

INGLÉS

María GANUZA VILLANUEVA

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LEARNING ENGLISH WITH GAMES IN  
INFANT EDUCATION

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*Haur Hezkuntzako Irakasleen Gradua*

**Grado en Maestro en Educación Infantil**  
**Haur Hezkuntzako Irakasleen Gradua**

Trabajo Fin de Grado

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***LEARNING ENGLISH WITH GAMES IN INFANT  
EDUCATION***

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## Preámbulo

El Real Decreto 1393/2007, de 29 de octubre, modificado por el Real Decreto 861/2010, establece en el Capítulo III, dedicado a las enseñanzas oficiales de Grado, que “estas enseñanzas concluirán con la elaboración y defensa de un Trabajo Fin de Grado [...] El Trabajo Fin de Grado tendrá entre 6 y 30 créditos, deberá realizarse en la fase final del plan de estudios y estar orientado a la evaluación de competencias asociadas al título”.

El Grado en Maestro en Educación Infantil por la Universidad Pública de Navarra tiene una extensión de 12 ECTS, según la memoria del título verificada por la ANECA. El título está regido por la *Orden ECI/3854/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se establecen los requisitos para la verificación de los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Infantil*; con la aplicación, con carácter subsidiario, del reglamento de Trabajos Fin de Grado, aprobado por el Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad el 12 de marzo de 2013.

Todos los planes de estudios de Maestro en Educación Infantil se estructuran, según la Orden ECI/3854/2007, en tres grandes módulos: uno, *de formación básica*, donde se desarrollan los contenidos socio-psico-pedagógicos; otro, *didáctico y disciplinar*, que recoge los contenidos de las disciplinas y su didáctica; y, por último, *Practicum*, donde se describen las competencias que tendrán que adquirir los estudiantes del Grado en las prácticas escolares. En este último módulo, se enmarca el Trabajo Fin de Grado, que debe reflejar la formación adquirida a lo largo de todas las enseñanzas. Finalmente, dado que la Orden ECI/3854/2007 no concreta la distribución de los 240 ECTS necesarios para la obtención del Grado, las universidades tienen la facultad de determinar un número de créditos, estableciendo, en general, asignaturas de carácter optativo.

Así, en cumplimiento de la Orden ECI/3854/2007, es requisito necesario que en el Trabajo Fin de Grado el estudiante demuestre competencias relativas a los módulos de formación básica, didáctico-disciplinar y practicum, exigidas para todos los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Infantil.

En este trabajo, el módulo *de formación básica* se concreta en todos aquellos contenidos socio-psico-pedagógicos que se desarrollan en el marco teórico del trabajo. En este apartado del trabajo se concretan las teorías de diversos autores en relación al juego. En este trabajo se presenta la teoría socio-cultural de Vygotsky, la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples de Gardner, el aprendizaje significativo de Ausubel, todo ello aplicado al juego como herramienta de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

El módulo *didáctico y disciplinar* nos ha permitido analizar el juego como metodología de enseñanza, especialmente de lenguas, en la educación infantil. Este módulo está presente a lo largo del trabajo tanto en la definición y caracterización del juego como en el posterior desarrollo y análisis de juegos.

Asimismo, el módulo *practicum* nos ha permitido enfocar este trabajo desde una perspectiva práctica y funcional, con el objetivo de ser aplicable en mi futura labor docente. Para ello, se proponen distintos juegos y ejemplos prácticos que pueden llevarse a cabo en un aula.

Por otro lado, la Orden ECI/3854/2007 establece que al finalizar el Grado, los estudiantes deben haber adquirido el nivel C1 en lengua castellana. Por ello, para demostrar esta competencia lingüística, se redactan también en esta lengua los apartados “Antecedentes” y “Conclusiones”, así como el preceptivo resumen que aparece en el siguiente apartado.

## **Resumen**

Debido a la abundancia de documentación, estudios y materiales sobre el juego, el objetivo del presente trabajo es hacer un análisis del juego como metodología de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Primeramente, se examina brevemente la situación educativa actual. Posteriormente, se trata la importancia del juego en la educación infantil, así como su idoneidad como metodología para la enseñanza del inglés desde unas perspectivas psicológicas, pedagógicas y sociales y se realiza una clasificación de los distintos tipos de juego. Finalmente, se analizan juegos empleados tradicionalmente en la enseñanza del inglés y se propone desarrollar una serie de actividades prácticas que permitan trabajar las distintas competencias del currículo así como las destrezas lingüísticas.

*Palabras clave:* Juego; metodología; competencia lingüística; enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera; proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje

## **Abstract**

Due to the number of research and materials about games, the purpose of this work is to analyze the game as a methodology for the English as a foreign language teaching-learning process. Firstly, it briefly reviews the current educational situation. Subsequently, it is analyzed the importance of the game in infant education and its suitability as a methodology for teaching English according to a psychological, educational and social perspective and it is accomplished a classification of the different types of game. Finally, games traditionally used in the teaching of English are analyzed and a series of practical activities to enable work the different competencies of the curriculum and language skills are developed.

*Keywords:* game, methodology; linguistic competence; Teaching English as a Foreign Language – TEFL; teaching-learning process

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## INTRODUCCIÓN

En la actualidad, tras los muchos cambios sufridos en el sistema educativo y en sus metodologías de enseñanza-aprendizaje, encontramos el juego como herramienta didáctica, especialmente empleada en la enseñanza de lenguas. Debido a la gran cantidad de estudios didácticos y pedagógicos realizados en base al tema del juego y a su importancia en la educación infantil, encontramos una gran cantidad de documentación y bibliografía sobre este tema: Vernon, S. A (2009). *ESL games: 176 English language games for children*; Lee, W.R. (1991) *Language teaching games and contents*; Ojeda, A. (2004) *The role of word games in second language acquisition: second language pedagogy, motivation and ludic task*; Brumfit, C., Moon, J., & Tongue, R. (1995) *Teaching English to Children: From Practice to Principle*; Cook, G. (2000) *Language play, Language learning*.

Todos estos estudios, muestran además de la evolución del juego, y el uso tradicional que se hacía de éste, como a lo largo del tiempo, han ido variando las metodologías de enseñanza, concretamente del inglés. Esta enseñanza ha evolucionado desde una concepción educativa conductista, hasta una enseñanza centrada en el alumno y en el aprendizaje significativo y motivador para el aprendiz.

Todo ello, nos ha llevado a hacer un análisis global del juego, de su clasificación y de sus características desde una perspectiva de enseñanza integradora de lenguas, en base a distintas metodologías y didácticas educativas (conductismo, constructivismo, enseñanza de lenguas estructuralista) y desde unas perspectivas psicológicas, pedagógicas y sociales. Para concluir en la efectividad e importancia del juego, como herramienta de enseñanza-aprendizaje y la minusvaloración que ha sufrido tradicionalmente este método, entendido durante mucho tiempo como una actividad de relleno, caótica y sin ningún valor didáctico.

## 1- ANTECEDENTES, OBJETIVOS Y CUESTIONES

En la actualidad la lengua inglesa se ha convertido en *lingua franca*, facilitando la comunicación entre las distintas comunidades que han adoptado esta lengua. *“Actualmente estamos asistiendo al desarrollo de un proceso de globalización mundial. Este proceso ha favorecido el aumento de todo tipo de intercambios, lo que requiere el dominio de más de un idioma, especialmente del inglés”*. (Escobar Urmeneta, C. 2009 p.46)

Por ello, cada vez son más las metodologías de enseñanza de idiomas tales como Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), que están apareciendo como respuesta a esta demanda social multilingüe. Como resultado, hemos asistido en los últimos años a una amplia variedad de cambios en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés. Desde una metodología estructuralista, se ha evolucionado hacia un enfoque comunicativo o basado en tareas a posteriormente la aplicación de una metodología CLIL.

En cuanto a la educación infantil, sabemos que se caracteriza por ser una educación enfocada globalmente al no haber asignaturas concretas en esta etapa de la educación. De acuerdo con la ley de educación vigente, LOE (Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo), el sistema de la educación infantil se divide en tres áreas:

- Conocimiento de sí mismo y Autonomía personal
- Conocimiento del Entorno
- Lenguajes: Comunicación y Representación.

Durante mucho tiempo en el sistema educativo, el inglés fue tratado como una asignatura propia, en la que los contenidos eran los propios de la lengua inglesa sin entenderse el inglés como la lengua vehicular para la enseñanza de contenidos no lingüísticos propios de dicha lengua. Este planteamiento de la enseñanza del inglés solo con contenidos lingüísticos se ha llevado a cabo asimismo en Educación Infantil al enmarcarse la lengua inglesa dentro del área de lenguajes y comunicación.

Sin embargo, con el aumento de las nuevas metodologías de enseñanza-aprendizaje como Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), el inglés ya no es tratado como

una asignatura aislada sino como una lengua vehicular en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de los contenidos del currículo. Por lo tanto, con esta técnica de enseñanza, no sólo se evalúa el aprendizaje de contenidos, sino también la adquisición de la lengua inglesa. Este método implica que las clases se dan la mitad del horario en inglés, y la otra mitad en la lengua materna del alumno aproximadamente. Como consecuencia de ello, los profesores tienen que coordinarse para lograr una integración real de ambos idiomas, la lengua materna y la lengua inglesa, con los contenidos curriculares en la enseñanza de idiomas.

Además, el currículo de Educación Infantil (Decreto Foral 23/2007, de 19 de marzo) y el currículo de Educación Primaria (Decreto Foral 24/2007, de 19 de marzo) en Navarra, establecen que la finalidad de la Educación tanto Infantil como Primaria es la adquisición de ciertas competencias básicas por parte del alumnado.

Las competencias básicas, que se tratan por primera vez en el currículo de la etapa, permiten identificar aquellos aprendizajes que se consideran imprescindibles desde un planteamiento integrador y orientado a la aplicación de los conocimientos adquiridos. Su logro deberá capacitar al alumnado para su realización personal, el ejercicio de la ciudadanía activa, la incorporación a la vida adulta de manera satisfactoria y el desarrollo de un aprendizaje permanente a lo largo de la vida. Se define la competencia básica como la capacidad de responder a demandas complejas y llevar a cabo tareas diversas de forma adecuada. Supone una combinación de habilidades prácticas, conocimientos, motivaciones, valores éticos, actitudes, emociones y otros componentes sociales que actúan conjuntamente para lograr una acción eficaz. (Decreto Foral 24/2007 p.4)

Debido a todos estos planteamientos, el inglés tiene que hacer frente a otra realidad en el aula y por consiguiente, los profesores de esta lengua tienen que pensar en nuevas metodologías y formas de enseñanza, no sólo del idioma, sino también del contenido, dotando a los estudiantes de todas las competencias establecidas por el curriculum.

Por otra parte, hay que tener en cuenta las edades (3-6) que identifican esta etapa educativa, así como las características de los alumnos de este ciclo, tales como: capacidad de concentración limitada, necesidad de movimiento, disposición innata para el aprendizaje, necesidad socio-afectiva. Todos estos aspectos deben atenderse y en consecuencia los profesores deben adaptar su metodología a ellos.

Al poner en relación las demandas sociales y legales con la labor a la que los maestros se enfrentan, se obtiene como resultado una tarea compleja de desarrollar. Sin embargo, hay diversas actividades y metodologías, como es por ejemplo el juego, que tienen como objetivo la enseñanza de las habilidades comunicativas, teniendo en cuenta los intereses de los niños de manera que aprendan de manera significativa y considerando también sus necesidades y características.

El empleo del juego como metodología de enseñanza y como base del desarrollo natural del niño, ha dado lugar a abundante número de estudios y un amplio desarrollo de materiales, por ello se analizará la función de los juegos en la adquisición de segundas lenguas<sup>1</sup> y en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.1. Objetivos**

1. Análisis bibliográfico de los estudios previos realizados a cerca de la enseñanza de segundas lenguas, pedagogía y psicología.
2. Análisis de la adecuación del juego como metodología educativa
3. Análisis de juegos tradicionales y de su efectividad en la enseñanza del inglés
4. Desarrollo de actividades atendiendo a las distintas competencias lingüísticas (expresión y comprensión oral y escrita) con el fin de favorecer la adquisición de dichas competencias y del idioma.

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<sup>1</sup> Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to situations where English is widely used in a particular society but it is not the first language for the population. (Moon, 2000, p.182)

<sup>2</sup> Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) refers to situations where English is learned as a subject at school mainly for international communication. It is not normally spoken or used in that society for any purpose. (Moon, 2000, p.182)

## 2. MARCO TEÓRICO: FUNDAMENTACIÓN Y SU RELACIÓN CON LA PRÁCTICA DOCENTE

### 2.1. Methodologies and conceptions of the language teaching

For years the educational system has based the teaching-learning process, and particularly in relation to TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), on a conductist theory in which the teacher was the owner of the knowledge and the children were a passive and empty “tabula rasa” ready and prepared to receive all the knowledge that the teacher gave them. The teaching of languages in particular, follows strictly this teaching methodology in which the teacher provides the passive student with structuralist knowledge. Thus why whole generations of learners have been taught following this procedure, becoming experts on the English vocabulary and grammar and being unable of making themselves understandable in oral or written form.

Macedonia (2005) highlights this idea:

The language learning in Europe over the last decades revealed that learners accrue much meta-knowledge about the language, nevertheless, yet even after years of study cannot speak fluently...Foreign languages used to be taught in a declarative<sup>3</sup> way: rules for morphological and syntactic structures and lists of vocabulary are the crux of instruction and mainly based on the writing and reading skills...Nowadays, the foreign language instruction has different goals (p.135-140)

Fortunately, in the course of time several changes on the way of understanding the education, and even more the language teaching, have taken place.

Firstly the education followed a focus on forms, grammar-based methodology typical for the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) classroom. Sheen (2002) defined this concept: “*Focus on forms is based on the assumption that classroom learning derives from general cognitive processes*”. It entails three stages:

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<sup>3</sup> The declarative memory refers and is responsible for memories which can be consciously recalled of facts and events.

- Providing understanding of the grammar
- Exercises entailing using the grammar in both non-communicative and communicative activities for both comprehension and production
- Providing frequent opportunities for communicative use of the grammar to promote automatic, accurate use

After this structuralist and grammar based conception of the focus on forms language teaching, the education system changed to a task-based learning approach characteristic of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The task based approach on the contrary to the focus on forms approach, stimulates an effective use of the language but without a conscious analysis of the structural and grammar aspects of the language. As stated by Frost (2004)

In a task-based learning the teacher doesn't pre-determine what language will be studied, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The students complete a task using the language resources that they have as the teacher monitors and offers encouragement.

Finally the language learning-teaching process derived in a focus on form and CLIL methodologies that are the educative techniques currently used. Long (2000) established that focus on form is concerned with: *"How intentional resources are allocated and involves briefly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements in context as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication"* (Xianchun Gu, 2007).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is representative of the current foreign language educative tendency, as a result more and more schools are adapting this methodology. Regarding the theory of Coyle (1999) in Barrios about CLIL, this methodology involves using a language that is not the mother tongue as the manner of instruction of linguistic and non-linguistic contents, in other words the language is used as a way for communicate and to learn contents. This CLIL methodology integrates 4 components that Coyle denominates as the 4 Cs: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture.

- Content: acquisition of knowledge, skills and comprehension of the specific curricular content and topics, making easier the construction of their own knowledge.
- Communication: using language with the aim of learning and meanwhile learning to use the language itself.
- Cognition: development of the complex cognitive skills processes that help to form concepts and knowledge.
- Culture: being expose to varied perspectives, promoting the knowledge and integration of these varied perspectives, being more aware of the others and one's self.

Both language approaches, Focus on Form and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), are founded on the importance of the communication process and the acquisition of knowledge, more than on the learning of grammar and vocabulary of the language.

These new methodologies not only changed the teaching-learning techniques, but also transformed the way of understanding English. *"Language can be seen in terms of structure or in terms of use (function and purpose)"* (Garvie, 1995, p. 115). Firstly, English was understood and treated as a foreign language, that is to say the lessons were given in order to teach that language mainly on the basis of the grammar and the vocabulary, as Macedonia comments "accruing meta-knowledge about the language". Then, this conception about English changed into a use of the English as the mean for teaching other contents and knowledge of the curriculum. According to this notion of English, the language is left in second place in order to prioritize the learning of other areas of development.

The first conception quoted by Garvie (1995), is based on a structuralist teaching of the foreign language and it is the methodology that has been traditionally followed in the educative system. Nonetheless the second technique, in addition the one that is feasible nowadays, is based on the process in which the mother tongue is acquired.

In the words of Macedonia (2005) *"The difference between a native speaker and an ESL speaker lies on the fact that the native speaker speaks effortlessly. They retrieve every word and structure instantaneously and so can communicate in real time"*. Keeping the

idea of this statement, the aim of the second language acquisition techniques should be to attain the capacity to retrieve the meta-knowledge about the language effortlessly and in real time, with the final intention of being able to communicate.

The second aforementioned method, based on a functional use of English, is more similar to a communicative approach of the language. The exposure to a language that is used with other purposes than only the teaching of that language makes the student acquire and assimilate this language without being aware of it. Besides, this exposure allows automatizing the linguistic and grammatical aspects of the language, as Macedonia points out *"...native speakers use the language without consciously thinking about it, the rule system (sentence construction, grammar, structures and vocabulary) functions automatically in a procedural sense, this allows speaking in real time and the development of fluency."*

Consequently, the aim of the new English teaching methodologies such as CLIL, following the idea of the native speaker language automatization, is to manage the proceduralisation of the linguistic knowledge, automatizing it and being able to make use of the language without thinking about the purely metalinguistic and grammatical aspects of it. In order to achieve it, all the declarative knowledge should be transformed into procedural memory<sup>4</sup>.

This change from a declarative knowledge into a procedural one can be managed by a redundant practice and pretty frequent repetitions, and in the opinion of Macedonia (2005) this proceduralisation of the declarative knowledge about a foreign language can be reached through games.

Language games serve the function of redundant oral repetition of grammar structures (morphological, syntactic) and vocabulary in a playful way. Students are not always aware that they are practicing grammar... practice proves fun,

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<sup>4</sup> The procedural memory is the memory in charge of the performance of particular types of action. Procedural memory guides the processes we perform and most frequently resides below the level of conscious awareness. When needed, procedural memories are automatically retrieved and utilized for the execution of the integrated procedures involved in both cognitive and motor skills.

repetition is not boring, and declarative knowledge is converted into procedural knowledge. (Macedonia, 2005, p.139)

Apart from all those mental processes that are involved in the learning of a foreign language, there are other aspects that concern this educative process.

According to Musbalat (2012) "*Language learning is a hard work. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time*". Besides, if the learners whom English has to be taught are infant children, the effort is more complex since we have to take into account that children at early ages cannot keep the attention for a long time, regarding Nedomova in Yolageldili & Arikan (2011) their capacity of concentration is for 10-20 minutes and after that they start to lose the interest and motivation.

Holden (1980) stated that "*children cannot concentrate on one thing for a long period and that lessons should therefore be divided into a series of activities lasting no longer than five or ten minutes*" (Brewster in Brumfit et al., 1995, p.7). Consequently, infant education teachers should look for catchy activities that keep children's attention and that are also useful in order to learn. "*When I stop to think about it I realize that an important part of the state of mind is enjoyment. I get so involved in what I'm doing, I almost forget about time*". (Allison and Duncan, in Cook, 2000, p. 106)

Children at early ages acquire knowledge when it is meaningfulness and interesting for them, that is why teachers must consider the previous knowledge of the children since these are already meaningful for them and thus a solid foundation for subsequent knowledge. Quoting Ausubel (1986) "*Si tuviese que reducir toda la psicología educativa a un sólo principio, enunciaría éste: el factor más importante que influye en el aprendizaje es lo que el alumno ya sabe. Averígüese esto y enséñese consecuentemente*".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "If I had to reduce all the didactic psychology to just one principle, I would enunciate this: the most important factor that influences the learning process is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach accordingly."

Thus teachers have to look for the activities, techniques and procedures that appeal children's motivation. One of the techniques and methodologies that accomplish all these demands are the games.

### **2.1. Definition of games**

Several definitions of games have been provided by different scholars. Khan in Brumfit et al. (1995, p. 142-145) compiles several of them:

The definition of games is something that everyone feels that they know but the definition is elusive.

A game is played when one or more players compete or cooperate for pay-offs according to a set of rules. (Jones 1986)

Games are activities governed by rules which set up clearly defined goals. The achievement of these goals signals the end of the game.

Games involve a contest either between players or between the players and the goal, and games should lead to having fun. Games are for playing and this element of play is crucial.

Games are activities that children naturally and universally engage in. Games may be seen as a route by which children come to terms with their social environment, presenting as they do a social situation which is firmly governed by rules but whose outcome is known.

### **2.3. Characteristics of the games**

Musbalat (2012) similarly to Macedonia (2005) claims and stands up for the game as an efficient technique for the learning-teaching process and particularly for English teaching.

Moreover, the games are a basic necessity and essential for child development in all their aspects: psychological, social, physical and emotional. The game is the most important and common activity during the childhood. From their birth up to the age of 5, games are the main activity performed by children.

It is through games how they comprehend, learn, investigate and understand the world that surrounds them.

For a series of years, we find life virtually controlled by play. Before systematic education begins, the child's whole existence, except the time devoted to sleeping and eating, is occupied with play, which thus becomes the single, absorbing aim of his life. (Groos in Cook, 2000, p.102)

In spite of the pleasure that children obtain from playing games, games have also a didactic purpose as they are a tool for learning and acquire knowledge and hence they foster the development of the children.

Infant children regard games as a way of fun and entertainment and that is the reason why they result so motivating for them. Games offer a ludic approach for teaching, they are known as well as immersion activities since the acquisition of knowledge, content and language is taking place while children are having fun. Pedagogically, the learning that games implied is authentic and meaningful for the learners; they acquire curricular knowledge and contents, they develop several competences and they socialize without being aware of it.

### *2.3.1. Language development*

In order to be pedagogical and educational and to promote the development of all these competences, skills and knowledge, the games should be procedurally led by the adults with the intention of creating an appropriate learning-teaching environment. Nonetheless, teachers should be careful in order not to keep with the traditional tendency to understand the games as a sort of warm-up activities or just to use them when there is some time left at the end of a lesson.

In agreement with Musbalat (2012) *"A game should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments, they ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages, games should be used at all the stages of the lesson"*.

Games result very effective as a methodology to follow in class and more at the lower stages of education and especially in foreign language acquisition. Therefore, teachers should create and look for all those games in which the pupils can make an authentic use of the language, being meaningful and entertaining for the young learners.

The theories which are based on a teaching process focusing on the meaningful knowledge and the entertainment aspects of the games have a positive side effect because they promote the communicative competence. The games allow children to interact and cooperate and as a result the communication flows and is stimulated naturally without the children being conscious of it. According to Palmer and Rodgers (1983) in Brumfit et al. (1995, p. 151) there are six features which can be found in communicative language teaching games to greater or lesser extent: *“the players have to interact; they have to deal with some unpredicted information; they have a clear purpose; the context of the activity is clear; players have to be actively involved; they are given a particular role to play”*.

Besides, it must be taken into account, as Murado (2010) indicates, the fact that human being is naturally disposed to acquire languages as an innate capacity while being a baby.

Cualquier ser humano desde sus primeros meses de vida manifiesta una predisposición natural para aprender la lengua de la comunidad lingüística en la que se desarrollará, ya que todos los niños independientemente de su nacionalidad, siguen unos patrones comunes en la adquisición del lenguaje, lo que nos lleva a concluir que en todo individuo existe un conjunto de capacidades innatas necesarias para adquirir, al menos, su primera lengua. (Murado, 2010, p.15)<sup>6</sup>

Similarly to Murado, Chomsky (2002) develops the idea of a language faculty which is *“a component of the human mind, physically represented in the brain and part of the biological endowment of the species”* (Chomsky, 2002 in Saville Troike, 2006, p. 47).

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<sup>6</sup> Any human being in their first months of life are naturally disposed to learn the language of the linguistic community in which they would grow up, since all children regardless of their nationality, follow the same common patterns in the acquisition of a language, it makes us come to the conclusion that in every individual there is a whole set of innate capacities and skills necessary to acquire, at least their first language.

Nonetheless, it has to be remembered that this innate aptitude to acquire language is applied to the acquisition of the baby's mother tongue. As a result of this innate capacity to acquire the first language, several research about the second language acquisition and about the age for being exposed to this language, have been carried out.

Most of the researchers conclude about the beneficial effects of being exposed to English at early ages. First of all, starting learning a language at early stages of education allows that this language could be used as a medium of teaching by the time. This idea is closely related with the CLIL educative methodology, already cited, in which English is used as a vehicular language in order to teach other contents.

Besides, understanding the education as a whole with not a clear end, that is to say considering the education as a long-life process, the earlier the children are exposed to English the more time they get and the more they could improve and become more proficient in that language.

Infants are biologically disposed to learning, owing to their brain's capacity of adaptation as they are more prepared than the adults for absorbing all the knowledge that is provided to them. This disposition to learn allows acquiring the knowledge without self-consciousness of it; it is the same with the acquisition of English if a child is exposed to a language, gradually they would learn it. Brumfit et al. (1995) supported the exposition of children to a second language *"young learners are able to learn a foreign language more naturally and therefore to some extent more easily than older learners...The younger the learners the more they will benefit from the experience of hearing the target language in appropriate situations"*

Despite of the innate disposition of the children for the natural acquisition of a language at the early ages if they are exposed to it, there should be four main objectives to foster the acquisition of English at schools:

- Language learning should assist general educational objectives of encouraging the conceptual development of the child.
- Language learning should form part of the skills/conceptual and cultural/social development of the child.

- Schools should promote the formation of a positive attitude to language learning and form a good basis for posterior studies, but not ape the style of learning that may later be imposed.
- Language learning should result in the acquisition of some appropriate elements of the actual language studied

(Brumfit et al., 1995, p. 34-35)

### 2.3.2. Social development

Furthermore, being in contact with a language also implies the contact with the culture of that language. Because of that, learning languages at early ages support the understanding of a different culture and the development of important virtues such as sympathy, tolerance and empathy, as well as the development of a positive attitude to foreign languages and cultures.

The development of these attitudes and virtues is an important aspect to consider, keeping in mind the words of Urmeneta (2005) previously mentioned: *“These days we are assisting to the development of the world globalization”*. Since the world is becoming globalized the contact with more and more cultures is increasing, owing to that, it is essential to develop this positive attitude to them in the children and this could be managed by the acquisition of the languages through games of the country where this language is spoken.

The games as a didactic technique are pretty useful not only for the acquisition of a language and contents but also for the development and knowledge of different cultures and social behaviors.

Games offer the possibility of working the culture regarding Coyle’s theory of CLIL (1999) *“being exposed and integrating different perspectives, being more aware of the others and one’s self”*. Playing games allows working in groups and to interact with the others, and this is how the child starts being aware of the perspectives of the others. Besides, using the English as the vehicular language endorses the understanding of the English-speaking cultures.

Other aspects that could be worked through the games are the social behaviors. Infant children begin to learn social behavior and to gain from social interaction while playing in groups.

Piaget in Khan (1995, p. 143) cited that the children's games are "*the most admirable social institution*". Vygostky's sociocultural theory (1925-1932) is related to this theoretical consideration about the importance of the social aspects involved in games.

In relation to that theory "*the human development cannot be viewed independently of its social context*". (Eckman, 1995, p. 22). In other words, the sociocultural theory stands up for an active relation among the child, the others and their environment, this collaboration and relation has as a result the acquisition of knowledge. Through the social interaction the child learns, they assimilate the thinking and behaviors of their society.

In order to manage this development of knowledge it is necessary the interaction between the novices and the experts. That is to say, the adult or the most advanced peers ought to help the novice child to build and organize the knowledge, before they could do it on their own. This interaction novice-expert is known as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the distance that exist among the level of what the child already knows and the level of potential development that they could reach under the adult guidance or in collaboration with their peers. (Cameron, 2001, p.11).

In order to progress and based on the ZPD, the responsibility and the construction of the knowledge gradually changes from the expert to the novice, from the other-regulation to self-regulation.

However, the teacher should not understand their role as the depositor of information in the empty minds of the children as in the Conductist theories, but as an assistant. A guide who helps the child build up the basic scaffolding of the knowledge with the intention of support it until the child could do it autonomously. Playing games allows the teacher to guide the learning of their students and promotes the peer cooperation; therefore the scaffolding of knowledge and the relation expert-novice is fostered.

Games usually lead to social as well as intellectual involvement, since players need to communicate in order to compete or cooperate with their mates to achieve the aim of the game.

Children learn through playing and while playing children interact and develop the language skills. The social function of play however, like the social function of language among humans, is not only cooperative... Humans like animals play socially. But we play more than they do and in ways more complex and more rule-governed. The key to this difference and this development is language, which has enabled us to make the rules of sports and games complex in ways which would have been quite impossible without it. Indeed, language and games have a particular affinity. Both demand turn-taking and restraint, both enable enhanced cooperation; both are of potential mutual benefit. (Cook, 2000, p.103)

Through games, children are given the opportunity to use the language purposefully in a playful and comfortable direction; meanwhile they acquire basic social skills and behaviors. Using games as a teaching methodology endorses a learner-centered approach and as a result an atmosphere of relaxation, entrainment, fun, interest, enjoyment and well-being is created.

### *2.3.3. Emotional development*

A condition of the games is that the participants enjoy playing and do not think consciously about acquiring knowledge or the language that involve the game. If the game engages learners' attention the learning will be supported.

All these feelings as well as the commitment of the learner on the game itself, and the children's final interest of having fun, as a result promotes an efficient acquisition of language and knowledge.

Consequently, teachers should create in the classroom a social environment in which the children have the necessity to interact and communicate with the others. As it has been mentioned previously, the best way to learn a language is by using it and by the practice and the repetition. The games can support this learning as it is a technique

that provides with practice and constant repetitions. In the words of Brumfit et al. (1995, p.144-145):

*Involving children in games which they are very eager to play may be a good way of creating a powerful need to use the language.*

Wells (1981) in working on first language acquisition found clear evidence that a child who has a lot of opportunities for negotiating meaning (for making sure they have properly understood what is said) develops language skills more rapidly. Games create opportunities where children need and want to communicate in order to have a turn in playing.

Games have a relevant role on the acquisition of the language, they promotes the communication, the development of social skills and the cooperation in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. It must not be forgotten that the language and the communicative skills are not the only capacities that could be developed due to the games.

#### *2.3.4. Personalized development of the intelligence*

Gardner (1993) suggested “The Theory of Multiple Intelligences”, in which he came to the conclusion that the intelligence is not innate and settled or permanent in the individual’s brains.

Besides, after several research studies (1983-1995) he could conclude that the intelligence was located in eight different areas of the brain, in relation to the eight types of intelligence he developed. Gardner supported the existence of eight intelligences, that are interconnected and that could be worked and developed independently under certain conditions. Under these conditions each individual improve the diverse intelligences according to their capacities, abilities and personal differences in order to store information and acquire new knowledge in an individualized way. The eight intelligences are:

- The Mathematical-logical intelligence: Children that improve the mathematical –logical intelligence develop a capacity to handle the numbers as well as logical patterns, connections and functions.

Infants that cultivate this intelligence are good at posing and solving numeric problems, making calculations, etc.

- The Verbal-linguistic intelligence: This intelligence refers to the ability of using the word, the structure, the phonetic, the syntax and the semantics of the language.

Children that develop a verbal-linguistic intelligence are good at learning languages but also they are keen on rhymes, tongue twister, limericks and reading.

- The Musical-rhythmic intelligence: Pupils whose intelligence is musical and rhythmic have a well-developed auditory capacity. They can discern, distinguish, transform and express themselves easily by rhythms and tones of the musical sounds.

The infant that evidences this kind of intelligence, enjoys listening sounds and melodies and following and keeping the rhythms.

- The Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: Kids with a bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, tend to use their body to express their ideas and feelings. They have a good coordination, equilibrium, flexibility, strength, speed and tactile ability.

This intelligence is noticeable in the children that are remarkable in sports, dancing, body expression, and making constructions with diverse materials such as building blocks.

- The Interpersonal intelligence: The infants, who cultivate the interpersonal intelligence, are able to distinguish and notice easily the other's mood.

Children with an interpersonal intelligence enjoy themselves cooperating, working in groups and interacting with the adult and their peers. These pupils follow the sociocultural Vygostkian theory, in which the learning is stimulated by the social interaction.

- The Intrapersonal intelligence: Opposed to the interpersonal intelligence, the intrapersonal intelligence is the one in charge of the introspection, that is to say the analysis of the personal mood. They act consequently to themselves; they have their own self-image, as well as a lot of self-discipline, self-esteem, self-respect.

The intrapersonal intelligence is characteristic of reflexive children who used to be advisers of their peers.

- The Visual-spatial intelligence: This intelligence is based on the visual and spatial images. Children express their ideas graphically through the color, line, shape, figure, space... The infants that are more visual learn better through diagrams, sketches, outlines and conceptual mind maps.
- The naturalist intelligence: The naturalist intelligence was accepted by Gardner as intelligence in 1995. It is defined by the ability of the pupil of distinguish, classify and use diverse elements from the environment that surround them. This intelligence develops on the child certain characteristics such as the capacity of observation, experimentation, reflection and analysis of their surroundings. These infants love the nature and they love investigating about it and about the human being.

According to Gardner, there is not just a global common intelligence but eight offering multiple opportunities to the pupils with the intention of building and acquiring the knowledge.

For a long period of time, in the educative system and even now in certain schools, the teachers focused all their didactic efforts on the improvement of the linguistic-mathematical intelligence, forgetting all the other capacities and as a result leaving behind the children that are better in other aspects. Giving importance to the development of linguistic-mathematical intelligence is closely related to the Constructivist theory of education.

The constructivism stands for the teacher as the owner of the knowledge and the pupil as a passive learner. The linguistic-mathematical intelligence is followed in a conductist teaching methodology, as the teacher keeps the knowledge and the child is a “tabula rasa”. In a conductist methodology based on the linguistic-mathematical intelligence the other intelligences are not worked and as a result the pupils that build up their knowledge through other intelligences are forgotten in the learning teaching process. As a consequence of this perception of education, children might become demotivated and have a negative perception of the process of learning.

Therefore, the theory of Gardner about the multiple intelligences has a great reception in the infant and primary education, due to the multidimensional and globalized principles that define these stages of education. In infant education there are no particular subjects but common objectives such as the achievement of certain competences, the integral development of the child (physical, social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive) and the improvement of the personal intelligences as a personal tool to acquire knowledge.

Taking into account this current perspective of the globalized education and the multidimensional development of the child, it can be understood that the teachers of infant education adopt the theory of the multiple intelligences of Gardner as it is a framework for the development of their educational work.

The teachers following the multiple intelligences theory take into account the different possibilities and ways for acquiring the knowledge that the children have, that is to say, which of the eight intelligences is more suitable for each child. As a result, the pupils develop their knowledge through those intelligences, and citing Bruner "*we get interested in what we are good at*" in other words the infants get motivated as they develop the language through the way that is more suitable for them.

The schools that work on the different intelligences allow personalizing the teaching-learning process and organizing the school according to these intelligences, adapting and individualizing the knowledge and the learning- teaching process to the necessities of each child.

One of the methodologies that could respond to all these demands is the game as they offer a wide range of activities to cover not only all the intelligences requirements, but also the assimilation of new concepts, the development of several skills and competences and the acquisition of knowledge.

#### *2.3.5. Competition and cooperation*

The using of games is really effective as an educative methodology regarding the Conductist and Gardner's theory. The game is an activity innate in the infants, in other words, is a learner-centered technique. Dögg Sigurðardóttir (2010, p.8) mentioned that the funny element that characterizes the games activates the children to participate.

As a consequence of playing games with a didactic aim, the pupils get involved in their own building process. *“While using games in the classroom the teacher is giving his students a bigger role, and he himself is stepping out of the frontline which is a positive thing because it allows students to take on more responsibility”*

This idea of giving more responsibility to the child to become in charge of his/her own knowledge is closely related with the Vygostkian theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), already mentioned.

The Vygostkian ZPD understands the acquisition of knowledge as a mediation of the adult among the children and the world that surrounds them. The adult or an expert peer helps the child making the knowledge more accessible to them, and providing a deeper understanding and more capacities than the one they could develop on their own. Hence the game provides all the necessary requirements for creating a Zone of Proximal Development environment, in which the kids step by step would take more responsibilities on the construction of their knowledge. *“Vygostky saw the child as first doing things in a social context, with other people and language helping in various ways, and gradually shifting away from reliance on others to independent action and thinking”*. (Cameron, 2001, p.7)

Furthermore, the way in which games are organized varies (either in groups, in couples, or merely individually) and the cooperative work can be fostered, working with a partner and sharing the knowledge with the others promotes a better assimilation. The diverse manners of making groups, also stimulates and support the interpersonal and the intrapersonal intelligences.

The cooperation and making groups while playing games could also help to build social relationships between equals.

Besides, this social aspect that derives from the cooperation, interaction and group distribution on the games, is really helpful and efficient keeping an exciting learning environment and creating a friendly and positive atmosphere in the classroom, especially for shy students and students with low confidence. In the word of Langran & Purcell in Dögg Sigurðardóttir (2010, p.8.):

Children get a chance to speak in front of fewer audience instead of having to express themselves in front of the whole class...Also it is sometimes easier to open up and forget the shyness when playing a game because the atmosphere is not as serious and more emphasis is put on fluency rather than grammatical correctness.

Concerning the language acquisition, to learn a language is to be able to use it in a non-instructional setting. Musbalat (2012) points out one of the advantages of using games as a strategy for learning a language is that it provides the chance for a meaningful and purposeful communication, and therefore more similar to real situations. By playing games not only are real situations presented, but pupils are also offered a huge variety of situations to which they can be exposed.

Another need that games can fulfill is the motivation, meanwhile the children are playing they are emotionally involved in the game. Strong emotions such as happiness, excitement, amusement and suspense allow students to acquire language and knowledge without being aware of it.

“Through games children experiment, discover, and interact with their environment. Through playing games, students can learn English the way children learn their mother tongue without being aware they are studying; thus without stress, they can learn a lot even shy students can participate positively.” (Mei and Yu-jing in Musbalat, 2012)

There is a ludic principle present in the game as well as the cooperation, which are the competition and the luck element that provides the game with a feeling of amusement and motivates children to play. According to Julkumen in Ojeda (2004, p.24) *“games are interesting and effective because the tasks that attract and motivate the learner are those that include an optimal amount of uncertainty and unpredictability”*

Games of chance are often played competitively. Yet, by definition victory in them does not indicate any superiority in the winner....They may have a limited social function in shaking up the established order, or giving hope to the disadvantaged (thus also perhaps keeping them under control). (Cook, 2000, p.132)

As Cook mentions in this quotation, the chance not only offers amusement and entertainment to the game and expectation about the winner, but it also fosters the equality among all the players providing with the same opportunities. Besides, chance games and cooperation contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition against peers or against the game itself, providing an opportunity for the use of the language according to their previous knowledge in a non-stressful situation.

Keeping in mind the words of Dögg Sigurðardóttir (2010) and Yolageldili & Arikan (2011), another advantage of the games is their capacity of adaptation since they can be easily adjusted to the age, curricular areas, individual necessities and level of the pupils. The adaptation to the kid's levels is an important issue in order to obtain satisfactory results.

Piaget in Cameron (2002, p. 3-4) supported the notion that:

A child's thinking develops as gradual growth of knowledge and intellectual skills towards a final stage of formal, logical thinking. However, gradual growth is punctuated with certain fundamental changes, which cause the child to pass through a series of stages.<sup>7</sup> Children cannot do certain things if they have not yet reached that stage.

Teachers should look for games with a pedagogical aim and justification for its use adapted to the children's development stages. They ought to consider which games to use and when to use them. Games should have a benefit for the children and at the same time they meet the curricular demands.

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<sup>7</sup> Piaget refers to four stages during the children's development:

- Sensori-motor period (0-2 years old): the knowledge is based on the motor and sensory inputs.
- Pre-operational stage (2-7 years old): Characterized by the egocentric thinking.
- Concrete operational stage (7-12 years old): Children can adopt different points of view and their thought is more logical.
- Formal operational stage (from 12 years old and up): Kids have a complex thinking, they think abstractly and logically

#### **2.4. Advantages and disadvantages of using games.**

There are several authors that stand up for the games as an educative methodology for language learning, and who underline the advantages of this technique.

Conformed to Dögg Sigurðardóttir, McCallum (1980) explains that there are many advantages of using language learning games and he summarizes them in eight ideas:

- Focus students' attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items.
  - Can function as reinforcement , review and enrichment
  - Involve equal participation from both slow and fast learners
  - Can be adjusted to suit the individual age and language levels of the students
  - Contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition, providing an outlet for the creative use of natural language in a non-stressful situation.
  - Can be used in any language teaching situations and with all skill areas (reading, writing, speaking or listening)
  - Provide immediate feedback for the teacher
  - Ensure maximum students participation for a minimum of teacher preparation.
- (Yolageldili, G. & Arikan, A. 2011)

Despite all the educative benefits of using games, sometimes they are undervalued as a learning-teaching tool and there are people, even teachers who have are against the use of games as an educative methodology. Brumfit et al. (1995, p.151-152) synthesize the most common arguments against the game as an educative tool for learning languages:

- Games are not serious and cannot therefore be treated seriously as part of a methodology for teaching English
- Games can only ever be decorative extras- time fillers
- Games should remain outside the classroom
- If children get involved and excited in playing games, they will use their first language and gain no benefit in English
- Games are noisy and therefore disruptive

Stojovic, M. (2011) adds four more disadvantages of the use of games following the arguments previously presents by Brumfit et al.

- Discipline issues, learners may get excessively noisy
- Straying away from the basic purpose of the game-play activity, perhaps, due to inadequate rules instruction, resulting in playing too much and the lack of learning
- If games are already familiar or boring, students might not get equally involved
- Some learners, especially teenagers, may find games unnecessary and childish.

Nonetheless, all this arguments against games can be easily refuted. The first statement about the disciplinal and serious aspect of the game is rejected by Brumfit et al. (1995), Musbalat (2012), and Macedonia(2005) who declare that the fun that involve the game is perceived like this by the students, however the teacher objective is not the same, they are two different ways of understanding and perceiving the games. The amusement element of the game results motivating and as a consequence it has a reinforcing effect in the learning-teaching process, making it meaningful and interesting. The acquisition of the knowledge as a result of this enjoyment is more natural and the anxiety is lower than with other didactical techniques.

About the second evidence *“Games can only ever be decorative extras- time fillers perhaps”*. As Lee (1979:3 in Yolageldili, G. & Arikan, A. 2011) proposes *“games should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do”*. Games should not be treated as filling or warm up activities but as a way to review the previous knowledge, present and introduce new information and to accommodate and assimilate it.

*“Games belong outside the classroom”*. Playing games is something innate in the kids hence it is something natural in their daily routine. Regarding Dögg Sigurðardóttir (2010):

Finally, using games in the classroom is important because many children do not get enough opportunity to play during their free time, which can be traced to the rapid changes in our society. Cities are getting bigger and traffic is getting heavier which means that more and more parents are hesitant to let their

children play outside. Also passive activities such as watching television, or the computer screen are seen as being more exciting than actually physically playing, so today the sight of children playing various games in groups outside is becoming much more rare than it was 10, 15 or 20 years ago.

Teachers' duty is to supply the children's necessities and hence provide them with the real social context required to develop themselves and their knowledge. Besides, the involvement of the games varies from outside to inside the classroom, the aims are different and the pedagogical demands too.

Considering the use of the mother tongue instead of English while playing, is not a disadvantage of using games. The change among languages could occur with different methodologies while learning English not only with games. Children switching languages imply that they are so involved in the activity and so motivated that the main objective is the message itself and not the mean. Meanwhile infants mixed languages they are making themselves understandable and focusing on the communication.

Some teachers are worried about losing the control of the class and try to avoid all these activities that imply movement or the speaking in groups, as they found it disruptive and noisy. The noise is the sample that in class the teacher does not work based on a Conductist theory (just teaching grammar and vocabulary). If there is noise is because all the competences (specially speaking) and the eight intelligences of Gardner (naturalist, mathematical-logical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial) are worked and not only the ones that not require anything else but a table, a chair and a paper. According to Brumfit et al. (1995, p.152) the noise and the loss of the control in class is not a result of games, but a consequence of the boredom of the children on what is going on. He states that *"the most powerful threat to good order in the classroom comes from lack of learner interest in what is going on. High levels of motivation are conducive to good order. Purposeful and involving games may be strong support to motivation."*

Another of the fears that persuade teachers to use the games is *“Straying away from the basic purpose of the game-play activity, perhaps, due to inadequate rules instruction, resulting in playing too much and the lack of learning”*. In order to avoid this, as well as using games that are familiar or boring to the children, teachers should make a selection of what kind of games to use, give clear orders about the aim of the game and make the game purposefulness for the infants. Besides it is advisable to monitor the games as the children playing on their own can change it and therefore it could lose the didactic and educative part of the game.

The last disadvantage Stojovic, M. (2011) mentions, is that the learners could find the games unnecessary and childish. Related to the already cited selection work that the teachers must develop, it is also the teachers' duty to adapt and select those activities and games more suitable for each group and age; attending to Piaget's theories in order to adjust them as well to the stage of development in which the children are.

## **2.5. What games to use.**

Therefore, in a teaching methodology based on the games, the teacher work must consist of looking for those games more suitable for the pupils, their necessities without forgetting the curricular demands neither the linguistic aim of acquiring the English language and the four linguistic competences (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

According to Musbalat, M. (2012), teachers need to consider which games to use, when and how to link them with the syllabus and he highlighted five ideas that teacher should not forget at the time to choose a game:

- A game must be more than just fun
- A game must be motivating and help to make and sustain the effort of learning
- A game should involve “friendly” competition
- A game should keep all of the students involved and interested
- A game should encourage students to focus on the use of language and the practice in various skills rather than on the language itself
- A game should give students a chance to learn, practice or review specific language material.

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### 3. PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF GAMES

#### 3.1. Classification of games

The games is such a natural action and function in the children's life, that there are thousands of them and it is a complex task to choose the appropriate ones. In addition, the research about this methodology come out with a wide range of manners to classify the games.

- Piaget (1946) classified the games in:
  - Sensory motor games
  - Symbolic games
  - Ruled games
- Ingvar Sigurgeirsson (1995) in *Dögg Sigurðardóttir* divided games into the following categories:
  - Games for dividing into groups
  - Introduction games
  - Group games
  - Physical games
  - Scavenger hunt games
  - Educational games
  - Theoretical expression games
  - Drawing and coloring games
  - Educational card games
  - Word games
  - Story games
  - Question games
- Lee (1991) and Pham in Stojkovic (2011) organized the games keeping this classification:
  - Structure games
  - Vocabulary games
  - Spelling games
  - Pronunciation games

- Number games
- Listen and do games
- Games and writing
- Miming and role-playing
- Discussion games

### **3.2. Personal classification of games**

Attending the classifications suggested by these four authors, as well as the areas of knowledge and the linguistic competences (reading, speaking, writing and listening) presents in the LOE (Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo) and in the Decreto Foral 23/2007, of 19<sup>th</sup> March, I have developed the following classification of the games:

- Grammar games

According to Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) games have a great pedagogical value providing language teachers with many advantages when they are used in foreign language classes and learning in a variety of areas.

Hong (2002) gives some suggestions to teachers about using game for teaching young learners by claiming that:

- When giving instructions to beginners, a few words in the mother tongue would be the quickest way to make everything clear. More English exposure is needed at a later stage.
- Games are best set up by demonstration rather than by lengthy explanation.
- It is very important not to play a game for too long. Students will begin to lose interest. It is best to stop a game at its peak.

It must not be forgotten that at early ages, children acquire their mother tongue naturally and that is the aim of teaching English in a CLIL methodology, to acquire the language as naturally as possible. Regarding Ojeda (2004) *“The games are designed to use specific features of grammar, either in isolation, or in conjunction with other grammatical features”*. Because of that, teachers should not forget that children start being conscious about grammar and acquiring structures through the chunks that teachers offer them in their oral productions. That is the reason

why teachers must be extremely careful about their productions as it is by their example how the kids begin learning.

Rinvolucrí (1990) in Yolageldili & Arikán (2011) clarifies that a game can be used in any of these three stages while using them as a part of grammar instruction:

- Before presenting a given structure, especially to find out diagnostically how much knowledge is already known by the learners
- After a grammar presentation to see how much the group has grasped
- As a revision of a specific grammar area.

Taking into account that Infant Education children are the target group of this project, Rinvolucrí's ideas should be adapted to this educative stage and therefore the grammar would be presented as games with other aims such as kinesthetic or vocabulary and the grammar would be acquire in a transversal way by the chunks and the corrective feedback offered meanwhile the game is executed.

#### ▪ Vocabulary games

In words of Uberman (1998), vocabulary acquisition is increasingly viewed as crucial to language acquisition. There are numerous techniques concerned with vocabulary presentation. If teachers want students to remember new vocabulary, it needs to be learnt in context, practiced, and the revised to prevent students from forgetting.

In the opinion of this author before starting a game, it is worth presenting the vocabulary first. Gairns and Redman (1986) offered a technique for presenting new vocabulary following this classification:

- Visual techniques such as flashcards, photographs and pictures, wall charts, blackboard drawings, word pictures, incongruous visuals, realia, mime and gestures.
- Verbal techniques consist of using illustrative situations, descriptions, synonyms, and antonyms, scales and definitions (demonstration, contextual or translation definition)

These means for presenting the new vocabulary that would be used in the game, are connected with the multiple intelligences theory of Gardner (1993), as it covers different intelligences.

Meanwhile the children play games they acquire vocabulary and grammar structures, they develop the communicative competence too, all without being conscious of it and just enjoying from the experience that the games provide them.

▪ IT (information technologies)games:

In the current society of new technologies, the computerized educational games coexist with paper-based activities. Regarding Şahhüseyinoğlu (2007) *“Computer based educational games have recently become an important asset of today’s learning communities”*

In the LOE (Ley Orgánica de Educación), in the area of “Languages and communication”, in the section 2 “Audiovisual language and information and communication technologies” it is mentioned:

- Iniciación en el uso de instrumentos tecnológicos como ordenadores, cámaras o reproductores de sonido e imagen
- Acercamiento a producciones audiovisuales como películas, dibujos animados o videojuegos.
- Distinción progresiva entre la realidad y la representación visual
- Toma progresiva de conciencia de la necesidad de un uso moderado de los medios audiovisuales y de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación.<sup>8</sup>

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- Introduction to the use of technological tools such as computers, cameras, audio and video players
- Approach to audiovisual productions such as movies, cartoons and video games.
- Progressive distinction between reality and visual representation
- Rising awareness of the necessity of a moderate use of audiovisual and information and communication technologies.

Currently, the new technologies are taking more and more importance inside the classroom, however they are still in development and they are not considered as a central element of the learning-teaching process. The consequence of this lack of legal development for the use of IT and formation of teachers in its use is that the teacher does not tend to use them during the progress of their classes.

Due to these previous factors, I have created an IT game to promote the acquisition of English.

- Physical games

Yolageldili & Arikani (2011) concluded that: *“What teachers should consider while choosing a game is the fact that children learn best with games which require physical action, interaction, competition and participation”*.

Games for young children are usually related with the movement, while playing they run, clap their hands, jump, mime or walk.

Asher (1977) in Tomlinson & Masuhara (2009) developed an approach called total physical response (TPR), this approach *“involves the learners carrying out physical actions from teacher’s instructions”*. Teachers usually use this approach in their classrooms, promoting the acquisition of English through the movement. This approach is based on the innate acquisition of the mother tongue, and tries to apply this conception to the second language acquisition.

### **3.3. Analysis of traditional games**

#### *3.3.1. Simon says*

In spite of being very traditional and well known, I have chosen Simon says game (Vernon, 2009, p. 161-163) since it is very effective and easy to play in a SLA classroom as the children already know the rules of the game and they know how to play.

Simon says is an English traditional game that has become popular in other cultures. This game allows not only the work on vocabulary and grammar (imperatives and verbs), but also the listening comprehension and the body-kinesthetic intelligence considering that this game is a total physical response approach requiring movement. Additionally it has the advantage of carrying it out in big or small groups as well as the wide range of ages and spaces it can be adapted to. As the players get older the structural and lexical aspects that involve the game can become more complex.

In this game, the teacher gives the players some instructions that they must follow, but only if the instructions are preceded by the expression "Simon says". For instance: "Simon says touch your nose!" The teacher makes the gestures too.

If the teacher gives an order without Simon says, children must not do it. For example: "Touch your head!".

Through this game it can be worked the vocabulary related to parts of the body and objects of the classroom, the verbs for actions (jump, touch, sit down). Besides, it is an extraordinary game for the development of the attention and listening comprehension as they must pay attention to the teacher's orders and they must know when to follow the instructions and when not.

### 3.3.2 *I spy*

*I spy* (Lee, 1991, p. 42) is as well as Simon says a traditional game, and in I have also selected it due to the fact it is a well-known game and it also exists in Spanish “*Veo, veo*”. Children know how to play as they have already assimilated the rules of the game.

This game allows working the phonetic, vocabulary and the structures of grammar. This game begins with a rhyme that is repeated: “*I spy with my little eye, something beginning with A/B/C*”. The continue repetition of this rhyme helps children understanding and acquiring, without being aware, the grammatical structure of a sentence. Besides, the turn-taking can be worked through this game if the infants are asked to raise their hands if they want to guess the answer.

This game could result a bit difficult for infant education but it can be adapted if the teacher shows the children some flashcards with different objects and choose the letter of just one of the objects of the flashcards rather than thinking about an object in the whole class.

Other adaptation that could be done for infant education is playing with the children’s names. The teacher selects the letters from the names of the children and they have to guess who the owner of the letter is. This variation would make the game more meaningful for the pupils as they are playing with their own names.

### **3.4. Development of my own games**

#### *3.4.1. The crazy cars*

I made a game with the intention of working on, first of all the phonemes, the vocabulary and finally, songs, limericks, tongue twisters, nursery rhymes.

Regarding the activity itself, it is easy to adapt the vocabulary as well as the topics of the game according to different ranges of age and to the pupil's level of English. Besides, children can do this game on their own without the presence of an adult.

This activity was prepared thinking about four year old children, depending on the topics that I think are suitable. Nevertheless, it could be used with three or five- year-old kids too, although some changes would be required, for instance, using an easier or more simple or complex syntactic structures or lexis.

In relation to education, this is a linguistic game based on the bodily- kinesthetic intelligence of Gardner as children have to run and move. It is useful for working on phonemes, acquiring new vocabulary and comprehending and producing English. Besides, this activity has a solid kinesthetic value as the students must run and move about. Regarding the infants, this is a competitive game because they are primarily playing and their main objective is to win, although at the same time they are learning in a fun way and without being aware of it.

It is an easy short game that can be played from fifteen to twenty minutes, that is the length of time that an Infant Education young learner can hold the attention in an activity without losing interest.

Taking into account that it is a kinesthetic game a lot of free space is required since the students are going to run around the classroom in which the pictures would be distributed.

This game can be played in a big group with all the students at the same time, during the game the teacher gives orders to small groups so it is easier to control them.

Linguistic objectives:

- To be able to recognize the phonemes

- To be able to associate the phonemes with words. With this activity they work on the phonemes and they also work on fluency and pronunciation but to a lesser degree.
- To acquire new vocabulary which can be related to various topics, familiar for them such as numbers, colours, shapes, sizes, animals, parts of the body or new topics can be introduced for instance fruits or toys.
- To develop the listening skills. They improve their listening skills as they have to comprehend the rules and the orders
- To improve their speaking skills
- To progress on the production of English. With this activity they don't have to produce output but they work on the pronunciation.
- To progress on the comprehension of English. Children must be able to follow the instructions.
- To have a positive attitude to other languages

#### Extra linguistic objectives

- To learn to respect and wait for their turn
- To keep silent while others are playing
- To learn to work in groups
- To develop the children's capacity of reaction when an order is given.
- To promote effort through the competition
- To help students to become autonomous
- To stimulate the participation of all the students, taking into account their needs.
- To follow and accept the rules, instructions and explanations of the game
- To appreciate the game as a way to enjoy and mix with their classmates.
- To promote the collaboration among the students and the respect for their peers.
- To listen carefully and respect the turn-taking
- To foster the participation of all the students taking into account their needs.

Development of the activity:

On the blackboard, there is a poster in which there is a car park with several cars of several colours and sizes which can be moved around. Three roads set off from the car park, each of them of a different color: pink, purple and orange and each of them will reach a house of the same colour.

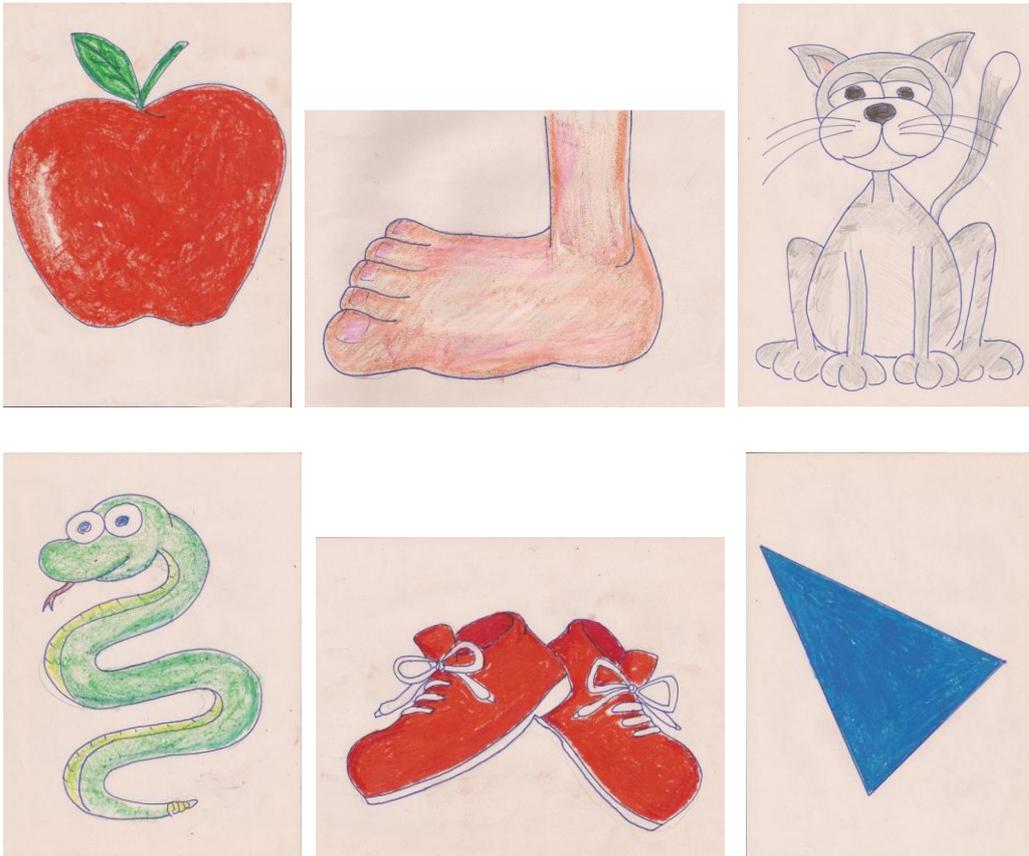


**Figura 1.** Poster

Every child is going to be given a hula-hoop of a different color; those hula hoops are of the same color and size as the cars on the poster (The hula-hoops are supposedly the infants' cars).

One pupil has an assistant role as the police officer, in other words he/she is going to help the teacher. Furthermore, if the teacher is not there, children can play autonomously and they can play the teacher's role.

Once each kid is given the hula-hoop along with the instructions, the teacher gives an order: "Green cars run!" Then all the children with a green hula hoop start running around the class and the teacher then gives another order: "Go to the word that starts with the /k/ sound". There are several images and pictures of numbers, animals, fruits and geometric figures distributed among the classroom (on the floor, the walls, desks...).



**Figura 2.** Images distributed in the classroom.

The children with the green hula hoop have to go to the picture of the /kæt/cat. The first to arrive will be the winner. The police officer will help the teacher by telling her/him who has arrived first at the picture. After that, the winner should say the word and phoneme aloud correctly to prove that the phoneme and the first sound of the word are the same and they match. If they do it properly they advance on the road; if they do not, they stand still. The child decides which of the three roads on the poster (pink, purple and orange) he/she wants and the police officer is in charge of moving the cars on the roads.

These actions are going to be repeated, but changing the orders: “All colors run”; “Big cars run”, and so on. After that, the child whose car arrives first at the house will be the winner. Each one of the three houses has a door that can be opened and inside there is something written: poem, song or story. So the winner is going to be given one of these three things (the one which is written in the house the child selected) and all the class is going to work on it (learning the song, or reading the book...).

As variations of the game and in order to make the children work autonomously the police officer can play the teacher's role by giving the orders. In addition, the activity can be adapted to work on vocabulary instead of phonemes. The teacher can say the names of the pictures as an alternative to saying the phonemes which the words start with.

The prize for the winner can vary too. They can be given a present or a sticker instead of a poem, a story or a song or the winner can bring a poem, story or song they like to class and they can show it to their classmates as an alternative to the teacher's giving them the prize.

The positive aspects of this activity are that the children can:

- Learn or acquire the phonemes and vocabulary in a relax atmosphere through a game.
- Do it autonomously
- All of them can participate
- The teacher can control which child has participated or not
- This activity allows making several variations of it.

The negative aspects are:

- To focus on the grammar section (the phonemes) too much in order to make children learn it, instead of promoting the enjoyment.
- If there are students with a severe disability this game would probably not be suitable for them and a new activity will be necessary.

### 3.4.2. *Smart-board Memory.*

I have decided to create an activity based on the traditional game of “Memory” however using the interactive smart<sup>9</sup> board in order to fulfill the demands of a society of information and communication technologies.

Having several pair of cards, this game consists of using the memory and visual retention to match as many pairs as possible. Each child has to find pairs by picking two cards which are face down each turn and memorizing them.

This game allows working vocabulary games, the use of new technologies and the memory. Moreover, the turn-taking and the value of respect are worked too, as children must attend their turn to play.

I have considered creating a game based on these traditional games as it could result familiar for the children and hence easier to understand the rules and to play.

I have also developed this game for three-year-old children as the vocabulary presented about the animals is very basic. The memory can be used and adapted with older pupils and levels of English using a more complex vocabulary, content or other topics presented while playing. It is a great game not only to review the vocabulary already works but also to add new knowledge.

Linguistic objectives:

- To review and acquire vocabulary related to several topics such as animals
- To develop their listening skills
- To start recognizing the phonemes
- To introduce the letters

Extra linguistic:

- To improve the memory
- To develop the visual intelligence
- To work on the fine motor skills

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<sup>9</sup> Smart notebook software

- To acquire basic knowledge about new technologies
- To learn to respect and wait for their turn
- To follow instruction as to keep silent while others are playing
- To appreciate the game as a way to enjoy
- To listen carefully and respect the turn-taking
- To foster the participation of all the students taking into account their needs.

Development of the game:

The game starts with a review of the vocabulary that is going to be worked in the memory. An image with several animals (cow, cat, dog and duck) is presented, each time the child clicks on the name of the animals is said aloud. This revision allows associating the image of animal to the written name and to their pronunciation.

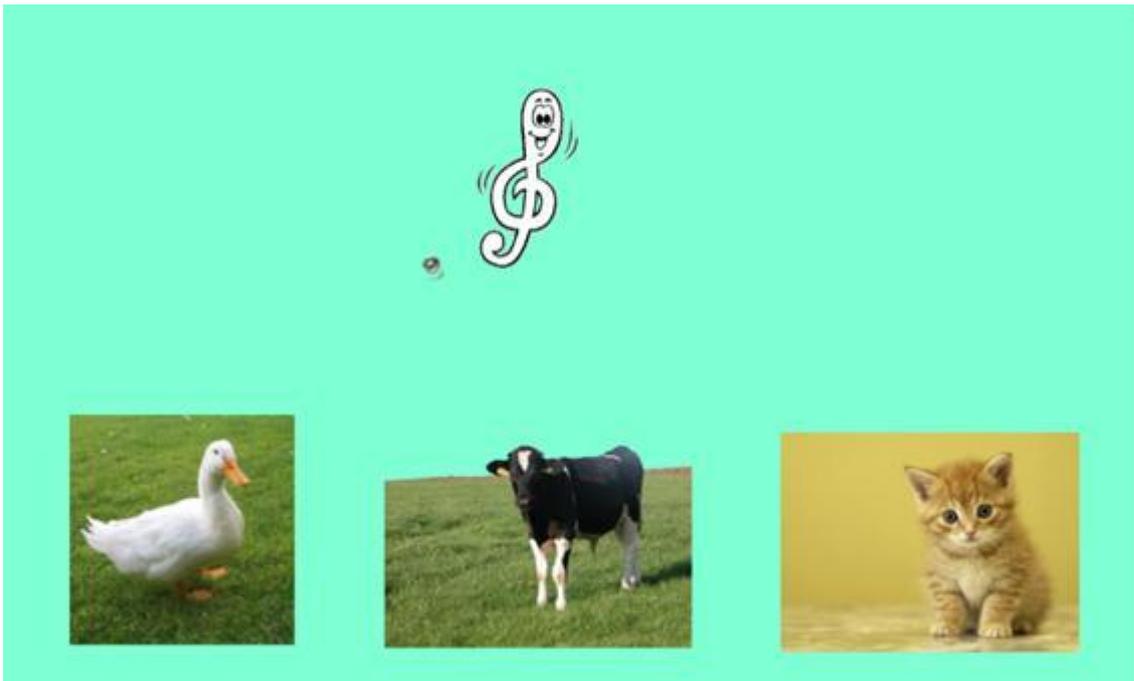


**Figura 3.** Presentation of the vocabulary

While doing this, Verbal-linguistic, Musical-rhythmic and Visual-spatial intelligences are being promoted. (Gardner, 1983-1995) The verbal- linguistic intelligence as the children are offered the written word of the animals, the musical-rhythmic one because the infants that acquire the knowledge while listening associates the

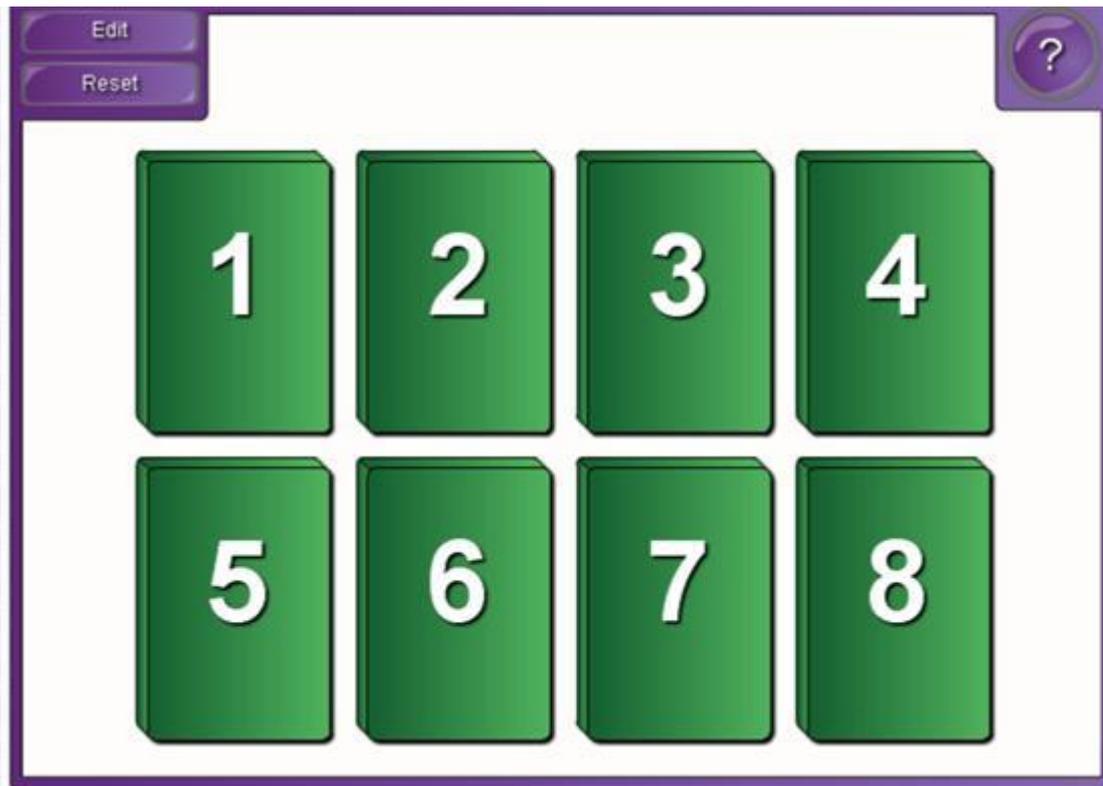
pronunciation of the animal to the image and the word and finally the visual-spatial one since those pupils retain the visual information.

Subsequently, children can play with the vocabulary acquired. There is a treble clef and three of the animals already mentioned. When the treble clef is clicked it is pronounced the name of one animal, the purpose of this game is the children to associate the word (orally pronounced) with the image of the animal.

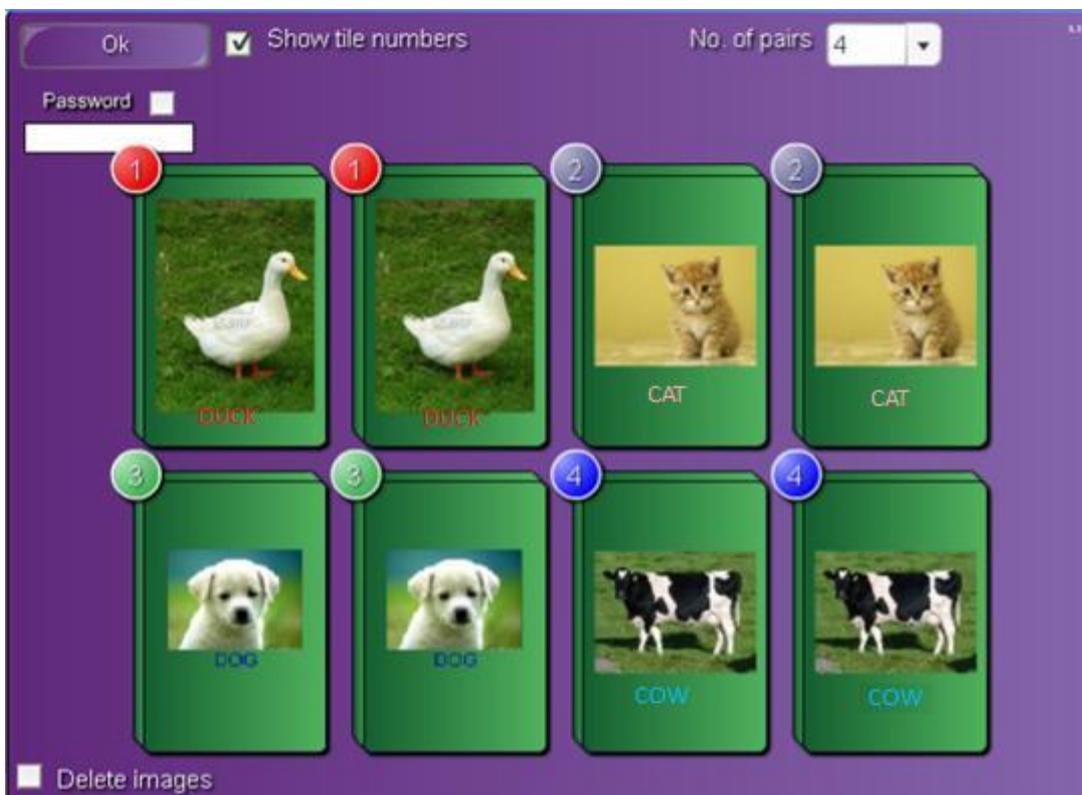


**Figura 4.** Example of the treble clef and the vocabulary worked

After the revision of the basic vocabulary starts the memory game. One by one, children should go to the interactive whiteboard to choose two cards, the aim of the game is matching pairs working on the memory. The game that I have developed offers four pairs of cards in order to work on the animals: duck, dog, cat and cow. Besides, I select four animals that start with the same phoneme with the aim of working on the phonemes sounds while playing.



**Figura 5.** Presentation of the memory with the cards face-down



**Figura 6.** Presentation of the cards showing the oais matched.

The programme itself turns up the cards, in case the infants' choice is wrong, which help them to understand when each turn ends. The children knowing when their turn ends, makes easier to control the group as they respect their turn-taking.

The positive aspects of this activity are:

- Children can review and acquire vocabulary while playing and having fun.
- The teacher just monitors the game, controlling the respect of the turn-taking and which child has participated or not. Hence children play autonomously
- All the infants can participate
- As it is played on an interactive smart board it results appealing for the pupils

The negative aspects are:

- This game can only be played one by one so meanwhile a child is selecting the cards on the whiteboard the others must wait.



## CONCLUSIONES

El juego ha sido valorado a lo largo del tiempo, tanto por pedagogos como por psicólogos y educadores como técnica de enseñanza. Tras la realización de este trabajo, se puede concluir y afirmar que el juego como metodología en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje tiene una gran efectividad, tanto en la enseñanza de lenguas (inglés) como en el resto de áreas presentes en el currículo de Educación Infantil.

Biológicamente se ha comprobado que el juego es una actividad innata en el día a día del niño. Teniendo en cuenta que este trabajo está enfocado a la enseñanza del inglés a estudiantes de infantil, todavía tiene mayor relevancia el empleo de este recurso, puesto que a estas edades aún se encuentran en plena adaptación al mundo escolar y en pleno proceso de desarrollo. Por ello, resulta de gran utilidad comenzar la iniciación y adaptación de los pequeños en el mundo escolar a través de aquellos aspectos inherentes en ellos, como es el juego.

Pese a su demostrada efectividad, los maestros no deben derivar en actitudes tradicionalistas en las que el juego simplemente se usa como actividad de relleno, ni sobrevalorarlo, creyendo que cualquier juego sirve y es útil para aprender.

La selección de los juegos por tanto, requiere de una profunda meditación por parte del profesorado, el cual debe tener en cuenta muchos factores para la elección de juegos idóneos, que no sólo garanticen el aprendizaje de los contenidos exigidos por el currículo, sino también la adquisición del idioma de manera innata y transversal al resto de aprendizajes. Todo ello, sin olvidar el objetivo esencial del juego, que es el jugar y la diversión, aspectos que motivan el interés del niño y en consecuencia el aprendizaje.

El juego como herramienta de enseñanza- aprendizaje, permite una gran adaptabilidad tanto a las características y necesidades de los alumnos como a las exigencias curriculares. Al tratarse de la etapa de educación infantil, los contenidos y competencias comunicativas (comprensión oral y escrita y expresión oral y escrita) a trabajar, y atendiendo a los distintos tipos de inteligencia de Gardner (1993) a través de los cuales los niños construyen el conocimiento, se adaptarán a los estadios de desarrollo del niño. Centrándose en estos estadios de desarrollo, la enseñanza

educativa se basa principalmente, en el desarrollo de la expresión y comprensión oral, puesto que la lectura y la escritura no están contempladas como objetivos a alcanzar en infantil.

Respecto a la enseñanza del inglés, se ha señalado que a través del juego, el idioma se va adquiriendo paulatinamente, mientras se trabajan y desarrollan otra serie de competencias y contenidos, todo ello de forma lúdica proporcionando diversión y disfrute al niño. La gran diversidad de juegos permite por tanto trabajar distintos aspectos del desarrollo, no sólo los relacionados con la adquisición de lenguas y otros aprendizajes sino los relacionados con el desarrollo social, personal y emocional del niño.

Toda esta variedad y diversidad de materiales a cerca del juego ha dado lugar a muchas clasificaciones de los juegos por lo que los maestros deberán adoptar aquellos juegos y clasificaciones que más se adapten a los objetivos a lograr en sus clases. Los profesores por tanto, tendrán que valorar del juego: su utilidad didáctica, los aspectos lúdicos, el desarrollo cognitivo-afectivo al que se les expone a los niños, la implicación y participación que exige en los alumnos y el tipo de competencias e inteligencias que permite desarrollar.

Personalmente, mi selección está enfocada al desarrollo del inglés, pero valorando dos aspectos importantes en el contexto actual del aula. Por un lado, la importancia del movimiento, especialmente para niños de infantil y por otro, la realidad actual de una sociedad basada en las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación.

Tras el estudio y clasificación de los juegos, he propuesto en este trabajo dos actividades que abordan todos los aspectos previamente mencionados en la categorización de los juegos, y he realizado un análisis de dos juegos presentes habitualmente en las aulas, que pese a ser tradicionales, resultan efectivos y adaptables a las distintas demandas educativas.

El objetivo de la realización de este trabajo basado en la enseñanza del inglés en infantil a través del juego, ha sido analizar y relacionar dos aspectos latentes en la educación, como son la importancia que tiene el juego en la infancia y la gran

demanda social actual de una enseñanza de idiomas, especialmente del inglés. Tras su realización se puede concluir que el juego es una metodología muy efectiva en la enseñanza de lenguas y que pese a sus aspectos lúdicos, el juego tiene una clara base pedagógica y didáctica que fomenta el aprendizaje desde la diversión y motivando e implicando al niño en la construcción de su propio conocimiento.



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