The Implementation of Assessment for Learning in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

This paper is a proposal for the introduction of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, specifically in *programa* groups in bilingual high schools in the Madrid Community. Several research studies have been done on AfL but all of them have focused on first language content subjects on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) contexts and therefore, it is necessary to introduce AfL in the EFL context, since it has been proved effective for the learning process in other situations. Moreover, it has previously been revealed that CLIL teachers tend to use AfL strategies with *sección* students more frequently than with *programa* students and, therefore, they have got fewer learning opportunities. This is a proposal which tries to encourage and provide a guideline for teachers to introduce AfL in the EFL context (the English subject) in *programa* groups.

Key words: Education, Madrid Community, bilingual high schools, *sección*, *programa*, Assessment for Learning (AfL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

1. Introduction

Assessment has always had an important role in education, but it has also been the focus of debate. The most frequent assessment practice has focused on the final product from the learning process, which usually takes the form of a number (this is known as Assessment of Learning). However, there is another type of assessment whose purpose is completely different, and which is related to the learning process per se, known as Assessment for Learning (AfL), which is an assessment specifically designed for learning, not just for assessing.

Assessment for Learning involves all the different activities undertaken both by the teacher and the students in the classroom which provide both teachers and students with information about their learning process and, consequently, help them to adjust their teaching and learning techniques. Assessment for Learning promotes autonomous learning and high cognitive processes which result in a more positive and efficient learning (Pascual, 2017., Black & Wiliam, 1998).

AfL is already being implemented in content subjects in some bilingual schools in Spain and there are several studies regarding the use of AfL in primary bilingual and secondary schools, all of them in content subjects (Pascual., 2017; Alonso, 2018). However, to my knowledge, no studies on AfL have been done on an EFL context, with a focus on the English subject. Then, this proposal is centered in EFL contexts with the purpose of guiding secondary school English language teachers on how to carry out AfL techniques in the English classroom.

As you may know, the bilingual program in the Madrid community is divided in two strands: *sección* and *programa*. On the one hand, *sección* students study an advanced syllabus in the English subject and they have more subjects in the English language such as Science or History. On the other hand, *programa* students follow a standard syllabus and have one or two (usually more practical) subjects in the English language. Related to this, one specific study revealed that teachers naturally tended to use AfL discursive techniques (in the content subjects) more frequently with *sección* students than with *programa* students, resulting in missing opportunities for *programa* students and a less efficient learning (Alonso, 2018). Similar findings were revealed in a study

by Llinares & Evnitskava (forthcoming), the same Science teacher used more cognitively engaging questions in *sección* than in *programa*.

Then, if *programa* students have less exposure to the second language, it is necessary to guarantee that this exposure is engaging and stimulating. AfL practices in the English subject (as well as in other subjects) could be one way for these students to engage in an optimal and efficient learning process with the same opportunities as *sección* students. For this reason, this proposal will focus on the EFL context and more specifically on *programa* students in the EFL classroom.

What makes this proposal not only necessary but also interesting and different from others is that it provides language teachers with steps and some ideas to follow if they want to implement AfL in their English subject. Moreover, it provides AfL techniques and concrete examples within the compulsory syllabus set by the Madrid Community for programa students in the English language regarding all the different skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Ultimately, this proposal aims at compensating potential missing opportunities for programa students regarding AfL.

2. Theoretical Background

This section provides all the necessary background information needed in order to understand the Assessment for Learning proposal in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. First of all, a deep explanation regarding Assessment for Learning (also known as Formative Assessment) is given, followed by a brief summary of previous research on the topic within the bilingual Secondary and Primary contexts. Then, as this proposal focuses on the discursive and interactive patterns of AfL, some explanation and specification regarding discursive patterns is provided.

2.1. Assessment for Learning in the Secondary School Classroom

Assessment is a fundamental characteristic in education, which needs to be planned before the teaching but takes places at the end or during the teaching (Llinares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012). In fact, there is not just one type of assessment, Byrnes's (2008) classifies assessment in an L2 classroom in this way:

- Classroom-based content assessment whose goal is to support the students' learning. This is known as formative assessment or Assessment for Learning.
- Curriculum-based content assessment whose results are of interest for the stakeholders (parents, teachers…). This is known as summative assessment and it is carried out through tests and exams.
- Content assessment of interest for a professional community with the goal of certification purposes. It is also a type of summative assessment.

Throughout the years, society has supported the two last types of assessment in Byrnes' classification – known as summative assessment or Assessment of Learning-, which has led to the importance of numbers and grades (Llinares et al., 2012). In fact, we even measure the efficiency of programs like CLIL (bilingual programs where content subjects and a foreign language are taught in integration) through the grades that students get and if they do not get good results, programs are put into question (Llinares et al., 2012).

It is true that assessment is strongly linked to effective learning but, it needs to be used in the right way (Bloom, 1998). Consequently, the link that exists between classroom-based assessment and learning has been strengthened (Bloom, 1998). Testing our

students (summative assessment) will not make the learning more effective; we need to make teachers aware of formative assessment since it is the one which will improve the students' learning achievements (Bloom, 1998).

Teachers usually overuse summative assessment, and this actually reduces the use of formative assessment and may affect the students' motivation for learning (Llinares et al., 2012). The fact that the teachers are too focused on summative assessment could have the effect that, in the end, they will teach to test rather than simply support the learners in their learning process (Llinares et al., 2012). Consequently, teachers need to have high quality educational preparation to be involved both in summative and formative assessment (Wiliam, 2000).

These two different assessments complement each other: summative assessment is necessary for administrative and reporting purposes, whereas formative assessment contributes to the students' learning (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). In addition, summative assessment only takes place either at the end of the term or at the end of the course year, whereas formative assessment takes place throughout every lesson (Lee, 2007). Moreover, summative assessment only values the learning product (Spolsky, 1992), whereas formative assessment focuses on the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The problem of only using summative assessment such as grades, points or gold stars is that students will always want to get the best and it will make them feel useless whenever they do not know an answer, which will get them to the feeling of failure, demotivation, and disappointment (Black & Wiliam, 2005). For this reason, there needs to be a change and we need to give more importance to formative assessment and the learning process.

This change should not be left in the teachers' responsibility since it would be 'unfair'; policymakers should directly help teachers in the implementation of AfL in the classroom (Black & Wiliam, 2005). For this reason, the purpose of this paper is to encourage teachers and to give them ideas of how to use AfL in the EFL classroom.

2.1.1. What is Assessment for Learning (AfL)?

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has always been looked at as an individual cognitive process but in the recent years- there has been a change to a more social perspective (Llinares et al., 2012). Therefore, many authors nowadays consider SLA as

a social process in which learning always takes place in interaction. From this shift emerges this view of AfL in which teachers and students need to work cooperatively to learn and acquire the second language (Llinares et al., 2012). In fact, some linguists state that the presence of AfL (planned beforehand) in the classroom is key to meet the language learning goals (Llinares et al., 2012). In fact, according to Black & Wiliam (2005), formative assessment and interaction are at the heart of effective teaching.

The definition of Assessment for Learning, also known as formative assessment or classroom-based assessment, that we are going to use in this study is the one provided by Black & Wiliam (1998):

> *''all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.''*

Llinares et al., (2012) also give a similar definition and they state that AfL are those classroom activities undertaken by both the teacher and the students from which they obtain feedback which will let them adjust, modify and improve their learning. Therefore, AfL seems to be related to the term of scaffolding, that is, the support that the expert gives to the students in the learning process (Llinares et al., 2012).

To carry out AfL in the classroom, it is important to promote discussion between students and the teacher since it will let them talk about their knowledge, understandings, beliefs, and opinions, whereas the teachers' role will be to lead the students' thinking (Black & Wiliam, 2005). In these situations, it is quite important that the teacher stays open to all kinds of questions and that they have flexibility with the students' responses; in other words, they should not be expecting or trying to orient the students towards a specific answer since it might limit the students' production (Black & Wiliam, 2005). The students may realize that the teacher is seeking a specific answer and therefore, they would simply produce the wanted answer rather than providing their point of view (Black & Wiliam, 2005).

Now that a definition of AfL has been given, these are a number of features which need to be taken into account in the implementation of AfL:

✦ A key aspect is the teachers' feedback, which should be guiding feedback together with evaluative feedback. Whenever there is a learning process, the feedback provided has three different goals: acknowledgment of the desired goal, get evidence about the current position and provide some comments on how to close the gap – between the students' current position and the learning desired goal (Black & Wiliam, 2005). The student should take all this information and use it in order to close the gap and improve the learning (Black & Wiliam, 2005). It is important that the feedback is about the students' work rather than their person since the former is more constructive for learning and motivation (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

Moreover, feedback in AfL should always promote motivation in students by signaling their progress rather than their failures. Teachers should motivate students by letting them be more autonomous and giving them opportunities of self-direction (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ AfL should always focus on the students' learning process rather than on the product (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ AfL should be the central practice, which means that all the activities or questions should work for formative assessment. Classroom tasks should engage cognitively the students, make them reflect and prompt them to show their understanding and skills (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ Teachers should be trained in AfL to plan assessment, observe the students' learning process, analyze and interpret the evidence, give feedback and support students in their learning process (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ Students should be informed about learning goals and criteria by which they will be assessed. Once students have an overview of the learning goals, they will be able to assess both their classmates' and their own learning and, this will promote the reflection of their thinking, which is clearly quite positive in the learning process

(Black & Wiliam, 2005). This will also engage students in self and peer-assessment (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ Teachers should constructively guide students in their learning process. They need to identify the learners' strong points and tell them how to develop them, give them constructive guidance on their weaknesses and telling them how to improve them and provide opportunities for them to learn effectively (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ AfL encourages learner autonomy and therefore, self-assessment. Students are active agents and responsible for their own learning, and they should be able to self-reflect on their learning process (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

✦ AfL is oriented towards every learner, and every learner is able to improve through this method. It does not leave aside any type of students (Black and Wiliam, 1998).

✦ AfL should be used to promote learning in all the different educational areas and it should encourage learners to do their best and have their achievements recognized (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

These are some features which create formative assessment in the classroom but, it is important to bear in mind that there is not one fixed list of elements which make up AfL in the classroom; there are many different ways in which formative assessment can be developed and there is not a closed list of actions to follow (Black & Wiliam, 2005). What it is clear is that teachers should have a clear view of the students' understandings so that they can take the role of helper in the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2005).

Through the implementation of AfL, we are creating a student-centered approach to learning rather than teacher-centered approach. In this way, although the teacher is still a really important element in the learning process, they are not the center. Teachers need to adapt their role from a position of transmitting knowledge to the students to one of interpreting knowledge with them (Barnes, 1992). Teachers need to understand that education is not simply about providing some knowledge which will be learned by the students; on the contrary, they need to promote deep thinking (Black & Wiliam, 2005).

In the transmission model, the learners are just passive agents who do not do any thinking and are not cognitively engaged, whereas with an interpretative learning, students are active agents, cognitively engaged and responsible for their own learning (Barnes, 1992). This is what is sought by putting into practice AfL in the classroom, to make students active agents of their learning and make them cognitively engaged in their learning.

2.1.2. Assessment for Learning in Bilingual and EFL contexts

Several studies have been carried out regarding Assessment for Learning, the great majority contextualized in teaching and learning Mathematics and English (as a first language) (Harlen & Winter, 2004). Although there are some general and core principles to AfL, it is also relevant to study AfL in different subject areas because the features could be manifested in different ways (Black & Wiliam 1998). In fact, these studies on AfL in different subject areas have found differences across subjects; for example, assessment tasks in subjects such as Science or Mathematics tend to be closed, which means that there is always an explanation which is different from the students' preconceptions.

In contrast, in subjects within the area of Language Arts, assessment tasks tend to be more open, where there is not just one single solution (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2004). What is common in most subjects is that teachers try to engage students in the tasks, make them reason their answers, and engage them in peer and self-assessment (Hodgen and Marshall, 2005). Nevertheless, AfL in different subject areas still needs to be researched deeply, taking into account that all the studies have been done in L1 content subjects and CLIL, none of them in the EFL context.

One of the few studies on AfL and CLIL is Pascual's (2017) analysis of AfL patterns in CLIL primary schools, contrasting AfL schools (which are schools specifically trained to follow an AfL pedagogy in the classroom) and non-AfL schools (which are ordinary schools). It goes without saying that she found that AfL techniques such as high-order questions[1] and feedback were barely found in non-AfL primary school whereas in AfL schools, they were very frequent. She also found differences across subjects: in Science, most of the questions were factual and there was a lot of evaluation, which means that

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[1] High-order questions will later be explained deeply but they are the type of questions which require more cognitive and reasoning thinking. (Bloom, 1998).

an AfL pedagogy was barely carried out. In contrast, in subjects such as Citizenship or Drama, evaluation was not very frequent, and teachers tended to use high-order questions. Moreover, Pascual (2017) found that those techniques which align with an AfL pedagogy have a positive impact on the students' contributions.

In a previous study carried out by the author of a present study on AfL in CLIL subjects at secondary school, Alonso (2018) found that- teachers tend to use more AfL techniques with *sección* students than with *programa* students, which could be due to the expectation of a higher cognitive as well as linguistic level (see also Llinares and Evnitskava, forthcoming). Moreover, in line with Pascual's (2017) study, Alonso (2018) found differences across subjects. In the Biology subject there were fewer patterns of AfL in contrast to Technology, in which students were more cognitively engaged through the use of high-order questions and feedback.

The most important results from my previous study (Alonso, 2018) is the fact that teachers themselves seem to avoid using AfL techniques with programa students, maybe due to the idea that they are less capable. This has led me to develop the present proposal to implement AfL techniques in the English subject, specifically focusing on *programa* groups.

2.2. Discursive patterns in an EFL classroom

This section focuses on the importance of classroom discourse and interaction in the EFL classroom as an element that improves the students' learning capacities in the second language and as a way of enhancing AfL techniques.

According to Mortimer and Scott (2003), there is not just one type of communication system but rather several communication systems. This idea is related to the fact that there are different approaches to teaching. For example, teachers may want to explain opinion essays to students, but they can do it by asking students or simply giving them information, which are two different ways of communication (questions vs. statements). Therefore, one of the roles of the teacher is to guarantee that different communication systems will be used in the EFL classroom so that students become familiar with them (Llinares et al., 2012).

Within these different communication systems, we find two different dimensions: (1) interactive/non-interactive and (2) dialogic/authoritative. On the one hand, if

communication is interactive, it means that different people intervene, whereas noninteractive communication means that only one person is intervening. On the other hand, if communication is dialogic, it means that students feel free to participate and share their own ideas – because they feel they will be recognized-, whereas if it is authoritative, only the teacher's ideas (or knowledge) is valid (Llinares et al., 2012).

This has to do with the idea that not all the interaction in the classroom is enriching for the students' learning. In fact, some linguists have argued that in order for communication to be effective, it needs to be interactive and dialogic (Llinares et al., 2012). This is because when interaction is both dialogic and interactive, students are more cognitively engaged (Llinares et al., 2012).

Then, we can argue that dialogic teaching is a tool that guarantees good learning and a sign that students are cognitively engaged in the interaction. Dialogic teaching is very rarely put into practice because it usually makes students go out of the topic of interest and teachers feel they need to adjust the lesson to the curriculum (Llinares et al., 2012). However, this should not be an excuse not to practice dialogic teaching because it has positive effect on the students' learning. Haneda and Wells (2008) provide three different reasons why dialogic teaching should be implemented in the classroom:

(1) Students get an i+1 in the input, which means that the messages they receive in the L2 are a little beyond their level of proficiency (Krashen, 1985); and additionally, they also get the opportunity to produce comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) because they are participating in the interaction and sharing their ideas in the L2.

(2) By participating in the discussion, they learn pragmatic features and social strategies which have to do with dealing with turns, intervening, interrupting…etc.

(3) By taking part in the discussions, they get the chance to see other points of view and ideas coming both from the teacher and their classmates. This is very positive because they see how their classmates use the language in order to express the same or different ideas and therefore, they come into contact with different linguistic means.

Also, Alexander (2006) provides some features which, according to him, make interaction dialogic:

- It has to be collective, meaning that the teacher and the students need to work together cooperatively as a group.

- It has to be reciprocal; the teacher and the students need to listen to their different ideas and share their viewpoints.

- It has to be supportive; students should feel comfortable to share their viewpoints without feeling afraid of giving a wrong answer. The teacher should support them and make them comfortable to present their ideas.

- It has to be cumulative, the ideas that they provide in the discussions should be useful to build ideas and lines of inquiry.

- It has to be purposeful, the interaction should be plan in order to achieve some content and linguistic goals.

These features are especially important in EFL contexts because it is one of the few opportunities for students to be in contact with the target language and it is important that they use the target language in a wide variety of situations. In fact, an EFL classroom which puts into practice dialogic teaching will provide an enriching scenario for language learning due to its cognitive potential (Llinares et al., 2012). Dialogic teaching is very much connected with Assessment for Learning; in fact, AfL should always include dialogic teaching or, otherwise, it is not AfL.

2.2.1. IRF Interaction Patterns in the EFL classroom

The IRF acronym stands for Initiation, Response, and Follow-up (Sinclair & Coulthard (1975); this is the most frequent exchange in the classroom interaction in which the teacher initiates – typically with a question-, the student answers and lastly, the teacher either provides some feedback or evaluates the response (Llinares et al., 2012)

The teachers are usually the ones who initiate the interaction since they are in control of the lesson; usually it is only when we have students working cooperatively that we see the students initiating turns (Llinares et al., 2012).

It is for this reason that the IRF exchange has been critized by many authors who state that it could be too restrictive for students, narrowing the possibilities for students to interact and participate (Nikula, Dalton-Puffer & Llinares, 2013). It could be restrictive mainly because it is a repetition of a question-answer series and additionally, the teacher usually already knows the answer, which leaves little space for the students to respond extensively (Llinares et al., 2012)

However, other linguists declare that the problem is not the IRF pattern per se but rather the activity type; if we have teacher-fronted situations in which the teacher is controlling the dialogue, then the IRF exchange could be restrictive. On the contrary, if we change the activity type to students working cooperatively in groups, the students would be the ones in charge of using the three types of IRF movements and there would be no restriction at all (Nikula et al., 2013). We could easily have student initiated IRF patterns which are considered to have positive effects in the students' second language use (Llinares et al., 2012). In fact, the implementation of Assessment for Learning in the classroom implies having more student initiated IRF patterns because it means that students are cognitively engaged and feel encouraged to initiate turns.

2.2.1.1 The role of the teachers' questions

There are different classifications of types of questions used in the classroom: display/referential (Long & Sato, 1983), open/close (Barnes, 1969), the classifications by content (Dalton-Puffer, 2007) and by cognition (B. S. Bloom & Committee of College and University Examiners, 1964).

Display questions are those whose answer is already known by the person who poses the question, whereas referential questions are closer to ''real'' questions since the person who formulates them does not know the answer, they do seek an answer (Llinares et al., 2012). In fact, display questions could not even be considered questions since they do not seek to investigate reality. Display questions are the most frequent in the classroom since they are useful for teachers to monitor the students' learning (Llinares et al., 2012). However, it is not surprising that the ones that bring more benefit

to the interaction and learning are referential questions since they trigger more complex responses – maybe due to its nature as ''real'' questions (Llinares et al., 2012).

Closed questions are those whose answer is usually a short phrase or clause, or even a minimal response like yes/no; moreover, they are considered quite easy and quick to answer because usually they are questions for facts (Barnes, 1969). On the other hand, open questions seek longer and more complex answers because there is not just one single and fixed answer; additionally, they are usually related to thinking and reflecting questions in which the students need to make a higher cognitive effort (Barnes, 1969). Closed questions are usually under the control of the teacher, whereas open questions can go out of the teachers' control. Generally speaking, closed questions are usually more frequent in the classroom, but open questions are desired because they benefit the students' cognitive capacities and learning (Barnes, 1969).

However, there are other factors in the teachers' questions which have a great impact on whether the student's answer is cognitively and linguistic complex or not, such as the teacher's purpose (whether they ask for facts or they want students to think) (Llinares et al., 2012). To know whether the teachers' questions are cognitively demanding or not, one of the most important and relevant classifications is Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1964).

Bloom classifies questions according to the level that they require of thinking since some questions require more cognitive capacities than others. Bloom (1964) classifies thinking into six hierarchical levels of complexity – which means that they go from lower to higher cognitive capacities:

(1) Knowledge questions
(2) Comprehension questions
(3) Application questions
(4) Analysis questions
(5) Synthesis questions
(6) Evaluation questions

If students get to master the sixth level of cognitive complexity (evaluation) that means that they are able to master all the lower levels of complexity (Pascual, 2017). This first

classification has changed, and the latest modification of Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer & Pintrich, 2001) classifies questions as:

- Remembering questions (retrieving knowledge from long-term memory)
- Understanding questions (describing, explaining, paraphrasing…)
- Applying questions (demonstrating, illustrating, dramatizing…)
- Analyzing questions (comparing, contrasting, criticizing, testing…)
- Evaluating questions (arguing, judging, evaluating…)
- Creating questions (constructing, creating, designing…)

The first two types of questions (remembering and understanding questions) are considered low-order questions, which means that they trigger low levels of cognitive thinking. On the contrary, the last four types of questions are considered high-order questions because they trigger higher levels of cognitive thinking (Pascual, 2017). Therefore, although low-order questions are the most frequent in class, teachers should formulate high-order questions because they benefit the students' cognitive capacities. It goes without saying that in order to know whether students are learning and internalizing the subject matter, higher order questions are the desired ones, knowledge and comprehension questions only tell us whether they remember or not, they do not give us information about their understanding and synthesis process. For this reason, AfL always looks for implementing these types of questions.

Based on the cognitive classification of questions, we find Dalton-Puffer's typology of questions by content (2007):

- Questions for facts: they ask for objective happenings
- Questions for explanations: they ask for how something happened
- Questions for reason: they ask why something happened
- Questions for opinion
- Metacognitive questions: their purpose is to engage the learner in extended dialogues.

We usually find questions for facts or for explanations in the lessons. Questions for facts equal knowledge questions (remembering and understanding questions) which are at the lowest level of cognitive thinking in Bloom's taxonomy (1964). On the contrary, metacognitive questions make students reflect on what they think and why they think in

that way; in fact, they are quite relevant because they make students initiate themselves in self-assessment (Pascual & Basse, 2017). Regarding Assessment for Learning, metacognitive questions are the most relevant because they engage students cognitively about their learning.

Pascual's (2017) adaptation of Dalton-Puffer's typology of questions (2007) includes two extra categories: language questions and meta-questions. Language questions are those whose goal is specifically linguistic and meta-questions are those which seek the students' reflection on the learning process (Pascual, 2017). Together with metacognitive questions, meta-questions are very important because they are related to self-assessment, which is a quite relevant feature regarding Assessment for Learning.

2.2.1.2. The role of the teachers' follow up

The third move in the IRF pattern has also an important role both in classroom interaction and in Assessment for Learning. Ideally, the teachers' role in this third move consists not only in repairing but also in encouraging students to participate and to expand on their answers (Llinares et al., 2012). However, teachers mainly use the follow-up move to either evaluate – positively or negatively- or repair (correct) the students' responses, thus limiting the students' participation in the interaction (Llinares et al., 2012). For this reason, some authors prefer to distinguish between IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) and IRE (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) since most of the time what we find in classrooms are sequences of IRE rather than IRF (Walsh, 2011).

Then, we may encounter two different situations in the teachers' follow up: either the teacher simply acknowledges the students' answer (evaluating or correcting) or tries to prompt the students' further elaboration (Llinares et al., 2012). We can also distinguish between evaluative and non-evaluative feedback (Pascual, 2017), also known as pedagogic feedback and interactional feedback, respectively (Llinares et al., 2012). It goes without saying that non-evaluative feedback is also desired for classroom interaction since it provides support for learning and it makes students keep on interacting (Llinares et al., 2012). For this reason, if we want to implement Assessment for Learning in a lesson, we should bear in mind the use of non-evaluative feedback since it is the one supporting the students' learning.

One of the best ways to prompt the students' not only elaboration and expansion as well as cognitive thinking on a topic is to use metacognitive questions in the third move (Llinares et al., 2012). As previously mentioned, metacognitive questions were coined by Dalton-Puffer (2007) and they are a way to make students reason, think and expand their answers; moreover, it involves cognitive, content and language engagement in the interaction (Llinares et al., 2012)

3. Proposal for using AfL in the EFL classroom

This section is devoted to the deep explanation and justification of the proposal for using Assessment for Learning in the English as a Foreign Language classroom with programa students in 1st ESO.

Last year, I conducted a research study on AfL in the secondary school CLIL classroom (Alonso, 2018), investigating whether CLIL content teachers (who were not specifically trained in AfL) used AfL in the classroom and whether their use varied regarding the type of group: *sección* or programa[2]. This research was carried out with a corpus (part of the UAM-CLIL corpus http://www.uam.clil.org) which consisted of four different transcriptions of four lessons which were recorded in the same state school in Madrid. These data were collected in 1st ESO, in which students are around 12 and 13 years old.

This high school, situated in a high socio-economic area in the outskirts of Madrid, belongs to the CAM Bilingual Project which started in 2004 and which provides students with greater opportunities of being in contact with English in interaction. A relevant aspect in the bilingual high schools in the Madrid community is that students are streamed in two different tracks: *sección* and *programa*. They vary in the level in the English subject and in the different subjects taught in English. See the following table:

Seccion bilingüe	Programa bilingüe
5 hours of English per week (Advanced English Curriculum)	5 hours of English per week (Standard Curriculum)
Only Social Sciences, Geography, History and Natural Sciences is taught in English in the first year of High School	Only the tutorial and maybe other easier subjects such as Technology or Arts & Crafts are taught in English
In the following years, every subject is taught in English excluding Mathematics, Spanish Language and Literature, and any other Second languages.	Classes will be made according to the students' linguistic level
At least a third part of the school schedule is taught in English	Students will have extra-curricular activities in English

Table 1. *Adapted from ¿Qué es un Instituto Bilingüe? In Portal de Educación de la Comunidad de Madrid, 2019.*

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[2] This study was carried out in the CLIL context, analyzing AfL in the discursive patterns in two content subjects: Technology and Science.

In 1st ESO there were 6 groups which belonged to the bilingual program: A, B and C belonged to *sección* and D, E and F included both programa and *sección* students together. The latter were mixed in the same classes but were separated in the classes that *sección* students received in English and programa students in Spanish: Biology/Geology and History/Geography. In these six groups, there was a total of 33 students in programa and 135 students in *sección*. This clearly shows that there is a big difference between the number of students in *sección* and programa, which could be a proof that the socio-economic background of the high school is quite high and parents send their children to private English lessons in order for them to obtain an A2, which is the minimal requirement to enter *sección bilingüe*.

Students who are in *sección* need to have passed the KET exam (A2) and students who are in programa are in this groups due to three main reasons: (1) They come from bilingual schools but they did not pass the KET exam, (2) They passed the KET but their families did not want them to study in the bilingual program or (3) They come from non-bilingual schools.

The main results in this previous research on AFL in CLIL classrooms (Alonso, 2018) were that teachers employed more AfL techniques with *sección* students than with programa students. See the following results:
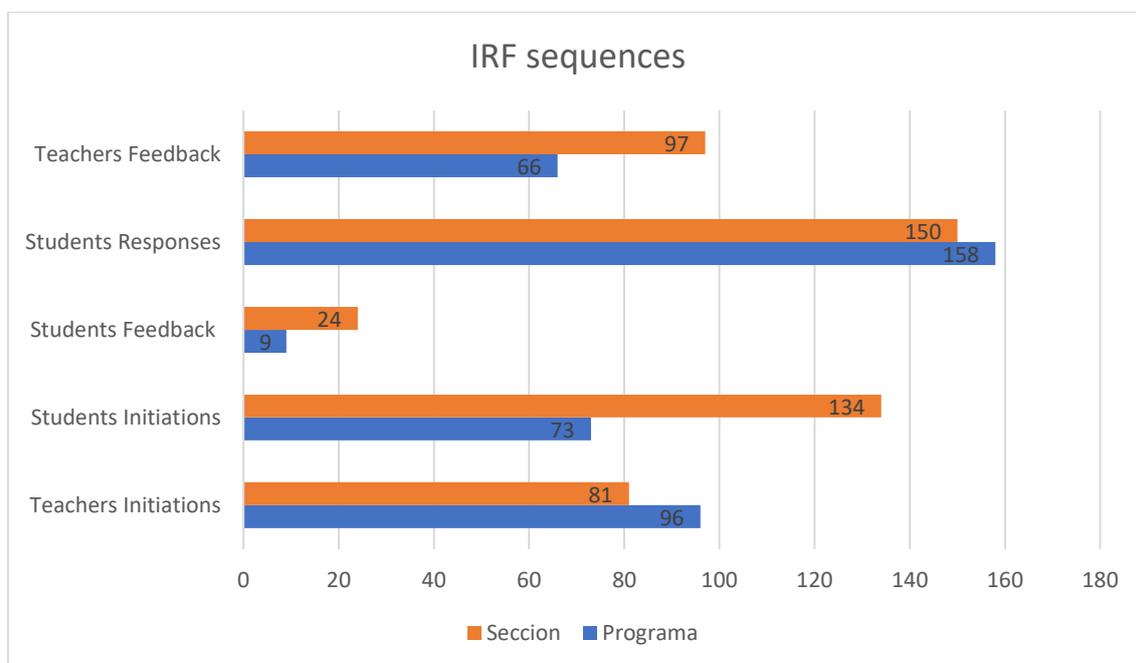
Graphic 1. *Results taken from (Alonso, 2018)*

As can be observed, teachers provide much more feedback to *sección* students, and they even initiate more in class and provide more feedback themselves, which shows that they are more familiarized with reflection. In contrast, programa students tend to answer more questions, they initiate less, and teachers are more in control of the interaction, initiating much more frequently.

Drawing on these results, I decided to develop a proposal for the implementation of AfL in the English class, focusing on: *programa* students. As it has previously been observed, it seems that the students' linguistic and cognitive capacities determine not only the way they interact in class but also the way that teachers interact with them, resulting in a more engaging (and potentially better) learning process for *sección* students. Then, the main purpose of this proposal is to suggest AfL techniques to be used in the English classroom at secondary level, also with the purpose of guaranteeing that AfL techniques are used with programa students so that they have the same opportunities as *sección* students.

All in all, this paper attempts to make a proposal for the use of AfL in an EFL context as it has previously proved effective for language learning and engagement in CLIL contexts (Pascual, 2017; Alonso, 2018).

3.1. Example of an English syllabus for 1ˢᵗ ESO

This section focuses on the explanation of the linguistic contents and objectives set for programa students in 1ˢᵗ ESO. First of all, it is relevant to mention that programa students follow a standard syllabus, in contrast to *sección* students, who follow an advanced syllabus which provides a higher linguistic level.

Here I propose a possible table of contents of a syllabus for 1st ESO students drawing on the standard syllabus for ESO students found in the Decree 48/2015, 14th of May, from the Government which established the ESO contents for the Madrid Community.

As can be observed in table 2, the syllabus includes 9 didactic units which would include all the necessary contents for 1ˢᵗ ESO students with the corresponding level of A1-A2. Moreover, a key feature in the syllabus is the inclusion of interaction and the language for communication purposes, which can be clearly appreciated in the different contents.

Each didactic unit goes around one communicative objective such as: describing physically and personally a person, describing an animal, describing food, talking about your plans, talking about past activities…etc. Then, the whole didactic unit provides elements which are useful to achieve that communicative objective such as the vocabulary needed, the grammar needed, it provides examples through listening and reading activities (which the students can use as models for their own production) and then, it also provides students with the opportunity of producing their own examples through writing and speaking/interacting.

Although it seems very communicatively oriented, this syllabus does not include Assessment for Learning. If we introduced AfL in this syllabus, we would be providing students with a more enriching learning process, but still following the standard syllabus proposed by the Government.

Contents for 1st ESO students – Standard Syllabus	
FIRST TERM	
D.U[3] 1	**Grammar:** To be & Have Got **Vocabulary:** Adjectives of Description & Adjectives of personality **Interaction**: Describing a person, talking about appearance, ask some questions **Listening activities**: (1) Description of people (2) Talking about appearance **Reading**: A web page **Writing**: A description of a person
D.U 2	**Grammar:** There is & there are, Articles & Quantifiers **Vocabulary:** House and household items **Listening activities**: Plans for the house **Interaction**: Describe your house, Describe your room, Picture dictation **Reading**: A book review **Writing**: A description of a room
D.U 3	**Grammar** - Present Simple **Vocabulary** – Free time activities & Routines **Listening activities**: A description of routines, A comparison of routines **Reading**: A magazine survey **Interaction**: Talking about activities, ask some questions, do a survey **Writing**: An email introducing yourself
	SECOND TERM

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[3] Didactic Unit

D.U	
4	**Grammar** – Present Continuous **Vocabulary** – Geographical features & Clothing **Listening activities**: A phone conversation, conversations about a holiday **Reading**: A travel brochure **Interaction**: Discussing photos, Guessing, Describing photos **Writing**: A photo description
D.U **5**	**Grammar** – Can, Must, Should **Vocabulary** – Sport & Sport venues and equipment **Listening activities**: A dialogue about sport, A description of a sport **Reading**: A school project **Interaction**: Talking about activities, talking about rules and possibilities, Talking about a sport **Writing**: A description of a sport
D.U **6**	**Grammar** – Comparative and Superlative adjectives **Vocabulary** – Adjectives & Animal groups and animals **Listening activities**: Riddles, A dialogue about animals **Reading**: A magazine article **Interaction**: Comparing animals, Getting information about an animal **Writing**: A report about an animal
	THIRD TERM
D.U **7**	**Grammar** – There was & There were – Was/were **Vocabulary** – Food & Adjectives of opinion **Listening activities**: Description of food **Reading**: An article **Interaction**: Describing a meal, talking about the past, describing an event **Writing**: A description of an event
D.U **8**	**Grammar** – Past Simple **Vocabulary** – Achievements & Jobs **Listening activities**: A discussion about a person, a dialogue about a famous person **Reading**: A newspaper article **Interaction**: Talking about important people, talking about past activities, Exchanging biographical information **Writing**: A biography
D.U **9**	**Grammar** – Be going to, Will & Present Continuous with future meaning **Vocabulary** – Places around the town & weekend activities **Listening activities**: Plans, plans for the weekend. **Reading**: An internet article **Interaction**: Talking about plans, making predictions, making plans **Writing**: A blog entry about plans

Table 2. *Contents for 1st ESO students, standard syllabus. Created from the contents published in Decree 48/2015, 14th of May.*

3.2. AfL aspects to be introduced in an English syllabus for 1st ESO

This section focuses on different aspects that we could introduce in this possible EFL syllabus in order to work with AfL and engage students cognitively, making them more active and autonomous in their learning and improving their learning process. Then, this section provides some general guidelines for introducing AfL based on previous findings from different research studies (Pascual, 2017; Alonso, 2018). It is relevant to specify that although this section provides general guidelines, most of them are discursive and interactive aspects. Later, the next section will provide a more detailed example within a didactic unit.

First of all, as we have previously mentioned, AfL should be present during all the different activities in all the lessons, so it is not something that should only be worked on at the end of the term. For this reason, it is very important that teachers get to know their students and plan the AfL techniques beforehand.

Table 3 refers to the AfL elements to be included, such as questions or feedback, while the second table contextualizes this in terms of activities.

AfL core aspects to be introduced	
Questions	Teachers' questions play an important role. They need to make sure that they do not only remembering question because these will only let them see how skillful a student is at remembering. Even with pure linguistic elements, teachers should try to make students think why. For example, '*why do you think that only he/she/it have an ''s'' at the end of the verb?*'' (this would be a metacognitive question)
Feedback	Feedback should always be interactive, and teachers should reduce evaluative feedback as much as possible. This will reduce the students' anxiety and they will feel free to interact and provide answers. Students should feel that interacting is positive for them because the teacher and even their classmates help them to learn, without feeling useless or scared to be mistaken. If students provide wrong answers, teachers should avoid acknowledging them as wrong but, rather, ask them questions and guide them so that they can easily realize by themselves.
Self - Assessment	Self-assessment should always be promoted in each activity and each lesson and for this, students should be informed of the objectives and criteria in each lesson, unit and term. Teachers can introduce self-assessment both at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. They can provide students with some questions at the beginning of the course (they can even hang these questions on the wall) related to their attitude and feelings to learn at that time so that students always take a look at them at the beginning of each lesson. Moreover, they can have similar questions at the end of the lesson (e.g. '*do you think you did your best today? Did you understand what you learnt today? Is there something that is not clear to you? What was the most difficult part for you?*''). In order for students to take this seriously, the teacher can ask them to do a portfolio with all of this information which they can hand in at the end of the term, with their reflections on the learning after each week, for example. This will be part of the final grade.

Peer - Assessment	Students should become familiar with peer-assessment as well because it makes them aware of their learning. Again, they need to know the objectives and criteria by which they are assessed in order to assess their classmates. This can be done throughout the lessons or at the end and there are many ways in which teachers can introduce this. For example, one way is to assign students a classmate each term and ask them to be informed of their learning. They can have a look at their work each lesson and write down a brief summary of the day. Teachers can ask students to always comment on something positive and something to improve. At the end of each week, students can hand it in both to the teacher and to the classmate and they can see their development: their positive aspects and aspects which can be improved. In this way, the teacher can also observe if students are understanding the goals and purpose.

Table 3. *AfL core aspects to be introduced*

AfL techniques to be introduced in the activities	
First Day of the Course	On the very first lesson of the course, it would be useful to get a general idea of the students' previous knowledge of the English Language. If we want to see their learning process, we need to have a starting point from which we can follow their development. This can be done from two different viewpoints: (1) attitudes and motivation towards the English language and (2) knowledge of the different skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening, grammar and vocabulary). In order to do this, teachers should elaborate and plan really well beforehand how they are going to get this starting evidence. This should be a really important step since it should shape the next sessions, which should have the goal of closing the gap. This collection of evidences should be done separately for each different skill. (See section 7.1 in the appendix)
First Day of the Didactic Unit	As we have previously mentioned, one of the goals of AfL is that students become autonomous in their learning and that they know whether they are achieving the purpose or not. For this reason, it is very important that students are informed at the beginning of each didactic unit of different aspects. First of all, they should know the objectives of the didactic unit; in this way, they will know whether they are going on the right track or not. Not only should they know the objectives, but they should also know the criteria by which they will be assessed. This will allow them to modify their learning and, also to assess themselves and their peers. Therefore, a big part of the first session should always be directed towards explaining this and having the students at least copying it down. Moreover, it would be useful that once the teacher explains the communicative objective of the unit, the students either debate the following questions or write down the answers to see them at the end of the unit and debate the final results: (1) What are we going to learn? (2) Why are we going to learn this? (3) How am I going to achieve this learning? These are questions for explanation, opinion and metacognitive questions.

Last Day of the Didactic Unit		The last session dedicated to the didactic unit should be dedicated to reflection, which means being aware. If we want our students to really learn and have an enriching learning experience, we should always include reflection. Students need to reflect on their learning process, their achievements and their difficulties; it is only in this way that they will be active agents in the learning. Reflection can be done in many different ways: they can work on discussions, they can work in groups and write down common difficulties, how they have solved them, what they need to work on more…etc. They can also reflect individually. Teachers can also provide a paper with some questions which can make them reflect on the learning. The purpose is that both students and teachers learn from this information in order to adjust themselves to the next didactic unit. Everything should be in constant change, teachers and students should be adapting their work to the learning process. (See section 7.2 in the appendix).	
Last day of the course		On the last day of the course, it would be useful that students did a final reflection on their whole year. For this, it could be interesting to give them the same questions they had to answer on the questionnaire the first day of the course and see the differences between their expectations on the first day and their thoughts once they have finished the course This can provide us with a general view of whether they have changed their attitudes and motivation towards English and whether they feel like they have succeed in the learning. (See section 7.3 in the appendix).	
Throughout the Didactic Units	**Listening Comprehension Activities**	If we want to introduce AfL techniques in listening activities, it is very important that teachers create a whole context for the listening activity, which will probably last the whole session. If we want students to carry out high cognitive processes, we cannot play a listening activity and give them some exercises to do which will only be corrected later. You can see an example of what should be done later. Moreover, it is relevant to make students see that they really can improve their listening skills. For this, they can compare their performance, when teachers play the listening activity first and then ask them comprehension questions, or when teaches carry out different pre-listening and post-listening activities which will facilitate the listening understanding; after	

		this, the teacher can ask again the same questions and students will see whether they have improved or not. If they still have difficulties, they can discuss where these difficulties come from: accent, vocabulary, tone, speed…etc. Teachers will get this information to adjust the next listening activities and keep on working on their difficulties. Teachers can also provide them a Rubric document for them to fill out (See section 7.4 in the appendix).
	Reading Comprehension Activities	In reading activities, there is one advantage over listening activities regarding exposure to input. In reading comprehension activities, they have the text in front of them and they can re-read it as many times as they need. This is a very important aspect in AfL: we should give students opportunities to think, give them wait time. Teachers are usually impatient. However, we need to give our students some time to process all the information. Students could work individually on texts (due to the individual wait time), and then discuss their answers with their partners. Teachers should provide some questions for comprehensions which would guide students. It is very important that teachers use questions which are as open as possible, in order for students not to look only for the right answer and, instead, look for comprehension. In order to do this, for example, instead of using ''do/does'' questions, questions for reason could be used instead. (e.g. ''*Why do elephants drink water only at night?*'' = ''*Why might elephants drink water only at night?*''); this would make students think that they should understand the text in order to get the answers instead of just looking for the sentence with the answer. Once they are discussing their answers with their partners, they could be asked to give their opinion on their partners' answers.
	Speaking production Activities	Speaking is usually one of the most difficult activities for students and even more if they belong to the programa track, since they are not used to talking in English frequently. Students usually feel anxiety of talking in public and making mistakes or having an incorrect pronunciation. For this reason, the proper implementation of AfL in these activities is quite important. Peer-Assessment should be introduced in these activities, students need to see that their classmates have something

| | | positive to say about their production since it will help them to produce more, feel comfortable and be ready to improve. We can provide students with some time to practice a speaking activity and then to perform it in front of a small group, which will later provide some feedback. Speaking activities should be done in at least two sessions so that students have time to reflect on the feedback received

Finally, they could perform one last time and their classmates could make a final comment. All these comments should be written down, version after version, and teachers should be able to take a look and see whether students are really implementing these pieces of advice or not.

Teachers could provide a Rubric, for students to know the aspects they need to focus on when giving feedback to their classmates (See section 7.5 in the appendix). |
|---|---|---|
| | **Writing Production Activities** | For the writing activities, students should clearly bear in mind what the objective of the task is. For this, not only should the teacher inform them, but they should be able to see a model or a previous example which is similar to the one they have to produce. They can use a previous reading activity if it has the same purpose and shape as a model.

Moreover, teachers should give students a Rubric in which they are able to see the criteria by which their production will be assessed. In this sense, they will be able to check whether they are following the instructions or not. The rubric does not have to be a rubric which the teacher will use but, instead, it could be a rubric which students themselves use to assess themselves after they have written down their task.

It would be recommended that students always assess their work and then, teachers collect this information about their beliefs regarding the learning process (See section 7.6 in the appendix). |

	Vocabulary Activities	The key to getting students to work on their cognitive capacities is contextualizing vocabulary and getting students to use it in specific situations. Then, teachers should not simply present the words and get them to do ''fill in the gaps'' exercises but they should check whether they are really understanding the meaning and the situation in which it could be used. Then, if students are learning some phrasal verbs, teachers could present different situations and ask them whether they would use the phrasal verb or not and why, explaining subtle differences and other possible options (e.g. *Would you use ''fall down'' or ''fall off'' in this situation? Why do you think ''fall down'' is better?)*. In this way, students would be internalizing the vocabulary words or expressions and understanding the meaning and possible contexts.
	Grammar Activities	Introducing AfL techniques while tackling AfL could seem difficult at first since grammar has traditionally been taught explaining rule after rule. However, we could actually make students reflect on grammar rules and ask them metacognitive questions which make them become active agents in the learning. In fact, if we use emergent grammar[4] together with questions and feedback, we would be using AfL in grammar activities.
Exams or Written Activities to hand in		Teachers should transmit students the idea that marks and grades are not the only important aspect since their development and learning process is very important as well. For this, although it is necessary that teachers give grades in the exams and projects, they could also write some comments focusing on their process; this evaluation of the process could be included in the final grade as well. It would be useful to write down some positive comments -there is always something positive to comment on, and constructive feedback (aspects they need to work on). It would be positive to provide the constructive feedback always after a positive comment and followed by; another positive comment. This will engage and motivate students; it will make them feel engaged to keep on working and improving their learning.

Table 4. *AfL techniques to be introduced in the activities*

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[4] Emergent Grammar is a functional approach proposed by Paul Hopper in 1988, where learners internalize grammar rules only if they see them in use (Hopper, 1988). For example, if we want our students to learn the present perfect, we should show them something (a song, an extract from a novel, a magazine) in which present perfect is used and, little by little, elicit from them the rules and the situation in which we use that specific grammar.

To sum up, engaging questions and feedback could be used throughout all the different activities, always minimizing low order cognitive questions and looking for open and high order reasoning questions (e.g. *Why do you think that word fits here? Do you think that it would be possible to use this other word?*). Moreover, teachers should provide interactional and expanding feedback to guide students and make them reflect on their learning process, minimizing evaluations and quantitative grades. Then, self and peer assessment should always be worked on in each lesson and activity, since it makes students reflect not only on their classmates' learning process but also on their own. High-order questions, interactional feedback, self-assessment and peer assessment should encourage students to reflect on the learning process in order to improve it, involving, then, a proper use of Assessment for Learning in English as a Foreign Language lessons.

3.3. Example in a didactic unit

This section is devoted to the elaboration of a didactic unit, which is taken from the possible syllabus created following the Madrid Community standard syllabus for 1st ESO students and modifying it by including Assessment for Learning in each of the different activities. The didactic unit selected is the one shown in table 2 since it will provide the ground in case teachers want to continue with this proposal and it will let teachers check it with their students and adapt it to their group. Then, this first ''didactic unit'' is going to be used as a model to explain step by step how we could introduce AfL in the EFL classroom for programa students.

In order to do it orderly, the different skills are going to be divided so that we can explain how to introduce AfL in each of the different skills worked on the unit. In reality, second language learners do not only work on one skill in a lesson but rather they should also work with different skills- in an integrated way (see table 2).

❖ **Listening – Unit 1**

Two different listening activities have been included, which could serve as the background for students to participate in a speaking activity later on: (1) Description of some people, and (2) Talking about appearance. For this reason, it is very important that students understand the listening activity, including the different words used in it, the whole context and situation. Moreover, they should be capable of recognizing the different sounds, together with the accent.

First of all, we should give students some context in order to activate their prior knowledge on the topic. Listening activities should be done after students have had a first contact with the vocabulary of the unit so that they are familiarized with some words. Teachers could do a brainstorming with the students about the vocabulary learnt in previous lessons or they can ask students to describe their classmate using vocabulary learnt in the unit. In this way, students would be activating their knowledge about adjectives to describe people and they would be more receptive when listening to the activity.

It is in this first pre-listening activity that teachers are already collecting information about the students' current position in the learning process. There may be students who remember all of the words and students who do not remember anything at all. It goes without saying that the teacher will know which students will have more difficulties than the others. The teacher can make some new pairs with the students who remember more words and those who have more difficulties with the vocabulary. Then, the teacher can give them more time to revise all these words together. The teacher can even ask for some peer-assessment from the students with some difficulties towards the students with fewer problems and vice versa.

After this, students should be given some time in order to read the post-listening exercise and check what they will be asked after the listening exercises. They can stay with the same classmates with whom they were before and check together whether they understand the meaning of some words and what they are being asked. Then, this can be checked together with the whole class. This is an important part as well because it will let both teachers and students know in what specific parts, they will have difficulties. Then, as the teacher and the students will have discussed this beforehand, they can still do something about it in order to overcome these possible problems. If there is something that students do not understand and it is blocking their learning process, the teacher should provide some background knowledge, some context so that students can understand. In other words, the teacher should act like a scaffolding for students to continue the learning process.

Then, the listening activity will be played once, and students should be provided with some wait time in order to answer the post-listening activities. Meanwhile, the teacher can be walking around checking whether the previous activities and modified techniques did have a positive effect or not. If they did not have an effect and students still had problems, teachers should take this information in order to modify their techniques and maybe give more context or play the listening activity twice.

Once every student has been able to complete the listening activity and carry it out, it would be useful to do some self-assessment at the end. We can provide students a rubric to fill in and hand it in later to the teacher. This rubric may serve as a guide for students to discuss orally their self-assessment to enhance expanding feedback, engagement and most importantly in the English class, oral practice of high order thinking skills. See the following possible rubric of self-assessment after a listening activity:

LISTENING TASK SELF-ASSESSMENT			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I have recognized adjectives to describe people If so, write some examples here:	3	2	1
I have differentiated between the verbs ''to be'' and ''have got''	3	2	1
I have deduced the meaning of unknown words from the context	3	2	1
I have understood the general idea from the audio	3	2	1
I can summarize it through speaking or writing	3	2	1
I understand in what context I could be listening to this audio	3	2	1
It is difficult to understand because of the accent or speed	3	2	1
The help from my classmates has been key in the understanding of this task	3	2	1
I have identified my difficulties and I have been able to solve them	3	2	1
With this task I have learnt…			
With this task I have realized I have to work more on…			
Teacher's comments…			

Table 5. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment after the listening activity*

❖ **Reading – Unit 1**

I have included one reading activity in this didactic unit which has the format of a webpage. Although the main purpose is to enhance reading comprehension, it serves many other purposes. For example, it is a perfect way in which students can see the grammar and vocabulary that they are learning in the unit used in a real context. Secondly, the reading activity could be the perfect model for students to have so that they can later create a similar one themselves, in the writing activity.

In order to understand the whole reading, students need to understand the vocabulary and the grammar. Then, there may a lot of students in class who have difficulties in understanding the reading activities, but the source of the problem may be different, and this is the important thing in AfL. For example, one student may not understand the text because he/she has got vocabulary problems whereas another student may not understand the text due to the grammatical problems. It is important that students identify the source of their difficulties.

Students should first of all skim the text to have a general idea of the main topic of the text. After skimming the text, teachers should check whether students are able to get the general idea or not. If they are not, it may be that the main problem is in the vocabulary. Then, teachers should brainstorm some of the vocabulary found in the text by debating all together in class or by making pairs and leaving students to debate by themselves.

Once students get the general meaning of the reading text, teachers should check that students get more concrete details and information. For this, students should first of all read the questions so that they are familiarized with the information they are being asked for. In this moment, teachers see where they will have more problems while reading. After reading the questions, students should be given some time to deeply read the text. After reading the text, they should be given this rubric so that they can identify their own problems. See table 6:

READING TASK SELF-ASSESSMENT			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I understand most of the vocabulary words	3	2	1
I understand in what tense the text is written	3	2	1
I can explain the text in my own words	3	2	1
I understand the contractions in the text (''He's'', ''She's got''…etc.)	3	2	1
There are words which I did not understand at first, but the context helped me understand Specify in what way and show examples:	3	2	1
With this task I have learnt…			
With this task I have realized I have to work more on…			
Teacher's comments…			

Table 6. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment about the reading activity.*

This rubric could be used in pairs, so two students would be asking each other, and they would have to check whether their classmates' answers are correct. For example, first of all, students take this rubric and answer according to their believes about themselves. Once they are finished, their classmate checks whether it is correct (''*I see that you think you understood most of the words, do you know what ''straight'' means?*''). In this way, both students would be focusing on what they think could be possible difficulties and the teacher would see their difficulties as well. See table 7:

READING TASK PEER-ASSESSMENT			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
He/She understands most of the vocabulary words	3	2	1
He/She understands in what tense the text is written	3	2	1
He/She can explain the text in her/his/my own words (to me)	3	2	1
He/She understands the contractions in the text (''He's'', ''She's got''…etc.)	3	2	1
There are words which He/She did not understand at first, but the context helped him/her understand Specify in what way and show examples:	3	2	1

Table 7. *Rubric to carry out peer-assessment in the reading activity.*

Once that they have a great knowledge about the text and they have solved their possible difficulties, they would answer the comprehension questions.

❖ **Speaking– Unit 1**

In this unit I have included two speaking activities: describing a person's personality and talking about appearance. The speaking activities should be done once the students are familiarized both with the vocabulary and the grammar and once the listening and the reading activities are done. This is because by the time they have done the listening and reading activities students will then have an idea about what their weaknesses are, and they may feel more confident after having overcome those. The following steps could be followed:

1. The teacher informs the students about the main goal: describing someone's appearance, talking about someone's personality or request your classmates some information.

2. The teacher asks the students how they think they can achieve it (e.g. What can you introduce? What elements should you use?) And the teacher writes it down on the board

3. The teacher gives them some time to practice and prepare the task in pairs. Meanwhile, he/she is walking around checking on their work.

4. After some time, the teacher can provide them with a rubric (see table 8) so that students know in what parts they have to focus more and how they will be assessed.

5. One student in the pair will do the speaking task (describing a person's personality or appearance) first and the other will be assessing it (peer-assessment). Once finished, the classmate will show the rubric filled and the student will have some time to think about their mistakes and how to improve. Then, they will repeat the speaking task again, and the classmate will assess again a second time.

6. The student checks the rubric again and answers the open questions in the rubric. The student hands it in to the teacher. See the following rubric:

Speaking task peer-assessment and self-assessment							
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)	FIRST TIME				SECOND TIME		
He/She can describe someone fluently	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She uses the verb ''to be'' and ''have got'' in my description	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She uses the current verb tense	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She pronounces properly the different words	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She uses the vocabulary learnt in this unit	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She gives a generally good impression while speaking	3	2	1		3	2	1
He/She knows how to use contractions	3	2	1		3	2	1
Was your classmate's feedback useful?							
What did you realize?							
What did you learn?							
What do you need to work more on?							

Table 8. *Rubric to carry out peer-assessment and self-assessment for the speaking activity*

❖ **Writing– Unit 1**

The writing activity in this didactic unit is the description of a person. As with the speaking activity, it is better if the writing activity is done after the reading and the listening activities because they would have a greater knowledge about their learning process (their difficulties and their acknowledgements) and they would have already seen some previous models they can have as reference.

If we want to introduce AfL, we need to make sure that students are well informed about what to do in every moment. The next steps could be followed:

1. The teacher explains the main goal of the writing task: describe a person (both the personality and appearance)
2. The teacher asks students about the elements they think that need to be included. For this, the teacher could remind them about what they have learned so far in the course and ask them whether they think they could use it for this purpose or not.
3. The teacher provides students with sample texts in which they can check what structures and elements to include. In this case the sample text would be the previous reading text.
4. The teacher asks students to highlight elements, structures or information they believe important to include. This can be done in pairs.
5. Students are given the assessment criteria which they will be using as self-assessment and peer-assessment in the writing process (see tables 9 and 10)
6. Once they are finished with the first draft, they complete the self-assessment rubric provided by the teacher (see table 9)
7. Then, they give their draft to their classmate and vice versa. They read it and complete the peer-assessment rubric (see table 10), and vice versa.
8. They read their classmate's feedback and they make the necessary changes to their first draft, making a second draft. They complete the self-assessment rubric a second time and answer the final questions. Everything is handed in to the teacher: their self-assessment rubric, their classmate's assessment on their task, the final answers on the task and the task per se (the two drafts). See the following rubrics and questions:

Writing task self-assessment rubric							
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)	**FIRST TIME**				**SECOND TIME**		
I have enjoyed writing this task!	3	2	1		3	2	1
I describe a person perfectly, providing personality and appearance information	3	2	1		3	2	1
I inform what I am going to do at the beginning	3	2	1		3	2	1
I write different paragraphs which can be clearly differentiated	3	2	1		3	2	1
I use connectors to join different ideas	3	2	1		3	2	1
I use a correct punctuation and spelling	3	2	1		3	2	1
I used different verb tenses in the right way	3	2	1		3	2	1

Table 9. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment in the writing activity*

Writing task peer-assessment rubric			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I have enjoyed reading my classmate's task	3	2	1
He/She describes a person perfectly	3	2	1
He/She informs what he/she is going to do at the beginning	3	2	1
He/She wrote different paragraphs which can be clearly differentiated	3	2	1
He/She uses connectors to join different ideas	3	2	1
He/She uses a correct punctuation and spelling	3	2	1
He/She uses verb tenses in the right way	3	2	1

Table 10. *Rubric to carry out peer-assessment in the writing activity.*

Final questions for the self-assessment on the writing task
I knew how to do this task because I knew how to use….
Thanks to my classmates comments I realized that….
I had to modify….
Teacher's comments:

Table 11. *Final questions to complete the self-assessment on the writing task*

❖ Vocabulary – Unit 1

In this unit, the vocabulary introduced is the one related to adjectives of description and adjectives of personality. First of all, it would be important to get a general idea of the students' prior knowledge related to these adjectives and, for this, a brainstorming activity could be used. This would serve for the teacher to have an idea of whether the students are going to need a lot of work on the adjectives or not.

Vocabulary is usually presented in a very traditional way, focusing on remembering words without getting the students to think.One way to present adjectives for appearances and personality is to present the words and ask students to put them on two different tables. We can ask them to do it in pairs and think of a justification of why they are putting the words on that table. In this way, we would be asking them to think why and they would be working on high order thinking skills. Then, they would all check together and give the different reasons why.

After this, it would be useful for them to make an exercise of choosing the correct word and, again, they should justify why they are using that word and not another, always justifying their answers and providing the right context for using the word.

At the end of the unit, students should check their understanding of the vocabulary of the unit. For this, we could do it in two different ways. One way would be to give some exercises to the students and give them some time to do them, together with a self-assessment rubric to fill in when finished (see table 12). Another way would be to do the same but once students finish their exercises, they should be given to their classmate together with a peer-assessment rubric to fill in; which they would later check.

Vocabulary task self-assessment			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I am able to match the words with the definitions	3	2	1
I am able to complete the sentence with the right vocabulary word	3	2	1
I am able to give a definition myself for the word or provide an example	3	2	1
I am able to provide a correct sentence in which the word is used properly in a situation	3	2	1
I know how to spell the different words	3	2	1

Table 12. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment regarding vocabulary*

Vocabulary task peer-assessment			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
My classmate is able to match the words with the definitions	3	2	1
My classmate isable to complete the sentence with the right vocabulary word	3	2	1
My classmate is able to give a definition myself for the word or provide an example	3	2	1
My classmate is able to provide a correct sentence in which the word is used properly in a situation	3	2	1
My classmate knows how to spell the different words	3	2	1

Table 13. *Rubric to carry out peer-assessment in vocabulary tasks*

❖ **Grammar – Unit 1**

Finally, the grammar introduced in this unit is the differentiation between ''to be'' and ''have got'' in the present tense. As I explained in the general guidelines, we should make students think as much as possible so that they can reflect on what they are learning. For this reason, we should not give them the rules in advance but introduce the grammar points in a communicative way. For this reason, it would be useful to use emergent grammar (Hopper, 1998), which would make students think and reason. For this purpose, we could present students a text in which these two verbs (''to be'' and ''have got'') are used frequently, such as this one:

Hi, I'm Tony. I am thirty-two and I have got a big family. We live in Birmingham in England. I have got three sisters and four brothers. We are all in our twenties or thirties now. My mum and dad are retired now, and they like to relax in the garden and go on holidays.

My sisters are all married but they not haven't got any children at the moment. All of my brothers are single, and I think they don't want to get married or have children. Yes, it is strange! All the women are married in my family! I am single at the moment but want to find the right person one day…What about you? Have you got any brothers or sisters? Are they your age?

Here it is very important for teachers make use of questions as an AfL technique in order to make them think and reason as much as possible. They should make them realize and understand by themselves the use of ''have got'' and ''be''. For this, they can use the following questions (although they might adapt them or change them depending on the group and their needs).

- *Can you notice any frequent or repeated words?*
- *Why are they being used? What is the purpose?*
- *Are they used in the same way? Can we use them interchangeably?*
- *Can you see any differences when they are used with ''he'', ''she''?*
- *Do you notice any changes in the questions?*

By responding to these meta-cognitive questions, students will be more cognitively engaged, and they will reason. Moreover, once they have practiced this, they can fill in the following rubric in order to assess themselves and see how their learning process is going. See table 14:

Grammar task self-assessment			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I have some mistakes, but they do not interfere in the understanding	3	2	1
I have noticeable mistakes which interfere in the understanding, mixing the verbs ''to be'' and ''have got''	3	2	1
I understand the difference between ''to be'' and ''have got''	3	2	1
I understand the different contexts in which I can use ''to be'' and ''have got''	3	2	1
I know the structure to do the questions	3	2	1
I know what to change when the subject is ''he'', ''she'' or ''it''.	3	2	1
I identify ''he'', ''she'' and ''it'' although they appear with a noun and not the pronoun	3	2	1
I do not forget the ''got'' in the verb ''have''	3	2	1
I understand the difference between ''have'' and ''have got''	3	2	1
I would be able to explain these two verbs to my classmate	3	2	1

Table 14. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment in the grammar task*

4. Evaluation of the AfL proposal

This section is devoted to the evaluation of the proposal presented in this paper. Once teachers have carried out these AfL techniques in the EFL classroom, it is very important that they evaluate and reflect on what they have done throughout the course. When we introduce something new in a lesson, we need to check whether the original purpose has been achieved or not and why. In fact, the most important part of the evaluation process is not to check whether we have succeeded or not but, rather, to see why we had difficulties (in case we did) and think of ways in which we can solve them for following implementations. The most important part of evaluation and reflection is the development and improvement of the proposal for following years.

In order to get a full view of this proposal throughout the year, teachers should evaluate it taking several aspects into account:

1) **Mixed-Ability group**: teachers should reflect on whether this proposal has reached every student in the classroom, including those with a higher level, those with a lower level and those with any kind of special needs. This is particularly relevant for programa students as, in some bilingual schools, these groups include students with learning/behavior difficulties, not only those whole English is lower than A2. According to previous research, AfL is oriented to every learner since it does not focus on the results but rather on the different learning processes. For this reason, teachers should reflect on the following:
    a. Have students improved regardless of their individual characteristics or special needs?
    b. Has it provided an individualized learning process for each of the students?
    c. Have students improved in their learning process, focusing on their individual weaknesses and strengths?

2) **Attitudes and Motivation**: teachers should also reflect on whether these techniques have changed the students' attitudes and motivation.
    a. Have students shown an eager attitude towards participation in class?
    b. Have students shown a careful attitude towards their learning process, showing care and willingness?
    c. Have students shown joy when realizing their learning process?

3) **Results in grades**: Although AfL is not concerned with grades (it is actually completely the opposite), it is also true that if AfL has a positive effect on the learning process, it is very likely that the positive results are reflected in the grades. For this reason, it would be useful for teachers to look at the effects on the students' grades.

4) **The teacher's role**: Teachers should also reflect on their role throughout the year. They need to reflect on the actions they have taken, whether they think they have missed some opportunities, or they have done something positive that they want to repeat. In order to remember everything, it would be good for teachers to have a diary in which they write down their reflections lesson by lesson or week by week. This will help them to reflect at the end of the year and take some decisions for future implementations.

Moreover, teachers should also reflect on how AfL has been carried out in the different skills and whether they think it has been a good way or there is something to improve. Then, it would also be useful that they have a kind of diary one the different skills and language areas with notes on the activities implemented regarding AfL. In this way, not only can they reflect week after week but also at the end of the year, checking which techniques have been the most effective and which ones have not, in order to improve in the following years.

5) **The students' experience and opinion:** As it is very likely that students had not experienced something similar to AfL, it is quite important to take into account their experience with AfL and what they think about it. For this, teachers can compare the first questionnaire, done at the beginning of the course, and the last one done on the last day of the course, and they can check the differences on their answers after having experienced AfL. If teachers want to know more specific answers, they can create a new questionnaire to ask them other questions which will let them know about their personal experience. As AfL is introduced in order to improve the students' learning experience, we should always take the students' opinion into account, as long as it is constructive.

Then, all of these different aspects should give us a complete view of whether the implementation of AfL in the EFL classroom worked or not, and how we can improve the proposal for future implementations, adapted to different groups.

5. Conclusion and further implementation

To conclude, we have seen how including AfL in the English classroom can be a useful tool, but it involves time and planning beforehand. Putting AfL techniques into practice helps teachers to get to know their students' individual needs and make their learning process much more individualized and optimal. Concretely, this technique may be particularly useful in *programa* groups, to give these students language use and learning opportunities which *sección* students seem to encounter anyway, giving them opportunities to think and express their thoughts in English.

It would be important for future implementation that not only AfL was implemented with *sección* and *programa* students but also with other minority groups such as PMAR (''Programa de Mejora del Aprendizaje y Rendimiento''). I have personally seen how PMAR students are in many occasions left aside with fewer technological resources, smaller spaces and a lot of difficulties to have similar lessons to *sección* and *programa* students. As I mentioned in the theoretical background, Assessment for Learning is oriented towards all the different students and thus, it should be implemented with PMAR to try and improve their learning process and make them aware of how they can adjust their learning techniques. I strongly believe it would make a big difference and they might even feel more comfortable.

I have provided a proposal to implement an AfL pedagogy in the English language classroom even though I have not had the time to implement it in the classroom myself during my teaching practice. This is a pending challenge ahead in my future career as an English teacher.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Document to get information on the first day of the course (it would have to be done in Spanish)

Information about attitudes and motivation

- Do you like the English subject? What do you think about it? Do you like it?
- Do you think it is necessary?
- What have you learnt in the English subject in the school up to now? Do you think you have learnt a lot? Do you think you have learnt useful things? In what cases do you think you could use what you have learnt here?
- What are you expecting from this subject this year? Is there anything that you are looking forward to learning?
- What topics are you interested in? What would you like to learn about? Do you like sports, music, reading…etc.?
- Have you ever travelled to an English-Speaking country?

Information about speaking

- Have you practiced speaking English in the classroom before?
- If so, how was it? How did you feel? Did you find it difficult or easy? What was the most difficult part of speaking in English? Do you know what your main problems and difficulties were?
- Would you like to practice speaking in English in class? How would you feel about it?

Information about reading

- Have you read a lot of English texts in English classroom before?
- Has anyone taught you skills to improve your reading comprehension?
- Do you understand English texts easily?
- If you have problems understanding the text, what do you think is the main source: the complexity of the grammar or the knowledge of vocabulary words?
- Do you think you will improve your reading skills this year?
- Would you like to read an adapted book in this subject? If so, you can leave here your wishes.

Information about writing

- Have you written anything in English in the English class before? Why type of texts have you been in contact with?

- Have your previous teachers taught you how to write in English?

- Do you think you could write a text in English right now?

- According to you, what are your main problems when writing in English? Maybe you do not know the vocabulary, maybe you do not know the different tenses…etc.

Information about listening

- Have you listened or watched any English spoken videos/audios in the English class? If so, how was it? Was it difficult to understand?

- Would you like to understand people who speak in English?

- How do you think you can improve your listening comprehension?

- Are you aware of the different English accents? If so, which one is easier to understand for you?

Information about grammar

- What English grammar have you learnt in previous years?

- Do you understand all the English grammar you have previously studied?

- Would you know what specific grammar to use in different situations?

- Do you think that knowing the grammar rules is important to communicate in in English?

- Are you aware of the problems you made regarding grammar in previous years? How did you solve them?

Information about vocabulary

- Can you mention some vocabulary topics you have studied in previous years in the English class?

- Do you think the topics you have studied are useful if you ever want to communicate in English?

- Do you remember all of the vocabulary you have studied?

- How did you study vocabulary?

- Do you have any suggestions of vocabulary you would like to learn?

- What type of vocabulary you think you will learn this year?

If you have any suggestion or wishes regarding this year, please, leave them here:

7.2. <u>Reflection on the last day of the unit</u>

On the last day of the unit, students will have to reflect on their learning process throughout this unit. First of all, they will take a look at the answers they wrote down at the beginning of the unit to the next questions:

- ✦ What are you learning?
- ✦ Why are you learning this?
- ✦ How are you going to achieve this learning?

Once they have read their answers at the beginning of the unit, they will answer the following questions:

- ✦ Did you follow all the steps to achieve the learning?
- ✦ Do you think you achieved your goals?
- ✦ What did you do well in your learning? Why?
- ✦ What do you think you need to work on more?
- ✦ What do you need to do to improve your learning?

All of this could be collected by students in a portfolio called **''MY LEARNING PROCESS'',** which would include all of their reflections on each unit throughout the year and could be handed it to the teacher each term.

7.3. <u>Questionnaire on the last day of the course</u>

<u>Information about attitudes and motivation</u>

- Do you like the English subject? What do you think about it?
- Do you think it is necessary?
- What have you learnt in the English subject during this year? Do you think you have learnt a lot? Do you think you have learnt useful contents? In what cases do you think you could be needing the contents learnt so far?
- Did the subject fulfill your expectations?

Information about speaking

- Have you practiced speaking in English during this year?
- How was it? How did you feel? Did you find it difficult or easy? What was the most difficult part of speaking in English? Do you know what your main problems and difficulties were?

Information about reading

- Have you read a lot of texts in English this year?
- Do you think your teacher has taught you skills to improve your reading comprehension?
- Do you understand texts easily?
- If you have problems understanding the text, what do you think is the main source: the complexity of the grammar or the little knowledge of vocabulary words?
- Do you think you have improved your reading skills this year?
- Did you like the experience of reading an adapted book (graded readers)?

Information about writing

- Have you written anything in English this year? Why type of texts have you written?
- Has your teacher taught you how to write in English?
- Do you think you have improved your writing skills?
- According to you, what have been your main problems writing in English?

Information about listening

- Have you listened or watched any English spoken videos/audios during this year? how was it? Was it difficult to understand?
- Do you now understand people who speak in English better?
- Do you think you have improved your listening comprehension?
- Have you discovered different English accents? If so, which one was easier to understand for you?

Information about grammar

- What grammar have you learnt this year?
- Do you understand all the grammar you have studied?

- Have you learnt what specific grammar to use in different situations?

- Do you think that knowing the grammar rules is important to communicate in in English?

- Are you aware of the problems you have made regarding grammar this year? How did you solve them?

Information about vocabulary

- Can you mention some vocabulary topics you have studied this year?

- Do you think the topics you have studied are useful if you ever want to communicate in English?

- Have you learnt all the vocabulary you were expecting?

7.4. Rubric for students to assess their listening task

Self-assessment in listening tasks			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I have understood most of the words	3	2	1
I have recognized the correct tense of the verbs	3	2	1
I have deduced the meaning of unknown words from the context	3	2	1
I have understood the general idea from the audio	3	2	1
I can summarize it through speaking or writing	3	2	1
I understand in what context I could be listening to this audio	3	2	1
It is difficult to understand because of the accent	3	2	1
It is difficult to understand because of the speed	3	2	1
With this task I have learnt…			
With this task I have realized I have to work more on…			
Teacher's comments…			

Table 15. *General rubric to carry out self-assessment in the listening tasks*

7.5. Rubric for assessing speaking – self-assessment and peer-assessment

Self-assessment in speaking tasks			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I show fluency in my speaking	3	2	1
I am tackling the topic the task requires	3	2	1
I use the correct verb tense	3	2	1
I use contractions	3	2	1
I use vocabulary learnt in the unit regarding this topic	3	2	1
I show an effort to have an intelligible pronunciation	3	2	1
With this task I have learnt…			
With this task I have realized I have to work more on…			
Teacher's comments…			

Table 16. *General rubric to carry out self-assessment in speaking task*

Peer-assessment in speaking tasks			
How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
He/She shows fluency in his/her speaking	3	2	1
He/She tackles the topic the task requires	3	2	1
He/She uses the correct verb tense	3	2	1
He/She uses contractions	3	2	1
He/She uses vocabulary learnt in the unit regarding this topic	3	2	1
He/She shows an effort to have an intelligible pronunciation	3	2	1
Mention something positive about your classmate regarding this task:			

Table 17. *General rubric to carry out peer-assessment in speaking tasks*

7.6. Rubric for students to assess their writing production

This rubric is an example on how to assess an opinion essay writing task.

How true are these sentences? (3=totally true, 2= partly true, 1= not true at all)			
I have enjoyed writing this task!	3	2	1
I did what the task asked me to	3	2	1
I have clearly stated the topic of the writing	3	2	1
I wrote different paragraphs which can be clearly differentiated	3	2	1
I gave my opinion	3	2	1
I gave arguments which supported my opinion	3	2	1
I used connectors to join my different ideas	3	2	1
I used a correct punctuation and spelling	3	2	1
I used different verb tenses in the right way	3	2	1
With this task I learnt…			
With this task I realized I had to work more on…			
Teacher's comments…			

Table 18. *Rubric to carry out self-assessment in an opinion essay activity*