

ENGLISH TEACHING METHODOLOGIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Metodologías de enseñanza del inglés en Educación Infantil

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Resumen.

El objetivo de este trabajo fin de grado es compartir un previo estudio desarrollado para establecer las bases que se deben tener en cuenta para elegir el enfoque y las metodologías más adecuadas para enseñar inglés como segunda lengua en Educación Infantil. Se han identificado y resumido las principales metodologías de enseñanza del inglés y los enfoques relacionados usados desde el pasado hasta ahora. Además, como resultado de la investigación, el artículo resalta algunas realidades y factores que se deben tener en cuenta al elegir las metodologías y los procedimientos más adecuados para enseñar inglés en situaciones concretas. Finalmente, eTwinning es introducido como una plataforma innovadora con diferentes herramientas para el desarrollo, implementación y evaluación de proyectos con diferentes metodologías usadas y compartidas por diferentes profesores de países europeos, quienes trabajan juntos para compartir sus conocimientos, experiencias, ideas, proyectos, propuestas y nuevas metodologías.

Palabras clave: Metodologías, enseñanza infantil, enseñanza de lenguas, enseñanza infantil, e-Twinning.

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Abstract.

The goal of this paper is to share a previous study aimed at establishing the main basis when choosing the best approach and the most appropriate methodologies to teaching English as a Second Language in Pre-Primary Education. Research has been done to identify and summarize the main English teaching methodologies and related approaches used in the past and the present. Furthermore, as a result of the research, the article highlights some facts, factors and procedures that should be taken into account when selecting the right methodologies for a particular situation. The importance of the Pre-Primary stage for children is also highlighted as it is in this particular period when children are at their maximum potential in terms of language acquisition. Finally, eTwinning is introduced as an innovative platform with different tools for the development, implementation and evaluation of the different methodologies in use (in terms of projects) to teach a second language working along with other teachers across Europe sharing knowledge, experiences, ideas, projects, proposals and new methodologies.

Key words: Methodologies, language teaching, early childhood education, eTwinning.

1 Introduction

After several interviews with different people of different ages, from 16-53 years old, from Cadiz and Madrid, there were interesting comparisons between the different styles of their English teachers, their attitude, the willingness they showed when learning the subject and how they used to study it. The majority of the interviewees from both cities admitted to have passed the exams or even obtained good grades during their education because they found it easy to memorize the English content and rules. They were able to answer exam questions, such as changing the verb tense, even without understanding the sentences. They also learnt by heart the irregular verbs, the translation of the topic vocabulary, and admitted that after the exam they normally forgot all the content learnt as they never used nor talked about what they learnt until they had to study it again the following years. In addition, while some of them claim to have forgotten most of their English and consider their English level to be very poor, some explained that their level is not so low but rather high as they attended English academies after school or went abroad to England, the USA or Ireland. Some even indicated that the English level they have now was achieved by reading texts or song lyrics and watching or listening to entertainment and social media in English, such as TV Series and podcasts. All this outside school, where they practice reading and listening skills on their own, aided by the previous knowledge learnt in school and now put in context.

It is therefore generally accepted one of the main reasons for the English Education failure in Spain is the lack of a programmed progression through the different school years starting with the acquisition of a sound foundation at the early ages. What they were taught in Primary Education has basically the same content that they had in High School, as "there was barely a difference between the English teaching Books from one year to another, they were very repetitive" (G. Gestoso, personal communication, January 3, 2016). Therefore, they tend to get tired of always learning the same verb tenses, vocabulary and the Irregular verbs, and didn't feel the progression of their second language learning. Although others acknowledge that this repetitious learning methodology, consisting of a very limited number of English classes throughout the school year, helped them learn and remember the most common vocabulary, such as food and animals, they didn't gain the experience and confidence to speak up and put all they learnt into practice. They lacked having a natural every day conversation in English, or being involved in an English speaking environment to develop an understanding of what they are being told. Furthermore, they add that having a strong Spanish accent makes it even more complicated for some native speakers to understand them.

This information is consistent with the "Brief history of language teaching" well documented in Chapter 1 of the book "Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching" by Richard and Rodgers (1986). Starting with the ancient scheme used to teach the Latin language, the later grammar-translation method, until the Reform Movement lead in the nineteenth century to new approaches. The book uses this evolution to introduce the main methodologies that are in use in the present day.

It is also important to highlight the importance of the Pre-Primary period. According to Wilder Penfield's Critical period hypothesis in 1959 (as cited in Asher & García, 1969), there is a critical period which, once trespassed, it will be very difficult to acquire a second language at the level of a native speaker. This would be the reason why adults find it so difficult to acquire new language and to identify differences between certain sounds as well as the difficulty to produce them. Therefore, it is intended to emphasise the importance of including early acquiring sound foundations methodologies from Early Childhood Education (ECE) that will easily allow the progression of English skills through the following years.

As a result, this article identifies some English teaching methodologies and factors that English teachers should take into account when teaching a second language from infancy, but also to call to attention the importance of the progressiveness and adaptations of those methodologies towards Primary and Secondary education. Furthermore, as it is important to take into account the experience gained by all teachers that work in similar environments, eTwinning is introduced as a platform with many valuable tools that teachers can use to create a collaborative environment across Europe. eTwinning allows for teachers to share their ideas, projects and methodologies in order to change and improve their teaching lessons to the best possible extent.

This article also presents a summary of students' experiences of participating in the eTwinning project "Speak-Up" and working along with other university students from different countries in the process of encouraging the development of English speaking skill in students.

Finally, the enrolment in the multilingual school "San Patricio" during the investigation provided the experience and the opportunity to put into practice some procedures for methods and also to observe the importance of several factors.

2 Considerations about the English Teaching Process

2.1 Learning or acquiring a language?

In the English Teaching Process (ETP), it is important to consider whether one method is aiming at acquiring or learning the language.

Stephen Krashen (1982) stated that the process of **acquiring** a language happens in a natural way, when children are immersed into a language, reacting spontaneously and interacting subconsciously. On the contrary, language **learning** is a conscious, rather rational process which normally happens in a programmed way, for example, when learning grammar or vocabulary.

Therefore, when learning English in the early stages, students begin to **acquire** the language unconsciously motivated by necessities, such as to get the attention of the teacher, to exchange information or to participate in a game. Consequently, children would start to understand, feel comfortable, and get used to an English speaking environment.

However, later on, when reaching Primary and higher levels of education, it is adequate for students to also **learn** English by means of studying the language using more complex approaches, learning the grammar, etc. (as native English speakers also do), but it is fundamental not to leave the acquisition process behind.

2.2 Second Language Acquisition

When the ETP aims at teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), it should be taken into account the route and the rate of the student's progress. The **route** is the nature of the stages students go through in the *acquisition* process, not taking into account their mother tongue nor the context of their learning, and the **rate** is the speed of the language's *learning* (Myles, 2011).

For this reason, regarding the Second Language Acquisition process (SLA), Myles (2011) believes that teachers should be more concerned about their student's **rate** of learning due to the implied pedagogical issues. Teachers need to observe what makes their students understand and learn the language faster and their capacities at certain stages of their development. From this, they will be able to adapt the **route** of learning and choose the most appropriate methodologies according to the situation and conditions (Myles, 2011).

3 Teaching methodologies

Before introducing the different English Teaching Methodologies, (ETM), some concepts must be understood:

Edward Anthony (as cited in Richard & Rodgers, 1986) described an **approach** as a set of correlative assumptions, evident or obvious, that deal with the nature of the matter to be taught. He explains that in the use of an approach to teach a language, there can be many plans for the presentation of the language materials in a procedural way; he refers to these plans as **methods**. Therefore, within one approach there can be many methods. Furthermore, Edward Anthony describes the **technique** as the implementation of the method in the classrooms, and the actions that would take place in the classroom.

On the other hand, Richard and Rodgers (1986), believe that as method is related theoretically to one approach, it is organized and determined by a **design** and then put into practice using a **procedure**. This whole broad relationship between theory and practice should be referred to as a **method**. The difference between an approach and a method is the emphasis and priority they give to the content versus instructional issues (Richard & Rodgers, 1986), i.e. "an approach is an idea or a concept, whereas a method is the procedures to turn that idea into reality in the classroom" (Taylor, n.d.).

Teaching methodologies refer to the study of one or various methods chosen by an educator to teach a specific lesson with a specific purpose successfully. It implies the study of its general principles, pedagogical, and management strategies used for the classroom instructions related theoretically to one approach. As there are many approaches and methods used in education worldwide, teachers have a wide number of different methodologies to use or adapt according to their philosophy, teaching skills, objectives of the school, classroom characteristics, etc (USC Rossier School of Education, 2016).

Moreover, having a good knowledge of the different methodologies, teachers could also apply the **Principled Eclecticism approach**, fitting the method to the learner and not the opposite (Taylor, n.d.).

According to Tiwari (2008), methods should be chosen based on how best they achieve specified aims in teaching a language. For example, if the aim of a lesson is merely to obtain information, the method used could focus on acquiring vocabulary by using translations. In other words, the "why" of the question determines the "how" and "what" (Tiwari, 2008, p. 67).

Methodologies are not necessarily affected by time. The evolution of methodologies doesn't mean that former methods become obsolete or useless. All of them may become equally useful. As methodologies develop over time, even a unique methodology would change itself over time or be developed into other methodologies because of adaptations to new resources, generations, educational or competence purposes, or based on the specific school year. From basic words and phonetics, to reading, writing, and ending with advance grammar and vocabulary, methods also differ according to age, English level, characteristics of the group, etc. In the study, some procedures of methods worked with one classroom or with a specific student, but didn't with others, and required a change in the whole methodology.

3.1 Which is the best method?

According to Taylor (n.d.) linguists have demonstrated that there is **not one single best method for everyone** in all contexts, and that no teaching method is inherently superior to the others. In addition, it is not always possible, nor appropriate, to apply the same methodology to all learners.

It is very important for teachers and learners to understand the different methodologies. Moreover, when choosing the best one, several factors have to be taken into account, such as the age, objectives, environment, learning styles, needs, context, previous knowledge, mother tongue, aptitudes, backgrounds, ambitions, attitude, and even the length and the time of the lessons. It also implies encouragement, dedication, time and effort.

An extreme example can be taken from the movie "Freedom writers" where the teacher was unable to use the methodologies she used with other high school students because many of them had family and personal problems. Nothing she tried to teach interested them until she changed the teaching method, involving them on writing a diary individually:

The best methods are therefore those that supply '**comprehensible input**' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. (Krashen, 1982, p. 6-7)

The **Principled Eclecticism** approach may seem the best answer when questioning the best method, but it has some disadvantages that may discourage teachers from its use. In particular, it doesn't provide a standard "of the self" solution and relies on each teacher's judgement

and evaluation of each student. This situation becomes increasingly complex when larger groups of students with different needs are considered. Therefore, it seems there is no universal best method to learn English. An experienced professional language teacher always adopts the **Principled Eclecticism** approach, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for that learner's specific objectives, learning style and context.

4 English Teaching Methodologies to use in Pre-Primary Education

Richard and Rodgers (1986) stated that a language teaching method is related theoretically to one approach, either as a theory of the nature of the language or as a theory of the nature of the language learning, by making designs, and then putting them into practice using procedures. Some of these second language teaching methodologies used in the last half century could be introduced in Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings:

(a) The **Community Language Learning** method tries to build strong personal links between the teacher and the student without any learning boundaries, using the mother tongue, translating it to English and encouraging repetition and familiarity with the new concepts (Krashen, 1982).

(b) In the **Silent Way** method, the teacher tries to say the least words possible to help students feel comfortable and find the right words to help them express themselves. Even if a student says "Me go toilet", the student would be in control of what they are trying to say without using their mother tongue.

(c) The **Direct Method** is used entirely in English, and the students are encouraged to answer in English as well, not using the mother tongue unless exceptionally necessary. It was observed directly at "Colegio San Patricio" that by the end of the Pre-Primary period the students can perfectly address their teachers in English and understand them using a direct method, improving the English acquisition of their students.

(d) The **Audio-lingual method** is based on learning English by means of adapting habits to the classroom. Promoting the dialogue in each situation. For example, in the morning routines, such as singing, praying, doing the calendar, the weather, setting the classroom's rules, etc. This method supports the idea that to learn a language, first it has to be listened to and understood before seeing it in its written form.

(e) The **Suggestopedia** method consists of transmitting that the English language is easy, avoiding or removing mental blocks towards English learning, consisting of procedures such as singing or doing simple activities.

(f) The **Communicative language teaching method (CLT)** develops situations to communicate effectively in different situations, such as in school, shopping, in the street, or at the doctors, suggesting notions, facts, or locations, and inviting other students to participate increasing their confidence with speaking English in different environments.

(g) The **Immersion** method implies learning school subjects in an English environment, and learning English as they learnt their mother tongue, as a means to "survive". This method might follow the **Natural Approach** also proposed by Krashen (1982) that highlights the similarities of learning the native language and the second language. There would be no corrections, as they would shape up naturally.

The difference between the Immersed Method and the Direct Method is that the Immersed would be a natural native-like English speaking environment whereas, in the direct method, students learn the language in an English speaking environment made comprehensible to them.

(h). The **Task-based Language learning** method can be used in ECE, but it is mostly used in the middle and high school levels. Students are involved in specific vocabulary for several weeks and then are evaluated through tasks. In Pre-Primary, this method is better used as task-command activities such as "Give me the apple" or "Stand up, sit down"

Pre-Primary teachers must keep in mind that children develop the language understanding first, then they start replying in their mother tongue, and then speak the second language little by little, when they feel comfortable and are willing to speak longer sentences. Remember as well that if they speak their mother tongue often, students might get confused and won't make an effort to use English as they know the teacher understands them anyways, and will end up saying it later in their mother tongue.

In addition to these eight methodologies, we can mention another three types of methodologies used in ECE when teaching in a mother tongue: *Cooperative Learning*, *Problem based Learning* and *Total Physical Response*. But as children are familiar with these methodologies, the

possibility of using them as well in the English Teaching Process deserves to be studied.

4.1 Cooperative Learning

Using the Cooperative Learning (CL) approach to education means to organize the classroom in several groups that work together and share academic and social experiences, encouraging creative, intellectual and open-ended tasks. In the CL approach teachers swap their role, from giving information to facilitating their students learning. The group succeeds when they all work cooperatively while gaining self-esteem, social skills, establishing a stronger bond with classmates, and performing better than when learning individually (Ross & Smyth, 1995).

Some studies have measured the success of cooperative learning as an instructional method and proposed some methodologies such as: Problem sets, laboratories and projects, jigsaw, peer editing, and peer-led team learning (Felder & Brent, 2007). Furthermore, laboratories and projects can also be adapted to the ECE classroom in the development of experiments, projects or group art crafts helping each other to follow their teacher's instructions, and talking among themselves in English.

This CL approach, works well using the mother tongue, and can be adapted to English Teaching Processes once the students have been introduced to the language beforehand, especially with children immersed in the English language.

4.2 Problem Based Learning

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an approach used to engage students in a real life challenge, encouraging them to solve problems using strategies and their previous knowledge (Stanford University, 2001). Instead of being informative lessons, the students are quite active working with the information and participating in class. Research has shown that PBL also improves students' problem-solving skills as they reflect on factors, facts, consequences, and process different information in different situations (Stanford University, 2001).

PBL in ECE settings cannot be used in the same way as in Primary or Secondary Education, nor in the same way infants use it in their regular mother tongue classroom. However, this approach could be adapted to learning English. For example, proposing a situation in which they need to identify a part of the body in English, or taking advantage of a situation that may arise in the classroom and how to solve it, such as saying sorry or thank you. Using a PBL approach would mainly support the development of understanding skills and encourage children to

speak even a few words to participate and share their ideas and propose solutions to daily problems.

4.3 Total Physical Response

Children are constantly moving and willing to play. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method emphasizes the importance of aural comprehension, where students participate actively responding to certain commands. For example, "Close your eyes", "Touch your nose", "Sit down", etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Using TPR activities in the ECE classroom promotes children being physically active. The procedures in the designs of this method would look like activities and games that are motivating and enjoyable methods to teach and acquire the English language. TPR activities can be done individually by asking individual children for commands while the rest of their classmates listen and process the information, or it could be done in groups. In the course of my student teacher field practice, this was the most used methodology and the one children seemed to enjoy the most.

4.4 White paper project

The White paper project, created by Ana García de la Fuente, director of the Art and visual Program at "Colegio San Patricio", has the purpose of teaching a second language in an enjoyable and simple way, reaching a personalized education. It is based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology, and its goals in ECE is to develop English oral comprehension and the artistic language as a way of letting children express themselves in a bilingual setting while enjoying talking about themselves and reinforcing the teacher-student bonding.

The White paper project consists of three activities directed to the acquisition, not the learning, of the language as a result of a natural communication between teacher and students. The activities consist of three parts. First, a group conversation where the teacher and students talk about a topic of interest, developing the general communicative competence in listening and talking. During the conversation, the students associate the information given with their previous knowledge. They structure their ideas and share them along with knowledge and even feelings and emotions. Secondly, the students would do an individual free drawing, finding a way of transmitting their ideas, feeling and thoughts. It was observed that during the first months the drawings were rather simple but the more they used this methodology, the more the students realised the teacher cares to learn about them, and gave

more importance to their drawings, adding more details and creativity. Thirdly, the One-to-One conversation takes place. It is an interaction between the teacher and the student talking in English about the drawing. It is a very important educational moment which can be reflected on and encourages English language speaking and comprehension skills, and their individual learning construction process, as well as learning about their innate capabilities, their experiences, feelings, personality, likes, concerns, and friends and family situations. (Salinas, 2016).

4.5 Correction Methods

The significance of errors in the learning process can be associated to the teachers not being concerned about the rate of the student's learning, what makes them learn, which methodology to use, how to adapt them to the characteristics of each group and lacking expectations of the knowledge that should be acquired.

Moreover, some teachers don't give importance to some student mistakes, considering them insignificant. Normally, teachers should first try to help children like the language and feel comfortable speaking it. Then, once they are confident, some correction methods can be used to correct the English mistakes while not affecting their confidence:

Eco Method: This method was proposed by Mr Stevens, a Primary teacher at the school. It is used while having a one-to-one conversation with a student repeating their mistake but correctly. For example, if a student says "Yesterday I go to the park" and the teacher would show interest and say "Really? You WENT to the park? What did you do?" The teacher would emphasise the word "went" by pronouncing it louder and slower and smiling, so the student associates it and realises for themselves the mistake, and tries to remember it for the next time (Mr Stevens. Personal communication, April 13, 2016). During the development of the project, this method was used with five-year-old children of whom some would repeat "Yes I went to the park", demonstrating that they had indeed received the feedback and corrected it, without the need of having to interrupt the conversation. Moreover, it was shown as well, that some other students who were listening received the feedback as well and later on said "I went to the park too".

Peer-to-peer: Some students have a higher English development than others, some speak English at home, so it is important that all students are opened to any corrections and suggestions from their peers and are encouraged to share their English speaking skills and

understanding. If they needed to say something to the teacher they could work out together how to do it.

4.6 Student's developed methodology

During the University placement with the five year olds, it was shown that a very effective way to motivate students to speak English in the classroom, and to forbid themselves from the use of Spanish, is to use the student-centred methodology that would let them create the solution themselves.

In this particular case, the teacher, Miss Saioa, wanted to motivate her students to speak English to each other during Learning Stations while they were playing with toys, with Play-Doh, doing art-crafts, etc. For that, she asked her students what they could do if someone spoke Spanish. All of them agreed that there would be a new rule in the class, if someone spoke Spanish in those periods the student would go to the corner of the classroom for two minutes. Therefore, in those periods, one student would say "You spoke Spanish! To the corner!", and soon the whole class agreed on calling the corner "The Prison". Then, it was made into a Prison jail and placed in the corner with some number cards to hold while they were there. They saw this as a game, at the beginning some would speak Spanish on purpose just to be there for a few minutes, but then they took it seriously and made an effort not to speak Spanish to carry on playing and doing the activities. Furthermore, to stop children from shouting and sending each other to prison, it was agreed that the helper of the day would carry a sheriff's badge and would be the only one who could send children to prison.

The other teacher, also working with five year olds, tried to include this method in her classroom as another methodology to motivate her children to speak English. She put the prison in her classroom and used the Sheriff's badge. However, the students didn't like it. Some didn't show interest in sending partners to prison and one girl started crying, it might be because she felt like a criminal. The students in that class didn't see this method as a game but as a punishment.

Therefore, when adapting or adding new methods to the classroom it is fundamental to let students take part in it, to set the rules and the decorations, all while encouraging them to be willing to learn from what they decide. Moreover, it is important to remember that there is not a best methodology nor a worst one. They all depend on the characteristics of the classroom and the students. However, it was demonstrated that the methodologies that are created or adapted involving the children tend to work if they are introduced correctly with

amusement, although the fact that it works with that classroom doesn't mean it would work with another.

5 The English Teaching Process

Before being immersed in an English teaching environment, and before looking for English teaching methodologies which can be found easily on the Internet, articles, books, etc., teachers should understand the ETP and its concepts, implications, considerations, and also the facts and factors involved in the process that will prevent and hamper the students from learning and themselves from teaching.

Concepts such as methodologies, methods, projects, approaches, learning and acquisition are some of the fundamental concepts already described. Moreover, teachers should be familiar with the English learning stages, approaches and methodologies and remember that these depend on the purpose behind the learning (Tiwari, 2008), and assume the responsibility it implies. This is especially important in Pre-Primary Education, the most critical period for children, being in their maximum state of development in terms of language acquisition in which children are going to be introduced to the language for the first time. It is in this stage where phonics, understanding and confidence of students towards the language could be developed successfully (Asher & García, 1969).

5.1 Factors that affect the learning and acquisition process

5.1.1 Classroom Characteristics

In each classroom of every school, of every city in every country, there is a different mix of children, with different learning dispositions, motivations, capacities, backgrounds, interests, prior knowledge, needs, etc. Although some methods may work with a certain child or a certain group, they may not work with others. Therefore, it is very important for a teacher to evaluate and study the characteristics of each classroom.

On one hand, the physical aspects of a classroom should be evaluated. This includes size of the room, decorations, health and learning conditions, lighting, cleanness, windows that provide fresh air and light, adequate chairs and tables according to age and size of the students, the main resources available, and the possibility to provide new materials according to the school's budget.

On the other hand, the teacher must also focus on the psychological and emotional aspects of a class creating a fun and engaging learning environment. This will allow students the best conditions to acquire knowledge while taking into account the general and individual interests

and motivations of the students when planning the lessons and choosing the methodology that best adapts to that classroom, not forcing them to learn English but to encourage them to acquire it willingly.

5.1.2 Student's motivation

In the ETP it is fundamental that the students have a feeling of improvement and motivation, enjoying and recognizing their progress and that teacher respect each child's learning process.

To motivate children towards the English language, it is recommended to praise the effort and improvement made when they start using the language willingly, even if they don't use it correctly or if they mix English with Spanish, such as "This is a nave espacial!" or even making up words, as "He is pegating me" instead of saying "He is hitting me". Teachers should know the individual situations and level of their students and motivate them individually to carry on trying.

In the case of teaching English as a second language, some may find motivation as a resource to satisfy their needs. Others to get a reward, such as a happy face on their hand or a sticker, or even wearing an "I speak English" badge for the day. Children can indeed motivate each other to speak English and to share their knowledge.

Engaging and active lessons, using games or activities they like, are useful in motivating infant students to bring up vocabulary, understanding speaking and even reading skills.

Other ideas to motivate students towards learning are mentioned in the English Teaching Methodologies section. But, fundamentally, to let the children take part in their learning process and put their ideas and proposals into practice.

5.1.3 Teacher's motivation

One important consideration that teachers must keep in mind when teaching English to children, is to transmit a good first impression of the language, their own motivation and their predisposition towards the language to encourage children to like the English language and to be willing to be involved in it.

Secondly, being a teacher is not just giving content away, but to evaluate the students' progression, abilities, and personalities, while examining the different groups each year, their ages, interests, motivations, and their potential to make the most out of each lessons. For this, teachers should not be accustomed to just one methodology, but to be open to examine, investigate and innovate according to their

students. By not teaching them the vocabulary but showing them, not telling them content but involving them in situations that use the language, a teacher introduces their students to language willingly, and not forced. This encourages students to speaking English confidently and fluently with native or non-native English speakers.

Thirdly, teachers should start every day with enthusiasm, making the students feel important, cared and loved. Teachers should never speak to their children in their mother tongue, even if they are tired or having a bad day. This might discourage the students from making an effort to speak English as they would know the teacher understands their mother language.

Moreover, great teachers should be motivated to never stop learning, including from their mistakes, their experiences, and their personal development by studying new methods, approaches and techniques that would encourage them to be the best teachers and transmit their motivation to their students. Furthermore, they should also be encouraged to love their profession, being organized and dedicated to the time required. This would include not just in decorations and art and crafts, but in the development of activities, programs, modifications, parent's interviews and staying updated on any innovations.

As a way to motivate teachers and students to learn or teach English, eTwinning is introduced as a motivational tool for teachers where teachers across Europe can share and learn from each other's experience and praise and motivate each other.

6 Etwinning in the use of methodologies

E-Twinning is an online platform where teachers and students, even head teachers and librarians from European countries, can work together and be in contact to discover, connect, collaborate and progress together during and after their teaching journey, sharing their methodologies, projects, ideas and experiences (Jelena, 2012). According to URJOnline (2014) eTwinning can generate methodological changes in teachers, as it is based in collaborative learning and the education by projects, as well as strengthen the use of the Innovation and Communication Technologies and foreign languages in their students and in deepening other subject areas.

6.1 Learning by projects

eTwinning uses a methodology based on projects that can be uploaded in the platform to be used and shared among teachers. As of May 2016, there were about 49,533 projects in twenty-eight languages.

The Project based methodology consists on the development of projects during the teaching and learning process about any topic, working any methodology as a dynamic approach. In these projects, students actively explore real-world problems and challenges and acquire deeper knowledge (Edutopia, n.d.).

6.2 Benefits

The benefits of using eTwinning start with the experience of being introduced to other cultures in Europe and encourages European teachers and students to work along with foreign partners, getting to know more about their cultures and to be able to share learning and teaching experiences, methodologies, projects, ideas, innovations, etc. They can learn from each other's experiences, working cooperatively and exploring real-world situations and cultural knowledge around Europe.

To facilitate and encourage the involvement, an eTwinning Portal is available in twenty-eight languages, in which there are about 382,306 teachers and 160,585 schools involved (May 2016), providing many tools to facilitate the use of the Platform. The Portal allows eTwinners to communicate and interact without any difficulties, allowing teachers to find out about professional development opportunities, discover eTwinning groups, and set up collaborative projects that include new topics and achieve common goals, all while being kept-up-to-date (Grochowski, 2012a, 2012b). Moreover, the eTwinning platform also offers several tools for teacher's formative purposes such as learning events, courses and seminars to increase their knowledge to a bigger extent.

6.3 Etwinning groups

Once registered, eTwinners can look for, join or even propose eTwinning groups to participate and collaborate with. There, eTwinners can discuss and work together, on a specific subject, idea, project, etc., to share teaching experiences, methodologies and find support for professional development.

Any eTwinner can join a group. However, to run one, the eTwinner needs to have successfully passed the free and limited online eTwinning Moderators Course available in the collaborative learning platform of eTwinning.

Finally, among the thousands of group projects, the non-formal education group of teachers stand out. They choose to teach by letting the students learn about the world themselves and by interacting and having fun rather than reading books and memorising (Dimitria, 2012).

6.4 "Speak-Up Project"

During this research, I was given the opportunity to become familiar with the eTwinning space by participating as trainee in an eTwinning project called "Speak Up", along with students from Italy and Slovakia, in the development of activities to encourage English speaking in Secondary Education students. The tools used were audio conferences, Chat, e-mail and Twinspace. We worked in groups and planned activities, made collections of piloted speaking activities which work well with English and CLIL students, used a common template and finally gave feedback on each other's activities.

Although the "Speak Up" project was aimed at students between 18-20 years old, and my project is based on Pre-Primary children, it has helped me observe the differences in the teaching methods of those periods and to make some conclusions of the progressiveness of the methodologies from ECE by considering the development and methodology for higher courses.

7 Conclusions

The importance of using the most appropriate methodologies when teaching English as a Second Language must be undoubtedly emphasized. These should be carefully analysed and adapted to the diverse students' needs and teachers' styles. There should be a Progression of the English learning process along the different educational stages ensuring that coordination exists among them. This progression must consider that every stage should prepare for the next, and should avoid the repetition of the same content learned previously. The educational system in Spain traditionally failed in applying these principles, having the Spaniards, in general, gained a bad reputation in terms of English language skills, and having them come to the wrong conclusion that the only practical solution to this problem is to spend some time living abroad in English speaking countries.

Pre-Primary is the most important stage for language acquisition (critical period), and special attention should be paid to this stage in order to provide the pupil with a solid foundation, with emphasis in phonetics in order to acquire good pronunciation.

Learning by acquisition is a fundamental principle in the early stages. Therefore, it is proposed to emphasize the use of the acquisition process from early infancy, and then progressively, introduce the learning process (grammar, etc).

When teaching ESL in Pre-Primary education, teachers should always speak English and avoid using their mother tongue. In order to facilitate the acquisition process, teachers need to introduce and show the vocabulary and sentences in context, stay firm, motivated, speak constantly, gesticulate if required, point to name the different objects or use physical resources to help the students understand.

There is no one best method, but instead, in this progression scheme, methodologies should change and evolve as the child progresses. Normally, different methodologies should be used during the different school years and according to different backgrounds. Teachers should evaluate the route and rate of the learning process in order to choose, develop or adapt any available methodology.

Eclecticism was identified as the most versatile and useful approach to design and implement proper methodologies. When implementing the selected procedures is important to gather the ideas delivered by the children, and at the same time make them feel that the activities they are conducting are the result of their proposals, for motivational purposes.

Methodologies change over time, and should change according to the results of new researches, the evolution of new technologies, and, more importantly, the cognitive evolution of the child.

Some methodologies used for education in the native language, such as PBL or Learning by Projects, among others, may also be used as a methodology in the process of teaching a foreign language. We should not be limited to foreign language methodologies but also adapt other educational methodologies used for the native language.

eTwinning was found as a great tool to share knowledge among teachers and students, facilitating the implementation and assessment of the methodologies according to the different situations allowing the continuous improvement of the teaching process.

For future language educational projects not restricted to a specific stage, it is suggested to perform a deeper research to evaluate the features of the available English Teaching Methodologies and develop a Matrix to facilitate teachers' selection of the more appropriate ones for every project or situation. In fact, the model used in Richards and Rodgers book to deal with the relationship of Approaches, methods and (hierarchical) procedures (**hierarchical**) is probably the best model to be used for the study and comparison of

different methodologies, and as a common reference in future research projects as well as in collaborative environments as eTwinning.

As a final conclusion in terms of a proposal, an urgent need to address the problem of English teaching in Spain was identified. The solution does not lie neither on schools nor individual teachers at the different educational levels. It needs a wider view, i.e. a “comprehensive approach” led by educational authorities.

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