

Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Students with Down Syndrome: A case study



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SPANISH SUMMARY / RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

En el campo de lingüística aplicada, los estudios sobre la adquisición y aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera se han visto incrementados en las últimas décadas. Así mismo, esta oleada de investigaciones ha hecho que otras áreas se unan y cobren protagonismo, como es el caso la Educación Especial e Inglés.

Desafortunadamente, todavía hay personas con necesidades especiales que han sido privadas del aprendizaje e investigación de esta lengua, como es el caso de individuos con síndrome de Down (SD). Aunque es cierto que profesionales han investigado la relación entre el bilingüismo, la adquisición simultánea de dos lenguas, y el síndrome de Down (Woll & Grove 1996; Feltmate & Bird 2008; Edgin et al. 2011), no sucede lo mismo con el posterior aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. La razón por la cual este tipo de investigaciones sea impopular o casi inexistente es debido a la restricción del aprendizaje de una sola lengua, ya que normalmente se negaba el estudio de dos lenguas a personas con síndrome de Down (Feltmate & Bird 2008). En relación con la práctica docente, numerosas investigaciones y teorías se han centrado solamente en la adquisición de la primera lengua entre los estudiantes con SD (Burgoyne et al. 2012; DSAWM 2010), concluyendo que, aparentemente, el uso de medios visuales, repeticiones y actividades motivadoras son las estrategias pedagógicas más efectivas. Es importante mencionar que no se han encontrado referencias sobre el uso de actividades que promueven la construcción de diferentes identidades como puede ser las actividades de dramatización de roles.

Por este motivo, esta investigación tiene tres objetivos principales: 1) Examinar la adquisición de vocabulario de la materia de inglés como lengua extranjera por parte de

estudiantes con síndrome de Down; 2) Averiguar cuáles son las preferencias de dichos alumnos en relación al estudio del inglés; 3) Facilitar medios y técnicas pedagógicas para la enseñanza de vocabulario en dicha lengua extranjera. La hipótesis principal consiste en la existente capacidad de aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera que estos estudiantes tienen si se les aplica un enfoque de metodologías mixtas con la consiguiente adaptación de la labor docente, teniendo en cuenta sus habilidades. Los resultados obtenidos en esta investigación demuestran que algunos de los alumnos participantes en el estudio han visto incrementado el aprendizaje de contenidos específicos de las sesiones.

Por consiguiente, y con la finalidad de cumplir los propósitos mencionados anteriormente, se distribuyeron a un grupo de estudiantes con síndrome de Down dos tipos de cuestionarios: pre-cuestionario y post-cuestionarios. El primero tenía la motivación de averiguar las opiniones y preferencias de los participantes en relación con el estudio del inglés y su actitud hacia dicha lengua. Tras los resultados de este primer cuestionario y acorde a las preferencias de los alumnos, se decidió que el tema principal de las sesiones sería el de los viajes, el cual permitió introducir diferentes subtemas tales como la ropa y los lugares. Posteriormente, el segundo cuestionario ofrecía la posibilidad a los participantes de expresar cómo se sintieron durante las sesiones y si tenían sugerencias para mejorar en el futuro. Además, se diseñaron cinco sesiones en las que se emplearon diferentes materiales para proporcionar los contenidos como hojas de ejercicios o tarjetas con imágenes. Para poder comparar el grado de aprendizaje y la evolución que los alumnos pudieran tener, se les administró el primer día un pre-test que permitió saber qué conocimientos tenían sobre el tema sin haberlo estudiado previamente.

Después de que todos los contenidos fueran cubiertos, se les proporcionó un segundo test, post-test, el cual se comprendía de dos bloques: comprensión y producción. El primer grupo contenía los mismos ejercicios que el pre-test, en cambio, los ejercicios del segundo bloque fueron añadidos para medir la capacidad de producción de los alumnos.

Por otro lado, las metodologías empleadas para el diseño de este estudio y la recogida de datos fueron las siguientes: observación e investigación-acción. El primer método facilitó algunas características de los alumnos que no fueron proporcionadas por la institución en la que estaban escolarizados, debido a la Ley de Protección de Datos, además de poder observar los patrones de aprendizaje y la interacción entre los estudiantes. En relación al segundo método, investigación-acción, proporcionó la mayoría de los datos y resultados relevantes a esta investigación, como puede ser el caso de que las actividades donde se requiere la construcción de identidades resultó ser beneficiosa y una herramienta para enseñar expresiones.

Además, la realización de esta investigación ha consistido en tres sesiones de observación y la impartición práctica de cinco sesiones de la materia de inglés como lengua extranjera en el programa Promotor de la fundación PRODIS, dedicada a mejorar algunos aspectos de la vida de personas con discapacidad intelectual. El número de participantes fue de cuatro estudiantes con síndrome de Down, tres mujeres y un hombre, de edades comprendidas entre los 22 y 24 años.

Los resultados de la presente investigación, teniendo en cuenta la limitación del número tan reducido de participantes, muestran que el uso de recursos de apoyo visual facilita el aprendizaje de vocabulario de la lengua inglesa, como también la recurrencia a utilizar la primera lengua, en este caso el español, para un mejor entendimiento de la

terminología y expresiones inglesas. Asimismo, se ha observado que las actividades más motivadoras son las que requieren interacción entre los compañeros. Por otra parte y como se ha visto anteriormente, los ejercicios que fomentan la construcción de identidades son beneficiosos para estos estudiantes por diversas razones. Por otro lado, se pudo concluir que los ejercicios propuestos deberán tener una tarea por enunciado, ya que se ha visto que la mayoría de los estudiantes no realizó el segundo ejercicio dentro de una actividad debido a un posible olvido por la longitud de dicho enunciado. Por tanto, se concluye que el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera es posible en estudiantes con SD, apoyando la idea de Buckley (2002) que afirma que los alumnos con SD son capaces de aprender una segunda lengua.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	9
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	12
2.1. Down syndrome	12
2.1.1. First Language Cognitive and Linguistic Profile of DS.....	14
2.1.2. Bilingualism in Down Syndrome Individuals	18
2.2. Special Education Policies	20
2.2.1. The Salamanca Statement.....	20
2.2.2. Overview of the Changes in the Spanish Special Education Policies	21
2.2.3. Special or Mainstream Schools? The Role of Inclusive Education	22
2.3. Learning Approaches and Methodologies	24
2.3.1. Communicative Approach.....	26
2.3.2. The PPP Model (Present, Practise and Production)	26
2.3.3. Grammar Translation Method.....	27
2.3.4. Habit Formation Theory and Classroom Routines.....	28
2.3.5. Errorless Learning (EL).....	29
2.3.6. One to One Approach.....	29
2.3.7. Learner-Centred Approach.....	30
2.3.8. Task-based.....	32
2.4. A Possible Selves Approach to Motivation	32
3. METHOD SECTION	35
3.1. Type of study	35
3.2. Preliminary Stage	37

3.3. Setting and Procedure	38
3.4. Participants	39
3.5. Data Gathering Process	40
3.5.1. Lesson plans	40
3.5.2. Worksheets and Homework	42
3.5.2.1. Worksheets	42
3.5.2.2. Worksheet One	43
3.5.2.3. Worksheet Two	45
3.5.2.4. Worksheet Three	47
3.5.2.5. Worksheet Four	49
3.5.2.6. Homework	51
3.5.2.7. Homework One	51
3.5.2.8. Homework Two	52
3.5.2.9. Homework Three	53
3.5.3. The Test	55
3.5.3.1. Pre-test	55
3.5.3.2. Post-test	58
3.5.4. The Questionnaires	59
3.5.4.1. Pre-questionnaire	59
3.5.4.2. Post-questionnaire	62
3.5.5. Class Blog	64
3.5.6. Rubric of Marks	64
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	66

4.1. Worksheets	66
4.2. Homework	67
4.3. Pre-test and Post-test	68
4.4. Pre-questionnaire	72
4.5. Post-questionnaire	74
4.6. OverallResult and Discussion	76
5. CONCLUSION	77
6. REFERENCES	80
7. APPENDIX	86

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing interest in the field of English as second or foreign language learning has heightened the need of widening the scope to other grounds, as this language has acquired a crucial role in society. In this regard, studies dealing with the area of Special Education (SE henceforth) and English have been flourishing during the last decades (Cummins 1989; Buckley 2002; DeWitt 2012; de Valenzuela et al. 2016). Despite the amount of research in SE, more research is needed, as DeWitt (2012)¹ highlights: “Special education has come a long way since legislation in the 70's but it still has a long way to go”.

More specifically, Down syndrome (DS henceforth) is a particular disorder that has been specially neglected by research. Some studies dealing with this type of students have only concentrated on the issue of bilingualism² (Woll & Grove 1996; Feltmate & Bird 2008; Edgin et al. 2011). Besides, fewer investigations have been devoted to the study of second language learning (SL henceforth) by Down syndrome students (Buckley, 2002). Consequently, the study of a foreign language (FL henceforth) by DS learners has been neglected due to the negative counselling given to families to prevent these individuals from learning another language. This might be one reason why this particular field is under-researched. As Feltmate & Bird (2008: 6) point out, “some professionals counsel families to restrict input to a single language for children with DS because there are delays present even when only one language is being learned.”

Bearing this in mind, the notion of inclusion of students with special needs is of great importance, and institutions have been promoting the right to participate in the

¹ Retrieved from:

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2012/12/special_education_a_delicate_balance_between_educating_enabling.html

² Bilingualism is understood here as the simultaneous acquisition of two languages in a naturalistic context.

educational and social community. For instance, in the Statute of Students of 1997³ from the Complutense University of Madrid, “social inclusion is promoted among those students who have some sort of physical and/or mental disability” (chapter VI, Article 21).

Regarding teaching practice, several investigations and theories have focused on first language methodology among DS learners (DSAWM 2010; Burgoyne et al. 2012) in which visual resources, repetition and motivating activities are apparently the most effective teaching strategies. However, there are no references or practical activities in the literature advising the use of identity construction activities such as role play.

Thus, the aim of this research is threefold:

- (1) To examine the acquisition of English vocabulary as a foreign language by Down syndrome students.
- (2) To discover what DS students’ preferences are towards English learning.
- (3) To provide instructors with some resources and teaching techniques for English vocabulary teaching to DS learners.

In order to meet these objectives, a series of research questions have been proposed:

- (1) Will visual support be effective in teaching contents?
- (2) Will the use of the L1 be a beneficial teaching technique?
- (3) Is there any kind of activities and/or content that motivates these students more?
- (4) Are activities that involve identity construction favourable for them?

In addition, the entire investigation revolves around the following hypotheses:

³ Retrieved from: <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/3-2013-09-19-Estatuto%20del%20Estudiante.pdf>

- (1) DS students can learn English as a FL if there is a mixed methodology approach and the teaching practice is adapted to their abilities.
- (2) DS students will be more motivated in learning English if their preferences are considered in the design and plan of the class.
- (3) Activities that involve trying out identities, such as role-play, will have a positive effect on content learning.

In order to seek for an answer to the previous issues, two questionnaires, a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire (see Appendix One), were distributed to DS students attending 5 English sessions, and a series of contents and activities were planned and designed on the basis of these questionnaires (see Appendix Two). In addition, a set of lesson plans containing the procedure of the session was also created (see Appendix Three). Moreover, two tests (see Appendix Four), a pre-test and a post-test, were taken so as to measure the learning of the contents and to spot possible difficult learning areas. The later feedback given to the students according to how they performed on the final test and during the session can be found as a rubric (See Appendix Five). As well, a class blog and an observation check list was used during the five sessions (see Appendix Six).

Lastly, the paper has adopted the approach of classroom research and it will be organized into four sections. To begin with, the theoretical framework provides an overview of the relevant literature and clarifications of key notions about Down syndrome, policies, methodology and motivation. After that, the method section offers a description of how the research has been carried out as well as the participants involved and the materials used during the investigation. Finally, the last section deals with the

results analysis and their discussion, hence attempting to provide an answer to the above mentioned research questions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Down syndrome

The most common genetic disorder found in people is Down syndrome, also known as Trisomy 21. This disorder is caused because there is an extra copy of the chromosome 21, that is, individuals with DS have 47 chromosomes instead of the 46 presented in any human body. Within this condition, there are three different categories of Down syndrome (Ndss.org 2017a⁴):

- Trisomy 21: it is the most common case of Down syndrome (95% of cases). This results before or during the procreation in that the egg or the sperm cannot separate a pair of 21st chromosomes. Therefore, the extra chromosome is copied in every cell of the embryo.
- Mosaicism: this type is the least common among Down syndrome people (only 1% of cases). It occurs when two types of cells are mixed in which there can be 46 chromosomes and 47 chromosomes in others.
- Translocation: it is present in 4% of the cases. In this regard, the total number of chromosomes remains the same, that is, 46. Nevertheless, one extra copy, partial or total, of chromosome 21 is linked to chromosome 14.

This disability has some physical and cognitive characteristics common among

⁴ Retrieved from: <http://www.ndss.org/Down-Syndrome/What-Is-Down-Syndrome/>

DS people. Focusing on the work by Madrigal-Muñoz (2005: 9), who outlines some of the physical features shared by most of the DS community, it can be identified that they have a small and plain nose, slanted eyes, and their tongue is bigger than the oral cavity, among others. Moreover, another important characteristic is that the shape of their hands may pose difficulties when writing. Priosti et al. (2013: 279) highlight that DS individuals might encounter difficulties with their hands: “some authors mention small and thick hands, with short fingers and an arched little fingers, which could cause some difficulties in manipulative activities”. These physical features might have an effect on the learning process. For instance, Buckley (1993) acknowledges that they have some difficulties regarding intelligibility due to the physiognomy of their speech organs.

In relation to identity and group membership, children with Down syndrome have been stereotyped, and some professionals have identified some of the misconceptions about people with DS, as follows: “they are widely viewed as children who are not too bright but nevertheless happy and docile, who love music and are very affectionate, and who fit easily into family life” (Wishart 2001: 48).

In Spain, a decreasing tendency has been observed about the births of babies with Down syndrome. According to Down21⁵, during the years comprised during 1976 to 1980 there were 15 births with DS for every 10,000. Currently, from 2011 to 2012 these were 5,51 out of 10,000 births (Muñoz, 2005; El Mundo, 2008; El País, 2008; *ibid.* 2016). The reason behind this is that abortion is permitted in this country since 2006, so women who are told that their unborn baby has Down syndrome prefer to stop their pregnancy (El Mundo, 2008; El País, 2008). However, explicit arguments about this

⁵ Retrieved from: <http://www.down21.org/informacion-basica/40-el-sindrome-de-down-una-vision-globalizadora/2898-datos-estadisticos-en-el-sindrome-de-down.html>

decision have not been found in any source of information although it can be speculated from what was read that families are not well informed about the medical, educational and societal advances that have been occurred during the last decade concerning people with disabilities.

Also relevant is the kind of language employed when referring to people with intellectual impairments. It is very common to see debates about this issue but it is also essential to raise awareness of the kind of language used when addressing the syndrome itself and the people affected by it. For instance, “In 2013 the Social Security Administration announced they were replacing the term “mental retardation” with “intellectual disability” in their Listing of Impairments used to evaluate claims and involving mental disorders” (Jacob & Sikora, 2015: 21; Ndss.org 2017b). Equally important, Down syndrome is a condition, genetic disorder and/or syndrome and should not be regarded as a disease. Therefore, people do not “suffer from” DS but “have” DS. As well, an individual has Down syndrome instead of Down’s syndrome and it is recommended to avoid the spelling “Downs” and/or “Down’s”.

2.1.1. First Language Cognitive and Linguistic Profile of DS

Regarding Down syndrome’s cognitive profile, it is worth mentioning that in these individuals working memory is affected due to their genetic disability. The work by Jarrold & Baddeley (2001) will serve as a basis for a detailed clarification of working memory in DS individuals.

First, the average number of items to retain in memory is 7, although this number is even lower for people with DS. However, it is important to consider that memory can

be of different types, that is, there is also visual memory in which “the individuals’ visual-spatial short-term memory is relatively unimpaired, in contrast to their verbal short-term memory performance” (Jarrold & Baddeley 2001: 18). Possible explanations about their poor performance in short-memory might be due to their physical impairments, that is, hearing loss and speech articulation problems. In this vein, memory is an essential faculty for language learning, thus this notion needs to be taken into account when teaching DS students. Besides, the working memory span can differ among DS people, as there are cases reported of individuals with a higher span than others.

As has been mentioned before, DS individuals encounter some difficulties in acquiring their first language due to their disability. Therefore, the problems encountered during the acquisition of the L1 will influence the learning process and pace of these children. Chapman (1997: 307) highlights this notion as follows: “As the genes on chromosome 21 that are related to retardation⁶ and language development are identified, our understanding of the biological-behavioural links affecting children’s learning, problem solving and language development will increase dramatically”. Despite this complex process of acquisition, children with DS not only have weaknesses but also strengths in relation to learning skills (Buckley 1993; Rondal 1995; Chapman 1997; Polišenská & Kapalková 2014). As will be further explained below, DS students seem to perform better in reading and vocabulary comprehension rather than production and syntax.

Firstly, the study by Rondal (1995) will be taken as the core work in order to outline the linguistic profile of individuals with Down syndrome due to the work’s

⁶ The preferred term in this context is disability, as advised in the literature.

exhaustive description. Taking phonology and the production of sounds, toddlers with Down syndrome start babbling at the same stage as any other child, but there are delays when DS infants begin to talk (Chapman 1997). The speech difficulties that Down syndrome infants encounter are due to the physiognomy of their speech organs. Moreover, the knowledge of the way sounds are pronounced affects the skill of reading, which is named as phonological awareness. In this respect, individual differences have been seen in DS learners “although the majority of children with Down syndrome performed poorly on tasks of phonological awareness, some children demonstrated perfect scores” (Fletcher & Buckley 2002: 12).

In relation to the reading skill, it has been stated that reading comprehension is less affected in Down syndrome people. However, it is suggested that they employ other strategies for reading as they find it complex to use an alphabetic reading strategy. In turn, they seem, first, to rely on a logographic strategy and, then, an alphabetic and orthographic one (Fletcher & Buckley 2002: 11). Despite this, the benefits of reading in these children have ranged from an improvement of spelling competence to make them aware of the sounds of phonemes. Thus, this might suggest that phonological awareness remains in a close relationship with reading.

In line with reading, DS individuals have problems in mastering syntax and grammar in the first and last stages of acquisition. As Rondal (1995) claimed, their sentences are short and simple because, generally, neither verb tenses nor verb inflection appear to be right, leading to grammatical errors. According to Rondal (1995: 9), “there was less than one article per utterance and slightly over one inflection marking gender or

number on the noun phrase in two utterances”⁷. Many researchers on the issue claim that DS communication reminds of a telegraphic message (Rondal 1995; Buckley 2002). Besides, it is worth mentioning that DS infants might not face problems in understanding and producing active sentences, whereas in passive structures some difficulties might arise. It is true that these complex sentences are not fully mastered in unimpaired children until late, so in the case of children with language impairment, neither the sense nor the structure of passives is easy to grasp. As Fowler et al. (1994: 112) state, “overall, the combination of the syntactic measures employed reveal Down syndrome subjects to be at a level of simple phrase structure grammar”. In other words, a consequence of this simple grammar is the limited use of pronouns and closed class vocabulary. Nevertheless, Buckley (1993: 6) holds a positive view on the improvement and development of syntax as DS infants grow, as “the length of utterances produced increased with age for both the groups and the older children with Down’s⁸ syndrome showed continuing syntactic development up to 20 years of age”.

Lastly, vocabulary acquisition in DS people has been regarded as a strength due to the positive results of this kind of skill. Apparently, these students are very competent in the comprehension of the lexicon whereas production is likely to be delayed (Rondal 1995). However, Chapman (1997) highlights the similarity of vocabulary production among DS and typical developing children. Many critics on the issue identify that Down syndrome children perform better in closed-class vocabulary - pronouns, determiners, prepositions and so on - than open-class vocabulary - nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or verbs.

7 This was found in a conversational analysis of one of his previous studies, Rondal and Lambert (1983).

8 According to Ndss.org (2017) the preferred term is Down syndrome instead of Down’s or Down’s syndrome. Therefore, it is not the author intention to write Down’s.

It is necessary to comment that verbs have a particular characteristic in this disorder, as “individuals with DS may have difficulties accessing rather than comprehending verbs, despite being able to access event contexts and roles associated with the verb” (Loveall et al. 2016: 162). Despite the controversy and disagreement about verb development, it might be observed that the learning of nouns and other open-class vocabulary might be easier than verbs.

In order to strengthen these language abilities, many professionals have encouraged involving DS students in intervention programmes. These interventions, for instance, Chapman (1997: 310) claims, “support for hearing initiation of communicative requesting, and sufficient amount of input tuned to the child’s level”. As a consequence, the DS student will face a positive language improvement and will benefit from this programme. In the research by Burgoyne et al. (2016), the evidence of the effectiveness of intervention is of great matter and students showed positive outcomes in receptive language skills.

2.1.2. Bilingualism in Down Syndrome Individuals

Research in the field of second language learning in DS students has been limited, although some scholars have considered it as a matter of importance (Woll & Grove 1996; Feltmate & Bird 2008; Edgin et al. 2011). In order to seek the cause for this lack of studies, there is one argument that seems to be crucial, which is to neglect the learning of a second or foreign language by DS people due to the difficulties in their first language. In the work by Feltmate & Bird (2008: 6), this idea is stated when they claim that “some professionals counsel families to restrict input to a single language for children with DS

because there are delays present even when only one language is being learned”. Consequently, these experts advising not to learn another language might have forgotten the benefits that the learning of a second language has, such as an increment in motivation and self-esteem, possible reinforcement in difficulties in an L1, and socialization, among others.

In the first place, Woll & Grove (1996) present two DS bilingual twins that have been exposed to English and British Sign Language (BSL), as they were born from deaf parents and the latter was their second language. What is concluded in this research study is that the twins had a preference for spoken language rather than sign language, as they might find difficulties at coordinating words and gestures. As Woll & Grove state, “analyses of tests and spontaneous data reveal a high degree of fluency in gesture but impairment in both languages, suggesting that the fundamental problems of children with Down syndrome are not modality-specific and that there are discontinuities between gesture and language” (Woll & Grove 1996: 271).

Secondly, Feltmate & Bird (2008) hold a positive view on the learning of a second language and state that families and professionals should decide whether it is appropriate for a Down syndrome child to learn another language. Moreover, they strongly claim that evidence shows that learning a second language is not damaging to these Down syndrome students although “there was considerable variability in second language abilities among children with DS, which suggested that some children have more difficulty than others in acquiring two languages” (Feltmate & Bird 2008: 8). Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that some first language impairments may affect the learning of a second language. For instance, it might be the case that syntax and

grammar are the skills in which DS students might face more problems. What is more, the fact that there is a lack of a fixed pattern of these difficulties supports the notion that SL is not detrimental for Down syndrome youngsters. Therefore, with suitable input, teaching techniques and an appropriate methodology, they might experience a positive result in learning a second language.

2.2. Special Education Policies

2.2.1. The Salamanca Statement

The Salamanca Statement is the result of a congregation of 92 governments and 25 organizations organised by the Spanish government and the UNESCO and held in the city of Salamanca, in which the issue of Special Education was the leading matter. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of “the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with Special Educational Needs (SEN henceforth) within the regular education system” (UNESCO 1994: viii). In addition, the Statement encouraged the attendee governments to make the necessary changes in their laws and educational policies to offer a quality and inclusive education. Examples of these suggestions are taken from these two statements:

1. “Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs” (UNESCO 1994: viii)
2. “Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties” (UNESCO 1994: ix)

Therefore, The Salamanca Statement is the most exemplary international piece of work that claims for an inclusive education for disabled people in order to take part in mainstream education. After this convention, governments started considering this notion and implemented it in their countries of origin.

2.2.2. Overview of the Changes in the Spanish Special Education Policies.

As has been already mentioned in the introduction, the field of Special Education began around the 1970's. For the purpose of the present section, the work by Díaz Velázquez et al. (2012) will serve as basis to provide an overview of the changes made throughout the past years in the policies and educational laws concerning SE.

In the Spanish context, before 1970 people who appeared to have any kind of disability were separated from the educational life. During that decade until 1980, students having a certain disability were segregated and had to attend special schools, deprived of an ordinary school. However, the Spanish law 14/1970 entailed a radical change in that disabled students are now allowed to enrol in mainstream schools if they have a slight incapacity.

The period in which SE was most favourable was from the 1980's onwards. The Spanish Constitution devotes an article (art. 49) to claim for a policy for the integration, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of people with physical, sensorial and psychological disability. So that, they can receive the required specialised attention. Thus, during this decade Special Education was integrated into the Spanish educational system since special schools were established for students that could not take part in mainstream schools due to serious disability.

In addition, the idea that inclusive education is based on the notion of students' diversity and that the educational system must adapt to every learner was fostered during the 1990's. The previous idea that disabled students have to enrol in ordinary schools is preserved in the LOGSE, which was the former Spanish educational law. What is new within this area is that the educational guidance services need to evaluate the psycho-pedagogical abilities of the coming student.

Currently, the previous educational law was modified resulting into what is called LOMCE. Some changes included that students need to take an exam planned and designed by the government at the end of both primary and secondary education, whose results will be shown in their academic record. Down España (2013a) showed its disagreement and considered this law to be disadvantageous for DS students, as it does not pursue and encourage inclusive education. Besides, this law does not permit DS to reach a higher education due to the lack of opportunities that it gives these learners to take part in *Bachillerato*⁹ or professional training.

2.2.3. Special or Mainstream schools? The Role of Inclusive Education

The controversy about who should attend special or ordinary schools has been of great matter among the Spanish educational system laws and regulations. Hence, it is important to know what special schools are and who should attend them. First, according to the Spanish Constitution and subsequent educational laws such as LOE or LOGSE, Spanish special schools are private or state institutions that people who have a severe degree of disability should attend because a specialist has resolved that these cannot benefit from

⁹ The equivalent in English would be college.

and be integrated in the mainstream school due to the complex learning process that they might go through; so in this case, these individuals can have a specialised education. In addition, students with low or mild disability are encouraged to enrol in ordinary schools, as Spain is aiming for an inclusive education.

Consequently it seems fair to seek an answer to the following questions: what is inclusive education? What are its features? How to implement inclusion in the classroom?

First of all, according to Down España (2013b: 8), an inclusive education is the one that does not exclude anyone from its practice, offering the same possibilities and training to everyone. In this vein, inclusive education contributes to socialization among disabled and non-disabled students, who both benefit from each other in the educational and social area. Particularly, in the case of DS students, those that joined a mainstream programme showed some improvement of different skills such as communication and expressive language: “their receptive and expressive language is progressing at the same rate and that reading and writing is a specific strength and better than might have been predicted from their other language abilities” (Buckley et al. 2006: 56). Apart from this, Cambra & Silvestre (2003: 204) highlighted the importance of inclusion for SEN students’ identity, as it is positively developed in learners with disabilities although some differences between non-disabled students can be spotted: “The results show that special needs students have positive self-concept, although significantly lower than the rest of other students”.

Lastly, teachers are the key figure in the inclusive program, yet their classroom activities and teaching techniques can make a difference in including every pupil into the

educational community. To exemplify these practices, Down España (2013b: 12-14) lists some of the strategies that the teacher might implement in the class:

- Cooperative learning.
- Task-based or project-based learning.
- Specialised support inside the classroom.
- Community language learning.
- Curriculum accommodation plan.

2.3. Learning Approaches and Methodologies

It is widely acknowledged that the core of the learning of any subject relies on the approaches and methodologies used in the class. In this, these two concepts are intertwined; so an approach can be defined as “how people acquire their knowledge of the language and makes statements about the conditions which promote successful language learning (Harmer 2003: 78). Consequently, a methodology is the practical instruction of that particular approach (Harmer 2003).

As far as Down syndrome and education is concerned, it is essential to be aware of which are the most favourable and less useful teaching strategies for this type of students. Horstmeier (2004) provides a chapter dedicated to teaching strategies addressed to DS students, in which she describes the diverse methods through which DS students might accomplish the contents and some that should be avoided. It is admitted that Hoestmeier’s work deals with a different subject; nevertheless, the essence of any teaching strategy can be applied to other subjects and skills. After saying this and, especially, since one of the aims of this paper is to provide teaching techniques for the

subject of English as a foreign language, any advice on how to instruct certain contents would be also applied to the learning on English vocabulary, as there is a lack of research in this field. Firstly, the lessons should be adapted and targeted to promote their visual memory, as Down syndrome students “learn better by seeing actual objects or pictures of concepts rather than hearing someone talking about those concepts” (Horstmeier 2004: 20). Equally important is that the teacher should not request these students to copy a great amount of writing, as they get easily tired when holding the pencil (Priosti et al. 2013). Davis, Florian & Ainscow (2004) suggest that cooperative learning is a worthy teaching strategy that children with special educational needs benefit from, so that would be for DS as they are part of this group of children. Therefore and according to these authors, “the use of peers is a valuable resource either as part of a behaviour management programme (e.g. peer-monitoring) or peer-oriented intervention (e.g. buddy system)” (Davis, Florian & Ainscow 2004: 5).

Yet, this is of no exception in the current research, in which a mixed methodology approach was adopted so that the students can acquire the contents. As inferred from the literature (DSAWM, 2010; DSRFCANADA, 2013; Greenfield et al. 2016), the teaching practice used with the students in this research has adopted the following approaches and methodologies: Communicative approach, the PPP model, habit-formation and class routines, grammar translation, errorless learning, one-to-one approach, learner-centred and task-based. These will be briefly reviewed below. Nevertheless, not every aspect of the methods and approaches has been considered but only some of them due to the nature of the investigation.

2.3.1. Communicative Approach

First of all, providing an accurate definition of the communicative learning approach is a complex task due to the lack of agreement between experts on how to explain this approach, as “a recurrent comment about communicative language teaching is that nobody knows what it is” (Littlewood 2011: 541). However, for the purpose of this investigation, the chosen dimension regarding the communicative approach is interaction. Students are encouraged to engage into teamwork and cooperative learning in order to enhance communication and not to miss the contextual setting of the content. As a result, “learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning” (Richards 2005: 5). Moreover, while fluency is one of the main features of this approach, in the context of the presented study, the students were given support in that skill although the focus was on accuracy.

2.3.2. The PPP Model (Present, Practice and Production)

The initials of the PPP Model corresponds to the words: Present, Practice and Production. According to Richards (2005: 8), the first stage is to present and explain the topic and contents that will be covered in the class. Afterwards, the students will demonstrate if they have understood it. Then, the students practise the targeted structures while the teacher is controlling the setting. Finally, the students will be able to produce the patterns in a different context; normally this last stage is more learner-centred. This model emphasises the theory of skill learning and accuracy. However, it cannot be considered as a methodology as such but rather as a constituent of one (Ur 2012: 8). Researchers have criticised this method because they claim that students do not learn the functions of

language but the automatic output. What is more, with the PPP models students aim to acquire a class routine. In other words, the learners will acquire the procedure of the class as a routine, so that if they feel lost, they will engage more easily because they will know the flow of the class structure.

2.3.3. Grammar Translation Method

The Grammar Translation Method is one of the earliest developed in language teaching. It started approximately in the mid 1800's and it is still used in several countries despite criticism against this theory. Experts in the field such as Howatt (2004: 151) acknowledge that the reason for its unpopular and rejected application was the excessive implementation of the methodology. Thus, students felt overwhelmed as a consequence of the amount of memorization that this method implied. Nonetheless, there are some features that might positively influence the teaching practice and the learning process.

According to Richards & Rogers (2014: 6), grammar translation lays its foundations in several characteristics. A summary of them is provided below:

1. The use of the L1 helps to comprehend and produce the L2.
2. Parts of speech are presented in a wordlist format with their equivalent in the L1.
3. Accuracy is given much more importance than fluency, as this method is not focused on the oral but written production and comprehension of the L2.
4. The language of instruction is the native language and the class is teacher dominated.

As a matter of fact, the reason why this method was selected is due to the students' low level of English and their physical difficulties in producing the language orally. Therefore, it is believed that the use of the L1 as a medium of instruction might benefit the acquisition of the L2, so that the student will know the exact meaning of the lexis.

2.3.4. Habit Formation Theory and Classroom Routines

According to Ur (2012), this theory of language acquisition is based on the assumption that language is learnt implicitly. Thus with this model, language is considered to be a set of habits that students have to memorise and practise in order to be able to produce it correctly. Therefore, the students will produce an automatic output. The main teaching strategy is repetition and drilling, so that a habit is created by the repetitive production of the language.

Moreover, closely related to this type of theory are classroom routines. As indicated by their name, classroom routines are habits formed during certain number of sessions or during the whole course. An example could be that students will know that revision of previous contents will be the first task to do at the beginning of the class due to the repetition of these activities. There are a number of positive outcomes in using routines within a class, and one of them is the following: “clear classroom routines provide context that facilitates the use of social and academic language across the content areas” (Colombo 2012: 29).

These two notions are considered in the plan of the present research, as they lay their foundations on repetition, a strategy that benefits DS students when learning a

language (DSAWM 2010). The former provides learning strategies to these learners in order to perform successfully in the content learning. The latter gives them schedules so that they will follow the classes by means of repeating routines.

2.3.5. Errorless Learning (EL)

First, Errorless Learning is considered to be a teaching technique rather than a methodology or approach per se (Wilson 2009: 89). Its main aim is to make the learning process, as indicated by its name, to be errorless. Thus, instructors adapt their classes in a way that students are not led to make mistakes. In addition, this practice is known for its beneficial effects on people with memory impairments. As identified in the work by Fish et al. (2015: 162), “participants with severe memory impairment learned more items from word lists under errorless learning compared with an errorful control”. With this procedure, learners have the advantage that they are presented with the correct term or expression and they avoid the effort of recalling the right word. Consequently, they only have to memorise one item, which is offered in a way that they will not make any mistake.

In the context of this investigation, this teaching strategy has been selected due to the ease and the effortlessness of memorisation, as this ability is known to be mostly impaired in DS students.

2.3.6. One to One Approach

This type of approach is well known because of its individualised teaching. The main idea behind this method is that the teacher adjusts the contents and the materials used in

the sessions to the demands of the learner. It is acknowledged that this kind of teaching is usually aimed to one student per teacher, although it can be set for reduced groups. According to Kaye (2008), students' and teachers' relationships constantly evolves from teacher-centred to learner-centred and vice versa. As well, this author outlines several advantages in using this approach, and some of them are the following:

- The classes are designed according to students' needs.
- The students can decide the rhythm of the class and their objectives.
- The teacher seems more accessible as there is a low number of students, and these can ask more questions and their doubts might be better solved.
- Large groups' problems are left aside.

In this regard, Harris (1986: 18) makes an interesting point when he acknowledges that classes based on a one-to-one approach offer better feedback since this is personalized and the teacher can focus on specific learners' difficulties.

Hence, during the sessions of the current research, the teacher used this type of approach; as the students showed different needs and the educator had to offer a personalised teaching when required. Moreover, the low number of students favoured this one-to-one learning and teaching environment.

2.3.7. Learner-Centred Approach

Nowadays, teachers are shifting from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred one. This latter mode of instruction focuses on different characteristics, such as: (Harrison 2003; Mino 2004):

- The students' personal experiences and knowledge create the learning context, so this learning environment is affected by their interests, objectives, enthusiasm, belief and so forth.
- Learning is aimed to be critical and creative, thus strategies are designed according to this principle.
- Learning is seen as social practice.
- Learners' differences are taken into account.

Taking these features into account, the previously mentioned authors recognise that adopting a learner-centred approach is a helpful resource for both the teacher and the students. Consequently, "a shift to a more learner-centred approach, one that focuses on effective learning strategies and teaching techniques, would help to create an environment that encourages and supports lifelong learning for all students" (Harrison 2003: 136). In this vein, assessment can be based on this approach and its main objective is to provide learners several ways in which they can demonstrate their knowledge about the targeted contents. As Mino (2004: 158) suggests "learner-centred assessment is characterized by a variety of assessment approaches, and offers students multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do at different times during the semester".

In Dole et al.'s (2015) study, the teachers' roles in the classroom with this approach are affected by a change in how they are seen. They adopt the model of being facilitators and they are the ones that provide guidance in the learning process. This means that teachers are not the "containers" of the subject knowledge, but they ease the teaching and contents in a way that they offer information for the students to perform the

activities.

Therefore, when adopting this kind of approach numerous opportunities are given to students to be able to engage in any classroom activity, making it more dynamic and cooperative.

2.3.8. Task-Based

Task based is an approach whose aim is to learn by performing tasks. The kind of tasks proposed in any activity should have a purpose, as Ur (2012: 121) pointed out “a task is goal-oriented”. Moreover, tasks have different features that they provide the learner with authentic language and they make students to engage in cognitive skills. In order to reach that aim, the students have to do the tasks proposed either individually or in groups. In other words, this type of approach focuses also on interaction.

2.4. A Possible Selves Approach to Motivation

After reviewing the methodologies and approaches, it is worth mentioning that there are other factors affecting the learning of a first or second language. These are motivation and identity, which have been widely discussed in the literature (Oyserman et al. 2002; Oyserman 2008; Dornyei 2009; Lee & Oyserman 2009; Saville-Troike 2012; Ur 2012).

Broadly speaking, motivation is the aspiration that one has in order to obtain future goals, thus people who are really motivated in learning a second language might invest their time and might work hard to reach their objectives and “it is often a key to ultimate level of proficiency” (Saville-Troike 2012: 188). It has been widely discussed whether motivation is the primary reason behind language learning success, but it is

proved that a student who is highly motivated might get higher grades and be a successful learner (Ur 2012). According to Gardner & Lambert (1959), there are two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. The former sees learning a language for academic or professional purposes, while the latter is related to the aspiration to learn a language in order to be integrated into a speaking community. In fact, there is a thin line in the relation between identity and motivation.

It seems reasonable to emphasise that language is the essential demonstration of our identity (De Fina et al. 2006). Identity embraces within itself many connotations and different notions, so it can be broadly defined as how we see ourselves, including our personality, our tastes and our goals, among other features. Moreover, it also categorises humans in terms of group membership, allowing individuals to create a social identity. Identity is dynamic; it can change and can be modified along time. Therefore, the scholars Markus & Nurius (1986) developed their theory about possible selves, which is closely related to this notion of identity being changeable.

In this same line, an accurate definition of possible selves is expressed in Lee & Oyserman (2008: 1) and they acknowledge that “possible selves are the selves one believes one might become in the near and the more distal future and are therefore important in goal setting and motivation”. Besides, there should be a balance between positive and negative possible selves.

In addition, our identity plays a key role in the learning process. That is to say that, for instance and considering second or foreign language as the starting point, the way individuals are and their attitudes influence greatly their willingness to learn and improve on learning and improving another language. Linking the notion of possible

selves to the field of education, the theory of possible selves has been applied in the educational practice to motivate students in an innovative and alternative way to former approaches, so they can see themselves as successful learners and might avoid becoming unsuccessful ones. Oyserman et al. (2002) claims that this dimension is extremely useful with the exclusion of minority groups, which might be at risk of not achieving their target objective. Hence, bringing this issue to bear on a school environment might be the answer for “a key question for applied researchers [...] how to facilitate emergence of academic focus in youth, especially youth who are at risk of dis-engaging from school and academic pursuits” (Oyserman et al. 2002: 323), as is the case with Down Syndrome children. According to Dornyei (2009: 10), there are six conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to portray an efficacious schema of the L2 motivational possible self theory:

1. Availability of an elaborate and vivid future self image.
2. Perceived plausibility.
3. Harmony between the ideal and ought selves.
4. Necessary activation/priming.
5. Accompanying procedural strategies.
6. The offsetting impact of a feared self.

The first and the second ones refer that the image of the possible self must exist and it needs to be possible and realistic according to one's situations. The third implies the idea that this image needs to be in harmony according to social rules. After that, the fourth feature is essential in this approach, as possible selves would not happen if the individual did not activate them, for example, in a certain situation that requires this

possible self, the person not only has to imagine it but actually s/he has to perform the self. As claimed in number five, “effective future self-guides need to come as part of a ‘package’, consisting of an imagery component and a repertoire of appropriate plans, scripts and self- regulatory strategies” (Dornyei 2009: 13). The last characteristic states that there should be a balance between positive and negative possible selves.

Finally, this alternative to encourage motivation within the class seems to be helpful for student who might be jeopardised in fully engaging in the classroom due to a lack of motivational strategies.

3. METHOD SECTION

This section aims to offer an overview of the type of research and how it was carried out among other issues such as the stages of the study and the participants who took part in the investigation. For this purpose, it is divided into six subsections: type of study, preliminary stage, setting and procedure, participants and data gathering process.

3.1. Type of study

The types of research adopted in the current investigation were two: classroom research and action research. The former aims to research the different classroom practices in context, which also includes observation; whereas the latter has the objective of solving any kind of problem.

More specifically, classroom research focuses on different dimensions in context such as interaction and the teaching practice, which is the primary focus of the research.

With this method, the researcher could be aware of what happens within the class, as this plays a key role in classroom research. In other words, the researcher had to observe the participants' and teachers' behaviour, the layout of the class and the materials among others because "the particular is therefore as relevant as the general, *in the context of the interaction*" (Van Lier 1988: 2). Therefore, all the data obtained occurred within the classroom.

Action research, on the other hand, deals with setting the investigation into practice. In this approach, the researcher is concerned with using a systematic process in solving educational problems and making improvements" (Tomal 2003: 8). The most representative features of action research according to Tomal (2003: 9-10) are the following: firstly, its main aim is to solve a problem and to increment positive outcomes for the students. Secondly, it is collaborative due to the involvement of all the participants in the research process. Finally, it is systematic and mechanic because of the use of different strategies and/or activities that permit to attain the purpose of the investigation.

Consequently and due to the nature of these methods, it seemed appropriate to choose a dual focus on classroom research and action research, as the aim of the current study is to observe and to fulfil the objectives previously stated in the introduction. Without any of these, the search of the findings would have been impossible.

In addition, the current research has adopted a mixed methodology approach because this "involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis levels" (Dörnyei 2007: 24). Thus, quantitative data dealt with the close questions of the two questionnaires, as it was represented numerically. Besides, the observation phase, the open questions in the

questionnaire, the analysis of the worksheets and homework were qualitatively analysed and an interpretation of the results will be provided in the next section.

3.2. Preliminary Stage

As already mentioned, the investigation took place in PRODIS, a foundation addressed to people with intellectual disabilities. However, in order to finally find a foundation, association or special school, the researcher went through different stages. In fact, trying to implement the study in one of these institutions was a limitation of the study. In order to ask the different institutions, an email template was designed containing a short paragraph about the researcher and the procedure and objectives of the investigation. Later, realising the few responses obtained, a letter was designed and the MA's coordinator signed it, giving more credibility and professionalism.

Firstly, during the month of November of 2016, the researcher contacted an employer who is currently working in A.P.S.A¹⁰, an organisation and private school aimed at the practice of Special Education at every level, from nursery school to adult education. This institution directly rejected the proposal without any further reason.

After that, another foundation and association called Ademo was contacted on 1st December 2016. The researcher directly talked to the project manager of that organisation who promised to give her an answer after Christmas. In fact, he has not given her this answer as of today, even though the author has tried to contact him twice in different ways: first, personally and, finally, by a member of the board of trustees. The same happened with AFADIS and FEISD, whose answers were never received.

¹⁰ Asociación Pro personas con deficiencia mental de Arganda del Rey

Then, an email was written to Down Madrid towards mid December without any responses. Another email was sent in mid January and they answered back alleging that no investigations were accepted as the deadline was over.

Having attempted to contact several institutions, at least twice, the researcher with the help of a classmate, finally, could put into effect the investigation in PRODIS. The researcher and the director of the programme, in this case Promentor which will be explained next, agreed to meet on 6th of February 2017 and the study began the following week and finished on the 8th of May 2017.

3.3. Setting and Procedure

PRODIS is an organisation that has the objective to improve the life of people with intellectual disabilities. It also seeks for professional, as well as societal inclusion for these individuals. The members of the institution foster different values such as commitment, dignity, justice, and quality among others.

In relation to this, Promentor is an educational programme developed by PRODIS that takes place in the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, whose goals are to promote labour inclusion by providing a professional training so that these students can access the employment market. It lasts two years and it has a variety of subjects such as: English, culture and society, thinking strategies and logic and accounting among others.

The investigation took place in the second year classroom every Monday in the faculty of teacher training and education at the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* located in Madrid, Spain. There were three teachers within the class, one was the main teacher and the others were foreign volunteers, French and Italian, enrolled in an abroad

European volunteering programme. The total number of participants enrolled in Promentor was 13 students, four of them had DS and nine had developmental and intellectual delay. The layout of the class allowed for a cooperative environment, as the learners sat forming a “U”. However, and for the purpose of the research, the students were placed into groups with the teachers and the researcher, so that way she could work with four students with Down syndrome. Particularly, one of the DS students was reluctant to change her seat but, after talking to her, she agreed to be placed in a different location. The other nine students did the same activities so that they would not feel excluded from the English class. Bearing in mind the purpose of the study, their results and outcomes were not taken into account, as the presented investigation was only addressed to DS students. Besides, the English class lasted one hour and a half and the total number of weeks of the investigation was eight: three weeks were devoted to the observation period and five to the action research.

3.4. Participants

Regarding the total number of participants in the study, there were 4 students with Down syndrome, whose first language is Spanish, three female (student A, B and C) and one male (student D), aged 22 with the exception of student C who is 24 years old. To protect their privacy, their names will not be given. Due to the Data Protection Law and regarding the vulnerability of this community, no piece of information about the students was given to the researcher. It was observed that student C had hearing problems, as she wore a hearing aid. They were not told about the aims or any detail about the research so

as to avoid any biased results and to lower anxiety. As well, the researcher commented that the investigation had a non-profit focus; its aim was purely educational.

3.5. Data Gathering Process

Data were collected during 5 weeks with two questionnaires: pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire (see Appendix 1); four worksheets and three homework worksheets (see Appendix 2); the lesson plan template and the lesson plans of the sessions (see Appendix 3); the pre-test and post-test (see Appendix 4); a rubric of marks (see Appendix 5) and a class blog and observation checklist (see Appendix 6). The sessions addressed the topic of travelling abroad; from packing the suitcase to the arrival in the country. As mentioned before, the class was divided into four groups, so each group covered a foreign city. In the case of the group of students with Down syndrome, they focused on the city of London.

3.5.1. Lesson plans

The lesson plans were designed by the author with the purpose of facilitating the implementation of class routines. They followed a fixed structure (see Figure 1) which was used for every session with the exception of the last one, which was entirely devoted to the completion of the post-test and the post-questionnaire. The model work chosen for the creation of the template was the one proposed by Ur (2012).

Session number (date)

- General aim.
 - Particular aim.
 - Main methodologies or approaches.
 - Teaching techniques.
 - Time of the session: (x) warm up and (x) for the core of the session.
 - Skills.
 - Comments:
- Warm-up activities (x)
- Agenda of the contents
 - Revision of the contents by a game format (when possible)
- Set up and closure (x)
- Elicitation of vocabulary / Learner-centred activities
 - Explanation + worksheet
 - (Revision of that day's contents)
 - Closure: positive feedback

Figure 1: Lesson Plan Template

In this regard, each session varied in the different areas. For instance, each session had a particular aim or aims, skills and methodologies. This has to be this way because every session entails new objectives, activities and skills among others. Therefore, the lesson plan is individually adapted to the different sessions according to the tasks to be accomplished.

However, the heart of each session lies in that there should always be an agenda at the beginning of each session, some communicative and learner-centred activities, and the sessions must end with positive feedback in order to increase motivation within the class. With this procedure, the instructor is making the students follow a class routine, so they might be aware of the stages of the class, which might help them to engage easier if they sometimes feel lost. In relation to the way to end the class, when the teacher finished with an overall positive feedback of that session, the students might feel more motivated,

enhancing positive images of themselves (Oysherman 2008). For further examples of the diverse lesson plans used in the current study see Appendix 3.

3.5.2. Worksheets and Homework

In order to meet two objectives of the research: (1) to examine the acquisition of English vocabulary as a foreign language by Down syndrome students and (2) to provide instructors with some resources and teaching techniques for English vocabulary teaching to DS learners, a total number of 4 worksheets, 3 homework activities and 2 sets of flashcards were designed according to what was advised in the literature regarding the teaching practice directed to DS students. The exercises and activities were entirely designed by the author. Besides, one task, which is the role-play activity, was introduced as innovative for those students to measure its outcomes. The description of the worksheets and homework will be done individually, concentrating on the main methodologies and approaches behind them. In fact, the headings of each exercise were originally written in Spanish, so they were translated into English.

3.5.2.1. Worksheets

The worksheets followed a strict routine so that DS students acquired and realised the patterns and structure of the class, in comparison to the homework, whose exercises were varied and offered a more open structure. The worksheets aimed to provide the contents of the lesson and encourage engaging into communicative activities with their classmates. The first exercise of worksheets one and two concentrates on writing the L1 equivalent of the L2 terms when the teacher has shown the flashcards with the L2 name and,

afterwards, the L1 one. In worksheets 3 and 4, the students had to try to find out what the meaning of the complete text was by seeing themselves in that particular context, that is to say that these last activities focused on learning by context.

3.5.2.2. Worksheet One

In this first handout, the students were presented with some vocabulary regarding clothes and personal belongings. More specifically, the lexis covered the topic of clothes and personal belongings that they need to pack in their suitcase for their trip to London, which consists of two exercises.

In the first activity (see Figure 2), the instructor used the first set of flashcards so the students were able to provide the L1 equivalent for the English words. The terms were labelled into two different categories (clothes & personal belongings) so that the students could visualise and memorise the contents into different groups. This type of activity is more teacher-centred, as the teacher was the one showing the cards and they were elicited the name of the terms. The main methodology and technique behind this task are grammar translation and repetition. In addition, with the resource of the flashcards, the students were given visual support in order to comprehend the words' meaning. Consequently, the teacher worked the visual and hearing stimuli so as to get the students to scaffold on memorisation.

In the second activity (see Figure 3), the students were told to agree with their group on deciding 10 items that they would take on their trip. The aim of this task was to enhance group work and they had to help each other to complete the exercise, which serves as a consolidation of the first activity. The teacher is seen as a facilitator and

monitor, so the main approaches are: learner-centred and communicative. Again, this exercise is divided into two categories to foster the visual learning of these students. In short, this first worksheet had the purpose of facilitating vocabulary learning relying on visual and hearing support. A mixed methodology approach was adopted with grammar translation in the first activity; and communicative approach and learner-centred due to the requirement of interaction in the second activity; habit formation, in the repetition and drilling of the terms in the first and second exercise and task-based, as the learners would learn the lexis by performing the presented exercises. The main teaching techniques were the use of flashcards, as visual support and constant repetition of the terminology.

WORKSHEET ONE

VOCABULARY LIST: CLOTHES & PERSONAL BELONGINGS

<p>- CLOTHES:</p> <p>Jacket =</p> <p>Jumper =</p> <p>Jeans =</p> <p>Pyjama =</p> <p>Raincoat =</p> <p>Sandals =</p> <p>Shirt =</p> <p>Shorts =</p> <p>Skirt =</p> <p>Socks =</p> <p>T-Shirt =</p> <p>Trainers =</p>	<p>- PERSONAL BELONGINGS:</p> <p>Flight ticket =</p> <p>ID card =</p> <p>Makeup =</p> <p>Mobile charger =</p> <p>Money =</p> <p>Passport =</p>
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Figure 2: First exercise of Worksheet One

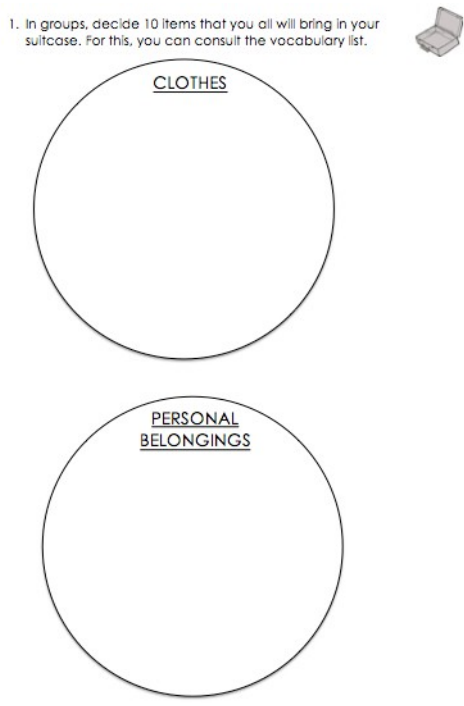


Figure 3: Second exercise of Worksheet One

3.5.2.3. Worksheet Two

The second worksheet used in the investigation and the first one are alike in their structure and methodology. What they differed in is that not only nouns are taught but also verbs. The reason why verbs are also included in the exercises is to discover if DS learners find them more complex to learn. This worksheet was addressed to the topic of sightseeing and actions that are appropriate of each activity.

In the first activity (see Figure 4), the students had to follow the same procedure as in the first exercise of worksheet one. This exercise is more teacher-centred, as the use of flashcards was required. The students had to repeat the words and they were elicited the name in the L1 with the help of the cards.

However, in the second exercise (see Figure 5), which was more communicative and learner-centred, the students had to associate the places to the actions that they might perform there. As in worksheet one, the teacher's role is that of facilitator and monitor.

In sum, this worksheet has several similar features as the first one just commented above. The methodologies and approaches are: habit formation, grammar translation, communicative, task-based and learner-centred, creating a mix methodology approach. The teaching techniques widely used are visual support and repetition of the contents. Both worksheets provide a categorization of the target vocabulary to facilitate the students' learning.

WORKSHEET TWO

VOCABULARY LIST: SIGHTSEEING AND VERBS

- SIGHTSEEING:	- VERBS:
Art gallery =	Book =
Bridge =	Buy a ticket =
Castle =	See =
Cathedral =	Take pictures =
Fountain =	Walk =
Hotel =	Take the train/bus =
Monument =	
Museum =	
Palace =	
Park =	
Port =	
Square =	
Statue =	
Tower =	

Figure 4: First exercises of Worksheet Two

1. In your group, discuss the places that you will visit in your country and what actions you will do there. For this, you can consult the vocabulary and the main attractions list.

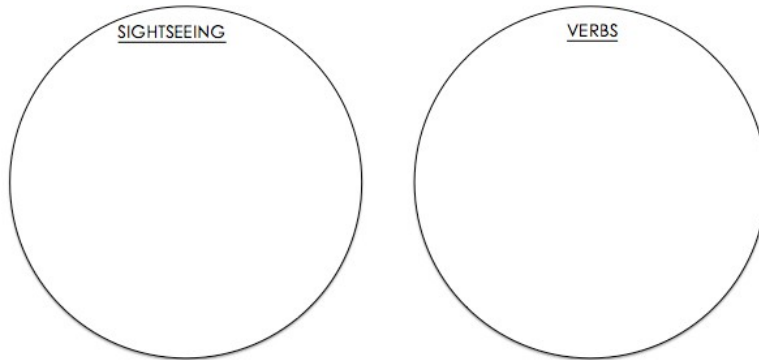


Figure 5: Second exercise of Worksheet Two

3.5.2.4. Worksheet Three

Concerning the third exercise sheet, the learners dealt with the topic of language in context. The students were given a setting in their chosen city, which was a restaurant in this particular group, so they had to figure out what the meaning of the sentences are in their L1 by thinking about the kind of expressions that there could be in the same setting in their native language. This corresponds to the first exercise (see Figure 6) in which the presence of the teacher as a provider is essential for the activity to run smoothly due to the lack of English knowledge the students had. In the same task, the students had to think with their group about two more expressions that were not in the original dialogue, which served as a follow up activity to the second one.

WORKSHEET THREE



1. Translate and order the following dialogue:

Yes, sure	
I will eat fish and chips, please	
Yes, sure	
Anything else?	
Good morning! Yes, please. Could you bring me a glass of water, please?	
Perfect	
Could you bring me the bill, please?	
Hello, do you want something to eat or drink?	

→ Can you think one more question and answer or a sentence that can be said in this place?

- 1.
- 2.

Figure 6: First exercise of Worksheet Three

As for the second exercise of this worksheet (see Figure 8), the students were told to perform a role-play activity, in which they had to decide who was the waiter/waitress or customers. In this kind of task, the teacher did not intervene as for the exception to help the students with the words' pronunciation.

2. Mini-play!

Instructions:

- You have to decide which role you are going to perform (waiter/waitress/customers) and write it down so you won't forget.
- You can modify the given dialogue. If you do so, you must write it in English and you can include past learnt vocabulary. If you have any doubt, the teacher will help you.
- You must rehearse the play, as you will perform it to the rest of the class next Monday.

Figure 8: Second exercise of Worksheet Three

All in all, the two exercises had the feature that the students had to activate L1 background knowledge and try to imagine themselves in the given context. Therefore, the last activity deals with the fact of changing identities (role-play) and makes them see themselves in a foreign setting and talking in English. As a consequence, two different identities are triggered: workers and/or customers; and they all have one thing in common: they all pretend to be speakers of English as a foreign language. In relation to the approaches and teaching techniques used in this worksheet, they are the same used in the last two worksheets.

3.5.2.5. Worksheet Four

The last worksheet was devoted to the different presentations made by the four groups. As already mentioned, all the students were permitted to take part in the session but only the work done by the students with Down syndrome was taken into account for the purpose of this study. Having said this, this commented group was in charge of presenting the mini-play regarding the restaurant setting whereas the others were responsible for the following settings: a museum, the underground and the street.

As a consequence, the presented sheet contained only one exercise (see Figure 9) in which the students had to watch the performances and the teacher would ask the meaning of some expressions, which the presenting group had to answer, and the other students had to write down the meaning.

WORKSHEET FOUR

1. Write the meaning of the underlined expressions:

Basic vocabulary and expressions in a restaurant in London

1. Hello, do you want something to eat or drink?
2. Good morning! Yes, please. Could you bring me a glass of water, please?
3. Yes, sure
4. Anything else?
5. I will eat fish and chips, please
6. Perfect
7. Could you bring me the bill, please?
8. Yes, sure

Basic vocabulary and expressions in a museum in London

1. Good afternoon, how much is the ticket?
2. Hello, it is £10.00
3. Where is the exhibition?
4. It is on the left
5. It is on the right
6. Thank you
7. Do you know where is the paintings and monuments?
8. It is on the second floor
9. Thank you

Basic vocabulary and expressions in the underground in London

1. Hello, could I have a ticket, please?
2. Good morning! Single or return?
3. Return, please
4. Thank you
5. Do you know how to go to the Big Ben?
6. Yes, you have to go to Embankment and then take the yellow or green line.
7. Thank you so much, goodbye
8. Bye!

Basic vocabulary and expressions in the street in London

1. Hello! Sorry, do you know how to go to the London Eye?
2. Good evening! Yes, you have to turn right in this street and then turn left
3. Could I take the bus or the underground?
4. Yes, but it is not far from here. You can see the monuments.
5. Goodbye, thank you
6. You're welcome! Bye!

Figure 9: Exercise of Worksheet Four

This last exercise is more communicative and learner-centred than the previous ones, as the students are the ones facilitating the contents and interacting with the class. The teacher is not functioning as a teacher per se but as one who intervenes to offer the students the possibility to know the meaning of the expressions. As well, this focused on the role-play activity seen in the third worksheet, so the students are showing to the rest of their classmates that they are able to activate different identities at the same time and, also, they demonstrate that they can fit in the community of speakers of English as a foreign language.

3.5.2.6. Homework

Moreover, the homework handouts were directed to complement the learning activity, in other words, these exercises focused on scaffolding and facilitating the wrapping up of the contents. The first two exercise sheets were more dynamic, as the tasks were more enjoyable; whereas the last one was purely aimed to consolidate and facilitate the revision of the target contents.

3.5.2.7. Homework One

These two exercises were given and explained to the participants towards the end of session two so that the students can revise session one and two together. Both of them were targeted to the recognition process of how the words are spelt. In the first exercise (see Figure 10), the students had to look for certain words in the word search puzzle. This activity helps the students to identify and focus on the way the terms are written.

The second task (see Figure 11) shares with the first one the feature of word identification with the slight difference that the students had to produce some missing letters in order to make the word complete. This exercise would facilitate the production of the words, as the students might have realised the different letters that constitute the words.

HOMEWORK ONE

1. Find 7 words related to the topic of clothes and personal belongings and translate them.

J H I Y L H H C P
 E S D E V R U J A
 A F C N S O C K S
 N V A O C Z X E S
 S Q R M D G H B P
 H M D S H I R T O
 T R A I N E R S R
 S F R M S K I R T
 P Y J A M A N I P

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

2. Complete with the missing letters and provide its meaning in Spanish.

A _ T _ _ L _ _ R _	_ E _	B _ _ K
_ A S _ _ E	H _ T _ _	P _ _ K
MU _ _ _ M	_ Q _ _ _ E	_ A _ K

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Figure 10: First exercise of Homework One

Figure 11: Second exercise of Homework One

3.5.2.8. Homework Two

This pair of exercises was given to the students in session three. As a brief reminder, this session was devoted to the topic of talking in English in a restaurant. Bearing this in mind, the exercises were targeted to the first and second session contents due to the fact that these themes were mostly addressed in the final exam. So more revision related to these sessions were considered needed.

As seen in Figure 12, the first exercise is less strict in the sense that the learners could choose whatever piece of clothes or item to take on their trip. In this activity, they were totally independent to produce the lexis, there was not any pattern guiding them in order to help them the writing of the words. To do this exercise, they might have felt the need to consult the vocabulary list provided in session one.

In the last activity (see Figure 13), it can be seen the opposite procedure as just commented above. The students had to order the letters in order to form meaningful words. With this type of exercise they were aimed to practise the actual spelling of the word, thus they might familiarise with their writing.

Overall, Homework Two provides a dynamic and varied way of wrapping up the contents presented during the two first sessions. The two exercises mixed two skills: the first one focused more on production and comprehension whereas the second concerns with being aware of the words' spelling.

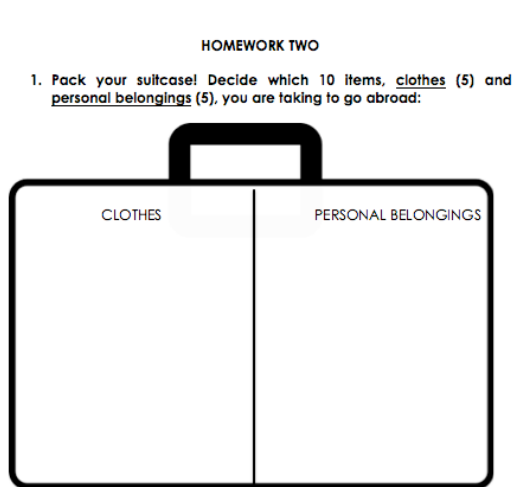


Figure 12: First exercise of Homework Two

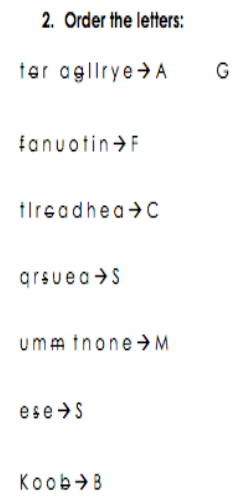


Figure 13: Second exercise of Homework Two

3.5.2.9. Homework Three

This last set of activities had the purpose of helping the students during the exam revision. Therefore, they differed from the previous two homework sheets in that these might be longer and harder. It was given in session number four, as session five was when they took the exam.

In the first task (see Figure 14), the students had to look for the English equivalent of the given words. In this activity, they were working with the grammar translation methodology so that they might comprehend the lexis' meaning at the same time they realised about how the words are spelt. Within the chosen tokens, all the verbs were included in this exercise due to avoid any misleading activity that might confuse the students in understanding the verbs' meaning, as this last type of words are especially tough for learners with Down syndrome.

As regards the second and last activity (see Figure 15), this time the students were not given any kind of written clue but they were provided with images in order for them to know the meaning of each picture. With this exercise, the students were encouraged to better comprehend and identify by means of giving them some visual support. It is worth pointing out that the images presented in this exercise were the same used in the flashcards.

In conclusion, these two activities had the purpose of reinforcing the contents' revision for the exam. They were planned and designed keeping in mind the two resources most commonly employed: translation and visual support. Above all, if students did all the tasks offered, they might have found the exam easier to complete, as they had been studying with the assistance of the exercise sheets.

Homework three

1. Write the English equivalent for the following words:
- Andar:
 - Billete de avión:
 - Castillo:
 - Chaqueta:
 - Chubasquero:
 - Coger el tren/autobús:
 - Deportivas:
 - Falda:
 - Fuente:
 - Gira a la derecha:
 - Gira a la izquierda:
 - Hacer fotos:
 - Hacer la maleta:
 - Jersey:
 - Maquillaje:
 - Palacio:
 - Puente:
 - Puerto:
 - Reservar:
 - Ver:

2. What is this? Write their name in English:

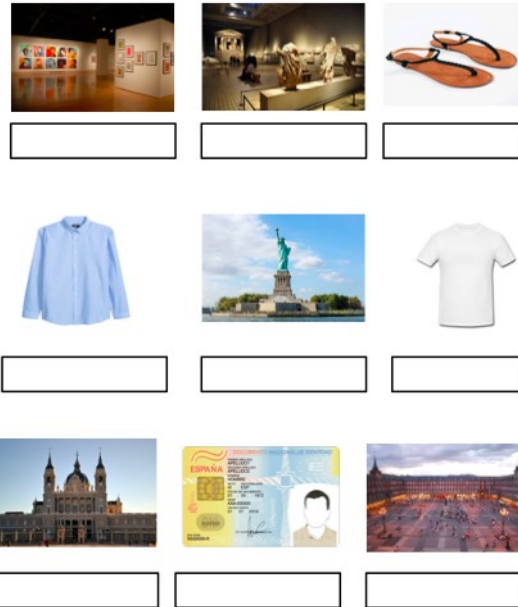


Figure 14: First exercise of Homework Three

Figure 15: Second exercise of Homework Three

3.5.3. The tests

Concerning the two tests, pre-test and post-test, both were designed to examine the learning comprehension of the targeted contents in the way that was advised in the literature, focusing on comprehension. The two tests summed a total of 3 comprehension activities with 32 asked items: 12 in the first exercise and 10 in the second exercise and in the third. Moreover, in the post-test the production section summed a total of 13 asked items.

3.5.3.1. Pre-Test

Firstly, the pre-test exercises were designed so that the learners had to identify and match the correct word or expression, with the help of visual support in the two first activities. The pre-test was primarily designed to compare the students' progress over the sessions.

Consequently, it was important to find out whether they had any previous knowledge on the topics that were covered in the five sessions. It consisted of three exercises in which the first and the second were similar.

As can be seen in Figure 16, the first exercise was addressed to both association and comprehension. The learners had to place the words in the right gap, for which they were given a picture representing the word. The main resource used in this activity is visual support, as it helped the students to try to figure out what word that belonged to the image is.

As already pointed out, the second exercise (see Figure 17) follows the same system as the first one. The activity offered some pictures so that the students could match the image with the word. These two tasks facilitate the recognition process of vocabulary acquisition. In other words, they attempted to ease the task so that the students knew what the images' words were by looking at the pictures and terms. This last activity was taken from an intermediate level book from Oxford¹¹.

As far as the last exercise is concerned (see Figure 18), the core of the activity was to find if the students knew any L1 equivalent for the English words. For that reason, they were given a matching activity in which they had to match the English word or expression with its meaning in Spanish. The relying methodology behind the activity is grammar-translation.











In sum, the pre-test was planned and created with the purpose of further comparing the content learning by the students. However, some exercises differed among

11 Oxenden, C. & Latham-Koenig, C. (2003). *English File. Intermediate student's book*. Oxford University Press.

each other but, as visual support is key in this investigation, the first exercises were addressed to visual memory.

1. Complete the chart:

Jacket	Jumper	Jeans	Pyjama
Raincoat	Sandaals	Shirt	Shorts
Skirt	Socks	T-Shirt	Trainers


			
			
			

2. Match the words and the pictures!:

TOURISM AND TRAVELLING

A Tourism

WHAT TO SEE ON HOLIDAY



Match the words and pictures. How do you pronounce them?

- a castle / kɑ:sl/
- a cathedral / kə'θi:drəl/
- a fountain / 'faʊntɪn/
- a monument / 'mɒnjəmənt/
- a museum / 'mju:ziəm/
- a port / hɑ:bəʊ / 'hɑ:bə/
- a square / 'skweɪ/
- a statue / 'stætʃu/
- an art gallery / 'gæləri/
- the scenery / 'si:nəri/

Figure 17: Second exercise of the Pre-test

Figure 16: First exercise of the Pre-test

3. Match the words and expressions with its translation:

Book	Hacer la maleta
Take pictures	¿Me puede traer la cuenta, por favor?
See	Crucero
Pack the suitcase	Gira a la izquierda
Hotel	Reservar
Can I have the bill, please?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Cruise	Ver
Turn to the left	Gira a la derecha
Turn to the right	Hacer fotos
How much is this?	Hotel

Figure 18: Third exercise of the Pre-test

3.5.3.2. Post-test

The post-test was divided in two blocks: comprehension and production. The former corresponds to the pre-test, as the post-test's activities were the same as the pre-test. Being the first block equal to the pre-test gives more reliable comparison and discussion if the students had learnt the target contents. However, external factors such as anxiety, noise or lack of concentration could affect the students' performance during the tests so these need to be kept in mind.

Regarding the second block, it was formed by two different exercises in which the students needed to write down the missing word by both visual aids and translation techniques. With this pair of activities, they would demonstrate how well they performed in written production.

In the first task, the learners had to provide the English name of the given pictures. For that, they had to focus on spelling, as they need to be accurate when writing the word. With this exercise, it can be seen whether production and visual memory together helped the students to recall the terms.

In the second activity (see Figure 20), the learners were given the L1 meaning and they had to provide the English one, using grammar translation as the main resource for the task. As in the previous exercise, this would help to find out whether good performance in production is influenced in the way the activities are presented.

As a conclusion, the post-test would give a fair comparison of the degree of vocabulary improvement as well as an overview of the tasks that DS students have performed better. By dividing it into two sections, it can reinforce the idea that production in DS learners is identified as their weakest skill.

4. Write the name of the following elements:



Figure 19: Fourth exercise of the Post-test

5. Write the name in English:

Puente:	Andar:
Parque:	Coger el autobús/tren:
Palacio:	Comprar un ticket/entrada:
Torre:	

Figure 20: Second exercise of Post-test

3.5.4. The questionnaires

In both questionnaires, the structure was similar: the questions were mostly closed but there also were some open questions so that the participants could write their impressions, as in the last questions of both questionnaires. There was one multiple-choice question in the two questionnaires and, in the pre-questionnaire, one rated question, which measured their opinion towards the importance of English. Bearing in mind that the participants had DS, this layout was chosen in order to facilitate their comprehension about the questionnaires and to elicit easier their responses. Thus, open questions remained short and simple and they were originally written in Spanish, as the students' level of English was very low

3.5.4.1. Pre-Questionnaire

This anonymous questionnaire (see Figure 21) was handed to the students before the beginning of the research sessions, thus the researcher could adapt and design the

lesson plans and activities accordingly. The aims were to explore the DS students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language, to discover their topics' preferences within the English class and to identify how they see themselves in a foreign country and which identity they might activate. It consisted of 10 closed and open question and the participants were asked their age and gender.

The questions were presented and created according to Burgess (2001) and cognitive and physical features of DS students were also taken into account. For instance, the questions were attempted to be short and simple and the learners' answers were required to be brief, as it was advised that they find writing a tiring activity due to their hands' physiognomy (Priosti et al. 2013). In fact, the questionnaire was originally distributed in Spanish, as the students did not have enough level of English to understand it in English.

More specifically, the first and second questions are related to the study of English as such. It was considered essential to know if the students had thought about studying English before and how important they find learning English. With this last question, the students had an opportunity to think about the significance of studying English nowadays. Concerning questions (3), (7), (8) and (9), they dealt with English in use and some advantages that knowing the language has. With these four questions, it can be known the possible uses of English that these students might further apply. Questions (4) and (5) are directed to students' preference towards the class organization and main activities, so that these dimensions could be considered to the later plan of the activities. In question number (6), the students were asked about ordering their likes in relation to possible English class topics. This question is considered key because it could be

identified what the students' interests are, so that they might be working according to their preferences during a certain number of sessions. Lastly, the last question (10) concerns the use of identity strategies, in which the participants were asked to vision themselves in a situation abroad so that they could express their visualization and how they might feel. With this activity, it could be observed which type of identities they students may have activated and which ones they might have avoided. This question is closely related to the theory of possible selves.

In conclusion, the questionnaire offered a wide range of varied dimensions related to English and its teaching practice in terms of students' motivation and likes. The just commented questions were decided to be key in the design of the contents of the five sessions, as it was stated that students' preferences would be taken into account for the research activity.

1. Have you ever thought about studying English as a foreign language?

Yes No

2. From 0 to 5, being 0 not important and 5 essential, how important do you consider to be the study of English?

0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Would you like to relate with people from other nationalities in English?

Yes No

4. Within in the English class, do you prefer group activities and why? Briefly explain your answer.

Yes:

No:

5. Would you like that two teachers teach the English class? Briefly explain your answer.

Yes:

No:

6. What topics would you like to be covered in the English class? Number the topics in your preferred order (1, 2, 3).

Daily Routines	
Culture	
Sports	
Office	
Urban life	
Tips (how to organise, order something in a restaurant)	
Others (specify):	

7. Would you like to use English when travelling abroad?

Yes No

8. Would you like to watch films in English?

Yes No

9. Would you like to understand English songs?

Yes No

10. Finally, close your eyes and imagine:

- How do you see yourself in a trip abroad?
- Who are you with?
- What do you see there?
- What are you wearing?
- What are you doing or are you about to do?
- How do you feel?

Figure 21: Pre-Questionnaire

3.5.4.2. Post-Questionnaire

The second anonymous questionnaire was administered to the students at the end of session five so as to measure the teaching practice and some students' attitude changes. This questionnaire had the same layout and procedure as the first one. However, some questions that they had to produce an explanation were reduced due to some difficulties encountered in the pre-questionnaire.

To get into details, the group comprised of questions (1), (2), (3) and (4) dealt with the sessions as such. In the first question the participants were asked about whether they would like to continue studying English in the future. In number (2) they were explicitly asked about whether they liked the sessions and they had to choose from three options or they could write their thoughts in the three of them. As regards the third question, it was considered essential to know whether the students felt motivated, as motivation is key in learning any language (Saville-Troike, 2012) so the same or similar activities could be carried out in other classes. In number (4), it was asked about the participants' opinion regarding the main activities done during the sessions. For this, they had to choose which activities they liked the most and there was not any number limit.

The second block, which consisted of questions (5), (6), (7) and (8), was concerned with the production, usage and attitudes of English. Questions (5) and (8) are interrelated in the sense that they covered the topic of possible selves, which allows to a fair comparison between the two questionnaires to spot if there had been some changes whether the learners were able to see themselves as speakers of English. As previously seen, question (6) relates to the third question of the pre-questionnaire in which the participants were asked about their perception of interacting with people from other

countries. Regarding question (7), it was interesting to know whether attending some English session might have an effect on students in the sense that they might feel more comfortable talking in the target language as they have practised it and produced in front of their classmates. Finally, the last question (9) was addressed for any suggestions that the students might highlight or any improvement.

To sum up, it can be said that the post-questionnaire complements the first one in the sense that it could serve to measure any changes in the students' opinion and/or attitude. Therefore, it is closely related to the previous one. The core of the two questionnaires remains the same: attitudes towards English and opinions related to the teaching practice.

1. After attending the English sessions, would you like to continue studying English as a foreign language?

Yes, because _____

Yes, but _____

No, because _____

2. Did you like how the English classes were taught?

Yes, because _____

Yes, but _____

No, because _____

3. Did you feel motivated during the sessions?

Yes

No

4. Tick the contents that you enjoyed the most during the English class:

Clothes and personal belongings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sightseeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Mini-Play	<input type="checkbox"/>
Las presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others:	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Can you imagine yourself travelling abroad?

Yes No

6. Do you feel motivated to meet people from that country?

Yes No

7. Do you feel more comfortable talking in English than at the beginning of the sessions?

Yes No

8. How do you imagine yourself talking in English in that country?

9. Do you have any improvement suggestions?

Figure 22: Post-questionnaire

3.5.5. Class Blog

Another resource that helped to collect data was the design of a class blog. This is a kind of hand-written diary in which the researcher wrote some particular issues or details that were relevant to the research. It was created with the objective to complement the analysis of the worksheets and to have a record of events that happened the days that the author of this paper was in the class. In addition, with this tool it is easier to spot any difficulty in the learning environment and more attention is paid to everything that occurs in the sessions. Nevertheless, as advised in Van Lier's work (1988), the observer might miss some details when researching about a particular issue. However, as this was a reduced group of participants, it is expected that the researcher will be able to focus better on the flow of events.

During the observation period, the class blog was the main tool used so it can be seen that the notes are more extended and detailed. However, along the action research weeks, it had been nearly impossible to take notes about what happened in the class blog, as the researcher had the role as one of the teachers in the class. It was written chronologically so that the sequence of the events did not suffer any change.

3.5.6. Rubric of Marks

As the students had been assessed in the last session, a marks' rubric (see Figure 23) was designed so that the students might have a detailed feedback of their performance during the five sessions. This rubric consists of four sections: comprehension, production, teamwork and individual work. Each section is graded from 1 to 4, being 1 the lowest and 4 the highest, in which it provides an overall overview of the different aspects. Moreover,

the students got individualised feedback in the teacher comments' chart. The reason why these different sections were chosen is that it seems fair that the outcomes would not be solely based on the grades within the post-test, it has been given importance to other areas as interaction and personal work.

Traveling Lesson

Teacher Name: Laura Sicilia

Student Name:

Date: 08/06/2017

Total Score: ____/16

- Production: ____/4
- Comprehension: ____/4
- Teamwork: ____/4
- Individual work: ____/4

Teacher Comments:

	1	2	3	4
Production	There are frequent spelling errors.	There are many spelling errors.	Most words are spelled correctly.	All words spelled correctly, helping readers clearly understand the central idea.
Comprehension	The student does not know any of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows some of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows the meaning of most of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows the meaning of all the words and expressions.
Teamwork	There was not any kind of interaction between the student and the group.	There was little interaction between the student and the group.	The student sometimes interacted with the group.	The student has collaborated with the group.
Individual work	The student did not show interest on the lesson and did not work properly.	The student showed little interest in learning the contents and rarely worked.	The student generally showed interest on the lesson and sometimes worked.	The student showed interest on the lesson and worked hard.

Figure 23: Rubric of Marks

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on the outcomes of the materials used after having the students completed them, which also provides an overview of the findings during the observation period. In order to discuss the results, a comparison will be provided between the two questionnaires and the tests and key findings in the rest of the materials will also be discussed.

4.1. Worksheets

In the first and second sessions the students' outcomes were both behavioural and educational. As a reminder, these two worksheet sessions were similar in terms of methodology and procedure. Therefore, it seems reasonable to link them together in the results and discussion.

In relation to worksheets one and two and the use of flashcards in order to run the activity, the results observed were that the students paid more attention and seemed more concentrated during the tasks. It was seen that some of the learners felt lost once or twice but they could engage rapidly with the aid of the flashcards and their group's help. Concerning the second activity of each worksheet, it was observed that the students needed the teacher's support. This suggests that the student-centred approach did not succeed in this task, as the learners required the teacher to monitor and help them while they were doing the activity. Consequently, the good accomplishment of the first activity is due to the use of visual cues, so these resources provide a useful support to the DS students (Burgoyne et al. 2012; DSAWM 2010). As regards the second exercise, it can be said that this exercise is concerned with production, which is identified as a weak area in

DS learners (Rondal 1995), so this was the main reason why they encountered difficulties in performing the tasks alone.

In worksheet three, the mini-play seemed to be the most motivational exercise due to the fact that the learners explicitly said that they really enjoyed the activity. The students were involved, as they did not stop rehearsing their roles and they adopted the proposed identities, which resulted in a very dynamic activity. Besides, the students performed effectively in the first exercise, as they had to find out the meaning of the utterances with the use of context, which was essential to the mini-play. This might be explained in the sense that using the L1 as background knowledge could support the students to know the meaning of some words or expressions within a certain context. Regarding worksheet four, it was well completed without encountering any difficulty, as the students helped each other.

4.2. Homework

First of all, it is important to point out that student D did not complete any of the sheets and was given extra time to do the homework activities and, still, refused to complete them. Unfortunately, there were no formal reasons for the student's repeated reluctance, which cannot be explained. On the other hand, student A could not hand in Homework 3 due to a class absence on the last day of the investigation.

A key finding is that the students were not able to fully complete exercise one in Homework one, as they missed the Spanish equivalent. So this suggests that the students preferred one instruction per activity rather than headings with two because the students tended to forget to perform the last exercise. In Homework two, the students performed

well in doing the exercises, as they could use the vocabulary list of the worksheets. The activities proposed in Homework Three were also helpful in the revision process towards the final test but the students made some spelling mistakes or they mixed up the terms “art gallery” with “museum”, as the students could not differentiate between these two notions. In fact, the three students found useful the activities in which they had to identify a word or to order the letters so as to make a meaningful word

4.3. Pre-test and Post-test

As already mentioned in the analysis section, the pre-test was administered in the first session, when the students still had not received any formal instruction about the topic. All the students, except for student A, completed it on the same day.

In the pre-test only the skill of comprehension was assessed. The results were the following (see Figure 24):

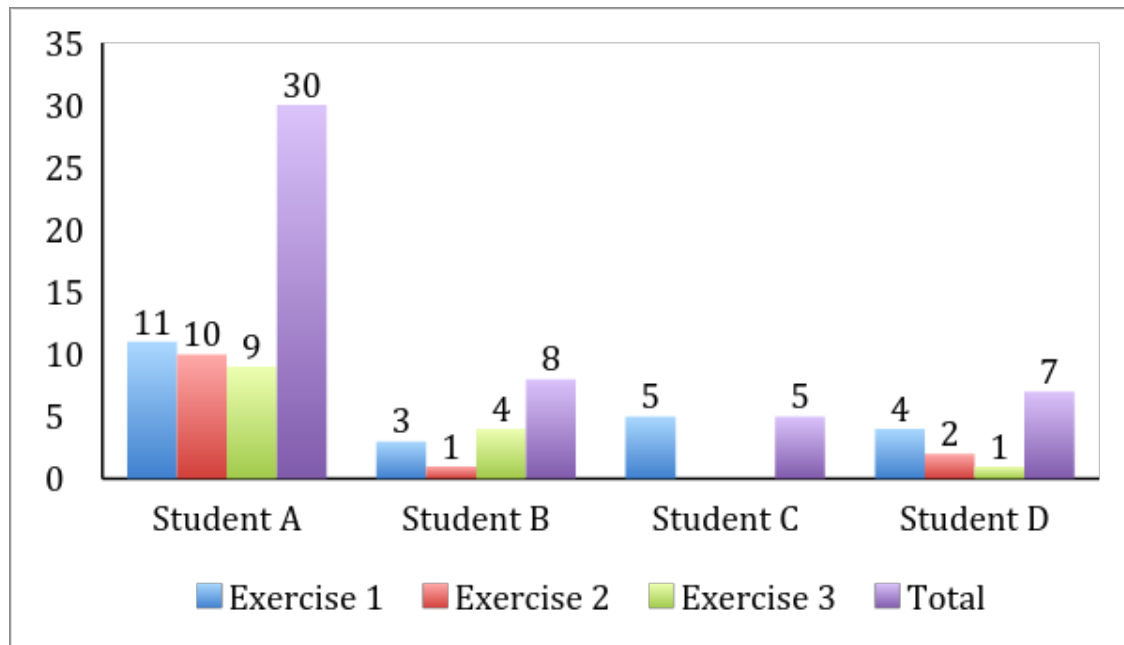


Figure 24: Results of the Pre-Test

As can be seen in Figure 24, 3 out of 4 students scored very low (student B: 8 out of 32 points, student C: 5 out of 32; student D: 7 out of 32). It is fair to comment that a possible explanation for the low results obtained in the pre-test lies in the fact that these students had basic or no knowledge regarding the main topics of the investigation: clothes and travelling. Remarkably enough, student A scored very high with 30 out of 32 points. The reason might be that student A did not come to class the day that the pre-test was distributed and she was given it another day. It is believed that student A might have had some previous contact with the topic via other the students or some of the other tutors.

Moreover, in the post-test, there were two blocks: comprehension and production. The first group had a total of 32 and the second 13 points. The results of the two sections are summarized in Table 1:

	Comprehension				Production		
	Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Exercise 3	Total	Exercise 4	Exercise 5	Total
Student A	9	6	5	22	3	1	4
Student B	12	8	10	30	3.5	4	7,5
Student C	7	3	3	13	3	3	6
Student D	1	1	0	2	1.5	1	2.5
Total	12	10	10	32	6	7	13

Table 1: Results of Post-test

Overall, students A, B and C performed better in the comprehension section than in the production one. This leads to Rondal's (1995) idea that DS students perform better in comprehension than in production. It is important to highlight that Student D

performed the lowest in the post-test (4.5), which pointed out that not doing the homework affected this learners' results in the post-test. As well, this student left exercise 3 blank; it could be speculated that this student lost concentration or was not willing to do it. In other words, this student might have felt overwhelmed or apathetic in doing the exercises. As regards the other students, it is interesting that the three of them completed the Homework exercises and they always led the group activities. Therefore, these two dimensions pinpoint to the successful compliance of the post-test. It is essential to take into account that student C had been observed to have a greater degree of Down syndrome, as she also carried a hearing aid. That could be the reason why this student had scored below to the other two her other classmates.

In order to compare the two tests, it seems fair to compare only the first three exercises, as they were identical in both tests. The results are provided in Figure 25.

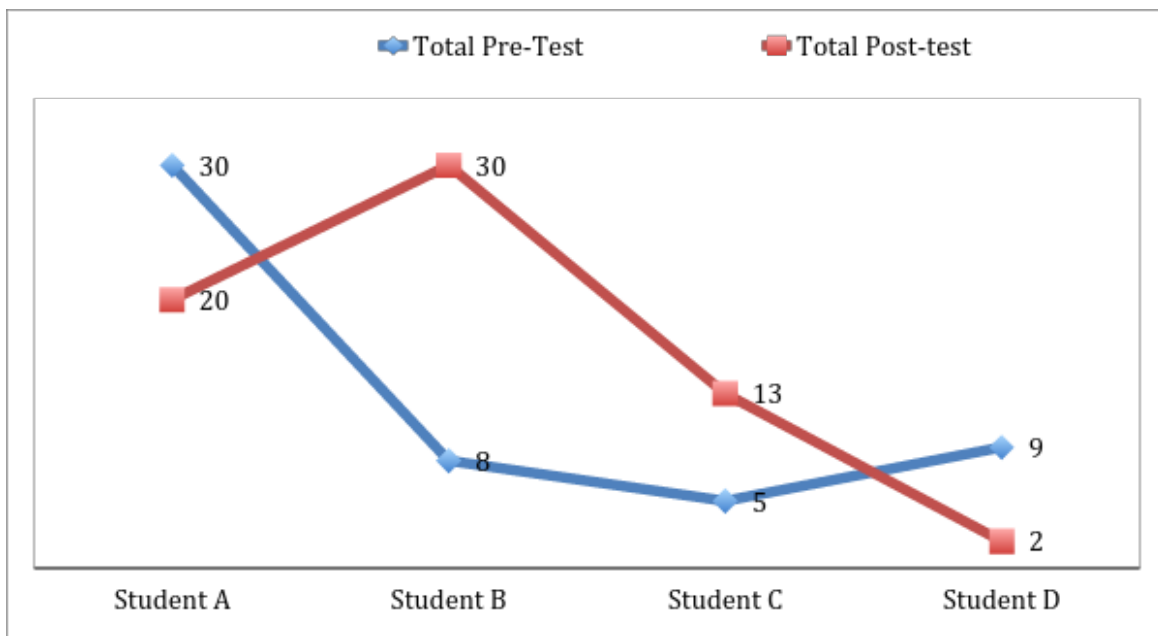


Figure 25: Total Results of the Pre-test and Post-test's Comprehension Exercises

The total results of the two tests will be discussed individually:

- Student A: this student had lowered the pre-test results in comparison to the post-test. As already mentioned in the introduction of the current section, it is suspected that this student had some contact with the terminology before doing the pre-test or had received some outside help, as the researcher was not in class that day and another teacher was in charge of handing the test to the student. However, this learner has scored high in the post-test, showing a good command of the target contents. This might be so due to the attitude, motivation and practice that the student had shown during the sessions.
- Student B: this learner obtained the highest score in the post-test. As well, it can be seen a great increment between the pre-test's results in comparison to the post-test's. It was observed that this student followed well the sessions' procedures and activities. In addition, this student demonstrated a positive attitude towards learning English and this might have led to a positive outcome in the post-test.
- Student C: as already mentioned, it is believed that this student had a greater degree of Down syndrome compared to the other students. In spite of this fact, the learner experimented a positive evolution as regards to the pre-test and post-test. The score was 8 points higher than in the pre-test and the reason why this increment was produced is due to the motivation that the student had regarding the learning of English, which this student expressed on several occasions. As well, the use of flashcards was key in the process of learning the contents, as this student had hearing difficulties.
- Student D: this student decreased by 7 points between the pre-test and the post-test. The evidence suggested that he might not be as interested as the other

learners in learning English, as this student did not do any homework sheet. Moreover, during the session the student's work was appropriate but it is true that this learner did not engage as well as the other learners in the communicative exercises but, still, student D showed a positive attitude during the four sessions. In other words, it could be suggested that this student might have performed poorly in the post-test due to a lack of interest in the subject or because this learner might have been distracted during the post-test.

4.4. Pre-questionnaire

The pre-questionnaire had the purpose of finding out the students' attitudes and likes of English. The results related to the yes or no questions: (1), (3), (4), (5), (7), (8) and (9), are presented and commented below (see Figure 26).

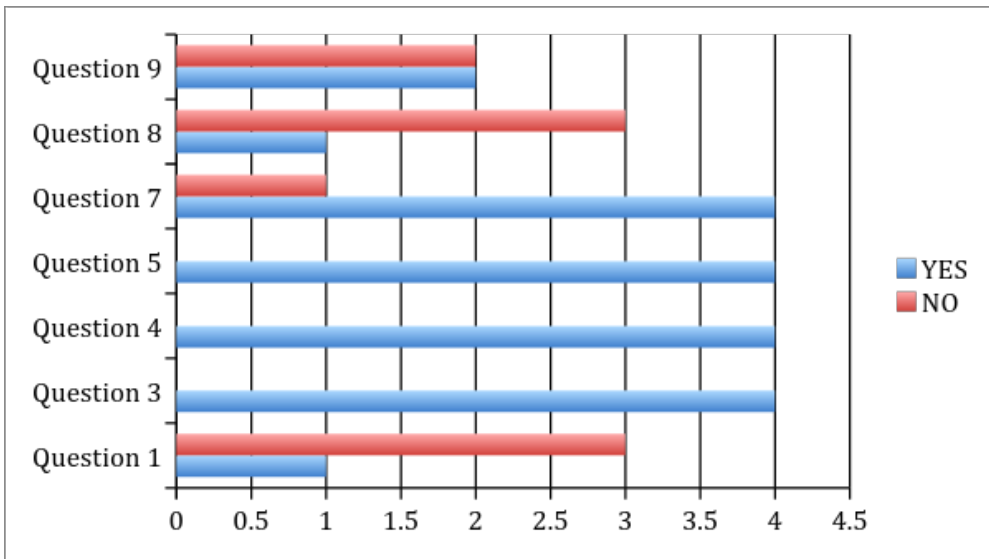


Figure 26: Yes/No questions of the Pre-test

In sum, the main findings in these questions are that the students place interaction as key in learning another language and regarding the presence of two teachers, they

found that it would have several benefits such as better concentration, comprehension and attention. It is worth commenting that only one student had thought about studying English whereas the rest had not. A possible explanation for this negative result is that DS students had been prevented from studying a second or foreign language (Feltmate & Bird 2008), therefore some of them might have not seen themselves as possible students of English as a foreign language. These five sessions could have contributed positively to change their perspective about themselves; enhancing their own self-image.

As far as the other questions are concerned, in question (2) all the students recognized that the study of English is important nowadays. In question (6) the most liked topics were the following: sports, trips and the office. A student suggested that a possible topic to cover in the English class was the family. The reason why they might have chosen these themes is because they are more familiar with them, as some of the students said that they practiced sports regularly and they are used to traveling abroad. The motivation behind the choice of the topic of the office is due to the current enrolment in the Promentor program, as it prepared them to develop their professional careers. Finally, the last question touched upon was the notion of identity, which is divided into six subsections. Overall, the learners activate positive identities, as they felt happy and relaxed in a foreign place. The students commented that they always saw themselves with either family or friends, none of them could imagine themselves being alone. In addition, three students visualize that what surrounded them were people and places and they were wearing clothes and they were visiting the places. Conversely, one learner answered that she was “wearing her mother”, this fact seems to highlight the idea that this student needs to be with other people. One student also commented that she was studying and doing

homework. Moreover, the students also activated social identities as they visualized themselves being with people.

4.5. Post-questionnaire

As already mentioned, this second questionnaire aimed to find out the students' opinion towards the English sessions and if they had changed or developed their attitude to English. The results are presented and commented below in different formats: the open questions, which required providing an elaborated answer, are described first whereas the closed Yes/No question are shown by means of a graph (see Figure 27).

- Question (1): the four students gave a positive answer in relation to the future continuation of the study of English, their main reasons being that they liked this language and they wanted to learn more. This could be due to the fact that the students discovered that they could study English with a suitable and adapted input and methodology.
- Question (2): the participants acknowledged that they liked the sessions as these helped them to learn the contents and, also, because the sessions focused on interaction among the students. In the pre-questionnaire, the students also pinpointed that they would rather work in groups, thus their likes were taken into account and that is why they had a positive feedback on the sessions.
- Question (4): in this question the students had to mark what contents they enjoyed. Unanimously, all the students indicated that they enjoyed all the activities offered during the sessions. This might be so due to the contents' design according to their preferences, as well as the use of different resources and type of

activities, which were created taking as a basis their learning characteristics; that is, the use of visual cues or the application of communicative tasks.

- Question (8): the four students imagined themselves talking in English in a foreign country. However, different degrees could be spotted, as one student felt somehow insecure whereas another student said that s/he visualized him/herself as “the best talking in English”. It can be commented that this question relied on the students’ personalities, so it varied depending on the students’ character. In fact, the four students activated the “possible speaker of English” identity.
- Question (9): two students suggested that they would like to be given more support during the learning of English whereas one student wanted to focus more on oral production, as her goal is to be able to express herself in that language. This last student also pointed out that she liked the classes, as she could directly participate. Regarding the suggestions made by the students, they will be taken into account for future research in the field.

Questions (3), (5), (6) and (7) are presented below:

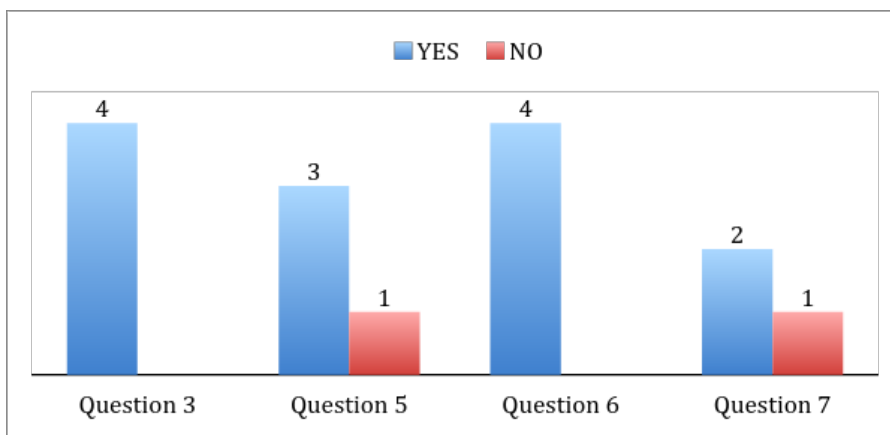


Figure 27: Yes/No questions of the Post-test

It is important to comment that question (7) is not valid in one student's response as the two options were marked. As commented in question (8), questions (5) and (7) are closely related to personal preferences, hence the students answered according to their personality. However, the negative answers in these two questions might lead to develop more support in the oral skill.

4.6. Overall result and discussion

In sum, the results of each section have led to answer the research questions provided in the introduction. Consequently, it has been seen that the use of visual cues helped the students to learn the contents and, also, facilitated the completion of some exercises such as in Homework three or the two first activities in the two tests. Moreover, it seemed that the use of the L1 in class and in the development of the exercises was a beneficial teaching technique. It helped the students to comprehend better the meaning of the terms and expressions by relating them to the L1 equivalent. As seen in the post-questionnaire and directly observed from the students, the activities that motivated them were the ones in which interaction was required such as the mini-play. As well, the activity that promoted identity construction; that is, the role-play exercise, was favourable for the students as not only did it make them be motivated during the set up and the procedure but they learnt the contents in a different way, which resulted in a good teaching strategy. In addition, the three research hypotheses have been confirmed by the investigation's findings, namely: (1) DS students can learn English as a FL if there is a mixed methodology approach and the teaching practice is adapted to their abilities; (2) DS students will be more motivated to learn English if their preferences are considered in

the design and plan of the class; and (3) Activities that involve trying out identities, such as role-play, will have a positive effect on content learning.

Nevertheless, it has been found that the exercises' headings should enunciate only one task, as for instance most of the students forgot to do the second task in the first exercise of Homework One.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has aimed at investigating vocabulary learning in English by young adults with Down syndrome. More specifically, the aims of the investigation were threefold:

- (1) To examine the acquisition of English vocabulary as a foreign language by Down syndrome students.
- (2) To discover what DS students' preferences are towards English learning.
- (3) To provide instructors with some resources and teaching techniques for English vocabulary teaching to DS learners.

In order to reach these objectives, a series of materials have been designed and adapted following the counselling and learning profile of DS students (Buckley 1993; Rondal 1995; Chapman 1997; DSAWM 2010; Polišenská & Kapalková 2014). As seen in the previous section, the analysis and results of the resources employed seem to confirm the stated hypotheses. They also provide the answers to the established research questions, which will be repeated here for the sake of clarity:

1. Will visual support be effective in teaching contents?

The use of visual support has been effective in the process of teaching the contents, as it had demonstrated positive outcomes in the exercises sheets (worksheets and homework) and in the post-test.

2. Will the use of the L1 be a beneficial teaching technique?

As the learners had none or basic knowledge of English, the use of L1 as a teaching technique has been beneficial as it provided a useful resource when telling the students the words' exact meaning.

3. Is there any kind of activities and/or content that motivates these students more?

The kind of activities that were motivational to the students were the ones that required interaction among the group members such as the second activities in worksheets one and two and the mini-play.

4. Are activities that involve identity construction favourable for them?

The activities that involve identity construction are favourable for them in more than one way. In other words, the use of this kind of activities (e.g. role-play), seem to motivate them at the same time as the students learnt different expressions.

However, this dissertation encountered some limitations mainly regarding the search of an institution that was willing to implement 5 sessions of English directed to Down syndrome students. As this process took a great amount of time, the study was carried out only on Mondays during 8 weeks, when a longer period might have offered better results. Another drawback was the limited size of the sample in two major senses: first, there was not a control group and, second, it hindered further generalizations.

Besides, it must be emphasised that further research in this field needs to be done. First, it should be considered that a longitudinal study on students with Down syndrome and the learning of English as a foreign language is required. Secondly and closely linked to the prior, an investigation that proposes the elaboration of a specific methodology taking into consideration DS students' characteristics, needs and likes would be essential. Finally, the outline, design and application of some policies in the acquisition of English as a foreign language by Down syndrome students is also required.

Overall, the author of this dissertation strongly believes that people with Down syndrome are capable of learning English as a foreign language if, and only if, their learning needs are considered in the creation of the lesson. As Wittgenstein (1922) claims: *the limits of my language are the limits of my world*.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE



QUESTIONNAIRE

(This anonymous questionnaire is part of a practical research for the MA's dissertation of MA in English Linguistics: New Applications and International Communication of Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Age _____

Male/ Female

1. Have you ever thought about studying English as a foreign language?

Yes No

2. From 0 to 5, being 0 not important and 5 essential, how important do you consider to be the study of English?

0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Would you like to relate with people from other nationalities in English?

Yes No

4. Within in the English class, do you prefer group activities and why? Briefly explain your answer.

Yes:

No:

5. Would you like that two teachers teach the English class? Briefly explain your answer.

Yes:

No:

6. What topics would you like to be covered in the English class? Number the topics in your preferred order (1, 2, 3).

Daily Routines	
Culture	
Sports	
Office	
Urban life	
Tips (how to organise, order something in a restaurant)	
Others (specify):	

7. Would you like to use English when travelling abroad?

Yes No

8. Would you like to watch films in English?

Yes No

9. Would you like to understand English songs?

Yes No

10. Finally, close your eyes and imagine:

- How do you see yourself in a trip abroad?
- Who are you with?
- What do you see there?
- What are you wearing?
- What are you doing or are you about to do?
- How do you feel?



FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

(This anonymous questionnaire is part of a practical research for the MA's dissertation of MA in English Linguistics: New Applications and International Communication of Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Age _____

Male/ Female

1. After attending the English sessions, would you like to continue studying English as a foreign language?

Yes, because _____

Yes, but _____

No, because _____

2. Did you like how the English classes were taught?

Yes, because _____

Yes, but _____

No, because _____

3. Did you feel motivated during the sessions?

Yes

No

4. Tick the contents that you enjoyed the most during the English class:

Clothes and personal belongings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sightseeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Mini-Play	<input type="checkbox"/>
Las presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others:	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Can you imagine yourself travelling abroad?

Yes

No

6. Do you feel motivated to meet people from that country?

Yes

No

7. Do you feel more comfortable talking in English than at the beginning of the sessions?

Yes

No

8. How do you imagine yourself talking in English in that country?

9. Do you have any improvement suggestions?

APPENDIX TWO

WORKSHEET ONE

VOCABULARY LIST: CLOTHES & PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- CLOTHES:

Jacket =

Jumper =

Jeans =

Pyjama =

Raincoat =

Sandals =

Shirt =

Shorts =

Skirt =

Socks =

T-Shirt =

Trainers =

- PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

Flight ticket =

ID card =

Makeup =

Mobile charger =

Money =

Passport =

CLOTHES

1. In groups, decide 10 items that you all will bring in your suitcase. For this, you can consult the vocabulary list.



PERSONAL
BELONGINGS

NAME:

DATE:

WORKSHEET TWO

VOCABULARY LIST: SIGHTSEEING AND VERBS

- **SIGHTSEEING:**

Art gallery =

Bridge =

Castle =

Cathedral =

Fountain =

Hotel =

Monument =

Museum =

Palace =

Park =

Port =

Square =

Statue =

Tower =

- **VERBS:**

Book =

Buy a ticket =

See =

Take pictures =

Walk =

Take the train/bus =

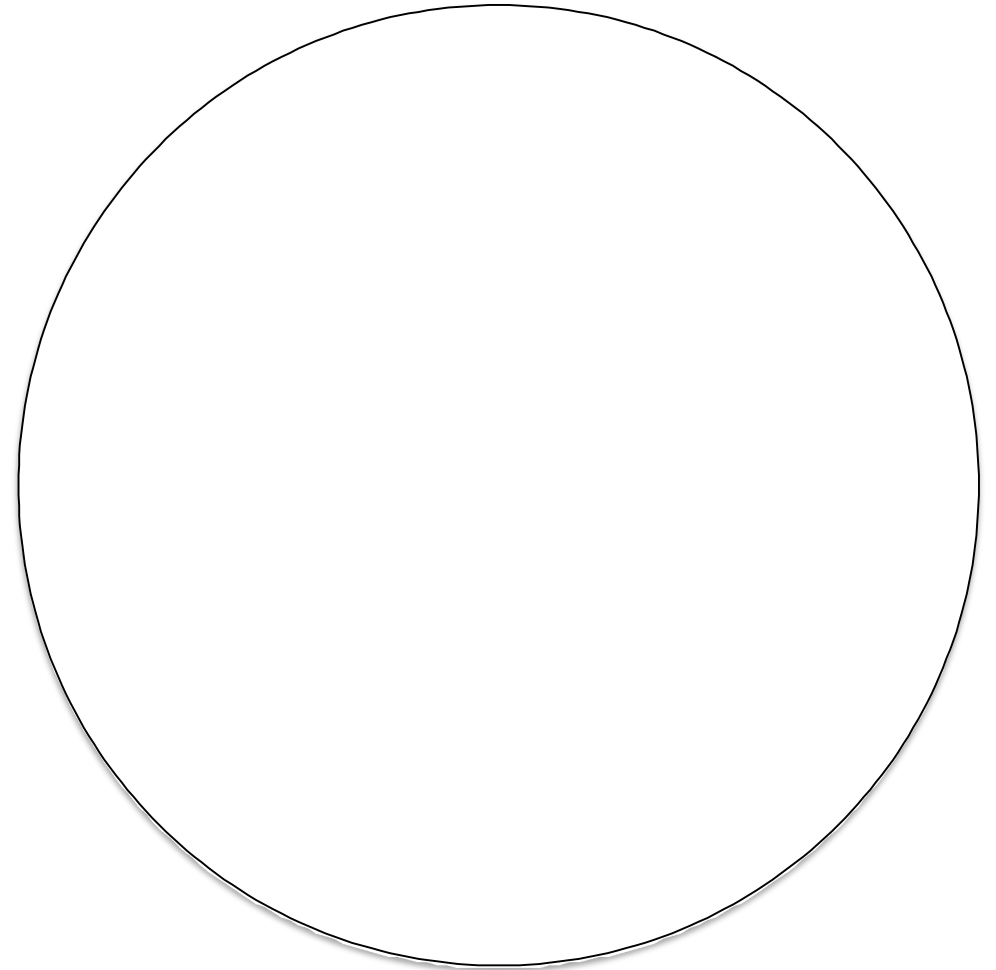
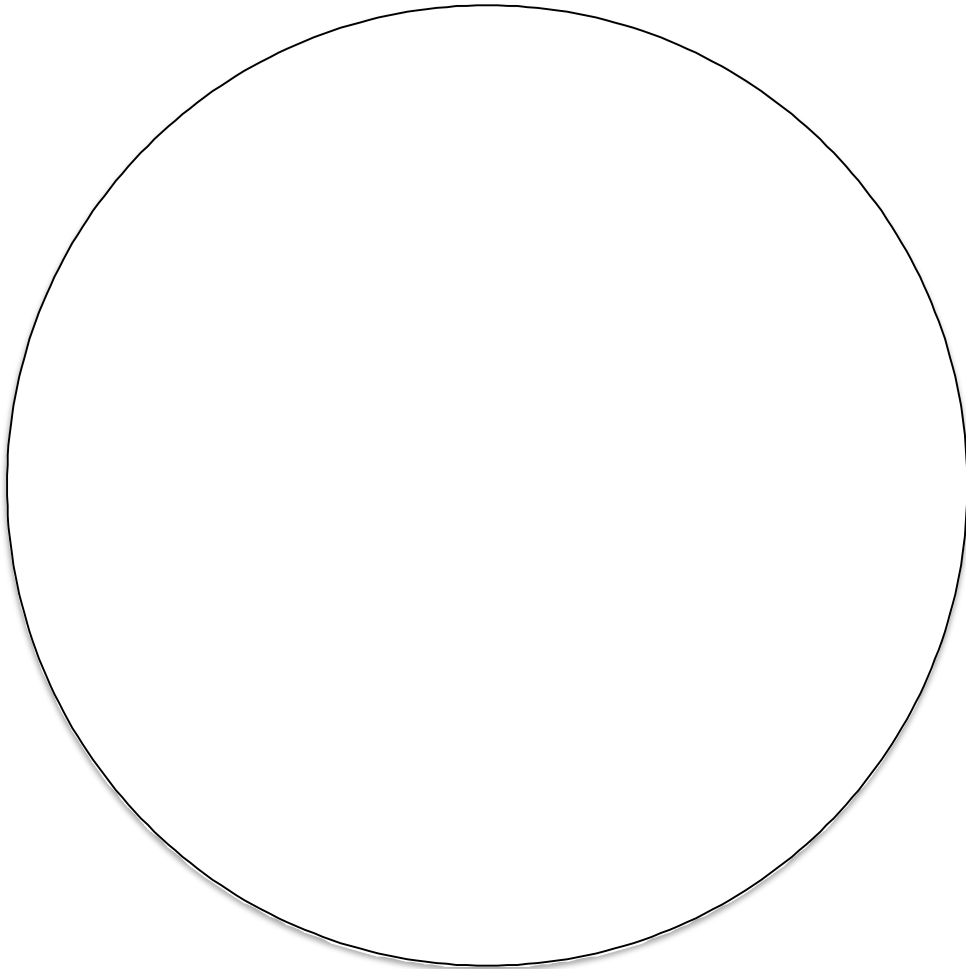
NAME:

SIGHTSEEING

DATE:

VERBS

2. In your group, discuss the places that you will visit in your country and what actions you will do there. For this, you can consult the vocabulary and the main attractions list.



NAME:

DATE:

WORKSHEET THREE



1. Translate and order the following dialogue:

Yes, sure	
I will eat fish and chips, please	
Yes, sure	
Anything else?	
Good morning! Yes, please. Could you bring me a glass of water, please?	
Perfect	
Could you bring me the bill, please?	
Hello, do you want something to eat or drink?	

1-

2-

3-

4-

5-

6-

7-

8-

NAME:

DATE:

→ Can you think one more question and answer or a sentence that can be said in this place?

1.

2.

2. Mini-play!

Instructions:

- **You have to decide which role you are going to perform (waiter/waitress/customers) and write it down so you won't forget.**
- **You can modify the given dialogue. If you do so, you must write it in English and you can include past learnt vocabulary. If you have any doubt, the teacher will help you.**
- **You must rehearse the play, as you will perform it to the rest of the class next Monday.**

NAME:

DATE:

WORKSHEET FOUR

1. Write the meaning of the underlined expressions:

Basic vocabulary and expressions in a restaurant in London

1. Hello, do you want something to eat or drink?
2. Good morning! Yes, please. Could you bring me a glass of water, please?
3. Yes, sure
4. Anything else?
5. I will eat fish and chips, please
6. Perfect
7. Could you bring me the bill, please?
8. Yes, sure

Basic vocabulary and expressions in a museum in London

1. Good afternoon, how much is the ticket?
2. Hello, it is £10.00
3. Where is the exhibition?
4. It is on the left
5. It is on the right
6. Thank you
7. Do you know where is the paintings and monuments?
8. It is on the second floor
9. Thank you

NAME:

DATE:

Basic vocabulary and expressions in the underground in London

1. Hello, could I have a ticket, please?
2. Good morning! Single or return?
3. Return, please
4. Thank you
5. Do you know how to go to the Big Ben?
6. Yes, you have to go to Embankment and then take the yellow or green line.
7. Thank you so much, goodbye
8. Bye!

Basic vocabulary and expressions in the street in London

1. Hello! Sorry, do you know how to go to the London Eye?
2. Good evening! Yes, you have to turn right in this street and then turn left
3. Could I take the bus or the underground?
4. Yes, but it is not far from here. You can see the monuments.
5. Goodbye, thank you
6. You're welcome! Bye!

NAME:

DATE:

HOMework ONE

1. Find 7 words related to the topic of clothes and personal belongings and translate them.

J	H	I	Y	L	H	H	C	P
E	S	D	E	V	R	U	J	A
A	F	C	N	S	O	C	K	S
N	V	A	O	C	Z	X	E	S
S	Q	R	M	D	G	H	B	P
H	M	D	S	H	I	R	T	O
T	R	A	I	N	E	R	S	R
S	F	R	M	S	K	I	R	T
P	Y	J	A	M	A	N	I	P

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

NAME: A _ T _ _ _ L _ _ _ R _ _

_ E _

DATE: B _ _ _ K

2. Complete with the missing letters and provide its meaning in Spanish.
_ A S _ _ _ E H _ T _ _ _ P _ _ _ K

MU _ _ _ _ M

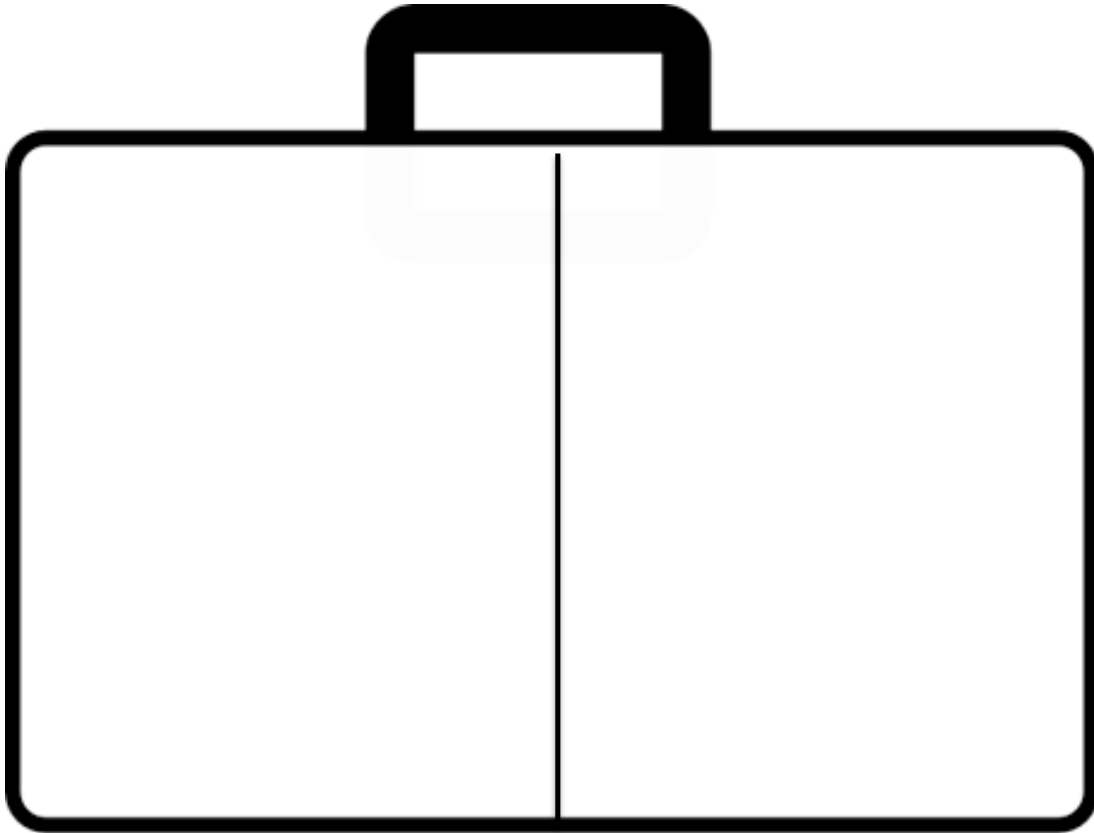
_ Q _ _ _ _ E

_ A _ K

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

HOMEWORK TWO

1. Pack your suitcase! Decide which 10 items, clothes (5) and personal belongings (5), you are taking to go abroad.



2. Order the letters:

tar agllrye → A G

fanuotin → F

tlreadhea → C

qrseua → S

umntnone → M

ese → S

Koob → B

HOMEWORK THREE

1. Write the English equivalent for the following words:

Andar:

Billete de avión:

Castillo:

Chaqueta:

Chubasquero:

Coger el tren/autobús:

Deportivas:

Falda:

Fuente:

Gira a la derecha:

Gira a la izquierda:

Hacer fotos:

Hacer la maleta:

Jersey:

Maquillaje:

Palacio:

Puente:

Puerto:

Reservar:

Ver:

2. What is this? Write their name in English:



APPENDIX THREE

Session number (date)

- General aim.
 - Particular aim.
- Main methodologies or approaches.
- Teaching techniques.
- Time of the session: (x) warm up and (x) for the core of the session.
- Skills.
- Comments:

Warm-up activities (x)

- Agenda of the contents
- Revision of the contents by a game format (when possible)

Set up and closure (x)

- Elicitation of vocabulary / Learner-centred activities
- Explanation + worksheet
- (Revision of that day's contents)
- Closure: positive feedback

1st Session (13/03/2017)

- General aim: to learn vocabulary related to travelling
 - Particular aim: to learn at least 10 words belonging to the field of clothes and personal belongings in order to pack the suitcase for a trip. To practise pronunciation and speaking skills. Finally, to start making the poster for the final presentation.
- Main methodology: mixed methodology containing different approaches such as the following:
 - Habit formation → the students will know that the lesson will begin with an agenda, oral exercises and more complex tasks. When the tasks are completed, the groups will have 15 minutes to plan and design the final presentation, so in the last session the selected city will be presented to the rest of the students. At the end of the lesson, a revision of all the contents seen in class.
 - Communicative approach → they will be encouraged to engage in speaking activities. As well, they will need to interact with the rest of the group in order to practise the vocabulary.
 - Learner-centred → they will decide which items are going to be included in one exercise and in the final presentation.
 - Task-based → the learners will acquire the contents by doing different kind of tasks.
 - Grammar translation → the words are going to be translated into Spanish for a better comprehension of the meaning.
- Teaching techniques: the strategies need to remain the same in every session as the investigation aims to create a class routine.
 - Use flash cards to introduce the vocabulary
 - Repetition of the procedures and scaffolding when necessary.
- Time: 30' addressed for the pre-test and 60' for the core of the session.
- Skills: vocabulary and speaking
- Comments: the students share their L1 and the session will be taught in Spanish. The students will be organised in groups. There are low expectations that the students will fully know every meaning of the target words in one session.

Anyhow, the acquisition of some of them will be highly rewarding for both the teacher and the student. In addition, the first half hour will be devoted to completing the pre-test, which will serve as a tool to measure any progress in the learning of the contents.

Warm-up (10')

- (5') The teacher starts greeting in English and displays on the blackboard the agenda, which contains the contents that need to be covered during the first session.
- (5') After this, the students have to discuss some pictures displayed on the blackboard, so they will know which country and city they are going to address in the presentation about the current unit: "A 3-day holiday abroad". This warm-up activity will be done in their L1, as they have an elementary level of English.

Set up (50')

- (10') The teacher elicits from the students four items that they would include when packing the suitcase. After this, s/he tells the students that, when packing the suitcase, it is necessary to differentiate between clothes and personal belongings (this distinction is made with the objective of classifying into categories the kind of vocabulary to be taught). Hence, the teacher encourages the students to say some kind of these words and why they are going to be useful in their trip.
- (20') After this, the teacher shows the vocabulary using the flashcards (see Appendix). The students have to repeat the word and the teacher try to elicit the meaning in Spanish. While the teacher provides the item in English and Spanish, the students have to write down the meaning in the vocabulary list provided in WORKSHEET ONE.
- (15') This time, the students have to complete with the rest of the group the first exercise proposed in WORKSHEET ONE, in which they have to decide 10 items to bring with them on their trip to London.
- (5') At the end of the class, the teacher reviews some of the words and ends with positive feedback in order to motivate the students. If the time comes up, this revision will be done as a warm up in the next session.

2nd Session (27/03/2017)

- General aim: to learn words and verbs related to travelling
 - Particular aim: to learn and identify nouns and verbs related to the topic of travelling.
- Main methodology: mixed methodology containing different approaches such as the following:
 - Habit formation → the students will know that the lesson will begin with an agenda, oral exercises and more complex tasks. When the tasks are completed, the groups will have 15 minutes to plan and design the final presentation, so in the last session the selected city will be presented to the rest of the students. At the end of the lesson, a revision of all the contents seen in class.
 - Communicative approach → they will be encouraged to engage in speaking activities. As well, they will need to interact with the rest of the group in order to practise the vocabulary.
 - Learner-centred → they will decide which items are going to be included in one exercise and in the final presentation.
 - Task-based → the learners will acquire the contents by doing different kind of tasks.
 - Grammar translation → the words are going to be translated into Spanish for a better comprehension of the meaning.
- Teaching techniques: the strategies need to remain the same in every session as the investigation aims to create a class routine.
 - Use flash cards to introduce the vocabulary
 - Follow the procedure of matching and naming
 - Matching: the name of the item remains written and the students need to write the name of the words. After this, they have to match it with the correct picture. Remember not to remove the word name the first time they do it. After this first time, the name has to be removed and they have to take turns to match the words.
 - Repetition of the procedures and scaffolding when necessary.
- Time: 20' for warm up and 70' for the core of the session.

- Skills: vocabulary, listening and speaking.
- Comments: the students share their L1 and the session will be taught in Spanish. The students will be organised in groups. There are low expectations that the students will fully know every meaning of the target words in one session. Anyhow, the acquisition of some of them will be highly rewarding for both the teacher and the student. In addition, the first half hour will be devoted to completing the pre-test, which will serve as a tool to measure any progress in the learning of the contents.

Warm-up (20')

- (5') The teacher starts greeting in English and displays on the blackboard the agenda, which contains the contents that need to be covered during the first session.
- (15') After this, the students have to review the contents of the previous session (i.e. clothes and personal belongings). This is going to be done in a game format. With an iPad application (Picaa), the students have to hear, first, the pronunciation and, then, they have to match the word in English with the picture.

Set up (70')

- (10') The teacher elicits from the students four verbs (and verb collocations) and places that they would go to visit when travelling abroad. They have to discuss this in groups and, after this, they have to report back with these items. In order to run smoothly and clarify the activity, the teacher proposes one example of each (museum and buy a ticket).
- (30') After this, the teacher shows the vocabulary related to sightseeing and verbs using the flashcards (see Appendix). The students have to repeat the word and the students try to guess the English word from the WORKSHEET TWO. The teacher only intervenes to give positive and negative feedback and when a word is not known, s/he says the word in English and they have to find it in the list.
- (20') This time, the students have to complete with the rest of the group the first exercise proposed in WORKSHEET TWO, in which they have to decide 16

places to visit on their trip to London and try to match these places with a verb or verb collocation. For this activity, they will be given in the worksheet the major attractions in London and the London underground tourist map. They have to choose up to 10 monuments or places and try to relate some map. This activity relates with the final presentation in the 4th session, so this will be the route they are going to follow in their trip to London. The teacher should monitor the activity in order to scaffold when necessary, if they do not require any help, the group will do the activity autonomously.

- (10') At the end of the class, the teacher reviews some of the words of this session. After that, s/he gives some homework (HOMEWORK ONE) in which they are going to revise the contents of the previous session and this one. S/he ends with positive feedback in order to motivate the students. The teacher will collect this worksheet and s/he is going to correct it. If the time comes up, this revision will be done as a warm up in the next session.

3rd Session (03/04/2017)

- General aim: to introduce speaking activities and to learn fixed polite expressions in the contexts of a restaurant, a museum, underground or the street.
 - Particular aim: to be able to adapt themselves in formal and informal context when travelling and know some cultural notions in the target country.
- Main methodology: mixed methodology containing different approaches such as the following:
 - Habit formation → the students will know that the lesson will begin with an agenda, oral exercises and more complex tasks. When the tasks are completed, the groups will have 15 minutes to plan and design the final presentation, so in the last session the selected city will be presented to the rest of the students. At the end of the lesson, a revision of all the contents seen in class.
 - Communicative approach → they will be encouraged to engage in speaking activities. As well, they will need to interact with the rest of the group in order to practise the vocabulary.
 - Learner-centred → they will decide which items are going to be included in one exercise and in the final presentation.
 - Task-based → the learners will acquire the contents by doing different kind of tasks.
 - Grammar translation → the words are going to be translated into Spanish for a better comprehension of the meaning.
- Teaching techniques: in this session, the flashcards cannot be used as the vocabulary is going to be learnt in context and they are fixed expressions and questions. Consequently, the teaching technique in this stage is repetition.
 - Repetition of the procedures and scaffolding when necessary.
- Time: 20' for warm up and 70' for the core of the session.
- Skills: vocabulary, listening and speaking.
- Comments: the students share their L1 and the session will be taught in Spanish. The students will be organised in groups. There are low expectations that the students will fully know every meaning of the target words in one session.

Anyhow, the acquisition of some of them will be highly rewarding for both the teacher and the student. Besides, the teacher will only intervene when necessary in order to aim for a learner-centred approach.

Warm-up (20')

- (5') The teacher starts greeting in English and displays on the blackboard the agenda, which contains the contents that need to be covered during the first session.
- (15') After this, the students have to review the contents of the previous sessions (i.e. clothes, personal belongings, words and expressions related to the city). This is going to be done in a game format. With an iPad application (Picaa), the students have to hear, first, the pronunciation and, then, they have to match the words in English with the picture.

Set up (70')

- (15') The students have to choose in which setting they would like to be in London (in the street, in a restaurant, in the museum or in the underground). For this purpose, the teacher has prepared a worksheet containing the main utterances that can happen in these settings and s/he has to explain, as a kind of curiosity, the importance of knowing few polite strategies when travelling abroad but without generalising too much in order to avoid stereotypes (e.g. the importance of saying thank you and please in England, to keep some distance when talking to English people, etc.).
- (20') After this, the students have to order the short text (which is going to be same as the one exemplifying the expressions in the previous stage) and, doing so, they might acquire the meaning of the expressions because the teacher will provide the meaning in the L1 and they might identify the question-answer format. After this exercise, the students have to suggest at least two questions and answers or sentences related to the chosen setting. In this activity, the teacher must scaffold with translation, as they might not know how the meaning and how it is said in English.
- (25') This time, the students are going to play a role-play game. They have to assign the characters to their partners and they have to adapt or modify some

parts of the given text, if they wish. Then, they rehearse their part of the text because it is going to be as a mini-play in which they have to act, which is going to be set in the 4th session as part of the final presentation. The teacher can monitor and help the students during the activity, if they require some scaffolding.

- (10') At the end of the class, the teacher reviews some of the words of this session. After that, s/he gives some homework (HOMEWORK TWO) in which they are going to revise the contents of the previous sessions and this one. S/he ends with positive feedback in order to motivate the students. The teacher will collect this worksheet in order to correct it. If there is not enough time, this revision will be done as a warm up in the next session.

4th Session (24/04/2017)

- General aim: to review the contents taught in the previous sessions and to do the students' presentations.
 - Particular aim: to give a general revision of the main contents so that the students can better prepare the exam and to spot possible difficulties regarding vocabulary comprehension.
- Main methodology: mixed methodology containing different approaches such as the following:
 - Habit formation → the students will know that the lesson will begin with an agenda, oral exercises and more complex tasks. When the tasks are completed, the groups will have 40 minutes to show their presentations. At the end of the lesson, a revision of all the contents seen in class.
 - Communicative approach → they will be required to produce the presentation in English, at least the vocabulary learnt. As well, they will need to interact with the rest of the group in order to practise the presentation.
 - Learner-centred → they will decide how they are going to present the tasks.
 - Task-based → the learners will revise the contents by doing different kind of tasks.
 - Grammar translation → the words are going to be translated into Spanish for a better comprehension of the meaning.
- Teaching techniques: in this session, the flashcards cannot be used as the vocabulary is going to be learnt in context and they are fixed expressions and questions. Consequently, the teaching technique in this stage is repetition.
 - Repetition of the procedures and scaffolding when necessary.
- Time: 20' for warm up and 70' for the core of the session.
- Skills: vocabulary, listening and speaking.
- Comments: the students share their L1 and the session will be taught in Spanish. The students will be organised, first, in groups and, later, they are going to be together in the class. There are low expectations that the students will pronounce correctly the words and expressions. Anyhow, the comprehension of these is

what these sessions aimed for. Besides, the teacher will only intervene when necessary in order to focus on a learner-centred approach.

Warm-up (20')

- (5') The teacher starts greeting in English and displays on the blackboard the agenda, which contains the programme for the session and collect the homework from the previous session and gives the new ones.
- (15') After this, the students have to review the contents of the previous sessions (i.e. clothes, personal belongings, words and expressions related to the city). This is going to be done in a game format. With the online programme "Kahoot!" they will first see the picture of the target word they will have to choose the correct one among three options

Set up (70')

- (20') The students have to rehearse the presentation. In order to do show, they have to take the second exercise from WORKSHEETS ONE AND TWO and WORKSHEET THREE. They have to plan how they are going to organise the presentation, as in the WORKSHEET THREE they have to explain the meaning of the dialogue, so they switch the roles, i.e. the presenting group are acting as teachers.
- (40') After the planning of the presentation, the groups give the presentation in which the teacher can only intervene if the students require so. Meanwhile, the students have complete WORKSHEET FOUR in which the transcription of the last part of the presentation is shown, only if they do not know some of the expressions related to the play. In order to give them support, key expressions are highlighted because they are going to be part of the exam. When all of them have finished, the teacher gives feedback on their work. If this is negative, s/he has to try to soften it because the students should not feel demotivated.
- (10') At the end of the class and if there is enough time, the teacher reviews some of the words of this session with the iPad application "Picaa" and ends with a positive motivational feedback.

5th Session (08/05/2017)

- General aim: to complete the exam in which all the contents are covered.
 - Particular aim: to encourage errorless learning.
- Time: 60' for the exam and 30' for the exam correction.
- Skills: vocabulary production and comprehension.
- Comments: the students share their L1 and the session will be taught in Spanish. The students will be together in the group and the class is going to be restructured so that the students can do the exam independently. The teacher should monitor and scaffold when necessary. They will be given the grades at the end of the class, so they will see their progress and can request for any further clarification on the topic.

Exam (60')





- The exam is designed in a way that the students can show their comprehension, association and production of the contents, as this will be part of the grade. During the exam, the students are not allowed to talk to each other and the teacher can help them if any difficulty arises. However, s/he must not tell any answers.

APPENDIX FOUR

PRE-TEST

1. Complete the chart:

Jacket	Jumper	Jeans	Pyjama
Raincoat	Sandals	Shirt	Shorts
Skirt	Socks	T-Shirt	Trainers

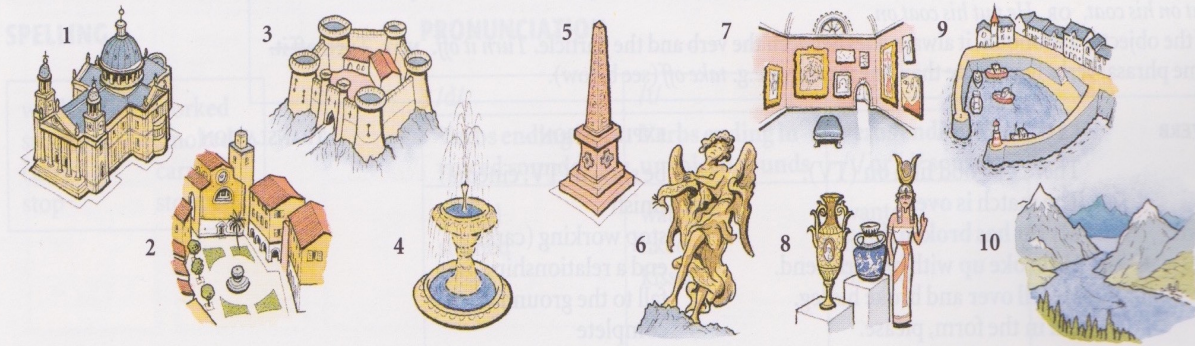
			
			
			

2. Match the words and the pictures¹:

TOURISM AND TRAVELLING

A Tourism

WHAT TO SEE ON HOLIDAY



Match the words and pictures. How do you pronounce them?

- a castle /'kɑ:sl/
- a cathedral /kə'θi:drəl/
- a fountain /'faʊntɪn/
- a monument /'mɒnjəmənt/
- a museum /mju:'ziəm/
- a port/harbour /'hɑ:bə/
- a square /skweə/
- a statue /'stætʃu:/
- an art gallery /'gæləri/
- the scenery /'si:nəri/

3. Match the words and expressions with its translation:

Book	Hacer la maleta
Take pictures	¿Me puede traer la cuenta, por favor?
See	Crucero
Pack the suitcase	Gira a la izquierda
Hotel	Reservar
Can I have the bill, please?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Cruise	Ver
Turn to the left	Gira a la derecha
Turn to the right	Hacer fotos
How much is this?	Hotel

¹ Oxenden, C. & Latham-Koenig, C. (2003). *English File. Intermediate student's book*. Oxford University Press.

POST-TEST

1. Complete the chart:

Jacket	Jumper	Jeans	Pyjama
Raincoat	Sandals	Shirt	Shorts
Skirt	Socks	T-Shirt	Trainers

2. Match the words and the pictures²:

TOURISM AND TRAVELLING

A Tourism

WHAT TO SEE ON HOLIDAY

Match the words and pictures. How do you pronounce them?




- a castle /'kɑ:sl/
- a cathedral /kə'θi:drəl/
- a fountain /'faʊntɪn/
- a monument /'mɒnjəmənt/
- a museum /mju:'ziəm/
- a port/harbour /'hɑ:bə/
- a square /skweə/
- a statue /'stætʃu:/
- an art gallery /'gæləri/
- the scenery /'si:nəri/

3. Match the words and expressions with its translation:

Book	Hacer la maleta
Take pictures	¿Me puede traer la cuenta, por favor?
See	Crucero
Pack the suitcase	Gira a la izquierda
Hotel	Reservar
Can I have the bill, please?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Cruise	Ver
Turn to the left	Gira a la derecha
Turn to the right	Hacer fotos
How much is this?	Hotel

² Oxenden, C. & Latham-Koenig, C. (2003). *English File. Intermediate student's book*. Oxford University Press.

4. Write the name of the following elements:

5. Write the name in English:

Puente:

Parque:

Palacio:

Torre:

Andar:

Coger el autobús/tren:

Comprar un ticket/entrada:

APPENDIX

FIVE

Traveling Lesson

Teacher Name: Laura Sicilia

Student Name:

Date: 08/06/2017

Total Score: ____/16

- Production: ____/4
- Comprehension: ____/4
- Teamwork: ____/4
- Individual work: ____/4

Teacher Comments:

	1	2	3	4
Production	There are frequent spelling errors.	There are many spelling errors.	Most words are spelled correctly.	All words spelled correctly, helping readers clearly understand the central idea.
Comprehension	The student does not know any of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows some of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows the meaning of most of the words and expressions of the lesson.	The student knows the meaning of all the words and expressions.
Teamwork	There was not any kind of interaction between the student and the group.	There was little interaction between the student and the group.	The student sometimes interacted with the group.	The student has collaborated with the group.
Individual work	The student did not show interest on the lesson and did not work properly.	The student showed little interest in learning the contents and rarely worked.	The student generally showed interest on the lesson and sometimes worked.	The student showed interest on the lesson and worked hard.

APPENDIX SIX

Class Blog

13/02/2017

This was the first day of the observation period. To set up the context, the students are attending a kind of working preparation. I could not observe how the English class is taught because the main teacher was away for a trip with other courses. However, there were two teachers in charge of the class and they talked about several life aspects of both, the teachers and the students. With this interaction, it could be seen how close the students are to the teachers, as they trust them. Within the class, the students have different preferences: most of them aim for getting a job while others prefer continuing studying. In addition, one striking comment was when they were complaining about some issues and one of the teachers replied: “you need to complaint as well, as long as it is a polite complaint”. The session ended when I present myself and the research that I am going to develop, they seemed very interested and I asked them if they want to collaborate with me and all of them said yes simultaneously. Finally, they introduced them and I found out that they all liked sports.

20/02/2017

In this second session of observation, two speakers were introducing a programme called “Gestiona” which is an opportunity for them to travel, to go on trips, to go out at nights, and so on. The majority of them, except two students, were attracted by this type of plan; however, all of them were enthusiastic about the trips around Spain and outside the country. With this talked, I could identify that the students considered social relationships as a primary issue in their lives, as they kept intriguing about whether their friends also could enrol in this programme. An important comment was made by one student while they are discussing about the fact that they have to be autonomous and to make decisions, this was the following: “you have to take initiative”.

At the end of the class, I could talk with the main teacher about the English classes and how he focused his session. He admitted having little command of this language as it is not his area of expertise. Regarding the students’ level of English, they have a low level of English. The objective of the English classes is to learn with games because the foundation has not yet found a proper methodology to implement in their classes and they believe that the classes need to be funny so that the students can engage with the

contents; consequently, the classes are designed according their preferences. The teacher acknowledged that the learners found problems in some language skills: writing and speaking, but despite of the speaking difficulties, he devotes some part of the classes on this skill because the learners enjoy this type of activities. Some of the topics covered in class are related to business (they are in this module to prepare for their future job), so the teacher explains some politeness strategies and they use TICs. As regards to the students, there are a lot of differences between the students, thus the teacher needs to scaffold them individually. Within the class, there are 13 students in which 4 are Down syndrome students that 9 learners have a limited intelligence. The reason why these two groups share the same classroom is due to inclusion. Finally, I asked the teacher whether in the foundation there is a team teaching approach and he replied that he is doing it with another teacher but they separate the class. In this, I open grounds for holding a team teaching with him when I implement the tasks.

27/02/2017

In today's session, the teacher began reviewing orally previous concepts belonging to the field of office stationary, that is, its pronunciation and their meaning in Spanish. When the students finished to reviewing the concepts, they played Kahoot! in which the teacher designed 10 questions in order to monitor how the students were doing in this topic. In addition, the translation was not provided just the image and they had to choose the correct answer. In the first option, among the answers was a Spanish term related to the matter and any of the students chose it. When the results were displayed, among the three winners was a student with Down syndrome (9/10), two the DS students were among the average (6-5/10) and the other student was at the bottom (2/10). With this, I also observed that this last student seemed not as motivated as the rest of his colleagues, I will try to figure out why.

After this game, the teacher commented that next session we would continue with the topic in the office but focusing on how to greet, introduce oneself and request something politely (depending on who one is addressing). They seemed very enthusiastic about dealing with these dimensions.

After that, the students played with their iPads to Doulingo, which gave them some scaffolding in other themes. While they were playing, the teachers (2 French and Italian

girls volunteers, the main teachers and I) discussed and organised next Monday session. We are going to hold a team teaching approach because the class is going to be divided into groups (3 students per teacher). In my group, the three students have Down syndrome due to the aim of my investigation. The objectives are going to be the following:

- To know how to introduce themselves in a formal context.
- To request and ask someone to do or get something.
- To try to make questions using the technique “las cajitas” which consists of writing five boxes and place each word in the right one (question word, auxiliaries, subject, main verb and complements).

The verbs intended to use in this session are the following: to be, give, need, use and can/could. This is going to last one hour approximately and they are going to present like a “mini play” playing different roles: the boss and two colleagues.

After the session, the four teachers are going to meet and evaluate the session, in order to spot both, strengths and weaknesses during the session.

06/03/2017

In this session, we were working the four teachers together. Right before we started, I wrote down on the blackboard the agenda (see sample session) for the session so the students know what we were doing that day.

First, the students filled in the questionnaires and after, we arranged the class into groups of 3's and we started the core of the session. During the procedure of the contents, it must be said that the learners only had minimal problems in identifying the meaning of “good afternoon” and “good evening” as in Spanish it is the same for both notions. In addition, the explanations were based mainly in repetition and translation so that they could comprehend better the senses of the words. When explaining, we wanted to make sure that they were learning the words so every now and then we asked for some meanings of the previous words. In order to show how questions with can/could are formed, we employ the resource of “5 boxes” (see sample session) in which they know that there are 5 empty spaces and one of them belong for the different elements presented in a question. Firstly, two examples were provided for them and after, the students have to come to the blackboard and place one item on the box and then they

had to choose a classmate and this had to do the same. Due to time limit, the presentations could not be done as the questionnaire took more time than expected.

After the session, the main teacher and I met and commented the session. We concluded that they students performed better than expected and the pace was fast so he was surprised that they learnt a lot.

13/03/2017

In this session, we followed the steps that were planned in the document entitled “1st session”. The activities ran smoothly and slowly so the final revision activity could not be done. Therefore, we will begin in the next session by reviewing the contents of the first session in a game format. What is worth mentioning is that the pace needs to remain slow for the core activities (i.e. the explanation and the exercises related to the explanation). Another issue is that the students seem more focused when the teacher talks. In addition, if they are working together with the group, the teacher needs to monitor them as they can loose concentration easily but this teamwork seems to be fruitful for them, as they become used to cooperate for their future job.

27/03/2017

In the second session, we followed the steps that were planned in the document entitled “2nd session” the students learnt the names of some city places that they might encounter while travelling abroad. The procedure was changed in order to see which technique they liked the most, and the deductive method seemed easier and more fruitful in terms of remembering better the words. It was observed that this kind of activities take more time than expected, so the teacher had to make it quicker in that the session is fully covered. As regard to teamwork, they helped each other, for instance, one student found himself lost in one word and, immediately, his classmates said in which word we were. During this session, the researcher paid attention also to the pronunciation and difficulties in certain words such as “bridge” and “cathedral” were found and it was most likely due to the physiognomy of their speech organs.

03/04/17

In the third session of the research we followed the steps that were planned in the document entitled “3rd session” and it is worth mentioning that, despite of its

complexity, all the contents were covered without any rush. The activities were completed on time and there was some extra time in which the students asked the teacher about the contents that will be part of the exam. This session was more enjoyable for the students, as they interacted more with their group and was more learner-centred. In addition, motivational comments, such as “good job”, “you are working really hard today” or “well done” play a role in this activity because the teacher was encouraging the students. In addition, the teacher collected the homework done by the class, except for one student. While correcting the exercises, some of the students forgot to translate the words from the first activity and they confused the words “park” and “walk”.

24/04/17

In the fourth session of the research we followed the steps that were planned in the document entitled “4th session” with the exception of the last activity which was a revision using the app Picaa due to the amount of time explaining the contents that are going to be part of the exam. The students were focused and motivated on doing the Kahoot! game and they scored highly with the exception of two students (one with DS).

When organising the presentation, it was observed that the students relied on the teacher on deciding how to present the contents. Despite of the instructions, the teacher needed to intervene because the students required so and, as a matter of fact, this little support helped the students to prepare better the presentation and they did great in presenting in front of the class. In addition, during the session the teacher observed that one of the DS students has an auditory deficit as she was wearing a hearing aid. At the end of the class, the teacher met with her students and gave positive feedback regarding their work during this and previous sessions. In order to show unity, the teacher and the students high five.

Observation checklist

The teacher:

- Adopts a mix methodology approach: yes / no
- Uses visual cues when explaining: yes / no
- Provides clear explanations (short sentences and simple language): yes / no
- Scaffolds the students when necessary: yes / no
- Makes the students participate: yes / no
- Gives positive and negative feedback: yes / no

The students:

- Have active participation: yes / no
- Interact with the teacher (ask questions): yes / no
- Do the tasks independently: yes / no
- Have good social skills in the class: yes / no
- Are very systematic: yes / no

Further comments: During the observation period the students did the activities independently but it was also observed that many problems were encountered because the teacher could not attend every learners' need. It could not be seen if they are systematic as the period was very short.