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# Tales and stories: an English teaching method for Children's Education.

*Trabajo de fin de grado*

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*"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn".*

*Benjamin Franklin, (1706-1790).*

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo se centra en la presentación de la utilización de los cuentos como recurso didáctico para enseñar inglés durante la etapa de educación infantil. Esta propuesta educativa justifica la importancia, el divertimento y las ventajas que puede proporcionar en el alumnado de edades tempranas el uso de dichos materiales. La propuesta presenta además, los tipos de metodología más adecuados para enseñar una segunda lengua durante esta etapa educativa.

Con el fin de aportar más información y apoyar la fundamentación teórica, se ha desarrollado una propuesta didáctica dirigida a niños de entre 3 y 6 años para llevar a cabo la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera haciendo uso de los cuentos como principal recurso.

## ABSTRACT

This final project focuses on the usage of stories as a teaching resource to teach English during the early childhood education. This educational proposal justifies the importance, enjoyment and the benefits that the use of such materials can provide students from an early age. The proposal also presents the most appropriate methodologies to teach a second language during this educational stage.

In order to provide more information and support the theoretical foundation, it has developed an educational proposal aimed at children between 3 and 6 years to carry out the teaching of foreign language using stories as a primary resource.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Lengua extranjera, enseñanza, aprendizaje, educación infantil, cuentos e historias, inglés, propuesta didáctica.

## KEY WORDS

Foreign Language, teaching, learning, childhood education, tales and stories, English, didactic proposal.

## INDEX

## <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

As we know, stories have been used as educational resources for a long time due to its pleasant character and its educational value. As a result, this work is heading towards exploitation of this resource, coalesced around 6 main points:

First, a number of goals I wanted to achieve have been exposed in the first point of this project.

The second point focuses on the justification of the chosen theme, which focuses on learning a second language through stories and communication skills. Hence the importance that teaching the foreign language has acquired in our country, referring to the academic development that the kids should get in learning of English is exposed.

The third point explains the process of carrying out the work based on the method that I used to develop it. It focuses on the explanation of the research methodology, with which I have collected a lot of information through literature review and revision of articles and books.

The fourth point and one of the most important, is focused on the theoretical foundation, which it is essential to understand how children learn in early childhood education. In it, I study the positive aspects of the story, the process of learning through stories, the use of the story as an educational resource in the English classroom and which types of appropriate methodologies are developed to teach English to children from an early age. All this, it's based on proven studies of important authors such as Gillian Baldwin, Moya Guijarro, Roig Estruch or Llorente del Pozo and others.

In the fifth item, one of the most personal parts of the final project takes place: the didactic proposal. In it, I develop a proposal through which guidelines are given to use the resource of stories in teaching English. This proposal can be developed by any professor of child education, and presents objectives and contents to be achieved through the realization of it. In addition, different resources that can be used to motivate students and evaluation criteria are discussed in order to see whether the objectives that had been previously proposed have been achieved

In the final point of the work, some considerations and personal reflections, along with some references are introduced.

## **AIMS**

- To learn how to perform deep investigations related to teaching.
- To collect and contrast information from different authors about teaching English through stories.
- To make learning proposals focused on teaching foreign language through stories.
- To expose different appropriate methodologies to teach English at an early ages.

## **JUSTIFICATION ABOUT THE TOPIC**

The choice of the proposed item was initially a bit dubious to me as it is a very treated topic today because of the importance of the story in the child's life. When I was a child, I loved when my parents, aunt or grandmother told me stories and I enjoyed so much this resource. I think that I learnt many values thanks to the books my family read to me and I have very fond memories of it, and this has been the main reason why I have chosen to devote my research to this topic.

Since 1990, English has been very present in the education of our country with the law "LOGSE", which establishes that children must understand and produce simple messages in the language. With the passage of time, English has become more important, being more necessary to establish its teaching from an early age. I've always admired that children have the opportunity to approach the language from an early age because I did not have that opportunity. Because of that, I think the youth of my age have lost more opportunities, leaving behind a greater cultural and linguistic learning.

Research of authors and the experience of many teachers leave us a wide range of options when teaching a second language, providing us with so much work. Despite the existence of numerous studies on methodologies, resources and models in teaching English, I think a teacher should always try to innovate, look beyond what is already written. I wanted to contribute with my little grain so I have analyzed information about teaching English through stories and I have expressed opinions and my own experience, thanks to the practice period that allowed me to make it.

In conclusion, the choice of the topic is due to my taste for reading and specifically, because of the pleasure and happiness that children showed me in the practices when I told stories to them.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In these lines, I'm going to explain the methodology that I have used to carry out this final project and the process to do so.

The first step towards the realization of this final project began with the decision of the issue, which was agreed with the tutor and implemented since that time.

Once I had chosen the topic, the tutor gave me some guidelines to structure the final project that started with the search for information on platforms like dialnet, doaj, or google academic. The first searches were unsuccessful because the information that was in relation to my subject did not come from reliable sources.

When I started to look at reliable sources, I began to find lots of articles and books related to my topic. I searched and contrasted information through scientific research methodology and bibliographic review, which have allowed me to meet many important authors and large studies related to teaching English through stories.

The knowledge gained through this method represents an activity of rationalization of academic and professional environment that fosters intellectual development of the individuals using it through the systematic investigation of reality.

Most information taken through this method has been directed to the realization of the theoretical foundation. Once I already had the information and knowledge, I had a base on which support the other sections, so I developed the theoretical framework and continued with other work.

Finally, once these parts were revised and taking the most appropriate content, I developed the short, methodology, reflection and conclusion.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### Positive aspects of the story in teaching English

According with Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez, (1999:196), *"the use of books and stories in a language lesson is becoming increasingly important because it's a very valuable resource and it stimulates the imagination suggests, it's motivating and, above all, provides a rich and meaningful context"*.

With the vast amount of activities that can be performed with different literary texts, we can say that story is the literary manifestation that is used as one of the most important teaching materials in the English classroom: "*Children learn best through play, games, make-believe, storytelling and songs",* according Ashworth and Wakefield (1994: 34) in Rodriguez López (2004). In addition to the reasons above, other aspects of the curriculum that also make a very positive use to teach a second language according to Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez (1999) are:

- To develop the student literary competition: through stories, children can understand and enjoy literature while being familiarized with certain expressive resources.

- To encourage communication: all activities carried out in class should encourage the interaction between people and their environment through the use of foreign language. Barreras Gómez, A. (2010: 32) indicates that *"stories are motivating and fun creating a desire to communicate"*.

Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez (1999) talk about how storytelling fits perfectly with this feature because it is storytelling and not reading, so communicative skills are used and the content changes every time that we narrate it. Teachers should pay attention to the reactions of children and attending to these, they should use gestures and modify or adapt those aspects that they consider important or necessary in order to induce interaction and communication. These elements are introduced into each story to attract the student's attention because they are new elements that can surprise and motivate the children.

- To train listening strategies: *"children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This allows certain language items to be acquired while others are being overtly reinforced"* (Barreras Gómez, A. (2010:33). Listening to stories develops the child's

listening and concentration skills in two ways: visual clues (pictures) or general knowledge (Barreras Gómez, A. (2010:34). Kids will learn to listen with attention according to different objectives: to understand the general argument of the text or to get specific information. In Baldwin words (2003: 90), *"stories introduce children to the rhythm, sounds, and intonation of English"*.

- To train comprehension strategies: if the student is able to anticipate some events in a part of the story, then we will increase their concentration while they gain confidence and self-esteem. "*Young children who are learning English need stories that have a very strong and easy to follow storyline*" Gillian Baldwin, (2003: 92). The repetition helps anticipation and therefore the participation of students, promoting by this way the use of foreign language inadvertently.

- To train the suprasegmental elements in stories: in the tales, especially if they have dialogue, children could find different types of intonations depending to the characters, several examples of onomatopoeia, rhymes, etc; and the rhythm will be very varied (Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez, 1999).

*"You will (...) maintain their interest in the story by varying the ways you present to them. You might dramatize it, you might use puppets, magnet board figures, a sequence of pictures, or you could use the children themselves to make take parts in the story"*.

(Gillian Baldwin, 2003: 95).

- To facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary: Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez (1999) talk about the new vocabulary that usually appears adapted according to the needs of students and which it's often repeated, always within a rich context which provides a better opportunity to grasp the meaning without the need for further explanations. To help students, we can motivate them using paralinguistic features (gestures with his hands, face, etc.) or support graphics (drawings, photographs, etc). It is very important to ease their comprehension because if the child feels unable to understand the story, he/she can feel frustrated and it will be hard to get their attention back. Books provide a context for learning and promote the learning of a new vocabulary, thus promoting language acquisition (Wright, 1995; Baldwin, 2003; in Guadamillas Gómez, 2015).

- To bring cultural diversity: according to Navarro Rincón and Jimenez Jimenez (1999: 197) *"we can use stories that the child has known through their native language and belong to traditions and customs of their environment, and others who belong to the narrative tradition in English"*. This would be critical to advance the linguistic and cultural knowledge.

- To be closer to the reality of students: literature transports children to real and imaginary situations and all kinds of characters that can be nearby or fictitious. As there are so many stories, we can always find those that are interesting to our students and closest to "their" reality, adjusted to the "world of children" which is usually full of fantasies. *"The closeness to the reality of students could facilitate the implementation of their mechanisms of expression"* in Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez words (1999:197). The student access to the foreign language should be used in a pleasant way, paying more attention to the story itself than in the use of language. *"Children connect with traditional stories and those written especially for them because they have situations that children have lived. Stories usually help children to understand their fears, prejudices and problems that they encounter"*. (Gillian Baldwin, 2003:88).

- To develop the imagination: children usually feels identified with the story and because of that they may feel the need to change circumstances of story until the end of it.

- To motivate the learning: Gillian Baldwin (2003:88) says that *"If children are to learn another language effectively, they need to be well motivated towards that language"* According with Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez (1999) motivation is vital in any educational process as a facilitator of learning element. If a story is attractive to students and has an interesting way, students get tuned and motivated. By contrast, an activity that lasts too long (especially in early childhood education) will lead them to boredom and inattention.

- To help emotional and social development: Navarro Rincón and Jiménez Jiménez (1999) believe that storytelling in the foreign language classroom is a shared activity between a group of students and between these with their teacher. In this activity, they share a collective experience of feelings, laughter, sadness, etc. The child feels integrated or identified into the group. *"Children learn language best when the language is real, when they can feel"* (Gillian Baldwin, 2003: 88). Through this type of

activities, students will develop their self-esteem and emotions in a mature and social way.

- Interdisciplinary character: stories offer the opportunity to continue learning as we choose stories that help consolidate knowledge acquired in other subjects of the curriculum by choosing stories themed according to the materials. *"It's possible to base a unit of work around a story and design activities based on it that children enjoy for a number of lessons"* (Gillian Baldwin, 2003: 88). According to Navarro Rincón and Jimenez Jiménez, (1999: 198) storytelling should be an open game activity, in which imagination, relaxation and cooperation would take place in a funny and informal way. To achieve this, we can:

- Improvise or modify something that we consider inappropriate.
- Resort to the Spanish language whenever deemed necessary.
- Change the layout of the desks in the classroom.
- Modify our usual way of behavior in order to get their attention and avoid routine.
- Create an appropriate environment for the storytelling with previous activities. During the same, we can create expectations to keep their attention for longer.

**Teaching- learning of foreign languages through stories.**

English Language Teaching in Childhood Education is rapidly developing in Spain, whose Educational Laws state the importance of preparing children for: "an international, multicultural and multilingual society" (RD 1513/2006, 7th December; p. 43090). According to Article 5.3 of Royal Decree 1630/2006, of December 29, whereby the core curriculum of the second cycle of child education are established, *"it corresponds to the education authorities encourage first approach to foreign language learning in the second child education cycle, especially in the last year. "*

The process of learning a foreign language in childhood depends on several factors, motivation's one of the most important. According to Murado (2010) in Guadamillas Gómez (2015), motivation is the key factor in second language learning, so getting a positive attitude in children is related to a successful learning. We mustn't ignore the affective and emotional factors that we must consider whether we want to help

contribute to good learning. Children's curiosity its another aspect that must be considered, because:

*"They are interested in new stories or materials that make their motivation grow. It is also important to take into account that children at this stage are self-centred, which should be considered when teachers select the activities or stories for the class".*

Guadamillas Gómez, (2015: 95)

Slattery and Willis (2001) in Guadamillas Gómez (2015) state that pupils at an early age learn the language unconsciously, and because of that, the activities, projects and tasks carried out during a lesson must contribute to this unconscious learning. With the purpose of facilitating the learning of a foreign language, teachers should create new situations from previous experiences of the students to give us access to the introduction of foreign language in a natural way (Pérez Esteve. and Roig Estruch, 2003).

We mustn't forget that nowadays, Foreign Language teachers are usually not specialists in child education, so a good coordination with the tutor is convenient to teach the language according to the needs of children (Llorente del Pozo, 2003).

Foreign Language Teachers should understand that the development of children's language in their mother tongue is not completed, so teachers should also consider not to *"teach children to say things in a foreign language that they cannot say in their own language"* (Clarke and Silberstein, 1977: 6) in Guadamillas Gómez, (2015).

So, once we know the most important aspects of children's foreign language learning, we are going to see how we can facilitate this learning through different contexts and stories.

As we said before, children learn better in certain situations where they feel comfortable. Bruner, J.S (1983-1984: 177) in Joy Morris and Segura Ruiz (2003) claimed that *"teaching new words and lexical structures must be undertaken in very specific contexts, accompanied by visual and gestural support to facilitate understanding".* This idea is consistent with his theory of "Formats". Bruner believed that children can learn a language using it in their daily relationship with the world. Therefore, one of the most productive methods to teach a language is immersive

education, which is based in carrying out all tasks in the language in which children have to learn according to Pérez Esteve and Roig Estruch (2003: 51).

This implies a vast use of language in communicative activities that involves long time and appropriated procedures. We would be facing a process of foreign language acquisition through use in a context that becomes necessary as a vehicle communication. That involves an extensive use of language in communicative activities such as storytelling or dramatizations: *"dramatizing stories can make the presentation of stories more interesting to children",* (Baldwin, 2003: 91).

If the child's mother tongue is firmly structured and is strongly present in the external environment of the school, teaching in the foreign language does not reduce the level of the mother tongue because bilingualism has enhanced both languages and communication skills (Pérez Esteve & Roig Estruch, 2003).

These authors agree that in the school context there are many situations that can be exploited to enter new expressions in the foreign language. As we have noted previously, according to Yvette Coyle (2000), learning a new language requires opportunities to understand and produce language significantly. From this perspective, classroom activities that are meaningful to students are very required. These types of activities have led to the recent methodological proposals based on topics (topics) or tasks (task-based Approaches).

The use of these situations should be monitored and prepared. Children at this age can't act autonomously because they are still learning the concepts of space and time. Because of that, experienced teachers of Early Childhood Education have to carry a routine of lessons and activities in a very organized way and they have to build several small rituals on which daily practice is ordered. According to Zabalza, (1996:173) in Joy Morris and Segura Ruiz (2003): *"the routine is based on the repetition of activities and rhythms in the spatiotemporal organization of the class and it plays important roles in the configuration, the educational context."*

These rituals are developed to arrange some events like entry to class, the distribution of school materials, the development of the assembly, or performing communications and petitions, etc.

Knowing the function of these rituals and how they are developed in each class, gives us the ability to act in many cases to introduce foreign language (Pérez Esteve and Roig Estruch, 2003).

If we change the expressions of the mother tongue in the corresponding foreign Language, students easily can understand what teacher says. In addition, the teacher can regulate the operation of the lesson using the foreign language without having to create his own procedures for achieving automation of the rules by the whole class.

As we have named before, coordination between English teachers and tutors is essential and this has the virtue to get with little effort and time that we can lead lessons in a foreign language (Joy Morris and Segura Ruiz, 2003). This will contribute to an effective teaching of the language and to take advantage of the limited time that teachers of foreign language have.

When we have achieved a certain control of the class, children learn a significant amount of expressions that will be used by them in daily situations to communicate in the context of foreign language class. It will be more effective if the situations are the most participatory possible, because language is learned in interactive and cooperative contexts, from making multiple exchanges that, at first, should be primarily oral (Yvette Coyle, 2000) so that we push forward the expressive side in addition to the understanding of language that we use.

We need more familiar situations in which they can use their development expressions and vocabulary that interests us to create a complete competition of all aspects of children's life which are significant at these ages. The way to incorporate the school context in several situations experienced by students is through stories. *"Traditional stories and those specially written to children, appeal to them because they connect in some way with their lives. That is why stories around the world often have similar themes"* Baldwin, (2003: 88).

All of us know the taste that children at these ages have by tales and stories in general because *"sometimes, the children's desire to tell a story that is known, is the best proof of how much he enjoys"* Zaro and Salaberry (1993: 2) in Beltrán Llavador (1994) . We also know more or less the ability students have to live through symbolic play or game situations as semi-realities.

Therefore, it is good to create interesting and fun stories based on family situations of students; *"teachers can connect children to characters, places and situations that are unfamiliar as long as there is something in the story that appeals to them"* (Baldwin, 2003: 88). More important than the content of the stories is the way that we tell them. If we stand in front of a class of kindergarten and we began to tell a story just as we do in their mother tongue but in a language they don't understand, the result will be the general lack of attention and change the activity to other more attractive as talking to the partner.

To capture their attention from the outset, we must ensure understanding; although this is still not enough. If we want to maintain attention, that should be interesting, easily understood and funny; *"If children are to learn another language effectively, they need to be well motivated towards that language"* (Baldwin, 2003: 88). We need a proposal focused on expression and understanding, therefore, it has to incorporate the production of all our activities and stories have to be the central activity through which the language we want to teach is presented to children.

**The story as a teaching resource in English classroom.**

The story is one of the most important teaching resources for the acquisition of communicative skills in L2. By teaching materials we understand documents of teaching that offer linguistic, oral or written texts. Here we refer to those materials that are related to child folklore: tales, rhymes, songs, etc., which if they haven't undergone any alteration we call "authentic material." (López Tellez, G. y M.T. Rodriguez, 1999:180) in López Tellez (2003).

*"Stories helped in developing liking for learning English in general and reading comprehension skill in particular. Also, stories helped in guessing the meaning of the difficult words from context and in improving essential vocabulary. As for understanding the usage of English stories helped in learning and understanding idiomatic expressions as well as most required structures. Tales offer the much needed exposure to the target language, making learning English a fun activity".*

Mourao (2009: 37), in Guadamillas Gómez (2015).

The story avoids repetition of linguistic structures without context and it favors repetitions and incorporating new vocabulary. At these ages, children like to play with words and sounds, so they will be incorporated into learning by the combination of text and image that only books offer us with their stories (Mourao, 2009: 37) in Guadamillas Gómez.

This type of material is vital to teaching and learning of foreign languages, just as it's for learning the mother tongue, because according to Heath (1986) in Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun A. van Dijk (1988), academic success depends on the forms of language that children know.

If we introduce a significant input to children, the opportunity to acquire unconsciously rhythm, melody or intonation of the new language and enjoy the place in an endless of recreational activities through which they experience, discover and satiate their curiosity, the story becomes an ally for teaching another language (López Téllez, 2003).

According to Joy Morris and Segura Ruiz (2003: 200-201) the story is an irreplaceable activity in English class by the following reasons:

- It allows works in linguistic elements in its proper context, which facilitates understanding greatly.

- It allows represents familiar contexts that are artificial in classroom.

- It promotes the acquisition and fixation of vocabulary and linguistic structures.

- It's motivated and students like it.

- Features that should have a story to be effective according to Joy Morris and Segura Ruiz (2003: 201):

- Simple argument directly related to the childhood experience

- Simple and repetitive linguistic structures.

- Attractive presentation. Children should see that a story is been telling.

- Short duration, because the attention span is quite limited.

- Variety in presentation mode: using visuals, puppets, slides, or making a small representation in which students play the role of the characters.

Stories that can be found in children's classroom are more than adequate for its use in English classroom, as well as it usually hasn't got any word, so that makes them interpretable in any language. Therefore, if they are to be used in class, we must ensure that the story is understandable by the illustrations.

The narration of children's stories is a close familiar experience because it's part of our experiential and cultural fabric. In Hymes (1982) and White (1981) words in Smitherman, G. amd Van Dijk, T.A (1988) the narrative of own stories has been one of the pricipales ways to organize and make sense of experiences in all societies. Throughout the history of humanity, children have enjoyed the adventures of intrepid characters wrapped in a frame full of fantasy that has been revered by children at the same time that it was an inexhaustible source of new knowledge.

This type of transmission of knowledge it's a very appropriate technique to introducing and teaching foreign language and culture in the kindergarten stage. Address Language (DI) believes that language, rather than a system of habits that can be formed through mechanical exercise, is primarily a linguistic interaction between human and historical, social and cultural contexts (Gounari, P. 2008) in Muñoz Restrepo (2010).

Understand a story in a foreign language is a difficult task, so here we must ensure the necessary supports that help students to assimilate the story through the maintenance and increase the motivation and interest. According with Wood (1988: 70) in Rodriguez López: *"we have to recognize that, when we ask children to pay attention and concentrate on tasks that we set and which provide little by way of concrete, perceptual support, they may find it impossible to comply with our demands"*.

If we want to achieve good results, narration and exploitation of children's stories requires careful planning if we want children to engage in it. To start, teachers should choose an appropriate story according to psycho-cognitive level of students, and later make an adaptation of it.

We should adapt the story itself by developing a scheme in which the highlights were included without changing its original structure. This is what E.Garvie (1990) in López Tellez (2003) calls "staging-posts" and Morgan and Rinvolucri (1993) in López Tellez

(2003) call "skeletons" as schemes that give us a written summary of the argument that the teacher has to use to tell the tale. These "skeletons" contain the essence of the story and what the teacher considers necessary to teach foreign languages to children of different levels.

In addition, it is advisable to have planned objectives and contents (concepts, procedures and attitudes), by making choices about which points are necessary to understand the story and what would be suitable to make possible its production: vocabulary, expressions to be used for various communication functions, etc (Brewster, 1992), in Barreras Gómez, A (2010).

Perhaps, one of the first decisions that teachers should take, refers to the choice between familiar stories known by children because they are more appropriate for young children because they know the situation and the context in which the story unfolds: this circumstance promotes the understanding and it facilitates the language acquisition (López Téllez, G., 2003). Some of these stories would be those traditional such as "The Three Little Pigs," "Little Red Riding Hood", "The three Billy Goats", etc.) These stories are appropriate depending on the age of the children, their psycho-cognitive level and their previous experiences.

To increase the excitement and interest, we can use less familiar stories. Using the appropriate methodology, they can be easily understood by children because they already know how stories work and how they are structured. In both cases, the motivation may be secured.

The first contact of children with the childhood story should be through the voice of the teacher, because tales have been told orally since the origin of language and in all civilizations. Thus, teachers connect the story and its parts and with the prior knowledge and experience of school like parents have made this before. According to Michaels (1981) in Smitherman,G and Teun Van Dijk, T.A. 1988), teachers can understand the children's narratives perfectly because they share the same underlying story schema.

López Téllez, G, (2003) believes that first narrations can be done with the support of the storybook, pointing to the illustrations or having specific material that has been prepared previously.

The story should be told by attracting the attention of all children and creating the right climate in the classroom: trainees sitting on the floor in a semicircle around the teacher, focusing attention on the gaze of the teacher, in the melody or in the gestures. As Baldwin (2003: 93-94) points out, *"the gestures, dramatization, mimic and intonation, as well as illustrations and other visual support or are used for telling stories, are essential for young learners to understand the whole meaning of the story".*

Finally, it's timely the incorporation of the story to the classroom library with the aim that children can "read" and turn pages whenever they wish, in order to accustom them to the care and love of books.

**Methodologies to teach a foreign language in early education**

Until 1970 the methodologies that are mainly used to teach a foreign language have been, firstly, the grammar-translation method, and audiolingual method later (with the direct method involved), which are still in use today. These methodologies are used simultaneously by correcting some deficiencies of the other.

According to Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003) in these early methodologies there was a confrontation; on one hand the direct method "prohibited" the use of the mother tongue and the use of translation, while the grammar translation method didn't put into practice oral skills, which is the basis of direct method.

Despite this, although it's still believed that the systematic use of translation can lead some problems such as the interferences between L1 and L2, it is useful to promptly use the translation of a word, expression or fragment, especially at early ages (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, 2001) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

On the other hand, to teach a foreign language through the audiolingual method was based only on "drill, drill and more drill" (Byrne, 1969:48) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

In the late sixties and early seventies came a turning point in studies of applied linguistics and those of pedagogy. Hymes (1971) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003), with the precedents of Wales in 1966 and Jakobovits in 1970, introduced in 1971 the concept of communicative competence, in open opposition to Chomsky's theory of language competence.

Finally, in order to innovate, Hallyday breaks in with his theories of systemic-functional grammar, designed to explain how language has evolved to meet the communication needs of human beings and how it is used. Therefore, in 1970, a significant change was given in the methodology of foreign languages teaching.

Once that we have reviewed the background, we will proceed to take a look at the different most innovative methodologies and those which are indicated to teach English to young children:

- **Total physical response (TPR)**

This is a technique developed by the American psychologist James J. Asher based mainly on coordination between speech and action that tries to teach a foreign language through physical or motor activity (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 87-98; Bestard and Pérez, 1992:84-86) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

According to Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003), due to the active and fun character of this methodology, we can see its applicability to teach a foreign language in early childhood education. At this stage, the child between 3 and 5 years usually does not understand what the specialist teacher explains in the foreign language, but the pupil is able to capture the actions the teacher shows at a specific time during the lesson.

This methodological aspect stands out for its effective use as a teaching technique in the first contacts with the foreign language and its motto is "learning by doing". One of the most used techniques of this method is through the use of orders: "The commands are given to get students to perform an action, the action makes the meaning of the command clear" (Larsen- Freeman, 1986:118) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

In this sense, López and Rodriguez (1999: 45) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003), says: *"We must focus teaching in action: games, object manipulation, peer interaction, etc. This is to take the kids to enjoy learning and language not consciously."*

Therefore, and in conclusion, this methodology facilitates the understanding of the tongue exposed to the student, because it is clear the purpose with which the language is used.

- **Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPR-Storytelling)**

The TPRS was created in the nineties by a Spanish teacher in California called Blaine Ray, with the purpose of teaching second languages.

This teacher created the TPRS method influenced by the hypothesis of second language acquisition of Stephen Krashen (1982) and the TPR method invented by James Asher in the seventies introducing stories in the TPR method.

Ray, after reading the hypothesis Krashen of acquisition- language learning, decided to use in class a totally understandable language telling stories after seeing his students lost interest with many instructions (used in TPR method).

According to Marsh, V. (1998: 24-28), the TPRS "provides the critical vehicle-storytelling- to use and expand vocabulary." High-interest stories contextualize the vocabulary, enabling students to hear and see a story and then to act out, revise, and rewrite.

The objective of the TPRS is to achieve fluency (Ray and Seely, 2008). Fluidity is achieved by repetitive hearing as babies do when they acquire their mother tongue (Krashen, 1997: 3) in (Ray and Seely, 2008).

According to Ray (2008), the central part of TPRS is the storytellers (storytelling), and most importantly the storyteller is to develop the story by asking (asking a story). Blaine Ray (2008)establishes the following three basic steps of TPRS:

1) Enter all new structures: Blaine Ray suggests two forms to introduce new structures: introduce them when they appear in the story, or enter them with management before starting the story.

2) Develop the story asking: the story unfolds asking questions about it.

3) Reading: reading is a fundamental part in the class of TPRS and its aim is to expand vocabulary. When students have not understood some of the new structures, teachers can explain like Pop-up.

For these reasons, this method may be useful in a class of children's education because the story is one of the most important teaching materials.

- **Natural Approach**

The natural approach is a method of teaching a second language developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrel in 1983. It's one of the best methods to teach a second language at an early age because it is based on the communicative use of foreign language and naturally (Llorente del pozo, 2003). Intended that at first, students learn to understand and after that, that children try to express themselves in the foreign language, just as happens in the mother tongue. She thinks we should get the attention of the child and the best way to do this is through stories, songs or games you can participate actively.

Krashen's theories about learning a second language, together with the procedures and techniques developed by Terrel, gave the natural approach an international recognition. This methodology has contributed to the reform of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in general and in particular at early ages. A fundamental assumption of this methodology is the Learning Acquisition hypothesis, which develops linguistic and communicative competences in the second language.

This methodology, developed by Krashen and according to him in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003) (1983), is based on using real communication situations naturally and unconsciously, in the same way it is done in the mother tongue. The objective of this methodology is to "sensitize children to other forms of oral communication and contribute to their integral development and basic training" according to Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003: 29).

According to these authors, we must bear in mind that the aim of teaching / learning at an early age is not the language itself, but the fact of involving the child in several activities in which the language is used as a communication tool to interact with other children.

*"It is necessary to forget the idea of the language as an objective and concentrate on the activity we want to achieve... Then the language becomes a vehicle to help the teacher to achieve certain things that are firmly fixed in the context of daily activities in the world of children".*

Vázquez et al (1999:49) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003: 30)

Another aspect of this methodology establishes that the learning of a second language takes place when the tongue is relevant to the interests of children and with the appropriate degree of difficulty. Therefore, it is important to use a language adapted to the child's world in the first contacts of the child with the foreign language so that child can function in communicative language activities.

One of the most important aspects of this methodology is the hypothesis of input, which states that the process of acquisition of the foreign language becomes clear when offered the child a kind of comprehensible input or for related to their interests and with an appropriate degree of difficulty for the students (Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

The reading hypothesis belongs to this input hypothesis and it claims that the way we tell stories with a comprehensible input stimulates language acquisition; so storytelling has an important role in language acquisition.

This methodology does not invite students to speak up if they do not feel comfortable. Teachers do not correct students directly because the errors are considered part of learning here (Edge, 1989) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003). Thus, language teaching with this method is carried out in a relaxed atmosphere to ease the pressure that sometimes children are learning a new language: *"it becomes vital to create an atmosphere of calm, and a friendly, relaxed ambiance which will stimulate observation"* (Vazquez et al, 1999: 50) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

At the same time, affective factors are fundamental in learning a new language, and therefore, the class has to reproduce the natural environment of children, their family life, their games, etc ... (López and Rodriguez,1999) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

These are the reasons why this is one of the most effective methodologies for this type of teaching-learning foreign languages.

- **Task-Based Syllabus**

A task-based syllabus is, briefly, a syllabus which uses tasks as the unit of syllabus analysis (Long & Crookes 1992:41) Townsend, L. (2014). Tasks can be defined in a variety of ways, one of them will be: "activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome". (Willis 1996 :23) in Townsend, L. (2014) or as "A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form". (Nunan, 1989:10) in Townsend, L. (2014).

This method is responsible of organizing teaching in communicative activities that promote and integrate different processes related to communication. But, what is a communicative task? It's "(...) A unit of classroom work which involves learners in understanding, handling, production and interaction in L2 while their attention is focused primarily on meaning rather than form" (Nunan, D. 1989: 10) in Townsend, L. (2014)

Roca, J. and M. Valcárcel (1990) in Moya Guijarro, Albentosa Hernández and Jiménez Puado (2003) suggest that the task includes the following components:

1. Objectives to suggest a task.

2. An input or data supplied to students that are the starting point of a task.

3. A sub-skills, which are the activities that lead to realization of the entire task; activities sequenced in three sentences: processing, productive and interactive.

4. Some roles and a frame or scene (setting), specifying the functions of the teacher and students in that particular task, the organization and the type of grouping

5. Evaluation of the task, that allows to see whether they have achieved the objectives and provide a feedback mechanism to modify and adjust your design.

Task-based learning aims to provide the conditions for learner's language abilities to develop naturally (Foster, 1999:69) in Townsend, L. (2014). Therefore, programming by task is a way to approach the communicative and interpersonal reality of human language and it runs away from radical extremism.

The tasks performed in early childhood education are focused on routines, songs, storytelling and especially in the game. In this way,

*"The game is an essential element in the child's learning, and is a part of their evolutionary development and it's a channeler of formation of children's personality. Through it, children measure time and spaces are socialized, becomes, learn to give and to receive, to share, to unify rhythms of learning, and is tolerant and supportive ".*

Carrasco, López and Puertas (1997: 7) in Moya Guijarro, A.J, Albentosa, J.I and Jiménez, M.J (2003).

**DIDACTIC PROPOSAL**

## 1. Introduction.

In these lines, I will try to explain the development of my teaching proposal, which addresses the issue of teaching a foreign language through tales and stories. By using these educational resources, communication skills of children will be encouraged, and this will help them working on this aspect of language.

For the progress of this proposal with the aim of teachers of a foreign language can use this form of teaching and learning of English, I'm going to contextualize the stage to which it is addressed, the objectives, contents, methodology, evaluation and resources that are to be treated in this section.

## 2. Context.

The educational proposal that I'm going to develop can performed both bilingual and non-bilingual schools, so that children can address the English in a more informal and fun way than in the typical class.

The stage at which it is addressed is child education, and it isn't aimed at a particular age stage because, as we all know, children love to hear tales and tell their own stories. We can say that it is indicated for the first two years of the stage, because children are smaller and put more interest, although children aged 5 and 6 have longer attention. Therefore, for the first two courses it is most suitable to use stories of short duration and with easy vocabulary if we are going to use this technique.

The number of students per class is indifferent, although small groups are preferred for a stronger bond between children and the story.

Finally, say that children should have a prior approach to language in class so they can understand something. Therefore, if this method is going to be performed in the first year of infant education is recommended that either middle or end of the quarter.

### 3. Objectives.

- To develop linguistic skills of foreign language in early childhood education (oral comprehension and oral expression).
- To enhance the oral comprehension of stories in the English language.
- To encourage children's active participation in the English language through stories.
- To arouse the interest of children for foreign language telling stories with which they can identify

### 4. Contents.

- Initiative and interest in participation in oral communication in the foreign language (oral comprehension and oral expression).
- Use foreign language to express feelings, needs and interests, communicate own experiences and transmit information.
- Stories and tales related to the reality of the lives of children.
- Anticipation events in stories through pictures and drawings of these.
- Use of foreign language vocabulary in relation to the images of the stories.

### 5. Methodology.

Depending on previous and subsequent activities to be undertaken when we tell a story and depending on the objectives I set out to get, I will use different methodologies:

- **Natural Approach:** we will use this method because it's very focused on the communication. For this methodology, the communication is the primary function of language, so it's focused on teaching communicative abilities. As we have named previously, storytelling focuses its language teaching in communicative competences, and this is why this approach it's more than

adequate for that. Furthermore, in this approach the teacher has to create a classroom atmosphere that has to be interesting and friendly, and it is very easy to create a relaxed climate through stories. For all these reasons, this is a very adequate approach to use in this didactic proposal.

- **Active method:** in this methodology the active participation of the students and their motivation are vital. Stories are an encouraging activity and like all children, and their attention in active listening of these take you to participate by asking questions and forming part of the story before. We must not forget that children put squarely in history and intrigue listeners to know what will happen leads them to participate actively listening and asking questions.

  The teacher in this methodology is the learning and guidance counselor; he chooses the stories and vocabulary that he/she wants to try to carry out teaching language learning.

- **Direct method:** we are going to use this method because it implies the direct utilization of the foreign language. This approach works the oral competences, so it's very adequate for this didactic proposal since storytelling implies the listening and speaking, when we ask questions to children after telling stories, or when they ask about what's going to happen while we are telling the story. It's very useful in childhood education because with this approach children learn the foreign language in the same way they learn the mother tongue. With this approach the foreign language is learning by an inductive and active way.

- **Suggestopedia:** we will use this approach in specific cases if we want to relax children or stimulate their creative minds. This approach creates a comfortable environment in which the learning of children is relaxed and because of that children's learning is more open. With this approach we can deepen in vocabulary and show them before storytelling, by this way children could recognize this vocabulary in the story, adding it to their learning.

6. **Resources.**

- **Stories:** *Annex 1.*

The story is the main resource in this didactic proposal, as the second language teaching focuses on the use of this material. We will not focus on a specific type of story or will name the titles of any story, because the story should be appropriate to the level of students and you can always adapt it. Depending on the vocabulary or agenda that children are learning, we must choose a story line parallel to the subject so that the children can relate to and have prior knowledge of what we have in the story. In addition, we must remember that stories convey values, so we must choose those with which children can be identified by different personal situations so that reading looks more attractive to them and calls their attention.

The story shouldn't have too many characters because children may get confused. They need a character with which to identify, and they will not achieve it if there are too many characters in the story. Furthermore, *"it's a good idea to choose stories that lend themselves to dramatization. Stories with repeated actions are particularly good for this"* Baldwin (2003:92).

When we choose the story, it is very important to look at having some resources that attract the attention of children such as large any kind of illustrations, puppets, a pop stage, kamishibai, etc. Stories "*should be supported by clear, attractive and unambiguous illustrations*" Gillian Baldwin (2003: 92).

To end this resource, we will go over the most important: how to tell a story. If we want children to feel interest and attraction to the story we're telling, we have to be good storytellers, and believe us as the best. The good storyteller should master the techniques, practice and personal. With the practice techniques I refer to get the attention of children, maintain the order of the class or make children participate in the act. The personal techniques varies depending on individuals, some people may be more effusive telling stories, others transmit more harmony and tranquility, but all touch the emotions of children in one way or another.

With these techniques we refer to technical characteristics of teacher account such as intonation, physiotherapy techniques such as gestures and movement, mimicry, use of repetition, use of paralinguistic elements such as pauses or tone of voice. Below and finally, I'll give you a few tips for better reading comprehension according to Yvette Coyle (2000):

- To arrange the class so that every child can hear and see well, creating an environment that facilitates concentration and attention.
- To use attractive material of the story, presenting the story with a clear sequence of events.
-  To maintain visual contact with students so they feel closeness.
- To comment and talk about the images and illustrations to model new vocabulary.
- To maintain an appropriate pace with the aim that students have enough time to relate what they hear with visual images.
- To use gestures, mimicry, intonation, facial expression and body to explain new vocabulary.
- To repeat new vocabulary for students to get used to the sound and rhythm.
- To involve students to participate in the narration of the story through repetitions closed questions, etc.
- To make pauses to elicit keywords, check for understanding, keep intrigue, etc.

- **Dramatizations:** *Annex 2.*

Dramatizing stories is another way to bring the English to children. In the dramatizations of stories, the illustrations are replaced by scenes and actors who can be teachers, family, or children themselves.

According to Baldwin (2003:91*) "dramatizing stories can make the presentation of stories more interesting to children".* He exposes that children love to see their teachers acting with colleagues, dressing up, using puppets, masks or figures for the magnet board.

This resource is very attractive to children and a perfect tool for children to have the opportunity to hear the English of a wide range of people.

To see a play is very motivating for children because they see it from a more realistic and close-up, in which there are different characters with their own dialogue and not a single narrator. Every character has a different voice, intonation, pronunciation and gestures, and this is more fun to children.

Children usually feel attracted to see how people act in the same way as they do in some typical games like "mom and dad". Therefore, they may be attracted by the dramatization and they will want to be part of it, wanting themselves to represent a story, leading them to the direct use of language, which is one of our purposes.

- **Songs:** *Annex 3.*

Another fun and useful resource to introduce a story could be songs. Children love to hear stories repeated, and often sing with a certain rhythm. Therefore, invent or search for a song according to the vocabulary or topic of the story is highly recommended. *"Songs and stories can be listened while the children look at the books from the story, play with puppets o use the magnetboard"* Baldwin (2003: 98).

The playfulness that the songs convey, create a relaxed atmosphere in the class in which children feel more comfortable. The songs are catchy, allowing children to learn quickly, resulting in children a sense of achievement.

Due to the easy memorization and assimilation of the songs, the use of the foreign language outside the classroom is encouraged. Children love to move and sing, so it is strongly recommended to use catchy songs to present a story; by this way they will be more attracted to the tale.

- **Videos:** *Annex 4*

This is the last resort to teach English through stories of which I'm going to speak. We know the taste that children are developing by new technologies; therefore, any activity involving see a screen will attract the attention of children.

Nowadays many resources are online, and it's very easy to find cartoons or animated or short films of many stories. We must use them considering the taste that children have for cartoons, with which often they feel identified.

Once chosen the story that we will tell, we can look for plays that have made children of that story; cartoons that represent it, or native people who talk about it. This will be a great incentive to attract the attention of children when they go to tell a story, because *"they are often attractive to children and provide plenty of visual support for their understanding"* Baldwin, (2003: 98).

### 7. Evaluation.

For the evaluation of the didactic proposal, I will use the formative evaluation, which is applied when we want to evaluate the learning from the beginning, taking into account the progress and improvements throughout the process. In addition, it's applied to find out whether children have achieved the learning objectives we had previously raised too.

This type of evaluation is also useful for us to know that we need to improve or deepen more, for best children's learning. The objective of this evaluation is to make decisions regarding the alternatives of action and direction that present themselves as we go along in the process of learning of students.

In addition, we also use direct observation during storytelling sessions, analyzing whether they are effective, entertaining and motivating for children. This type of evaluation will take her place in our diary, where we go pointing the shortcomings and achievements of students.

- **Evaluation criteria:**

| CRITERIA | In process | ✔ |
|---|---|---|
| **He/she uses the communicative competence of foreign language (oral comprehension and oral expression).** | | |
| **He/she acquires some vocabulary and concepts of stories in the English language.** | | |
| **He/she maintains an active attitude in the participation using the English language through stories and listening.** | | |
| **He/she pays attention to the stories told in the foreign language and shows interest in them.** | | |
| **He/she manifests interest in the foreign language.** | | |
| **He/she is attentive during related activities of storytelling (songs, videos, and dramatization).** | | |

- **Tools of evaluation:**
  - **Direct observation:** field diary, recording dramatizations.
  - **Work record:** information reporting in tab of criteria.

## FINAL CONCLUSSION

To enter this section, I will say that the realization of this work has been a bit difficult due to being something unknown to me; since I had never done work of this importance. Thanks to the constant support and guidance of my tutor, I have tried to direct it according to his advice and instructions, in order to perform an adequate job that satisfies the requirements.

I must say too, that it has been difficult for me to get organized, as the work began to be carried out during the practices so I did not have enough time. In addition, at the end of practices, I got a job as instructor in the school of Almarza, thanks to which I have also been motivated to carry out this work.

Regarding the content of the final project, the truth is that at first I didn't even knew where to start. At the end, I realized that one of the things I liked most during my school practices was telling stories; so here I turned my attention and effort to it. Once carried out and finished the job, I have acquired great knowledge about this resource through experience that the investigations of various authors have provided me. So I have to say, as many authors cite, and as I myself have experienced, storytelling in teaching English offers many advantages to the teacher such as motivation, divertissement and participation of students in the classroom of English.

When children hear a story, they are fully involved in it and they sharpen the ear and sight, paying special attention to the illustrations and the story that is being told. Tales provide the students fun, fantasy, excitement, thus creating the desire to continue listening to know the end of the story. This resource encourages children to learn a second language and allows the language to be learned unconsciously, something that is useful as my children see it as a way to enjoy and not a task.

So, in order to end these findings and work, I will quote final project related lines that have carried out:

> *"We all need stories for our minds just as much as we need food for our bodies."*
>
> Andrew Wright.

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## *ANNEX 1*

### *PUPPETS*



### *POP STAGE AND ILLUSTRATONS*

**KAMISHIBAI**
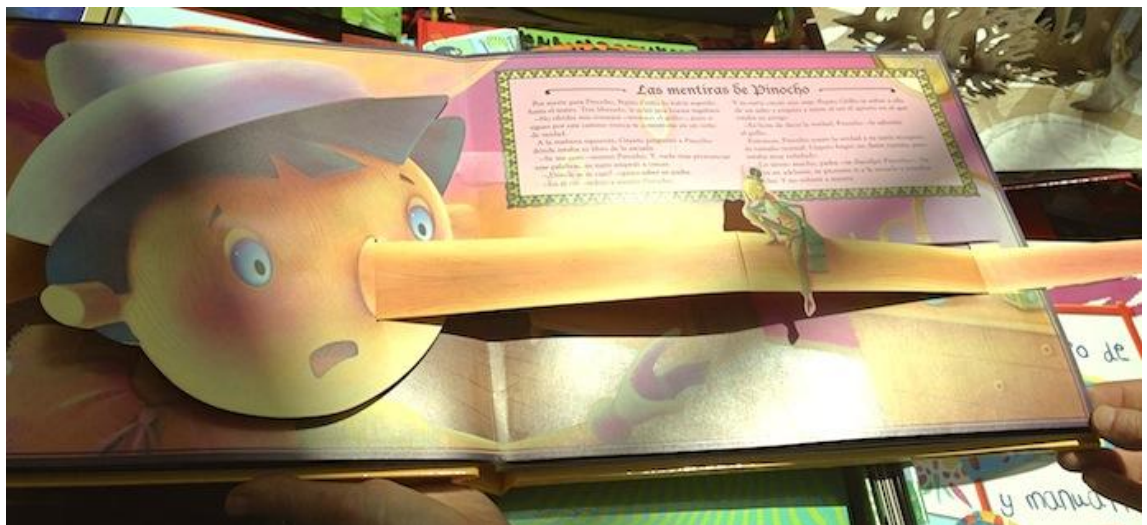
**ANNEX 2.**
*DRAMATISATIONS WITH PUPPETS*



*DRAMATISATIONS BY PUPILS*

*DRAMATISATION BY TEACHERS*



**ANNEX 3**

*EXAMPLE SONGS*

## THE BIG BAD WOLF

*Who's afraid of the big bad wolf*
*The big bad wolf*
*The big bad wolf*
*Who's afraid of the big bad wolf*
*Tra la la la la*
*Long ago there were three pigs*
*Little handsome pigs*
*For the big, but very big, very bad wolf,*
*They did not give three figs*
*Number one was very gay*
*And he built his house with hay*
*With a hey hey toot he blew on his flute*
*And he played around all day*
*Now number two was fond of jigs*
*And so he built his house with twigs*
*Hey, diddle diddle he played on his fiddle*
*And danced with lady pigs*
*Number three said: "nix on tricks,*
*I shall build my house with bricks!"*
*He had no chance to sing or dance,*
*'Cause work and play don't mix*
*Ha, ha, ha, the two little do-little pigs*
*Just winked and laughed Ah! Woo!*
*Who's afraid of the big bad wolf*
*The big bad wolf*

## ANNEX 4

*VIDEOS*
***Three little pigs***
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Olo923T2HQ4
***The wise little hen***
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5dowCyaP7I**
***The ugly duckling***
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THmHFHBWQZc**
***Lambert the sheepish***
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOEE_kc61H4**