Imagine you are working in the second cycle of infant education, how you will develop the communicative competence in the foreign language area

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**Abstract**

This article is about the development of a session focused on acquiring a basic communicative competence towards a group of students who belong to the second cycle of Infant Education in the area of English as a foreign language. Moreover, I am focused on talking about other important elements related to the development of a practical case which are English Curriculum, methodology to be used, attention to diversify for my students with educational special needs and I would finish with a conclusion about the most important elements of this practical case as well as a bibliography and webography.

**Keywords:** Second cycle, Infant Education, Communicative approach, linguistic skills.

**Título:** Imagina que estas trabajando en el segundo ciclo de infantil. Como desarrollarías la competencia lingüistica en el área de inglés.

**Resumen**

De acuerdo a mi caso práctico, el principal tema que voy a tratar va a ser una propuesta metodológica para trabajar con alumnos del segundo nivel de educación Infantil a través de una serie de actividades prácticas adaptadas a las necesidades e intereses de mi clase orientadas a la adquisición de una competencia comunicativa que es el principal objetivo como profesores de Inglés dentro del área de lengua extranjera. A lo largo del desarrollo de mi caso práctico también hablaré de los elementos curriculares principales, la metodología a usar, atención a la diversidad y evaluación. Finalmente, ofreceré una conclusión.

**Palabras clave:** Second cycle, Infant Education, communicative competence, linguistic skills.

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Imagine you are working in the second cycle of infant education, how you will develop the communicative competence in the foreign language area.

Taking the topic of this teaching situation into account, I would like to begin by talking about the first point which is about INTRODUCTION.

As a way of Introduction, we can say that we will focus on talking about the Infant education stage which is a non-compulsory school level. During these first years of life, the basis of a person's psychological development are formed. Therefore, educators, psychologists, teachers and sociologists should all contribute to the enrichment of the child who goes to a school where he or she finds companions of the same age. Thus, the child acts, experiments, reacts and interacts with others in an environment organized with an educational intention under the supervision of professionals. Moreover, all these characteristics have been designed taking into account when designing the activities for this practical case.

Now, I would like to continue by talking about the CONTEXT of this teaching situation, we are located in a school of the city of Albacete which is in an urban area of the city, where we can distinguish a middle socioeconomic class level and the socioeconomic level of the families is medium low.

Regarding to my group of students, we can say that they are within the stage second which goes from three to six years and according to Piaget, children at these ages are starting the concrete operational thought that will be developed during Infant Education stage. Children can reason about concrete, tangible things and can perform mental manipulations in an organized, integrated and systematic way. They are able to decanter, focus on and coordinate in more than a single dimension. In Foreign Language, they will learn many words, expressions and will acquire an awareness of the countries
where the target language is spoken. One of the main objectives of this cycle is to familiarize students with the foreign language.

We are going to work with a group of students which belong to the second cycle of Infant Education in the foreign language area, the main aim is a previous preparation for Primary Education which will be our main aim giving them the opportunity to achieve a bit level of communicative competence in order to take a first contact into this world. So, we will propose an easy session with motivating and funny activities in order to enable them to be competent English speakers. Moreover, we will achieve the specific objective F for Primary stage which refer to acquire in at least one foreign language a basic communicative competence to communicate and understand messages and to get along in daily life situations.

In addition, it is important to mention that we will do an initial evaluation for the students which will be carried out through the observation into the class taking into account aspects such as participation, effort, interest through games and Total Physical Response (TPR) activities.

On the other hand, the coordination among all teachers in Infant Education is basic. This coordination should not be limited to the team of class teachers giving information on the topics that will be covered so that the specialist teacher can design parallel sessions; this coordination should mean developing a joint project that integrates all the activities in order to attain joint aims.

Coordination with families can also support what is done at school by helping children with the foreign language at home or by welcoming positively their initial productions. In this sense, parents meetings held at the beginning of the year are a good opportunity to present the linguistic project and to ask for their cooperation.

Children will play, as they should, the main role. They will show adults that the English language is not only a different language that we can use to sing songs, but a language that can also be used to learn and to discover.

After that, when designing this teaching situation, we will use the following LEGAL FRAMEWORK which is made up of the following legal documents.

- **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.** It sets the standards that the student has to achieve in the different stages.
- **Our Organic Law 8/2013, 9th December of Education (LOMCE) (BOE, December 10) for the improvement of the quality of education.**
- **Royal decree 1630/2006** which sets out the basic curriculum for Infant Education in the community of Castilla La Mancha.
- **Decree 67/2007** which establishes the curriculum for Infant Education in the autonomous of Castilla-La Mancha.
- **Order 12/05/2009** which establishes the evaluation for Infant Education in Castilla La Mancha.
- **Decree 66/2014, 3rd September** which sets out the educational and professional educative guidance in the autonomous community of Castilla La Mancha.
- **Plurilingualism Decree 7/2014,** which establishes the plurilingualism in the community of CLM.

Once we have examined it, I would like to move into to talk about the next point which is about the CURRICULAR ELEMENTS which can be the following and they are going to be developed taking into account the Decree 67/2007 and the Royal Decree 1630/2006 which establishes the curriculum for Infant Education in the community of Castilla La Mancha.

I would like to say that we will mention the objectives, contents and key competences adapted of the first level of Primary Education for Infant Education. I am going to interrelate objectives, contents and key competences. The main topic to work with them is about Animals and the curriculum elements are going to be the following:

- **Objective:** To acquire and use the vocabulary and structures related to wild animals and action verbs. Content: acquisition of linguistic exponents such as Can the lion run? Yes, it can/No it can’t. Where does the elephant live? The elephant lives in Africa. “Is it...?”, “Can I/ you/ it...? Yes, I/it can. No, I/it can’t”, “I/ you/ it can run/ swim...”. Key competence: we will develop linguistic communicative competence, learning to learn competence and mathematical competence.
Objective: To understand a story and its vocabulary. Content: being able to learn vocabulary about animals for example lion, crocodile, monkey, etc., Actions: run, fly, swim and jump and Adjectives: big, small. Key competences: linguistic communicative competence, learning to learn competence and digital competence.

Objective: To reproduce a dialogue bearing in mind intonation, rhythm and stress. Content: knowledge of classroom language Classroom Language: Stand up, sit down, listen to me, Can you repeat, please?, What is ---------- in English?, silence...key competences: we will develop linguistic communicative competence and learning to learn competence in an integrated way.

Objective: To produce simple written texts (from given models) related to the unit. Content: being able to write words in an easy way about animals. Key competences: linguistic communicative competence and social and civic competence.

After that, I would like to continue with the METHODOLOGY of this teaching situation which is based on acquiring a communicative competence to be able to communicate and understand messages, so a method called communicative approach by Dell Hymes where all the linguistic skills will be developed in an integrated way.

Other point really important would be TPR which is language teaching method developed by James Asher. It is based on the coordination of language and physical movement. In TPR, instructors give commands to students in the target language and students respond with whole body actions.

According to Materials used, there are different kinds of materials that the teacher can use for the teaching-learning process. The use of one or another will depend on the activities developed. The materials that we are going to use are:

1. Printed materials like textbooks, worksheets.
2. Visual aids like posters, realia, flashcards, story cards and wall charts.
3. Art and craft materials: crayons, plasticine, different kinds of paper.
4. Audiovisual resources, for example films, CD’s, the Internet, etc.

Regarding to the students organization they are going to be the majority of the time in groups and all the activities will be carried out with the whole class.

The methodology will be open and flexible taking into account our student’s needs and characteristics.

Moreover, it is important to use an open and flexible methodology adapted to the students’ needs and which provide a good knowledge in order to increase and improve the teaching-learning process. We have also to take into account the different teacher’s roles in the classroom and the different activities. On the other hand, the role of the learner will be really important because he/ she is considered the center of the teaching learning process. Nevertheless, the teacher will have some different roles as to facilitate the teaching learning process between the participants and to be involve as a participant within the class. According to Harmer, we can distinguish the following roles such as controller, assessor, organizer, participant, prompter and resource.

We will focus on a CLIL methodology which refers to use the learning contents integrated with other different areas because we are going to work with science, arts and crafts and maths. It will be achieve skill integration due to all the linguistic skills are going to be developed along the different activities and in the class all the day.

Families are going to be necessary in the teaching learning process because they are going to help students with their homework and they will give motivation and interest towards the process of studying in the class. We can say that this school is going to be open for all the people.

Let’s have a look at the development of the session of the practical case and the activities are going to be the following:

- The warm up stage is divided in two routines. The first activity is related to the Today’s Poster and the other one is different each lesson. Classroom routines: As we said before, starting the lesson routine, every day, one of the students (by list order) can complete the Today’s Poster. Taking into account the changes on date, month, day of
the week and the weather. Menu’s Poster. Regarding with the most important activity in the warm up stage, we show the Animals’ Poster to the children. Along with these, new words are introduced orally.

- **Activity 1:** Missing flashcards. To start, we point to the photographs on the poster and encourage the children to say every word with us. Later, we say: Close your eyes! Hiding a flashcard. Then we say: Open your eyes! And tell us which one is missing. The procedure is repeated hiding a different flashcard every time until they all have been named.

- **Activity 2:** Next activity is Match the word cards with the flashcards. We put the flashcards on the blackboard again and ask some child to go out to the blackboard, then we give him/her a word card and encourage him/her to repeat with teacher, later he/she must place it under the correct flashcard.

- After having introduced the main vocabulary of the unit through listening and speaking skills, we are going to present the next activity which is....

- **Activity 3:** Board Game: Rock, Paper, Scissors! In pairs, children take turns playing “Rock, Paper, Scissor!” with a partner. The winner moves their counter one space and says the word. The first person to reach “Finish!” wins.

After that, I would like to continue by talking about the next point which is about the EVALUATION taking into account the Order 12/05/2009 which establishes the evaluation for Infant Education. My evaluation is going to be competencial.

Evaluation must be understood as one of the main educational components. The principal aim of evaluation is to reflect on the teaching-learning process, so it must cover all the aspects of the linguistic learning. Actually, there is no need of an explicit evaluation, what is normally known as “test”, because during Primary Education the assessment instruments for a foreign language should be based on the systematic observation of the teaching-learning process. Nevertheless, using a “test” can be also very interesting because thanks to that children can practise listening, reading and writing, and it will also help the teacher to achieve a better idea of how each pupil has improved during those days. So this Unit is evaluated in different ways.

- During all sessions, the teacher must be careful about the use of language the children do, and see if they are improving their pronunciation, behaviour... how they do the activities...

- Nevertheless, a written examination must be done too, in order to see if they are able to recognize and produce the vocabulary worked in class.

As a **self-evaluation**, the teacher will give to the students some sentences referred to the learned contents and they will have to put from 1 to 5, if they think that they have achieved the objectives of the unit. For example:

**SELF-EVALUATION STUDENTS:**

- I can say and speak about the most important inventions, inventors and their characteristics.

- I am able to write vocabulary about inventions.

- I am able to build up a new and creative invention.

- I am able to show a positive attitude towards the teaching learning process and cooperation with others.

**Self-evaluation of the teacher** which give to the students the opportunity to evaluate the teacher, the course and themselves, can act as a valuable means of stimulating the taching-learning process, as well as aiding curricular development.

**Items for teacher’s evaluation**

The English teacher

1. Knows the subject well.
2. Plans appropriate objectives and contents and presents them clearly.
3. Takes the students’ needs and interests into account.
4. Explains clearly and adapts classroom work to the students’ capabilities.
5. Prepares classes and teaches according to the school’s curricular project

Now, I will focus on talking about the ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY. My classroom is made up of 20 students and we can find a student with a ADHD disorder which needs an individualized working plan, so we will do extension and reinforcement activities to take care of students with educational special needs.

I would like to finish with a **CONCLUSION** by saying that the English as a Foreign Language subject contributes to the acquisition of abilities, skills and attitudes that will allow the students to approach and gain direct knowledge of a language, way of life, customs and social organization that are different from one’s. It contributes to the student’s education from a global perspective that encourages the development of their personality and the establishment of relationships that are defined by social and cultural tolerance in a world where international communication is increasingly important.

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