, methodology and procedure, we consider that a brief outline of our main investigation aims, choice of subjects and the ensuing dual research periods is necessary. Our research methodology has mainly focused on investigating the validity of reflective critical practice for pre-service teachers as a means to become more effective practitioners. Thus, we have wondered about the following issues:

1. How effective is Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training?

2. How valid is CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better, and more efficient, professionals.

3. What might the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) be in teacher training courses for the promotion of teachers as reflective practitioners?

To explore this premise, we have used informal, unstructured classroom observation as an investigation approach since the researcher, teacher and the ULE provider are the same person in this project, and we have also used open-ended structured questionnaires and content analysis of corresponding diary entries as the most appropriate investigation instruments for this context. We decided to group a three-year research period into one single data collection procedure, labeled 2011-2013 due to the following reasons: the questionnaires employed were exactly the same ones, the investigation goals were also identical, and all the subjects involved were enrolled in the elective subject *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II* (An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language) as part of their second-cycle degree studies in ( '*Filología Inglesa*' ) (English Language and Literature) and had similar characteristics.<sup>77</sup> A part of culling data from 2011-2013 we have decided to include 2003 Trinity College Diploma research data, since the questions were the same one as well as the researcher it was presented to us as a perfect opportunity to prove the ULE validity since we have asked those students eleven/ twelve years the very same questions asked back in 2003.

### 3.1. Research Context

In this subsection, we are going to contemplate two teacher training scenarios for foreign language secondary teachers-to-be in Spain. The first one is the Master's degree in teacher training <sup>78</sup> and the other one is the introductory elective teaching methodology subject previously on offer in the degree in '*Filología Inglesa*' both at the ULPGC.

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<sup>77</sup> For further details check sub-section 3.3.1.

<sup>78</sup> *Máster Universitario en Formación del Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas por las universidades de La Laguna y Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.*

In order to be able to teach at state-funded secondary schools in Spain, once having finished their degrees students<sup>79</sup> have to enroll in a one-year Master's degree with a major in foreign language teaching offered by the ULPGC and the ULL<sup>80</sup> in our Canarian context. This Master's programme first started in 2009 and it fulfills the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) requirements<sup>81</sup>: Although the syllabus does have some subjects that foster reflection<sup>82</sup> we consider that it is not sufficient and that ULE should be a compulsory part of the Master's teaching programme. We are convinced that the ULE could greatly contribute to training teachers to be reflective and critical professionals in their future language teaching careers. To be able to explore this premise, we first need to address the conceptual framework of this study.

As regards the conceptual framework (after Maxwell, 2012) of this current study, we shall start out by describing the current context in foreign language teaching in the Canary Islands. The issue of EFL teaching is a somewhat controversial subject in Spain, and even more in the Canary Islands, due to the results published by the Program for the International Student Assessment report (PISA). The results for the Canary Islands were disappointingly low in outcomes and in teachers', parents' and students' motivation. The PISA report recommends not to worrying so much about teachers' salaries, and focusing more on motivation, career structure and the lack of a quality control system, as well as leadership and training, which, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), are the main reasons for such bad results and lack of

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<sup>79</sup> Here we refer to these kinds of students, since the vast majority of students who attend 'Filología Inglesa' degree, since 2010 Degree in Modern Languages, decide to take this path and as well our research subjects were precisely those students.

<sup>80</sup> Universidad de La Laguna.

<sup>81</sup> 24 credits of educational theory, 24 credits of general teaching skills and 12 credits of an external teaching practicum.

<sup>82</sup> The subject *Aprendizaje y Enseñanza De Las Materias Correspondientes A La Especialización De Lenguas Extranjeras* or 'Learning and Teaching of Contents Related to Specialization in Foreign Languages I' (code: 50335) contemplates three sessions of foreign language classroom observation and two hours of reflection upon it. It does not specify which language and what kind of observation is carried out. The practicum subject (code:50369) *Prácticas de la Especialidad de Lenguas Extranjeras* (or 'Teacher Training Practicum for Foreign Languages I' I also involves observing and reflecting on the learning/teaching process.

motivation. The key factors were low student motivation, limited interest in learning, the limited education of parents and lack of aspirations. Another issue that has been considered as a relevant one is the secondary school curriculum that lacks problem solving, critical thinking and learning to learn:

The teacher recruitment and deployment system is a clear example of civil service arrangements producing sub-optimal results. Currently, the suitability of teaching applicants is judged by whether they pass the civil service exam: but passing this exam is no guarantee of possessing all the talents and skills a good teacher needs. Studies show that teachers with good subject knowledge are more effective. And certain personal characteristics have been found to be shared by effective teachers: sustained commitment, resilience, perseverance and motivation, as well as high overall levels of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn and a motivation to teach. In the best education systems, tests of these characteristics and qualities underpin rigorous pre-entry selection of candidates for teacher training. (Guidance from PISA for the Canary Islands Spain, 2012:66).

This is only one of the recommendations which are given and it would take numerous pages to sum up the report about the current situation in the Canary Islands. We have chosen this excerpt as a means to highlight the need to design more appropriate teacher training programmes aimed at the development and subsequent professional selection of those teachers who possess more classroom-based skills than just a degree certificate. We have been guided by the OECD study in our own research and by the accompanying literature we have described in Chapter 2 promoting teachers as reflective practitioners. The ULE raises foreign language learning/teaching awareness and encourages self-reflection, which seems to be highly necessary in order to be an effective practitioner.

In this sub-section, we also need to mention the observations that the OECD has made about the initial teacher training that is offered by the University of La Laguna, Tenerife and by the University of Las Palmas, Gran Canaria:

Both universities agreed that insufficient time is allocated to teaching practice, particularly at secondary level where there is a culture – already mentioned – that teaching skills are less important than transmitting the content of the curriculum. Thus the teaching of basic linguistic

and mathematical literacy, application of knowledge, problem-solving and analysis are neglected (OECD report about the Canary Islands, 2012:69).

Several stakeholders also told the OECD research team that student's lacked interest in education and the motivation to pursue it to the end of compulsory education and beyond: "No doubt, there are some de-motivated, disinclined- to- learn students in the Canary Islands. And no doubt some of them express their frustration by behaving badly in the classroom, disrupting the learning of classmates, or truanting or dropping out" (*ibid*:40).<sup>83</sup>

It would be very bold to affirm that the ULE is the solution for the current motivational problems in Canarian and Spanish schools, but it could form part of a solution due to the fact that it promotes reflection and puts the teachers-to-be in the students' shoes and offers a unique opportunity to observe and reflect upon the learning/ teaching process.

In the PISA report, we can also find comments regarding teachers' teaching styles:

The OECD team was also told that the teaching style of many secondary teachers is still to stand at the front of the class and deliver knowledge content to students, rarely checking whether students understand the meaning of what they are being taught or how to apply it. Indeed the team was told that some old-style teachers only require students to memorize what has been delivered, to earn a pass in their tests. This teaching style is not conducive to good results in PISA, or good education more widely (*ibid*: 68)

After reading these lines, we can clearly see that a more effective approach is essential regarding teaching style in the Canary Islands, and the OECD suggests the following for the Master's degree in Teacher Training:

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<sup>83</sup> Here we wish to include more quotations that show the general situation in the Canary Islands.); "It is paramount indeed to read results and recommendations for the Canary Islands in order to comprehend that a change in teaching methodology is currently overriding"; "The average PISA performance of Canary Islands 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science is low – the second-lowest of all Spanish regions" (*ibid*:40) ; "The high repetition rate, which meant that many 15-year-old students in PISA 2009 were still being taught the syllabus appropriate to 13- or 14-year-olds.( *ibid*:41).

The OECD team suggests that it might be useful for faculties to recruit, as part-time lecturers, practicing teachers identified for their excellence both as subject and pedagogical experts, to supplement any gaps which may arise in the syllabus and also contribute to the teaching of subject-specific methodologies. This would help to address the frequently voiced criticism of many teacher education programmes that the pedagogical skills required at school level are not modelled throughout the programme (*ibid*:70).

The report clearly highlights the need of having experts in methodology and pedagogical skills in order to enhance results. Knowing about a vast range of options that methodology offers us and reflection upon the learning/ teaching process, might be the right answer to the lack of motivation and disappointing learning outcomes. With regard to the second scenario, we do not have any data about students' satisfaction, or the lack of it, regarding the two methodology subjects offered in the new Modern Languages degree at the ULPGC , so we have used the course syllabi to base our recommendations on.<sup>84</sup> These subjects are part of the current offer in the Degree in Modern Languages, back in 2011 ( the extinct '*Filología Inglesa*' ) there was no such offer as we have mentioned previously.

The offer of teaching methodology subjects in the Degree in Modern Languages is present in the last year of their four-year studies, but these subjects, and indeed the degree in itself, do not qualify graduates to be teachers in state-funded schools. They can only teach or sit the state exam to be civil servants only if they achieve the previously-mentioned Master's qualification. The two methodology subjects are the following ones: *Metodología de La Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera* or 'English Teaching and its Methodology' (code: 44034 ) and *Didáctica de La Lengua Inglesa y Metodología para una Educación por la Integración y la Igualdad* or 'English Language Methodology for Education in Integration and Equality' (code: 44039). The former contemplates the description of different teaching approaches and methods, and the latter does mention reflection in these terms: "*Reflexión sobre la adecuación de la(s) metodología(s) usadas para cada contexto de enseñanza.*"<sup>85</sup> We would like to add some definitions here about how to

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<sup>84</sup> The first subject is compulsory and the second one is optional.

<sup>85</sup> Reflection upon the most suitable methodologies in the teaching contexts (Our translation).



be more effective teachers and how to shift lesson output to be more student-centered.

Effective teachers plan, communicate and manage and evaluate as a part of the process of instructing students. Being a student-centered teacher is one of the keys for being a more efficient professional. Anton Lee proposes ten qualities of an effective teacher:

A focus on student achievement.

Pedagogical practices that create caring, inclusive and cohesive learning communities.

Effective links between school and the cultural context of the school.

Quality teaching is responsive to student learning processes.

Learning opportunities are effective and sufficient.

Multiple tasks and contexts support learning cycles.

Curriculum goals are effectively aligned.

Pedagogy scaffolds feedback on students' task engagement.

Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse.

Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.

(2003,vi-x, cited in Gurney, 2007:1)

By taking into account the abovementioned characteristics, we can apply them in class by catering for more student-centered teaching, and then we can analyze and reflect upon our own teaching practice to see whether these traits have been present in our lessons.

Additionally, Eisner, in putting forward a number of concepts that should be essential components of schools, argues that "Good teaching depends on sensibility and imagination. It courts surprise. It profits from caring. In short, good teaching is an artistic affair" (2002:577; cited in Poetter,2013:204). By summing up teaching practice as something artistic, Eisner highlights imaginativeness and the perceptiveness as foundations of good teaching. In addition, Gurney offers five key factors that provide a foundation for a good teaching:

1. Teacher's knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for learning.

2. Classroom activities that encourage learning.
  3. Assessment activities that encourage learning through experience.
  4. Effective feedback that establishes the learning processes in the classroom.
  5. Effective interaction between the teacher and the students, creating an environment that respects, encourages and stimulates.”
- (Gurney, 2007:3)

In our opinion, this list of good or effective teaching characteristics contains three key words: enthusiasm, effectiveness and encouragement. Any class should be made up of activities that encourage students to participate and, therefore, teachers have to be enthusiastic, no matter what kind of subject they teach and no matter what language item they instruct in. If these premises are fulfilled, then the lesson is effective. We have attempted to replicate this by means of our ULE teacher training awareness experiment in two different time spans (with more than ten years between both experiments) by fostering enthusiasm and encouragement above all, and which have been perceived by the pre-service teachers on both occasions as we shall see when analyzing our research data.

### 3.2. Research Questions

One of the main reasons for conducting this study has been to show how a practical experience of being in your future learners' shoes for trainee teachers can make all the difference,<sup>86</sup> since a first-hand experience cannot ever be compared to

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<sup>86</sup> Here, we refer to the fact that it is much more productive to experience how we learn languages at first hand than to read about it or learn about it from books. This is especially meaningful for pre- service teachers who usually tend to think that there is no need to study methodology, as we can see in the following quotation: “ Pre-service teachers expect their teaching contexts to be no different from their student contexts; therefore, they see little or no reason to study pedagogy (Bird *et al.*, 1993; Book *et al.*, 1983; Doolittle *et al.*, 1993; Holt-Reynolds, 1992), even interpreting material presented in teacher training courses in ways that support their own perceptions about teaching (Doolittle *et al.*, 1993). Regardless of the form that teacher training takes, these perceptions persist throughout the period of training and remain with new teachers well into their early years of teaching (Doolittle *et al.*, 1993; Griffin, 1989; Lermen, 1997; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Taylor & Sobel, 2001)” (Fajet *et al.*,2005:718).

simply reading about foreign language learning and teaching.<sup>87</sup> The experiment itself can be easily reproduced in teaching methodology lessons as long as the language we are going to use as a target language is not similar to any other languages that the students know or have heard of. Moreover, after the ULE there should be a feedback session and oral/written discussion about the experiment. It can be guided by using semi-structured questionnaires or we can just ask students what they learn and why. The latter is the procedure carried out as part of the Trinity College of London Certificate, since semi-structured questionnaire responses and diary entries are a compulsory part of the diploma and are evaluated. The feedback session is used as an eye-opening session for pre-service teachers who discover the most efficient methods to teach and analyze how and why we learn something.

We have decided to support our investigation procedure by following the concepts mentioned below after Maxwell (2012). The aspects that identify research methodology and procedure comprise constructs such as goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity:

1. Goals. Why your study is worth doing? What issues do you want it to clarify and what practices and policies do you want it to influence? Why do you want to conduct this study and why should we care about the results?
2. Conceptual framework. What do you think is going on with the issue, settings, or people you plan to study? What theories, beliefs and prior research findings will guide or inform your research, and what literature, preliminary studies, and personal experience will you draw on for understanding the people or issues you are studying?
3. Research questions. What, specifically, do you want to learn or understand by doing this study? What do you do not know about the things you are studying that you want to learn? What questions will your research attempt to answer and how are these questions related to one another?
4. Methods. What will you actually do in conducting this study? What approaches and techniques will you use to collect and analyse your data and how do these constitute an integrated strategy? [...]

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<sup>87</sup> See the sub-section 5.1.

5. Validity. How might your results and conclusions be wrong? What are the plausible alternative interpretations and validity threats to these results and conclusions and how will you deal with these? How can the data that you have, or that you could potentially collect, support or challenge your ideas about what is going on? Why should we believe your results? ( 2012:4)

Regarding goals, we can affirm that we intend to clarify the issues related to reflective practice and EFL teaching/learning in order to inform current teacher training in Spain. The conceptual framework has been outlined by investigating learning processes in general, and foreign language learning in particular, with specific emphasis on critical reflective practice. The chosen research questions have a tight relationship with motivation, interest and learning/ teaching strategies in EFL. The selected method were the lessons we gave in Croatian as the most suitable tool to investigate the language learning phenomenon followed by a semi-structured questionnaire, feedback session and diary entries. Regarding validity, once we have done the experiment and analyzed the data we have found out that there is a perfect match between the conceptual framework and the data analysis. (See chapter 4)

At this point of our study, we consider that it is highly relevant to highlight the aims of the current study, or our research questions:

1. How effective is Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training?
2. How valid is CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better, and more efficient, professionals?
3. What might the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) be in teacher training courses for the promotion of teachers as reflective practitioners?

The first research question stresses the importance of CRP in pre-service teacher training as an essential experience for future teachers, which, unfortunately, is not present in the majority of the teacher training programmes in Spain. The second research question tries to demonstrate the reliability of CRP as a practice that may contribute to teachers being more adept and effective. The third research question has a specific and determined link to the experiment itself since it examines the prospect of our ULE investigation as a tool in endorsing teachers as professionals

who reflect and act (before, during and after) upon class situations, striving for improvement and successful learning outcomes.

### **3.3. Research Design**

Since our aim was to prove the validity and usefulness of ULE in teacher training programmes, we have decided that our research design had to be three-fold: qualitative, quantitative and mixed. Regarding the qualitative data, we have analyzed the diary entries by means of content analysis procedures, for the collection of quantitative data we have the adapted Trinity College London Diploma questions, and with regard to the mixed aspect, triangulation is present since we have addressed the same research questions by means of both quantitative and qualitative data. We consider that only one type of research design would have been insufficient and inadequate, for it would have failed to give a full insight into the learning/teaching processes and the role of reflection. For us, the problem or the issue was and is mainly qualitative, since it provided richer data in this case and there seems to be insufficient research about the inclusion of ULE in teacher training, and we have wanted to show its validity in order to offer a solid grounding for its implementation within Spanish teacher training programmes, both in graduate and in postgraduate programmes. In our case, one of the main objectives was to obtain insights into motivation when teaching or learning a foreign language and the only approach we could use to investigate this phenomenon was a qualitative one accompanied by a small scale quantitative design for triangulation purposes. The nature of the design itself belongs to the social research analysis tradition: "Social research is the systematic analysis of research questions by using empirical methods (e.g. of asking, observing, analyzing data.) Its aim is to make empirically grounded statements that can be generalized or to test such statements" (Flick,2015:10.).

The qualitative method research is a highly complex one since we work with words not numbers. In our study, we have tried to follow Grbich ´ suggestions about the key research factors that should be taken into account: ´Person, Processes and Presentation` (2012:2). ´Person´ refers to the subjects of our study which have been carefully chosen due to their similar backgrounds and future careers in education;

the processes have been different methodologies and techniques used to interpret the data and the presentation is the overall design of this dissertation. Grbich also proposes the symbiosis of quantitative and qualitative research methods since it has many advantages, as more details are obtained statistically about the individual experience and this helps in developing measures and changes that can be tracked over time” (2012:27).

By combining both analyses we have obtained a deeper insight into all of our research questions. Moreover, we have not only illustrated mere statistics, but we have also gained more knowledge behind the individual answers. The answers and the diary entries have helped us to develop measures or recommendations for further study about the foreign language teaching/learning processes. In addition, since this research has an overall span of some 11/12 years between the first Trinity College Diploma in Unknown Language Experience and the one carried out at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, we have managed to compare and contrast the data by finding similar perspectives in both cases. Despite the time gap, the student’s contributions<sup>88</sup> have proven that time in this case was not a detrimental factor affecting our research.

The choice of the research design depends on the research problem, the researcher’s personal experience, and the audience of the study (Creswell, 2013). In our case, the research problem was the lack of critical reflective practice in teacher training courses in Spain. In order to be able to address this problem, the author of this research project has applied a procedure used by Trinity College London Diploma as part of their programme to train future foreign language teachers. The researcher carried out the original experiment in 2003 and it over a three-year period from 2011- 2013 at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The audience of the study might be future teachers and tertiary education stakeholders from the previously mentioned university.

Here we explain in detail the Communicative lesson which was used as a part of the research design of this project. In order to better comprehend the research design, we have decided to describe the Communicative Approach lesson in detail.

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<sup>88</sup> For further details see the subsection 3.3.1. about 2014 Trinity College Diploma students.

The first lesson<sup>89</sup> was taught using a Communicative Approach. The subjects did not know which language they were going to experience and before the teacher entered the room, the map of Europe had been projected on the board. Since the very beginning of the lesson only the Croatian language was used. The teacher greeted students and invited them to repeat the greeting chorally, then introduced herself by writing her name on the board as well as the Croatian language "hrvatski". Then she asked questions about the map, showing different countries. When she pointed to Croatia, some students guessed the country and the target language of the lesson. Then, she showed her photo embedded on the map showing her place of birth, and explained the country's peculiar shape (boomerang, croissant) with some further information about the country.

After that, a very short video was projected about Croatia while the teacher was giving some information about the places shown. One of the most important features of Croatia are the islands and the National Parks, so the teacher explained that Croatia has more than 1000 islands and 8 National Parks, and with 6 cities that hold the UNESCO World Heritage Award.

After this brief geographical and historical introduction for cultural contextualization, the teacher introduced the Croatian alphabet that has 30 letters. She has included some phonemic symbols such as č = tʃ, đ = dʒ, š = ʃ and ž = ʒ. This helped students to identify and pronounce the sounds. Once the teacher had presented the alphabet, students repeated chorally and individually. The next exercise consisted of eliminating some sounds from the alphabet letters and they had to fill in the gaps individually by pronouncing the missing phoneme. For example:

Hrvatska abeceda										
Velika slova										
	Č	Ć	D	DŽ	Đ		H	I	J	K
L	Lj		O	P	R	S	Š	T		

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<sup>89</sup> See Appendix II.

After this activity, the teacher introduced expressions to greet and to say goodbye by using pictures, time slots and a clock. The activity that followed the explanation was to say a suitable greeting depending on the time of the day. Some basic social rules were explained too, such as handshakes and what to reply for each greeting. After introducing new vocabulary, such as *Dobro jutro*, *Dobar dan*, *Dobra vecer* and *Adio*, students practised the greetings and replies in pairs.

How to ask "How are you?" and reply appropriately was the following stage. Emoticons were shown in order to introduce expressions:

Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?



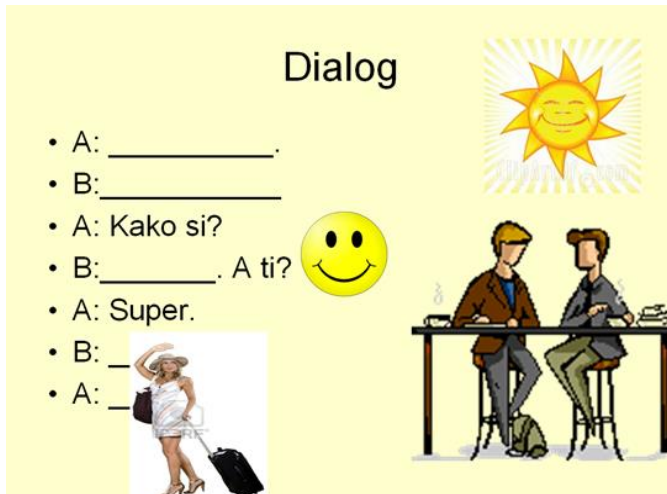
This explanation was followed by short dialogues interpreted by students who replied according to the emoticons shown on the slide during the controlled practice and followed by free practice when they asked each other: *Kako si?* Once having practiced the greetings and common social etiquette, for example it is mandatory to ask the other person the same question: How are you? teacher introduced farewell greetings. *Adio*, *Dovidjenja* and *Bok*, explaining which one is the formal one, which one is used in the south of Croatia and which one is the most informal one.

The first spoken and written activity was a simple dialogue (fill in gaps):



**Dialog**

- A: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: Kako si?
- B: \_\_\_\_\_. A ti?
- A: Super.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_.



Students worked in pairs and filled in the gaps and later one performed the dialogue. The correct version was given and there was a lot of encouragement since some gaps had several right answers. There were three dialogues or three different versions that have covered the content given since the beginning of the lesson.

A new item has been introduced: What is your name? *Kako se zoveš?* afterwards with an appropriate reply. Students threw the ball and asked the above mentioned question. Once this activity was over, the teacher introduced: Pleased to meet you. *Drago mi je.* Students again repeated the same activity, but this time they shook hands and rounded up the conversation in an appropriate way.

The following new item was to introduce the personal pronouns she and he. Students this time asked each other: What's his/her name? *Kako se on/a zove?*

As a break of introducing lexis and/or grammar structures teacher showed students some slides with famous Croatian actors, (Goran Višnjić) sportsmen, (Davor Šuker), inventors (Nikola Tesla), and adventurers (Marco Polo). It was important to establish some meaningful context for this first lesson, students guessed names and learnt more about Croatia. A part from famous people, teacher displayed a famous Dalmatian dog and continued explaining some more facts under the title: *Interesantno.* Interesting. In this part, students learnt that Croatians have invented the tie.

More new words were introduced but by eliciting them such as: *vino, voda, kafa, čaj, and pivo/* wine, water, coffee, tea and beer. Obviously, they did not know these words, but the teacher used the first letters to trigger the whole word and/or the hangman game. This was a good opportunity to practice spelling and

pronunciation of the Croatian alphabet something they did at the very beginning of the lesson.

As the final activity, teacher has shown this slide:



- 1. Kako se **ona** zove?
- 2. Kako se **on** zove?
- 3. Kako se **ovo** zove?

Students had some flashcards and they had to ask one of these questions depending if it was a person (s/he) or a thing and the other student had to give a full answer; for example: *Kako se on zove? On se zove Eric Bana.* The flashcards were photos of famous Croatian, English and Spanish people and places and things that we had worked on throughout the lesson.

Once this activity was over, the teacher gave some feedback and dismissed the class. After each session there was a feedback session where the subjects reported on what they had learnt and why, followed by a written open-ended questionnaire about the experience itself. Once the four sessions were over, another questionnaire was given to them containing questions about their general impression of the lessons. In this case, the emphasis of the questions was on usefulness of the project.

The methodology used in the four lessons is a quest to relate to best practices and to train reflective practitioners; therefore two lessons were given by using the communicative approach, Audio-Lingual and Grammar Translation Methods. The main objective of this experiment was to sensitize teacher trainees to students' needs and develop empathy towards their future students as well as explore the theoretical bases of language learning theory with their practical implications. That is why it was essential to teach some lessons in an effective way (Communicative

approach) and others in less efficient methods (Audio-lingual and Grammar translation)<sup>90</sup>. By observing the lessons and by analyzing their own reactions, future teachers are more prone to understand the classroom context and to grasp problems and seek solutions. They might also become aware of the rationale behind the learning tasks they use.

Students had some time to answer the questions anonymously and the data were grouped according to similarities and common traits as to analyze learners' contribution towards the main goal of proving the effectiveness of critical reflection in pre-service teacher training. With the Communicative approach lesson we have assessed the hypothesis that had lead our study: Is ULE valid?

Davies and Hughes define the type of social research that can be applied to the current study:

Research is a process of testing a stated idea or assertion (the hypothesis) to see if the evidence supports it or not. This may involve putting in place experimental practices and comparing them with other controlled or current practices, but it can also employ simple data gathering procedures (2014:15).

Trochim (2006; cited in Watt, 2015) claims that research design is the glue that keeps the research project together. Therefore, our choice to teach a lesson and then administer a subsequent semi-structured questionnaire in order to elicit data to be further supported by learner diary entries and classroom observation seemed the best option since the main aim was to prove the validity of the ULE.

Grbich mentions the labels given to the mixed research method: "[...] synergy, integration, triangulation, concurrent, parallel, merging, sequential, exploratory and explicatory" (2012:26). If we make the decision of using a mixed method, we need to decide where and when to use it, and whether we are going to use it in design, method and/or interpretation? Is it possible to convert qualitative data into quantitative and vice versa? And how are we going to show the results? Separately,

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<sup>90</sup> In 2011 we have done the whole experiment with three methods, in 2012 and 2013 we have only done the Communicative approach lesson.

integrated or consolidated? This mainly depends on the paradigms that have been chosen for the research. Grbich offers two options: pragmatism or the transformative paradigm (2012:27). The first one's focus is on the research questions; the method is the instrument which offers the most inclusive answers, whereas the latter relies on multiple approaches, methods and techniques as a basis for social change. Due to our study characteristics, our option is pragmatism, therefore we have used the mixed method in all the stages of the research and we have presented the data accordingly. Also, we have transformed the data from words into numbers, but not vice versa. Grbich lists the advantages of using a mixed approach: as a means to clarify and answer questions from different perspective, enhancing the validity of your findings , increasing the capacity to cross- check one data set against another. (*ibid*).

There are some essential elements of Krashen's notion of 'comprehensible input' (2014:1) that we should consider here as relevant to the teaching approach adopted in the current project such as: 'modified input', 'context' and the 'silent period'. 'Modified input' refers to information that has been made simpler for less advanced learners. Some teachers may use this type of input during lessons for beginners. Also, contextualization is essential to make sense of the comprehensible input and new language items, with maybe visual aids and realia the most common resources for teachers of beginning foreign and second language students (Krashen, 2014:10). There is no doubt that visual resources are helpful tools when teaching especially for beginners: they are motivating and can contribute to a better understanding of what is being taught.

In order to measure experience and flow, Csikszentmihalyi and his team (2013) came up with a technique in order to make sure that their research was as valid and as objective as possible: the 'Experience Sampling Method', (44) used not only in teaching but also in psychology, sociology and anthropology. The outcome of the investigation shows that learners with high level of self- efficacy are more prone to having positive experiences when learning a language, whereas a low level of self- efficacy results in anxiety and lack of motivation with the final consequence of having a negative experience and low performance.

Also, in order to learn, or acquire, a second language successfully, Krashen (1988:45) highlights three factors that influence the learning process: (i) motivation, (ii) self- esteem and (iii) anxiety. If you want to succeed in any language learning situation, your anxiety needs to be as low as possible, and one way to lower anxiety is by offering meaningful input in contextualized situations since genuine communication should emerge as in L1 situations, hence errors should be welcomed (Krashen, 1980).

The interpretative paradigm searches for comprehending people's experience from their experience. In a nutshell: "understand subjective meaningful experience." (Hennik *et al*, 2010:14) This paradigm is also labeled emic or inside paradigm for it investigates the subjective meaning that people assign to their personal experience. Interpretative paradigm acknowledges that the reality is a social concept since it happens within a context. In our research the context was a personal one related to teaching/learning. It is also important to highlight that people's perception and experiences are obviously subjective and therefore subject to multiple layers of reality interpretations. The authors Denzin and Lincoln go even further by claiming: "All research is interpretative: it is guided by the research's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how would it be understood and studied." (2008:31, cited in Hennik *et al*, 2010:15). We indeed comply with this statement, researchers cannot ever be completely objective when investigating a phenomenon, for when you research you bring along your predetermined (mis) conceptions and emotions about the researched topic. Any qualitative research has three cycles " design, data collection and analysis." (*ibid*,2010:24). The choice of research questions is essential for any investigation; the first one called design deals with question, checking the literature about the investigated subject, and developing the framework and the field of study. The investigation questions have been adapted from the ULE task set in ESOL Trinity College Diploma and after reviewing literature about reflexive teaching/ learning. <sup>91</sup>The selection of questions and changes, have been made using the inductive reasoning foremost; for we have taken into account a general phenomenon

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<sup>91</sup> See Appendix II.

being the second language teaching/learning by observing and reflecting upon a specific language teaching. Inductive research requires exploratory and open-ended questions and the information is in a narrative form.

There is a diversity of qualitative research methods that consist of 3 categories: socio-linguistic methods that explore the use and meaning language such as discourse and conversation analysis; method that focus on developing theory, typified by grounded theory; methods that describe and interpret participant's view such as content and thematic analysis. (Smith and Firth, 2011:3)

As we will see later on in relation to the methodology employed in our project to collect data from our subjects (semi-structured questionnaires and learner diary entries) our results seem to support Krashen's and Csikszentmihalyi's theories. During the Unknown Language Experiment where the Croatian language was used as the only means of communication, our subjects seem to have been so engaged during the lesson that they had the impression that the Unknown Language was easy to acquire and similar to Spanish and English. Croatian is a Slavic language and has no or very little similarities to the above-mentioned languages. Nevertheless, thanks to the communicative methodology employed by means of a natural approach, accompanied by interesting and meaningful input, our subjects were under the impression that they could understand, despite the connections they inevitably tried to make to other languages they are familiar with. If this happens during the learning/teaching process, then acquisition should occur more effectively. This is called 'optimal experience', a term coined by Csikszentmihalyi who describes how the best learning moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult or worthwhile: "Optimal experience is thus something that we make happen" (2013: 10). This experience does not necessarily have to be a pleasant one and order is an essential part of it:

[...] the pursuit of a goal brings order in awareness because a person must concentrate attention on the task at hand and momentarily forget anything else. Any learning process involves effort, and in this case they had to figure out what the words mean by connecting them to visual stimuli and teacher's mime. (2013:11).

The quotation stresses the fact that there is no progress in learning unless hard work and time are invested in this pursuit. In our case we have chosen a small sample of students to test this theory.

Also, the sample is usually small, non-random, purposeful and theoretical; data collection is determined by as researcher being the primary instrument; interview, observations, documents and findings are comprehensive, holistic, expansive and richly descriptive. Our investigation is inductive since we have culled data from 65 students over a three year period the validity of critical reflective practice in teacher training courses in order to train more efficient professionals.

We have created this map of our own investigation following the Maxwell model, including our goals, the conceptual framework, our research questions; methods and validity (see Figure 1):

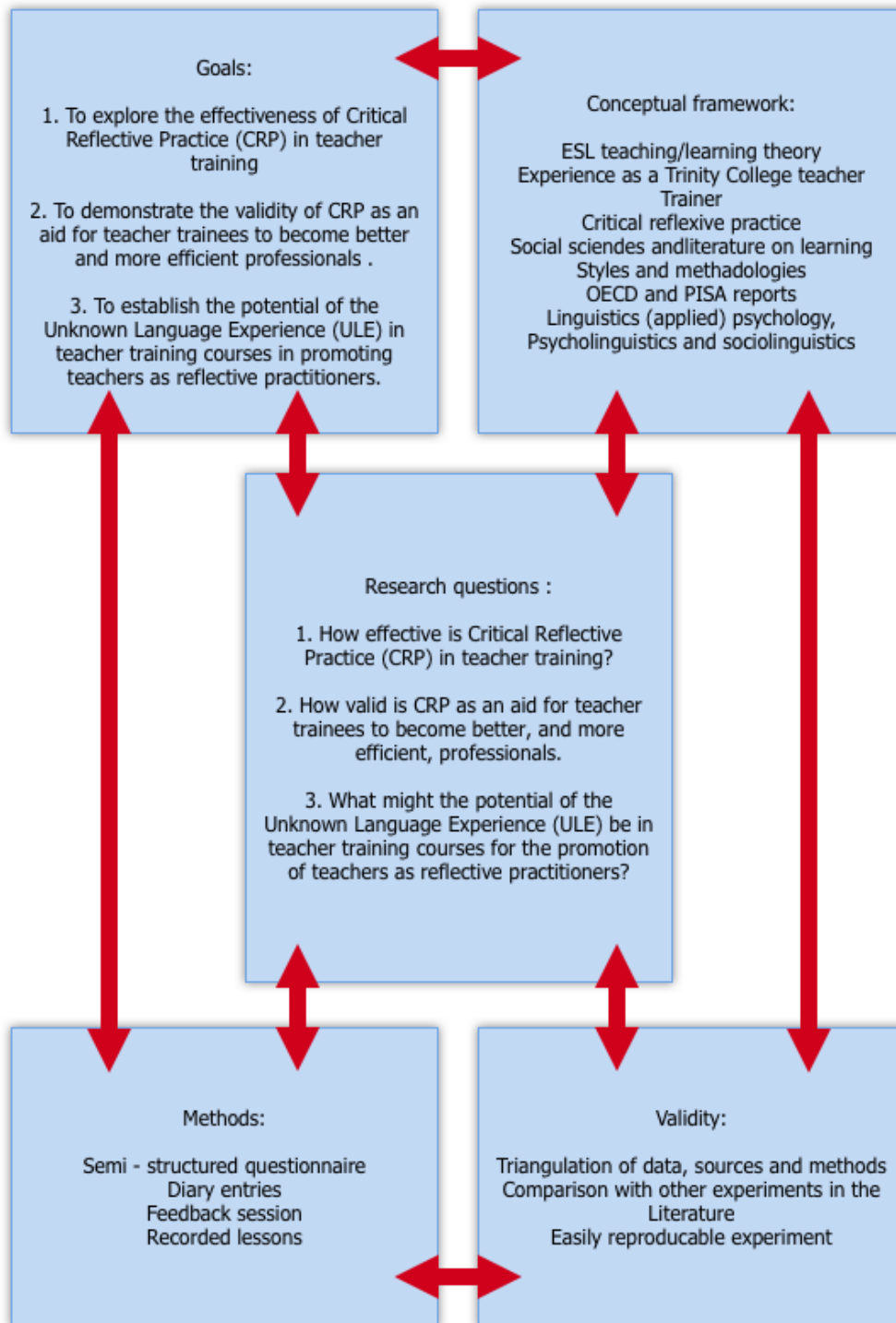


Figure 2. Current research project diagram.

This diagram has been adapted to our current research and is inspired by Maxwell's figure 1.4 (10) labeled "A design map of study of Manned and Unmanned undersea research."



In our case as research design we have used the technique and the methodology used by the investigation called Action Research (henceforth AR). Although, the subjects of this research were not investigator's students we have decided that the optimal way of proving our objectives was to use this classroom research. Therefore, we are going to briefly explain what AR.

AR is a name given to a particular way of looking at your own practice to check whether it is as you feel it should be, and is a form of classroom-based research used by practicing teachers as a means to reflect on possible problems with the view of finding solutions. Although we have not adopted an action research procedure as such since we have focused on teacher trainees who do not pertain to our own teaching content, we have, however, adopted some of the relevant principles and techniques. As McNiff points out, "You might be checking it as a part of your critical reflection on your practice, or perhaps in response to a professional development review" (Mc Niff, 2013: 21). According to Reed (2015:21)

AR enables teachers to solve challenges, to gather data in order to form sensible questions and to provide for reliable methods to be used in the classroom. As Ghaye reminds us, "Good reflective practitioners are good at observation" (Ghaye, 2010:9) Observation is one of the key aspects of AR. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2013) the main aim of action research is to solve problems in general, and, in particular, in education to look for improvements in teachers' understanding of teaching practice and learning phenomena. AR has several steps as follows: a) the choice of behaviour that the teacher wants to investigate,; b) the choice of an appropriate technique; c) data culling and analysis; d) an action plan; e) implementation; and f) improvement; and consequence noting.

AR has its goal to address a specific problem within a specific setting, such as classroom, a workplace, a program, or an organization. By using the action research we can offer practical solutions in the real world: how to improve the teaching process by implementing reflective practice and by participating in unknown language lessons and therefore developing critical skills. (Merriam, 2014:4)

There are four stages of any Action Research project: (i) planning; (ii) action; (iii) observation; and (iv) reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1998; cited in Burns 2010:8). The first one is to identify the problem and plan the action to take in order to look for improvements, deciding what kind of investigation is possible within the realities and constraints of your teaching situation; and ii) what potential improvements you think are possible (*ibid*). In our case, the main problem that has been identified was the search for effective, communicative, student-centred and purposeful participation in language learning contexts, as well as greater involvement and improvement in the second language teaching/learning process. Action involves deliberate interventions into the teaching situation which are critically informed as you question your assumptions about the current situation and plan new and alternative ways. Schon also claims that teachers are not: “[...] ‘technical experts’, but rather ‘reflective practitioners’ (1987:332). Teachers understand their teaching practices due to the process of reflection and reframing.

According to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2012 and 2005 respectively, teaching is the single most important factor that the schools have to improve students’ performance and overall scores (Gore, 2015: 70). By placing responsibility on teachers, the need for this type of learning/ teaching investigation is in vogue more than ever. To endorse this research, we should be aware of relevant SLA research and reflective practice in order to improve teaching performance and assure successful L2 learning, as we have already done in Chapter 2.

Motivation prevails over any other language learning variable such as aptitude, age and intelligence, therefore catering for motivation by using meaningful input should be the teaching priority. If we do not comprehend the learning process then effective teaching is unfeasible, so pre-service teacher training is a timely opportunity to start working on SLA research and reflection. Pre-service teachers should learn about comprehensible input, learner-centered lessons, suitable sequencing to succeed in language learning and about the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of teaching, among other issues. We should always bear in mind that an effective teacher focuses mainly on students’ achievement and

encourages learning; this reflection should thus feature highly in teacher training programmes.

### **3.3.1. Research Subjects**

A total of sixty-five subjects enrolled in their third or final year in their degree in English Language and Literature (*Filología Inglesa*) at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria took part in a research project that consisted of being taught an unknown language (Croatian) for four sessions (60 minutes each) from 2011-2013. All of them were enrolled in an elective introductory EFL Methodology course; *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua Inglesa II*, or 'An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language'

During these experimental lessons, these future teachers had a two-fold role: they were at the same time students and observers of the teaching and learning process. As students, they played an active role and as observers they were contemplating teaching strategies, techniques and approaches by reflecting upon their learning process after the ULE experience.

All the subjects were of Spanish origin from 2011-2013, with no previous knowledge of Croatian, and, even more importantly, they did not know which language they were going to experience. These learners/future teachers' ages ranges from twenty to fifty-two. They spoke Spanish and English, and some of them had some knowledge of French and German. Regarding gender, 78% were female and 22% male.

In the case of the former 2003 experiment, 90% of the subjects were Scottish, 5% were Spanish and 5% Australians from 23 to 65 years old. The Trinity College trainees had a degree not related to languages except the Spanish ones, who had a Degree in 'Translation and Interpreting'. The Scottish ones had degrees in Social Studies, Business Administration and Psychology; the Australian ones were Computer Technicians.

Regarding the sample size and characteristics of the 2011-2013 experiment, the number of students was not random and it was relatively small per year, as all of the students were attending the optional subject *Lingüística Aplicada A La Lengua*

*Inglés II* (An Introduction To The Methodology Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language) in their third or final year of the degree in English Language and Literature at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The sample was purposeful and theoretical; however, since the students chosen for the ULE were students who had chosen the abovementioned subject as an optional one, that is to say, they were motivated since it was their choice for the subject was not a compulsory one. The main aim of this subject was to give a broad scope of theoretical and practical issues related to EFL Methodology, and concepts such as psychological and linguistic theories of language learning and factors affecting the foreign language learning process were part of the subject syllabus. The ULE session was done once the students had been introduced to different EFL methodologies and discussed factors affecting learning underlying psychological and linguistic features in the language learning/teaching process (see annex 3). Therefore, we can affirm that they were knowledgeable about the concepts of language learning and teaching to a certain extent: for example, this knowledge can be seen when analyzing their diary entries.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.3.2. Research Instruments

The two main instruments we have used are the semi-structured questionnaire and interactive learner diaries. With regard to the questionnaire, our subjects replied to open-ended questions after each unknown language learning session, and they reflected in their learning diary, expressing their thoughts and feelings about the experience. They reflected on several aspects of the class, on the one hand guided by the open-ended semi-structured questionnaire, and on the other hand writing freely about the experience in their journals. For example, the question "How did you feel as a learner?" offered some possible response: 'relaxed', 'enthusiastic', 'uncomfortable', 'threatened'?" in the original version of the

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<sup>92</sup> In the form of the following sample excerpt: *According to the Krashen theory, there are three important aspects which can affect the second language learning. These are: the anxiety, self-confidence and motivation. Because of the Croatian class that Daniella gave to us last week, I could figure out that these three aspects are very important to learn the language correctly. [...] She advised us when we makes a mistake to do an auto correction, therefore, we acted like monitor model (another concepts coined by Krashen).*

questions<sup>93</sup>, but we also used diary entries to corroborate these aspects. We knew or we hoped that we knew that the most important factors would be motivation and interest, but we also wanted to comprehend and know more about the underlying assumptions about foreign language teaching/learning such as the importance of reflection and observation and facts such as language aptitude, innate characteristics, motivation, and learning strategies. The questions that we have chosen to investigate deal with the above mentioned phenomena and they are as well interrelated. For instance, the questions " How did you feel?" and " What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?" are interconnected, since feelings are closely related to motivation, interest and enthusiasm and one of the main reasons why we learn or do not learn something can be answered by those questions.

This is the list of questions included in the questionnaire administered after the first lesson taught using the Communicative Approach:

1. How have you felt?
2. What structural differences and similarities are there between the target language and English, in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation?
3. Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?
4. What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?
5. Which were teacher's objectives?
6. By the end of the lesson students would be able to...
7. How far were the grammatical/lexical/phonological rules explained?
8. What range of learning activities took place?
9. Was the new input too much/too little or about right? Justify your opinion.

The decision of not changing the questions throughout the three-year period was taken since we have analyzed the data as if they were culled just in one year. Maybe, if we had made a decision of analyzing every single year and compared the years, the change in question formulation would have been an appropriate decision. Moreover, we have compared the same questions and answers done by

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<sup>93</sup> Here we refer to the Trinity College Diploma questions, see Appendix I.

corresponding to the Trinity College students from 2003 and then the very same questions were asked to those same ten students eleven or twelve years later. According to Hennink *et al.*, it is essential to assess the quality of questions by taking into account the following traits: interpretation, reflexivity and appropriateness This is clarified below:

Interpretative: Does the research fit within the interpretive paradigm? What characteristics of the interpretative paradigm are identified? Does the research reflect the meaning and perception of the study population? Are the voices of the participants evident? Is there "Verstehen" Is the emic perspective clear?

Reflexive: Does the researcher reflect on the subjectivity in the research? How is subjectivity managed? Is there evidence of reflexivity in the research? Does the study describe both personal and interpersonal reflexivity?

Appropriate: Are the questions suitable for the qualitative method? Can the research questions only be addressed by using qualitative methods? (2010:26)

Regarding the interpretative issue in this dissertation, we can affirm that the pre-established research objectives and hypothesis could have only been researched by using qualitative research procedures as well as quantitative ones. The interpretative paradigm is present since the research has looked for and investigated in detail the whole process of teaching/learning. To have a closer look at interpretative paradigms we have chosen the definition given by Ellis:

The interpretative paradigm seeks to describe and understand some aspect of teaching by identifying the key variables and examine how they interrelate. The sociocultural theory of L2 learning has informed research in this paradigm. This treats learning not as something that happens as a result of instruction but rather occurring within the interaction that instruction give rise to. Conversational analysis is the preferred tool for investigating this phenomenon. ( 2012:2)

### **3.4. Methodology**

As we have mentioned previously, Croatian was chosen as the unknown language in our ULE research project, and this is due to the fact that it is so different from Spanish and English. It is an Indo-European language and therefore it shares

some minor similarities in grammar and lexis, but none of these elements (such as words of Greek or Latin origin) were used by the researcher, on purpose, to show that you can understand and participate totally in a foreign language classroom if the context and methodology are the right one.

Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from a text. (Weber:1990) "Two of those procedures are part of our research: code open-ended question and identify the intention of the communicator." (1990:9) Our students by participating in answering questions and by writing a diary about the experience have offered us a sound material to be analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. We have calculated the percentages of most frequent answers and examined in detail both diary entries and open- question answers. We have classified the data into fewer categories by taking into account common traits among answers. According to Weber, these categories or classifications have to be reliable, consistent and they have to generate variables that are valid above all.

To prove our objectives and to evaluate students' contribution we have used content analysis research method. This investigation technique originated in social science and it is used widely and very often when we want to present data quantitatively: "Content analysis has more than fifty years of use in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology and business. Its methods primarily stem from social and behavioral sciences. It is the fastest growing technique in quantitative research." (Neunendorf, 2002:15). Content analysis dates back from the beginning of the early twenties of the last century in the United States. According to Flick, there are 4 types of procedures that should be considered when approaching content analysis, namely summarizing, inductive category, explicating and structuring

[...]...summarizing seeks to reduce the material in such a way that the essential contents are preserved, inductive category formation is the procedure of summarizing content analysis to develop categories gradually from some material, explicating content analysis seeks to do the opposite of summarizing content analysis; additional materials are needed to explain the content of the text, structuring seeks to filter out particular aspects of the material and to make a cross section of the material under ordering criteria that are determined in advance. (2014: 268 - 269)

In our research we have used the inductive category procedure. The categories that we have established are the following: (a) positive and negative feelings towards language learning, (b) similarities and differences between Croatian and other languages known to the students, (c) the usefulness of the experiment and (d) course expectations.

This research project could be defined as naturalistic, intervention research. According to Punch, "In intervention research, the intervention is designed to solve or change some unsatisfactory situation. This unsatisfactory situation is the problem" (2013:6). Therefore, Punch votes for a "questions first- methods later" approach, since the questions are the main focus of the investigation. We comply with this view where the questions are the centre and the main cause of - subsequent empirical research. Closely related to the questions is the matter of substantive theory which is a content- based theory where method does not matter so much, since its main aim is to describe and explain a phenomenon. Our role has been to describe, explain and to propose solutions to educational problems by using research questions and analyzing the data.

#### *3.4.1. Quantitative Research Instruments: Administration*

It is said that quantitative research is more concerned about theory verification and qualitative research deals with theory generation. In our case, these concepts are intertwined in all aspects of the research; we have studied some theory before our research, but we had first chosen the items to be included in our questionnaires, and once we have analyzed the answers, we have come up with results and recommendations that can be transformed into theories. We have never intended or even tried to write a new theory about language learning; we have simply tried to prove that there are efficient ways of teaching and learning foreign languages by backing them up with theoretical background.

Quantitative research offers an array of statistical data and it is about how we see the information in term of facts and figures by setting relationship between variables. Often these parameters scare social researchers since it means mastering formulas and programmes. ( Treiman, 2014:xxx). In our case we have used open –



ended questions and we have coded them as Treiman recommends it. (*ibid*,3) Although, according to this author is very time consuming and expensive we have decided to use these types of questions since this was the only way to find out the solid answers behind our research questions. We have considered that given them a limited number of choices would hinder our research and our main aim to boost reflection during and after the learning/ teaching process.

For each open ended answer we have selected a code, creating a large, extensive and highly complex data base. The example below shows below question number one<sup>94</sup> asked from 2010- 2013. Each individual was number subsequently from numbers 1- 65, then we have assigned a code to each answer namely a,b,c, d and e. In order not to analyze a wide range of answers we have decided to group them according to their semantics, so we ended up with five possible common answers or groups, in this particular case we also show

Q1		
negative feelings( anxiety, shock, nervousness, tension and tiredness)	1	a
positive feelings ( happy, comfortable, relaxed and entertained)	1	b
curiosity	1	c
motivation( interest, like an immigrant in Croatia and enjoyment)	1	d
amazement and fun ( surprise and excitement)	1	e

Figure 3. Semantic groups for question number 1 ( 2010- 2013).

The decision to separate curiosity was that in our opinion could have some mixed meanings being at the same time positive but also it can convey something strange. For us it was impossible to figure it out without contrasting this information with the learners `diary information. We have also, separated the word motivation since one of our research questions is related to validity of the experiment and the motivation for the trainees to participate in it. Amazement and fun were also considered a differentiated variable for its relevance to learning just for fun not to learn.

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<sup>94</sup> Question 1 is: How did you feel?

2011- 2013

Individuals	Q.1					
	a	b	c	d	e	
1		1				
2	1					
3			1	1		
4		1			1	
5		1				
6		1		1		
7		1			1	
8	1					
9		1				
10		1				
11			1			
12		1		1		
13					1	
14	1					
15		1				
16		1		1		
17		1				
18		1				
19				1		
20		1			1	
21		1				
22		1			1	
23		1				
24					1	
25				1		
61		1				
62		1				
63		1		1		
64		1		1		
65		1		1		
Total	7	41	5	22	10	85
%	4%	24%	3%	13%	6%	50%

Figure 4. Sample of coding open- ended questions. (2010- 2013)

Similarly Vrettou ( 2014) for his doctoral thesis about Greek speaking strategies in Greek context has been inspired by : " (Aaker, Kumar, and Day 1995, cited in *ibid*,6) the study, which was conducted for a doctoral thesis, was comprised of two parts. In the first part, quantitative data were collected through cluster sampling; in the second and third parts, which are to be reported here, individual short and long interviews were held respectively through the method of simple random clustering." When doing social research the most effective way to find out real and relevant information about how we learn languages ( in our case) and about the potential of reflective practice a mix between quantitative and qualitative research is the only possible methodology.

The four components of the study have been the following ones: a) the relationship established with the participants was as objective as possible, in all 3 years students did not know which language they were going to learn and they had

no knowledge of Croatian , the lessons were practically the same <sup>95</sup>and the feedback sessions as well.

After each lesson and after answering the semi- opened questionnaire we have asked them about the experience itself and what they remember and why, b) the selection of setting has been unchanged throughout the 3 year experiment, we have chosen the Applied Linguistics II subject due to the fact that back then it was the only subject in the degree in English language and literature that deal with foreign language methodology, the students were exclusively the above mentioned students. ( out of 65 students, 60 were of Spanish origin and 5 of German origin),c) the method we have used was the qualitative research method and action research.

The 2003 experiment was taken as a sample for the further 2011- 2013 study, the same researcher has done the experiment and the same lessons were taught.

Year	Number of students	Institution
2003	23	✓ Trinity College of London
2011- 2013	65	
2015	10	✓ ULPGC ✓ Trinity College of London

Figure 5. Research students and institutions

#### *3.4.2. Qualitative Research Instruments: Administration*

The qualitative method has been chosen as the main research method for this doctoral dissertation, since the main topic of this investigation belongs to an applied

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<sup>95</sup> See Appendix II.

social science;<sup>96</sup> linguistics related to reflective teaching/processes. Our investigation has had the aim of discovering and understanding underlying concepts and reflections about teaching/learning foreign languages by working with guided reflection on variables such as motivation, interest and feelings of success or failure when learning a new language. According to Ezzy: [...] qualitative research is useful at assessing and creating theories about meaning and interpretations (2013:3).

According to Ezzy:

The focus on meaning creates a distinctive problem for qualitative researchers. Meaning is not a thing, or a substance but an activity. This makes meaning difficult to grasp. Meanings are constantly changing, are produced and reproduced in each social situation with slightly different nuances and significances depending on the context as a whole. (2013:3)

We have used the quality research method difference suggested by Merriam (2014) as a basis of this investigation. Merriam divides qualitative research into two main categories: basic and applied. The basic one informs about the topic and focuses on its interest in gaining more knowledge, whereas the applied one's goal is to improve the quality of practice by hoping to be heard by administrators and policymakers to better the current situation.

There is another research categorization consisting of five types of research, with two latter ones added by Lather depending on the investigation targets: positivist, interpretative, critical, post structural and postmodern. (Carr and Kemmis, 1995 and Lather in 1992; 2006 cited in Merriam, 2014). Our interest lies in interpretative research which is where we can find qualitative investigation for it has several interpretations of the reality that we are observing." The main objective of this kind of research is to describe, understand and interpret. The reality in this case is context bound and multiple." ( *ibid*, 2014: 11)". As qualitative researchers, we are primarily concerned about the meaning that people convey during an experience and above all the main aim is on the participant and never on the observers. " Qualitative

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<sup>96</sup> Applied social science refers to investigations about people and their behavior in context. In our case, we have investigated e students' behavior in an artificially created classroom context, but at the same time realistic and relevant to foreign language teaching/ learning. (Punch, 2013:9).

research is also called inductive, because observers gather data to build concepts, hypothesis or theories, the theory is built from observation and intuitive understanding gleaned from being in the field. " ( Merriem, 2014:15-16).

Denzen and Lincoln state that qualitative research involves: "[...] an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world to make sense, and is interpreted in the term of the meaning people bring to them." (2008:4; cited in Hennik et al, 2010:9) In the same publication, we can find a clear distinction between interpretative and positivist qualitative research depending on the paradigms. The positivist paradigm is the scientific approach to reality, which measures what is being investigated in terms of facts and stating that we can only measure what we see and the researcher cannot influence. This way is also called epistemological and it consists of the following steps: first the researcher elaborates the hypothesis basing it on the theory or statistics, and then the hypothesis is tested by culling the empirical information and as the last step is to check whether the evidence backs up the previously formulated hypothesis. This approach is the core process for social studies research. Epistemology deals with inductive and deductive ways of acquiring knowledge, since according to Blaikie there is no such thing as pure induction or pure deduction (2007; cited in Ritchie 2013:6). The example that has been given can be applied to this particular research project, when we approach an investigation we need to read first about it we cannot approach it with a blank mind.

Similarly, researchers draw conclusions about any investigation and form theories which have relied on previous investigations. They have tested the hypothesis in an empirical way first, but there have been some observations before they did it. There is another crucial trait in epistemological investigation and it is the relationship between the researcher and the researched. There are two positions that we can adopt: objective observation or value-mediated observation. Other authors advocate the term 'empathic neutrality', which is value conceptions and judgments free, or neutral, so if this is the case then reflexivity is the key. (Ritchie: 2013). Our investigation has been value free and neutral, thus we have eliminated any bias from

the Trinity College Diploma questionnaire.<sup>97</sup> Another important concept is related to acceptance or rejection of the truth or the accurate data. The accepted true or accurate statements are made if this leads to or produces wished-for results. Empiricism and epistemology are necessary terms that need to be addressed in any qualitative research study;. "Empiricism is a philosophical term to describe the theory that regards experience as the foundation or source of knowledge. " ( Apin, 1995:21, cited in Punch, 2013:2).

Epistemology is another approach we have used in this research study and is " a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998:3, cited in Cox, 2007:34). The epistemological approach in this study was constructivism. Constructionists do not create meaning; rather, meaning is constructed through work with the world and the objects in that world" (Cox, 2007:34). An epistemological approach was a suitable approach for this research since we have examined individual experiences and their interpretations of the phenomenon of foreign language teaching/learning processes. The paradigm chosen to examine the analysis of individual experiences and conception was the interpretative paradigm.

The most appropriate way to find the right answer regarding motivation in language learning is by means of qualitative research and content analysis. The main purpose of this method, in this case, is to analyze and explore the motivational characteristics that do not fit within the dominant research paradigm, and thanks to qualitative methods we can find out the patterns and underlying beliefs that form the student's engagement in the learning process. (Ushioda,2001).

If we had used solely the quantitative approach, we would have obtained only measurable outcomes about how much time they spend on certain activities or how much effort they have put into doing an activity. A qualitative research method highlights the importance of categorization. Moreover, this method begins from the view and actions done by the subjects of a study.

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<sup>97</sup> See Appendix I.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into series or representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. ( Denzin and Lincoln; 2005:3 cited in Alvesson and Skoldberg in 2009: 7)

This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It is a kind of reflexive research ( *ibid*,9)

Qualitative research allows us to examine students' experiences in their natural setting; the classroom. This approach caters for contextual influences on the issue that is being researched. The student in his/her diary entry has connected the theory with hands-on experience, hence firmly confirming that what has been taught as pure theory does coincide with her/his own classroom apprehension. This is an added value to the learning process and it is twofold; firstly the students link t theory with the practice to reaffirm the theory and secondly they are able to identify key concepts and to apply them to her/his observation of her/himself and her/his classmates. We could claim that for some moments during the lesson students themselves have become qualitative researchers by trying to give a meaning and context to what was going on in class.

In our case we have used the sociolinguistic method by exploring and describing qualitative data obtained from 65 questionnaires and diary entries.

Ritche *et al.*, ( 2013) give a definition and a list of characteristics of qualitative data research. In this book the qualitative research is depicted as naturalistic, interpretative approach that focuses on examining phenomena from the inside. Moreover, it relies on answering questions such as: what, why and how instead of how many, by highlighting the importance of participants and perspective over other issues. It is an in- depth and interpreted comprehension of the social phenomena of

research subjects by investigating about how they make sense of their experiences,<sup>98</sup> the more we hear and produce, the more integrated on the language we are. This student has come to a conclusion that the methods used were suitable for beginner levels and more importantly for teacher novices; the experience has made this student make sense of what was going on in class. Moreover, the data are detailed, rich and compound with many underlying traits which are then analysed and reflected upon.

Miles and Huberman suggested that:

With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations. Then, too, good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and new integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual framework. ( 1994: 1, cited in Bazeley, 2013:4)

### *3.4.3. Triangulation*

As Denscombe has wisely put "there is no single pathway to good research." (2014:3). Before we carry out an investigation we often wonder which research methodology to use since they are many options. Thus he proposes to the following outline: research logic and rationale, a plan of action and above all to have clear the research problem. ( an aim that we want to achieve with our investigation) (*ibid*). From the very beginning we have believed in the aims since the main researcher has experienced it as a trainee and two years later she has taught the ULE to a group of TESOL teachers- to- be. The first year the ULE was so successful that she was appointed teacher trainer for Trinity College of London Diploma. We thought that it was worthwhile to investigate ULE phenomenon seeking mainly to train more effective and reflection prone future teachers.

Given the complex problem that we have wanted to address the only option that we have had was the choice of mixed method or triangulation. *Carter et al.*, cite Patton ( 1999) " Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources

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<sup>98</sup> *I also believes that the method Daniela uses is useful both for beginning teachers and beginning students as well: Learner's diary questionnaire 2011. ( Reproduced verbatim)*



in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena.” ( 2014:545) and add “ Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources.” (*ibid*).

Our main data analysis approach is a qualitative one, to the fact that we have wanted to explore and explain a phenomenon, but we have combined it with a quantitative approach for the purposes of triangulation. Some questions were limited to yes/ no answers although students have added some comments, while the vast majority of questions were open-ended ones. Validity of gathered data is an important issue in any investigation and taking into account that we have used triangulation<sup>99</sup> to interpret data we need to apply the cross- over analysis. Grbich has given some recommendations how to do it:

- reducing dimensionality of either data set ( quantifying to the basic)
  - integrating data display ( visual presentation of both sets as one)
  - transforming data ( qual to quant, numerical codes) and quant to qual ( themes for analysis)
  - correlating data ( results from quantitising and qualitatitising)
  - consolidating data ( merging multiple data sets to create new codes, variables)
  - comparing data ( comparing findings)
  - integrating data (integrating into one or two sets of data)
  - using warranted assertion analysis ( seeing meta inferences from both sets)
  - importing data ( using follow up findings from quantitative to inform qualitative and vice versa)
- ( 2012: 34)

In our data analysis we have reduced the data dimensionality, integrated the data display, transformed the data, compared, correlated and integrated them. We have decided to analyze both questionnaire responses and diary entries, so the gathered data are of multiple types. This means that they need to be analysed using different or multiple approaches. We can affirm that not only are the data different in content but also in the way they were gathered. The questionnaires were answered

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<sup>99</sup> “Triangulation is the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point.” ( Marshall and Rossman, 2010:146 cited in Glanz, 2014:36.)

immediately after the ULE experience and the diary entries corresponded to a compulsory part of the evaluation of the 'Applied Linguistics II' subject from the degree in '*Filología Inglesa*' ('English Language and Literature') offered at the ULPGC, which were delivered to the class teacher on line some days or weeks after, meaning that these subjects had much more time to contemplate on the experience. Due to these premises, we have had to adapt several ways of interpreting data: mostly qualitatively, but also quantitatively. Moreover, we have analyzed the same data by examining the content and the statistics of the answers. We have offered a qualitative content analysis about the answers and diary entries. Once we have done that we have labeled the answers into similar groups (codes) which were then analyzed quantitatively (expressed in graphs and percentages).

By offering the data examination by using two different approaches we offer a deeper grasp into the investigated phenomenon by backing up the statistics with explanations and vice versa. For example, the quantitative data analysis has shown that 54% of the students felt interested, motivated and comfortable during the lesson. If we only analyze the pure figures we can miss the facts why did they feel that way and the main reasons were: teacher's attitude, methods, increased interest in learning this language, I wanted to know how far I could go, wanted to know much more. The validity of these findings lies in the fact that the right methodology and creation of interest by using a motivating and suitable context can achieve excellent learning outcomes and enhance cognitive skills in any learning process. We have used this experiment to prove that thanks to better understanding of the learning process we can train more efficient teachers. We are aware that there is no a single theory behind the question: How do we learn languages? mainly due to its complexity and the fact that only one science can explain the phenomenon, but we can affirm that there are more successful methods than others; such as the Communicative Approach and reflection. Moreover, by cross-checking the data we have underpinned our main objectives of this dissertation, especially this one: to show the validity of CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better and more

efficient professionals. For example, the Trinity College students asked about the ULE experience 10 years after had only positive feedback.<sup>100</sup>

These contributions clearly show that the experiment was a valid one for their teaching careers and the most valuable trait is that they have discovered it on their own thanks to a hands on experience not by reading about right ESL methodology. Some of them had doubts about the ULE and felt nervous at the beginning of the lesson; nevertheless all of them confirmed at the end that the experiment has helped them to prepare more motivating and interesting lessons at any language level and at any age. The main roles of research questions according to Punch:

- they organize the project and give it direction and coherence
- they delimit the project, showing its boundaries
- they keep the researcher focused during the project
- they provide a framework for writing up the project
- they point to the data that will be needed. ( 2013: 65)

The questions that we have chosen for this piece of work are not simply data collection, but research questions that have managed to guide the project and offer a solid framework for data analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

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<sup>100</sup> See Results chapter 4 : *so I felt the methods I learnt on the course were particularly relevant and useful here ( China),/I think anyone training to be a language teacher should experience this./ By using diff teaching implements to teach and group activity helps communicate the 'lesson' and allows easier understanding./ For me, learning is an active process, not something that happens passively in isolation./ I certainly lived the experience of being a language student and learned the importance of relating the language to the lives of real people./ Revisiting language points and having the students produce them is also important for learner progression./ you can always find something positive, even if they make mistakes./ Always favour the communicative approach, it really works.*







**4.RESULTS**

*Apart from learning a new language I focused my interest on how Daniela built up the lessons, how she interpreted her role and how she was guiding and linking one theme with others. This time I realized about the intention of these lessons and about the research that Daniela was developing. I will try to subtract some points of her lessons and apply in my future lessons.<sup>101</sup>*

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<sup>101</sup> Learner diary contribution 2011 (Reproduced verbatim).





In the following chapter, we are going to present both quantitative and qualitative data from the two different, yet related, research periods (2011-2013 and (2003 and 2014/15) based on similar Unknown Language Experience experiments which were integrated into two initial teacher training courses as we have described in the previous chapter.

The first research period that we shall focus on relates to the experiment carried out with ULPGC students during their 'Applied Linguistics II' lessons during a three-year time scale, and with three different groups. The latter shows the results from questionnaires completed by 'Trinity Diploma of London' students in 2003, and these very same students were asked the very same questions between twelve and thirteen years after their initial ULE in order to explore the beneficial effects of their ULE training over more than a ten-year span.

Having analysed the data from the 2003- 2014/15 period, we have realized that the ULE experiment seems to be worthwhile, and we shall therefore attempt to illustrate in this chapter, by means of the data we have gathered, the reasons why we believe it could be included in other teacher training courses as an obligatory component, especially in the case of university undergraduate teachers-to-be.<sup>102</sup> As we have already described in Chapter 3, we have used quantitative data from diaries, structured open-ended questionnaires and classroom observation as our research tools in this project in order to illustrate the perceived effectiveness of reflective practice for pre-service teachers.

The students who have participated in our experiment had the unique opportunity to analyse their own learning processes and also to examine the strategies and techniques they have used to be able to participate and understand what was going on in the ULE classes. Without being conscious of their cognitive

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<sup>102</sup> In fact, some UK universities, such as Aberystwyth University, are using ULE as a compulsory part of their university TESOL modules. In the case of Aberystwyth, out of 100% of the subject grade, 30% is assigned to the ULE experiment. ULE is assignment number 1 and the FL input corresponds to two hours. The main part of the assessment is to produce a reflective report on language teaching and learning.

processes, they have, however, showed their awareness of some of the processes inherent in foreign language learning. In our case, and as we shall see in more detail in the current chapter, our research data does show that reflective practice, as well as the unique opportunity for teacher trainees to analyse themselves and others while learning foreign languages, should be the core part of any teacher training course. This is well illustrated when reading the comment made by one 2003 Trinity College Diploma trainee who has reflected upon the ULE experience some 10 years after the Trinity College Diploma course, subsequently stating: *In China, most students learn languages in a very formal way, lots of rote learning and very little communicative speaking practice - it's a big problem here in fact - so I felt the methods I learnt on the course were particularly relevant and useful here.* The experience of being in your own students' shoes, although only for a short period of time, gives you a valuable insight into learning foreign languages, especially at beginner levels. The strategies and techniques used for absolute beginners can thus be primarily communicative by making sure that after each lesson they learn some communicative chunks of language that can be used in everyday conversations in real-life contexts.

Before commenting on our data in more detail, we shall make some general comments. For example, we did hope that we would find some answers, clues, or ideas with regard to the following question: "How is it that some people can learn a second language or a foreign language so easily and do so well while others, given what seem the same opportunities to learn, find it almost impossible?" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:130). We can affirm that in our data we have discovered some traits and characteristics that can explain this aspect of the foreign language learning process. One of these valuable aspects is motivation and interest, the pillars of any effective EFL lesson. To further support this statement, we have to mention Krashen who revealed that "[... ] language anxiety impedes the learner's foreign language production and achievements.(1985; cited in Kojima,2007:8). Our students did feel anxious at the beginning, but possibly due to our selection of an appropriate teaching methodology we can affirm that we have been able to overcome our subjects' initial sense of anxiety.

Students who are anxious may learn less and not be able to demonstrate what they have learnt. At the beginning of our ULE experiment, due to the fact that the language was totally unknown for our students, feelings of fear and anxiety arose. However, towards the end of the lesson, all of them felt confident and no longer frightened.<sup>103</sup> Not being able to participate or feeling exposed in the classroom by having to say words that you have never heard before, can cause a lot of stress and affect learners' self-esteem and confidence. However, according to some of our subjects' diary contributions after the experience, anxiety levels were getting lower towards the end of the lesson.

Action research procedures allow us to work on 'problematizing' and addresses moments in class when the teaching/learning process is not effective. If we use action research, we do not merely state what has gone wrong but we also question why so we try to find solutions to the ineffectiveness we have detected. Burns claims that "The central idea of AR is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes, and even better, improvements in practice" (2010:2). An example of this from our own project might be that teachers who continue to use Grammar Translation techniques in contemporary classrooms do not attempt to cater for the basic needs of learning a language: communication. These techniques are still very-much used at secondary education levels nowadays, and it seems that the teachers using them do not see what harm they are doing to students, some of whom even start hating English due to inefficient methodology and a complete lack of motivation on both sides. In the words of one of our research subjects, *'It is an important theme in my personal dialogue because I am completely against of following grammar books as the Christians follow the Holy Bible. I hate that process of teaching because I felt depress when I was studying primary and secondary school. So many English teachers made fun of me in front of my classmates and I think that this is the main reason why I hate grammar, but not only in English also in Spanish and French. [...]*<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See Graph 1.

<sup>104</sup> Learner diary contribution 2011.

Burns also mentions that Action Research is based on information or data, not on some hypothesis or impressions, making action research investigation base its results and finding on solid information. The improvements that arise from Action Research are reliable; therefore it is highly recommendable if we wish to be effective teachers. With respect to the current study, although it is not an action research study itself, the diary entries we have explored and analysed seem to correspond to solid information, not only about the experience itself, but also about foreign language teaching/learning processes in general: In the words of another subject: *I think that it was very useful to show us that people can learn a foreign language forgetting about other languages and with a complete exposure to the target language at least in class, as well as how different teaching methods work.*

#### **4.1. Data Presentation**

Our data are going to be presented in the form of graphs and tables<sup>105</sup>. We have used the 'Microsoft Excel', spread sheet software to display and analyse the data. Peakall and Smouse (2012) highlight the usefulness of the 'Excel' programme for small scale studies in teaching. In our case, we have coded the data (see Figures 1 and 2) and used 'Excel' spread sheets to create the graphs and tables that are presented in this study. We have also used content analysis procedures to analyse our diary data, which is a method used in qualitative research to illustrate the meaning of analysed texts. Although at the beginning it concentrated mainly on the frequency of certain words within the given information.

Due to the brief nature of the current study, we will only focus on the data we have gathered in relation to our ULPGC subjects' reflections on the Communicative Approach lessons given to them in Croatian in the three-year research period from 2011 to 2013. In order to establish a relation between the unknown language trial at the ULPGC and the compulsory part of the Trinity College of London course, we collected 10 questionnaires from 2003 and we invited those same ten students to answer the exact questions the students were asked in the years 2011, 2012 and

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<sup>105</sup> See the Tables in Appendix XI.

2013, but this time years after their Unknown Language Experience. Apart from grouping the structured questionnaire answers for quantitative purposes, learner diary contributions were also analysed. The latter were analysed by assigning the percentage used for Trinity College Diploma students' feedback in 2003/ 2015. Throughout 2014, thanks to social networking media, the author was able to contact some of the Trinity College course students from 2003. Ten of those students still kept their journals/ diaries from 2003 and were willing to answer the same questions again as they had answered twelve years previously. One example of that original journal can be seen as Appendix X. It is important to highlight the fact that all of them are working as teachers, mainly in China and Scotland (for more information about these results, see section 4.2).

In the ULE experiment, we have enhanced (self) reflexivity behind teaching by asking the subjects relevant questions about teaching practice and learning. According to McDonough and McDonough (2014: 38) this AR procedure should not be a conflict between teaching as an action and research as an understanding. The use of qualitative research techniques has given us an opportunity to interpret, and not merely quantify, how people feel and express their experiences in a classroom and which meanings they attribute to the active participation and observation. For example, as one of our subjects highlights: *Anyway, it has been a good experience to be in a L2 learner position, and it has useful for us to know what to do or what not to do when we become teachers..... It's quite motivating to know that if I ever meet a Croatian person I will be able to ask them if they like chocolate or pizza, I need a cheap hotel, or what their name is.*<sup>106</sup>

Observation is when you systematically observe the effects of the action you have undertaken, and document the context, action and opinion of those involved. It is the data collection phase where you use 'open-eyed' and 'open-minded' tools to collect information about what is happening. Reflection is when you reflect on, assess and describe the effects of action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue you have explored. For instance, one of our

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<sup>106</sup> Learner' diary contribution 2011. ( Reproduced verbatim)

subjects illustrates this aspect of reflective practice: *She based the introduction of new structures on the Audiolingual Method, with activities of repetition and drilling (choral, individual, with a ball, dialogues...) and an implicit focus on grammar. Moreover, I think she also turned to CLT to consolidate what we had already drilled, with flashcards of famous people and slides that presented dialogues with an information gap to work in pairs. In addition to this, when she was introducing new terms of vocabulary or new cultural concepts, she elicited from us, thus engaging our attention.*<sup>107</sup> This diary extract is in itself a thorough insight into teaching strategies and techniques, since the student has been an “open-eyed” observer who not only participated in the experiment, but also took notes about methodologies as a result of this experience.

#### *4.1.1. Research Period 1: 2011-2013*

This research period comprises a span of three years of the research carried out at the ULPGC with 65 students in total. We invited them to participate in an absolute-beginner-level lesson of an unknown language (Croatian) and apart from that, they took notes, as well as observed themselves and their peers in a unique experience of witnessing how we learn foreign languages. In the following subsections, we are going to present graphs which reflect the research culled data culled

#### *4.1.2. Quantitative Data*

Quantitative data are presented in graphs, showing the frequency of the responses to our questionnaire items. These answers were also grouped semantically as a means to make the data analysis clearer for interpretation. With respect to our primary research instrument, the semi-structured open-ended questionnaire whose design we have described in the previous chapter<sup>108</sup>, five out of the total nine

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<sup>107</sup> Learner’s diary contribution 2011. (Reproduced verbatim).

<sup>108</sup> See Appendix X.

questions are included in the follow-up questionnaire,<sup>109</sup> and for the purposes of this study the following five questions have been chosen to be analysed in more depth:

Q.1.How have you felt?

Q.2. What methods, strategies, activities, and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?

Q.3.Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?

Q.4. What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?

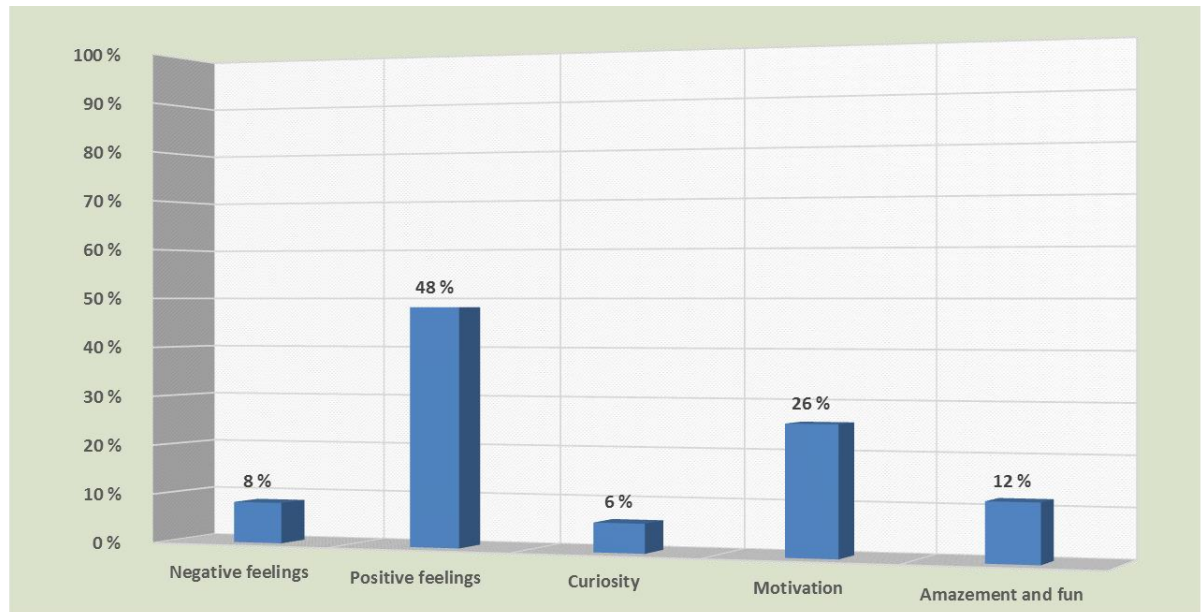
Q.5. Which were the teacher's objectives?

Every possible response given by the students was assigned a letter so that we would be able to group them accordingly in order to establish the most common answers and their frequency using the 'Microsoft Excel' software to collect and classify the responses for their posterior analysis. Once the answers were labelled, we transferred them to a data base containing each question with the range of all its equivalent answers so as to be able to discover the frequency and similarities between the replies. Once the data was transferred into graph form, we realized that we should group the answers instead of giving each single reply separately in order to facilitate analysis. For example, for item 1 we have established two main types of response: those of having (i) positive or (ii) negative feelings about the ULE experiment.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> After the ULE we asked them nine questions, see the original Trinity College Diploma questions in Appendix X. We have chosen only five to analyze here since they correspond more directly to our research questions.

<sup>110</sup> See Table 1 Appendix XI.



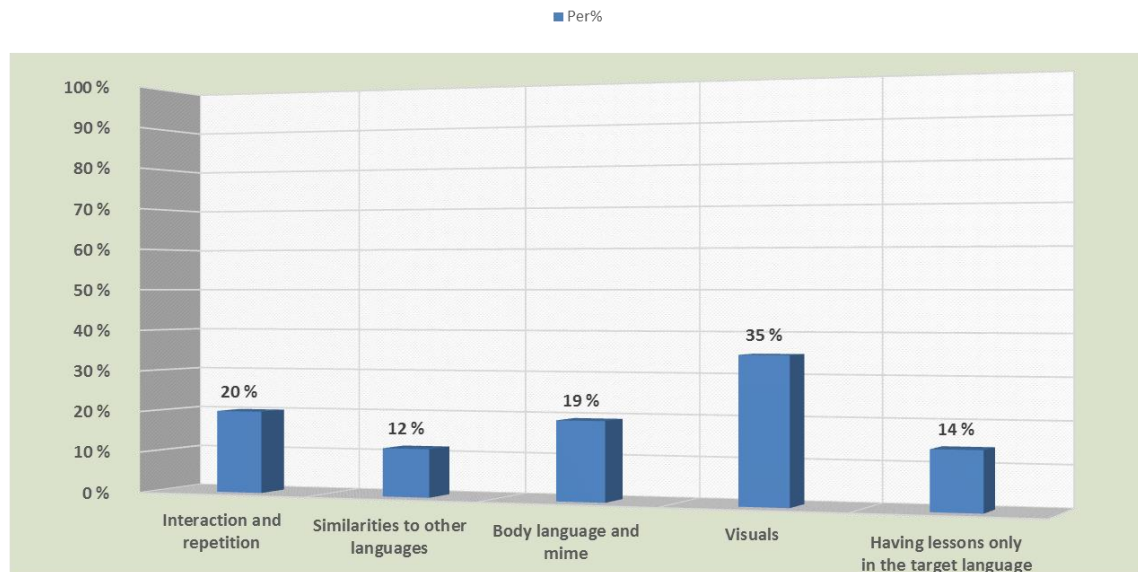
Graph 1: Question 1 (How have you felt?)<sup>111</sup>

The data collected for item 1 in relation to the 2011- 2013 research period, it seems that that positive feelings outweigh negative ones significantly (85% compared to 8%)<sup>112</sup>. Yet, although feelings such as curiosity, motivation, amazement and fun are positive ones, we have decided to separate them here since they express diverse underlying issues about the experiment. The first one, curiosity, and the second one, motivation can be almost considered synonyms since both express the desire to know or to learn something. The latter constructs of amazement and fun, in spite of the fact of having positive connotations, do not concern our current study, and therefore we have decided not to comment on them here. In total, 92% of the students expressed positive feelings towards the experiment. The remaining 8% account for negative feelings (anxiety, shock, nervousness, tension and tiredness). These students did participate in the experiment, but did not feel comfortable and in their diaries they have expressed that they prefer studying alone without being asked to participate in public (we shall explore this aspect further in our subsequent analysis of the qualitative data).

<sup>111</sup> See Table 1 in Appendix XI.

<sup>112</sup> For us all the positive adjectives are included in 85% except amusement and fun, which do not really reflect any feelings but just the fact of having fun.



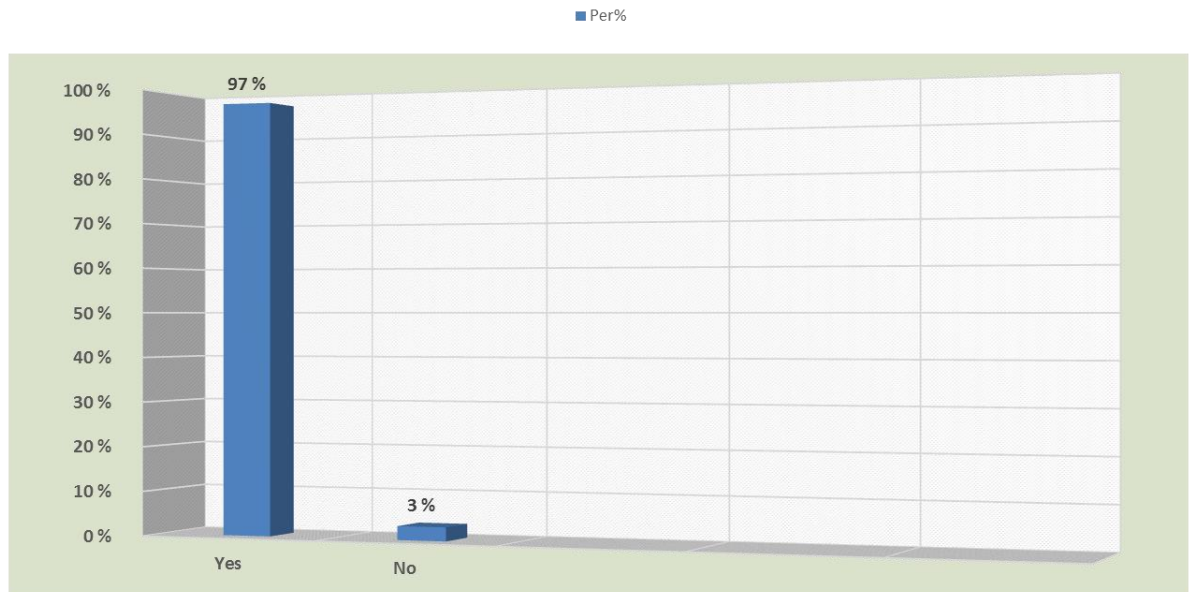


Graph 2: Question 2 (What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?)<sup>113</sup>

The results show that our subjects seem to be mainly visual learners (35%) and that repetition and interaction are also the main aids to comprehend an unknown language. Therefore, thanks to this ULE, these subjects have discovered their preferred learning styles which is useful not only for reflecting on how to improve language learning, but for thinking about learning in general. We also need to mention that only 14% consider that the use of the L2 can help to understand language input better.

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<sup>113</sup> See Table 2 in Appendix XI.

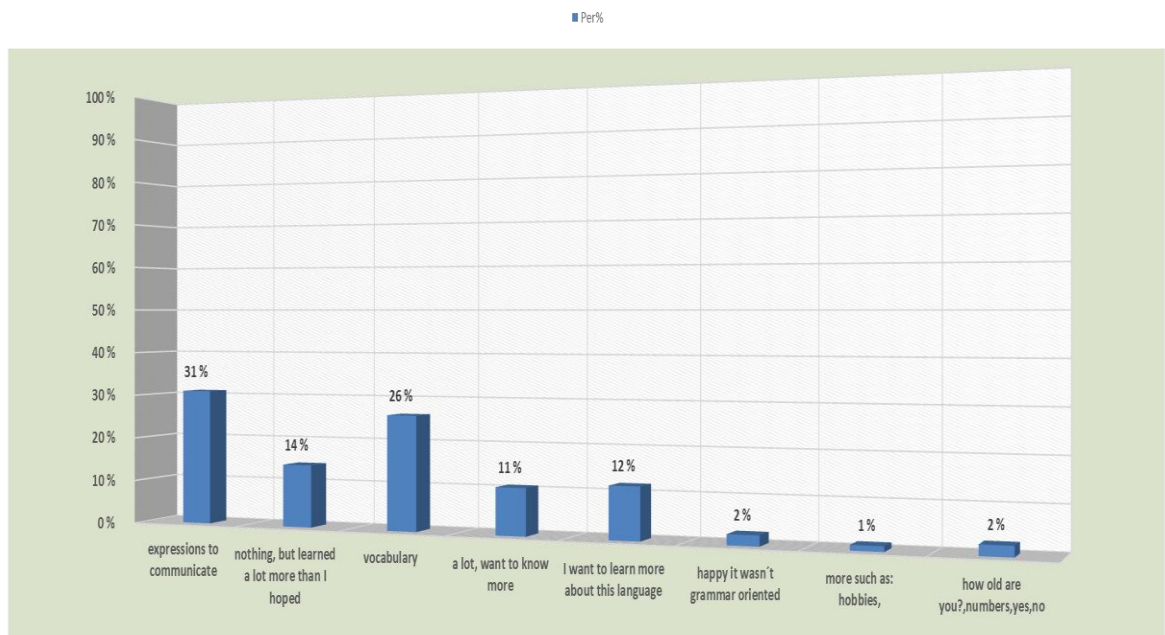


Graph 3: Question 3 (Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?)<sup>114</sup>

In response to this particular question, almost 100% affirmed that they will use the strategies since they found them useful, whereas the 3% refers to one of the students from the previous item who felt uncomfortable during the lesson. Not all of them most a vast majority a part from affirming the question have added the word 'useful'.

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<sup>114</sup> See Table 3 in Appendix XI.



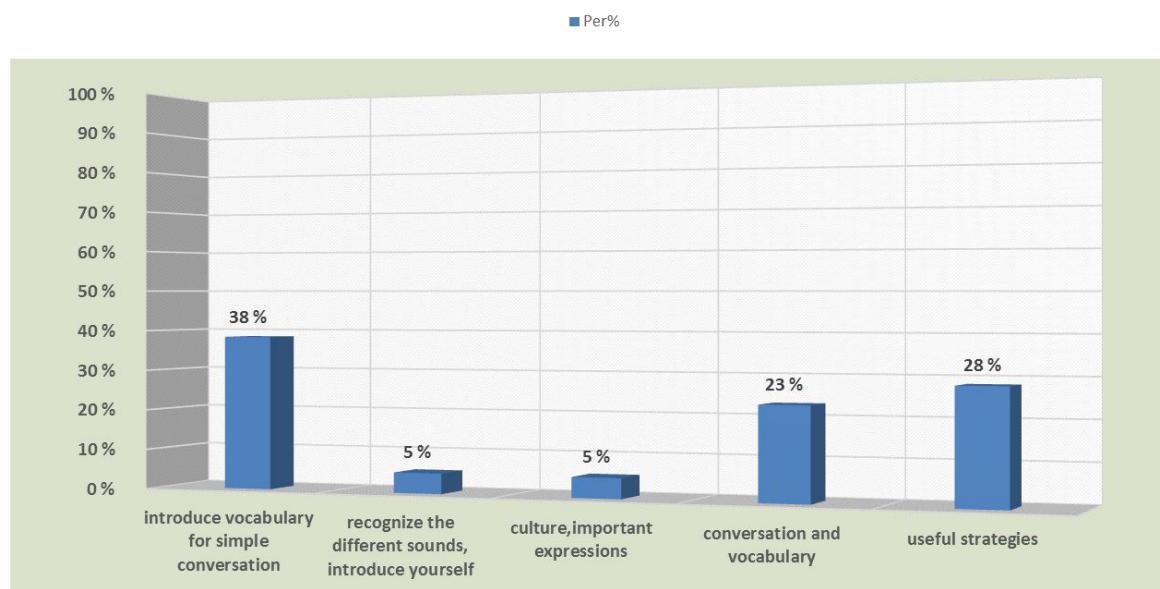
Graph 4: Question 4 (What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?) <sup>115</sup>

The results obtained for 'expressions to communicate and vocabulary' (31% and 26% respectively) demonstrate that the use of a lexically-based Communicative Approach seems to be effective since more than 50% of the students affirm that they have acquired necessary lexis to be able to communicate at a basic level in only one hour. In our study, both explicit and implicit learning took place, as it was never our intention for student to memorize or to remember the unknown language words, but it has happened naturally since they have participated actively in the experiment as if they were real students of a foreign language. Also, in our ULE experiment every single word was an unknown word, but the context was conveyed through images, mime and repetition. In order to make the experience even more challenging after teaching the alphabet at the very beginning of the lesson and drilling the sounds, at the end of the lesson the students played 'hangman' with some of the new vocabulary and did really well, taking into account that they did not know any words previously.

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<sup>115</sup> See Table 4 in Appendix XI.

Creating an appropriate context in the classroom was essential to elaborate an illusion of being in the country of the language spoken in class; hence the cultural context, the videos, famous Croatians and photos that were included as further learning aids. It seems that students who experience this kind of vocabulary learning might retain more words and for a longer period.



Graph 5: Question 5 (Which were the teacher's objectives?) <sup>116</sup>

It is encouraging to see that the answers match the previous data results perfectly, with the aspects of vocabulary and expressions to communicate accounting for 61% of the total responses. Also, almost 30% have highlighted strategies instead of mentioning lexis and social features.

#### *4.1.3. Qualitative Data*

In the following sub-section, we shall proceed to present the qualitative data we have obtained from the learner diaries by means of content analysis procedures. In total, 92% of the students expressed positive feelings towards the ULE

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<sup>116</sup> See Table 4 in Appendix XI.

experiment.<sup>117</sup> As we can see from the comments above taken from the post-lesson questionnaires, the subjects reacted positively when facing a lesson in a language they had never heard before, as well as learning about a country they had previously scarce knowledge of. Therefore, some context had to be created to catch their attention and to invite them to participate. It is always a good idea to contextualize anything we teach and to teach meaningful phrases or sentences. This can be illustrated in the following comment from the following sample diary contributions from the subjects corresponding to this research period:

- *I felt as if I were an immigrant in Croatia*
- *At first I felt stupid and shocked, because I did not understand the teacher, but during the lesson I became very comfortable because it was not so difficult as I thought.*
- *Entertained and curious, I wanted to know more and I wanted to talk.*
- *At the beginning of the lesson I was a bit confused, because I did not understand anything, but later I realized that the professor was using good methods.*
- *I felt happy and comfortable.*
- *I felt really good (happy, surprised) the teacher (her attitude) made me feel really comfortable. I felt excited and curious; I wanted to know how far I could go learning a new language in the first day.*

From our perspective as the teacher-researcher, it is highly rewarding to read these lines and to see that the ULE has been beneficial for them as novice teacher trainees. The key aspects that need to be highlighted in these contributions are those of creating participation by means of a safe environment, pair work, the need for output, having a fun and relaxing lesson, and economizing language items. Whether you teach children or adults at any level, it is crucial for students to feel at

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<sup>117</sup> See Graph 1 and Table 1.

ease which makes them willing to participate without thinking about possible mistakes.

Regarding strategies, techniques and methodology they have mainly highlighted the use of mime, gestures and visuals. Most of the subjects seem to have been satisfied with the ULE and their expectations were met.<sup>118</sup> The context created and the vocabulary taught made sense, grammar as such was not taught explicitly, but they did unconsciously acquire, for example, personal pronouns, possessives, question words, the present simple form of the verb *zvati*, the pronouns 'this is' / 'these are', how to ask "how are you?" and reply, and, of course, the form of greetings for saying 'hello' and 'goodbye'. Therefore, we feel it is relevant here to reproduce some of our subjects' comments by means of illustration:

- *I did not hope anything, and I think I learned more than she wanted us to pick up. Though she did not write down I picked words as ima ( have/has), otok (island) and srtze ( heart). I wrote them as they sounded to me.*
- *I learnt easy and useful vocabulary and I want to learn more of this type of vocabulary.*
- *As I did not know what language I was to learn I hope whatever about that. At the end, I learned some knowledge about Croatian language that I find very interesting in order to introduce myself and be able to communicate something in this language.*
- *I hoped a first contact with the foreign language but I am very surprised because in one hour we learned a lot more than I hoped.*
- *I hoped to learn a new kind of language but that was even better.*
- *I didn't have any idea what I was going to learn and I think I have learned more than I expected.*
- *I thought I was not going to learn anything but in the end I learnt how to have a dialogue with another person.*

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<sup>118</sup> See Graph 2, table 2.

- *I learned: introduce myself, and ask other's names, express feelings and I hope to learn more.*
- *I hoped to learn how to say " hello " and " goodbye " ( single words, very basic) but I've learnt much more, whole structures for asking questions and useful vocabulary.*
- *I would like to learn more vocabulary and thing about Croatia I have learnt vocabulary and the main questions when we learn a language (what's your name?).*

These undergraduate pre-service teachers evidently appreciated the ULE experience by also highlighting the following useful aspects:

- *visual and audio aids are essential*
- *how to teach a class of absolute beginners*
- *the importance of interaction and body language*
- *productive techniques that motivate students to participate*
- *communication is the key*

During the oral feedback session after the class, our subjects also stressed the essential role of catching students' attention with engaging materials and how to make them speak without feeling on-the-spot.

Additionally, almost all of them agreed that they would use the very same strategies and were amazed by the amount of information they could retain and learn by only using the target language.<sup>119</sup> Since " *very useful*" was the most common answer by far, we have decided to list some excerpts from their diary contributions that correspond to the 'usefulness' category or label.

- *I will apply all of them. I think they were fantastic.*
- *I've learnt how to start a class for beginners.*

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<sup>119</sup> See Graph 3, Table 3.

- *Yes, I will use visual material and also the interaction exercises.*
- *Yes, I love all that have a relation to visual learning because I am a visual learner.*
- *Yes, I think these techniques are very productive and help to facilitate the learning.*
- *I will be concern about how students feel so I will able to apply specific techniques. In the case of introduction to the language, I saw that visual activities plus communicative teaching is compulsory.*

As we can see from the comments above taken from the post-lesson questionnaires, the subjects reacted positively when facing a lesson in a foreign language that they have never heard before, as well as a country they had previously scarce knowledge of. Therefore, some context had to be created to catch their attention and to invite them to participate. It is always a good idea to contextualize anything we teach and to present phrases or sentences in a meaningful way. The activity where they had to guess famous Croatian people or inventions was challenging, but we consider that it is very important to know something about the culture and history of the language that you are presenting. All of them agreed that they would use the very same strategies and were amazed by the amount of information they could retain and learn by only using the target language. This can be seen in the following diary excerpts:

- *I could understand pretty much everything. Images and gestures helped a lot. I am left with a bit of curiosity to continue the learning of this language.*
- *Daniela made it very easy; she used different types of activities that helped us acquire the language very easily.*
- *I think that the hour was very productive in terms of language acquisition.*
- *I am motivated in order to learn a new language and the explanations were very easy. We did some practise that allow us to feel more comfortable with it.*



Regarding what they have learnt<sup>120</sup>, they expressed the fact that they have learned much more than they have initially thought. Here are some comments to illustrate this:

- *I was amazed how much we learnt in only one hour, there was a lot of repetition of course, but it was necessary.*
- *I did not expect much, at the end I am pleased with the vocabulary that I have learnt, I could go to Croatia and greet people, ask them how they are and answer back, this makes me really satisfied with the experience.*
- *I learnt enough to get by for some time at least.*

Thanks to appropriate strategies and the use of a Communicative Approach, our subjects seem to have acquired much more than they originally thought they would be able to. Also, here we can relate to the concept of 'flow' coined by Csikszentmihalyi and his optimal experience theory. If the students are experiencing 'flow' it means that they are concentrated on the task and that they are going to take full advantage of it. It is an example of intrinsic motivation; there is a full immersion since the task was not pitched too high or too low and the students have had all the necessary skills to be able to participate in the lesson.

With respect to their perceived objectives<sup>121</sup> our data suggests that they mainly concentrated on what they had learnt and not so much how and why they had learnt it. For example:

- *We learnt some basic concepts and did a small conversation between us.*
- *It's quite motivating to know that if I ever meet a Croatian person I will be able to to aske them if they like chocolate or pizza, I need a cheap hotel, or what their name is.*

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<sup>120</sup> See Graph 4, Table 4.

<sup>121</sup> See Graph 5, Table 5.

- *We learnt how to greet people, how to introduce ourselves and other people, how to conjugate the verbs "to be", and how to express how we are feeling.*
- *Moreover, the structures and vocabulary we learned will be useful to us if we would go to Croatia one day.*

From our data, it seems that participating in the Unknown Language Experience is a unique opportunity to develop reflective criticism towards ones' own learning and teaching processes. If future teachers get used to using reflection thanks to reflective techniques such as those promoted by the ULE, then it is highly probable that they are going to continue doing it in the future. This experiment should enable them to construct meaning and to determine their level of reflective engagement. Moreover, it should help them to make right decisions in the classroom and to develop the practice of critical and the active, ongoing habit of reflection.

By choosing a definite context for teaching an unknown language to three groups of students over a three-year period, we have created an appropriate scenario to intervene by acting and reacting according to the ULE learning process:

*I assume that the unknown language experience was provided in order to illustrate how our knowledge of grammar informs our ability to make L1 and L2 analogies to learn structures when being confronted with a completely unfamiliar language.<sup>122</sup>*

This was one of the most common comments throughout the three-year experiment, too. Our subjects seem to have been very aware of the troubles pupils encounter when learning a new language and the first reaction is always to make sense of what you are experiencing and to relate that to your L1. Apart from this coherence, our subjects have mentioned another difficulty:

*Moreover, it is more difficult for me to remember the first time I was spoken in English maybe because my English lessons used to be in Spanish. And that*

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<sup>122</sup> 2011- 2013 period.

*is the main problem teachers face nowadays. My English classes used to start by the theory and grammar lessons that were taught in Spanish of course... One of the aims of the ULE is to show that there is no need to use L1 to comprehend lexis and grammar rules hence the experiment is taught by using only L2.*

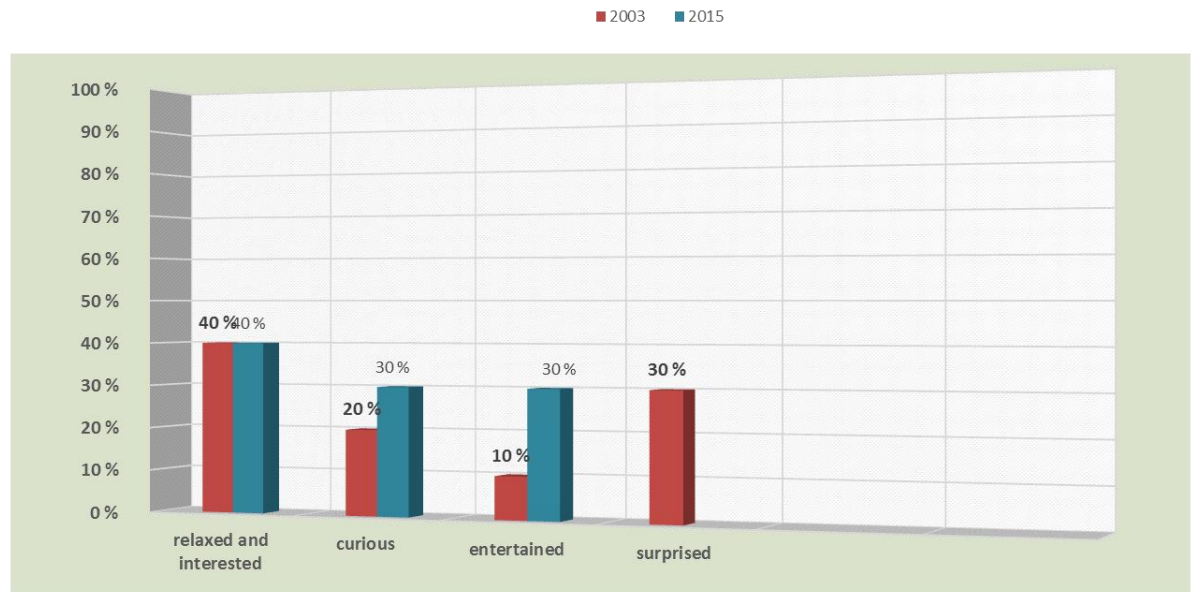
In our opinion, these results, and our subsequent initial conclusions, clearly show that our goals have been achieved. In the words of two of the participants in this research project:

- *I certainly lived the experience of being a language student and learned the importance of relating the language to the lives of real people*
- *The most important lesson from the experience was being able to relate to learners; not just ESL learners, but anyone in a classroom environment. Fundamentally it helps me empathise with children and informs my classroom teaching.*

#### *4.2.1. Research Period 2: 2003-2014/2015*

This research period comprises a span of eleven/ twelve years. The first research experiment was in 2003 and was carried out for the Trinity College of London students with 23 students in total. They have participated in an absolute-beginner-level lesson of an unknown language (Croatian) and apart from that, they took notes, as well as observed themselves and their peers in a unique experience of witnessing how we learn foreign languages. Thanks to the social media we have found ten of them who still kept the original diaries and were willing to answer the very same questions after more than a decade of the original experiment. In the following subsections we are going to present quantitative and qualitative data.

#### *4.2.2. Quantitative Data*

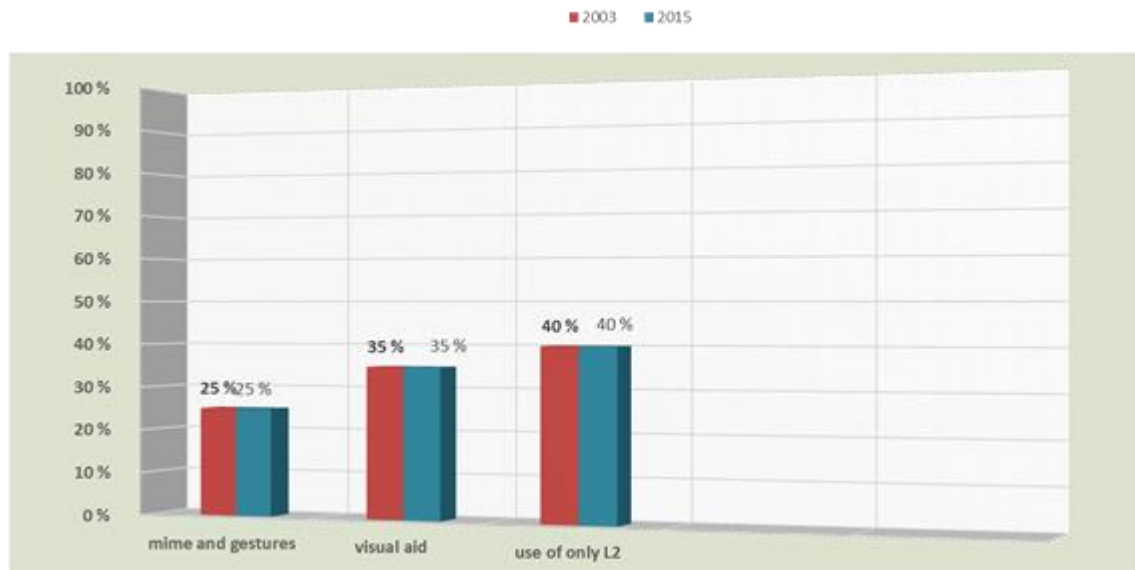


Graph 6: Question 1 (How have you felt?)<sup>123</sup>

For these subjects who were participants in the Trinity College of London Diploma training course from the 2003 research period, only positive feelings such as 'relaxed', 'interested', and 'entertained' can be perceived in their questionnaire responses. It shows us that positive feelings correspond to the most frequent in both cases, accounting for almost 50%, and 'amazement' and 'fun', with approximately 12%, were the same given answers. Once again in the responses to the same questions obtained from the same subjects in 2015, we have only positive feelings expressed in the following terms: 'best part of the course', 'very useful' and 'memorable'.

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<sup>123</sup> See Table 6 in Appendix XI.

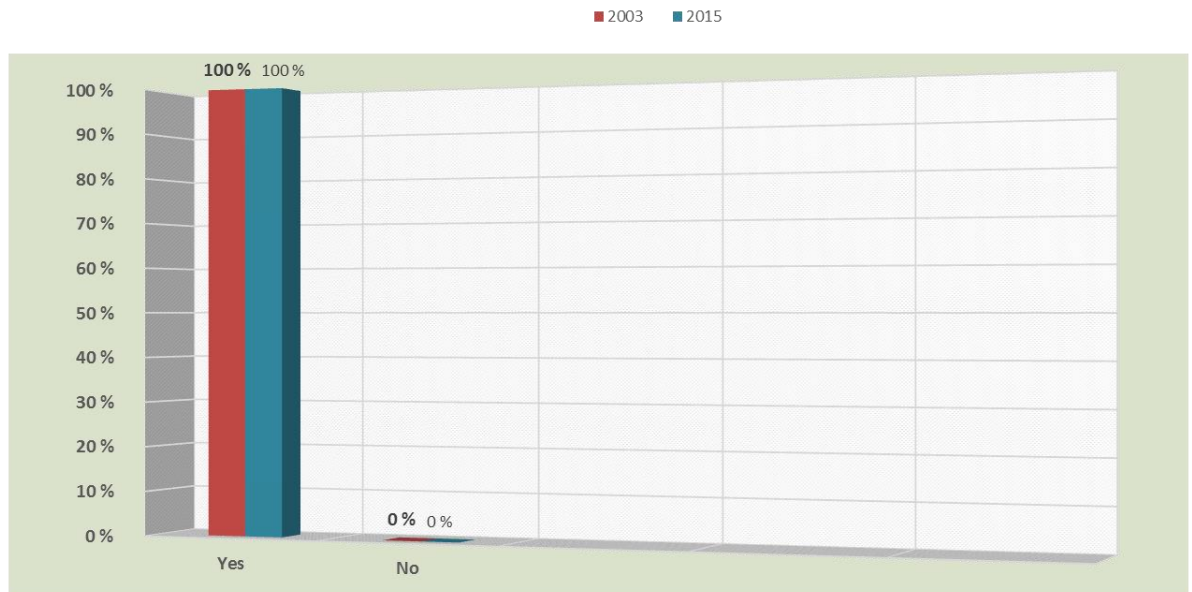


Graph 7: Question 2 (What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?)<sup>124</sup>

Here, we can encounter surprising positive responses to this question: the most popular was 'because you have used only L2 (40%)', which was followed by visual aids (35%). The same responses were offered eleven or twelve years after the original ULE: 'visual aspects' (35%) and 'body language' and 'mime' represent approximately 20%. In 2015, 40% answered 'use of L2' and the other 60% account for 'visuals' and 'concept checking'.

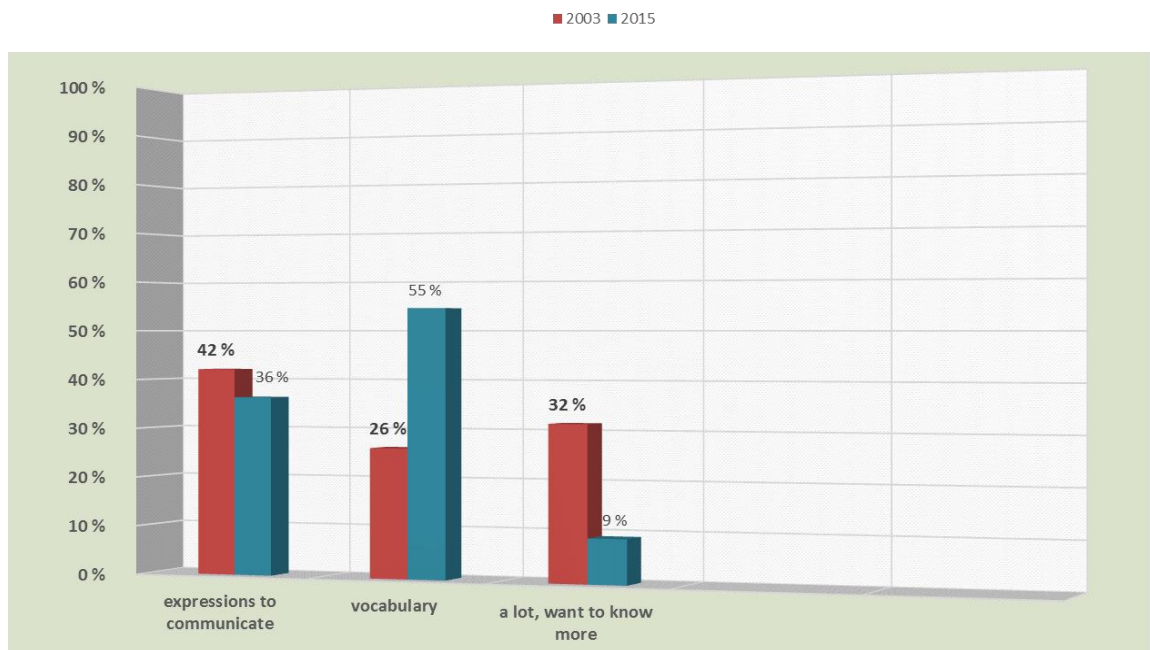
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<sup>124</sup> See Table 7 in Appendix XI.



Graph 8: Question 3 (Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?)<sup>125</sup>

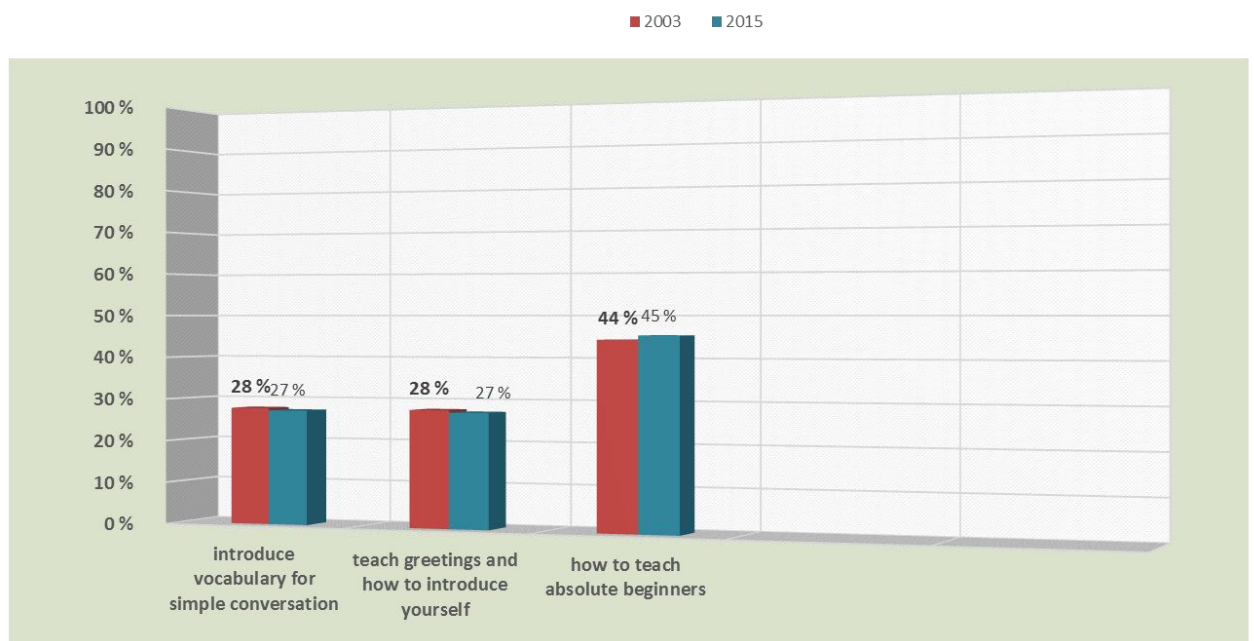
In this case, the results are exactly the same as the ones obtained in 2015 as 100% of the subjects answered 'yes' to this question.



Graph 9: Question 4 (What do you remember now/ what did you learn?)<sup>126</sup>

<sup>125</sup> See Table 8 Appendix XI.

'Communication' and 'vocabulary' account for 68% of the given answers in 2003 and it shows that 'vocabulary' and 'expressions to communicate' were the most common answers (between 26% and 42%) in 2014/15. Moreover, 91% state 'basic vocabulary' and 'expressions'.



Graph 10: Question 5 (Which were the teacher 's objectives?) <sup>127</sup>

56% match the previous answer and approximately the other half talk about how they have learnt how to teach beginners. The responses obtained in 2015 support the previous data (28% and 38%). Also, 72% answered 'the right methodology' and 27% 'to be able to socialize'.

The quantitative data show us the frequency of given replies and we can see that only positive feelings were present in the experiment. The use of L2 was considered as a key to learn an L2 for the first time followed by visual help. Moreover, all of them will and have used the strategies since they have found them highly useful and for they have experienced those strategies too.

<sup>126</sup> See Table 9 in Appendix XI.

<sup>127</sup> See Table 10 in Appendix VIII.

### 4.2.3. Quantitative Data

With regard to the qualitative data obtained for this research period, we shall present here a selection of diary entries that match each question asked and the quantitative data described above. Content analysis of these above-mentioned contributions has revealed semantic groups and key words. For example, for the first area of feelings as we have mentioned before, only positive feelings were felt by the subjects: 'confidence', 'excited', 'keen', 'positive reinforcement', 'feeling good' and empathy. For the second questions, we have found the following categories: 'pair work', 'scaffolding', encouraging students to talk', 'creating a friendly atmosphere', 'the power of gestures and 'visuals', VAK', 'interaction patterns' (teacher- student, student- student), 'paralinguistics' and 'multiple intelligences'.

For the first question about feelings, we have selected the following contributions:

- *[...] I had no confidence that I would be able to use them spontaneously, but I did.*
- *I felt surprised above taking into account that I could understand what was going in class as well as my classmates.*
- *I felt excited to learn and keen to impress the teacher (I'm a bit of a sycophant).*
- *I never felt intimidated or over-whelmed as the teacher (you) fed us words cautiously using lots of repetition and positive reinforcement.*
- *I felt good and the most important lesson from the experience was being able to relate to learners; not just ESL learners, but anyone in a classroom environment. Fundamentally it helps me empathise with children and informs my classroom teaching.*

As we can see from these sample comments, positive feelings are present in our Trinity College of London Diploma students. Moreover, here we have some key concepts that we should highlight, such as the role of positive reinforcement when



learning, being able to relate to learners, and the importance of empathy. We can always find something good in any students' participation, either written or spoken, and we should not concentrate only on mistakes. If we do not pinpoint performance mistakes, then we create a safe environment for students to produce 'comprehensible output'. The need to be able to relate to learners and to be empathetic towards them can be learnt through experience such as the ULE. If we do not understand how our students are feeling in class, how can we teach them more effectively?

For In relation to the second questionnaire item about methods, strategies and techniques that help us to learn an L2 we have discovered the following comments from the original diary entries:

1. *make sure the student understands what he is being taught - being lost in a language lesson is an unpleasant experience, getting the students to practice with each other is important - in fact, the more speaking the better, keep the lesson friendly and relaxed, this atmosphere is much more conducive to learning, keep it simple and get the basics taught first.*
2. *The teacher spoke nothing but Croatian but her use of hand gestures, signals and simple pointing at items made it very easy to understand.*
3. *Involving students physically in the learning process, games, handouts, quiz type tasks allowing us to have many ways of retaining the info as we have diff attachments to it.*
4. *I remember substantial variation of task: teacher led, teacher-to-student and then student to student. There were listening, speaking, reading (and possible writing) tasks. There was an attempt to reach all learning styles through use of VAK (visual, audio, kinaesthetic)- maybe a bit of Howard Gardner here. The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm.*

As we have seen before, 100% of our students gave a positive reaction to the demonstration strategies used in class. Here we have some questionnaire answers<sup>128</sup> that support the quantitative data we have already presented:

- *Yes, I have used some strategies with beginners and advanced learners, for example using famous people, dialogues, noughts and crosses to revise among others.*
- *Always favour the communicative approach, it really works. Facilitate learning in all 4 skills.*
- *Yes, I use a lot of great, well done,( was it bravo?) and do not ever say no, you can always find something positive, even if they make mistakes.*

The strategies that they learnt eleven/ twelve years ago were in a absolute beginner context and it is interesting to see that some of them have also later used by them for advanced levels since they are perceived to be relevant and motivating activities. Fostering all four skills should be the main objective of any lesson and it is closely related to the previous question VAK learning styles and Gardner's MI theory. Also, positive reinforcement should always be present in class, as a means to fostering a more relaxed environment and making sure that students feel able to participate. Question Item 4 from the questionnaire is related to the essence of the learning process (What did you expect to learn and what did you learn?), and is closely related to item 5, since that would be the teacher's objectives: what should students know at the end of the lesson? This is the reason why we have gathered these answers to further support these aspects:

- *Overall, I found the whole Unknown Language element very interesting and useful - it was one of the most enjoyable parts of the course.*

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<sup>128</sup> In case of 2015, we have asked them the same questions are requested that they wrote a bit more like a diary. The contributions were much shorter than back in 2003 since after so many years it was difficult to recall every single detail.

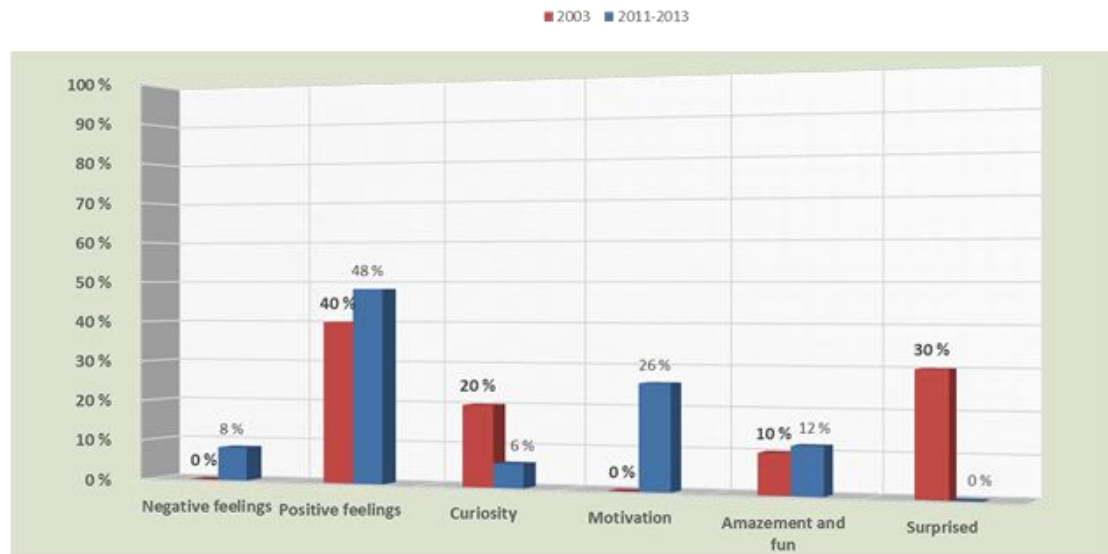
- *Also, I still remember some basic vocabulary, very basic thanks to efficient teaching.*
- *I get away with the sense of satisfaction for being able to follow the lesson and participate. And the objectives were to teach us some vocabulary and expressions to get by if we ever go to Croatia. I am sure we would.*
- *I realized that it is an amazing experience that my future/ current students are going to/ have experience(d), so I relaxed and got away with some simple expressions, greetings, and how to introduce yourself.*
- *I remember studying Vygotsky whilst completing my teacher training and I often thought about the ULE as a great example of scaffolding: creating an environment that allows a student to operate at their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). If you had introduce too much language, we would have been overwhelmed; similarly, too little and we would have been bored. You pitched the ULE perfectly to our needs and behaviour.*
- *I teach secondary kids, which is challenging as you well know, so knowing the theory about the learning process (see my previous answer) and the ULE are the perfect match to become a teacher, do not dare to say here good teacher. Ok, I do good teacher.*
- *I certainly lived the experience of being a language student and learned the importance of relating the language to the lives of real people.*
- *Right now, I am not teaching, but I am still pursuing a teaching career and I think that your objectives were what I wrote before teach us some basics and show us that it is possible to teach without using just the target language.*

- *I remember long nights filling in the questionnaire and writing up the diary, studying together and having fun above all. I believe that your objective was to show us how to teach beginners, and when to use certain strategies.*

Some of these former diploma students remember more *what* they learnt, and other remember more *why* they have learnt it. One of them mentions Vygogtsky and his ZPD. The concept of ZPD is crucial in any learning process and it is related to scaffolding, mainly as it shows how to be effective teachers. It involves encouragement provided by the teacher, who gradually lets their students perform more independently.

#### **4.3. Research Periods 1 And 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

In the current project, we compare the data obtained from these subjects (2011-2013) to those obtained from a similar previous ULE experiment with Trinity College Diploma Students in 2003. In this case, 100% of the subjects described the experience as a positive one, and, once again, we separated the feeling of 'curious' from the rest, as well as that of 'surprised', since in our opinion it might have some negative connotations, but when we analysed the qualitative data from the diary entries, we could see that it implied positivity above all.

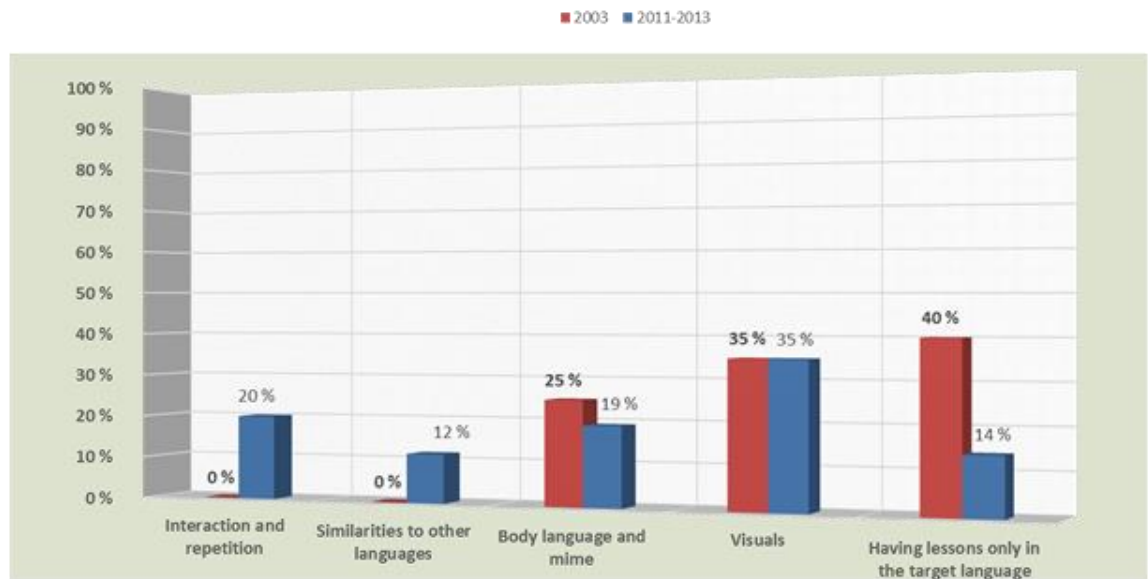


Graph 11. Question number 1: (How did you feel? 2003-2014/2015 and 2010-2013)<sup>129</sup>

Both time periods show most positive feelings accounting for almost 50%, another common trait are the feelings of amazement and fun (10 % and 12%). Motivation is equal to 0% in 2003 since no student has mentioned this word or concept, it is not a negative feeling just a lack of mentioning this aspect on behalf of 2003 subjects. The same phenomenon we have with the concept surprised since 201- 2013 have not mentioned that word/ concept.

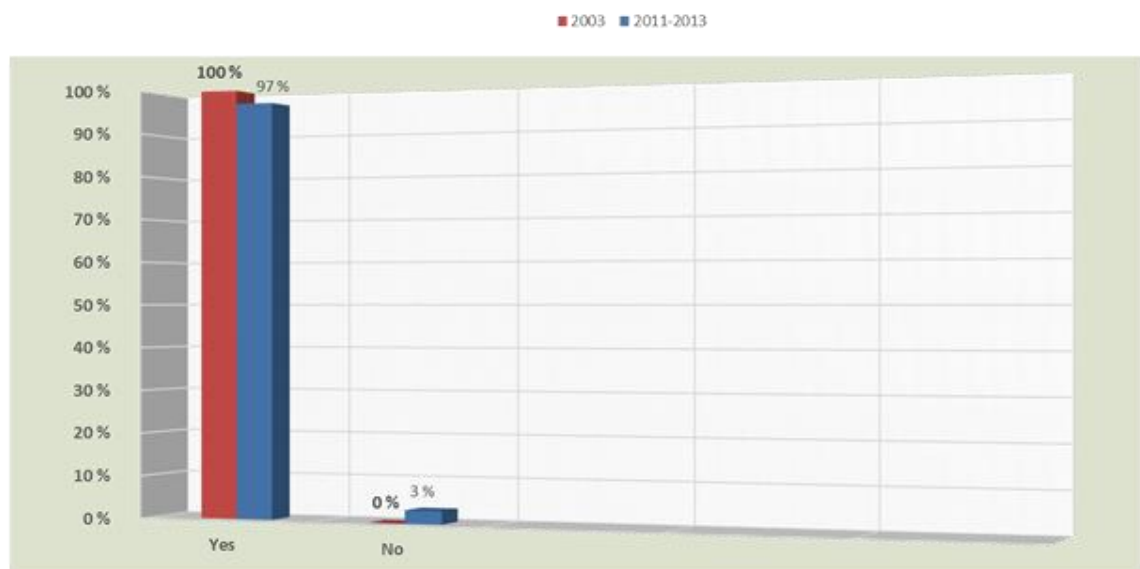
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<sup>129</sup> See Table 11 in the Appendix XI.



Graph 12. Question number 2: (What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?)<sup>130</sup>

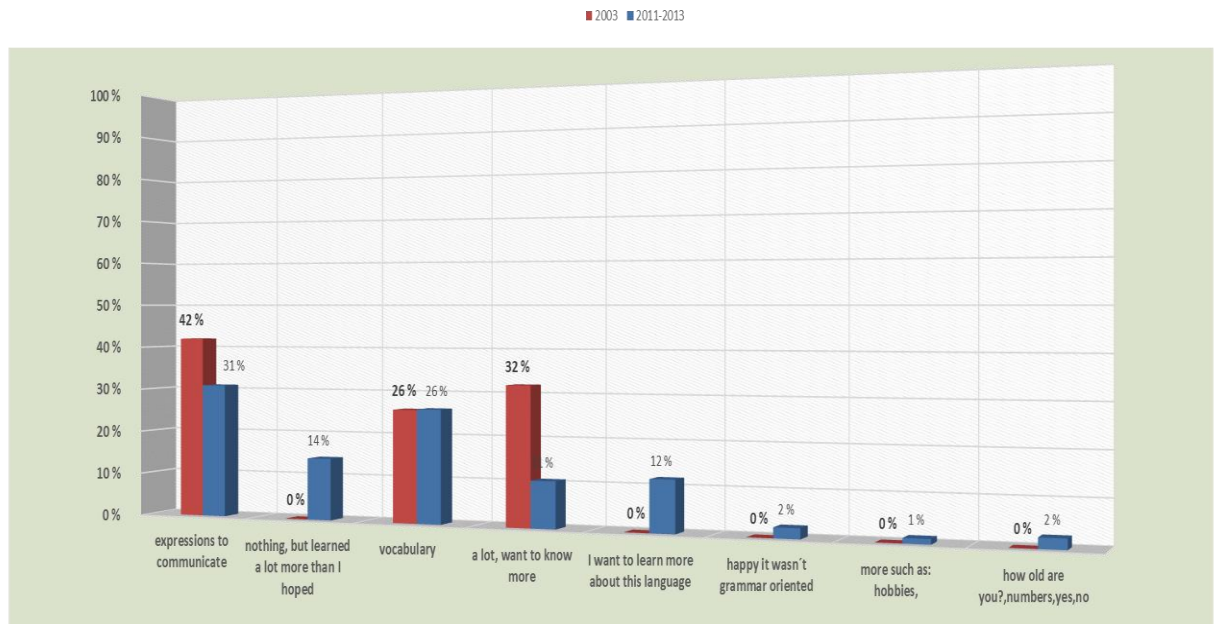
Visuals are the most popular answer in both time frames (35%) followed by body language and mime (25% and 19%) respectively. Similarity to other languages was the most distinct feature between both groups. (12% and 0% respectively).



<sup>130</sup> See Table 3 in the Appendix XI.

Graph 13. Question number 3: Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching? <sup>131</sup>

Both ULE show that future teachers are going to use the strategies with a slight difference of 3 % in the case of 2011- 2013.

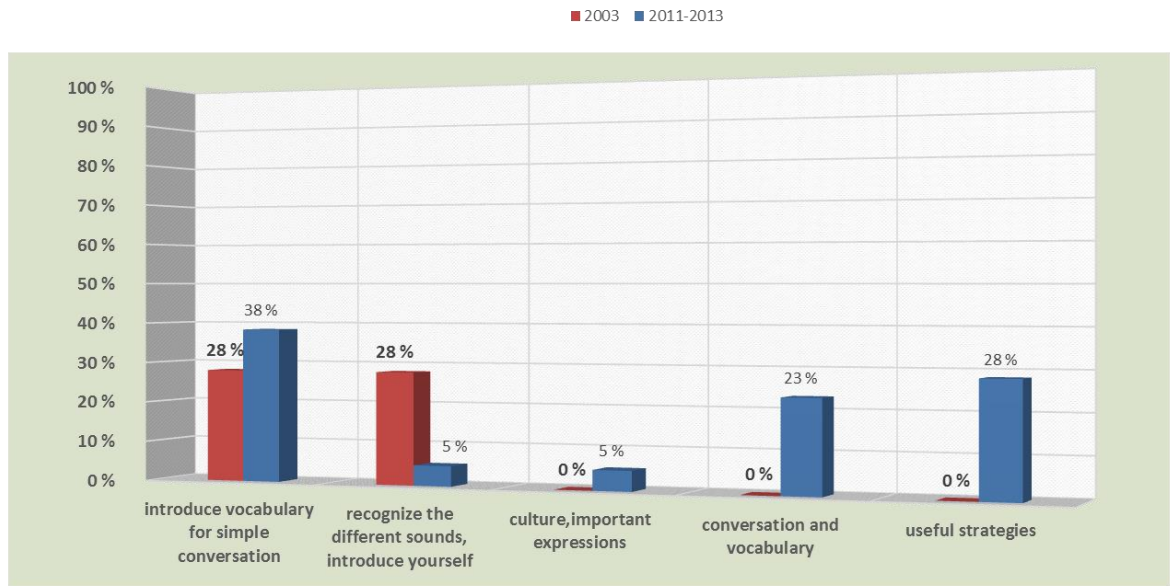


Graph 14. Question number 4: ( What do you remember now/ what did you learn?) <sup>132</sup>

Vocabulary in both cases was the same answer; we can also affirm that expressions to communicate have similar results with only almost 10 point difference. The main difference was when referring to the fact they have learnt much more than they have expected, in 2011- 2013 it was almost twice less than in 2003. ( 32% and 11% respectively).

<sup>131</sup> See Table 13 in the Appendix XI.

<sup>132</sup> See Table 14 in the Appendix XI.



Graph 15. Question number 5: ( Which were teacher ´s objectives?) <sup>133</sup>

Regarding objectives the introduction of vocabulary for simple conversation have almost the same results with 10 point difference ( 28% and 38%).Conversation and useful strategies as well as useful strategies had the biggest data difference, in both cases 2003 students did not mention these aspects whereas 2011- 2013 refer to these concepts with 23% and 28% respectively.

Here we mention again the aspect of motivation and learning is the question that Gardner and Lambert have asked themselves:

“How is that some people can learn a second language or a foreign language so easily and do so well while others, given what seem the same opportunities to learn, find it almost impossible?” (1972:130)

The answer to this question is still open, because there is a necessity to measure it and to break it down into several components. Regarding motivation and the positive aspects of ULE here are some comments from our 2011 students: *create communicative situations, forced or not./use a litter higher level of the target language/ no L1/ we integrated quickly in the lesson and started participating without realizing it. / how to deduce meaning from mime, repetition and visual aid /*

<sup>133</sup> See Table 15 in the Appendix XI.



*now I understand why I have some lack in knowledge in some subjects and I know now how I want to teach /the importance of context/ correction and praise with tact/ stimulate curiosity and interest/.*

Moreover, our subjects did not only participate as learners, but they also reflected on the experience which is something that they were not able to do when they learnt their first second language. In this case, the Unknown Language Experience is aimed at future English teachers during their training period.

*Now, I can understand why I have some lack of knowledge in some subjects and now I know how I want to teach. I have had different experiences with methodologies. Now, I know that are different and easier ways to learn a new language."/I think that you as a student have an opportunity to experience the first steps to learning a new language a short beginner's course may either motivate or demotivate students."/It was interesting. I learned from the student's point of view, which methodology is more useful to start teaching a brand new language, and which one is not so useful"<sup>134</sup>*

There is no better way of understanding the learning process than being a part of one and observing in order to take full advantage of the experience. The ULE can be easily reproduced in any teaching context, and not only in L2 ones. Due to the participation in the Unknown Language Experiment, our future teachers have had the chance to examine core aspects such as aptitude, interest, or motivation, as well as to assess concepts and their possible (mis)conceptions about learning and teaching. The unique opportunity of being able to observe yourself and your classmates while learning a language should be a compulsory part of any teaching training and a part of teaching methodology courses at teacher training faculties as a way forward to being able to improve foreign language teaching practices.

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<sup>134</sup> These contributions are from the feedback session after the experiment. They were given a final questionnaire about the experience as a whole.

#### 4.4. Triangulation and Initial Conclusions

Triangulation method has helped us to see beyond mere figures, graphs and numbers. We have been able to address our objectives and research questions and therefore confirm our hypothesis about the validity of CRP and ULE in teacher training courses.

It is important to highlight, as we have seen in our subjects' contributions in their responses to the open-ended questions from the questionnaires and their reflections in their learning diaries in both research periods that if we investigate a complex phenomenon such as learning foreign languages, then as a investigation method we cannot use only one method because it would fail to show the full picture behind the data.

Here we remind the reader about our objectives and research questions:

1. How effective is Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training?
2. How valid is CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better, and more efficient, professionals?
3. What might the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) be in teacher training courses for the promotion of teachers as reflective practitioners?

We have learnt that students are aware of some theoretical issues about the nature of the foreign language learning process, and, more importantly, they are going to use this knowledge, or have used it. Since we cannot separate learning from teaching, FL teachers can only really be considered competent if they are aware of the complexity of learning. Our students can do so only if they reflect upon the learning process, and thanks to their experience with the ULE, we have discovered that they are aware of the importance of their student's expectations, beliefs, learning styles, feelings and assumptions about learning foreign languages.

We have found out that some students felt uncomfortable at the beginning of the ULE process, but thanks to encouragement and appropriate teaching strategies

they have overcome those initial negative feelings, as their own future learners might be able to do. Moreover, being in your learners' shoes is an unparalleled experience that cannot be replaced by reading or listening about strategies or techniques that really work. They have reflected upon the learning process itself on a metacognitive level, and offered some very valid answers to the questions posed. In addition, they believe that the Communicative Approach is an appropriate method for learning languages, since it caters for the innate human need to communicate and to be a member of a group or community. It promotes real contexts and interpersonal or discursal features, so it is not surprising that students prefer or benefit most from this kind of teaching.

Learning about your preferred learning style can only help you to learn in an efficient way. Another important aspect should be taken into account and this is language learning beliefs: what students and teachers believe to be the best way to learn a foreign language. By participating in an ULE, these beliefs can be explored and, as a result, foster more effective and productive learning. Essentially, the ULE shows teacher trainees that they should be learner-centred rather than teacher-centred.

Here, we shall go back to Chapter 2 in order to revisit this quotation: "There is no such thing as an unreflective teacher" (Ziechner :207; cited in Gore, 2015:69). Initial teacher training is the perfect time for teachers-to-be to start reflecting and adapt a critical attitude towards the learning and teaching process. If they do so, they can not only provide a positive change in their own classrooms, but also question the educational system they work in, and even the pre-established contents and ways of teaching that are imposed by the authorities. We have to affirm that there has recently been a positive turn in the Spanish context we work in towards more reflective, student-centred learning, with greater emphasis on 'learning to learn', which is a move forward, but it is still in need of improvement.

The disappointing results achieved by Spanish students in educational reports that we have described in Chapter 3 do have solutions and one of them might be for teachers to become more aware of the nature of the foreign language learning

process and to comprehend its complexity. If we strive to be more effective teachers, then we have to reflect as well as plan, communicate, manage and evaluate as a part of the process of instructing our students. Incorporating an awareness-raising ULE component in teacher training programmes might enable learner teachers to become more efficient reflective practitioners in the future.

The sample diary contributions and open-ended questionnaire answers we have selected once again confirm the importance of triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data since when analysing quantitative data; we cannot obtain a full insight into the complex process of learning languages. In this case, these students mention scaffolding (*keep it simple and get the basics taught first.*), learning styles (VAK), and a highly important strategy that any teacher should use with their students since it ensures solid and sequential progress from using simple words to complex sentences. This phenomenon is connected to the way we learn our L1. Additionally, knowing our own learning styles can be beneficial, not only for language learning but for learning in general. Nowadays, we cannot imagine any lesson preparation or discussion of competences if we do not mention Gardner. His Multiple Intelligences theory shows us that all of us are different in the way we approach tasks and learning, so in class we should cater for all these different kinds of intelligences, ensuring that our students do learn and, even more importantly, learn to learn more effectively. These students have managed to get inside the cognitive process of learning and extract the main traits of any effective teaching/ learning process.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

*I assume that the unknown language experience was provided in order to illustrate how our knowledge of grammar informs our ability to make L1 and L2 analogies to learn structures when being confronted with a completely unfamiliar language.<sup>135</sup>*

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<sup>135</sup> Learner's diary contribution 2012. Reproduced verbatim.

The Unknown Language Experience (ULE) seems to be a unique opportunity to develop reflective criticism towards ones' own learning and teaching processes. If future teachers become accustomed to using reflection thanks to the inclusion of reflective practice offered by participating in a ULE as part of their training, then it is highly probable that they are going to continue doing it in the future. This experiment should enable them to construct their own meanings and to determine their level of reflective engagement, and these findings are going to influence their future teaching and pedagogical abilities. Moreover, this experience should help them to make appropriate decisions in the classroom and to develop the practice of critical thinking as well as the active, on-going habit of reflection. According to Ellis, teacher's cognition influences highly the way they act, since they hold their own theories about how to learn languages, but sometimes these beliefs come into conflict with something that Woods (cited in Ellis, 2012: 12) has called 'hotspots'.

Due to their participation in the unknown language learning experiment, future teachers have the opportunity to train their own abilities to assess concepts and (mis)conceptions about learning and teaching. Reflective thinking is essential for any teacher, no matter the level of their experience, because if teachers reflect upon the foreign language learning and teaching process, then they can take control and make decisions which will affect the success of their own teaching practice. As a result, teachers should become more skilled or able professionals, and even act as change agents in the educational system.

Our participants in the Unknown Language Experience considered the experience to be highly valuable and meaningful, despite the initial stress of the situation and some elements of discouragement at the beginning. The objective of the project was not to learn Croatian,<sup>136</sup> the unknown language we used, but to

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<sup>136</sup> We ask the reader to consider here the idea of not learning Croatian *per se*, but learning new language items was obviously one of the main objectives. If the subjects learnt and remembered some words even many years later, then our research objective was achieved.

analyse and reflect upon one's emotions and feelings about the language learning experience, to observe both good and bad practice, and to learn from them each.<sup>137</sup>

The project could have caused frustration among the subjects, especially taking into account that we were teaching adults who are often competitive, but this is not necessarily negative. If the trainees are frustrated, then they are going to know how their students will feel if they cannot communicate or answer questions in class. The teacher's task is to try to find ways and techniques to take the frustration level to the lowest point. If language instructors are aware of discouragement during the sessions, they have to be able to turn this situation into a positive experience. The most important issue is being capable of reading students' feelings and emotions in order to be able to respond immediately.

We have tried not to influence our subjects' responses in our research instruments as much as we could by avoiding any referral to subjectivity towards the experience, but it was impossible due to the nature of the questions we asked and the nature of the context. For example, in the words of one of our participants, *[However,] I was highly aware that we were in a highly restricted and artificial language environment. This felt safe, knowing we wouldn't be exposed to any unpredictable language or situations.*<sup>138</sup> This contribution shows that the students were well aware of the specific context created just to demonstrate how to explore (in) effective language teaching or learning. Despite knowing this fact, they still felt safe and willing to participate.

There are some quintessential traits of interpretative research procedures that are relevant for the analysis of our own investigation since our data and outcomes are characterized by the following features: (i) the data are words and not numbers, and (ii) the outcomes identify and explain behaviour, actions and beliefs. Our investigation has worked with words as well as quantitative features, and we have also observed the way our subjects experienced and reacted to a created and highly controlled situation or context which was realistic at the same time. The context was

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<sup>137</sup> Here the initial stress mainly refers to the ULE done using Audio- Lingual method and Grammar Translation. These two methods were used only in 2011, and we did not include the research data in this current work, but we do consider important to mention them.

<sup>138</sup> Learner's diary contribution 2014/15.



learning an unknown language without any other input than the target language itself accompanied by contextualising visuals: as Krashen reminds one of our participants, *"In the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful"* Stephen Krashen.<sup>139</sup> This reflection shows the perfect symbiosis between what our subjects have learned during their lessons in the 'Applied Linguistics II' subject at the ULPGC and the ULE. The learning theory and different methodologies that the 'Applied Linguistics II' students have learned about and discussed has proven to be highly appropriate for being able to analyse the language teaching and learning process more precisely. The reflections upon what they have experienced are an essential part of any qualitative research for both the researcher and for the investigation subjects themselves.

### 5.1. Study Limitations and Further Research

Golebiowska (1985) criticized the ULE in terms of the perceived lack of validity of a simulated class and its inability to motivate participants who have no use for the unknown language in their lives (Hyatt 1999:1). The validity of the ULE has been put in doubt due to the fact that unknown language learning is not the aim of the experience; also, it is considered that pre-service teachers do not have enough expertise to be able to analyse their feelings and reactions. She poses several doubts about the experience:

1. Is the motivation experienced by the trainee comparable with that of a learner?
2. Might we not quite unwittingly be causing frustration?
3. Are we wasting time?
4. Doesn't the novelty wear off quickly?

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<sup>139</sup> 2011 Student contribution. (Reproduced verbatim).

5. Is there any difference between lessons whose sole aim is to recreate the feelings of a language learner and those which aim to present a specific technique?
6. Can one lesson be characteristic of the whole teaching/learning process? (1985: 1)

Regarding her opinion of the experiment having no use, it is not plausible according to our own data since our participants consider it highly valuable and meaningful despite some initial stress at the beginning. For example, one participant reported that:

*The first day I was lost because I didn't know anything about this language and I didn't know how to react but it was really funny and interesting to learn of that way. Each class was different and that was good because we were more motivated. She helped us when we needed it but she just gave us some clues not the answers<sup>140</sup>.*

The objective of the project is not learning that unknown language, but to analyze and reflect upon one's emotions or feelings about the learning experience, as well as to observe good and bad practice in order to learn from them.

With regard to the questions that she poses, the first one addresses the equivalence between the motivation of a true learner and that of a trainee teacher in the experiment, and I do believe that it can be the same motivation, as we are learners too in the ULE and are perfectly able to experience the nature of motivation and later on apply techniques to foster it in our own future classrooms. The second question is definitely true; we can cause frustration, especially taking into account that we are teaching adults who are mainly competitive, but as we have highlighted above, this is not necessarily bad. If the trainee is frustrated, then s/he is going to know how their students might feel if they cannot communicate or answer questions in class. Therefore, the teacher's job is to try to find ways and techniques to take the frustration level to the lowest point. If the language instructor is aware of discouragement during the sessions, s/he has to be able to turn this situation into a positive experience. For example, students should first work in pairs when answering

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<sup>140</sup> Learner diary contribution 2011. ( Reproduced verbatim)

questions and then give their answer to the rest of the class, if the student makes the mistake instead of correcting and giving the right answer, the instructor can motivate the learner by using praise such as "well done", or "almost" correct. The most important issue is to be capable of reading students' feelings and emotions and respond immediately.

The third question is whether we waste time by teaching an unknown language; I strongly do not believe that after having done it for three years as a teacher trainer and after the experience at the ULPGC (2011-13). Students' contributions are worth reading and analyzing. The fourth question raise the issue of novelty, and once again I am still in touch with my former trainees who still mention unknown language classes and repeat how much they learnt and enjoyed them. The fifth question refers to the ULE lesson objectives by stressing that it should be to teach using the required technique than simply to teach another language. If we do so, then the experience would not be a realistic and relevant one. The last question is an interesting area to explore, and a very difficult one to answer. Most of us speak more than one language or at least we have studied another language at some time in our lives, and that experience influences us throughout our lives. If it was a good experience, then we look forward to learning more languages or studying the one we know in greater depth, but if the experience was bad then we become very frustrated and do not want to repeat the experience. Therefore, my reply would be that one experience does not and cannot count as a characteristic of a whole learning process. Moreover, learners do not only participate, but also reflect upon something that they were not able to do when they were learning their first second language and in this case the Unknown Language Experience is aimed at future English teachers during their training period. There is no better way of understanding the learning process than being a part of one and observing in order to take full advantage of the experience, even when thinking back to previous experiences retroactively. We could also point out the fact that successes can be perceived as a way of pleasing evaluators knowing that it is a compulsory part of the final evaluation in any TESOL certificate course. At the ULPGC this cannot be the case

since their contributions were not evaluated and the feedback answers were anonymous.

The ULE has considerable potential in helping teachers to become reflective practitioners. Until now I have never experienced any negative feedback from trainees neither during nor after the experience. Nevertheless, there can always be some improvements.

What follows are some recommendations for improving our research procedure:

1. The ULE experience should have a clearer outline and include more questions regarding the learning experience.
2. There should be a long feedback session after each session where the teacher and the pre-service teachers could discuss the experience, share ideas and reflections.
3. The reflective journals should be made public by using debriefing sessions with all the trainees as a way of providing a collaborative database of experiences, feelings and reflections.
4. Journals and questions should be more detailed.
5. We should establish a longer and more insightful dialogue with the ULE subject during and after the experience.
6. We should maintain contact with participants after the ULE and after some time ask them the very same questions as we did with the 2003 subjects.

For the first suggestion, we consider that apart from adapting the Trinity College of London Diploma questions we could have added some more of our own with a clearer layout. That is to say, the order of the questions could be more interconnected and correlative, which would allow us to compare more results. The second recommendation refers to fostering reflective practice and CRP, so the long feedback session should be after they have filled in the questionnaires. They could compare the results in pairs and then as a whole group we could connect what they have said with the theoretical background, since thanks to the ULE we have found out that they know a lot about the theoretical issues behind language learning processes. The third suggestion should help future teachers to be able to analyse in

more depth their own and their peers' contributions. They would discover that they have had similar experiences and could draw definite and solid conclusions about the foreign language learning process from their own perspective. Regarding suggestion number four, we here refer to the fact that we should encourage participants to give more details and insights, and we can achieve that if our requirements are clearer or if we give them more time. After having analysed the data and drawn up the conclusions, we feel that we did not obtain enough information (suggestion 6) from our subjects, and we wish we could have had a chance to ask them more about the answers they had given to us. Suggestion seven is the most relevant one in our opinion since we cannot affirm the validity of the experiment if we do not keep in touch with the experiment subjects. We could ask them the very same questions as we did with the 2003 students. It was an arduous task to find them after so many years, but also a very rewarding one.

With regard to our future research intention, we are going to continue researching the very same questionnaire and diary entries since we have only analysed five out of the ten open-ended questions. Also, in 2011 we demonstrated two more methods in the ULE with our subjects, the Audiolingual Method and the Grammar Translation Method, and we intend to analyse the corresponding data and compare them to those obtained for the Communicative Approach. We should also ask our 2011- 2013 students to answer the very same questions from the questionnaire retroactively as we did with the 2003 subjects and possibly conduct a semi-structured interview as well.

We are planning to do the same experiment again next year this time in the obligatory postgraduate Master's degree<sup>141</sup> offered by the ULPGC for future secondary foreign language teachers, and given the experience reported here; we plan to make some small changes in the questionnaires. We are also going to ask them to reflect on the experience in a learning diary.

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<sup>141</sup> *Máster Universitario en Formación del Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas.*

One of the main reasons for conducting this study has been to show how a hands-on experience of being a foreign language student can inform our teaching practice. Moreover, it is important to highlight that the experiment itself can be easily replicated in teacher training courses lessons as long as the language we are going to use as a target language does not have any similarities to our students' first language. Thus we invite the reader to experience and/ or teach the same type of experience and to share and compare their findings. In order to close our dissertation, we would like to refer once again to our research questions:

1. How effective is Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) in teacher training?
2. How valid is CRP as an aid for teacher trainees to become better, and more efficient, professionals?
3. What might the potential of the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) be in teacher training courses for the promotion of teachers as reflective practitioners?

CRP certainly seems to be an effective tool in teacher training courses as we have seen after analysing, and reflecting upon, our quantitative and qualitative data. Our subjects seem to have greatly appreciated the ULE experience and reported positive feelings as a result, highlighting their desire to use the same strategies in their own future teaching contexts, and they also seem to have been able to analyse why they learnt, or why they didn't in their past learning experiences.

For us the most valuable aspect of this research project are the diary entries we have analysed, since our investigation has been qualitative above all especially since the subjects seem to display knowledge of learning and teaching issues. We were, in fact, pleasantly surprised by the details given and our subjects' insights into language learning and teaching processes. Hence, we can confirm that CRP is a valuable help for teacher trainees as a means to become more efficient practitioners, since thinking about, reflecting on, and analysing the foreign language learning and teaching process can only benefit both teachers and learners towards a more learner-centred approach to education.

The following final quotation from one of our subject's diaries succinctly sums up the main objectives of the research project reported here: it is valid and

necessary in any teacher training programme for foreign language teachers. This student is nowadays a secondary teacher of English in Scotland, and even after twelve years of experience, he remembers several details from the ULE he participated in, and seems to still reflect and analyse the learning and teaching process. What stands out for me in this excerpt is his amazement of me not uttering a single word in English in the ULE class. Above all, as he has wisely affirmed, on reflection, that teaching exclusively in the target language is the key to effective learning.

*The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm. This helped to combat inertia or trepidation about speaking in a foreign language. I'm sure you exploited our boisterous willingness to impress you by dividing us into teams and allocating points, thus giving us an incentive to participate in the activities. I'm sure there was some kind of random questioning too, meaning that I, as the learner, had to stay alert to what was happening. Staying alert most of the time for you have used Croatian and not a word of English (how did you do that?, you did not even use good or no mind slips.) I did learn a lot, because of this, use only the target language it is the key.*







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**APPENDIX I: TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON ( CERT. TESOL )**

( Reduced version)

**Unit 2: Language Awareness & Skills****Language Skills**

Language Skills (LS) is used as a generic term covering the receptive skills of **listening & reading** and the productive skills of **speaking & writing**.

Successful trainees will demonstrate the following learning outcomes in the context of initial training (with reference to appropriate resources):

- 1) an understanding of the sub-skills outlined below in the classroom
- 2) an application of some of these sub-skills to communicative learning and teaching approaches
- 3) a reflection and evaluation of their success.

The learning outcomes are based on the following four areas of course content:

<b>Receptive Skills</b>
<p><b>1) Listening Sub-skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Predicting content, vocabulary and answers</li> <li>▶ Listening for gist</li> <li>▶ Listening for specific information</li> <li>▶ Intensive/extensive listening</li> <li>▶ Deducing meaning from word form, grammar and context</li> <li>▶ Decoding phonological features</li> <li>▶ Understanding grammatical structures and syntactical relationships</li> <li>▶ Distinguishing between language form and language function</li> <li>▶ Understanding cohesive devices and discourse markers</li> <li>▶ Distinguishing main points from supporting information</li> <li>▶ Making inferences</li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Reading Sub-skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Predicting content, vocabulary and answers</li> <li>▶ Recognising genre from format and layout</li> <li>▶ Navigating titles, subtitles, index, etc.</li> <li>▶ Skimming</li> <li>▶ Scanning</li> <li>▶ Intensive/extensive reading</li> <li>▶ Deducing meaning from word form, grammar and context</li> <li>▶ Decoding spelling</li> <li>▶ Understanding grammatical structures and syntactical relationships</li> <li>▶ Distinguishing between language form and language function</li> <li>▶ Understanding cohesive devices and discourse markers</li> <li>▶ Distinguishing main points from supporting information</li> <li>▶ Making inferences</li> </ul>

<b>Productive Skills</b>
<p><b>3) Speaking Sub-skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Producing phonemes and features of connected speech</li> <li>▶ Producing appropriate word- and sentence-stress patterns</li> <li>▶ Producing appropriate intonation patterns</li> <li>▶ Using appropriate grammatical structures with accuracy</li> <li>▶ Applying syntactical rules correctly</li> <li>▶ Selecting appropriate vocabulary and lexical chunks to express desired language function</li> <li>▶ Expressing cohesion</li> <li>▶ Using discourse markers appropriately</li> <li>▶ Selecting appropriate level of formality</li> <li>▶ Making appropriate use of paralinguistic devices</li> </ul>
<p><b>4) Writing Sub-skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Forming characters accurately</li> <li>▶ Using spelling and punctuation accurately</li> <li>▶ Using appropriate grammatical structures</li> <li>▶ Applying syntactical rules correctly</li> <li>▶ Selecting appropriate vocabulary and lexical chunks to express desired language functions</li> <li>▶ Expressing cohesion</li> <li>▶ Using discourse markers appropriately</li> <li>▶ Selecting appropriate level of formality</li> <li>▶ Organising information logically and in a format appropriate to the genre</li> <li>▶ Drafting and editing</li> </ul>



### Unit 3: Learner Profile

#### Unit 3: Learner Profile

Successful trainees will demonstrate the following learning outcomes in the context of initial training:

- 1) be able to draw up a simple linguistic profile/analysis and needs analysis for one learner of English on the basis of interviews totalling a minimum of 60-90 minutes and a sample of the learner's written work which may include diagnostic tests. The interviews should include general discussion of the learner's language learning background and aims in learning English, preferred methods of learning, and the strengths and weaknesses of the learner
- 2) be able to prepare and teach (unobserved) one lesson of 45-60 minutes (this lesson does not count as one of the six hours of observed and assessed teaching practice)
- 3) be able to prepare a number of broad recommendations for the learner's study programme in at least one area of each of the four main skills, including grammar and phonology.

#### Presentation and content of the Learner Profile

- ▶ the Learner Profile should be presented in an A4 ring binder or folder. Plastic pockets should only be used for smaller materials
- ▶ the materials used in the one-to-one lesson should be appended (small materials may be presented in plastic pockets) and a readily-accessible copy of the recorded interview should also be appended
- ▶ a transcription of the whole interview is not required
- ▶ pages should be numbered and there should be a contents page at the front of the profile.

The Learner Profile must include the following:

- a) a description of the learner's cultural and social background, including language learning experience; the occasions when and where the learner uses English; her/his reasons for learning English and the contexts in which she/he is likely to use English in the future. This description should also include the the main linguistic features of the learner's mother tongue. This section should represent approximately 15% of the content of the profile.
- b) an evaluation of the learner's current linguistic proficiency, including strengths and weaknesses in the four main skills, analysed in terms of grammar, lexis and phonology, and with references to relevant features of the learner's mother tongue. This analysis should be based on:
  - ▶ a recorded sample of the learner's spoken English, part of which will be orthographically transcribed, and a part (or parts) of which will be phonemically transcribed
  - ▶ a sample of written English, from which a variety of error types should be chosen
  - ▶ short tests of extensive and intensive listening and reading skills
  - ▶ interaction skills in interview.

This section should represent approximately 50% of the total content of the profile.
- c) a lesson plan for, a rationale for and an evaluation of, a one-to-one lesson with the learner, based on selected key learning needs emerging from the above analysis. The lesson duration must be a minimum of 45 minutes. This section should represent approximately 20% of the total content of the profile.
- d) recommendations for the learner's future language development over a further 5 x 45 minute lessons, based on learning needs emerging from the above analysis. This section should represent 10% of the total content of the profile.
- e) a brief conclusion summarising the process, and a bibliography referencing the texts used for research and teaching. This section should represent 5% of the total content of the profile.

#### Structure of the Learner Profile

##### 1) Reading and listening skills

##### Reading

Trainees should set one short reading task which will test the learner's abilities in one or more of the reading sub-skills. It should be based on a text of approximately 300 words and other strategies, such as newspaper or magazine skimming, may be used to assess extensive reading. This activity may be

conducted in one of the short interviews with the learner. The account presented need not be more than a half to one page of A4 and should include brief details of the following:

- ▶ the task set and the learner response (including any sub-skills) to it
- ▶ the learner's general reading habits in their own language and in English
- ▶ any advice the trainee was able to offer to the learner to help develop this skill.

#### Listening

Trainees should set one short listening task, in which intensive listening skills will be tested. This may be conducted in one of the short interviews with the learner. Listening skills may also be assessed during the conversations with the learner. The account presented need not be more than a half to one page of A4 and should include brief details of the following:

- ▶ the ability of the learner to understand and respond to the trainee in conversation
- ▶ the task set and the learner's response to it
- ▶ the learner's general listening habits (radio, TV, internet, conversation with English speakers outside of the classroom)
- ▶ any advice the trainee was able to offer to the learner to help develop this skill and any of its sub-skills.

#### 2) Speaking and writing skills

The analysis of speaking and writing forms the greater part of the profile, and will require suitable input to have taken place before it can be attempted. This section brings together what the trainee has learnt about the grammar and systems of written and spoken English, and the sound systems of English.

#### Speaking

This section focuses on both the phonological and grammatical analysis. These two analyses should be presented separately, although a general introduction to the section may refer to both. A trainee is also expected to comment on the fluency of the learner.

This section must contain:

- ▶ an orthographically-transcribed section of the recorded interview of around one minute. (It is recognised that this one minute of speech may have been interrupted by prompts from the trainee: these need not be transcribed, but should be indicated in some way.) The purpose of this passage is to provide a vehicle for demonstration of typical grammatical errors encountered in the learner's speech. N.B. the whole conversation should not be transcribed, although the recording must be appended to the profile in an accessible form
- ▶ a comment on the fluency of the learner, and how well she/he has communicated their message in the interview
- ▶ a phonemic transcription of part of the one-minute recording. This may be one segment totaling at least 20-30 words, or several multi-word segments, together totaling 20-30 words (e.g. 4 x 6 word segments). This should be transcribed twice: once in a version of standard English and again as spoken by the learner. It may be necessary to make approximate representation of sounds which cannot be transcribed precisely. The purpose of the transcription is to illustrate clearly problems of intelligibility due to segmental and supra-segmental features of pronunciation.

The phonemically transcribed segment(s) chosen should provide error analysis of two features of segmental phonology (sound) and two features of suprasegmental phonology (e.g. stress, intonation, elision). The transcription should illustrate:

- ▶ the trainee's ability to apply the phonological theory learnt within Unit 2
- ▶ the trainee's listening skills, particularly in relation to sound discrimination
- ▶ the trainee's ability to recognise features of stress and intonation
- ▶ the trainee's awareness of teaching priorities in terms of pronunciation and intelligibility, and other teaching objectives.

The analysis of specific errors in spoken English must be presented in tabular form, although a summary of errors and achievements may be included in order to give a more complete picture of the features of the English spoken by the learner. Please see below an example of a suitable table for the presentation of features of pronunciation and spoken grammar. Course Providers need not follow this example, but must provide trainees with a similar framework within which to present their findings.

**Unit 3: Learner Profile**

**Example analysis of errors in spoken English**

Speaking: pronunciation analysis				
Number (refers to phonologically transcribed segment(s))	Error	Correction	Orthographic representation	Analysis/reason for error
1	/kant/	/ka:nt/	can't	Khalid has a general difficulty in distinguishing between long and short vowel sounds which are not present in L1.
7	/bak/	/pak/	pack	There is no equivalent to /p/ the unvoiced bilabial plosive, in Arabic (Smith & Swan, 2001) The voiced bilabial plosive /b/ is usually the letter chosen to replace it as Khalid demonstrates here.

Speaking: spoken grammar and lexis analysis				
Line (refers to orthographically transcribed passage)	Type of error	Error	Correction	Analysis
6	Grammatical subject-verb agreement	He have two cars	He has two cars	This error is likely to be as a result of L1 interference. Chinese is a non-inflected language and errors in subject-verb agreement are common.
8	Lexical word formation	I'm very boring in the evenings	I'm very bored in the evenings	Confusion between the adjectival -ed/-ing endings used for feelings and judgment.
12	Grammatical superlative	The goodest dad...	The best dad...	Over-generalisation of the superlative ending -est ('goodest' should be 'best')

**Writing**

The sample of written English to be analysed may be generated by a task set by the trainee, or from the learner's class work, but in either case should have been analysed by the trainee. The original and the corrected versions should be included in the assignment, with lines numbered for reference purposes. The sample should be handwritten. One method of obtaining a suitable piece is for the trainee to handwrite a letter to the learner, inviting them to reply in a similar manner.

The writing analysis will be in two parts: a) grammar, lexis, spelling and punctuation, and b) organisation, register and handwriting.

**Part A:**

- ▶ grammatical accuracy – full structural analysis (strengths and weaknesses)
- ▶ lexical range and accuracy – analysis of learner's use of vocabulary when writing
- ▶ spelling and punctuation.

**Part B:**

- ▶ effective communication of meaning
- ▶ appropriacy of register – level of formality used
- ▶ organisation – appropriate use of paragraphs and linking of sentences
- ▶ handwriting – if relevant (where the learner uses a different writing system in L1).

The main analysis of the grammar of written English should be presented in tabular form. This tabular analysis must include two different examples from Part A (see above). This will be a minimum of six errors in total. Further examples of error may be included, up to a maximum of 10 errors overall. Please see below an example of a suitable table for the presentation of features of written grammar.

#### Example analysis of errors in written English

Writing: grammar and lexis analysis				
Line in text (refers to sample of learner's writing)	Type of error	Error	Correction	Analysis/reason for error
3	Grammatical verb form	I studying	I am studying	Likely to be L1 interference; there is no auxiliary 'be' in Arabic.
4	Lexical spelling	He spend	husband	Learner has written the word as she hears it. Typical p/b confusion and problems with short vowel sounds.

### 3) The lesson and recommendations for further study

The profile must contain:

- a) the rationale for choice of the lesson objectives. The lesson should not simply concentrate on correction of the written language or discussion of reading comprehension tasks undertaken for the assessment, but should aim to build on an identified area of the learner's language, and language skills that require attention
- b) the lesson plan (this may be the regular lesson plan or one designed for the purpose)
- c) the lesson evaluation and self-reflection – this will usually have been designed for this purpose
- d) the materials used in the lesson – published teaching materials may be used but should be adapted with materials devised by the trainee to meet the particular identified needs of the learner.

The recommendations for further study should take the form of a scheme of work for 5 x 45 minute lessons. This section should be prefaced by a brief summary of the rationale behind each choice. The scheme of work must be presented in tabular form. Precise details of activities and materials to be used need not be included. However, the suggestions must be linked back to the data collected in the analysis and should include reference to grammatical, lexical and phonological areas, and listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

An example of a suitable table for presenting recommendations for further study is given overleaf.

Unit 3: Learner Profile

Example table to present recommendations for further study

Lesson	Functional /structural objectives	Skills objectives	Phonological objectives	Lexical objectives	Rationale
1	To be able to use the past. Talking about the past.  To develop the use of simple past tense (regular and irregular verbs).	To develop speaking skills to discuss past travel.  To develop the following writing skills: use of past simple to write a postcard describing a journey.	To practise the pronunciation of 'ed' ending /t/, /d/, /ɪd/.	To learn the use of travel-related verbs (visited/stayed/travelled/flew/went, etc.).	The learner was unable to use the past tense to talk about her journey to the UK.  However, the learner loves travelling and uses English mainly for talking to her friends on topics such as past experiences.
2	To be able to describe regular and current actions.  To develop the use of simple present tense and present continuous tense.	To practise and develop skimming/ scanning reading skills.	To practise the pronunciation of shortened vowels in unstressed syllables.	To learn the use of vocabulary related to domestic routine; collocation of nouns and verbs (make the bed, do the washing etc.).	Habiba had difficulties differentiating between these two structures in use.  Needs practice in skimming and scanning to assist her in exam work. Currently reads very slowly.

**4) Conclusion, bibliography**

A brief conclusion summarising the profiling process and acknowledging the assistance of the learner should be included after the main assignment and before the appendices. This should be followed by a bibliography of texts used for research or for teaching.

**Assessment of the Learner Profile**

Course Providers will provide criteria specific to this assignment. These will make reference to each segment of the assignment which can be individually marked and collated to give an overall summary mark.

Note that the ability to produce written assignments to an appropriate level of written English is one of the basic requirements of the course. Trainees will be penalised for poor levels of English and presentation, and may be asked to resubmit.

## Unit 4: Materials Assignment

Successful trainees will demonstrate the following learning outcomes in the context of initial training:

- 1) the ability to plan, produce, use and evaluate simple classroom teaching materials and accompanying tasks
- 2) the ability to produce a written rationale and evaluation of the effectiveness of the materials
- 3) the ability to reflect on and discuss the use of the selected materials.

### Structure of the Materials Assignment

The content of the Materials Assignment is as follows and consists of both a written and spoken assignment.

#### 1) The material

The assignment consists of one piece of material linked to a single task used in teaching practice: these must not include any of the materials which are used in the one-to-one lesson. The use of published materials (either in print or online) is not excluded, but trainees must show evidence of imaginative and significant adaptation and exploitation of these, beyond what may be suggested in a coursebook or on the internet. Any such sources must be acknowledged appropriately (using Harvard referencing conventions as appropriate to the level of the qualification). Material which has worked well should be selected. For example, the material may have provided some significant learning lessons for the trainee or the material worked well with the learners concerned.

#### 2) The written assignment

The written assignment is divided into three sections: the **rationale**, **evaluation** and **motivation**.

The **rationale section** is an explanation of why the material was developed for the particular group of learners and why it was felt that the material might be useful in achieving the objectives of the lesson. The rationale must include, as a minimum, information on the class profile, the anticipated linguistic aims, the objectives for the learners' language development and the anticipated achievements and difficulties for learners. The profile must refer to a specified group of learners in terms of level, type of class (e.g. general English, multi- or monolingual), their anticipated strengths and weaknesses, and place of this lesson in the overall programme if this is known.

Anticipated linguistic aims cover the areas of language development trainees expect to work on with learners (for example, new language learnt in terms of structure, function, semantics and/or skills development) and going beyond, for example, simply 'conversation practice'.

Anticipated achievements and difficulties and the strategies for dealing with these for learners include linguistic issues, such as the learners' existing command of structures or lexis necessary for use of the materials, complexities of pronunciation, questions of class organisation, group dynamics, and/or motivation.

The **evaluation section** is an explanation of how the materials were used in the classroom effectively. The evaluation must give reasons for the success (or lack of) of the materials. This section must also give a statement explaining how the materials might be improved for the same learners without changing the learning objectives.

Word count: The rationale and the evaluation of the material must be between 400 and 500 words in length, excluding the rubric.

#### 3) Assessment interview

The assessment interview will draw on the written rationale and evaluation, but the focus will be on the learners and their needs.

Trainees will be assessed on:

- ▶ the suitability of the materials for the learners' needs and motivation
- ▶ the problems that arose in the lesson
- ▶ how the problems were dealt with
- ▶ how the learners responded to the materials
- ▶ how the materials might be improved to meet the needs of the learners.

### Unit 4: Materials Assignment

In addition, trainees will be asked to give an appraisal of:

- ▶ selection and production of English language teaching materials
- ▶ teaching English using materials from different sources.

**The Materials Assignment:** This must be carried out on an individual basis. Trainees may usefully share their ideas and experiences with each other, but each trainee must plan and produce all of their own materials and be able to discuss them independently of other trainees.

**Tutor support:** Tutors are not required to mark Unit 4 work, they are required to give trainees relevant support in identifying appropriate material for this exercise and preparing their written and spoken assignments. Tutors will inform trainees about Trinity's assessment criteria before they embark on their work for Unit 4. Tutors will also give trainees the opportunity to rehearse an oral discussion based on their written rationale and evaluations by way of preparation for the interview with the moderator. Trainees will not receive a mark for either the written work or interview, but they will receive constructive feedback.

The trainee **must have used** the material with learners in teaching practice.

#### **Assessment of the Materials Assignment**

Trainees are assessed on Unit 4 by an external moderator from Trinity College London. The total time allocated for the assessment of Unit 4 is 15 minutes per trainee.

Time	Detail
5 mins	Moderator reads the rationale, evaluation and motivation sections for each trainee.
10 mins	Individual discussion/interview between the moderator and each trainee.

Written assignment and interview procedure
1) Trinity provides a standard pro forma for all trainees to complete with the relevant information on their rationale, evaluation and motivation sections for the written assignment. This ensures consistency of headings for the written work and more efficient reading and checking by moderators (see Appendix 1).
2) Trainees must not bring the associated lesson plans to interview, but leave these with the Teaching Practice Portfolio to be looked at by the moderator in the general sampling process at the start of moderation.
3) Course directors will give moderators the photocopies of the written assignment, together with the relevant materials, in advance of the point on the schedule set aside for reading.
4) Moderators will read the written assignment for 5 minutes immediately before the 10 minute interview with the trainee.
5) Moderators will elicit information by asking questions as appropriate. Trainees are expected to take the initiative at the start of the interview; thereafter the interview is guided by the moderator according to criteria established by Trinity.
6) Moderators will assist the flow of the interview with suitable comment, but avoid any evaluative comment.
7) Moderators will return all trainees' pro formas to the course director.

The focus of Unit 4 is the rationale and the evaluation of the materials provided in the written assignment and discussed in the interview. The focus is not the quality of the materials themselves. The materials themselves will have been assessed by course tutors when they evaluate lesson plans and teaching practice within the framework of Unit 1.

## Unit 4: Materials Assignment

### **Criteria for Pass and Refer on Unit 4** (see table overleaf for details)

Trinity uses six criteria for Written Communication Skills and six criteria for Oral Communication Skills. Moderators record an assessment in relation to these criteria. For each criterion, trainees can be awarded a maximum of 2 marks. Trainees must obtain 14 marks out of 24 to obtain a Pass on Unit 4. Fewer than 14 marks in total will lead to a referral for Unit 4. This will involve a further interview with a moderator. For a re-moderation to take place, trainees will need to attend another moderation visit at either their original or another course providing organisation.



Unit 4: Materials Assignment

Assessment criteria

	Criterion	To obtain a pass, trainees must obtain 14 out of a possible 24 marks	
	The trainee is able to:	1 mark per criterion	1 mark per criterion
<b>Written Communication Skills</b>	▶ identify a linguistic purpose and specific objectives	Identification of a linguistic purpose	Identification of specific objectives
	▶ explain how the materials were appropriate to the students' linguistic needs	Identification of the class needs	Explanation of how the materials met the class needs
	▶ identify potential difficulties of the materials for the learners and solutions for dealing with them	Identification of potential difficulties	Identification of potential solutions
	▶ effectively discuss how the materials were used in the classroom	Discussion of groupings used	Discussion of the wider context of using the materials in the lesson, e.g. stages of lesson
	▶ evaluate the success of the materials	Reasons for the success (or not) of the materials	Indication of how the conclusion was reached
	▶ suggest how the materials might be improved	Suggestion(s) on how the materials might be improved in terms of relevancy to the linguistic needs of the students	Suggestion(s) of how the materials might be improved in terms of their design and presentation
<b>Oral Communication Skills</b>	▶ discuss the suitability of the materials both in terms of needs and motivation for learners	Discussion of the suitability of the materials in terms of learner needs	Discussion of the suitability of the materials in terms of learner motivation
	▶ discuss what problems arose from the materials and how these were dealt with	Discussion of the actual problems that arose	Discussion of the solutions to these problems
	▶ discuss how the learners responded to the materials and why the trainee thought this was the case	Discussion of the learners' response to the materials	Reason(s) for why the learners responded in this way
	▶ discuss what the learning outcomes were from the materials and how the materials might be improved	Discussion of the learning outcomes	Discussion of the potential improvements to the materials
	▶ demonstrate what they have learnt about the selection and production of English language teaching materials	Discussion of the point(s) made in relation to the selection of materials	Discussion of the point(s) made in relation to the production of materials
	▶ demonstrate what they have learnt about teaching English using materials from different sources.	Example(s) of what trainees have learnt	Justification for why using self-generated materials is beneficial

All trainees' interviews will be recorded. If trainees do not agree to the recording, they cannot be moderated.

### Unit 5: Unknown Language

Successful trainees will demonstrate the following on completion of the course and in the context of initial training:

- 1) awareness of the learning experiences and feelings of a learner being taught a new language, with little or no use of the learner's first language
- 2) ability to identify the aims and objectives of the lesson and the ways in which these were or were not achieved through the methodology, materials and class management techniques employed
- 3) awareness of a few of the main elementary contrastive features of the taught language and of English.

The unknown language will be a natural language, i.e. not an invented or computer language, and this language should be one previously unfamiliar to all of the trainees on the course.

#### Structure of the Unknown Language Assignment

Trainees will be given four hours of tuition in an unknown language, with a bias towards the aural-oral in the teaching of that language. In addition, the tuition will be:

- ▶ delivered in sessions of approximately one hour
- ▶ at beginner level
- ▶ given by an experienced teacher
- ▶ in a communicative context
- ▶ in the initial stages of the course.

Trainees see in practice some of the methodology and approaches introduced in Unit 1. They establish and record their feelings and experiences as learners, and the ways in which different methods and techniques result in successful learning, through a written, assessed journal.

#### The Unknown Language Journal

For each lesson, the journal should include as a minimum:

- a) an account of the grammatical, functional and lexical objectives of the lesson, as perceived by the trainee
- b) broad details of the methods used by the teacher including use of activities and materials, interactive patterns and class-management techniques
- c) a reflection on the nature of the learning experience and on which teaching methods and attitudes suited the learning preferences of the trainee and others in the group
- d) consideration of features or aspects of teaching in different observation sessions (rather than trying to concentrate on all aspects during every session)
- e) a brief one-page description of a few of the main contrastive features of English and the taught language.

At the end of the series of lessons, trainees must produce a summary of the overall experience that reflects their professional evaluation of this unit and the teaching methodology used. The summary must be a considered statement that goes beyond comment on the trainee's personal difficulties, and will include what they will take forward into their own teaching.

#### Assessment of the Unknown Language Journal

Trainees are assessed on the accuracy of analysis and the reflective nature of the journal. Trainees will be provided with a pro forma to guide them in what to look for in the language lessons and how to comment on what they experience including help with specific terminology.



**APPENDIX II : COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH LESSON 2003,  
2011- 2013**



**HRVATSKA**

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZapBzMgQLY&NR=1>



**Nacionalni parkovi**

**HRVATSKI JEZIK**

**Hrvatska abeceda**

Velika slova														
A	B	Č	Ć	D	Dž	Đ	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
L	Lj	M	N	Nj	O	P	R	S	Š	T	U	V	Z	Ž
Mala slova														
a	b	č	ć	d	dž	đ	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	
l	lj	m	n	nj	o	p	r	s	š	t	u	v	z	ž

**Hrvatska abeceda**

Velika slova														
A	B	Č	Ć	D	Dž	Đ	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
L	Lj	M	N	Nj	O	P	R	S	Š	T	U	V	Z	Ž
Mala slova														
a	b	č	ć	d	dž	đ	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	
l	lj	m	n	nj	o	p	r	s	š	t	u	v	z	ž

č = tʃ    đ = dʒ    š = ʃ    ž = ʒ

**Hrvatska abeceda**

Velika slova														
		Č	Ć	D	Dž	Đ				H	I	J	K	
L	Lj						O	P	R	S	Š	T		
Mala slova														

č = tʃ    đ = dʒ    š = ʃ    ž = ʒ



**Dobro jutro.**

06:00 – 12:00

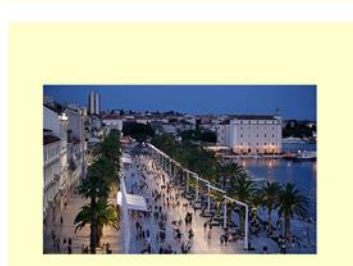


**Dobar dan.**

12:00 – 18:00

**Dobra večer.**

18:00 – 24:00



**Dobro jutro/ Dobar dan/ Dobra večer ?**

### Pozdravi

### Pozdravi

- Dobro jutro
- Dobar dan.
- Dobra večer.

### Pozdravi

- D \_\_\_\_\_.
- D \_\_\_\_\_ d \_\_\_\_\_.
- D \_\_\_\_\_ v \_\_\_\_\_.

### Pozdravi

- Dobro jutro
- Dobar dan.
- Dobra večer.

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Kako si?

- Super
- Dobro
- Tako – tako
- Loše
- A ti?

### Pozdravi

- Bog.
- Adio.
- Doviđenja.

### Dialog

- A: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: Kako si?
- B: \_\_\_\_\_, A ti?
- A: Super.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Dialog

- A: Dobar dan.
- B: Dobar dan.
- A: Kako si?
- B: Dobro. A ti?
- A: Super.
- B: Adio.
- A: Adio.

### Dialog

- A: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_?
- B: \_\_\_\_\_, A ti?
- A: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Dialog

- A: Dobra večer.
- B: Dobra večer.
- A: Kako si?
- B: Tako- tako. A ti?
- A: Dobro.
- B: Adio.
- A: Adio.



Kako se (ti) zoveš?

Kako se (ti) zoveš?

Kako se (ti) zoveš?

- Ja se zovem
- Daniela.
- A ti?
- Ja se zovem
- Jose.

Kako se (ti) zoveš?

- Ja se zovem
- Daniela.
- A ti?
- Ja se zovem
- Jose.
- Drago mi je.

Ja se zovem ....

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **ona** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

Kako se **on** zove?

HRVATSKA  
BAKA SALVADORA  
MAMA DALMA

Kako se **on** zove?

- Néstor Carlos Kirchner Ostoic
- Predsjednik Argentine

Kako se **on** zove?

- Francisco Orlich Bolmarcich
- Predsjednik Costa Rike



Kako se **ona** zove?



Kako se **on** zove?



Kako se **on** zove?



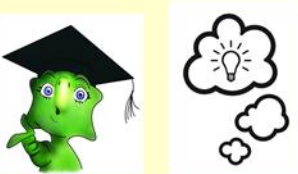
Kako se **ovo** zove  
Kako se **on** zove ?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



INTERESANTNO



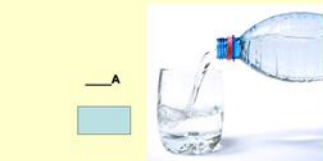
Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?



Kako se **ovo** zove?





- 1. Kako se **ona** zove?
- 2. Kako se **on** zove?
- 3. Kako se **ovo** zove?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb-AHxTNIQw&feature=related>

### Feedback session

- Why Unknown language experience?
- Why Croatian?
- What have you learnt today?
- Why?
- TESOL cert.







## **APPENDIX III: LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA LENGUA INGLESA II**

### LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA LENGUA INGLESA II

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

***SEMESTER 2 (FEBRUARY - MAY 2011)***

**GINA OXBROW (OFFICE 27: [goxbrow@dfm.ulpgc.es](mailto:goxbrow@dfm.ulpgc.es))**

This course aims to provide a brief, yet comprehensive, introduction to the research area and practical discipline known as *EFL Methodology*, a branch of the multi-faceted academic field known as Applied Linguistics. Although we will initially focus on theoretical issues and concepts inherent in the dual processes of language learning and language teaching, the class sessions will be largely practical in nature and will provide a firm grounding in EFL teaching methodology for those students who are planning to enter the language teaching profession in the future. Regular attendance and active participation is a fundamental part of the learning process in order to guide learners towards a greater understanding of the complexities of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in combination with supplementary reading texts and out-of-class task preparation. Course participants will also be required to submit 1 theoretical and 1 practical assignment as part of their total assessment (40%) as well as prepare a peer teaching session (20%), which will be formally evaluated as part of their final grade along with either a written examination, a research paper, or an ongoing learning journal (40%) which will be kept regularly throughout the course and handed in for assessment at the end of the semester.

The areas to be covered in the syllabus are as follows:

1. Background issues in the teaching and learning of languages: psychological / linguistic theories of language learning. Factors affecting learning: learning styles, learning strategies and learner autonomy.

2. Language awareness and the teaching of grammar. Interlanguage and the role of errors. Language analysis (Assignment 1).
3. The presentation and practice of new language items. Accuracy versus fluency.
4. Lesson planning: aims, timing, activities and logical staging. (Assignment 2).
5. Classroom management techniques: classroom language, effective instructions and group dynamics.
6. Vocabulary and the nature of meaning. Presenting and recycling lexical items.
7. Developin the productive skills: speaking and writing.
8. The receptive skills - listening and reading activities. The use of authentic materials.

### ASSESSMENT

The following system of evaluation will be observed which is based as much as possible on a process of continuous assessment:

Written assignments (x2)	: 40%
Peer teaching/presentation	: 20%
Final examination/research paper/journal	: 40%

### **RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

There is one recommended text for the course, which will prove to be an invaluable reference for any future teacher of English as a Foreign Language:

Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4<sup>rd</sup> ed. with DVD.) Harlow: Longman.

The following secondary sources are highly recommended and will be referred to in whole or in part during the course. Extra bibliographical references will also be given for each topic. Regular reading assignments will be set, and photocopies of relevant articles will be provided.

Aitken, R. 2002. *Teaching Tenses*. Brighton ELB Publishing.

Carter, R. and D. Nunan. 2001. *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

Crystal, D. 2007. *How Language Works*. London: Penguin.

Ellis, R. 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: O.U.P.

Griffiths, C. (ed.). 2008. *Lessons from Good Language Learners*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

Harmer, J. 2007. *How to Teach English* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. with DVD). Harlow: Longman.

- Oxford, R. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Heinle and Heinle.
- Parrott, M. 2000. *Grammar for English Language Teachers*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Parrott, M. 1993. *Tasks for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Pinker, S. 1994. *The Language Instinct*. London: Penguin.
- Richards, J. and T. Rodgers. 2001. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Richards, J., J. Platt and H. Weber. 2002. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Harlow: Longman.
- Scrivener, J. 2005. *Learning Teaching*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Ur, P. 1996. *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Williams, M. and R. Burden. 1997. *Psychology for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

## **WRITING A LEARNING DIARY**

You should try to write in your diary as regularly as possible, and your entries should contain any thoughts or reflections, you may have after the class sessions, your supplementary reading, or your own experiences. Here are some suggestions:

- comment on or react to class discussions/activities and give your opinion
- comment on supplementary reading texts or Internet sites you have visited
- reflect on your own language learning experience
- relate reading texts or class discussions to your own experience
- argue for or against something that you've read or discussed
- explore the pedagogical implications of theoretical concepts
- describe new knowledge you have obtained
- relate new knowledge with what you already knew
- make connections between the course content and previous experiences you have had as a learner or a teacher
- argue for or against a particular technique

Write your diary in a Word document if possible and send it to me as an attachment by email ([goxbrow@dfm.ulpgc.es](mailto:goxbrow@dfm.ulpgc.es)) every two or three weeks. I will reply to you as soon as possible. The criteria for assessing the diary will be based on the following:

- frequency of entries
- evidence of reading
- critical perspective
- range of topics covered







## APPENDIX IV: 2011 ULPGC STUDENTS' DIARY ENTRIES

This appendix shows the extracts which reproduce the information provided by the 2011 students at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) after the first session. In this case, there were no questions directly asked and students just wrote about what they had experienced. Therefore, we have just enumerated the contributions to make the reading easier. We have eliminated references to sessions 2, 3 and 4, which dealt with questions related to the Audio-lingual approach, Grammar Translation and Communicative Approach respectively.

<p>Student A 2011.A</p>	<p>These days, we experienced a type of class very different to what we are normally used to doing in this subject. The teacher had already told us that we were going to learn a new language so that in the former day, a woman called Daniela came in to the class speaking in a language that we did not recognize. I guess that the first Daniela did was to introduce herself to the class and then, she showed us a power point presentation while she was speaking in that unknown language. While we were watching the presentation we realized that the language she was speaking was Croatian. She kept up drilling all the time, saying us to repeat what she said and showing us pictures about she was talking about. We learnt some basic concepts and did a small conversation between us. It was very funny and we practised a lot. The method she applied was called "Communicative Method" and I personally have to say that it was a quite effective method because I still remember what I learnt that day. Because the main aim of learning a language is to maintain at least a little conversation.</p>
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Student B 2011.B	<p>This week has been quite different because we have began to learn a new language, Croatian. The first day it was quite easy and fun to learn Croatian, although this language is a little bit complex. We acquired vocabulary, expressions and phrases by listening the teacher firstly and then we repeated it, moreover we did mini conversations with the teacher and between us and all this information was illustrated with a PowerPoint presentation too. So these two classes have help us to realized the ways that are effective to give a lesson and to put ourselves in the shoes of learners.</p>
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Student C 2011.C	<p>At least it was useful for understanding a little bit better the communicative method. Nevertheless I still believe that some grammar is necessary for adults studying foreign languages. This method could be useful mixed with some basic grammar explanations and then relating the communicative class with the previous grammar lesson.</p>
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Student D 2011.D	<p>These days we are learning Croatian with Daniela. This is innovative for us because nobody in the class can speak this language. The motivation about learning a little bit of it was successful. I am very pleased to learn Croatian. [...]</p>
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Student E 2011.E	<p>This way we realise about how a student feels, depending on the way a teacher teaches. [...] It is always nice to learn a different language. It's quite motivating to know that if I ever meet a Croatian person I will be able to to aske them if they like chocolate or pizza, <i>I need a cheap hotel</i>, or what their name is. Anyway, it has been a good experience to be in a L2 learner position, and it has useful for us to know what to do or what not to do when we become teachers.</p>
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Student F 2011.F	<p>Finally, in today's class we had our first session in a language I have never learned before, Croatian. For me, Croatian seems a little bit easy; it has similar structures to the romance languages. Although it seems easy for me, I see Croatian as a difficult language to learn, so that the phonology of the Croatian language is a little bit difficult. One thing I learned to know in Croatian is the following sentence: <i>Ja se zovem Jessica</i>, that in English means: my name is Jessica. It seems to me that by doing this kind of activities you are making the lessons more enjoyable. The learners had the opportunity to participate in class, something that motivates them, so that they feel involved in the progress of the class and they are not considered as "tabula rasa" that the teacher has to explain some topics.</p>
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Student G 2011.G	<p>The Croatian lesson with Daniela was awesome. We learnt how to greet people, how to introduce ourselves and other people, how to conjugate the verbs "to be", and how to</p>
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	express how we are feeling.
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Student H 2011.H	<p>In today's class we had a short introduction to Croatian language with Daniela. At first I got surprised as most of my classmates seemed to be, because I did not remember we were going to learn a new "mysterious" language and because Daniela did not pronounce a word in English or any other language but Croatian and that was a bit frustrating for me as I wanted to understand what she was saying. I think that it was very useful to show us that people can learn a foreign language forgetting about other languages and with a complete exposure to the target language at least in class, as well as how different teaching methods work. I found the lesson very interesting, we are learning different teaching and learning strategies that may be helpful for the future, as well as a bit of Croatian which did not seem very difficult and it shares many characteristics with English and Spanish, too. We are having three more lessons...let's see how it goes.</p>
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Student I 2011.I	<p>These four classes have been really interested. The way in which this foreign language has been taught is new for me. The first day I was lost because I didn't know anything about this language and I didn't know how to react but it was really funny and interesting</p>
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	<p>to learn of that way. Each class was different and that was good because we were more motivated. She helped us when we needed it but she just gave us some clues not the answers. Moreover, the structures and vocabulary we learned will be useful to us if we would go to Croatia one day. It means that in just four classes we've learned a lot because we were motivated and the environment was adequate</p>
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<p>Student J 2011.J</p>	<p>In today's class we started to learn a new language with Daniella, Croatian, I thought it was a very interesting how she quickly had us very silent and paying attention. I consider that the different activities she had prepared for us were very well structured, so we all participated and learnt with these activities.[...]</p> <p>Daniella showed us the present simple in a very quick and efficient way.</p>
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Student K 2011.K	<p>This experience of learning a new unknown language for us has been very interested from my point of view. I remembered that the first day I was a bit nervous because I didn't know what language we were to learn and if I could follow it. However, as the class was developing I became more confident and I participated actively and motivated. This experience has been also positive because it showed us some different methods and approaches and if they are effective or not. I can only say thanks you to Daniela to show us this in an effective way and motivating too. And I hope that I remember how I feel in this session when I start to teach some learns who does not know anything about the language they are going to understand. I think that if I follow it I will be able to do my classes more motivating and evolving the learner in his own process of learning.</p>
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Student L 2011.L	<p>Today's class was very productive. We learnt to speak a new language: Hrvatska. In "Modern Christian", Croatian. Daniela taught us some basic vocabulary and easy dialogues in that language. I felt very surprised because we learnt a lot in only one hour about the language. It is incredible what beneficial is to learn a language applying the appropriate learning methods and strategies. Daniella support her presentation with pictures which helped us to guess what was the meaning of the sentences which she wanted to show us. It was very productive this strategy because we had not idea about the language and I think that is a very interesting method at the time of teaching a language.</p>
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Student M 2011.M	<p>What a beautiful class. This time a new person gets into the class and began to speak in a completely different language, I have never heard it. Not English or either Spanish. Then we guessed that the language was CROATIAN. This person was a kind of teacher called Daniela and she was from "Hrvatska". This experience opened my eyes to a completely different point of view in language teaching and learning. I did not remember how the experience of learning a new language is and with these Croatian lessons I learnt much about how I have to prepare a language class for new students of English and also how they will feel a parallel experience. It was very useful to me and I enjoyed it as a child in an amusement park. It was very funny and sincerely I felt very well but in a more personal reflection I learnt in a small piece of time an important language point: How to introduce you. [...]I knew that Daniela and Gina are doing a research in language teaching but now I am feeling like a laboratory rat. [...]A funny Croatian lesson that made me think again about what is the best way to learn a language and my opinion is: 'Experience it'.</p>
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<p>Student N 2011.N</p>	<p>Again a huge internal debate was happening in my mind – Why when I was a child all of my English teachers focused its efforts only in teaching grammar? - It is an important theme in my personal dialogue because I am completely against of following grammar books as the Christians follow the Holy Bible. I hate that process of teaching because I felt depress when I was studying primary and secondary school. So many English teachers made fun of me in front of my classmates and I think that this is the main reason why I hate grammar, but not only in English also in Spanish and French. [...] Apart from learning a new language I focused my interest on how Daniela built up the lessons, how she interpreted her role and how was guiding and linking one theme with others. This time I realized about the intention of these lessons and about the research that Daniela was developing. I will try to subtract some points of her lessons and apply in my future lessons.</p>
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<p>Student O 2011.O</p>	<p>Hi Diary! How are you today? or should I say Kako si? ;o) Today when I arrived at my Lingüística aplicada class, a surprise was waiting for us, Daniela, a Croatian teacher that demonstrated us that everyone can teach a foreign language, by using different methods such as, the audio-lingual or the communicative one. In my opinion, the first method would be useful, if you are teaching basic thing like the ones Daniela taught in her first Croatian class. Obviously, we were expectant, because it was a language that, at least in my case, I've never seen before. This method would be a good one, for beginners, especially if they haven't had contact with the language</p>
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they are learning before. In my opinion, for advanced levels, this method can be used, accompanied by the use of grammar (rules, structures, etc) in order to be able to acquire a high level of the new language, otherwise you will be able to order a meal in a restaurant, but you can't include English as a language in your CV for instance. Do you remember the German course I did two years ago? Well, in case you don't remember it, I'm going to refresh your memory... Two years ago, I did a course because I need credits, and also because I want to at least be able to say how are you in German. The method used was the audio-lingual one, and as you can imagine, I still can say, that I don't speak German. It is true, that after the course, I didn't study what I've learnt, maybe, if I had studied the things taught, I would have acquired some knowledge of the German language (see page 1, line 7). But it's what I've told you before, I could go to a restaurant, but I couldn't have had a conversation with a German guy. On the contrary, I consider that the communicative approach is more effective than the audio-lingual, although in my opinion it must not be used in isolation; mixed with some grammar explanations. In conclusion, I really like the Croatian lessons, in fact, I realised that it is not as difficult as I thought, well, at least the basic things; I suppose that as the level is increasing, the difficulty will increase too, so, maybe my opinion will change... ;o)

## APPENDIX V: 2012 ULPGC STUDENTS' DIARY ENTRIES

This appendix shows the extracts which reproduce the information provided by the 2012 students at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) after the ULE session. In this case, there were no questions directly asked and students just wrote about what they had experienced after the session, in which only the Communicative approach was used. Therefore, we have just enumerated the contributions to make the reading easier.

<p>Student A 2012.A</p>	<p>One of the most important things that I need to mention in this part of the journal is the lesson that we did with Daniela, a Croatian girl. For me this class was so interested because with different methods we can understand something about this language. It is important to mention what activities did Daniela because I think this was very relevant to learn about a language only in one hour. She made very interactive activities in which we had to speak (in the whole class and in pairs). I have to say that I really liked this lesson because I could learn something about one language that I have not heard before.</p>
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<p>Student B 2012.B</p>	<p>We had the opportunity to enjoy a class with Daniela in a completely new language, and I have to say that I truly like it. I attended to her class because I was motivated and interested in this experience. At the beginning it was quite difficult but it is</p>
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normal in this situation. However, little by little it was easy to follow her and the correct pronunciation by repeat her. What I really found interesting was that the teacher spoke only in Croatian, it make us pay more attention and remember some important and useful words. When I was about 12 or 13 years old, my classmates ask me for teach them some Swedish words and sentences. As you probably had notice I am very shy, so I went home thinking about it and decided to prepare a short lesson for them. It was something like we did in Croatian lessons, in my opinion we should not learn grammar rules at the first class, because it will maybe be bored for them. The best thing to entertain the students is to make games, to make small dialogues, to see pictures of objects and learn theirs name like if we were children, but it will be Of course in next sessions they have to learn some grammar because learners need grammar rules if they are going to learn successful. When a person is learning a L2, the need to communicate is unnecessary and useful to learn better the language. So they have to be independent and work by themselves. For example, listening to music while they read the lyrics, reading books, seeing films, talking to friends, search for some exercises with keys online. To sump up, I think that to learn a new language should start as young children: worrying to speak and understand first, later when you handle basic communication you can worry about correct grammar and verb conjugations. This technique is recommended, unfortunately it is the least applied by teachers who teach a second language.

<p>Student C 2012.C</p>	<p>The following class was very interesting and funny. We were going to learn a new Language, "Hrvatska". Gina was always telling us that we were going to learn a new language in a few weeks but she never told us which one. The teacher "Daniela" came into class speaking a very weird language. She started teaching us where is her country situated and she taught us how to say "hello" and our names. Then she taught some typical things we learn in our first classes. I really enjoyed and liked the class. I think her way of teaching and if it could be possible, I would like to continue learning this new language. I love learning new languages (as in Primary school we did).</p>
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<p>Student D 2012.D</p>	<p>Regarding the Croatian class: I was hoping that the language we were going to learn was Icelandic (just because I love Björk!) but it was a completely good surprise. I still remember <i>Dobar dan</i> to say good afternoon. At first it was a bit frustrating that we don't know which language were we listening or that we weren't understanding many things until we saw the map or until Daniela show us a map or a video from Croatia I also believes that the method Daniela uses is useful both for beginning teachers and beginning students as well: the more we hear and produce, the more integrated on the language we are. By the way (not for you to forget that I haven't answer this line — or yes), I recognised on the Eurovision Song Contest that the country giving the votes was Croatia (before they say which was the country giving the votes) since I heard something similar to <i>Dobar dan</i>, so the</p>
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	<p>sounds of Croatian are still on my head. The culture input we were presented in that class reminds me of the second time I went to the School of languages to study German (first time I started like one month after the classes began and I felt uncomfortable, although some sounds were still in my mind and some idioms too). The second time I arrive to German classes (as a first year student, again), I remember that the teacher puts on a powerpoint many photos of German monuments and typical symbols of the German culture. I remember that she included a photo plus the name of it afterwards — and that I was the only one writing down those names. Thanks that I have been learning German before, I achieve to write them down quickly, because that was not the point of the class. I have pointed this because I think that was quite good for both visual and listener type of students.</p>
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<p>Student E 2012.E</p>	<p>This time I'll begin writing about methods because I have some questions I'd like to ask you... First of all, I'd like to thank you for letting us live such a great experience as the one we had with Daniela and her Croatian class. I think that class proved that there's no need to know anything about a language to use the target language full-time since the beginning though I also think that the settlement of a context since the beginning and the use of pictures played an important role. . If I'm not wrong, the method used during that class was the Lexical Approach. and answering what you asked me in the previous journal, I do think the Lexical Approach is quite a successful one since you're teaching learners real chunks of language but, what about</p>
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	<p>fluency? In one of the articles it's said that this method helps the student be fluent ("It is our ability to use lexical phrases that helps us to speak with fluency"- Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992) but really? Do you think that way of teaching isolated pieces of language would allowed them to speak in a fluent way? Wouldn't they have difficulties to connect that knowledge? What's more, the Lexical Approach is about teaching learners chunks, collocations, and so on but, how do you know how many "varieties" to teach?. I mean imagine you're teaching lexical chunks as the ones used in the article I referred to before: "by the way, up to now, upside down, If I were you, a long way off, out of my mind". How do you know those are the important ones, the ones the learners need, and not others? How do you know the quantity is the right one in order for the learners not to be overwhelmed? As you can see, I need to keep researching about this method</p>
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<p>Student F 2012.F</p>	<p>If a good (language) learner knows their own learning style, why is this important skill not taught in schools? I like to learn alone so I can concentrate better and repeat things in my head, e.g. the class with Daniela was not my learning style, I did not feel comfortable. It was not my pace, I prefer to learn the basics of a language at home-.</p>
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<p>Student G</p>	<p>One advantage is that there is no mother tongue and students have to guess so it requires more work from them. However, I think it</p>
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2012.G	<p>does not allow students to develop personal dialogues it is too much controlled making everything very artificial. Moreover, it is based on drills and if a student goes abroad he/she won't be able to create spontaneous sentences but only those drills which they had learnt. This method was used for learning Japanese, I think if I learnt Japanese like that it would be easier but then I could find the problem that I did not know how to do my own utterances. Like Chomsky I think that language is something spontaneous and so is grammar. Furthermore, I don't agree with this method as far as mistakes are concerned, if students don't make mistakes how are they going to learn?</p>
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<p>Student H 2012.G</p>	<p>I was really surprised when we learned that our unknown language learning experience had to do with Croatian because my father actually speaks the language fluently. He had to learn it for his studies in Zagreb. However, I had no previous knowledge of the language, except for the greeting "dobra večer" and the word "čaj". However, the class session was extremely interesting and entertaining, although somewhat nerve-wracking in the audio-lingual part of the session. I assume that the unknown language experience was provided in order to illustrate how our knowledge of grammar informs our ability to make L1 and L2 analogies to learn structures when being confronted with a completely unfamiliar language. Thus I recognized some similarities between Croatian and Spanish structures like "a ti" or "adio", for example. So our awareness of the new language was raised. For most of the class, the teacher resorted to an audio-lingual approach involving the drilling of correct model sentences. At the same time, a communicate approach of language teaching was used that even promoted learners' engagement by means of information gaps. That's why the gap fill dialogue did not</p>
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	<p>anticipate learners' answers, but provided arguably little but some flexibility. In general, we learned useful and common expressions like greetings, asking for someone's name, introducing oneself, the time of the day and a number of adjectives and names. Apart from lexical input, some cultural input was given as well.</p>
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<p>Student I 2012.I</p>	<p>In my opinion, the Croatian class we had a couple of weeks ago has been one of the most interesting and useful experiences so far, at the University and there are several reasons for that. Firstly, I think that most of the people who are starting to learn "how to teach" do not really remember how it was, to learn a new language for the first time. I do remember some of the lessons I have had on previous years, buy unfortunately I cannot remember what I felt the first time my teacher spoke to me on a different language. Moreover, it is more difficult for me to remember the first time I was spoken in English maybe because my English lessons used to be in Spanish. And that is the main problem teachers face nowadays. My English classes used to start by the theory and grammar lessons that were taught in Spanish of course; however, our Croatian teacher spoke on the target language from the very beginning of the class and with something as simple as "Dobro jutro" which means "Good morning".</p>
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<p>Student J 2012.J</p>	<p>I think that a language lesson must be focused on useful vocabulary and expressions, in order to be able to finish the class with some kind of a "vocabulary-box" from which we can actually take expressions and words and be able to use them in a real context. Of course, I will not be able to develop fluency and concrete</p>
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	<p>sentences until we have intense grammar lessons however, it is necessary to provide something that makes our students get interested by the new language. From my own experience, I loved the way the language was pronounced, and I got really interested in the different letters and sounds they have, very different from the ones we use in Spanish or in English. The teacher got the whole attention from the beginning of the class because I think she knew exactly how to engage us, and she did very well. She asked us to use some of the structures orally, with our mates and with her. In my opinion this is a very useful technique in order to get to know if your students have engaged well with the class or if there is something that the students need to work on a little more. Finally, I believe this has been a great method because I can still remember words and expressions without reading my notes and I think that must always be the main goal of a good teacher.</p>
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<p>Student K 2012.K</p>	<p><u>Dobar dan!</u> In today's session, we have learned some basic notions of Croatian. It was quite challenging at the beginning, since we did not use any English or Spanish throughout the lesson. However, this allowed us to put ourselves in the place of a beginner and live a class from that perspective, having the same feelings and curiosity and learning more about a new and different language and its culture. In that sense, this session was, in my opinion, very productive and effective, as we learned unconsciously much more than what we expected.</p>
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<p>Student L 2012.L</p>	<p>Without a real or explicit focus on grammar, we acquired sentence structures, declensions, pronouns, pronunciation, accentual patterns and word order, together with vocabulary. In order to achieve this, our teacher used different techniques from several methods of language teaching. For instance, she based the introduction of new structures on the Audiolingual Method, with activities of repetition and drilling (choral, individual, with a ball, dialogues...) and an implicit focus on grammar. Moreover, I think she also turned to CLT to consolidate what we had already drilled, with flashcards of famous people and slides that presented dialogues with an information gap to work in pairs. In addition to this, when she was introducing new terms of vocabulary or new cultural concepts, she elicited from us, thus engaging our attention. In short, this has been a great experience. In my opinion, many learners tend to forget about this kind of languages, probably because they are less spread or popular. However, this interaction has proved that Croatian is as interesting and rich as any other language. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to discover it and, at the same time, live the learning process from a different point of view.</p>
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<p>Student M 2012.M</p>	<p>I can remember some basic sentences and vocabulary we learnt that day, but some others are more difficult to keep without reading them. I guess you chose Croatian because it was a language that none of us had learnt before, and also because it is quite different from Spanish or English. In that sense, the lesson was free from other influences and we could connect easily with the situation of a learner without any idea about the language and</p>
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	know how challenging it is to teach in such environment.
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**APPENDIX VI: 2013 ULPGC STUDENTS' DIARY ENTRIES**

These extracts reproduce the reflections of the 2013 students at the ULPGC after the unknown language learning session. They were not asked specific questions about it but just wrote about what they had experienced. Therefore, we have just enumerated the contributions to make the reading easier.

Student A 2013.A	<p>This session was totally different. We were introduced to another language in order to analyze how we integrate a new language just listening to that language. After listening you also practised. The teacher that was invited is a native Croatian speaker, so she introduced us in her language. At the beginning, I felt lost because I didn't understand anything. But, through pictures and gestures, she was able to explain herself and explain language without using any word in Spanish or English. She had prepared her class through a power point presentation and she was explaining the slides whereas she was also writing in the blackboard some words that we could relate to the pictures. I realize that we are able to remember some words and easy structures, but I am not sure if a whole language can be explained in that way. I consider that it is essential that the classes are given in the language that is taught. I confess I was trying (in this specific moment) to find some examples to show my doubts with the method, but I find nothing. Pronunciation, spelling and grammar can be explained through pictures and words written in the blackboard. It would be interesting to carry out an investigation in which this method</p>
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	<p>is analyzed. So, I was thinking that maybe in some more difficult lessons, the explanations can be a little bit difficult to understand and maybe the lesson is slower but more effective, because we are acquiring real language and not language from a textbook. I think that Daniela was able to engage us in the lesson through her games and pictures. She prepared some games in which we had to repeat some basic structures and I liked to participate and know about another language.</p>
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<p>Student B</p> <p>2013.B</p>	<p>Obviously, I have never heard a word in Croatian and it was AWESOME! I really like it! I knew Daniella because some of us had a subject last year with her and we knew she was Croatian but, apart from that, I have no idea about anything related with Croatia. At the beginning, I thought she would use some words in English to guide us, I mean, at least two or three words, but she didn't use any English words!! I was absolutely astonished! And I have to admit that I also felt a little frightened! However, I have to say that, at least in my case, I really picked up some words. And when I arrived home, I started bombard my mum with all the sentences I have learnt and showed her how they are pronounce and what their meanings are!! It really works! And even I have not said in our lessons that this is what we normally do in my work since children are 3 years old. We speak to them in English since the beginning and the first weeks are very hard because we have to do many actions or gestures to relate English with a concrete action or meaning. For example when the littlest children ask for water they normally say: agua!! And we answer: "Can I have some water, please?" At the beginning, they just repeat: "water, please." Or just "water" but with the pass of time, they are able</p>
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	to say the whole sentence.
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Student C  2013.C	<p>In my case I remember many of the words Daniella showed us, what would happen with a child? It is completely true that this method works because, if it works with me, it probably will work much better with children.</p>
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Student D  2013.D	<p>According to the Krashen theory, there are three important aspects which can affect the second language learning. These are: the anxiety, self-confidence and motivation. Because of the Croatian class that Daniella gave to us last week, I could figure out that these three aspects are very important to learn the language correctly. I love to know new languages, even if it is only a few words or expressions. I felt very motivated with the Croatian lesson from the beginning; I think that the class was great because of the teacher. She did the class very entertaining and dynamic at all time. She also followed a good teaching method with activities</p>
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	<p>in which all of us participated in, so we were very stunned and receptive. She advised us when we makes a mistake to do an auto correction, therefore, we acted like monitor model (another concepts coined by Krashen). My self-confidence was fine, not too high as other times, I think it is probably because the language was totally unknown for me and I didn't understand almost anything.</p>
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<p>Student E 2013.E</p>	<p>I liked the class so much! But I don't know if the two concepts mentioned before will be the same if I continue learning Croatian. Because as we commented in class, the anxiety and motivation to learn is not as necessary as we were children. We already know a language to communicate, and maybe a second one, we don't know anybody that speaks Croatian in our environment to practice with, etc. That could complicate our anxiety state to learn a language. For all these reasons sometimes people leave the learning of a new language. I really think that is fundamental to be surrounded by people who speak the desire language. As Krashen said:</p> <p>“In the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful”. Stephen Krashen</p>
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<p>Student F 2013.F</p>	<p>This Thursday has been a very different one. Usually, we start the lesson with a warmer. However, Daniela, who is a lecture from our college, gave us a Croatian lesson. From the very beginning, once she entered into the classroom, until the very end she talked to us in Croatian. It has been a little bit shocking to me since I have never heard Croatian language before. Moreover, it has been my first time learning a language without using my native language or English. I had a feeling of confusion at the same time that I had the emotion of curiosity blooming. I can assure you, after this new experience, that feelings have a great influence over our capacity of learning a new language. Even though, if these emotions establishes a contrast between them since being confused or curious are a bit opposites but with a fresh result, in my case. On the one hand, I have felt confused since without the visual images I could not follow her once the class started. Later on, she has used a power point presentation that helps me a lot to relate what has been taught with the reality. Nevertheless, once the class has carried on I did not have the need of these visual supports in order to understand her. This feeling of satisfaction is what I really like. On the other hand, curiosity bloomed. This method of communicative competence seems to be obsolete in the most of language lessons in high schools. This Croatian class has been the first foreign language class that I have had in whole my life. Now, the sensation of continuing learning a different language is positive. I mean without constructive ideas most of the students abandon language subjects easily. However, if the teacher applies this methodology then students' minds work hardly. Students construct a new idea about how to learn a language. At the same time, teachers activate a completely different way of engaging students to the language.</p>
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Student G 2013.G	<p>According to the tools used by the Croatian teacher, it seems to me that the visual relation with the reality and the relation that we make between body language and words are relevant. For instance, I quickly learnt that "Ona se zove Daniela" refers to "She is Daniela" since she pointed the person and the sentence was written in the power point. Thus, I establish the link between both concepts in order to get to the idea that has been transmitted. My wish is to be a Spanish teacher. I would like to apply this method in my classes since it is very effective. I think I have to get better on it and it would be great!</p>
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Student H 2013.H	<p>The experience of having a lesson of a language I hadn't heard before and getting to understand and learn some of the basic structures of it has been very rewarding. The tools used by Daniela were great to realize what the act of communication takes into account, especially when trying to learn, that is, gestures, tone of the voice and visual prompts among others, which made the lesson memorable. Not only that, but also the interaction with the learners was essential to engage us from the beginning; the introduction of anecdotes such as the place where she was born and so on made the lesson more pleasant. What this class proved was that grammar is not the most important element in the process of learning. As I was listening to this new language, I was thinking semiconsciously about grammar, comparing the structures I was able to identify with Spanish in order to retain them.</p>
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Student I 2013.I	<p>I agree there is no need to teach the verb to be from the very first class, but I believe it is important to be familiar with it since early in the course, little by little. The mixture of learning and acquiring should be quite effective in adults who want to speak another language, they could benefit from the best of both processes.</p>
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Student J 2013.J	<p>We dealt in this session with a total immersion in the experience of learn croatian almost during one hour. It was a kind of warmer (really?) and it was extremely interesting for me. From this experience, I learnt basic ways of expression in Croatian: English: Good morning! Croatian: Dobro jutro! E→ Good-bye! C → Adio/Bog. I also think that it was a very good example of a session applying the direct method in a way because we did not use the L1 ( or L2) in order to explain the lexicon and, even more, there was an emphasis on the oral component. Indeed, it was a quite inductive approach to the language and, simultaneously, we used objects and images along the process.</p>
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Student K 2013.K	<p>I was very engaged with the Croatian class, even if I didn't have any motivation to do so. I think that the methods that Danny used suited my learning style and when the class ended I wanted to know more about the language, just for the sake of learning. Even when she was speaking in Croatian, you could get something, if not the literal meaning,</p>
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	<p>at least you got what she wanted you to do and by the end of the class you even managed to get some words. I liked how she taught us everyday language like "good morning" etc, and even to this day I remember some of it, like "Dobro jutro", "dobro dan", "tako-tako"... something that I can't do on German after two years of it.</p>
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<p>Student L 2013.L</p>	<p>A clear example of such learning was experienced by our class on 21st March when we were taught Croatian by Daniela in an ungrammatical way. Accordingly we were only spoken in Croatian and we learnt basic language in chunks as how to greet a person, ask for the age, for the mood, as well as for the hour and all this helped with visual cues in order to guide us. Moreover, we receive some cultural input and vocabulary learning. As a consequence, I believe grammar should be taught only to reinforce some notions of correctness in language, but after having acquired the language through vocabulary first.</p>
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## **APPENDIX VII: 2014/2015 TRINITY COLLEGE OF LONDON DIPLOMA STUDENTS**

This section includes the answers of the students that participated in the Unknown Language Experience (ULE) at the Trinity College in the academic year 2003 and that were later asked about that experience in 2014/2015.

The original questions that we asked students in the 2013 experience are shown below and the results and figures related to these quantitative data can be consulted in Chapter 4.

1. How have you felt?
2. What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?
3. Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?
4. What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?
5. Which were teacher's objectives?

These are the questions we asked the same students in the academic year 2014/2015, 11/12 years after the ULE experience in 2003.

1. How do you feel about the experience 12 years after?
2. What helped you to understand what was going on?
3. Did you use any of the strategies?
4. What do you remember now/ what did you learn?
5. Which were the teacher's objectives? (What did you get away with in the lesson?)

Below we reproduce the students' answers in 2014/2015:

<p><u>Student A</u></p> <p>Q1.2014/15.A</p>	<p>I can remember feeling intimidated when you gave us a map and a bit of text in Croatian. I felt it would be impossible to get a clear idea of the grammar and rules of the language we were being given small chunks of language and I had no confidence that I would be able to use them spontaneously, but I did. You were smiley and friendly. I recall you drawing smiley faces on the blackboard and learning " <i>Dober Dan!</i>" We were encouraged to practise speaking with each other and in this class I genuinely felt like I was learning Croatian. It was exciting and fun to be learning another language in this open, relaxed way.</p>
<p>Q2.2014/15.A</p>	<p>The methods I adopted for my own teaching were all taken from the communicative class (which I think was the idea). Important lessons I learned were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make sure the student understands what he is being taught - being lost in a language lesson is an unpleasant experience</li> <li>- getting the students to practice with each other is important - in fact, the more speaking the better</li> <li>- keep the lesson friendly and relaxed, this atmosphere is much more conducive to learning</li> <li>-keep it simple and get the basics taught first.</li> </ul>

Q3.2014/15.A	<p>I did apply a lot of the strategies I learned in that part of the course in my teaching. I was teaching mainly children in China, so these strategies are particularly useful I feel (ie you have to keep the lesson fun, and you have to keep it simple enough that the children can follow it). In China, most students learn languages in a very formal way, lots of rote learning and very little communicative speaking practice - it's a big problem here in fact - so I felt the methods I learnt on the course were particularly relevant and useful here.</p>
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Q4.2014/15.A	<p>I hoped to learn a bit of Croatian as well as some useful teaching methods, and I did learn all of those (I've forgotten most of the Croatian now, sadly!). I found the bad methods of teaching particularly useful as an example of "what not to do" in a lesson. Overall, I found the whole Unknown Language element very interesting and useful - it was one of the most enjoyable parts of the course.</p>
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Q5.2014/15.A	<p>I got away with some strategies, techniques how to teach absolute beginners. I use some of the games you did such as ball throwing/ naming and naught and crosses. Also, I still remember some basic vocabulary, very basic thanks to efficient teaching.</p>
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<p><u>Student B</u> Q1.2014/15.B</p>	<p>I was slightly dubious at first but soon realised that the techniques and methods being used were entirely appropriate and soon got in to the fun of the language learning. I felt surprised above taking into account that I could understand what was going in class as well as my classmates. We were motivated to do so by your encouragement.</p>
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Q2.2014/15.B	<p>The teacher spoke nothing but Croatian but her use of hand gestures, signals and simple pointing at items made it very easy to understand. There was a lot of repetition, again mainly reinforcing the teaching point. We would then be given an activity to back up the previous techniques for the particular teaching point. For example, choose a magazine cut out and with the vocabulary you have learned describe the person and the class must try and guess the celebrity.</p>
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Q3.2014/15.B	I will definitely be applying the techniques used and have used some and the one described can be changed to suit any age group and or lesson plan. Characters from children's books, cartoon characters, sports personalities, to name but a few.
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Q4.2014/15.B	I have a much better understanding off what it feels like being the student. I remember this when I have vacant looking faces in the classroom and quickly evaluate my method. As a teacher I always have additional support resources at hand for each lesson plan again because having experienced what it us like first hand to be in the foreign language students shoes. I think anyone training to be a language teacher should experience this.
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Q5.2014/15.B	I get away with the sense of satisfaction for being able to follow the lesson and participate. And the objectives were to teach us some vocabulary and expressions to get by if we ever go to Croatia. I am sure we would.
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<u>Student C</u>	
Q1.2014/15.C	Felt that it dealt with the difeerent ways of learning and informed us that not neccessarily all of us would 'take' to learning in this way- made me feel very confortable to know that if I didn't 'get' it that it was not a big problem- also helped

	understand the approach better.
Q2.2014/15.C	Involving students physically in the learning process, games, handouts, quiz type tasks allowing us to have many ways of retaining the info as we have diff attachments to it. Also the explanation behind the activity as u understand why we are doing the task.

Q3.2014/15.C	I would like to think I have used and adapted to my own needs, which I have found a valuble point to start and improve on my own techniques. I found that by using tools and planning I am able to incorporate and adjust so the many ways of communIcations group and alone. I've learnt that creating the right type of environment for learning is essential! By using different teaching implements to teach and group activity helps communicate the 'lesson' and allows easier understanding.
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Q4.2014/15.C	I hoped to acheive the abolity to communicate with all pupils, how to keep them engaged and interested in returning to classes, and different methods of approaching tasks and what tools to use. I would like to think I have acheived this and so much more that I didnot realise that I needed. My confidence
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	<p>grew when I realised both the position of the teacher and the student. I have also managed to get tips on classroom etiquette.</p>
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<p>Q5.2014/15.C</p>	<p>I remember the first feelings of being scared maybe a little bit to speak a language I have never heard before. But then I realized that it is an amazing experience that my future/current students are going to/ have experience(d), so I relaxed and got away with some simple expressions, greetings, and how to introduce yourself.</p>
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<p><u>Student D</u> Q1.2014/15.D</p>	<p>I felt excited to learn and keen to impress the teacher (I'm a bit of a sycophant). I wanted to interact with the teacher with what few words I managed to pick up. I never felt intimidated or over-whelmed as the teacher (you) fed us words cautiously using lots of repetition and positive reinforcement. However, I was highly aware that we in a highly restricted and artificial language environment. This felt safe, knowing we wouldn't be exposed to any unpredictable language or situations.</p>
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Q2.2014/15.D	<p>I remember substantial variation of task: teacher led, teacher-to-student and then student to student. There were listening, speaking, reading (and possible writing) tasks. There was an attempt to reach all learning styles through use of VAK (visual, audio, kinaesthetic)- maybe a bit of Howard Gardner here. The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm. This helped to combat inertia or trepidation about speaking in a foreign language. I'm sure you exploited our boisterous willingness to impress you by dividing us into teams and allocating points, thus giving us an incentive to participate in the activities. I'm sure there was some kind of random questioning too, meaning that I, as the learner, had to stay alert to what was happening.</p> <p>Staying alert most of the time for you have used Croatian and not a word of English ( how did you do that?, you did not even use good or no mind slips.) I did learn a lot, because of this, use only the target language it is the key.</p>
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<p>Q3.2014/15.D</p>	<p>I do think that I have used fairly many strategies; let them choose the next person to speak, clear instructions ( still amazed how you did it without saying a single word in English, and we could follow you), create a warm environment and lot of encouragement above all. I remember substantial variation of task: teacher led, teacher-to-student and then student to student. There were listening, speaking, reading (and possible writing) tasks. There was an attempt to reach all learning styles through use of VAK (visual, audio, kinaesthetic)- maybe a bit of Howard Gardner here. The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm. This helped to combat inertia or trepidation about speaking in a foreign language. I'm sure you exploited our boisterous willingness to impress you by dividing us into teams and allocating points, thus giving us an incentive to participate in the activities. I'm sure there was some kind of random questioning too, meaning that I, as the learner, had to stay alert to what was happening.</p>
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<p>Q4.2014/15.D</p>	<p>Much of the communicative method is repeated in high schools here in Scotland. We would call it AifL techniques (Assessment is for Learning) through a variety of formative assessment strategies. I remember studying Vygotsky whilst completing my teacher training and I often thought about the ULE as a great example of scaffolding: creating an environment</p>
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	<p>that allows a student to operate at their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). If you had introduce too much language, we would have been overwhelmed; similarly, too little and we would have been bored. You pitched the ULE perfectly to our needs and behaviour.</p>
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<p>Q5.2014/15.D</p>	<p>This is an interesting question, well I do use some of your strategies and they work, I do my best to change the pace or activity when I see the expressions on their faces. I teach secondary kids, which is challenging as you well know, so knowing the theory about the learning process ( see my previous answer) and the ULE are the perfect match to become a teacher, do no dare to say here good teacher. Ok, I do good teacher.</p>
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<p><u>Student E</u> Q1.2014/15.E</p>	<p>I felt good and the most important lesson from the experience was being able to relate to learners; not just ESL learners, but anyone in a classroom environment. Fundamentally it helps me empathise with children and informs my classroom teaching. I try to make my lessons as interactive as possible and encourage opportunities for participation and self-application of knowledge. For me, learning is an active process, not something that happens passively in isolation. So my positive feeling was boosting after each ULE lesson.</p>
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Q2.2014/15.E	<p>The communicative one, involved you showing us photographs. I could be making this up, but I seem to recall that the photographs were of your family and you used them to teach rudimentary family nouns. By seeing photos I could understand what was going on in class. It engaged my interest and motivation as it related to real people with real lives. (I really hope I'm remembering the bit about the photographs correctly!)</p>
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Q3.2014/15.E	<p>I am no longer a teacher, but when I did that job I certainly used personal photographs on several occasions, particularly ones from travel. And many real life dialogues.</p>
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Q4.2014/15.E	<p>I learn how to teach a beginner's class and how to introduce new vocabulary even if they haven't seen it before. (hang man is a universal saviour, for these occasions, just as you did it).</p>
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Q5.2014/15.E	<p>I suppose the main objective was to learn what it felt like to be on the receiving end of various foreign language teaching methods. I certainly lived the experience of being a language student and learned the importance of relating the language to the lives of real people.</p>
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	<p>I realise these points are far from technical or detailed but I'm afraid these distant impressions are all that memory permits in the present day.</p> <p>If there is any way in which you could jog my memory further I would be happy to add more comments.</p>
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<p><u>Student F</u> Q1.2014/15.F</p>	<p>Being in a foreign language lesson made me feel nervous and insecure. Most of the time, when studying through English, I'm a confident student. But this situation made me very self conscious when answering questions in front of my peers. However, it did get easier as the lessons progressed.</p>
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<p>Q2.2014/15.F</p>	<p>The use of gestures, visuals and pronunciation drilling all helped me understand the new vocabulary and simple phrases the teacher introduced. Repetition of phrases and being given the opportunity to speak was also effective. The teacher recycled phrases from the lesson before which was effective. Also, I felt useful the use of only Croatian so we felt like as if we were there, with those beautiful photos you showed us. I do believe that it made sense cause you have used Croatian this made us work more and harder and concentrate a lot.</p>
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<p>Q3.2014/15.F</p>	<p>Yes. This experience has demonstrated the that speaking slowly, keeping instructions clear and to a minimum and using visuals and gestures all contribute to teaching a beginner/ elementary class. The teacher didn't</p>
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	<p>use any unnecessary phrases, she only spoke the words and phrases she wanted us to learn. I will apply the method of pronunciation drilling before showing the student the vocabulary to ensure they don't become confused.</p>
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<p>Q4.2014/15.F</p>	<p>I learnt that empathy is important when teaching a English to students with a very low level. Teachers must remember that they might be teaching a group of highly skilled/ educated individuals who's confidence has been thrown by being immersed in a language they don't understand. Visuals, gestures, concept checking and a steady pace are all essential in the classroom. Revisiting language points and having the students produce them is also important for learner progression.</p>
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<p>Q5.2014/15.F</p>	<p>Well, given the fact that I do remember something after so many years means that I did get away with some knowledge about how to teach vocabulary, expressions to absolute beginners. Right now, I am not teaching, but I am still pursuing a teaching career and I think that you objectives were what I wrote before teach us some basics and show us that it is possible to teach without using just the target language.</p>
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<p><u>Student G</u> Q1.2014/15.G</p>	<p>It has been 11 years since my last ULE in Telde. I can only remember a few words of Hrvasta: mainly:</p>
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	Dobro and Super! Strangely enough, I had a few hours of ULE in Greek about a year before that (at Langside College in Glasgow) and I seem to remember a few more words and phrases! No comment on the quality of your teaching Daniela. I felt nervous at start, but then it got better, thanks to the right strategies.
Q2.2014/15.G	Visual aids, mime, laugh, videos, repetition, drilling, positive feedback, checking understanding: <i>Ima problema?</i>
Q3.2014/15.G	Yes, of course, especially with the beginner students. I use a lot of mime and visuals to help them understand.
Q4.2014/15.G	I did not hope for much, learned enough, right now I still remember: Dobar dan and Kako si? We had fun and learnt some useful techniques.
Q5.2014/15.G	Well, we learnt some basic expressions, as mentioned before and how to teach beginners. I think that these were your objectives.
<u>Student H</u> Q1.2014/15.H	I felt good despite participating in an unknown

	language experience, I mean with no knowledge about the language whatsoever. You used some photos from magazines to illustrate famous Croatians and to elicit how to: <i>What 's your name, his names is, her name is.</i>
Q2.2014/15.H	A lot of praise and positive energy, mistakes were corrected by peers and by you, but in a nice way, we did not feel intimidated. This made me more intrested to know which the right strategies to teach a foreign language are. And I remember taking many notes in Croatian, guessing some spelling since you did not write it all on the board. I got most of it because you did not use English, so I had to do my best to understand and you did make us participate like it or not.
Q3.2014/15.H	Yes, I use a lot of : <i>great, well done,( was it bravo?)</i> and do not ever say <i>no</i> , you can always find something positive, even if they make mistakes.
Q4.2014/15.H	Basic Croatian and we did. It was OK and enough for the sessions we have had. I remember how to praise and to give simple instructions.

Q5.2014/15.H	<p>I got away with the feeling of being happy to have participated, I remember long night filling in the questionnaire and writing up the diary, studying together and having fun above all. I believe that your objective was to show us how to teach beginners, and when to use certain strategies.</p>
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<p><u>Student I</u> Q1.2014/15.I</p>	<p>I felt some trepidation as it is many a long year since I have studied a new language. I was also wary as I had previously had absolutely no exposure to the new language. I was curious and unsure how the language would seem and this was quite an issue for me. I suppose I was nervous because I could not imagine how the phonology would work and was especially nervous that I would be asked to reproduce Russian type pronunciation, which I cannot do. However, did look forward to the challenge. I felt relaxed and interested and even volunteered.</p>
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Q2.2014/15.I	<p>The ball game, everyone was on their toes all the time, it was far more effective than the teacher asking students in sequence, or students asking neighbours in turn. Concept checking, to express hot she blew into a coffee cup, it was crystal clear. Substitution, let's have some coffee/tea/coca- cola/beer/water.</p>
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Q3.2014/15.I	Always favour the communicative approach, it really works. Facilitate learning in all 4 skills.
Q4.2014/15.I	Not much Croatian, but learnt some good strategies and felt in students 's shoes, and that really helps.

Q5.2014/15.I	I consider that your objectives were to teach us some vocabulary and expressions that we can use in everyday situations, and to put us in learners' shoes. This was really effective.
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<p><u>Student J</u></p> <p>Q1.2014/15.J</p>	Honestly speaking I wasn't looking forward to the ULE and did not see much sense. But once we started I felt good and enthusiastic to participate. To talk to my classmates in the UL. And we did and we had fun and learn a lot in just one hour.
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Q2.2014/15.J	I understood what we going on thanks to the visuals and mime and concept questions. Also, you used only Croatian and in a weird way it made the comprehension easier. We had to pay attention and had all the senses working and on alert.
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Q3.2014/15.J	Yes, I have used some strategies with beginners and advanced learners, for example using famous people, dialogues, noughts and crosses to revise among others.
Q4.2014/15.J	I recall how to use some techniques to make the students motivated. I always remember the ULE as a gratifying experience and I try to transmit this to my students. I hope that I do.
Q5.2014/15.J	Well, to teach us some vocabulary and expressions and how to teach absolute beginners. Well done.!!



## APPENDIX VIII : LANGSIDE/TLC GRAN CANARIA CERT.TESOL COURSE TIMETABLE: JAN- FEB 2003

### Langside/TCL Gran Canaria Cert. TESOL Course Timetable: Jan – Feb 2003

- ITEMS IN BOLD CAPITALS: ASSESSED COURSE COMPONENTS
- REFERENCES IN ITALICS: PAGES FROM PRESCRIBED READING TEXTS – *K = Kenworthy: Teaching English Pronunciation*  
*H = Harmer: Practice of English Language Teaching (3rd ed.) LH = Lewis & Hill: Practical Techniques*  
Note that some references are re-visited!

NOTE: ALL INPUT SESSIONS ARE TAUGHT BY COURSE DIRECTOR, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED!



#### Week 1

PERIOD	MONDAY <i>20/1</i>	TUESDAY <i>21/1</i>	WEDNESDAY <i>22/1</i>	THURSDAY <i>23/1</i>	FRIDAY <i>24/1</i>
08.00-10.00		TO-Group 1 8-9am TO-Group 2 9-10am	<b>TP-Group 1 8-9am</b> <b>TP-Group 2 9-10am</b>	TO- Group 3 8-9am TO- Group 4 9-10am	Feedback to Group 4 on Thursday TP
10.00 – 10.30	Introduction & Admin Issues	Writing up Observation Tasks	Writing up Lesson Evaluation	Writing up Observation Tasks	<b>Finalise Unknown Language Journal, to hand in at 10.30am.</b>
10.30 – 11.30			Feedback discussion		
12.00-13.30	Croatian (1) & <b>SET-UP OF ULJ</b> <i>H 78-91 DC</i>	Croatian (2) <b>(HAND IN ULJ 1)</b> <i>H 78-91 DC</i>	Croatian (3) <b>(HAND IN ULJ 2)</b> <i>H 78-91 DC</i>	Croatian (4) <b>(HAND IN ULJ 3)</b> <i>H 78-91 DC</i>	<b>(*HAND IN ULJ 4) SET-UP OF STUD. PROFILE</b> <i>H: see Index 'Learners'</i>
13.45-14.45	Fundamentals of Language Learning	Roles of the Teacher <i>H 57-63, LH 7-20</i>	Classroom Management <i>H 114-132, LH 39-54</i>	Unknown-Lang: Follow-up <i>H 78-91</i>	Use of Teaching Aids <i>H: see Index</i>
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>F</b>
15.45-16.45	Language Awareness [LA] (1): Overview	Phonology (1): Word Stress <i>K 28-30, 59-65</i>	Phonology (2): Sentence Stress & Vowel-weakening <i>K 71-72, 104-109</i>	Lesson Planning (2): Skills & Functions <i>H 308-318, LH 55-60</i>	Teaching Young Learners <i>H38-40</i>
16.45-17.45	Lesson Planning (1): Aims & Objectives	LA (2): The Tense System <i>LH 127</i>	Presenting New Language – including eliciting & prompting <i>LH 39-54 and Concept Checking LH 97-104</i>	Practising New Language	Student profile preparation: Identification of profilees and interview prep.
18.00-21.00		TP Guidance	TP Guidance	<b>TP-Group 3 7-8pm</b> <b>TP-Group 4 8-9pm</b>	TP Guidance



Week 2

PERIOD	MONDAY 27/1	TUESDAY 28/1	WEDNESDAY 29/1	THURSDAY 30/1	FRIDAY 31/1
08.00-10.00	TP Group 1	TO Group 2 8-9am (Terry)	TP Group 2	TO Group 4 8-9am (Laura)	FB on Thurs evening TP (Gp 3)
10.00-10.30	Writing up Lesson Evaluation	TO Group 1 9-10am (Laura)	Writing up Lesson Evaluation	TO Group 3 9-10am (Terry)	Receptive Skills (2): Listening H 181-234
10.30-11.30	Feedback discussion		Feedback discussion		
12.00-13.30	LA (3/4): Pres Perf/ Past	Producing and Using Language	Presenting Language through Texts	Teaching Young learners: A practitioner's perspective TW	<b>COURSEBOOK EVALUATION PRESENTATIONS</b>
13.45-14.45	Lesson Planning (3): Grammar staging models H 308 - 318; LH 55 - 60	Error Analysis LH: 89-96	Receptive Skills (1): Reading H 210-227	Phonology (4): Consonants K 72-75, 76-77, 101-03	
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>F</b>
15.45-16.45	Phonology (3): Vowels K 46, 75-76	LA (5): Future Forms	Productive Skills: Speaking LH 65-74	<b>SET-UP OF MATERIALS PROJECT</b>	Professional Awareness & Development Interviews
16.45-17.45	<b>SET-UP OF COURSEBOOK EVALUATION</b> H 301-304	FB on TP from Monday evening Gps 2 & 4)	FB on TP from Tuesday evening (Gp 3)	FB on TP from Wed evening (Gps 1 & 4)	
18.00-21.00	TP guidance 6-7pm TP Group 2 7-9pm TP Group 4 7-9pm	TP guidance 6-7pm TP Group 3 7-9pm	TP guidance 6-7pm TP Group 1 7-9pm TP Group 4 7-9pm	TP guidance 6-7pm TP Group 3 7-9pm	TP Guidance 6-7pm

**APPENDIX IX ( DVD)<sup>142</sup>**

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<sup>142</sup> You can find the DVD at the back cover.



**APPENDIX X: A SAMPLE OF UNKNOWN LANGUAGE  
JOURNAL, 2003**

LANGSIDE COLLEGE GLASGOW - ELT UNIT

Lara

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON CERT. TESOL



# UNKNOWN LANGUAGE JOURNAL



During the first week of the course you'll be participating in a total of four hours of tuition in Croatian, taught mainly through the target language. This will give you the opportunity to log your observations in three main areas:

- > What it *feels* like to be a student at beginner level, surrounded only by sounds you can't initially understand.
- > What *methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques* are used by the teacher to help you to make sense of this linguistic chaos; they won't be exclusively 'communicative' methods, so you'll gain a little experience of other methodologies too.
- > What *structural differences and similarities* there are between the target language and English, in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

After each lesson you'll be required to write up your observations in the form of a brief perceived lesson plan, together with answers to questions focusing on specific aspects of the lesson. It's important that you provide as much concrete detail as possible, always backing up your comments with specific examples and reasons for your answers. Try to discuss your experience with other course members to gain a deeper insight, as not everyone responds to a particular teaching technique or strategy in the same way.

After the final lesson you'll be asked to summarise your reaction to the whole experience of learning a new foreign language. This will ask you to think about the role of the teacher and the needs of beginner students, as well as pulling together the main ideas behind the communicative approach. A specimen completed tutor-comments sheet is appended, so that you can keep the assessment criteria in sharp focus as you complete your daily journals.

Enjoy the lessons and participate as much as possible, as this will allow you to empathise with 'ab initio' learners and provide you with first-hand ideas and feelings to write about.

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*Each set of proformas should be handed in daily, not all at the end of the language course  
- otherwise it's not a journal!*

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**LANGSIDE COLLEGE GLASGOW - ELT UNIT**  
**TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON CERT TESOL**  
**CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF UNKNOWN-LANGUAGE JOURNAL**

GRADE	Clarity & quality of lesson plans (20%)	Quality of insight into language teaching (20%)	Quality of insight into affective factors (20%)	Quality of L1/L2 contrastive analysis(20%)	Quality of reflection on ULJ experience (20%)
<b>Distinction</b> 80+%	Perceived lesson plans: - lucid, detailed & accurate, with crystal-clear aims & objectives; - expressed in totally professional-terminology; - could be used to deliver self-same lesson by another teacher	The trainee demonstrates a high degree of insight into: - language-teaching methodology/ies; - a wide variety of specific language-teaching techniques; - all major classroom-management issues.	The trainee demonstrates a high degree of insight into affective factors influencing the behaviour of beginner learners with respect to: - self; - specific others; and - class-dynamics in general.	The trainee: - demonstrates a high degree of insight into L1/TL similarities & differences with respect to grammatical structures, lexis & phonology; - consistently cites examples of the TL to support points made.	The trainee shows an excellent ability to reflect on the UL course component experience, both during and at the end of the experience, and description & narrative are used largely to provide data for analysis.
<b>Merit</b> 65 - 79%	Perceived lesson plans: - lucid, detailed & relatively accurate, with aims & objectives generally well conveyed; - expressed largely in professional terminology; - quality not entirely consistent	The trainee demonstrates a generally good understanding of: - language-teaching methodology/ies; - a number of specific language-teaching techniques; - most classroom-management issues.	The trainee demonstrates a generally good degree of insight into affective factors influencing the behaviour of beginner learners as regards: - self; - specific others; and - class dynamics in general.	The trainee: - demonstrates a generally good degree of insight into L1/TL similarities & differences, though may focus largely on one or two of the three areas: - generally cites examples of the TL to support points made.	The trainee shows a good ability to analyse and reflect on the UL course component experience, both during and at the end of the experience, with analysis outweighing description & narrative.
<b>Pass</b> 50 - 64%	Perceived lesson plans: - satisfactory but lacking in detail, with aims & objectives only outlined; - grasp of terminology shaky but developing; - quality not always consistent but upward trend apparent	The trainee demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of: - language-teaching methodology/ies; - a few specific language-teaching techniques; - some classroom-management issues.	The trainee demonstrates a satisfactory degree of insight into affective factors influencing the behaviour of beginner learners as regards: - self; - specific others; or - class dynamics in general.	The trainee: - demonstrates a generally satisfactory degree of insight into L1/TL similarities & differences, though detail/balance may be lacking; - cites some examples of the TL to support points made.	The trainee shows a satisfactory ability to reflect on the UL course component experience, both during and at the end of the experience, though the Journal may contain description or narrative at the expense of analysis.
<b>Narrow Fail</b> 45 - 49%	Perceived lesson plans: - barely adequate and lacking in detail, with aims & objectives vaguely expressed; - largely lay terminology used; - quality inconsistent but development discernible	The trainee demonstrates a barely adequate grasp of: - language-teaching methodology/ies; - specific language-teaching techniques; - classroom-management issues.	The trainee demonstrates a barely adequate grasp of the nature of affective factors influencing the behaviour of beginner learners, and focuses only on self.	The trainee: - demonstrates a barely adequate grasp of the notion of contrastive linguistic analysis; - cites few examples of the TL to support points made.	The trainee shows a barely adequate ability to analyse and reflect on the UL course component experience, both during and at the end of the experience, and description/narrative prevail.
<b>Fail</b> 0 - 44%	Perceived lesson plans: - inadequate in quality and quantity, with no indication of aims & objectives; - little or no terminology used, or used wrongly; - little/no sense of development	The trainee demonstrates an inadequate grasp of: - language-teaching methodology/ies; - specific language-teaching techniques; - classroom-management issues.	The trainee demonstrates an inadequate grasp of the nature of affective factors influencing the behaviour of beginner learners.	The trainee: - demonstrates an inadequate grasp of the notion of contrastive linguistic analysis; - cites few, inaccurate or even no examples of the TL to support points made.	The trainee shows an inadequate or no real ability to analyse or reflect on the UL course component experience, neither during nor at the end of the experience, and the Journal is entirely descriptive/narrative.



**SPECIMEN**

LANGSIDE COLLEGE GLASGOW / TLC GRAN CANARIA

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON CERT. TESOL

**UNKNOWN-LANGUAGE JOURNAL (HUNGARIAN)**  
COMMENTS SHEET

NAME: XXXX XXXXXXXX

MARKED BY: Tony Foster

DATE: October 2003

Mark  
Awarded

72%

• **Perceived lesson plans (20%)**

These are very well done: you describe the structure of each lesson in a pleasing amount of detail, which speaks well for your own lesson planning, and your use of the jargon of the trade is well-developed for this very early stage in the course.

• **Observations on methodology & teaching techniques (20%)**

You clearly benefited enormously from the large amount of exposure to varied teaching in the Langside phase of the course ... You pick up on and describe very well a wide range of activities and make perceptive comments on all the key factors in the delivery of a successful lesson.

• **Observations on the feelings of beginner learners (20%)**

This facet of the experience is also registered in some detail, and it's good to see you making mental note of such crucial factors as the speed at which new language is introduced, as it's very easy to overwhelm beginners - particularly if they're not surrounded by English in their everyday lives (as they are, for instance, at Langside).

• **Observations on comparative/contrastive L1/L2 features (20%)**

You mention the main language points, though you don't analyse them in any real depth. Most striking is the very small amount of Hungarian that you actually quote in this assignment - despite the request for explicitness! Nevertheless, you present a sound overview in this most technical of areas.

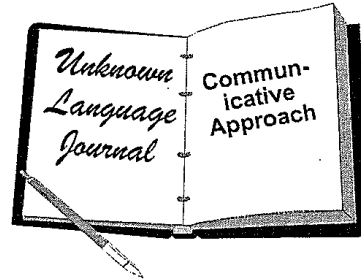
• **Concluding observations (20%)**

It's good to see you registering 'enjoyment' and 'achievement', though again you don't quite do justice to listing precisely what you learnt to say. Methodologically you seem to have things in perspective, and your summary of the principal features of the communicative approach promises great stuff for the classroom - which I understand you're already achieving!

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**LESSON 1**

DATE &amp; TIME - 13.10.03. 15.15 - 16.15

NAME - 

- Outline, blow by blow, what happened in the lesson.

The teacher entered the classroom smiling and explained she was from Croatia, then went on to use the native lexis for: Croatia, Croatian and from Croatia. This information was imparted with gestures to herself and to a map which was shown with an overhead projector - (henceforth O.H.P.)

T. then introduced the country and its situation using the map. Students observed that Croatia is part of Europe and that topographically, it is made up of a thousand islands. T. explained that she was born in a city called Split and then moved to an island later. A (beautiful) photo of her as a child was displayed - pinned to the blackboard. T. then explained that Croatia is a tourist area.

T. told us her name and introduced 'I'm called ...'. Ss then wrote their names on signs as requested by T. This was followed by a ball game. Ss threw the ball to each other, asked: 'What's your name?' The recipient of the ball answered and threw to the next person. Along pictures of celebrities, the difference between he and she was explained. We then discovered how to ask - 'What's his name?' 'What's her name?' This was followed by a diagram of a clock to demonstrate

- Now complete in detail the following sections of the report, bearing in mind the marking criteria set out on the specimen comments sheet. Overspill onto the back of the page if necessary.



\* <sup>app.</sup>  
If there was any confusion  
in the fourth session - and I am  
sure there was confusion in  
abundance - the teacher  
never paused to consider  
this, moreover rectify it.

No non-verbal communication  
was offered, let alone  
positive criticism. The teacher  
conveyed no flexibility and  
appeared oblivious to SS'  
confusion. I am sure the SS  
were very reticent to vocalise  
their confusion. I certainly  
was.

The 'blind' jigsaw consisted of the dialogue displayed around the room. Parts of dialogue were missing from the sheets so each pair of students was positioned so that one of the pair could see a's or a's appropriate for the roleplay.

Student A and B were then able to help each other with the missing information or questions as appropriate

⑤

- 1) ti / rođena / gdje / si?
  - 2) živiš / ti / gdje?
  - 3) imaš / da li / sestru / ti?
  - 4) imaš / da li / nećakinju / ti?
  - 5) se / zove / mama / tvoja / kako?
  - 6) da li / radiš / ti?
- u školskoj  
u školskoj  
pa ja imam, ne ja ~~imam~~ imam

and appropriate greetings for each time of day. Development was to 'How are you?' - 'I'm fine' - 'I'm very well' - 'I'm super'. The ball game was played again, asking and answering this question.

1. What were the teacher's aims?

She aimed to:

- ..... Teach grammar point of feminine, masculine and neutral nouns.
- ..... Teach introductions places of origin and personal information.
- Teach students to ask for and give personal information when introducing themselves to each other.

2. What were the teacher's objectives?

By the end of the lesson the students would be able to:

1. .... Greet each other, using an appropriate time of day + Q+A with names
2. .... Inform one another where they were from.
3. .... Ask each other how they were and answer appropriately.
4. Say 'goodbye' to each other.

3. How did the teacher put across the new language - the grammar, the lexis and the phonology?

Throughout the lesson, only Croatian was spoken. Pictures, maps and mime were used with examples to explain lexis and grammar. The phoneme /ʃ/ was used to demonstrate its particular sound.

4. How far were the grammatical/lexical/phonological rules explained?

Male, female and neutral nouns were explained a.a. The difference in the noun for Croatia, i.e. 'Croatia' and 'from Croatia' were explained by hand gesture and emphasising appropriate changes in spelling and pronunciation. Wh+yes/no question.

5. What range of learning activities took place?

Teacher - Student.  
Student - Teacher.  
Student - Student.

I was born in ...  
Where were you born?

Dialogue.

Summary of lesson.

6. How much correction of mistakes took place, and what techniques were used?

Minimal correction of mistakes took place, though we, as students, gathered that we had minimal pronunciation mistakes. A lot of positive gestures were used by the teacher in response to student participation. Mistakes were corrected by T. showing Ss the lexis on the board, then repeating and emphasising the correct pronunciation and intonation. Prompting was also used as necessary.

7. How would you describe the atmosphere in the classroom; how was it generated; and how did the other learners respond?

The atmosphere was very relaxed and totally non-threatening. This was generated by the T's non-verbal communication. She conveyed encouragement by nods, smiles and delighted expressions when Ss had performed well. T. also said 'super' many times, which is recognised as praise. The students were interested and eager to these positive stimuli.

8. How do you feel about the value and effectiveness of this style of teaching?

Which techniques would you adopt - or adapt - for your own teaching, and which would you avoid? And why?

From a personal viewpoint, I felt relaxed and interested. I did not feel intimidated or threatened and was happy to volunteer on occasion. I felt the blind dialogue was particularly effective and a great confidence-booster.

The ball-games were good. Everyone was "on their toes" all the time. It was far more effective than the Teacher asking students in sequence, or students asking their neighbours in turn.

Perhaps I would have demonstrated greetings for appropriate times of day with a twenty-four hour clock as this

9. Note below the actual language which you learnt or recycled in this lesson, quoting examples in the language.

AREA OF LANGUAGE	NEW	RECYCLED
GRAMMAR	I, you, he, she - with statements and questions. Conjugation of verb with above persons. Difference in names with functions.	
LEXIS	Introductions: Country name and changes for usage. Greetings Giving and asking for personal information.	
PHONOLOGY	/s/ emphasised - necessary since Croatian is a language with MANY consonants.	
FUNCTIONS	Greetings Introductions Interview for basic personal information.	

10. Was the new input too much, too little or about right? Justify your opinion!

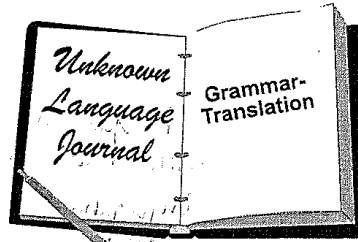
I felt the input was about right.  
The lexis and grammar developed in a logical way until the students were able to have a short conversation with each other in a relatively short time. Less input would have left us feeling the input was curtailed abruptly and we couldn't use enough language for effective and interesting communication. Any less, and the interviews may not have been worthwhile. It felt like a good place to stop.

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# LESSON 2

DATE & TIME - 14:10:03@

NAME - 15:15hrs - 16:00hrs.



⇒ Outline the teacher's lesson plan, as you perceived it.

WHEN?	WHAT?	WHY?
Begin 15:15 ①	Write the various cases of nouns on board: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, locative, instrumental.	To enable ss to complete a translation about Croatia, entitled: 'Basic information'. The most indented coast in the Mediterranean. Cities that witness history.
②	Teach present simple of verbs 'live and work'.	To enable completion of a translation as above.
③	Teach 'was born with he and she'.	
④	Teach vocabulary contained in texts.	As above
⑤	Translate sentences from English → Croatian and	As above - as preparation for individual translations at home.
⑥	Croatian → English	

## 1. List and/or describe what the teacher aimed to teach under each heading:

## • GRAMMAR

Nominative and locative cases of nouns.

Present simple of verbs live and work, along with born.

The aim was for ss to translate a passage on a

photocopied handout. Three types of nouns would be demonstrated,

• VOCABULARY without explanation. Translation to be completed for homework

fish, village, hotel, sister, brother and sea.

## • PRONUNCIATION

None.

## • LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

None - the three types

## • READING

None.

## • WRITING

None.

## • LISTENING

None.

## • SPEAKING

None.

2. What 'aids' did she use, and how did she use them?

✓ • BOARD

This was used as a notepad. The information was then quickly wiped away - often before SS had had the chance to note it down.

✓ • HANDOUTS

Homework translation assignment was handed out on a photocopied sheet midway through the lesson. The teacher informed SS that the work was to be completed and handed back to her the following day.

X • REALIA (everyday objects)

NONE

X • TECHNICAL AIDS (OHP, cassette recorder, video)

NONE

T. was chalking and talking - in L1.

3. How far did the teacher use English as the medium of instruction and explanation? Give details!

The entire lesson was conducted in English as far as greetings and instructions were concerned.

Information was given in English too.

Explanations - such as they were - were all in English.

4. How far did you actually communicate in the target language, as opposed to simply learning 'how it works'? Give examples!

No opportunity was offered for communication in the target language.

The cases of the noun were demonstrated on the blackboard. There was no accompanying communication.



5. How far did the teacher explain the workings of the language, and was the terminology user-friendly or daunting?

No explanations were given.

Terminology was daunting due to its being totally 'foreign' to the students - there are no such cases of nouns in English.

6. How did the teacher establish whether you were learning anything or not?

This was not evident at all. SS were never asked whether or not they understood. There was no oral practice to establish comprehension of the grammar or lexis.

7. How did you - and the other students - actually feel during the lesson?

Stressed - this was due to the speed at which the information was written on the board and then immediately wiped away. The students had previously been handed the photocopied text to translate for homework, so were understandably under pressure to gather as much information as they could.

8. What did you come away with from the lesson?

Determination never to emulate the teaching methods used! The demonstration of the grammar-translation method, as a means to an end for literary translation seems very unrealistic in terms of teaching and learning the four language skills.

9. Give a brief general assessment of the lesson: how effective, how useful (in terms of experiencing language-teaching methodology) ... and how enjoyable was it?

This was a very useful lesson in so much as it highlighted how NOT to teach a language!

It was very useful as an experience of one method of language-teaching methodology from a student's point of view.

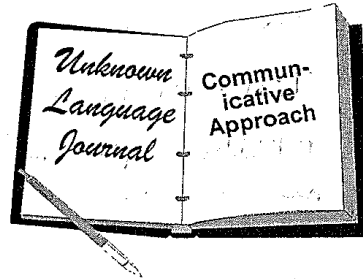
From a student's point of view it was not at all enjoyable. However, it was enjoyable from a theatrical point of view!

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# LESSON 3

DATE & TIME - 14.10.03

NAME - Laura Walton



⇒ Complete the teacher's lesson plan, as you perceived it.

TIME	TEACHER'S ACTIVITY	STUDENTS' ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR ACTIVITY
15 mins ①	<p>Check SS in Croatian</p> <p>Revise grammar and bits from lesson one -</p> <p>T &lt; S } as S &lt; S }</p>	<p>Check teacher in Croatian.</p> <p>Take part in dialogues with teacher and other SS - ↑ and ↓ about personal information.</p>	<p>Revise and consolidate greetings.</p> <p>Revise and consolidate the dialogues previously taught in session one.</p>
5 mins ②	<p>Teach the negative form of the verb 'to be' - present simple active voice. Teach - "Yes, I am" and "No, I'm not."</p>	<p>Ask and answer questions to elicit a negative response.</p> <p>Ask and answer questions to practice short answers - "Yes, I am" and "No, I'm not."</p>	<p>To extend ability to take part in a dialogue about personal information in a natural way.</p>
10 mins ③	<p>Explain the sentence-making activity on phonology.</p> <p>Encourage SS to be freer in their sentence-making.</p>	<p>With hand-out take part in a controlled and then free sentence-making.</p>	<p>To revise and consolidate the first session.</p>

## 1. What were the teacher's aims?

She aimed to:

- ...Erase
  - ...Consolidate
  - Reinforce
- } Session one.

Extend range of students' responses.

## 2. What were the teacher's objectives?

By the end of the lesson the students would be able to:

1. ...take part in a dialogue about personal information. (q + a)
2. ...use the short answers (+ & -), of the present simple
3. ...Match sentences appropriate for of the verb 'to be'.
4. Dialogue re. personal information.

Demonstrate greater confidence in the above skills.  
(This could be measured by responses to q's posed in a random way during different pairs involved in the dialogues)

3. How did the teacher put across the new language - the grammar, the lexis and the phonology? The communicative approach was used throughout

The new grammar was taught by written and oral examples, which were then practised.

The lexis - in this case numbers 1 - 7 plus the instruction 'Fold in half', were taught by gesture. Phonology of rotten was highlighted on the board with a simultaneous oral repetition to emphasise it.

4. How far were the grammatical/lexical/phonological rules explained?

The rules of giving short answers to Y/N questions with the verb 'to be' - present simple were highlighted on the blackboard. Comprehension was then checked by means of T < S and S < S questions and answers.

5. What range of learning activities took place?

Revision and consolidation were established by means of controlled dialogue and then freer question and answer sessions - all oral - in random pairs, open pairwork and then students selecting partners themselves to carry out task. (3)

6. How much correction of mistakes took place, and what techniques were used?

Gentle correction was used.  
Correct language and phonology was emphasised,  
it was then repeated by all SS.

7. How would you describe the atmosphere in the classroom; how was it generated; and how did the other learners respond?

The atmosphere was relaxed and nobody appeared to feel intimidated or daunted by any of the methodology used. It was generated by TLT and S < T rapport. This was most noticeable in the non verbal gestures. There were lots of smiles and a lot of verbal encouragement from the teacher. This was in Croatian, but international vocabulary was used - e.g. 'super' and 'bravo'.

8. How do you feel about the value and effectiveness of this style of teaching? Which techniques would you adopt - or adapt - for your own teaching, and which would you avoid? And why?

This teaching style is very valuable and effective with adult learners of a new language. This is due to the positive feedback and use of gentle correction.

I feel very positive about the style of the lesson. I would adopt the technique of gentle correction as it does not undermine student confidence - especially in an oral skills lesson. I also look forward to adopting and adapting the sentence-matching activity. It could be relevant in many lessons and might be handy to have available as a gap-filler at the end of a lesson in intermediate language learning.

9. Note below the actual language which you learnt or recycled in this lesson, quoting examples in the language.

AREA OF LANGUAGE	NEW	RECYCLED e.g.
GRAMMAR	Present <sup>SHORT</sup> simple <sup>AN SWGCS</sup> - verb to be positive and negative. Da, ja sam - Yes, I am. Ne ja nisam. No, I'm not.	Gdje si rođen? (Where's he from?) Kako se on zove? (What's your name?) Da li si tu Robert de Boro? (Are you Robert de Boro?)
LEXIS	None	Names of countries: e.g. škotskoj - Scotland Hrvatska - Croatia
PHONOLOGY	None	rođen /3/
FUNCTIONS	Yes/No answers to questions with verb 'to be' - present simple (active voice).	q's and a's re. personal information: Kako se zoveš? (What's your name?) Ja se zovem Maria. (I'm Maria) For example.

10. Was the new input too much, too little or about right? Justify your opinion!

The new input was about right, given that this session only ran for thirty minutes.

The small amount of new input meant that there was ample time to practise and for the teacher to establish everyone's confidence with the new language.

The students had plenty of opportunity to practise with a variety of pairwork partners and take part as both interviewer and interviewee

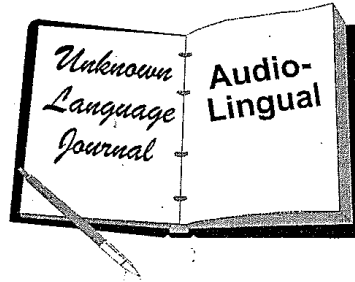
\* The other learners responded by volunteering to take part in dialogues with no apparent worries about

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# LESSON 4

DATE & TIME - 15.10.03 15:15hrs

NAME - Laura Walton



⇒ Complete the teacher's lesson plan, as you perceived it.

TIME	TEACHER'S ACTIVITY	STUDENTS' ACTIVITY	AIDS/MATERIALS	REASONS FOR ACTIVITY
3/5 mins	role play dialogue between 2 people x2	listening skills activity	Pictures - Draw on B board/c stick people	warmers
5 mins	writing sentence by sentence	Repeating sentences after the teacher. W/C activity.	none	to practise phonology & pronunciation stress and intonation
5 mins	Drilling sentence by sentence	Each student repeats a sentence from dialogue	none	to reinforce and correct phonology and to monitor students individually.
5 mins	None	Open pair work - reproducing dialogue	using the pictures on blackboard	To see if students can reproduce dialogue without support.
5 mins	Drilling sentences & individual words & phrases	Repetition of sentences. W/C activity	None	To correct phonology & help SS to memorise dialogue
5 mins	Practise dialogue T/S and then closed pairs S/S	T/S P/W (open) closed pairs practise dialogue (S/S)	written handout with dialogue	To practise the dialogue without help from T - allowing her to monitor individually.

5 mins / monitoring Practising dialogue as a. To draw lesson to a close.

## 1. What were the teacher's aims?

She aimed to:

- ..... teach ss to reproduce a dialogue by using
- ... audiolingual approach
- - correct and reinforce phonology
- - teach new structures and lexis.

## 2. What were the teacher's objectives?

By the end of the lesson the students would be able to:

1. .... reproduce a basic roleplay without help from T.
2. .... pronounce correctly every word in dialogue
3. ... use the correct stress and intonation when speaking.
4. - use some new lexis e.g.: address, telephone etc.
- 5 - Recycle greetings.

## 3. List and/or describe the new language input (grammar, lexis, phonology, language functions) of this lesson - quoting actual language items.

There was quite a lot of new language input included in this lesson:

Lexis -  $\Rightarrow$  dobar, nema problema etc phone no. cheap, hotel address, <sup>How much</sup>  $\Rightarrow$  (verb to have) = imam / possessive adj (few) = "mo ja"

Phonology  $\Rightarrow$  Pronunciation of words which look strange to native English speakers - monolingual group - "Hvala"

## 4. How much variety was there in ...

- ... the range of learning activities which took place?

There was not much variety - if any! The whole session was audiolingual and relied on drilling and correction from T. Listening and speaking skills were tested. Visual and kinesthetic learners were not catered for at all. The activities were boring for a whole class/lesson. The only variety on offer was the change from listening to T  $\rightarrow$  reading. ... the forms of interaction (T  $\leftrightarrow$  Class, T  $\leftrightarrow$  S, S  $\leftrightarrow$  S, etc) which took place?

Principally, T used T  $\rightarrow$  class method. Then there was a shift to T  $\rightarrow$  S as a medium for T to hear and correct specific phonological problems. Following this ss were organised into pairs or small groups to practise what had been taught. One example of PPP, but not very stimulating for ss!

5. How challenging were the demands made on you during this lesson? Quote specific instances.

This lesson was both challenging and demanding for me. It was extremely difficult to remember the sentences given that there was quite a lot of new vocabulary. Our listening skills were well-tested - especially during the period when T 'upped' the pace! I gathered this was a little contrived. SS had to concentrate for long periods to recognise the sounds, then to remember and reproduce them. I was totally exhausted and challenged! The more times we practised the dialogue the faster we became and the longer the sentences were! (eg. Ah unam jedan problem - ~~trab~~ un jedan jeton dobar ushel) I personally understood <sup>2/10 words</sup> here!

6. What was the approach taken to explanation of grammatical/lexical/phonological rules? No detailed explanation of grammar, lexis or phonemes was given. Drilling was used and this offered a kind of 'explanation' of the phonology.

T. exaggerated certain phonemes, word and sentence stress to demonstrate that some words had stress in different places to others - i.e. a shifting stress - eg. "kako si?" - How are you? Is different to "kako si?" It is more like, "kako si?"

7. How tolerant was the teacher of mistakes and what correction techniques were used?

The teacher demonstrated patience and sympathy in so much as she repeated the dialogue in as many ways as possible. She corrected mistakes as they happened - as above.



8. How do you feel about the value and effectiveness of this style of teaching and the limited range of techniques it encompasses?

- From the learner's perspective: Anyone wanting to learn specific expressions in a given situation might enjoy this style. I imagine that some business students with a 'quick fix' need might appreciate its prescriptive nature. However, it was very long and repetitive. No variety was used and given the amount of new language included in the session, I didn't feel it was effective in demonstrating the function of new topics.
- From the teacher's perspective: It must be both tiring and boring, perhaps like proving your budget can talk - even if it takes three weeks of sleep-deprivation! Perhaps the SS can churn out a dialogue on cue, but they can't adapt the dialogue at all without practising the language in various contexts.

9. Which area(s) of language learning (grammar, lexis, phonology, language functions) do you feel are best served through so-called 'pattern practice'?

I can't really see the relevance. It is possibly useful in certain situations - for learning lexis - perhaps technical lists, which can be regurgitated parrot-fashion.

However, the audiolingual approach to teaching all aspects of phonology could be useful with the right amount of drilling - it may not be as much fun as learning a

10. What did you enjoy most and least about the lesson, and how effective did you find it as a learning experience?

The first few minutes of the session were challenging and this was fun. I felt as though I had to be 'on my toes'. After that, it became difficult and tedious. Tedious because I lost interest and difficult because there were a lot of phrases which I was not certain I had understood. I thought I had identified functions, but then became uneasy when the meanings were not clarified. I found it difficult to use the language with confidence

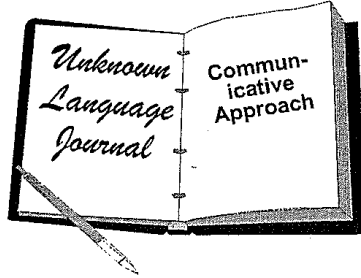
that I was conveying the correct meaning as I was unable to remember what to say next! I WAS LOST!!

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**LESSON 5**

DATE & TIME - 15:10:03 1600hrs.

NAME - Laura Walton.



⇒ Complete the teacher's lesson plan, as you perceived it.

TIME	Teacher's Activity	Students' Activity	Aids/ Materials	Reasons for Activity	Potential Problems
5 mins	Pin pictures from magazines on Board to represent a family tree. Introduce family and use 'mya' possessive	Listen and guess family members.	board and pictures (realia)	To introduce lexical group of family members	Not applicable.
5 mins	my. q: a d k a j e who is...	Answer q's re. family with new lexis.	as above.	Prach se leas and dialogue.	2 SS don't know possessive
5 mins	q: a / verbs ro dena zini	give a's T & S & S & S	as above.	Recycle and conjugate verbs in present simple recycle names of countries.	
10 mins	Elicit knowledge of sentence structure & word order.	Reorder jumbled sentences	Photo-copies	Check SS' knowledge of structure.	New lexis and structure.
5 mins	T & S q's	answer q's	Photo-copies	as above	as above
5 mins	Monitor SS in PLW	PLW with reordered dialogue	as above	Monitor	

## 1. What were the teacher's aims?

She aimed to:

- Teach SS to talk about their families.
- Introduce possessive adjectives.
- Increase lexis and structure for further dialogue.

## 2. What were the teacher's objectives?

By the end of the lesson the students would be able to:

1. Describe family members and origins using possessive adj.
2. recognise a 'ko je...?' (who is...?) and answer correctly <sup>moya</sup>.
3. Conjugate verbs 'rodna (to be born) and zin (to live) present <sup>smile</sup>.
4. Gain confidence and know a little more in sentences /c present simple /e. personal information.

## 3. What language items/structures do you feel you actually learnt in this lesson?

I learnt how to use the possessive adj moya for feminine nouns.

I learnt this by deduction with reference to L1.

## 4. How would you describe the role of the teacher (authoritarian, facilitative, ...) in comparison with the previous lesson? Quote specific instances to substantiate your answer.

The teacher was far more approachable in this lesson. She acted more as a facilitator and was less authoritative because the lesson was communicated. The teacher personalised the topic by using media of 'her' family. The previous lesson was not negotiated at all - T was in charge at all times: - instructing, drilling, correcting etc. This authoritarian persona facilitated the SS becoming almost robotic - at times repeating and uttering phrases they did not even understand! In this session T asked concept a's to check <sup>amareha</sup>

5. Outline at least three contrasting learning activities used in the lesson.

- 1) Listening - the teacher talked about her family using V.A.'s to illustrate the information. The SS had to use listening skills to gather information about family members and the possessive adjective 'my'.
- 2) Speaking - Communication between T + S. S had to recognise the q - 'Koj je...?' (Who is...?) and then reply using the new texts and pronounce this correctly. A short dialogue was accomplished.

- 3) Reading - The photocopied sentences had to be re-ordered. The students were given time to think, so was particularly useful.

6. What was the approach taken to use of the mother tongue in the classroom?

Only L2 was used until the meaning of 'Zet' had to be elicited. (brother-in-law).

Positive criticism was in Croatian when the noun was identified by translation. The teacher said, 'Da, super!' - 'Yes, well done!'

7. List three adjectives that you feel aptly describe your feelings at any stage during this lesson, in each case saying why you have chosen them.

- 1) Relaxed - I mention this first because the communicative approach generates this emotion in me.

- 2) Interested - Because the topic was familiar, I wanted to know more. Maybe <sup>because</sup> the teacher had personalised the language - whatever the reason, I finally felt the language was coming together.

- 3) Confused (Re-ordering sentences.) There were still some instructions I hadn't fully understood and this became clear during the last

8. What techniques/activities/strategies used in this lesson would you ...

- ... 'steal' for your own teaching? ①
- ... avoid in your own lessons? In both cases explain why. ②

① I would always favour a communicative approach in my own teaching - selfishly - because it works for me!

② I would always avoid re-ordering activities, unless I was sure the SS were confident with a structure. This is purely from my own experience, as the activity made me feel insecure.

9. How important do you feel it is to make language learning a 'holistic' experience, rather than an 'academic' or 'intellectual' one?

It is of paramount importance.

Language learning should ultimately aim to facilitate communication in all four skills.

Students need to understand not only its structures and functions, but also its

sounds. So often we encounter students who

are competent in reading and writing, but they cannot take a telephone message or respond verbally when spontaneity is appropriate.

I think it is vital that language learners can express themselves in a meaningful way in any given context. They need to know how to communicate appropriately in a huge

variety of situations for effective communication to take place. This can only come about if they can use the language and

haven't been given one - it's now 20:15 so I 'made' a page! I.L.P. on the computer in case my journal was missing a page!

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Hope this was the right thing to do. Yes!

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON CERT. TESOL

## LESSON 6

DATE & TIME - 16:10:63 @ 15:15

NAME - Laura Walton



① Complete the appended lesson plan, including aims and objectives, as if you were the teacher of this lesson.

2. Bracket together on your plan those stages that you feel comprised the PRESENTATION, the CONTROLLED PRACTICE and the FREE PRODUCTION.

3. Describe in detail the *lead-in* activity. How did the teacher create a context for what she was about to teach? How did she focus your attention and engage your interest? The teacher first engaged interest by asking us how we were - we said "fine thanks" - she then conveyed that she was hungry - through facial expressions and gestures. She asked us if we were hungry. 'Da li si gladna' She engaged our interest and focused attention by using realia, with a teabag, a biscuit, a bottle of water and so on. This introduced a lexical set of food and drink. She asked 'what is this?' in Croatian and then wrote the words on B/B giving them slowly and clearly. Very interesting warmer.

4. What exactly did the teacher 'present'? Describe and/or list the new language at the core of the teaching point, quoting the actual language items, where possible.

She presented the question 'what is this?'  
T. then presented new vocabulary of food and drink e.g. hamburger, piro, sladoled, cay....

Listen to the music!

## 5. How did the teacher 'bridge' from one lesson stage to the next?

- From PRESENTATION to CONTROLLED PRACTICE The presentation involved a lexical set of food and drink and controlled practice began with introduction of q's & a's (T > SS communicative activity). Realia as well as O.H.P. transparencies were used. This presented language was used in a fairly controlled way in the practice - e.g. repeating dialogue (T < SS, T < S, S < S).  
Do you like...? Yes, I do. No, I don't. T corrected accuracy.
- From CONTROLLED PRACTICE to FREE PRODUCTION  
The last activity in the controlled practice was a group activity. SS had to put a dialogue in order on the B/B. Free production was then encouraged by SS practising the dialogue, but using lexis in order to express their own preferences.

## 6. How did the teacher undertake 'concept-checking' - i.e. verify that you understood the teaching point - at the PRESENTATION and CONTROLLED PRACTICE stages? Quote specific examples!

T. used a q & a technique to 'concept-check' at the presentation stage. It wasn't too difficult as SS only had to work with new lexis, as well as recycled dialogue. 'Let's go...' was taught by gesture and mime - e.g. 'Idem na kafu, along with topka - hot (blowing into imaginary cup) ... VERY EFFECTIVE. She checked by asking us to substitute in... Let's go for a... - Naturally we didn't use the adjective for hot with wine, beer, water etc.

7. Consider correction techniques: Drilling was used during the controlled practice which was emphasized by mimes.
- How rigorously did the teacher correct errors at the CONTROLLED PRACTICE stage, and what techniques did she use? Grammatical and phonological errors were corrected. This was carried out regularly without demotivating SS. Drilling emphasized correct structures and pronunciation. T also used echoing mime and gesture. Certain points were highlighted on B/B - good for visual learners.
- How far did the teacher undertake correction at the FREE-PRODUCTION stage? Did she use any different techniques? Did she correct individually, while circulating and monitoring; did she correct as a class activity during or after a smugent. Echo replaced drilling for example. It only seemed evident when SS demonstrated problems with pronunciation or phonology. Apart from these occasions,

feedback session; or both? How do you account for any differences in her attitude to the importance of accuracy in the two lesson stages?

Continue. More emphasis was given to accuracy and fluency.

As the free production stage is supposed to help the SS to be more creative and explore the language, less emphasis was placed on mistakes and more on adventurous adaptation of the language. A real 'feel' for the language' ensued.

8. Good teachers always 'react' to every contribution made by students, thereby making them feel valued as individuals and boosting their self-confidence. In what ways did the teacher do this - with you or other 'students'?

The teacher was motivating and positive. She listened to everyone's input and positive criticism and praise were used whenever appropriate. Everyone was involved equally in the activities - T < S or T < Class activities - All the learners had a chance to participate and therefore felt they were contributing in a valuable way.  
(Bravo!) Super!

9. List any 'features' of this *Communicative* lesson that you feel might have been 'borrowed' from ...

- the *Grammar-Translation Method*:

Personally, I can't see any similarity between the two. The communicative approach involves solely the new language (target language), explanation by whatever means is favoured over the *Audio-Lingual Method*: translation. The G.T. method does not offer explanation.

I appreciate the two methods use drilling as a means of checking and correcting phonology, but the communicative approach always has a visual cue - e.g. BIB, OHP, or on the wall. I feel

this is far more effective in making L2 learning easier.



Time	Teacher activity	Student activity	Material/aids	Reasons for activity	Anticipated problems
10 mins	OTHP food & drink H&W - match word - picture phonology practice (drills)	Guess which word goes with which picture (orally) repetition	OTHP & Transparency OTHP	To learn a lexical set - food & drink. Improve pronunciation	Possible explanation in mime.
10 mins	Introduce verb to like / previously Introduce 'Ja' tone, 'Ist' & 'Zu' person (+ -?) & short answers 'Ne' (same volume)	a's & a's (+ -?) 'Da li...?' 'Ja volume...' & short answers 'I Da, ja volume' 'Ne' (same volume)	B/B OTHP	Practice of + / - / ? fridge dialogue & demonstrate comprehension of a's / c appropriate answers.	? pronunciation
10 mins	Introduce 'bi...?' would you like...? function - to offer Guest a's to dialogue	S.S & groupwork - offering + acceptance/refuse	OTHP, transparency photocopies	C.P. + obvious discreet monitoring	Comprehension of difference between... would & do you like...?
5 mins	Give SS AT sweet / c part of dialogue	Put dialogue in order on ATB iSLC activity	AT sheets with parts of a dialogue	Spontaneous choice from cues - forming structures.	Students may have forgotten the language
* 5 mins	Monitor Quiz (oxd) & previous	Practice dialogue & try to win	OTHP in previous		

**LESSON PLAN**      **Class** Lesson      **Date** 16:10:03 (Lesson 15: 15hs)  
 6:00:40hs

- Aims**
- To introduce a lexical set of food and drink in order to talk about likes and dislikes.
  - To offer food and drink.
  - Recycle language from previous lessons and construct dialogues.

**Objectives**

By the end of the lesson the students will be able to...

- Say the names of a range of different food and drinks.
  - Say what they like - 'Ja vohm staided', 'don't like, 'Ja wairiam Cay', and ask other SS 'Da li idis'.
  - Reproduce most of the lexis and grammar studied previously - e.g. 'rodena'.
- Assumptions** Scottish etc. verb greetings, geography, grammatical aspects, I expect the students to know... some of the above language. gender, noun cases etc.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Teacher activity</u>	<u>Student activity</u>	<u>Materials/aids</u>	<u>Reason for activity</u>	<u>Anticipated problems</u>
5 mins	Name - I'm hungry with gestures Ja sam gladno resubstantiv) with reaka - Elicit new lexis (four drink) IT'S D.A. - Whans	listen and try to appreciate meaning and concept. Helped by reaka. Cues meanings Answer correctly	BIB Reaka in teabag, coffee biscuits etc	To introduce a lexical set and capture SS' attention "Position in class"	keks - biscuits L1 interference due to similarity to 'cake' (False friend)

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## UNKNOWN-LANGUAGE JOURNAL CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Now that the Introduction to Croatian is over ...

1. Describe in some detail how you felt before the course began, and why.

I felt some trepidation as it is many a long year since I have studied a new language! I was also wary as I had previously had absolutely no exposure to the new language.

I was curious. I was unsure how the language would sound and this was quite an issue for me. I suppose I was nervous because I could not imagine how the phonology would work and was especially nervous that I would be asked to reproduce Russian-type pronunciation, which I cannot do! I have tried with an Albanian student.

2. List in English all the LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS (e.g. greeting, thanking, ...) and you've learnt to perform in the target language.  $\Delta$

Greeting

Thanking

Enquiring

Offering

Suggesting

Accepting

Refusing

Writing

Asking for information

Supplying information

Informing

Praising

Stating preference

Needless to say, I wanted to have 'hands on' experience to be

3. Summarise what you've learnt about how the language 'works' (quoting the Croatian, where possible) in terms of ...

• GRAMMAR:

Nouns have various cases: For example: Nominative, genitive, locative etc -- For example Škotska - Scotland becomes Škotski when used as a locative case. Nouns such as 'kafa' (☺) coffee also change to 'kafi' when used as the object, however masculine nouns - e.g. vino. LEXIS: or change and are the same whether they be subject or object. In the rest of Europe there is 'international language' - hamburger, kino and so on.

★ PHONOLOGY: Croatian is a stress-timed language but has many features which were strange: Vrlo dobro = V3:DU = very well

is learnt how to make sounds from 3 consonants in line common in Croatian, other examples included:

Hrvatska (Croatia) Žvaptsko

Gdje je (where is...?) gdje whereas this would be the (weak form in L1) in L2 it was stressed

4. Now that you've reviewed what you've learnt, are you surprised or disappointed at the amount covered in four hours of tuition? Why?

Yes, I have to say I am very surprised at the amount of material we covered in four hours. Beyond this is because I had no previous idea of a single word of Croatian and now find I could actually have taken part in a limited discourse about basic information: country of origin, likes and dislikes, after only 4 hours. I can even say some everyday objects just

5. What factors do you think influenced your own degree of success in this experience?

I was motivated because the L2 was part of an intensive course of study. I suppose this had a great bearing on my commitment as I knew the experience was to be assessed from my journal! Perhaps this is a big 'pat on the back' for the continuous assessment method mixed with an exam-type focus to monitor progress! There was also a huge element of self-motivation. I enjoyed learning a new language and would like to learn more after this taste! accents indicated some sounds which were unknown previously e.g. ž = ʒ these were symbols for unknown

6. In your role of language teacher, list the three most important things you've learnt about the methodology of teaching absolute beginners in a language.

- (i) 1/ The new language must be seen to be relevant. I am not intending to study or work in Croatia at this point, but I may holiday there and the TL could be imperative and fun to experiment with in many given situations.
- (ii) 2/ Interest has to be engaged. Forms and functions have to be practised and activate
- (iii) 3/ in order for active language to be used in a realistic way. So then need to be able to recycle and produce TL appropriately.

7. Summarise, using bullet points, the main features of the Communicative Approach to language teaching, explaining why we refer to it as an 'approach' and not a 'methodology'.

- The Communicative Approach to language focuses on function - e.g. inviting, suggesting and so on.
  - Communicative language is to be used rather than learnt - i.e. it is appropriate in real communicative situations rather than studied as a discipline.
  - Communicative language teaching acknowledges appropriacy and register.
  - The language is 'humanised' - i.e. it is an opportunity to communicate in the vast area of human affairs. (Real life sit.)
- The study of the difference between written and spoken language is highlighted, again this focuses on appropriacy.

\* I think we refer to this method as an approach -  
 (What is reading a desk... ram... a...)

as a method has a prescriptive plan to achieve a result - it is strict rules

8. Give a general assessment of the value of being exposed to a short beginners' course in a language previously unknown to you, describing both positive and negative features of the experience.

The positive aspects of the exposure were personal enjoyment, challenge and relief. I enjoyed the classes immensely - apart from when the G.T. + A.L. methods were used. I enjoyed the function-based approach because I could appreciate the usefulness and relevance of the language. I suppose the language we concentrated on would be exactly the type I would be able to use if I visited Croatia. This made the sessions pertinent to everyday life and reinforced the value of topic-based language for adult learners, whether it be E.S.P., E.A.P. and so on. It highlighted the fact that the teaching must be based on students' needs and the syllabus planned according to these needs, rather than its being based purely on an assessment of students' levels.

Learning styles must also be taken into consideration. I personally found G.T. + A.L. methods daunting, but some SS responded positively. I hope I will always try to cater for V.A.K. learners when I am planning my lessons. I can honestly sympathise and empathise now in a meaningful way. I feel the experience was invaluable as I know what both success and failure feel like.







**APPENDIX XI .TABLES****Q1 How have you felt ?**

Answers	Number	%
Negative feelings	7	8 %
Positive feelings	41	48 %
Curiosity	5	6 %
Motivation	22	26 %
Amazement and fun	10	12 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 1. Graph 1. Question 1.

**Q2 What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?**

Answers	Number	r%
Interaction and repetition	24	20 %
Similarities to other languages	14	12 %
Body language and mime	23	19 %
Visuals	42	35 %
Having lessons only in the target language	17	14 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 2. Graph 2. Question 2.

**Q3 Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?**

Answers	Number	%
Yes	63	97 %
No	2	3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 3. Graph 3. Question 3.

**Q4 What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?**

Answers	Number	%
expressions to communicate	26	31 %
nothing, but learned a lot more than I hoped	12	14 %
vocabulary	22	26 %
a lot, want to know more	9	11 %
I want to learn more about this language	10	12 %
happy it wasn't grammar oriented	2	2 %
more such as: hobbies,	1	1 %
how old are you?, numbers, yes, no	2	2 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 4. Graph 4. Question 3.

**Q5 Which were teacher's objectives?**

Respuesta	Nº Resp.	Por%
introduce vocabulary for simple conversation	38	38 %
recognize the different sounds, introduce yourself	5	5 %
culture, important expressions	5	5 %
conversation and vocabulary	23	23 %
useful strategies	28	28 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 5. Graph 5. Question 5.

**Q.1. How have you felt ?**

Answers	2003	2015
relaxed and interested	40 %	40 %
curious	20 %	30 %
entertained	10 %	30 %
surprised	30 %	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 6. Graph 6. Question 1.

**Q.2. What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense?**

Answers	2003	2015
mime and gestures	25 %	25 %
visual aid	35 %	35 %
use of only L2	40 %	40 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 7. Graph 7. Question 2.

**Q3. Did you use any of the strategies??**

Answers	2003	2015
Yes	100 %	100 %
No	0 %	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 8. Graph 8. Question 3.

**Q4. What do you remember now/ what did you learn?**

Answers	2003	2015
expressions to communicate	42 %	36 %
vocabulary	26 %	55 %
a lot, want to know more	32 %	9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 9. Graph 9. Question 4.

**Q.5.Which were teacher´s objectives?**

Answers	2003	2015
introduce vocabulary for simple conversation	28 %	27 %
teach greetings and how to introduce yourself	28 %	27 %
how to teach absolute beginners	44 %	45 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 10. Graph 10. Question 5.

**Q1 How have you felt ?**

Respuesta	2003	2011-2013
Negative feelings	0 %	8 %
Positive feelings	40 %	48 %
Curiosity	20 %	6 %
Motivation	0 %	26 %
Amazement and fun	10 %	12 %
Surprised	30 %	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 11. Graph 11. Question 1.

**Q2 What methods, strategies, activities and teaching techniques were used by the teacher to help you to make sense ?**

Respuesta	2003	2011-2013
Interaction and repetition	0 %	20 %
Similarities to other languages	0 %	12 %
Body language and mime	25 %	19 %
Visuals	35 %	35 %
Having lessons only in the target language	40 %	14 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 12. Graph 12. Question 2.

**Q3 Have you applied/ Will you be able to apply any strategies to your own teaching?**

Respuesta	2003	2011-2013
Yes	100 %	97 %
No	0 %	3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 13. Graph 13. Question 3.

**Q4 What did you hope to learn and what did you learn??**

Respuesta	2003	2011-2013
expressions to communicate	42 %	31 %
nothing, but learned a lot more than I hoped	0 %	14 %
vocabulary	26 %	26 %
a lot, want to know more	32 %	11 %
I want to learn more about this language	0 %	12 %
happy it wasn't grammar oriented	0 %	2 %
more such as: hobbies,	0 %	1 %
how old are you?, numbers, yes, no	0 %	2 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>32 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 14. Graph 14. Question 4.

**Q5 Which were teacher's objectives?**

<b>Respuesta</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2011-2013</b>
introduce vocabulary for simple conversation	28 %	38 %
recognize the different sounds, introduce yourself	28 %	5 %
culture,important expressions	0 %	5 %
conversation and vocabulary	0 %	23 %
useful strategies	0 %	28 %
how to teach absolute beginners	44 %	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 15. Graph 15. Question 5.





*I felt it would be impossible to get a clear idea of the grammar and rules of the language since we were being given small chunks of language and I had no confidence that I would be able to use them spontaneously, but I did.*<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> El siguiente resumen en lengua española recoge solo los aspectos más relevantes de la investigación presentada por lo que si el lector desea conocer más detalles acerca de la misma, deberá leer el estudio completo presentado en su lengua original (inglés).

<sup>144</sup> Extracto de las preguntas año 2014/2015.



Este resumen en español presenta, por un lado, la descripción de la tesis, la justificación los objetivos de la investigación (sección 1) y la estructura del trabajo (sección 2). A continuación, la sección 3 describe la metodología seguida (diseño de la investigación, instrumentos de análisis, análisis de los datos), y el apartado 4 recoge un resumen de los resultados obtenidos. Asimismo, hemos incluido las conclusiones (sección 5) y aportaciones originales del trabajo, así como sugerencias y posibles áreas de investigación en el futuro (sección 6).

## 1. DESCRIPCIÓN Y OBJETIVOS

La actual tesis doctoral se centra en la búsqueda continua de una metodología apropiada y ecléctica para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras y, más concretamente, en la práctica de la reflexión en el proceso de aprendizaje/enseñanza como una herramienta pedagógica tanto para los profesores como para los estudiantes. Investigaciones recientes en el campo de la pedagogía de la lengua extranjera dentro del área de investigación de la adquisición de segundas lenguas (*Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*)<sup>145</sup> se basan en la búsqueda de metodologías más eficaces y comunicativas centradas en el alumno y que resulten útiles en el aprendizaje dentro de contextos reales.

El proceso de aprendizaje o la adquisición de lenguas extranjeras ha causado interés y curiosidad durante muchas décadas, y en consecuencia hay una serie de teorías sobre la manera en la cual aprendemos idiomas, que se han apoyado además en la investigación empírica. No obstante, como Ellis nos recuerda: "Hay, sin embargo, un considerable desacuerdo acerca de establecer la necesidad de un modelo único o, al menos, hay una necesidad de una cierta selección de principios entre diferentes posiciones teóricas que se ofrecen" (1997: 89)<sup>146</sup>. No parece que

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<sup>145</sup> *SLA* es una disciplina que investiga la forma en que aprendemos idiomas desde la década de 1960. Antes del *SLA*, existía únicamente una necesidad de encontrar una herramienta pedagógica para ayudar a los estudiantes a aprender otros idiomas aparte de su primera lengua (L1) (Gass, 2015) .

<sup>146</sup> Traducción propia.

exista una única teoría que es capaz de dar cuenta sobre la complejidad del proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas, así que no hay una única respuesta para esta pregunta.

Además, en el campo de la adquisición de segundas lenguas se potencia una mayor reflexión sobre el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje que ha contribuido a aumentar el interés del profesor en el aula. Por otro lado, también se investiga sobre las percepciones y opiniones de los alumnos sobre el proceso de aprendizaje y enseñanza (Weimar, 2013; Wright, 2011; Pollard y Collins, 2005; Stronge, 2002). No hay duda de que las interpretaciones y conceptualizaciones de un alumno influyen en sus logros de aprendizaje, premisa que será la base del presente estudio que gira en torno a la práctica pedagógica de la reflexión sobre el proceso de aprendizaje y enseñanza.

A veces las percepciones y opiniones de los estudiantes no coinciden con las de sus profesores, creando insatisfacción y falta de interés por ambos lados y, con frecuencia, estas ideas preconcebidas son muy difíciles de cambiar. Estas concepciones predeterminadas, así como ideas erróneas sobre el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, suelen estar relacionadas tanto con buenas como con malas experiencias previas en el aprendizaje de idiomas.

Por lo tanto, la formación inicial del profesorado de Inglés en Metodología de Lenguas Extranjeras (*English as a Foreign Language Methodology*, (EFLM)) podría ser la oportunidad perfecta para empezar a trabajar en la reflexión crítica sobre la práctica docente, en otras palabras, sobre el éxito o el fracaso dentro del aula. Este método podría incluso ser más eficaz si los futuros profesores tienen la oportunidad de participar ellos mismos en un experimento donde aprenden un idioma desconocido (*Unknown Language Experience*, (ULE))<sup>147</sup> creando un contexto perfecto para que los estudiantes se conviertan en futuros profesores reflexivos y críticos. Además, esta experiencia (ULE) les permitirá experimentar el proceso del aprendizaje del idioma al igual que (re)descubrir los sentimientos, los problemas y las creencias de sus futuros estudiantes. En consecuencia, consideramos que los

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<sup>147</sup> La práctica de una Experiencia en un Idioma Desconocido (ULE) es una parte obligatoria y evaluable incluida en el certificado de la enseñanza de inglés otorgado por el *Trinity College of London*. El idioma desconocido es un idioma que los alumnos no conocen y que nunca han oído y que tiene poca o ninguna relación con su lengua materna.

docentes en formación inicial deben comenzar a dominar sus habilidades reflexivas y críticas con el fin de apoyar aún más su continuo aprendizaje y desarrollo profesional.

La base de nuestra investigación se centra por un lado en investigar sobre el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras así como en explorar la base teórica relevante acerca de este proceso. De este modo, el objetivo principal de este estudio es el análisis de opiniones y percepciones de profesores en formación a partir de su participación en una experiencia de aprendizaje de un idioma desconocido con el fin de mostrar que la reflexión sobre los propios procesos de aprendizaje, especialmente importante para los futuros docentes, conduce hacia un proceso de aprendizaje más eficaz y una clase mucho más productiva.

En resumen, los objetivos de esta investigación son los siguientes:

- ✓ Explorar la eficacia de la práctica reflexiva crítica (*Critical Reflexive Practice*, (CRP)) en la formación de profesores.
- ✓ Demostrar la validez de la CRP como una ayuda para los estudiantes en formación en enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras con el fin de convertirse en profesionales mejores y más eficaces.
- ✓ Establecer el potencial de la experiencia del lenguaje desconocido (ULE) en los cursos de formación del profesorado con el objetivo de promover y fomentar que los profesores actúen como profesionales reflexivos.

El actual proyecto de investigación se centra en la naturaleza y en las características de la enseñanza en la formación de profesorado. El objetivo principal que queremos demostrar es la validez de la Práctica Reflexiva y Crítica (CRP) como un medio útil y eficaz para los profesores de lenguas extranjeras. Un gran número de nosotros seguramente ha experimentado los desajustes resaltados por Van Manen que comenta que la mayoría de los profesores no ven la conexión entre la teoría recibida y la práctica real en el aula (1995:4). Esto es especialmente cierto para los profesores en prácticas ya que este sentimiento puede, de hecho, obstaculizar su trabajo. Creemos que el obstáculo se produce debido a la falta reflexión y también

por la falta de conocimiento limitado sobre el proceso de enseñanza / aprendizaje. Como respuesta a esto, este proyecto de investigación tiene como otro objetivo demostrar la validez y la necesidad de comprender la forma del aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera (*Foreign Language, (FL)*) para poder ser un profesor eficaz. Por otra parte, consideramos que la reflexión guiada debe formar una parte obligatoria de los programas oficiales como un medio que permite a más alumnos convertirse en futuros profesores de idiomas más eficaces.

Para probar que estos objetivos son posibles e importantes para la formación de profesorado hemos investigado los pilares teóricos sobre el proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas haciendo hincapié en la motivación, los intereses, las estrategias eficaces y las técnicas de enseñanza efectiva. Por otra parte, nos hemos preguntado sobre las siguientes cuestiones: ¿Cómo se aprenden los idiomas? ¿Es la CRP una herramienta eficaz en la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras? ¿Puede ULE ofrecer soluciones a la falta de reflexividad en los cursos de formación del profesorado y en la investigación en el aula?

## 2. ESTRUCTURA DEL TRABAJO

En esta sección presentaremos la estructura de este trabajo de investigación, que cuenta con cinco capítulos, en los que se incluyen la introducción (Capítulo 1), precedido por un prefacio, y la conclusión (Capítulo 5). En las siguientes líneas abordaremos de manera más detallada el contenido del capítulo segundo y de forma más breve los capítulos que siguen, ya que las secciones 3, 4 y 5 de este resumen abordan de manera directa su contenido.

En el capítulo segundo, titulado "La investigación actual en Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras y Aprendizaje: Una visión general", el lector puede encontrar información sobre el proceso de aprendizaje y la enseñanza que es tan esencial para llegar a ser profesores más eficaces. La efectividad está estrechamente relacionada con la motivación y el interés y por lo tanto tenemos que comprender las cuestiones

subyacentes detrás del aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Este capítulo resume las diferentes ciencias que han investigado y tratado de explicar el complejo proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas: la semántica, la lingüística aplicada y estructural, la psicología y la psicología cognitiva.

Por otra parte, en este segundo capítulo el lector va a aprender sobre la relación entre el aprendizaje de una primera y una segunda lengua. Por esto, hemos intentado responder a algunas preguntas sobre el aprendizaje de idiomas: ¿Tenemos todos la misma capacidad para aprender una lengua? ¿Cuál es la forma más eficaz de aprender y enseñar las lenguas extranjeras, teniendo en cuenta diversas variables tales como la motivación, el interés y la metodología? ¿El aprendizaje de idiomas tiene más beneficios aparte de fomentar la necesidad humana de comunicarse? ¿Cómo puede este proceso cognitivo afectar a nuestro cerebro? ¿Es la motivación uno de los pilares más fuertes o el único pilar en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma? ¿Puede el conocimiento sobre el propio estilo de aprendizaje mejorar los resultados académicos y ayudar a los estudiantes y profesores en prácticas para hacer frente a sus puntos débiles y potenciar sus puntos más fuertes? ¿La habilidad innata para aprender idiomas persiste cuando aprendemos una segunda lengua (L2)? ¿Hay una manera correcta de aprender idiomas dado el hecho de que no hay tal cosa como la homogeneidad de nuestro cerebro? ¿Tiene Krashen razón cuando afirma que todos somos capaces de aprender una segunda lengua de la misma forma que adquirimos nuestro primer idioma? ¿Cómo nos puede ayudar Gardner a ser profesores más eficaces gracias a su teoría de las inteligencias múltiples? ¿De qué manera está unida la metacognición y aprender a aprender con la práctica reflexiva crítica y la ULE?

En el mismo capítulo se presentan al lector dos cursos dirigidos a cómo enseñar inglés a hablantes de otras lenguas (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages, (TESOL)): el certificado CELTA y el Trinity College of London Diploma. En ambos cursos hay una ULE, pero solo en el último se contempla como una actividad obligatoria y que además debe ser evaluada. La ULE nos ofrece la oportunidad de desarrollar técnicas de enseñanza y aprendizaje más eficaces mediante la

exploración de los procesos de aprendizaje. Nos hace ser conscientes del hecho de que el aprendizaje es un proceso altamente individualizado ya que los estudiantes difieren en relación con su propia personalidad, la motivación, sus habilidades y sus propios estilos de aprendizaje. Por lo tanto, podemos afirmar que la principal tarea del profesor es transformar no solo la comprensión, sino también las habilidades y actitudes para un mejor aprendizaje. Los profesores pueden hacerlo solo si utilizan la práctica reflexiva crítica, que es una característica adicional del proceso de reflexión, ya que permite a los profesores pensar sobre y actuar en cuestiones más amplias en materia de educación, como el sistema educativo y cuestionar el *status quo*. La enseñanza implica no solo los métodos y estrategias, sino también los materiales, actividades y el desarrollo de las inteligencias. Por estas razones, los cursos de formación del profesorado en metodología y la reflexión sobre el proceso de enseñanza en sí son esenciales.

El tercer capítulo presenta la metodología y el proceso de la investigación, y se inicia con una presentación de los cursos de formación destinados a futuros profesores en España tanto a nivel de grados como de posgrados, haciendo especial referencia a la situación de las Islas Canarias en la formación de profesores como instructores de idiomas extranjeros en la enseñanza secundaria. A continuación se explica el diseño de la investigación y se presentan los instrumentos de recogida de información y los informantes que participaron en los distintos periodos de la investigación. El capítulo lo cierra la sección destinada a presentar la metodología seguida.

En el capítulo 4 presentamos un análisis general y detallado de los datos en cada uno de los periodos de investigación, seguidos por un análisis comparativo de esos resultados. Por último, el capítulo quinto incluye las conclusiones finales del trabajo de investigación llevado a cabo en relación directa con los tres objetivos marcados y además ofrece un apartado en el que resaltamos las limitaciones propias de un trabajo de esta envergadura y sugerimos posibles áreas de trabajo para investigaciones futuras relacionadas con el tema de esta tesis.

El estudio de casos que se presenta recoge una Experiencia en un Idioma Desconocido (ULE) en la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria que fue llevado a cabo desde 2011 hasta 2013. En este estudio se miden y se definen las creencias y percepciones de los alumnos sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza después de una serie de clases en croata, a partir de la utilización de un cuestionario semi-estructurado y de sus anotaciones en el diario de clases con el propósito de analizar temas tales como las concepciones de los alumnos, estrategias percibidas y sus métodos de enseñanza preferidos. Hemos decidido citar el diario textualmente en cada capítulo de este trabajo de investigación para sustentar la información teórica y precisar en profundidad el análisis de datos.

Los sujetos de este proyecto en al primera fase del proyecto (2011) fueron alumnos del último año de la licenciatura en Filología Inglesa, que ha sido una carrera cursada por muchos futuros profesores de lengua inglesa, y que llegarán o ya han llegado a convertirse en profesores de lengua extranjera. Los participantes reflexionaron sobre su propia experiencia de aprendizaje después de participar activamente como aprendices de un lenguaje previamente desconocido en una serie de cuatro lecciones que incluían distintos enfoques metodológicos: Enfoque Comunicativo, Método Audio-Lingual y Método Traducción Gramatical. También expresaron sus experiencias y creencias anteriores sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras comparando estas con la nueva experiencia del idioma desconocido. Debido al éxito de este proyecto en 2011, se llevaron a cabo dos ensayos adicionales en 2012 y 2013, con la única diferencia de que en estas dos fases del experimento solo se incluyó la clase del Enfoque Comunicativo.

Nuestro método de investigación se ha centrado principalmente en la investigación de la validez de la práctica reflexiva y crítica para los alumnos/futuros profesores con la finalidad de que dicha experiencia les lleve a ser más eficaces en su práctica docente y consecuentemente mejores profesionales. Para probar esta hipótesis, hemos utilizado la Investigación-Acción (*Action Research* (AR)). Este tipo de investigación se centra en una forma particular de observar la propia práctica de

enseñanza para comprobar si lo que pasa en clases es lo que debería pasar; es una forma de investigación en el aula utilizada por docentes en prácticas como medio para reflexionar sobre posibles problemas con vistas a la búsqueda de soluciones. Como Ghaye nos recuerda: "Los buenos profesionales reflexivos son buenos observadores" (2010: 9)<sup>148</sup>. La observación es uno de los niveles clave de la AR. Según el diccionario sobre la enseñanza de la lengua publicado por Longman (*Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*), el objetivo principal de Lingüística Aplicada AR es resolver problemas en general y, en particular, en la educación para buscar mejoras para el profesor en la comprensión de la práctica docente y en los fenómenos de aprendizaje.

Además, hemos recurrido a la observación en el aula<sup>149</sup> como procedimiento para registrar lo acontecido en el desarrollo de la clase y hemos utilizado los cuestionarios abiertos y los diarios como instrumentos de recogida de datos y de medición.

Hemos decidido agrupar un estudio de tres años en una única recopilación de datos, a la que nos hemos referido como "periodo de investigación 2011- 2013", debido a las siguientes razones: las preguntas formuladas a los participantes eran exactamente las mismas en cada una de las fases de la investigación; los objetivos de la investigación eran igualmente idénticos en las distintas etapas investigadas en el periodo 2011-2013; el investigador ha sido el mismo durante todo este periodo; todos los estudiantes que participaron en la investigación cursaron la asignatura "Lingüística Aplicada a la Lengua Inglesa II" (Introducción a la metodología de la Enseñanza del Inglés Como Lengua Extranjera Semestre), de segundo curso de la licenciatura en 'Filología Inglesa' y tenían características similares. Una vez hecho el experimento, procedimos a agrupar y analizar las respuestas del cuestionario semiabierto clasificando los contenidos en grupos de palabras similares desde el punto de vista léxico y cognitivo.

La sección destinada a presentar el contexto en el que se ha desarrollado este proyecto de investigación incluye una descripción del panorama educacional en

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<sup>148</sup> Traducción propia.

<sup>149</sup> Aquí nos referimos al hecho que hemos grabado todas las clases, para apoyar la investigación. El DVD con los videos se puede consultar en el Apéndice IX.



España, con particular atención a las Islas Canarias, en donde se explica el contexto educativo de formación de profesorado en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) a través de un breve análisis de dos asignaturas pertenecientes al Máster en Formación del Profesorado <sup>150</sup> necesario para poder trabajar en los colegios públicos de secundaria, y de dos asignaturas de metodología ofrecidas en el Grado en Lenguas Modernas de la Facultad de Filología, ambos se ofertan en la ULPGC. Por ejemplo, en relación con el Máster en Formación del Profesorado, podemos resaltar que, aunque el programa sobre especialidad en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras tiene algunos temas que fomentan la reflexión, consideramos que estos no son suficientes y que ULE debe ser una parte obligatoria del máster. Estamos convencidos de que la ULE podría contribuir mucho a la formación de profesores para que sean profesionales reflexivos y críticos en sus futuras carreras de enseñanza de idiomas. Para poder probar esta hipótesis primero tenemos que abordar el marco conceptual de este estudio.

El marco conceptual<sup>151</sup> de este trabajo se sitúa en el contexto actual de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en las Islas Canarias. La cuestión sobre la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras (ESL) es actualmente un tema muy polémico en España y más aún en las Islas Canarias, debido a los malos resultados publicados por el Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de Alumnos, normalmente conocido como el Informe PISA (2012)<sup>152</sup>. Los resultados para las Islas Canarias fueron decepcionantes, y han mostrado la existencia de una motivación baja tanto en los profesores como en los alumnos y en los padres. PISA recomienda no preocuparse tanto por los salarios de los profesores, sino que las instituciones pertinentes se

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<sup>150</sup> El nombre completo de este máster es "Máster Universitario en Formación del Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas". Este programa comenzó en 2009 y se rige por el sistema europeo de la transferencia de créditos (ECTS) constando de 24 créditos ECTS sobre teoría de la educación, 24 créditos ECTS sobre la enseñanza de habilidades generales y 12 créditos ECTS sobre la práctica docente externa.

<sup>151</sup> El marco conceptual está guiado por el autor Maxwell, 2012.

<sup>152</sup> El informe PISA pertenece a la Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico (OCDE) y cuenta con un estudio que analiza los conocimientos de los alumnos de 15 años de edad, en áreas como matemáticas, ciencias y lectura. El objetivo principal de PISA es mejorar las políticas educativas. En 2012 España se situó debajo de la media en todas las pruebas, y se afirmó que la moral del maestro y de los alumnos era muy baja. La puntuación media a nivel mundial fue de 496, mientras que el principal país, China/ concretamente Shanghai) obtuvo 580 puntos.

concentren más en la motivación, la estructura de la carrera y la falta de sistemas de evaluación, el liderazgo y la formación, que según la Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico (OCDE ) son las principales razones que explican estos malos resultados y la falta de motivación. Los factores clave fueron la escasa motivación de los estudiantes y un interés limitado en el aprendizaje. Otro tema que ha sido considerado como un aspecto relevante es el plan de estudios de la escuela secundaria, que carece de habilidades relacionadas con la resolución de problemas, el pensamiento crítico y aprender a aprender.

Nos hemos guiado por el estudio de la OCDE y por las lecturas acerca de la L1 y la enseñanza y aprendizaje de L2, siempre en busca de las mejores prácticas y con el fin de confirmar el potencial de la ULE en los cursos de formación del profesorado. ULE plantea el aprendizaje consciente del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma extranjero y fomenta la autorreflexión que es tan necesaria para ser un maestro eficaz. También el mismo informe presenta información sobre el estilo de enseñar de los profesores canarios, que sigue siendo tradicional y centrado en clases magistrales, sin tener mucho en cuenta al alumno a la hora de enseñar, ya que se le pide memorizar temario (2012:68). El Informe PISA no recomienda este tipo de enseñanza debido a que por lo general lleva a resultados pobres en los exámenes<sup>153</sup>. PISA también tiene recomendaciones para el Máster en Formación del Profesorado aconsejando que se contraten profesores que sean al mismo tiempo expertos en su materia pero también en aspectos metodológicos, y así, de esta manera, se contribuiría a paliar las críticas dirigidas a argumentar que la teoría impartida no tiene relación con la realidad de la enseñanza en el aula<sup>154</sup>. Teniendo en cuenta este contexto, nos preguntamos acerca de las siguientes cuestiones: ¿Puede ULE proporcionar al menos una solución parcial ya que permite a los alumnos desarrollar la metodología adecuada y la empatía? ¿Las escuelas de las Islas Canarias y los cursos de formación de profesores necesitan profesionales reflexivos o expertos en metodología y habilidades pedagógicas con el fin de mejorar los malos resultados?

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<sup>153</sup> Traducción propia de Informe de la OECD para las Islas Canarias, (2012:68).

<sup>154</sup> Traducción propia de Informe de la OECD para las Islas Canarias (2012:70).

En cuanto a las asignaturas de metodología ofrecidas en el Grado en Lenguas Modernas, estas se sitúan en el último año de su plan de estudios y son las siguientes: Metodología de la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (Código: 44034) y Didáctica de la Lengua Inglesa y Metodología para una Educación por la Integración y la Igualdad (Código: 44039). La primera de ellas contempla diferentes enfoques y métodos de enseñanza y la segunda se centra en la reflexión sobre la adecuación de la(s) metodología(s) usada(s) para cada contexto de enseñanza, con atención, además, a las necesidades específicas de una educación por la integración y por la igualdad. No obstante, el simple hecho de haber cursado estas asignaturas no les permite ser funcionarios de la escuela pública. Solo pueden enseñar o hacer el examen estatal para ser funcionarios públicos si asisten el Máster en Formación del Profesorado ofrecido por la Facultad de Formación del Profesorado (ULPGC), tal y como se mencionó anteriormente. Por lo tanto, los temas de metodología que se ofrecen en distintas asignaturas tanto en el Grado en Lenguas Modernas de la Facultad de Filología de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) como en el Máster en Formación del Profesorado, son los que permiten a los estudiantes enseñar en las escuelas públicas españolas de enseñanza secundaria.

Con el fin de conseguir cumplir nuestro objetivo, hemos decidido que nuestro diseño de la investigación tenía que ser triple ofreciendo un enfoque cualitativo, cuantitativo y mixto. En nuestra opinión, solo un tipo de diseño de la investigación habría sido deficiente, ya que habría dejado de dar una visión completa acerca de los procesos de enseñanza/aprendizaje y el papel de la reflexión. Por ejemplo, las respuestas recogidas en los cuestionarios y los comentarios de los diarios nos han ayudado a desarrollar medidas o recomendaciones para estudios posteriores sobre los procesos de enseñanza/ aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

En cuanto al proceso en sí, impartimos una lección en la que, con el fin de demostrar que la comunicación es la clave y el objetivo principal de cualquier aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, se utilizó el enfoque comunicativo. El capítulo tres de esta tesis incluye la lección impartida en detalle, y la sección 3.1. de este resumen también ofrece su descripción. Después de la lección, tuvimos una sesión de retroalimentación corta en la que los estudiantes cumplieron los

cuestionarios semi-estructuradas. Antes de pasar a analizar los datos en el capítulo siguiente, nos pareció necesario dedicar algunas líneas a la labor realizada por lingüistas de gran prestigio como Krashen y Csikszentmihalyi: el primero nos muestra qué tipo de datos y/o información (*input*) se debe utilizar para los principiantes absolutos; este último nos ilumina alegando que los estudiantes con un alto nivel de autoeficacia son más propensos a aceptar las experiencias positivas en el aprendizaje de un idioma, mientras que un bajo nivel de resultados de autoeficacia en la ansiedad y la falta de motivación llegan a ser la consecuencia final de tener un experiencia negativa y de bajo rendimiento.

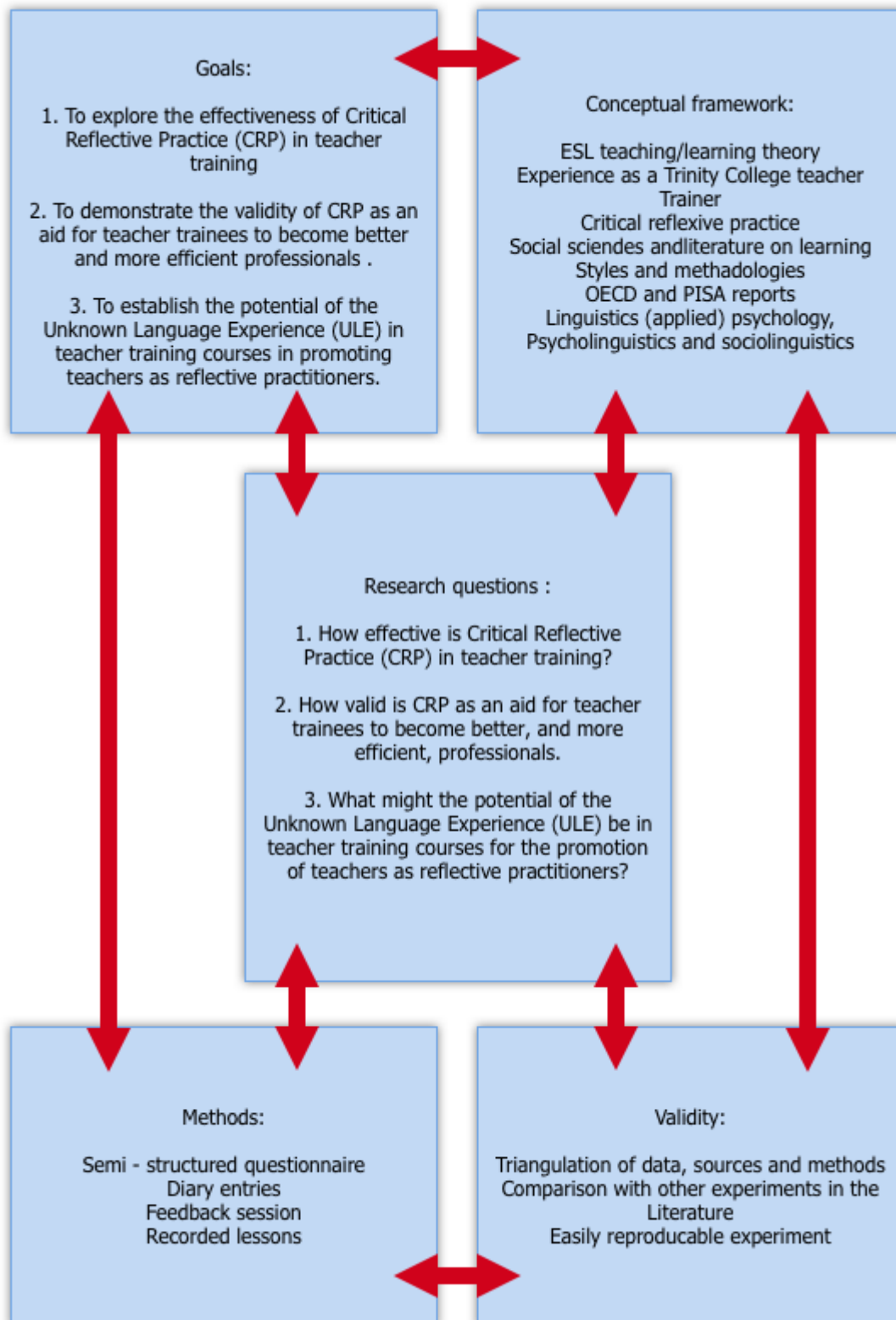
Como ya hemos anunciado, hemos utilizado la técnica llamada investigación-acción (o AR) para probar y evaluar el proceso de aprendizaje: soluciones reales a problemas reales de la clase. El problema que hemos decidido abordar es una consecuencia directa de los malos resultados y la falta de motivación en las escuelas, y para hacer frente a esta situación difícil, hemos realizado la experiencia ULE en la ULPGC con 65 estudiantes durante el periodo 2010-2013. Con los datos obtenidos, y en un periodo de investigación posterior, realizamos un estudio comparativo en el que contrastamos esos datos con los de un grupo de estudiantes que se encontraban realizando el curso sobre TESOL *Trinity College of London Diploma* y que habían participado en la ULE que realizamos en el año 2003. A este último grupo de estudiantes le pedimos que respondieran las mismas preguntas unos once/doce años después de la experiencia para comprobar la validez del experimento.

### 3.1 DISEÑO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

La elección del diseño de la investigación depende del problema y de los objetivos de la investigación, la experiencia personal del investigador, y el público del estudio (Creswell, 2013). En nuestro caso, el problema de la investigación fue la falta de práctica reflexiva crítica en los cursos de formación del profesorado en España y la falta de motivación y aspiración tanto en los profesores como en los alumnos. Con el fin de ser capaz de hacer frente a este problema, la autora de este proyecto de investigación ha aplicado un procedimiento utilizado por el *Trinity College of Londres Diploma* que es parte obligatoria de su programa de formación para los futuros

profesores de lenguas extranjeras: el desarrollo de una práctica ULE (experiencia de un idioma desconocido). La investigadora llevó a cabo el experimento original en 2003, con un grupo de 10 alumnos que realizaban el *Trinity College of London Diploma*, y posteriormente, durante un período de tres años, 2011-2013, en la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. La audiencia del estudio son los futuros maestros y en ese momento actores de la educación terciaria de la universidad, como se ha mencionado anteriormente.

El diagrama que se presenta a continuación en lengua inglesa (Figura 1) fue propuesto inicialmente por Maxwell (2012:10) y ha sido adaptado a las particularidades de nuestro trabajo. En él se describen con detalle todos los aspectos del diseño de la investigación y es importante resaltar que todos los elementos están interrelacionados y son interdependientes entre sí. El diagrama presenta los objetivos de la investigación (*Goals*), el marco conceptual (*Conceptual framework*), las preguntas de los cuestionarios (*Questionnaires*), los métodos seguidos (*Methods*) y la validez (*Validity*).



1. Diseño de la investigación (adaptado de Maxwell, 2012:10)

Maxwell (2012) afirma que no existe un solo modelo de diseño de la investigación, por lo tanto podemos añadir más temas al diagrama de abajo. Es importante entender que el diagrama es una guía que puede ser revaluada y reexaminada. Por lo tanto, para el aspecto de validez podemos incluir algunas amenazas, tales como: no hay suficientes datos cuantitativos analizados; la muestra de 10 alumnos que han hecho lo mismo ULE hace 10 años no es lo suficientemente grande como para ser comparada con los datos extraídos de 2011- 2013; o no ofrecer ninguna retroalimentación a los estudiantes que han participado voluntariamente en el experimento.

En el primer periodo de la investigación (2011-2013), desarrollamos el experimento con alumnos que cursaban las asignaturas de metodología en la licenciatura en Filología Inglesa. A continuación, procederemos a detallar brevemente en qué consistió el experimento de impartir una sesión ULE.

Los sujetos no sabían qué idioma que iban a experimentar y antes de que el profesor entrara en el aula, el mapa de Europa se encontraba proyectado. Desde el mismo comienzo de la lección y hasta el final se utilizó solo el idioma croata. Se mostraron imágenes del país y preguntó a los alumnos que adivinaran de que país se trataba. Después de esta breve introducción geográfica e histórica para la contextualización cultural del profesor/ investigador, se introdujo el alfabeto croata que tiene 30 letras. Para ello, la profesora incluyó algunos símbolos fonológicos como č = tʃ, đ = dʒ, š = ʃ and ž = ʒ, lo que ayudó a los estudiantes a identificar y pronunciar los sonidos. Una vez que la profesora hubo presentado el alfabeto, los estudiantes lo repitieron coralmente y de forma individual. El siguiente ejercicio consistió en la eliminación de algunos sonidos de las letras del alfabeto y tuvieron que llenar los vacíos de forma individual al pronunciar el fonema que falta. Por ejemplo:

Hrvatska abeceda												
Velika slova												
		Č	Ć	D	Dž	Đ			H	I	J	K
L	Lj			O	P	R	S	Š	T			

### 2. Lengua croata: sonidos del alfabeto

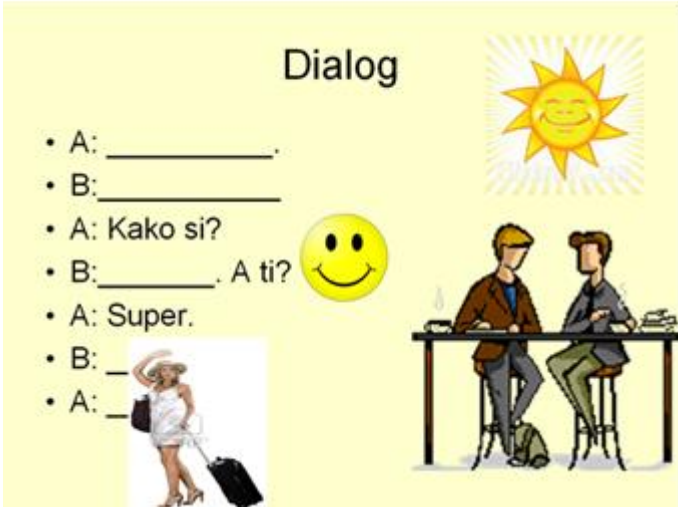
Después de esta actividad, la profesora introdujo expresiones para saludar y decir adiós, apoyándose en el uso de imágenes tales como los intervalos de tiempo y un reloj. La actividad que siguió a la explicación era decir un saludo adecuado dependiendo de la hora del día. Algunas reglas sociales básicos se explicaron también, como apretones de manos y lo que había que decir para responder a cada saludo. Después de la introducción de un nuevo vocabulario, como *Dobro jutro*, *Dobar dan*, *Dobra Vecer* y *Adio*, los estudiantes practicaron los saludos y respuestas en parejas.

Una vez practicados los saludos y la etiqueta social en Croacia como, por ejemplo, el hecho de que es obligatorio hacer la misma pregunta a la otra persona: ¿Cómo estás?, la profesora presentó saludos de despedida (*Adio*, *Dovidjenja* y *Bok*) explicando cuál es la forma formal que se emplea en el sur de Croacia y cuál es el más informal.

La primera actividad oral y escrita consistió en un simple diálogo en el que los estudiantes debían completar huecos:

**Dialog**

- A: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: Kako si?
- B: \_\_\_\_\_. A ti?
- A: Super.
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Actividad: saludos y etiqueta social en croata



En esta fase, una nueva expresión se introdujo: ¿Cuál es tu/su nombre? (*Kako se ti zoves?*) con una respuesta adecuada. Los estudiantes lanzaron la pelota e hicieron la pregunta antes mencionada. Una vez que esta actividad hubo terminado, el profesor introdujo: Encantado de conocerte/le (*Drago mi jel*). Los estudiantes de nuevo repitieron la misma actividad, pero esta vez se dieron la mano y condujeron la conversación de una manera adecuada.

Una vez finalizada la clase, procedimos a la siguiente fase de la investigación que consiste en recopilar las impresiones y opiniones de los alumnos a través de la distribución de cuestionarios semi-estructurados, que nos ofrecieron datos cuantitativos y que serán presentados en la siguiente sección dentro de la sección de instrumentos de investigación cuantitativos.

En el segundo periodo de la investigación (2014-2015), los alumnos del curso de *Trinity College of London Diploma* han respondido de nuevo a las preguntas del cuestionario y han escrito un diario breve sobre su experiencia en 2003. La recogida de datos se realizó a través de un instrumento de investigación cualitativos, que al igual que el instrumento de investigación cuantitativo, será presentado en su correspondiente sección.

Una vez tuvimos registrados las contribuciones de todos los participantes en ambos periodos de investigación, procedimos a utilizar el programa Excel de Microsoft con el fin de crear una base de datos con las respuestas obtenidas. A cada respuesta le hemos asignado un código (una letra), luego hemos calculado la frecuencia y agrupado las respuestas en grupos semánticos (por ejemplo, para la primera pregunta, ¿Cómo te has sentido?, hemos agrupado las respuestas en negativas y positivas.

Denscombe comenta sabiamente que "no hay un solo camino para una buena investigación" (2014: 3). Antes de llevar a cabo una investigación a menudo nos preguntamos qué metodología vamos a utilizar, ya que existen muchas opciones. Por lo tanto se propone el siguiente esquema: la lógica de la investigación y la razón de ser, un plan de acción y, sobre todo, tener claro el problema de investigación (el objetivo que queremos lograr con nuestra investigación) (*ibid*). Desde el principio hemos creído en los objetivos ya que la investigadora principal la ha experimentado

como aprendiz y dos años más tarde se ha enseñado la ULE a los alumnos/ futuros profesores del *Trinity College of London Diploma*.

Dado que el problema en nuestro caso es complejo la única opción que hemos tenido fue la elección del método mixto o triangulación. Carter y otros, citado en Patton (1999), explican que "La triangulación se refiere al uso de múltiples métodos o fuentes de datos en la investigación cualitativa para desarrollar una comprensión global de los fenómenos"<sup>155</sup> (2014: 545) y añaden que "la triangulación también ha sido visto como una estrategia cualitativa de investigación para poner a prueba la validez mediante la convergencia de información de diferentes fuentes" (*ibid*).

Nuestro enfoque principal en el análisis de datos es cualitativo, ya que deseábamos explorar y explicar un fenómeno, pero lo hemos combinado con un enfoque cuantitativo para los fines de triangulación. Algunas preguntas se limitaron a respuestas de "sí / no" (aunque los estudiantes añadieron en ocasiones algunos comentarios) aunque la gran mayoría de las preguntas eran de respuesta abierta. La validez de los datos recogidos es un tema importante en cualquier investigación, y teniendo en cuenta que hemos utilizado la triangulación para interpretar los datos, ha sido necesario cruzarlos para su posterior análisis.

En nuestro análisis de los datos que hemos reducido el factor de dimensionalidad de datos, integrado la transformación de los datos, transformado los datos, comparado, correlacionando e integrando.<sup>156</sup> Hemos decidido analizar tanto las respuestas al cuestionario como las contribuciones de los diarios, por lo que los datos recogidos son de varios tipos. Esto significa que tienen que ser analizados utilizando diferentes o múltiples enfoques. Podemos afirmar que no solo son los datos diferentes en su contenido, sino también en la forma en que estaban reunidos. Los cuestionarios fueron respondidos de inmediato después de la experiencia ULE, mientras que las entradas del diario correspondían a una parte obligatoria de la evaluación de la asignatura sobre lingüística aplicada (*'Applied Linguistics II'*) de la licenciatura en 'Filología Inglesa' ('Lengua Inglesa y Literatura') ofrecido por la

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<sup>155</sup> Traducción propia.

<sup>156</sup> Estos conceptos provienen de la teoría de Grbic (2012: 34) que nos enseña cómo hacer el cruce de datos.

ULPGC. Estos diario fueron entregados la profesora de la clase algunos días o semanas después, lo que significa que estos sujetos dispusieron de mucho más tiempo para contemplar y reflexionar sobre la experiencia.

Debido a estas premisas, hemos tenido que adaptar varias formas de interpretar los datos: no solamente la cualitativa, sino también cuantitativa. Por otra parte, hemos analizado los mismos datos al examinar el contenido y las estadísticas de las respuestas. Hemos ofrecido un análisis de contenido cualitativo de las respuestas y de las contribuciones del diario. Una vez hecho ese primer análisis, hemos marcado las respuestas en grupos similares (a los que se les ha asignado códigos) que luego fueron analizadas cuantitativamente (expresados en gráficos y porcentajes).

### 3.2. INSTRUMENTOS DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

Una de las razones principales para la realización de este estudio ha sido el de mostrar cómo una experiencia práctica donde los futuros profesores se sientan como sus futuros alumnos es valiosa y necesaria, porque una experiencia de primera mano no puede jamás ser igualada a la lectura sobre el aprendizaje de idiomas y la enseñanza de los mismos. Otra ventaja del ULE es que el experimento en sí mismo puede ser fácilmente reproducido en las clases de metodología, siempre y cuando el idioma que vamos a utilizar como el idioma desconocido no sea similar a cualquier otro idioma que los estudiantes conocen o han oído. Por otra parte, después de la ULE debe haber una sesión de retroalimentación y discusión por vía oral o escrita sobre el experimento. Para recoger este tipo de información, se puede utilizar el cuestionario semi-estructurado (que consiste en una serie de preguntas abiertas en su mayoría y algunas cerradas) o simplemente se puede pedir a los estudiantes que expresen de forma escrita qué han aprendido y por qué. Este tipo de recogida de datos se utiliza en el TESOL Certificado de *Trinity College of Londres*, ya que los cuestionarios y el diario son parte obligatoria del diploma y se evalúan. La sesión de retroalimentación se utiliza como una sesión reveladora sobre el aprendizaje para los

futuros profesores en la que además descubren los métodos más eficientes para enseñar y al mismo tiempo analizar cómo y por qué se aprende algo.

### 3.2.1 CUESTIONARIOS SEMI-ESTRUCTURADOS

El modelo de cuestionario tiene preguntas abiertas y cerradas, tal y como refleja el nombre que recibe este tipo de cuestionarios: semiestructurados. El cuestionario utilizado en nuestra investigación fue adaptado del cuestionario original utilizado en el curso *Trinity College of London Diploma*, que utilizamos en dos periodos de investigación diferentes, pero haciendo cambios mínimos. En concreto, analizamos dos grupos en dos épocas diferentes con un intervalo temporal de entre unos ocho y diez años: la primera ULE fue en 2003 con los estudiantes del curso mencionado arriba y el segundo fue durante el periodo 2011-2013 con estudiantes de la licenciatura en Filología Inglesa (ULPGC). El cuestionario original tiene nueve preguntas, pero en nuestra investigación hemos analizado solo cinco<sup>157</sup>:

1. Cómo te has sentido ?
2. ¿Qué diferencias estructurales y similitudes hay entre el idioma desconocido e Inglés, en términos de la gramática, el vocabulario y la pronunciación?
3. ¿Va a ser capaz de aplicar las mismas estrategias para tus futuras clases?
4. ¿Qué esperabas aprender y lo que has aprendido ?
5. ¿Cuáles fueron los objetivos del profesor?
6. Al final de la clase los estudiantes sería capaz de ...
7. ¿En qué medida eran las reglas gramaticales / léxicas / fonológico explican?
8. ¿Qué rango de actividades de aprendizaje se llevó a cabo?
9. ¿Fue el contenido de la clase demasiado / o demasiado poco o justo? Justifica tu opinión.

4. Cuestionario original utilizado en el curso *Trinity College of London Diploma*

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<sup>157</sup> Hemos seleccionado aquellas cuyas respuestas se referían a la motivación, interés y en aprender a aprender y que coinciden con las preguntas 1,3,4 y 5.

El cuestionario fue anónimo en el segundo caso, aunque cada alumno eligió un nombre clave para poder comparar al mismo alumno en diferentes clases impartidas<sup>158</sup>. En 2003 los cuestionarios fueron con nombres completos ya que la ULE es parte obligatoria del curso y por lo tanto evaluable.

El cuestionario fue distribuido a los alumnos inmediatamente después de la clase impartida y tuvieron entre media hora y cuarenta y cinco minutos de tiempo para cumplimentarlos. Luego fueron inmediatamente recogidos por la investigadora.

También es importante resaltar que se tomó la decisión de no cambiar las preguntas durante el período de tres años ya que los datos han sido analizados como si fueran tomados en un solo año. Esta decisión fue tomada por las siguientes razones: la investigadora era la misma, los alumnos eran todos del último año de la carrera en Filología Inglesa, el cuestionario se impartió siempre en el mismo mes, y durante la misma asignatura.

### 3.2.2. DIAROS DE ALUMNOS

El diario de los alumnos es un documento en el que los estudiantes reflejan sus impresiones y reflexiones a lo largo del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en una determinada materia. En nuestro caso, este diario además se utilizó como instrumento de recogida de datos procedentes de los estudiantes. Los estudiantes escribieron los diarios con sus reflexiones sobre la clase durante las semanas siguientes al experimento, y se lo entregaron a la profesora de la asignatura, que les comentó sus contribuciones. Al finalizar el curso, la profesora nos hizo llegar las partes de los diarios que se referían a la ULE. Como ejemplo de una de las contribuciones de los estudiantes, hemos seleccionado la siguiente:

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*We had the opportunity to enjoy a class with Daniela in a completely new*

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<sup>158</sup> Esto se refiere solamente en el año 2011, ya que en los dos años consecutivos hemos hecho solamente una sesión utilizando el método Comunicativo, mientras en 2011 hemos hecho el experimento 4 veces (dos veces la clase comunicativa, una Audio- Lingual y una Traducción Gramatical).

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*language, and I have to say that I truly like it. I attended to her class because I was motivated and interested in this experience. At the beginning it was quite difficult but it is normal in this situation. However, little by little it was easy to follow her and the correct pronunciation by repeat her. What I really found interesting was that the teacher spoke only in Croatian, it make us pay more attention and remember some important and useful words. When I was about 12 or 13 years old, my classmates ask me for teach them some Swedish words and sentences. As you probably had notice I am very shy, so I went home thinking about it and decided to prepare a short lesson for them. It was something like we did in Croatian lessons, in my opinion we should not learn grammar rules at the first class, because it will maybe be bored for them. The best thing to entertain the students is to make games, to make small dialogues, to see pictures of objects and learn theirs name like if we were children, but it will be Of course in next sessions they have to learn some grammar because learners need grammar rules if they are going to learn successful. When a person is learning a L2, the need to communicate is unnecessary and useful to learn better the language. So they have to be independent and work by themselves.*

Alumno B año 2012 (reproducido sin correcciones)

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5. Ejemplo de una contribución del diario de uno de los alumnos participantes en el experimento (2012)

A continuación, mostramos como ejemplo otra contribución del diario de un estudiante. En esta caso, el alumno/a en particular nos muestra su satisfacción con el experimento, y su reacción hacia el hecho de que la clase fue íntegramente impartida en el idioma desconocido, resaltando su capacidad para superar los sentimientos negativos del principio y aprender y recordar vocabulario y sentirse cómodo/a en la clase. También menciona el hecho de que es mejor no enseñar gramática sino concentrarse en la comunicación en la clase.:

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*I was slightly dubious at first but soon realised that the techniques and*

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*methods being used were entirely appropriate and soon got in to the fun of the language learning. I felt surprised above taking into account that I could understand what was going in class as well as my classmates. We were motivated to do so by your encouragement.*

Alumno año 2013 (reproducido sin correcciones)

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6. Ejemplo de una contribución del diario de uno de los alumnos participantes en el experimento (2013)

En este caso el alumno/a fue del año 2003 y comenta lo mismo que el alumno anterior: la sorpresa de ver cómo se puede aprender algo sin conocer de nada el idioma y participar. También se mencionan palabras tales como: motivación y estímulo.

### 3.3. ANÁLISIS DE LOS DATOS

Dado que nuestro objetivo era demostrar la validez y utilidad de la ULE en los programas de formación de profesores, hemos decidido que nuestro diseño de la investigación tenía que ser triple: cualitativo, cuantitativo y mixto. En cuanto a diseño cualitativo, se han analizado los diarios; para el diseño cuantitativo, hemos utilizado las preguntas adaptados del Diploma de *Trinity College of London*. Por último, el diseño mixto o *triangulation*, que consistió en contrastar y analizar los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos, fue muy relevante en nuestra investigación actual ya que nos permitió abordar los mismos problemas de investigación y preguntas. Consideramos que recurrir solo a un diseño de la investigación habría sido insuficiente e inadecuado ya que habría dejado de dar una visión completa de los procesos de enseñanza / aprendizaje y la reflexión. Mediante el uso de la triangulación hemos complementado los resultados. Para nosotros el problema o la cuestión era y es principalmente cualitativa, ya que no hay suficiente investigación o casi ninguna investigación sobre la ULE y hemos querido mostrar su validez y crear bases sólidas para su ejecución dentro de los programas de formación de profesores

de en España, tanto en el grado como en los programas de postgrado. En nuestro caso uno de los objetivos principales era obtener unas ideas profundas sobre la motivación en la enseñanza / aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera y el único enfoque que podíamos usar para investigar este fenómeno fue uno cualitativo con un diseño cuantitativo a pequeña escala.

#### 4. RESULTADOS

Tras el análisis general de los datos extraídos se puede afirmar que los estudiantes en ambos periodos, sin ser conscientes del proceso cognitivo del experimento, han demostrado conocimiento sobre el aprendizaje de idiomas y la enseñanza. Además, se demuestra que la práctica reflexiva y la ULE ofrecen una oportunidad única para los estudiantes/futuros profesores de analizarse a sí mismos y a los demás, durante un aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Estas características demuestran que la ULE debe ser una parte obligatoria de cualquier formación de profesores en lenguas extranjeras. En este capítulo nuestra principal preocupación era la pregunta una vez planteada por Gardner y Lambert: "¿Cómo es que algunas personas pueden aprender una segunda lengua o lengua extranjera tan fácilmente y tan bien, mientras que para otros, teniendo en cuenta lo que parecen las mismas oportunidades de aprender, resultará casi imposible?" (1972 : 130).

Los datos se muestran en gráficos y tablas (las tablas se incluyen en el Apéndice VIII). Hemos utilizado la hoja de cálculo Microsoft Excel para el análisis de los resultados.

En cuanto a la forma de registrar las contribuciones escritas de los estudiantes, a cada respuesta dada por los estudiantes se le ha asignado una letra para que nosotros pudiéramos agruparlas con el fin de establecer las respuestas más comunes y la frecuencia. Una vez realizada esta tarea, clasificamos las respuestas para su análisis.

Mediante la combinación de ambas formas de análisis, cuantitativo y cualitativo, se ha obtenido una visión más profunda sobre todos los resultados obtenidos a partir de las preguntas formuladas en los cuestionarios. Por otra parte, no solo hemos ilustrado meras estadísticas, pero también hemos obtenido mucho



más conocimiento sobre las respuestas individuales. Las respuestas y las entradas de los diarios nos han ayudado a desarrollar medidas o recomendaciones para estudios posteriores sobre los procesos de enseñanza/aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Además, dado que esta investigación tuvo comienzo hace unos 11/12 años (diferencia entre la primera experiencia con los alumnos del Diploma de *Trinity College of Londres* y el experimento en la ULPGC) hemos logrado comparar y contrastar los datos mediante la búsqueda de puntos de vista similares en ambos casos y grupos. A pesar de la diferencia de tiempo, las contribuciones de los estudiantes han demostrado que el tiempo en este caso no fue un factor negativo para nuestra investigación.

Debido a la breve naturaleza de este estudio, solo nos vamos a centrar en los datos que hemos recogido a partir de las reflexiones de nuestros sujetos de la ULPGC en las lecciones del enfoque comunicativo (*Communicative Approach*) que se les impartió en croata en el período de investigación de tres años desde 2011 hasta 2013. Con el fin de establecer una relación entre el idioma desconocido en la ULPGC y la parte obligatoria del *Trinity College of London Diploma*, se recogieron 10 cuestionarios de 2003 y hemos invitado a esos mismos diez estudiantes para responder a las preguntas exactas que se pidieron a los estudiantes en el años 2011, 2012 y 2013, pero esta vez años después (entre once y doce) de su experiencia con la lengua desconocida. Los datos cuantitativos se analizaron mediante la asignación del porcentaje utilizado para la retroalimentación a los estudiantes del *Trinity College of London Diploma*, 2003/2015. A lo largo de 2014, gracias a los medios de comunicación de redes sociales, la autora fue capaz ponerse en contacto con algunos de los estudiantes del curso que lo hicieron en 2003. Diez de los estudiantes todavía mantienen sus cuestionarios/diarios del año 2003 y estaban dispuestos a responder a las mismas preguntas de nuevo como habían respondido años antes. Un ejemplo de ese diario original se puede ver en el Apéndice VIII. Es importante destacar el hecho de que todos ellos están trabajando como profesores, principalmente en China y Escocia.

Hay dos periodos de investigación, el primero que vamos a analizar es el más reciente. Este período de investigación comprende un tiempo de tres años de la

investigación llevada a cabo en la UPLGC con 65 alumnos en total. Los invitamos a participar en una lección de nivel principiante absoluto de un idioma desconocido (croata) y aparte de eso, tomaron notas, se observaron a sí mismos y a sus compañeros en una experiencia única de presenciar la manera de aprender lenguas extranjeras. En este apartado , vamos a presentar gráficos que reflejan los datos de la investigación.

Aquí consideramos importante repetir las preguntas:

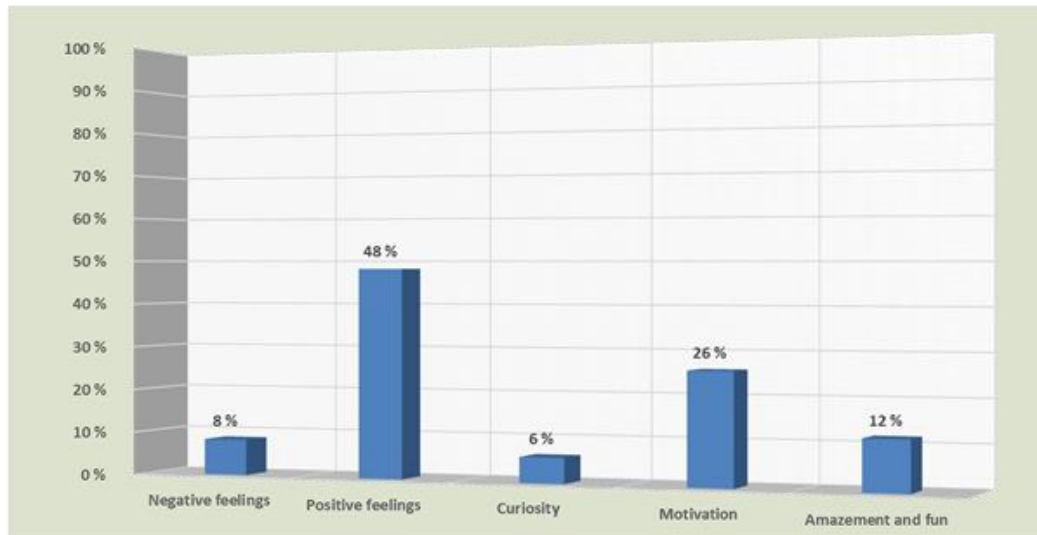
P.1. ¿Cómo te has sentido ?

P.2 . ¿Qué métodos, estrategias, actividades y técnicas de enseñanza fueron utilizados por el profesor para ayudarle a comprender?

P.3. Será usted capaz de aplicar las estrategias en sus futuras clases?

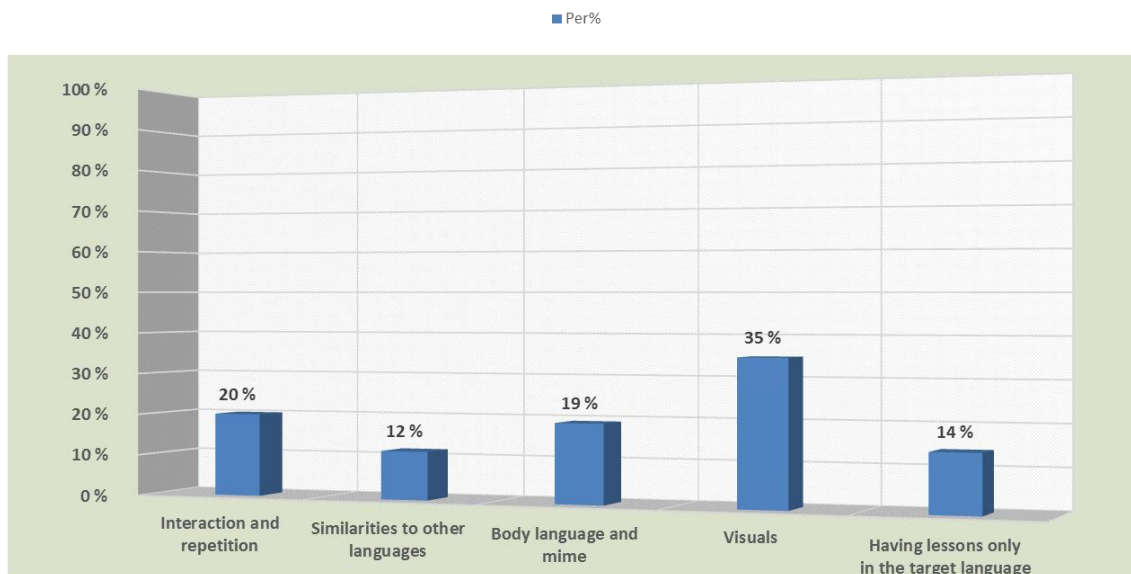
P.4 . ¿Qué esperaba aprender y qué has aprendido ?

P.5 . ¿Cuáles fueron los objetivos del profesor ?



Gráfica 1. P.1. ¿Cómo te has sentido ?

Parece que los sentimientos positivos sobrepasan a los negativos (85% frente a 8%)<sup>159</sup>. El 8 % expresaron sentimientos de ansiedad, shock, nerviosismo, tensión y cansancio. Estos estudiantes participaron en el experimento, pero no se sintieron cómodos y en sus diarios expresaron que prefieren estudiar solos sin haber sido invitados a participar en público (vamos a explorar este aspecto en nuestro posterior análisis de los datos cualitativos).

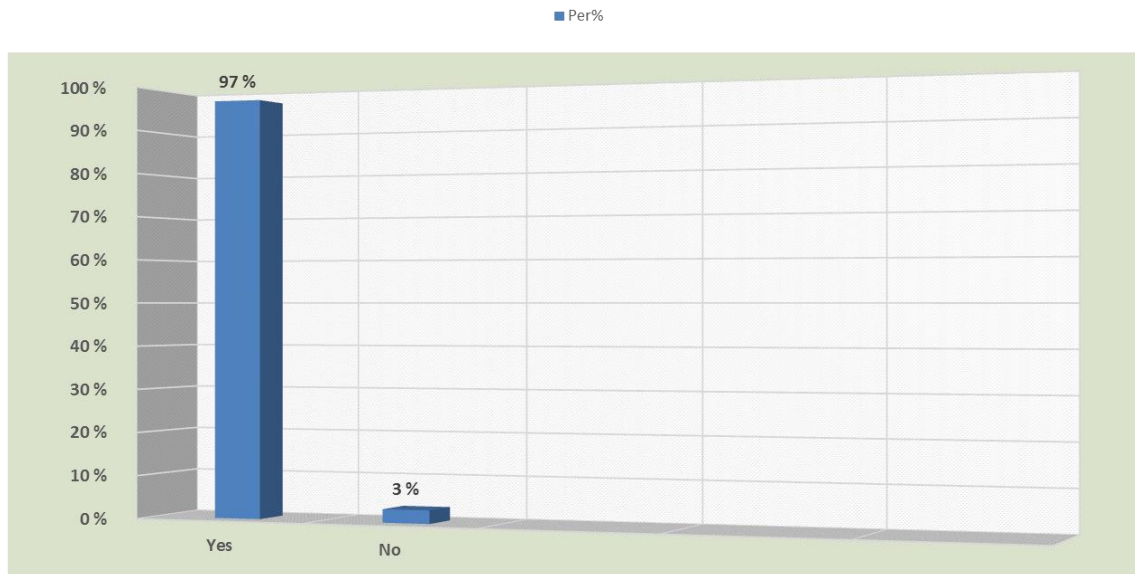


Gráfica 2. P.2 . ¿Qué métodos, estrategias , actividades y técnicas de enseñanza fueron utilizados por el profesor para ayudarle a comprender?

En cuanto a la segunda pregunta, los resultados muestran que nuestros sujetos parecen ser principalmente estudiantes visuales (35 %) y que la repetición y la interacción son también las principales ayudas destacadas para comprender un idioma desconocido. Por lo tanto, gracias a la ULE, estos alumnos han descubierto sus estilos de aprendizaje preferidos que es útil no solo para reflexionar sobre cómo mejorar el aprendizaje de idiomas, sino para el aprendizaje en general. También

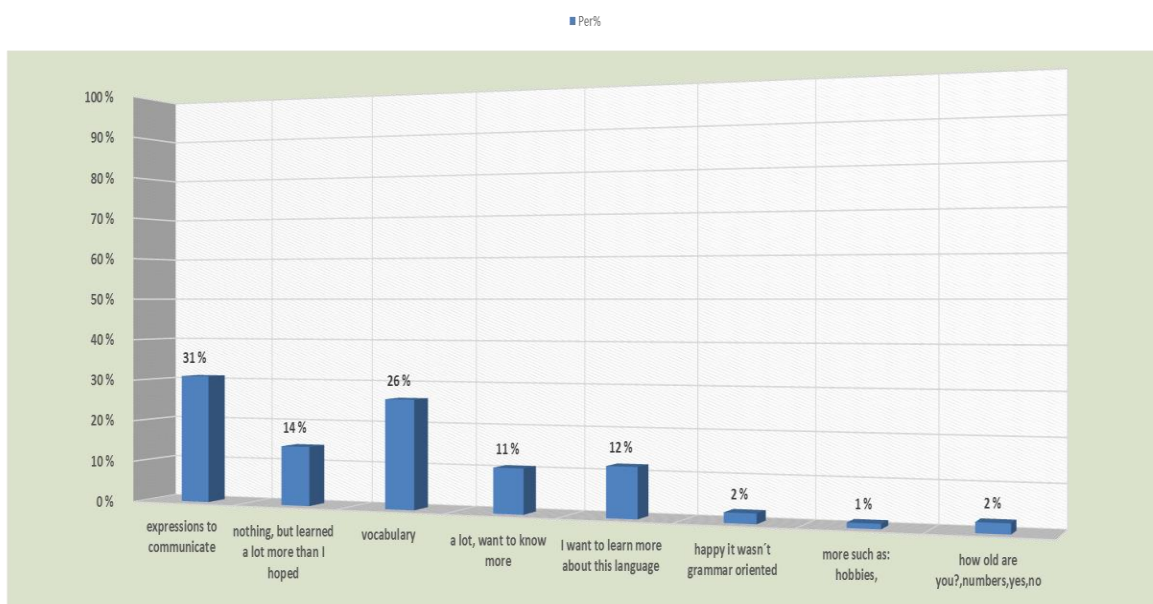
<sup>159</sup> Aquí hemos calculado que todos son positivos menos *amusement and fun*, ya que no nos aportan sentimientos sino impresión de pasarlo bien.

tenemos que mencionar que solo el 14 % considera que el uso de la L2 puede ayudar a entender el lenguaje de entrada mejor.



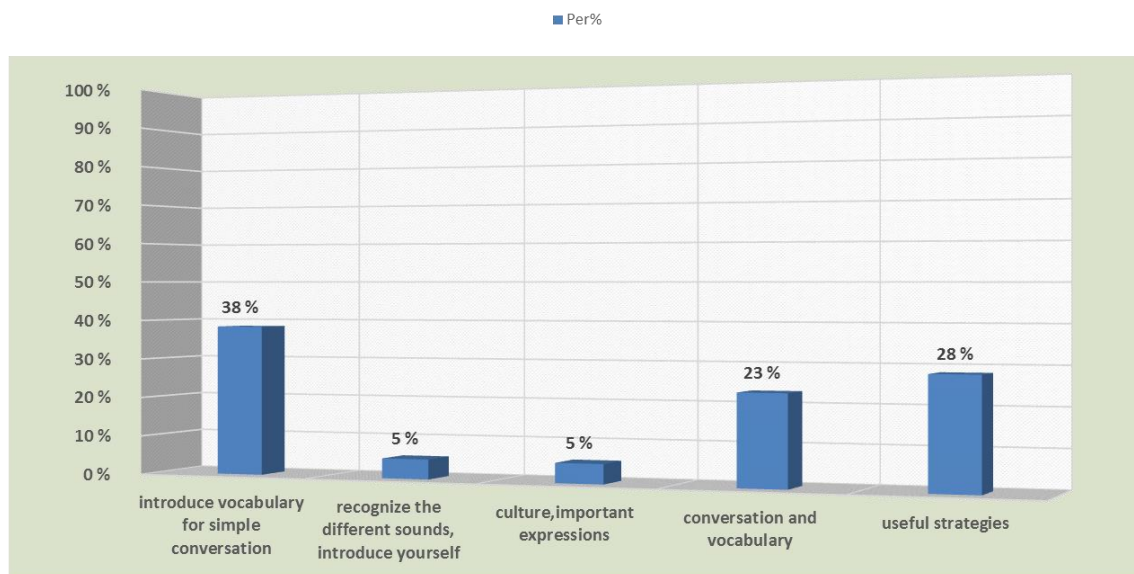
Gráfica 3. P.3. Será usted capaz de aplicar las estrategias en sus futuras clases?

En respuesta a esta pregunta en particular, casi el 100 % afirma que van a utilizar las estrategias, ya que las encontraron útiles, mientras que el 3% se refiere a uno de los estudiantes de la pregunta que se sentía incómodo durante la lección.



Gráfica 4. P. 4 . ¿Qué esperaba aprender y qué has aprendido ?

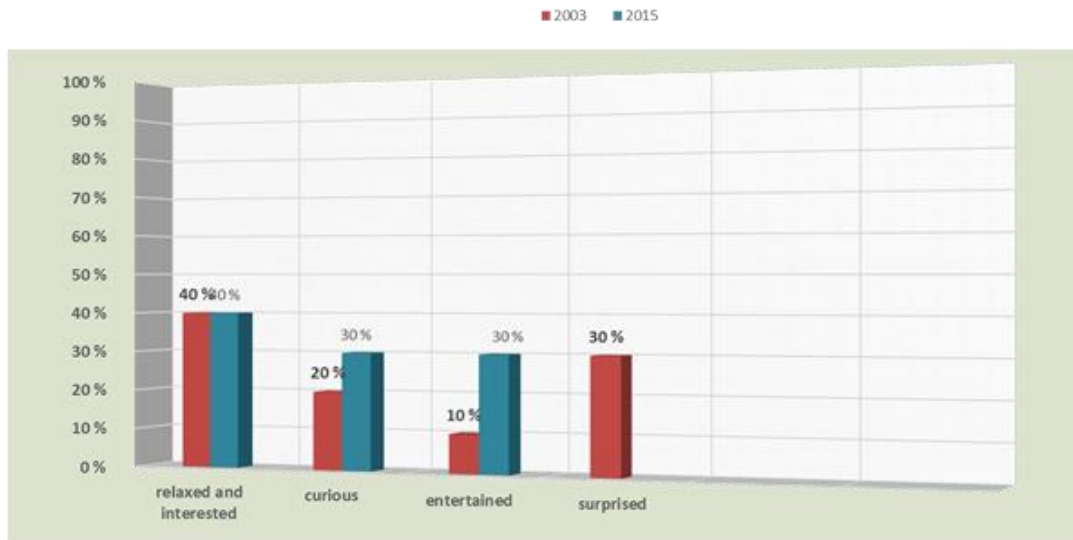
Los resultados obtenidos en la pregunta cuarta son "expresiones para comunicarse y vocabulario" (31% y 26%, respectivamente); dichas respuestas demuestran que el uso de un enfoque comunicativo basado en el léxico parece ser eficaz ya que más del 50% de los estudiantes afirman que han adquirido el léxico necesario ser capaz de comunicarse en un nivel básico en solo una hora. En nuestro estudio, tanto el aprendizaje explícito e implícito se llevó a cabo, ya que nunca fue nuestra intención que el estudiante memorizara o recordara las palabras de la lengua desconocida, pero ha ocurrido de forma natural, ya que han participado activamente en el experimento como si fueran estudiantes reales de un idioma extranjero.



Gráfica 5. P.5 . ¿Cuáles fueron los objetivos del profesor ?

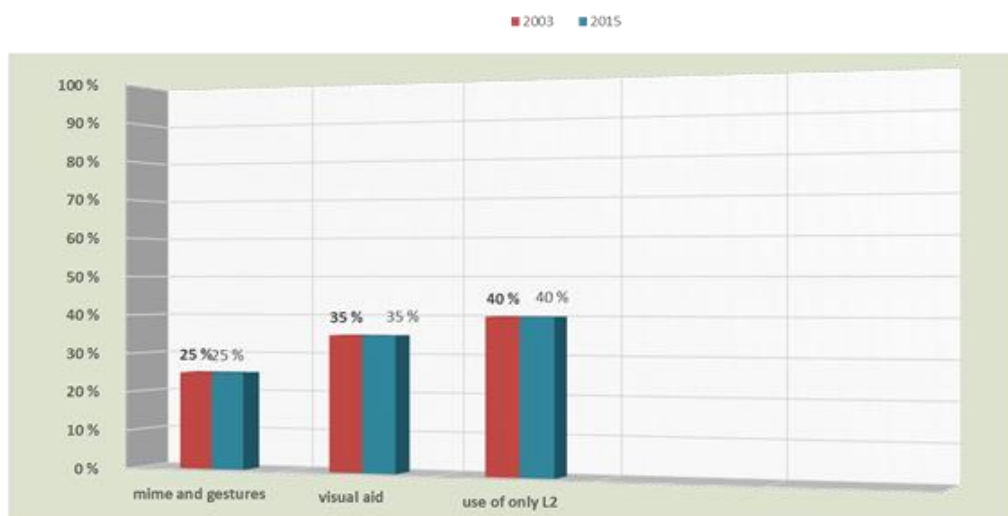
Es alentador ver que las respuestas a la pregunta 5 coinciden con los resultados de los datos anteriores a la perfección: vocabulario y expresiones para comunicar de contabilidad hacen el 61% de las respuestas totales. Además, casi el 30 % ha resaltado estrategias en lugar de mencionar el léxico y las características sociales.

Aquí presentamos la comparación de los datos de 2003 con 2014/15.



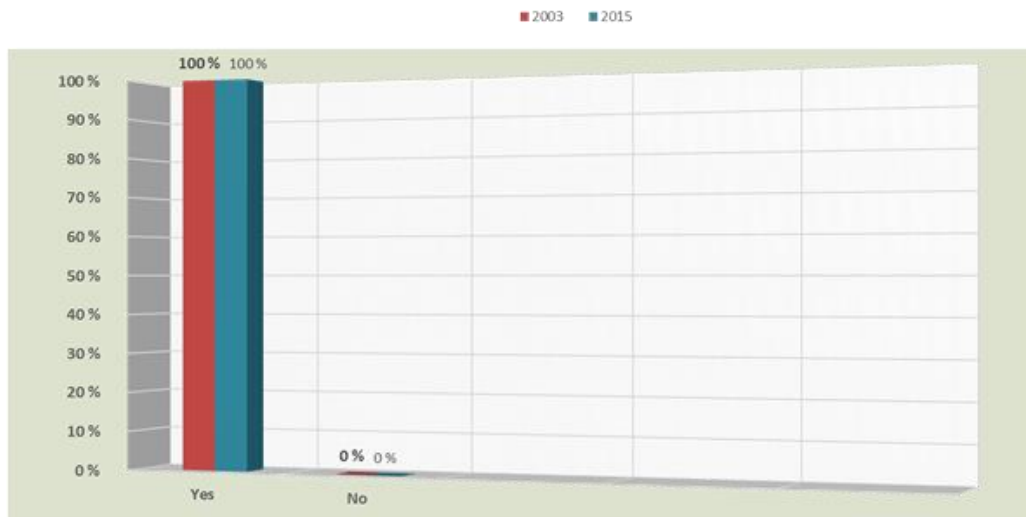
Gráfica 6.P.1. ¿Cómo te has sentido ?

Para los sujetos que eran los participantes en el *Trinity College of London Diploma* del período de investigación de 2003, solo se mencionan sentimientos positivos como la 'relajado/a', 'interesado/a' y 'entretenido/a'. Esto nos muestra que los sentimientos positivos corresponden a los dos periodos ya que en ambos casos representan casi el 50%, y "asombro" y "diversión", con aproximadamente el 12 %, eran las mismas respuestas. En el 2015, tenemos de nuevo sentimientos positivos expresados en los siguientes términos : "mejor parte del curso ", " muy útil " y ' memorable " .



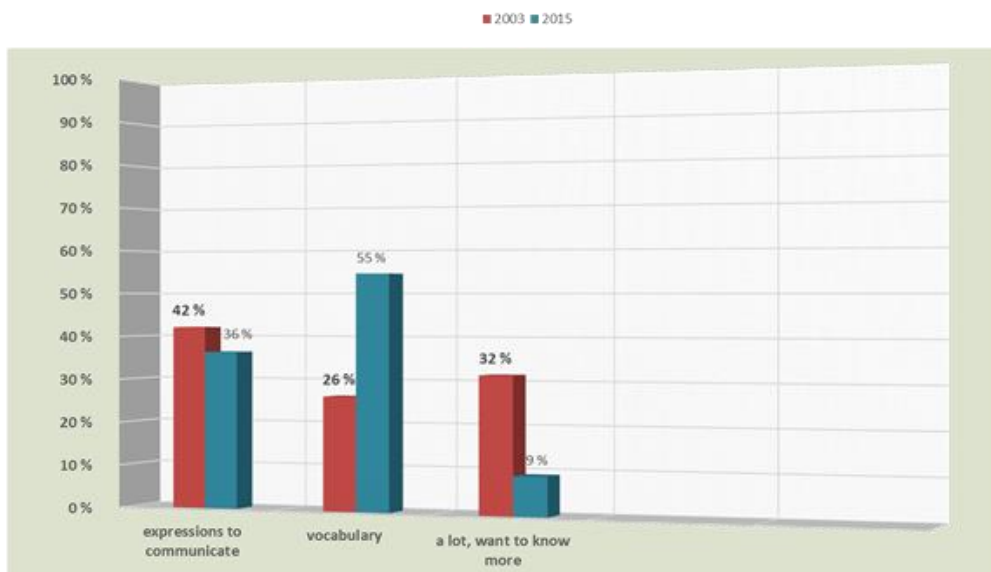
Gráfica 6. P.2 . ¿Qué métodos, estrategias, actividades y técnicas de enseñanza fueron utilizados por el profesor para ayudarle a comprender?

En la pregunta 2 encontramos respuestas positivas: la más popular fue "porque usted ha utilizado únicamente L2 ( 40 % ) , que fue seguida por las ayudas visuales (35%) . Las mismas respuestas se ofrecieron once o doce años después de la ULE original: "aspectos visuales " ( 35 %) y " lenguaje corporal " y " mímica " representan aproximadamente el 20 % . En 2015 , el 40% contestó "uso de la L2".



Gráfica 7. P.3. Será usted capaz de aplicar las estrategias en sus futuras clases?

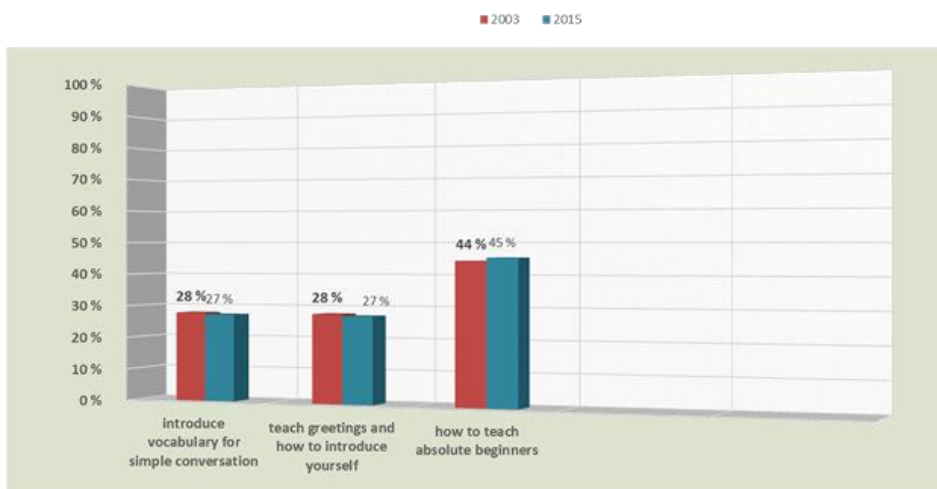
En este caso (pregunta 3), los resultados son exactamente los mismos en 2003 y en 2015: el 100% respondió positivamente a esta pregunta.





Gráfica 8. P.4 . ¿Qué esperaba aprender y qué has aprendido ?

Las respuestas a la pregunta 4 se resumen en " Comunicación " y "vocabulario", que hacen el 68 % de las respuestas dadas en 2003 y muestra que "vocabulario" y "expresiones para comunicarse " fueron las respuestas más comunes también ( entre 26 % y 42 % ) en 2014/15 . Por otra parte , el 91 % menciona " vocabulario básico " y" expresiones " .



Gráfica 9. P.5.¿ Cuáles fueron los objetivos del profesor?

Con respecto a la pregunta 5, el 56 % coincide con la respuesta anterior , y aproximadamente la otra mitad habla de cómo ha aprendido cómo enseñar a los principiantes. Las respuestas obtenidas en 2015 apoyan los datos anteriores ( 28 % y 38 %). Además , el 72% respondió " la metodología correcta" y 27 % " para poder socializar".

A continuación vamos a mostrar contribuciones de los diarios siendo la parte cualitativa de este estudio, y vamos a empezar con el primer periodo 2011- 2013.

Como podemos ver en los comentarios anteriores tomadas de los cuestionarios posteriores a la lección , los sujetos reaccionaron positivamente enfrentándose a una lección en una lengua que nunca habían oído antes, y sobre un país del cual tenían previamente escasos conocimientos. Por lo tanto , un poco de contexto tuvo que ser



creado para captar su atención e invitarlos a participar. Siempre es una buena idea contextualizar todo lo que enseñamos y enseñar frases u oraciones significativas y útiles . Esto puede ilustrarse con los siguientes comentarios del diario:<sup>160</sup>

- *I felt as if I were an immigrant in Croatia.*
- *At first I felt stupid and shocked, because I did not understand the teacher, but during the lesson I became very comfortable because it was not so difficult as I thought.*
- *Entertained and curious, I wanted to know more and I wanted to talk.*
- *At the beginning of the lesson I was a bit confused, because I did not understand anything, but later I realized that the professor was using good methods.*
- *I felt happy and comfortable.*

En cuanto a las estrategias, técnicas y metodología, han destacado sobre todo el uso de la mímica, gestos e imágenes . La mayoría de los sujetos parece haberse quedado satisfecho con la ULE y sus expectativas se cumplieron ( véase el Gráfico 2 , cuadro 2) El contexto creado y el vocabulario enseñado tenían sentido , la gramática , como tal, no se enseñaba de forma explícita , pero ellos la adquirieron inconscientemente; por ejemplo, los pronombres personales, posesivos , palabras de interrogación, la actual forma simple del *zvati* verbo , los pronombres ' esto es ' / ' son ' , la forma de preguntar " ¿cómo estás? " y la respuesta , y, por supuesto , la forma de saludos para decir "hola" y "adiós" . Por lo tanto, creemos que es relevante aquí reproducir algunos de los comentarios:

- *I learnt easy and useful vocabulary and I want to learn more of this type of vocabulary.*

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<sup>160</sup> Hemos decido no traducir las aportaciones al español por varias razones, son palabras exactas que a veces tiene fallos y no vemos mucho sentido en traducir algo que originalmente fue hecho en inglés.

- *As I did not know what language I was to learn I hope whatever about that. At the end, I learned some knowledge about Croatian language that I find very interesting in order to introduce myself and be able to communicate something in this language.*
- *I hoped a first contact with the foreign language but I am very surprised because in one hour we learned a lot more than I hoped.*
- *I hoped to learn a new kind of language but that was even better.*

Casi todos de ellos coincidieron en que usarían las mismas estrategias y estaban asombrados por la cantidad de información que podían retener y aprender utilizando solo el idioma de destino ( véase el Gráfico 3 , Tabla 3 ) .Ya que "muy útil" fue el más respuesta común, hemos decidido enumerar algunos extractos:

- *I've learnt how to start a class for beginners.*
- *Yes, I will use visual material and also the interaction exercises.*
- *Yes, I love all that have a relation to visual learning because I am a visual learner.*
- *Yes, I think these techniques are very productive and help to facilitate the learning.*
- *I will be concern about how students feel so I will able to apply specific techniques. In the case of introduction to the language, I saw that visual activities plus communicative teaching is compulsory.*

En cuanto a lo que han aprendido (véase el Gráfico 4 , Tabla 4 ) , expresaron el hecho de que han aprendido mucho más de lo que habían pensado inicialmente . He aquí algunos comentarios:

- *I was amazed how much we learnt in only one hour, there was a lot of repetition of course, but it was necessary.*
- *I did not expect much, at the end I am pleased with the vocabulary that I have learnt, I could go to Croatia and greet people, ask them how they are and answer back, this makes me really satisfied with the experience.*
- *I learnt enough to get by for some time at least.*

Con respecto a sus objetivos percibidos (Gráfico 5 ,Tabla 5 ) nuestros datos sugieren que se concentran principalmente en lo que habían aprendido y no tanto en cómo y por qué habían aprendido. Por ejemplo:

- *It's quite motivating to know that if I ever meet a Croatian person I will be able to to aske them if they like chocolate or pizza, I need a cheap hotel, or what their name is.*
- *We learnt how to greet people, how to introduce ourselves and other people, how to conjugate the verbs "to be", and how to express how we are feeling.*
- *Moreover, the structures and vocabulary we learned will be useful to us if we would go to Croatia one day.*

Los datos cualitativos en el segundo periodo de investigación relacionados con las preguntas planteadas se presentan aquí. Sobre la primera pregunta sobre los sentimientos hemos hecho una selección:

- *[...] I had no confidence that I would be able to use them spontaneously, but I did.*
- *I felt surprised above taking into account that I could understand what was going in class as well as my classmates.*
- *I felt excited to learn and keen to impress the teacher (I'm a bit of a sycophant).*
- *I never felt intimidated or over-whelmed as the teacher (you) fed us words cautiously using lots of repetition and positive reinforcement.*
- *I felt good and the most important lesson from the experience was being able to relate to learners; not just ESL learners, but anyone in a classroom environment. Fundamentally it helps me empathise with children and informs my classroom teaching.*

Por otra parte, aquí tenemos algunas palabras o frases primordiales que debemos explicar, como el refuerzo positivo, ser capaz de relacionarse con los alumnos y la empatía. Siempre podemos encontrar algo bueno en la participación de los estudiantes, ya sea de manera escrita o hablada y no deberíamos concentrarnos solamente en los errores. Si no nos fijamos solamente en los errores, entonces

podemos crear un entorno seguro para la producción fluida de los estudiantes. Ser capaz de relacionarse con los alumnos y ser empático se puede aprender mediante la experiencia como la ULE. Si no entendemos cómo nuestros estudiantes se sienten en clase, ¿cómo podemos enseñarles?

Para la segunda pregunta sobre los métodos, estrategias y técnicas que nos ayudan a aprender L2 hemos descubierto lo siguiente:

- *Make sure the student understands what he is being taught - being lost in a language lesson is an unpleasant experience, getting the students to practice with each other is important - in fact, the more speaking the better, keep the lesson friendly and relaxed, this atmosphere is much more conducive to learning, keep it simple and get the basics taught first.*
- *The teacher spoke nothing but Croatian but her use of hand gestures, signals and simple pointing at items made it very easy to understand.*
- *Involving students physically in the learning process, games, handouts, quiz type tasks allowing us to have many ways of retaining the info as we have diff attachments to it.*
- *I remember substantial variation of task: teacher led, teacher-to-student and then student to student. There were listening, speaking, reading (and possible writing) tasks. There was an attempt to reach all learning styles through use of VAK (visual, audio, kinaesthetic)- maybe a bit of Howard Gardner here. The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm.*

Estas contribuciones confirman una vez más que si solo contamos con datos estadísticos no podemos obtener una visión completa sobre el complejo proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas. En este caso los estudiantes mencionan andamiaje (*keep it simple and get the basics taught first*), los estilos de aprendizaje (VAK), las inteligencias múltiples (Gardner). Todos estos conceptos son esenciales en el proceso de aprendizaje en general y si los alumnos y los profesores lo conocen pues el proceso es mucho más efectivo.

Como hemos visto antes 100 % de nuestros estudiantes dio una respuesta positiva a las estrategias utilizadas en la clase. Aquí tenemos algunos comentarios del diario que apoyan los datos cuantitativos:

- *Yes, I have used some strategies with beginners and advanced learners, for example using famous people, dialogues, noughts and crosses to revise among others.*
- *Always favour the communicative approach, it really works. Facilitate learning in all 4 skills.*
- *Yes, I use a lot of : great, well done,( was it bravo?) and do not ever say no, you can always find something positive, even if they make mistakes.*

Las estrategias que han aprendido hace unos once / doce años estaban en un contexto para principiantes absolutos y es interesante ver que algunos de ellos los han utilizado para nivel avanzado ya que eran actividades pertinentes y motivadoras. El fomento de las cuatro habilidades debería ser el objetivo principal de cualquier lección, hecho que está estrechamente relacionado con la pregunta anterior sobre VAK y Gardner.

La pregunta 4 está relacionada con la esencia del proceso de aprendizaje : ¿qué esperabas aprender y que es lo que has aprendido?, y está estrechamente relacionada con la pregunta número 5 , ya que serían los objetivos del profesor : ¿qué deben los estudiantes saber al final de la lección? Esta es la razón por la cual nos hemos unido a estas contribuciones:

- *Overall, I found the whole Unknown Language element very interesting and useful - it was one of the most enjoyable parts of the course.*
- *Also, I still remember some basic vocabulary, very basic thanks to efficient teaching.*
- *I get away with the sense of satisfaction for being able to follow the lesson and participate. And the objectives were to teach us some vocabulary and expressions to get by if we ever go to Croatia. I am sure we would.*

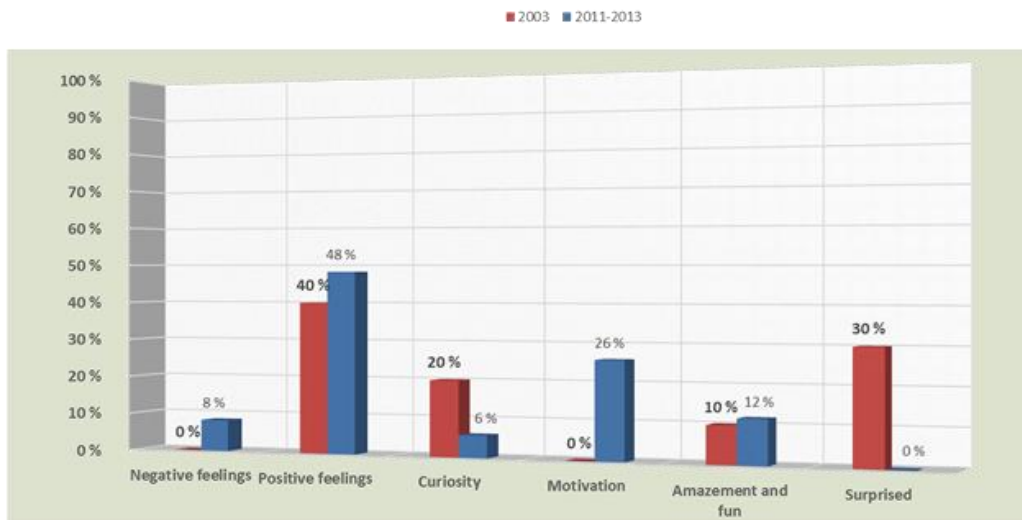
- *I realized that it is an amazing experience that my future/ current students are going to/ have experience(d), so I relaxed and got away with some simple expressions, greetings, and how to introduce yourself.*
- *I remember studying Vygotsky whilst completing my teacher training and I often thought about the ULE as a great example of scaffolding: creating an environment that allows a student to operate at their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). If you had introduce too much language, we would have been overwhelmed; similarly, too little and we would have been bored. You pitched the ULE perfectly to our needs and behavior.*

Algunos estudiantes recuerdan más lo que aprendieron y otros recuerdan más por qué han aprendido, pero es importante mencionar que dominan el proceso de aprendizaje apoyado en la teoría de andamiaje y en la necesidad de los alumnos de que se sientan apreciados por su contribución en las clases.

Es importante destacar, como hemos visto en la contribución de los estudiantes, que si investigamos un fenómeno complejo como el aprendizaje de idiomas, significa que como un método de investigación no podemos utilizar un solo método , ya que sería un fracaso para mostrar en plena luz de los datos.

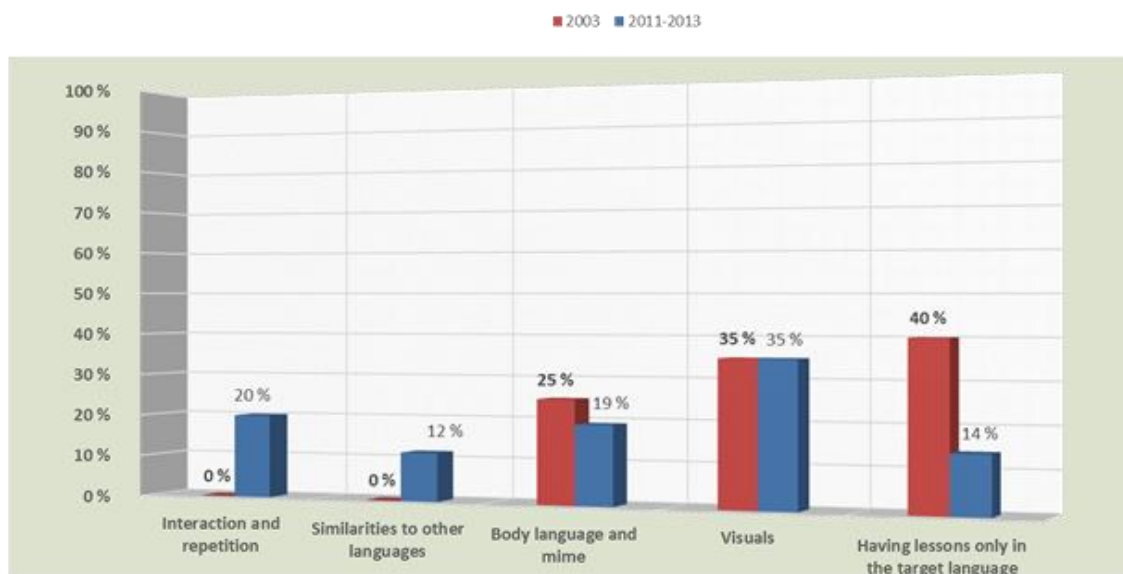
Hemos aprendido que el alumno conoce la teoría detrás del proceso de aprendizaje , y lo más importante que se va a utilizar y / o lo han utilizado . Ya que no podemos separar el aprendizaje de la enseñanza, los maestros realmente solo pueden considerarse competentes si son conscientes de la complejidad del aprendizaje. Nuestros estudiantes pueden hacerlo solo si reflexionan sobre el proceso de aprendizaje y gracias a la ULE hemos descubierto expectativas, creencias , estilos de aprendizaje , sentimientos y supuestos sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras de los alumnos.

Aquí presentamos las gráficas comparativas de los datos de 2003- 2014/ 2015 con los de 2011- 2013.



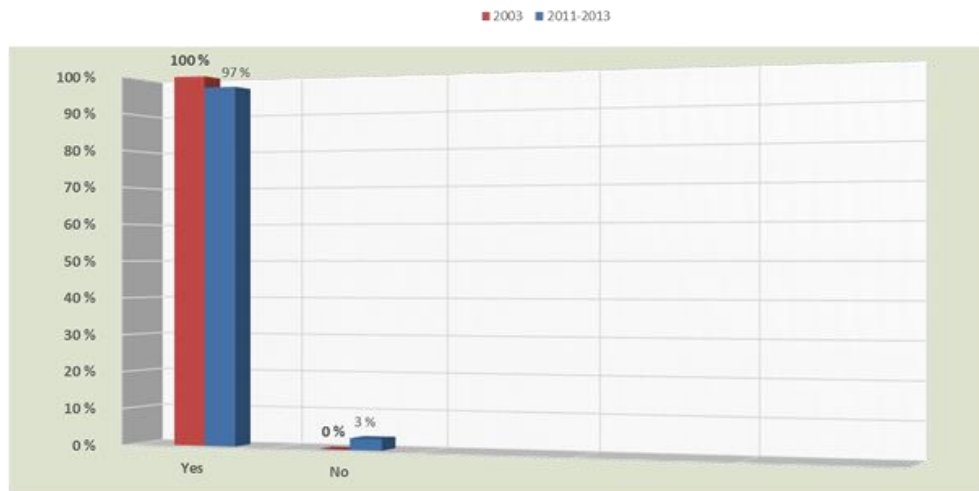
Gráfica 10. P 1: Análisis comparativo de los dos periodos de investigación

Para la pregunta 1 en ambos períodos de tiempo se muestran sentimientos positivos que representan casi el 50 % , y otro rasgo común son los sentimientos de asombro y diversión ( 10% y 12%). .Para la pregunta 2, la respuesta más popular en ambos casos (35%) es que son alumnos que utilizan factores visuales como estrategia de aprendizaje, seguidos por el lenguaje corporal y la mímica ( 25 % y 19 % ) , respectivamente.



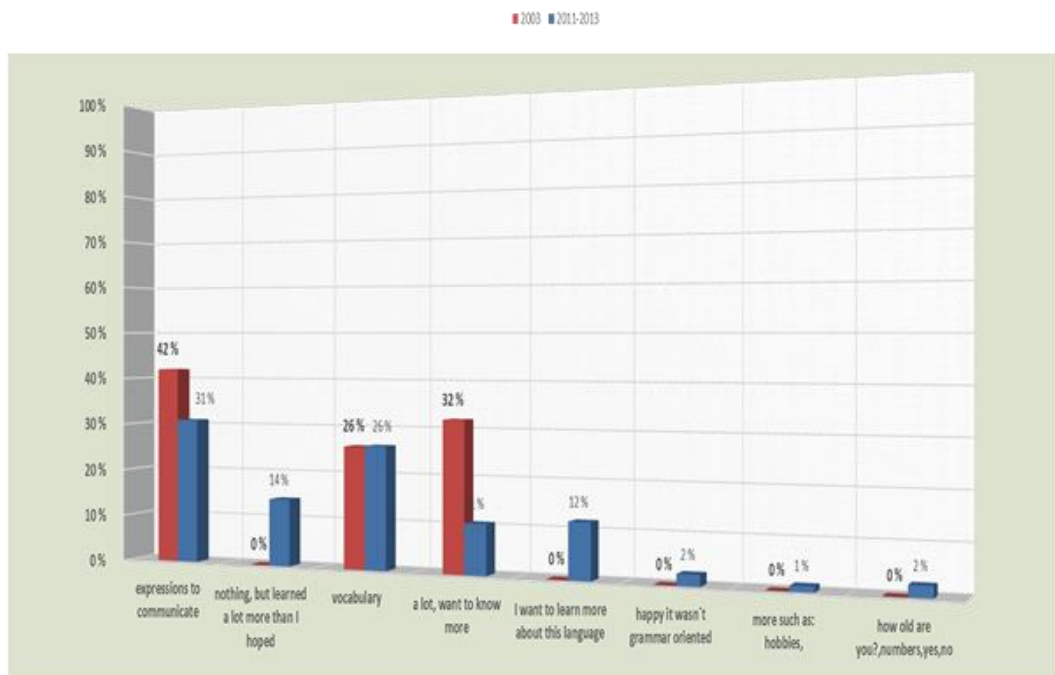
Gráfica 11.P 2: Análisis comparativo de los dos periodos de investigación

Para la pregunta 3 ambas ULE muestran que los futuros profesores van a utilizar las estrategias con una ligera diferencia de 3 % en el caso de 2011- 2013 .



Gráfica 12 .P 3: Análisis comparativo de los dos periodos de investigación

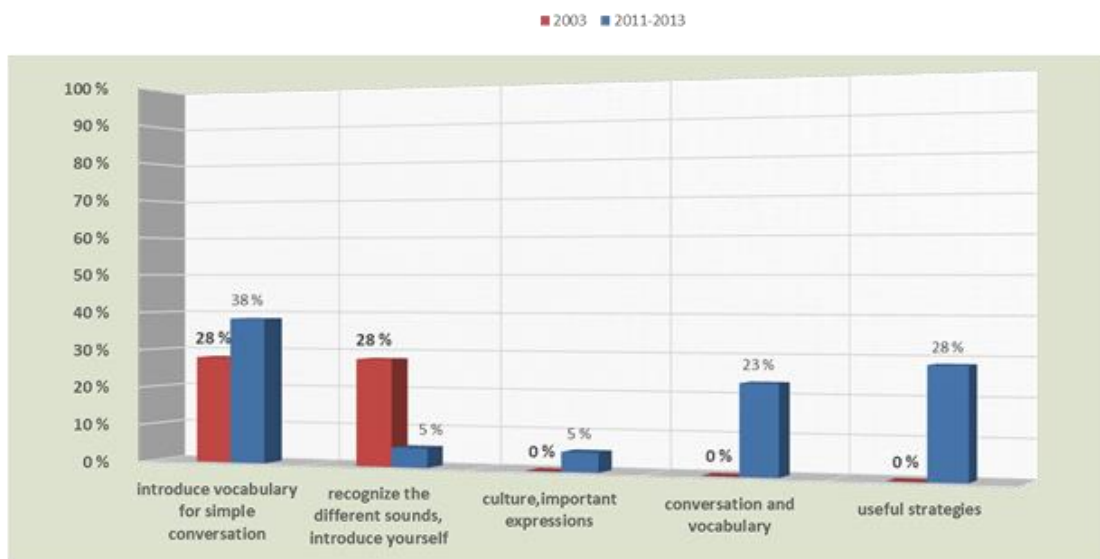
La pregunta cuatro nos muestra que el vocabulario en ambos casos fue la misma respuesta. También podemos afirmar que las expresiones para comunicarse obtuvo resultados similares con una diferencia de solamente casi 10 puntos.



Gráfica 13. P 4: Análisis comparativo de los dos periodos de investigación



La pregunta 5 nos muestra qué objetivos fueron percibido por los alumnos : la introducción del vocabulario de una simple conversación tienen casi los mismos resultados con diferencia de 10 puntos ( 28 % y 38 % ) .



Gráfica 14. P 5: Análisis comparativo de los dos periodos de investigación

Aquí mencionamos de nuevo el aspecto de la motivación y el aprendizaje y lo relacionamos con la pregunta de Gardner y Lambert: " ¿Cómo es que algunas personas pueden aprender una segunda lengua o lengua extranjera de manera fácil y hacerlo bien , mientras que otros , dado lo que parecen las mismas oportunidades de aprender , resultará casi imposible? " (1972 : 130 ) .

La respuesta a esta pregunta sigue abierta, porque hay una necesidad de medirlo y dividirlo en varios componentes. En cuanto a la motivación y los aspectos positivos de la ULE aquí están algunos comentarios de nuestros estudiantes de 2011:

- *create communicative situations, forced or not./use a litter higher level of the target language/ no L1/ we integrated quickly in the lesson and started participating without realizing it. / how to deduce meaning from mime, repetition and visual aid / now I understand why I have some*

*lack in knowledge in some subjects and I know now how I want to teach /the importance of context/ correction and praise with tact/ stimulate curiosity and interest/.*

Por otra parte , los alumnos no solo participan , sino que también han reflexionado sobre la experiencia , que es algo que ellos no fueron capaces de hacer cuando aprendieron su primer segundo idioma, y en este caso la experiencia de una lengua desconocida está dirigido a futuros profesores de inglés durante su periodo de entrenamiento:

- *Now, I can understand why I have some lack of knowledge in some subjects and now I know how I want to teach. I have had different experiences with methodologies. Now, I know that are different and easier ways to learn a new language."/I think that you as a student have an opportunity to experience the first steps to learning a new language a short beginner's course may either motivate or demotivate students."/It was interesting. I learned from the student's point of view, which methodology is more useful to start teaching a brand new language, and which one is not so useful"*

La mejor forma de entender el proceso de aprendizaje es ser una parte de ello y observar, con el fin de sacar el máximo provecho de la experiencia. Mitchell *et al.* explican la importancia de la comprensión de la segunda lengua en mayor medida , ya que puede ayudar no solo el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras , sino también el aprendizaje en general y nos podría dar una idea más precisa sobre el cerebro humano ( 2013: x ).

La ULE se puede reproducir fácilmente en cualquier contexto de enseñanza no solo en el L2. Debido a la participación en el experimento de aprendizaje de idiomas, los futuros profesores han tenido una oportunidad sin igual para examinar la aptitud, el interés, la motivación y para evaluar los conceptos sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza. La oportunidad es única ya que nos permite ser capaces de observarse a sí mismo y a sus compañeros de clase. El aprendizaje de un idioma desconocido debe ser una parte obligatoria de cualquier formación docente y una parte de los cursos de metodología en las facultades de formación de profesorado. La ULE debe

ser una implementación de éxito y / o la herramienta de esta solución oportuna para mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras.

## 5. CONCLUSIONES

Nuestros objetivos fueron llevados a cabo a través de la interpretación de las respuestas dadas por los alumnos que participaron en los distintos periodos de la investigación. Por esta razón podemos afirmar que hemos tenido una intención de aclarar las cuestiones relacionadas con la práctica reflexiva y la enseñanza/aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros con el fin de influir en la enseñanza de la metodología actual en la ULPGC, donde la ULE no es una parte del plan de estudios obligatorios en el Grado en Lenguas Modernas. El marco conceptual se ha descrito mediante la investigación sobre el aprendizaje en la enseñanza general y de idiomas, en particular, con especial énfasis en la práctica reflexiva crítica y la investigación-acción (AR). Las preguntas elegidas en el cuestionario distribuido entre los alumnos que participaron en la ULE tienen una estrecha relación con la motivación, el interés y las estrategias de enseñanza/aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua (ESL). El método elegido de la investigación fue la propia lección por ser la herramienta más adecuada para investigar el fenómeno de aprendizaje de idiomas, seguido de un cuestionario semiestructurado, sesiones de retroalimentación y diario. En cuanto a la validez, una vez que hicimos el experimento y analizamos los datos, pudimos concluir que en efecto existe una correlación entre los objetivos, las preguntas de la investigación y la validez del experimento.

Los participantes de la ULE han considerado la experiencia como muy valiosa y significativa a pesar de la tensión inicial de la situación y algunos rasgos de desaliento al principio. El objetivo del proyecto no era aprender croata, el idioma desconocido, sino analizar y reflexionar sobre las emociones y sentimientos acerca de la experiencia de aprendizaje de uno, para observar tanto buenas y malas prácticas, y aprender de ellos.

El proyecto podría haber causado frustración entre los sujetos, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que estábamos enseñando a adultos que son principalmente competitivos, pero esto no es necesariamente malo. Si se sienten frustrados los alumnos, entonces ellos van a saber cómo sus estudiantes se sentirán si no pueden comunicarse o responder a preguntas en clase. Por lo tanto, el trabajo del profesor es tratar de encontrar formas y técnicas para llevar el nivel de frustración al punto más bajo. Si los instructores de idiomas son conscientes del desánimo durante las sesiones, tienen que ser capaz de convertir esta situación en una experiencia positiva. La cuestión más importante es ser capaz de identificar los sentimientos del alumnado y responder inmediatamente.

Por lo tanto, hemos tratado de no influir en las respuestas de los estudiantes tanto como pudimos, evitando cualquier referencia a la subjetividad hacia la experiencia, pero fue imposible debido a las preguntas que nos hemos preguntado.

En cuanto a la comparación de los datos del primer y del segundo periodo podemos afirmar que los resultados son muy similares lo que se puede ver en las gráficas.

## 6. POSIBLES AREAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN EL FUTURO

Estas son algunas recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones:

1. La experiencia ULE debe tener un esquema más claro e incluir más preguntas con respecto a la experiencia de aprendizaje.
2. Debe haber una sesión de retroalimentación mucho más larga después de cada sesión donde los alumnos pudieran discutir las experiencias, compartir ideas y reflexiones.
3. Los diarios reflexivos deben hacerse públicos mediante sesiones informativas con todos los alumnos, como una forma de la base de datos colaborativa de experiencias, sentimientos y reflexiones.
4. Los diarios y las preguntas debe ser más detallados.

5. El investigador principal debe haber sido el que ha comentado sus contribuciones en el diario y no el profesor de la asignatura.
6. Debemos establecer un diálogo más largo y más profundo con los sujetos de la ULE durante y después de la experiencia.
7. Hacer la misma comparación con los alumnos de los años 2011- 2013, preguntarles las mismas preguntas para comprobar la validez y la eficacia del ULE.

Una de las razones principales para la realización de este estudio ha sido demostrar cómo una experiencia de ser un estudiante de lenguas extranjeras es válida. Por otra parte, es importante destacar que el propio experimento puede ser fácilmente reproducido en la enseñanza de clases de cursos de formación, siempre y cuando el idioma que vamos a utilizar como un idioma de destino no tiene similitudes con la lengua materna del alumnado. Por lo tanto invitamos al lector a hacer el experimento y compartir y comparar los resultados. Aquí nos referimos de nuevo a nuestras preguntas de investigación:

1. ¿Qué tan efectivo es práctica reflexiva (CRP) en el entrenamiento crítico maestro?
2. ¿Cómo es válida CRP como una ayuda para los estudiantes de magisterio para convertirse en un mejor y más eficiente, los profesionales?
3. ¿Qué puede el potencial de la Experiencia Desconocido Idioma (ULE) estar en los cursos de formación del profesorado para la promoción de los profesores como profesionales reflexivos?

La Crítica reflexiva (CRP) es una herramienta eficaz en curso de capacitación docente como hemos visto después de analizar los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Los estudiantes han apreciado el experimento y nos han presentado sólo sentimientos positivos, al igual que con el deseo de usar las mismas estrategias y han sido capaces de analizar por qué han aprendido algo o por qué no han aprendido algo en el pasado.

Para nosotros la parte más valiosa son las contribuciones de los diarios ya que nuestra investigación ha sido cualitativa, sobre todo. Hemos descubierto que los estudiantes dominan algún conocimiento sólido sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza, y que utilizan la terminología correcta en ambos períodos de investigación. Hemos sido gratamente sorprendidos por los detalles dados y por el conocimiento y reflexión sobre el aprendizaje de idiomas y la enseñanza en general.

Podemos confirmar que la ULE es una ayuda valiosa para los docentes en formación para convertirse en profesionales más eficientes, ya que el pensamiento y el análisis del proceso de enseñanza / aprendizaje sólo puede beneficiar tanto a los profesores cuanto a los alumnos hacia una educación más centrada en el alumno.

Para terminar este resumen hemos elegido la contribución de un alumno del año 2003 que en 2014/15 nos escribe esto en el diario:

*The teacher (you) made EXCELLENT use of paralinguistics, particularly with smiles and thumbs up to encourage our enthusiasm. This helped to combat inertia or trepidation about speaking in a foreign language. I'm sure you exploited our boisterous willingness to impress you by dividing us into teams and allocating points, thus giving us an incentive to participate in the activities. I'm sure there was some kind of random questioning too, meaning that I, as the learner, had to stay alert to what was happening. Staying alert most of the time for you have used Croatian and not a word of English (how did you do that?, you did not even use good or no mind slips.) I did learn a lot, because of this, use only the target language it is the key. (Q4.2014/15.D)*

Esta cita resume perfectamente los objetivos principales de este proyecto actual: ULE es válida y necesaria en cualquier programa de formación de profesores y especialmente para profesores de lenguas extranjeras. Este estudiante es hoy en día un profesor de Inglés secundaria en Escocia y después de doce años de experiencia que recuerda muchos detalles y es capaz de reflexionar y analizar el proceso de enseñanza / aprendizaje. Mi parte favorita de esta contribución es su asombro al apreciar que no he pronunciado ni una sola palabra en inglés incluso un

pequeño desliz. Y sobre todo la enseñanza como él ha puesto énfasis que impartir las clases en el idioma que se enseña es la clave.

