

A SWOT analysis of the Communicative English Language Skills Improvement Programme¹: A Tool for Autonomous EFL Learning

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Abstract. The digital revolution of recent years has led to new ways of learning by combining innovative and traditional methods. In order to engage the students in these new methods, a pilot project called the *Communicative English Language Skills Improvement Programme* (CELSIP) has been designed. Thus the learners will be able to achieve a higher level of communication in English through a wide range of multimedia resources, such as audio-books, learning apps, educational websites, TV series, films, board games, and music. These multimodal tools are of easy access to students since the vast majority are user-friendly. Hence, the main objective of this paper is to analyse and verify the feasibility of the CELSIP using a SWOT framework analysis to show the self-learning potential regarding English as a foreign language. In order to do so, we shall first describe the characteristics of the project named CELSIP. It is hoped that the SWOT analysis will provide an objective and critical perspective of the Programme's usefulness and effectiveness as a whole. Also, this analysis could offer prompts involved in the analysis of what is effective and less effective in the programme sections and procedures.

Keywords: Communicative English language skills, informal education, invisible learning, ICTs, autonomous learning.

[es] Análisis DAFO del *Communicative English Language Skills Improvement Programme*: una herramienta para el aprendizaje autónomo de ILE

Resumen. La revolución digital de los últimos años ha llevado a nuevas formas de aprendizaje mediante la combinación de métodos innovadores y tradicionales. Con el fin de involucrar a los estudiantes en estos nuevos métodos, se ha diseñado un proyecto piloto llamado *Communicative English Language Skills Improvement Programme* (CELSIP). De esta manera, los alumnos podrán lograr un mayor nivel de comunicación en inglés a través de una amplia gama de recursos multimedia, como audiolibros, aplicaciones de aprendizaje, sitios web educativos, series de televisión, películas, juegos de mesa y música. Estas herramientas multimodales son de fácil acceso para los estudiantes, ya que la gran mayoría son fáciles de usar. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de este documento es analizar y verificar la viabilidad del CELSIP utilizando el análisis DAFO para mostrar el potencial de autoaprendizaje con respecto al inglés como idioma extranjero. Para llevar a cabo esta tarea, primero describiremos las características del proyecto llamado CELSIP. Se espera que el análisis DAFO proporcione una perspectiva objetiva y crítica de la utilidad y eficacia del Programa en su conjunto. Además, este análisis podría ofrecer indicaciones involucradas en el análisis de lo que es efectivo y menos efectivo en las secciones y procedimientos del programa.

Palabras clave: habilidades comunicativas en inglés, enseñanza informal, aprendizaje invisible, TICS, aprendizaje autónomo.

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1. Introduction

Many resources have been employed to help students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) improve their communicative skills. The digital revolution of the past decades has contributed to innovative ways of teaching by combining new and traditional methods. Our task as language teachers is to make the study of the Foreign Language (henceforth, FL) available to the students to avoid them seeing the communication process as an almost impossible goal to achieve, which generates demotivation and results in the student withdrawing from the learning practice. It is our responsibility, therefore, to engage students in this process of language learning in the most encouraging and

¹ This research is part of an innovation project from the University of Valencia entitled "Recursos multimodales y literacidad: dos claves en el siglo XXI para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés" (UV-SSPIE_GER18-952026).

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motivating way. Following this line of thinking, a pilot programme that will help the learners expand their communicative abilities in English has been designed. The starting point of the programme focuses on responding to students' personal needs. Furthermore, learning is viewed as a social process that occurs within specific socio-cultural contexts, and it is most rewardingly accomplished by doing (*learning by doing*).

The *Communicative English Language Skills Improvement Programme* (henceforth, CELSIP) was designed in 2018 as an additional language training programme to help the learners achieve a higher communicative level in the foreign language. CELSIP was developed by the authors, coordinators of the subjects "Foreign Language I (English)" and "Foreign Language II (English)" respectively from the Department of Language Teaching (English) from the Faculty of Education of the University of Valencia (Spain), to assist students to develop the knowledge, abilities and necessary tools to become autonomous and competent communicators in English. Based on our shared experiences working with a variety of students, ranging from Primary, Secondary, Higher Education and other adult students, with this project, we seek to increase students' literacy, practical strategies, and the abilities needed to become successful teachers of EFL with excellent communication skills.

CELSIP has been divided into three parts: (1) In the first part, students are given a range of thematic sections made of a series of work tools and guidelines on how to use them to obtain a better performance in learning. Also, "these tools empower learners and educators to navigate, augment and simulate multiple learning worlds" (Parsons 2019: 144). (2) The second section is called the "Student Follow-up Reflective Log Book", which is a space located after each of the previous sections intended to contain the reflections and experiences of each student with the tools proposed for the two courses. With this, the aim is to promote critical thinking, autonomous learning and reflection as well as encouraging students to keep track of their learning; and, finally, (3) the last part of the portfolio that makes up the CELSIP contains the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning (CEFR, 2018) based on the GSE³ (Global Scale of English, Pearson) for levels B2, B2+ and C1 in all the skills considered necessary according to the course planning of the two subjects previously mentioned. The students can mark the descriptors, also called "can do" once they have accomplished them so that they are aware of their progress (see section 3.1 (D)).

Through this paper, thus, we shall attempt to describe the characteristics of this pilot project, originally designed as an additional training programme, and the myriad possibilities it can offer based on students' feedback so far since its implementation from the academic year 2018 with fourth-year students. Hence, the core aim of this research study is to analyse and verify the feasibility of the CELSIP using a SWOT framework analysis to show the self-learning potential regarding EFL and the possibilities it can provide to the participants involved.

Taking this as a reference, the research hypothesis of this paper is that the CELSIP could work as an effective learning tool to spark enhancement and reflection for EFL students since it could encourage students not only to use the materials and strategies proposed but to observe and reflect on teaching and learning performance while identifying areas of improvement either in learners themselves or the programme.

2. Theoretical Contextualisation

2.1. Communicative Approach

The recollection of resources and apps as a list that composes the CELSIP might not have a direct connection with the Communicative Approach (henceforth CA). Nevertheless, this project is mainly focused on the use of these tools in order to foster the communicative competencies of the users, which justifies the inclusion of the CA within the theoretical framework of this paper.

The CA first appeared in the 1940s and consisted of learning to communicate in an L2 with emphasis on oral comprehension and production, leaving grammar as secondary (Littlewood 2014). However, as described by Harmer (2003: 289), it is a term that "has always meant a multitude of different things to different people".

Some years later, based on Thompson's research (1996), Littlewood (2014: 335) explained that the method implied "using pair or group work, teaching only speaking, not teaching grammar, and much hard work for the teacher". Given the many definitions attributed to this approach, Harmer (2007: 70) suggested that the communicative method could be used as an umbrella term that encompassed learning and seeking to improve the students' ability to communicate (70).

Overall, for some authors, it means working in pairs or teams, emphasizing oral production, and leaving grammar aside while, for others, it involves including communicative activities and allowing them to practise the skills they have already learned. Conversely, a fundamental notion within the communicative approach shared by all authors is the notion of communicative competence. Let us revise this concept from different viewpoints.

In the 1960s, Hymes (1972) considered that the sociolinguistic perspective should be added to the linguistic competence propelled by Chomsky (1957, 1965). Hymes (1972) inspired a change in the way languages were taught since,

³ The GSE is a global standard of the English language that allows teachers to measure the progress of students accurately and easily. Based on research that has involved more than 6000 teachers from more than 50 countries, it expands the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) identifying on a scale of 10 to 90 what should be mastered for the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

from that time onwards, the teacher should not focus solely on the linguistic aspect, but also should pay attention to other aspects present in communicative situations, namely; registration, intonation, pauses, spontaneity, etc., and this also depended on the listener's response. At the same time, Halliday (1975) maintained in the 1960s the need for a functional approach where the study of meaning and context was a central part of linguistics (Vez & Viña Rouco 2005). Halliday (1975) proposes to study the language from its functions for communication and not from its morphological and syntactic rules and advises integrating the sociocultural component into the understanding of the language.

Almost a decade later, Canale & Swain (1980) deepened this concept and became pioneers in applying the communicative competence to language teaching, and suggested distinguishing between communicative competence and real communication. The authors understood the former term as a set of sub-competencies (grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic). Three years passed, and (Canale 1983: 6-12) added the discourse competence that included cohesion. In fact, Canale & Swain (1980) were a source of inspiration since from their conception, other concepts arose, such as intercultural competence and multilingual competence.

Later on, in 1990, new divisions of the communicative approach emerged, resulting in new teaching methodologies and new methods, among them: *Task-based learning* (TBL), *Whole-language approach*, *Multiple intelligences model*, *lexical approach*, and *cooperative language learning*.

In general, the CA indicates that teachers must prepare students to use the foreign language in real communicative situations within an approach that can contribute to meeting the needs and communicative interests of the students. As mentioned by Díaz-Cintas (2012: 97), some of the most important characteristics of this approach lie in the use of authentic material and the promotion of oral activities with "real communicative potential" (ibid.). Thus, what is intended to achieve with this project is that students acquire the five sub-competencies and can integrate the following skills: interaction, reception, production and mediation in their speech.

2.2. ICT in Language Learning

Some have labelled the amount of information which is continually being produced in today's society as a knowledge-based society and as a digital society by others. Despite its name, it means that we are currently living in an era where communication and information technologies are growing and, as a consequence, also the way individuals learn.

During the past four decades, the new information and communication technologies (ICT) have gained ground within the educational sphere; they have proven instructional tools to learn a foreign language (Gitsaki 2000, Kern & Warschauer 2000) since they provide both the teacher and the learner with authentic material focused on communication. Among their many benefits, it can be stated that students acquire knowledge by being exposed to ICTs and, thus, their oral communication develops (Herron et al. 1995 in Danan 2004). Baltova (1999) and Sokoli (2015) claimed that students learn through being exposed to audiovisual material since they receive the information through the acoustic channel (if they decide to add subtitles, then acoustic and visual-verbal), in which case, vocabulary would also be acquired (Baltova 1999, Sokoli 2015).

For the reasons above, as stated by Baltova (1994: 510–511): "It is now commonplace to say that audiovisual material, with its rich context, is a powerful instructional tool known to have a motivational, attentional, and affective impact in viewers, which in turn facilitates auditory processing".

One of the reasons we thought about introducing ICTs (ICTs meaning: (1) audiovisual material (video exposure); (2) use of applications (apps); and (3) use of a wide range of websites (the Internet)) into our subjects was to improve the students' communicative skills and allow them to improve their language skills through an entertaining holistic method since audiovisual material is closely connected with motivation and enjoyment. We rely on studies by Heredia Ponce and Amar Rodríguez (2016), Herron and Hanely (1992), Romero and Jiménez (2016), and Rubin (1990), who claim that students can improve these skills with the extensive use of audiovisual materials. This is because film, video and TV series "usually expose students to larger amounts of authentic oral language input, which in the long run should improve listening comprehension in face-to-face interaction with native speakers" (Herron et al. 1995: 68 in Danan 2004). Based on their research, students who used audiovisual materials consolidated their speaking abilities more than those who did not rely on this extensive material. However, there is not much time to carry out the different activities in the language classroom, which is why it was agreed to ask the students to put this into practice outside the classroom.

Audiovisual material (video exposure)

Video (films, TV series, documentaries, news) has changed the conception of studying a foreign language. Tomalin & Stempleski (1990: 4) discussed the many possibilities that video can offer for language learning:

Video can be used at every level, both as supplementary material for language reinforcement and skills practice (ideally once a week but at least once every two weeks) and as the main component of an intensive course or course modules provided that suitable material is available (4).

Although video existed before ICTs, the latter has increased the educational value of the former by giving the student easier access to it. For instance, learners have more autonomy and can work at their own pace; they can stop the image and watch the scene again, or add subtitles if they need to (Talaván 2013: 34–37); this flexibility allows them to work outside the language classroom. Besides, if the material is authentic, students will have more resources to face daily situations with L2 speakers, as already stated by Wilkins (1976), and their stimulus will increase since they will be learning about something more rather than learning the language *per se* (Kramsch 1993).

Overall, videos are essential for learning a foreign language since they allow students to see how L2 speakers interact between them, and they provide listening comprehension with different accents to distinguish from, which, in sum, allows the student to see how the L2 is used in a real context (Díaz Cintas 2012).

Drawing on the work of the researchers above on the importance of video in FL learning, for this project, films, TV series, documentaries, etc. have been selected according to relevance, intrinsic complexity, authenticity and students' interest. Students can count on many different platforms to use to watch the suggested material such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. (see section 3.1: Phase II).

Language Learning APPS

Beyond using video to learn a foreign language, the use of apps such as mobile apps, mobile learning, computer apps, and computer learning as new ICTs can also be added. Nowadays, students can choose from a wide range of applications that can be downloaded either to their computers or to their mobile phones and tablets to learn an FL; they are classified as language learning apps. Students can take advantage of these apps from the very beginning as a way of “informally” learning specific structures. Not only can they work with them at home via their PCs or laptops but also while they are on the train, on the bus, at the cafeteria, etc., since they are easily accessed via download. This category has been added to ICTs as supportive and extra material that students could use outside the classroom that can be motivating, joyful and useful (see 3.1: Phase II (4)).

Websites (The Internet)

As part of ICTs, one can find the big “I”, the Internet. This phenomenon has made the world closer to us, and that includes foreign languages. It had its growth in the 1980s and changed the perspective of the world by facilitating the way languages could be learned through the many available resources that could easily be accessed through the World Wide Web. To the many asynchronous e-learning strategies (e.g. e-mails, forums, podcasts, etc.), the synchronous e-learning tools (e.g. chats, *Skype*, etc.) that can be exploited to learn an FL can also be added. Thus, it has changed the conception of in-class and online teaching and has given us a wide range of instruments to work with as far as language teaching is concerned.

These apps have proven to be useful (Escobar Sevilla 2018) to learn grammar and vocabulary, but there is still some research to be done on whether they are useful for learning speaking and writing. Apart from the selected tools, the concept of invisible learning has also been introduced because the whole CELSIP project bases its foundations on it. Invisible learning is aimed at integrating

different approaches concerning a new paradigm of learning and development of human capital, especially relevant in the framework of the twenty-first century. This approach takes into account the impact of technological advances and the transformations of formal, non-formal and informal education, in addition to those intermediate meta spaces. [...] Invisible learning is also conceived as a search to remix ways of learning that include continuous doses of creativity, innovation, collaborative and distributed work (Cobo Romani & Moravec 2011: 28).

As mentioned by Hermann (2015), the reflection of the inclusion of technology in the educational field from a socio-critical perspective with an emphasis on the construction of knowledge and invisible learning is becoming a buzzword. Invisible learning, together with communication and entertainment, is being incorporated into the students' cognitive processes through the use of digital technologies (Hermann-Acosta, Apolo & Molano-Camargo 2019).

On the whole, the first answers from the pilot project extracted from the learners' reflective book have proven that they can learn through exposure to ICTs. The respondents' reflections confirm the conclusions drawn by some authors (Borras & Lafayette 1994, Danan 2004), who stated that creating an anxiety-free learning environment increases a stimulus, higher involvement in the learning procedure and, as a result, speakers internalise all the input “in the form of FL intake” (Cepon 2011: 1).

3. Methodology

As for the methodology, a case-study approach was adopted to a) design, create and implement the CELSIP; b) evaluate the effectiveness of this project as a learning tool. This was done by obtaining further in-depth information on

the students that took part in the pilot project, and c) develop an improved version of the CELSIP set on the gathered data. The starting point for this investigation laid its foundations on the following research questions: what are the most effective resources and strategies related to improving English as a foreign language students' communicative skills in an autonomous learning environment?

3.1. Context and sample

Fifty-two learners, who were studying Foreign Language II for Teachers (English), belonging to the Teaching Degree at the Education Faculty, were recruited for this study. These students were pre-service teachers, which means that they were studying to be Primary Education Teachers of English. Most of the sample (84.61%) were female (44 students). All the participants were aged between 22 and 26 at the beginning of the study.

3.2. Procedure

The process was carried out through six stages:⁴

- Phase I. Project design.
- Phase II. Creation and development of the first version of the CELSIP.
- Phase III. Pilot implementation of the programme.
- Phase IV. SWOT analysis of the programme
- Phase V. In-depth analysis of the data drawn from the participants' responses.
- Phase VI Enhancement of the CELSIP grounded on the analysis of data.

Phase I. Project design

The first step of this process was to make decisions on the objectives we wanted CELSIP users to achieve. With this regard, the following were the ones that most suited our aim: i) to help students increase the cognitive, literacy, and practical strategies, tools and abilities they need to become successful teachers of English with excellent communication abilities; ii) to make students aware that learning is as a social process that occurs within specific socio-cultural contexts and it is most rewardingly attained by doing; iii) to respond to students' personal needs by using their daily leisure-time habits as the vehicle for cross-curricular and invisible learning; and iv) to assist students in developing the knowledge, abilities, and tools necessary to become autonomous and competent communicators.

Phase II. Creation and development of the first version of the CELSIP

In the second stage, the researchers decided on the contents to be included in the programme. Additionally, this phase was devoted to research and to find and to select suitable materials to create the contents to be part of it. The design of the layout was our next concern since it needed to be appealing, engaging and inspiring for students. As previously mentioned, it was decided that it must contain:

- A. Nine sections containing tools were divided according to their origin and genre (films, TV series, music, and so on).
- B. A range of tips, included in each section, including suggestions and ideas to make the most of the use of each kind of genre proposal.
- C. A part, within each section, called "student follow-up logbook" which was intended to be used as a space for reflection on each student's learning. This part would contain the thoughts of the users on the difficulties and advantages of the materials used in terms of their personal experience and the kind of learner they considered themselves. Also, the achievements obtained, suggestions on further materials to be included in the programme, and personal thoughts on the learning were welcome. This part was devoted to encouraging critical thinking and reflection on their learning process.
- D. A final section aimed at checking their achievement and improvement in a more objective way. This section would contain the list of CEFR (2018) descriptors related to B2+/C1. They are better known as "can do". Students had to tick all those descriptors they thought they had attained during the course. The descriptors were organised according to different categories, namely: reception, production, interaction, mediation, communicative language competencies, and plurilingual and pluricultural competencies. This section also served as a reflection-on-learning segment. In this case, the objective was also to make the students familiar with metalanguage vocabulary and concepts because they were pre-service teachers.

⁴ The methodology described in the present article comprises phases I to IV of the aforementioned process, due to length constraints, Phases V and VI will be developed in a further article.

Concerning the contents, a large and growing body of literature and websites were investigated to complete all the fields, in which the researchers were interested. Criteria for selecting the fields of work were based upon the researchers' vast experience in the field of language teaching. Our philosophy was further based on our shared experiences working with a variety of students, ranging from Primary, Secondary, High Education and other adult students. In addition, retrospectively collected informal data drawn from informal conversations with fourth-year students of the Teaching Degree were also considered. This was because, in line with our teaching philosophy, one of the main points of this programme was focused on responding to students' personal needs, as mentioned previously. Thus, the following sections were taken into account: *Our best TV series to learn English; Films and popcorn! Listen to music & sing along as if you were the Grammy winner! Useful Apps to improve your English; Why not (board)games; Just read it!; Time for audiobooks; Talking opportunities; and The news, talk shows & other educational Websites in English.* All the materials chosen to be part of the programme were conveniently justified. Therefore, reasons for their selection in terms of English learning were added to each choice as it could be seen further on. The first version of the CELSIP was composed of the following materials:

1. *Our best TV series to learn English.* Either TV series or films are learning multimodal tools in a teaching/learning context, but they are likewise a medium of entertainment and could provide a context where EFL students experience the target language differently (Magnusson, 2014). Some tips for watching series in English were also provided, namely: a) to watch the TV series with the subtitles in English and repeat sentences; b) not to be scared to rewind and pause the shows. Once students get used to the language, they will be able to follow the show much more easily; c) to keep a notebook next to them for any new expressions they hear; d) if they already know the story, watching the foreign language version will be much easier. Finally, e) to take into account the cultural background of the movie, things like accents and the ways of pronunciation.

The TV series that were included in this first version of the CELSIP and the reasons why were as follows: *How I Met Your Mother*; It shows many modern American expressions and slang; *Once Upon a Time*: the language is simple and easy to understand; *Sherlock*: it shows British accents; *The Big Bang Theory*: it shows lots of different American accents to hear and study as well as an Indian accent; *Friends*: it shows many different accents to be heard and lots of slang; *The Simpsons/Glee*: these series could help students with their pronunciation; *Stranger things*: it shows English slang from the 80s; *Game of Thrones*: it provides a wide range of different British regional dialects and accents. *The Handmaid's tale*: It could train students to understand American accents through the different topics covered in the show. These two also provide websites that offer activities related to listening, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary⁵.

2. *Films and popcorn!* Films, as well as TV series, are a very useful tool to learn real English in context. The tips for learning English through films that the students were given were: a) to bring their dictionaries (the app *Word Reference* could be handy) and/or choose a film with subtitles thus when students hear a word they were interested in, they could be able to check it up. b) To repeat short phrases. c) To watch the film a second time and try turning off subtitles. d) To watch films on their computer. To open them with VLC Player. This programme allows them to play back movies at half speed or quarter speed. Therefore, if there are parts they do not understand, they could play these back at a slower speed and try again. Finally, e) they should not be worried about missing words, try to find meaning out from the context. The films suggested in this section were as follows: *Notting Hill* (1999), *The King's Speech* (2010), *The Social Network* (2010), *The Hunger Games* (2012), *Billy Elliot* (2000), *The Queen* (2006).
3. *Listen to music and sing along as if you were Grammy winner.* There is considerable scientific evidence that demonstrates how music can help EFL learners acquire grammar and vocabulary and improve spelling. The tips for learning English with songs suggested were: a) to study the lyrics and vocabulary. In addition to getting the content, they should break the song down, word by word, and try to master each word so that it is a part of their vocabulary. They could do this through a flashcard service like *Anki* or *Mental Case*. b) To sing along: they should try singing out loud to the music. This could force their mouths to adopt the right shapes and move with the rhythm of the song. iii) To try to sing from memory and, thus, they should be able to find that they are able to speak better, including such words in their everyday speech. The songs recommended in this section could be listened through some singing platforms like *fluent-u*⁶ containing some songs that had been selected due to the training they provide with a particular phoneme. The selected songs were as follows: *Shape of You* by Ed Sheeran, *Believer* by Imagine Dragons, *What About Us* by Pink, *Attention* by Charlie Puth, *Malibu* by Miley Cyrus, *Only You* by Selena Gomez. Another useful website selected for this CELSIP was *LyricsTraining*.⁷ It is a way of learning English through music (and lyrics). It helps enhance listening comprehension while practising different accents by means of the music videos. The last suggestion for this part was *YouTube music lyrics*.⁸
4. *Useful Apps to improve your English.* As the use of mobile technology is increasing, it was suitable to use it for learning anytime, anyplace and at each student's own pace. The researchers encouraged students to

⁵ http://www.englishbaby.com/lessons/7544/real_life/the_handmaid_s_tale.

<http://www.englishcaddy.org/gameofthronesactivities.htm>.

⁶ <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/learn-english-with-music/>

⁷ <https://es.lyricstraining.com/en>

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9jbx97WHiM7aPA_A3Sl6hQ

spend from five to ten minutes a day in English with their mobile devices. The APPS that were suggested to get acquainted with were the following: *LearnEnglish Grammar* (British Council), *Duolingo*, *Memrise*, *Two min English*, *Real English*, *Practice English Grammar 2*, *Hello English*, *Innovative Language*, *FluentU*, *LearnEnglish*, *Podcasts British Council*, *LearnEnglish*.

5. *Why not? (Board) games*. Sometimes one needs a break from traditional studying, games are a fun way to practise English then. They could be a really motivating way to learn a language. The selected games for this section were as follows: *Game to learn English powowbox*. It is a multi-level game aimed at spotting mistakes; *Family Feud*: it is aimed at getting us naming the most popular answers to questions surveyed by 100 people; *Scattergories*: it is a creative thinking game where you have to score points by naming objects that begin with a specific letter, within a set of categories; *Cambridge assessment English*.⁹; *Scrabble*; *Taboo*; *Once Upon a Time*; *Storycubes* and some Apps such as *Story Dice*¹⁰; *Gamezone*. It contains games about grammar, spelling, and vocabulary¹¹; *Vocabulary.co.il*¹²; *ESL Fun Games Online*¹³; *EnglishClub ESL Games*¹⁴; *Lord of the Flies*. Players relive the scenarios outlined in William Golding's scorching allegorical novel¹⁵; *Word Games at Merriam-Webster*¹⁶; *Tracy Boyd's Quia*: it offers more than 50 games involving speech and sequencing.¹⁷
6. *Just read it!* The helpful tips to make the most of reading provided to students were as follows: a) to remember that reading books in English can help them improve their reading and writing skills, their grammar; broaden their vocabulary, build up knowledge and exercise their brains; and b) they could complement their reading with the adaptations made for the big screen too; and c) the films are available for them online. The recommended readings for this section were as follows: Collins, S.: *The Hunger Games* saga. Lewis, C.S.: *The Chronicles of Narnia* saga; Martin, George R.R. *A Game of Thrones* saga; Meyer, Stephanie: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse*, *Breaking Dawn*. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Harkness, Deborah. *A Discovery of Witches*, *Shadow of Night*, *The Book of Life*, *Time's Convert*. ON-LINE NEWSPAPERS.¹⁸
7. *Time for audiobooks*. As students of a foreign language, audiobooks could help them: a) improve fluency due to the process of imitation; improve pronunciation, intonation since students will associate the form of the words they are looking at with their sound; b) instil literary skills since their interest in literature will awaken; and c) train students' ear through the different narrators and characters' accents. The tips provided to make the most of using audiobooks were the following: d) exposition time to the foreign language is crucial for students, so, even though they are not paying full attention because they are doing some housework, shopping or laying on the sofa, they can play an audiobook; e) stop once in a while and repeat words and expressions that caught your attention due to their pronunciation or difficulty; f) if they get the printed text, read aloud while listening (they will match their speed to the audio thus, gaining fluency and pronunciation); g) note down those words and expressions they would like to know the meaning, but do it after the audio session, it does not matter whether they understand everything, just infer from the context.

The authors recommend that participants complete their readings with an audiobook. They could go to the following platforms to get any audiobooks they liked: iTunes. Apple, openculture.com, Google Play and audiobooks.org¹⁹. In addition, The TALIS Project (Teaching and Acquisition of Intercultural and Solidarity Competences through Languages and Literature) is an innovative initiative that aims to promote educational innovation and research in order to improve literary and linguistic education, education for development and interculturality.²⁰

8. *Talking opportunities*. To get better at speaking English, the best way is to practise. Nevertheless, learners can practise speaking English online for free. Therefore, the students were encouraged to practise their oral skills with the suggested tools: *Elsa speak*,²¹ *Speechace*,²² *English Accent Coach*,²³ *Englishly*,²⁴ *Spoken Skills learning lab*,²⁵ *Simple English News*,²⁶ *Forvo*.²⁷

⁹ <http://go.uv.es/RCICx7m>

¹⁰ <https://www.storycubes.com/>

¹¹ <https://www.english-online.org.uk/games/gamezone2.htm>

¹² <http://www.vocabulary.co.il/english-language-games/>

¹³ <http://www.eslgamesworld.com/members/games/index.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.englishclub.com/esl-games/>

¹⁵ <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1983/summary/>

¹⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-games>

¹⁷ <https://www.quia.com/pages/havefun.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/>

¹⁹ <https://itunes.apple.com/es/app/audiobooks/id311507490?mt=8>,

<http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>, <http://www.audiobooks.org/>

²⁰ <http://proyectotalis.com/cuentos/>

²¹ <https://www.elsaspeak.com/home>

²² <https://www.speechace.com/>

²³ <https://www.englishaccentcoach.com/>

²⁴ <https://www.softandapps.info/2015/04/10/englishly-app-android-que-ensena-a-pronunciar-bien-en-ingles/>

²⁵ <http://www.spokenskills.com/>

²⁶ <http://www.spokenskills.com/>

²⁷ <https://es.forvo.com/languages/en/>

9. *The news, talk shows & other educational Websites in English.* When anyone is trying to adjust to a new place, they should behave like the people who live there. So, it is suggested to do what English speaking people do by browsing English websites and watching English shows and news. These shows have a host who invites and interviews different celebrities. They talk about future projects, play games and have short comedy segments. To learn English with talk shows it was suggested: a) pausing and answering open questions; b) outlining the conversations and re-enacting; c) jotting down notes or outlining the conversation while watching; d) to try to have their own conversation using just their notes on one of the topics; e) not to try to memorise word-for-word, but instead use the outline as a base to create from; and f) to watch them with subtitles. There are many informative websites recommended for this section: Websites like CNN,²⁸ BBC News,²⁹ BBC radio,³⁰ Voice of America,³¹ Al Jazeera English,³² and Vaughan Radio.³³ Some infotainment websites (informative and entertaining) that feature weird news stories, fun and interesting true facts, and funny commentary are the following: Snopes,³⁴ Boing Boing,³⁵ and Cracked.³⁶ These two, in particular, are known for one of the web's top forms of infotainment: English podcasts. Both feature informative talks and conversations by English speakers. Many other sites can be found through specialised podcast websites like iTunes,³⁷ Stitcher³⁸ or Earwolf.³⁹ Additionally, there are many entertainment news sites: Entertainment Weekly,⁴⁰ People Magazine⁴¹, TVFanForums.net,⁴² Fanpop forum⁴³ for films, TV, music, comics, video games and other areas of popular culture. Regarding talk shows: *Late Night*⁴⁴ (NBC), *The Tonight Show*⁴⁵ (NBC), *Jimmy Kimmel Live*⁴⁶ (ABC), *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*⁴⁷ (NBC), *Oprah*⁴⁸, *Loose Women* (ITV), *Chatty Man*⁴⁹ Channel 4.

Once the CELSIP was designed and edited, the pilot implementation of the programme the research went to the following phase.

3.3. Description of the project

Phase III. Pilot implementation of the programme

The pilot implementation of the CELSIP took place in the first term of the academic year 2018-19 (from September 2018 to January 2019) with fourth-year preservice students as mentioned previously. Prior to the students' implementation of the programme, there was a workshop session explaining its potential, possibilities, instruction for the correct use and practice of both the section content, and answering questions. After this "training", the participants were told to be steady and to start using it daily. Throughout the term, some anchoring to some of the CELSIP tools was carried out, such as mentioning a TV series, a film, book or song, playing some videos that were on the programme or watching a few minutes of some talk shows by way of a reminder. On completion of the time due, the process of data collection was carried out.

3.4. Research tools

Data for this study were collected from four main sources: first, the CELSIP handouts were temporally collected to obtain written informed feedback from the participants on each section. Second, suggestions on useful materials and apps were gathered through an online virtual bulletin board named *Padlet*.⁵⁰ Through this tool, students could collaborate and share links in a secure location with a custom URL. The third stage of the study comprised a semi-struct-

²⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/>

²⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news>

³⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio>

³¹ <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/>

³² <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

³³ <https://grupovaughan.com/vaughan-radio/>

³⁴ <https://www.snopes.com/>

³⁵ <https://boingboing.net/>

³⁶ <http://www.cracked.com/>

³⁷ <https://www.apple.com/es/itunes/download/>

³⁸ <https://www.stitcher.com>

³⁹ <https://www.earwolf.com/>

⁴⁰ <https://ew.com/>

⁴¹ <https://people.com/>

⁴² <http://www.tvfanforums.net/>

⁴³ <http://www.fanpop.com/recentforums>

⁴⁴ <https://www.nbc.com/late-night-with-seth-meyers>

⁴⁵ <https://www.nbc.com/the-tonight-show>

⁴⁶ <http://abc.go.com/shows/jimmy-kimmel-live>

⁴⁷ <https://www.ellentube.com/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.oprah.com/index.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.alancarr.net/>

⁵⁰ www.Padlet.com

tured oral interview with participants. This interview was embedded in the end-of-the-term oral exam of the subject. The final objective of this data collection was not to certify how much the participants had improved in their English language level but to know their own opinion on the usefulness and effectiveness of the programme.

Lastly, before analysing the interview data, a more accurate analysis was carried out on the transcripts. After all the data had been drawn from the transcripts, a SWOT analysis was considered in order to suit the objectives posed with this pilot testing, namely, to check on the efficiency and usefulness of the CELSIP, as well as to enhance its performance according to the students' needs. To analyse the data drawn from the students' responses, a SWOT analysis was implemented following the model by Thomas, Ting Chie, Jalarajan Raj and Beh (2013). In order to provide a brief definition, a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis) is a framework used to identify and analyse the internal and external causes that could have an impact on the viability of a project or, as it is the case, a resource.

Phase IV. SWOT analysis of the programme

Our goal is to identify and structure the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the CELSIP. The results will let us achieve a practical basis of reflection regarding the potential of this educational resource in the standpoint of its optimization.

Strengths of CELSIP (Factors that are likely to have a positive effect on achieving the programme objectives):

The result of the synthesis of the data collected shows several justifications for the implementation of the CELSIP in EFL in Higher Education. Those justifications are grounded mainly on students' reflection and autonomous and professional learning since they are preservice teachers and CELSIP helped add to their lifelong learning bank of tools and ideas for their classes with contents based on learners' needs analysis. Namely, six strengths have been found in this programme: first, CELSIP can overcome the limitations of student self-evaluation as a form of pedagogical measurement in learning performance. Second, the self-reflection component of CELSIP can promote self-knowledge and transformatory learning among students (Brockbank & McGill 1998). Transformatory learning allows changes in teaching quality to occur and enables students to draw meaning from the changes and enhancements. Third, improving the English language at the levels worked in this research is an issue that is difficult to work alone and is mostly mastered through experience and exposition to the target language. The CELSIP provides many tools to obtain those hours of experience for the students in a multimodal way. Fourth, the CELSIP was also designed as a strategy to demonstrate students' responsibility toward the faculty in assuring work quality and enhancement in their learning. In fifthly, this programme has resulted in an inclusive strategy since it seems to have suited all kind of learners' needs. That is a) Visual (spatial) learners have been fonder of TV series, films and some Apps since this kind of students prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding; b) aural (those who prefer using sound and music) participants were more interested in music, TV series, Apps or film that included music (musicals, for example), and audiobooks; c) verbal (linguistic) learners, as they preferred using words (either spoken or read), were more keen on reading, films and TV series, talk shows and Apps; d) physical (kinaesthetic) participants, that is those who were more comfortable using their bodies, hands and sense of touch, were very interested in games, music (since they could move their bodies) and Apps (they had to move their hands); e) logical Learners (mathematical) had their preferences among apps and games since they challenged them. They also put some more effort into the reflection part based on the CEFR. In turn, Social Learners (interpersonal) found almost every tool interesting since they managed to involve others in them. That is, these students held singing contests, played games or watched films and TV series with their flatmates or families. The last group of learners, the solitary (intrapersonal), found the programme very interesting because they could do everything on their own. Games and those apps that needed collaboration were not their favourite tool, though (Smith & Kolb 1996). To finish, the sixth strength found was that the CELSIP could develop communicative/linguistic competence combined with sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. This was drawn from the information provided by the participants gathered in their students' reflective sections.

Weaknesses of the CELSIP (factors that are likely to have a negative effect on achieving the programme objectives):

The facts to be taken into account in this section and thus, to be overcome for the second version of the CELSIP are the following: a) although many learning opportunities and tools tailored to the students' needs have been gathered, the researchers are unable to provide sufficient evidence on the efficacy and effectiveness of the tool. Hence, some records of the learners' real level before using the CELSIP and, after would be needed to be added, and find a way to analyse them empirically, which is the next target (as it will be explained later in the conclusions); b) the reluctance of most students to follow a steady pace to engage in the CELSIP all over the pilot period has been one of the weakness. They have attributed this lack of motivation to time constraints due to the overwhelming amount of workload they had all along with the term. This led them to use the CELSIP at an irregular pace, focusing mostly on holiday periods. Thus, not being regular has worked to the detriment of higher effectiveness of the programme. That is, the authors have found an absence of autonomous management in a learning culture that acknowledges the benefits of it. For the next version of the CELSIP, it was decided that it would be essential to state some milestones

or checkpoints in the implementation terms to encourage a more regular usage; c) another problem detected was the quality of the participants' mobile devices. Even though all of them were able to use these gadgets, those with higher performance traits found it easier to work on some of the tools such as Apps.

Opportunities for Development of the CELSIP (external factors that could have a positive effect on achieving the programme's objectives and were not previously considered):

There is a considerable potential and learning opportunity in the CELSIP, in addition to the fact that differences in learning styles cannot be ignored, and this programme suits them all. It can enhance education standards since it can be adapted to any new teaching climate and environment that this digital era could bring us. In fact, part of the results drawn from the data provided by the participants is aimed at adapting the CELSIP to their own likes and needs providing new suggestions, ideas and tools that were unknown to us.

Additionally, the students have set the foundations for developing not solely a learning, but a teaching portfolio, as well as a guide for self-reflection, for their professional future. A tool with no expiry date because it can grow and adapt at their own pace. Finally, the use of ICT in language teaching and learning processes provides opportunities for effective engagement and experiential learning. This is so because while one is watching a film, listening to music or reading a book, to mention but a few, one learns best since they are part of a recognised pattern that make students' imaginations arouse, and their senses are put to work.

Threats of the CELSIP:

There are two aspects of the CELSIP that are seen as essential threats toward students' learning practices. The first factor involves time limitation and management issues, which may result in the CELSIP being abandoned if students are unable to cope with being steady and work on the CELSIP proposals on a daily basis. The second factor is threats to personal likes and freedom. Some students feel that their likes regarding the different options provided by the CELSIP and freedom to choose what to do with their free time and to make decisions are threatened when there are attempts to exert external influence on teaching. That is, some students showed some concern because they did not like reading or watching TV and felt a bit overwhelmed by the thought of trying those tools, even though it was from a different perspective.

As mentioned previously, phases VI and VII of the development of the CELSIP, that is, an in-depth analysis of the data drawn from the participants' responses and the enhancement of the CELSIP grounded on the analysis of data are out of the scope of the present article due to length constraints. Nevertheless, the researchers can say that, grounded on the analysis of data after this investigation process, a second version of the CELSIP programme is being implemented during 2019 with the students beginning in the third year of the Teaching Degree (last term of the academic year 2018/19) and ending in the fourth year of that same Degree (first term of the academic year 2019/20).

4. Conclusions

Taken together, as an answer to the research hypothesis posed at the beginning of this paper, the authors are now able to state that the CELSIP is an effective learning tool that could spark enhancement of EFL learning and reflection since it encourages students not only to use the materials and strategies proposed but to observe and reflect on teaching and learning performance while identifying areas of improvement either in themselves or the programme.

Additionally, CELSIP has proved to be a tool that has offered transformative changes in educational perspectives as a result of these students' ability to open their minds to new teaching methods based on their personal needs, learning and reflection. This has had higher significance in comparison to anxiety over their freedom at the time of using their personal mobile devices in their spare time. Students have developed responsibility and autonomy in their own learning. Moreover, the weaknesses and threats of the CELSIP have been overcome by building on their strengths and opportunities (Chermack & Kasshanna 2007). Thus, collecting students' input and evaluating their needs have provided us with countermeasures to address their concerns through an effective bottom-up approach.

The efforts to inculcate the CELSIP culture can be encouraged in the next implementation of the programme with third-year students by showing them ample evidence of the effectiveness and efficacy of this programme through the pilot programme students' feedback. To overcome the weaknesses related to i) the lack of empirical testing on the improvements in terms of the participants' knowledge acquisition and enhancement, and ii) the increase in the steadiness of the work with the CELSIP, some actions will be implemented in the next stage of the process. First, the oral exams at the end of Foreign Language I and Foreign Language II (English) will be hosted by both teachers (as mentioned previously, the oral exam includes the semi-structured oral interview). The same graded rubric will be used for both courses so as to follow the student's progress. Second, the student who: a) had presented this handout at the end of the course (3rd & 4th), showing their progress by having worked with the tools; b) had demonstrated a critical reflection on their learning process through the annotations made in the spaces designed for that purpose and, c) had kept track of their progress in the list of descriptors based on the CEFR (2018) or "can do" that can be found at the end of the portfolio, will get extra credit in the final mark. Third, an app will be used to obtain a first and a final score that will provide empirical data on the participants' enhancement.

Given that the possible weaknesses and threats that had served as a diagnostic test to develop a second version of the CELSIP have already been tested and improved, it can be concluded that this programme is a viable and useful option for learning and reflection development. Individuals should enhance their communication in terms of the strengths of the CELSIP regarding reflection and learning, exploit the opportunity to engage in cross-cultural and multidisciplinary feedback, develop teaching evidence, and overcome time management issues.

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