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Teaching English from a multicultural perspective in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract:

In this Bachelor's degree final dissertation, I talk about how to teach English, taking into account the multiculturality of Early Childhood Education classrooms. I begin by explaining the meaning of culture, multiculturality and interculturality. I then present different methodologies for teaching a foreign language such as Cooperative Learning and TPR (Total Physical Response).

Taking into account the theoretical discussion I then present a didactic unit that fosters the learning of English culture and the learning of intercultural competence by dealing with different topics from a multicultural perspective.

Key words:

Early Childhood Education, Culture, Multiculturality, Cooperative learning, TPR

Resum:

En aquest treball final de grau, parlo sobre com ensenyar anglès, tenint en compte la multiculturalitat de les aules d'Educació Infantil. Començament explicant el significat de cultura, multiculturalitat i interculturalitat. Després presento diferents metodologies per a ensenyar un idioma estranger, com l'aprenentatge cooperatiu i TPR (resposta física total).

Tenint en compte la fonamentació teòrica, presento una unitat didàctica que fomenta l'aprenentatge de la cultura anglesa i l'aprenentatge de la competència intercultural en tractar diferents temes des d'una perspectiva multicultural.

Paraules clau:

Educació Infantil, Cultura, Multiculturalitat, Aprenentatge Cooperatiu, TPR

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity is really present nowadays in our society and all over the world, therefore, it is relevant to work with a multicultural perspective to integrate everyone in schools, so that children can gain more knowledge about other cultures and learn to respect the differences between cultures and people. As UNESCO declared in 1982:

> ... Culture gives man the ability to reflect on himself. It is what makes us specifically human beings, rational, critical and ethically committed. Through it we discern values and make choices. Through it, man expresses himself, becomes self-conscious, recognizes himself as an unfinished project, puts in question his own realizations, tirelessly seeks new meanings, and creates works that transcend it.   (UNESCO, 1982: Declaration of Mexico).

And what a better way to integrate multiculturalism than with language, especially English, the language that is globally extended and known. As language is a tool that we use to express ourselves and communicate with others, it is important to take into account the first language that the children acquire to help them learn English. We must take into consideration that they are subjects with cultural baggage and experiences that influence their learning process in all subjects.

This paper will start with an introduction explaining the theme, the justification, the objectives and the methodology of the paper. It will be followed by the literature review and the didactic proposal. To conclude, there will be a conclusion. And to end it all there will be a list of the references and the sources used for the elaboration of this TFG.

1.1. JUSTIFICATION

The decision to work on how to teach English in a multicultural environment comes from my interest in how students from different cultures learn English. I think that nowadays we are living in a multicultural and global world, and the students that we have in the classrooms are different in so many ways, culture being one of them. That is why I think that it is so important to work and teach children from a multicultural perspective, so that they can all have equal opportunities to learn, respect and recognize one another and their cultural differences.

Since I was young I always liked the English language. It started at a very young age with music and readings in class. As I got older I learned more about the culture of some English-speaking countries like America, England, Canada, South Africa, etc. All that helped me to understand and like English even more, as well as well as helping me to see the things that my native cultures and other cultures have in common, and it made me feel better about having a culture that was not the Spanish one.

I want to encourage children to develop speech and exercise their minds by understanding the environment that surrounds different cultures and let them see that although there are different languages, they all have aspects in common, that they all have words to designate colors, animals, customs, etc.

I want to investigate and learn more about how to teach English in a more significant and meaningful way, so that children can see themselves and their familiar context while learning English in class. I want to introduce a multicultural education, that respects and acknowledges different cultures through English.

It is said that learning about different cultures is essential when it comes to learning new languages. Salazar (2009, para. 3) says that "cultural aspects influence a decisive way when it comes to interpersonal relations. Cultural aspects such as food, religion, schedules, weather, etc., are decisive in this regard". Brown said that "language is part of culture and culture is part of language, they are related, meaning that they can't be separated without losing their meanings" (Cakir, 2006, p. 154).

We have to take into consideration that we have multicultural classrooms and that we act according to the diversity in them. Every child wants to be part of a group and be recognized and represented to feel accepted and respected. As the school is an important socializing agent where children spend a lot of time, it has the responsibility to recognize the students background, as Salazar (2009, para. 3) said:

> When the school recognizes and validates the student's culture, it helps them to be aware of their heritage and to value the achievements and skills of their family, community and ancestors. All these aspects build a sense of pride and self-esteem that is the best gift any teacher can give to their students.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

What is the appropriate education in a society that is influenced by different cultures and individualization at the same time? The answer to that question must take into account the multiple cultures that exist at the time in addition to teaching through motivational and inclusive methodologies for all. One the one hand, I want to rethink the way that we teach the curriculum to the children in a multicultural society.

On the other hand, the objective of this paper is to give a multicultural and dynamic view of the way the English language is taught in the classrooms by understanding how a language is learned and how culture affects and conditions the way it is learned.

I want to give a broader perspective on how to teach English or any language by using cooperative learning and total physical response (TPR) to promote peer work and small group work for a better understanding, respect and representation of everybody.

Lastly, I want to propose a variety of activities that can be useful in any class to promote respect, understanding and exchange of different cultures. With those activities I want to expose the children to different cultures, I want them to learn in a multicultural and intercultural education and learn English with others and from others with cooperative learning.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

This research report will be done as it is contemplated in the teaching guide of the TFG of the Faculty of Education of the UIB, and it will have the structure mentioned in the introduction.

Therefore, first of all, a piece of research will be made on the main theme, how to teach English in a diverse context, and on the different concepts and definitions around that topic. And next, there will be a review of the information found, emphasizing the strategies that are derived from the theory being consulted and I will try to extract strategies to possibly apply in a context.

Following that I will look for the possible practical application of what I have found in the theory, to carry out in the context of this study that is the public school CEIP Llevant, located in Inca. The reason for this is that I am doing my teaching practice II in this center and I am in the 3-4-year-old classroom. It is important to mention this because, although I will try to present the information on the learning of the English language in all early childhood education classrooms, the first and main reference for me will be how this language is taught

in the classroom of 3 years, therefore my field of practice is rather narrow and limited, but I will try to present proposals that are appropriate to this stage in general, as I believe that in this way the proposals will be richer and more diverse.

Finally, there will be a proposal of diverse activities in English that take into consideration the multiculturality in the classrooms and at the same time that could help to strengthen the links between school-family-students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part first of all I will be talking about the methodology that I am going to follow to do this work and then I will begin to touch on the subject. This section aims on one hand to serve as an introduction to a series of concepts such as culture, multiculturality and interculturality. And on the other hand, it presents two methodologies that are used when learning foreign languages and can be very useful in multicultural environments: cooperative learning and total physical response.

2.1. CULTURE, MULTICULTURALITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

2.1.1. What is culture?

Before we talk about multiculturalism, we have to go deeper into the meaning of "culture", since it is the root of the word and first we have to clarify what we understand by culture because it is a quite complex concept.

The word "culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "colere," which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture (Cultura, s.f). De Rossi an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, said that "It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth," (Zimmermann, 2017, para. 4).

Another definition of "culture" is "any complex set of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capacity and habit acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1971, p.1).

Culture needs to be ordered to be understood. In order to do this, all the aspects of culture need to be classified. And according to writer José Herrero's article on "*Estudios de*

identidades colectivas, 2002", some of the characteristics of culture are as follows (cited in Barón, P. 2014, p.10):

- <u>Culture has categories and all cultures are heterogeneous.</u> Within culture people are classified by categories. In any society among its members there is diversity of: interests, conceptions, values, vital needs, daily behaviors as those that supposedly differentiate and distance them from other cultures.
- <u>Culture has symbols.</u> Each culture has different symbols, such as languages. The symbols help us communicate with each other.
- <u>Culture is complex.</u> There are no rules in how the cultures are created, because it is a union of knowledge, norms, customs, beliefs… it is a system in which these elements interact and change constantly.
- <u>Culture is acquired and shared</u>. Culture is learned from those around us, so we share and teach the patterns of our culture.
- <u>Culture is influenced</u>. Cultures are permeable to both the positive and negative effects of the context in which they are immersed.
- <u>Culture is changing.</u> It suffers influences and changes in time.

There are some conflicts in defining the concept of culture that make it difficult to understand multiculturalism, as some, according to Baumann, treat nationality as culture, ethnicity as culture and religion as culture. But all these conflicts:

> *Se desmigajan en cuanto alguien escarba un poco en la superficie: la nacionalidad como cultura no es postétnica ni postreligiosa; la etnicidad como cultura se basa en una serie de compromisos culturalmente fermentados, no en puro genes; y la religión como cultura no es una cuestión de libros como normas sagradas sino orientaciones dependendientes de un contexto, Sin embargo, las tres versiones de la cultura comparten la misma dicotomía: la cultura se entiende como algo que uno posee o como un proceso que uno moldea.* (Fernández & Molina, 2005, p. 30)

Seen in this way, culture is presented as something you own and something you belong to or are a member of, and not as something you build in an active way throughout your life.

2.1.2. Multiculturality and interculturality

Multiculturality and interculturality are two concepts that are often confused. I will start by explaining what multiculturality and interculturality are.

In one hand multiculturality is the coexistence of different cultures or ethnic realities in the same society. Argibay (2003, p.1) defines multiculturality as "*existencia de diferentes culturas en un mismo espacio geográfico y social*" and he continues to say that the level of interaction in a multicultural society is almost nonexistent since

> *La sociedad de acogida suele ser hegemónica y suele establecer jerarquías legales y sociales que colocan a los otros grupos en inferioridad de condiciones, lo que lleva al conflicto, al menosprecio, a la creación de estereotipos y prejuicios dificultando la convivencia social, siempre en detrimento de los grupos más débiles.*

Bumann (1996) has described multiculturality as a triangle whose vertices are the state, ethnicity and religion. The first is based on the false idea of a single culture shared by all citizens. The second is equally erroneous and dangerous, equating ethnicity and cultural identity. The third, religion, contributes with its enormous power to motivate behaviour and to establish fixed and immutable divisions between groups (cited in Fernández & Molina, 2005, p.23).

On the other hand, interculturality involves a degree of interaction and exchange. Rodrigo Alsina (2000: p. 5) defines the concept of interculturalism as *"una relación respetuosa entre culturas"*. The author also points out that *"una cultura no evoluciona si no es a través del contacto con otras culturas" (p. 5)*. Arévalo (2010) explains the concept of interculturality in a more detailed way, such as:

> *El concepto de interculturalidad se refiere al hecho educativo en el que distintas personas de etnias, lenguas y religiones distintas conviven dentro de un mismo marco, por ejemplo, la escuela, en el que cada una de ellas respeta las diferencias de las otras y aporta lo mejor de su cultura para que se ahí surja una nueva sociedad en la que el respeto, la igualdad y la tolerancia sean la nota predominante* (p. 21).

To understand the concepts better we can look at the etymology of the two words and focus on their prefixes, then the difference is more noticeable. Thus, the concept of multiculturality as indicated by its *multi-* prefix which refers to several different cultures, it is more static. While interculturalism with its *inter-* prefix goes further and refers to the relationship and exchange between different cultures.

In conclusion multiculturality takes place within a society, perceives cultures as islands and can lead to ghettos. While interculturality takes place between societies and strives to understand each other.

In this paper I will use the concept of multiculturality to refer to the cultural diversity that exists in the classrooms and I will use interculturality to refer to the interaction that exists between cultures. Interculturality is a revitalization of multiculturality, as it adds dynamism to relationships and fosters greater interaction between different cultures. And since interculturality is a broader concept and comes from a concept of a dynamic culture in which a cultural exchange and dialogue between cultures is promoted, I believe it is appropriate to work with the concept of interculturality.

2.1.3. Culture in foreign language classrooms: intercultural competence

If we want to promote an educational model that meets the diversity of classrooms we must educate by means of an intercultural education and encourage the development of intercultural competence. In this section I will talk about how to educate taking interculturality into consideration and what the curriculum that educates in it should be like.

When you learn a language two things are taken into account, on the one hand, learning abilities such as reading, writing, listening and speaking the language. And on the other hand, learning and understanding the history and culture of the language, because that is taken into account in order to understand the configuration of the language, its meanings, its origin, etc. By teaching these two factors, we create a good and stimulating environment for foreign language competence. According to Francisco Meno Blanco (2004), the learning of languages gives a greater linguistic ability and increases cognitive capacity, besides improving the knowledge of the mother tongue and developing the capacity of communication (cited in Barón, 2014, p.13).

According to Gilherme (2009) the concept of intercultural competence is described in the teaching of foreign languages as "the ability to interact effectively with individuals of cultures that we recognize as different from one's own" (cited in Barón, 2014, p.13). In other words, it focuses on communication and the ability to move easily in situations of intercultural contact.

According to Arnaiz & De Haro (1995) "*la educación intercultural es un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje basado en el pluralismo democrático, la tolerancia y la aceptación de*

la deferencia a través del cual se intenta promover el desarrollo y la madurez personal de todos los alumnos" (cited in Arévalo, 2010, p.28)

Malgesini & Romero (2000, p. 131) in their book Guía de conceptos sobre migraciones racismo e interculturalidad states that the principles of intercultural education are:

a) <u>Human diversity is seen as something positive</u> and as a great opportunity for exchange and enrichment. Therefore, it is necessary to educate in the plurality of systems, beliefs, lifestyles, cultures, ways of analyzing family experiences and ways of approaching historical events.

b) <u>It highlights the incoherence of the monocultural education system</u>, since it does not stimulate curiosity [...] about other societies and cultures. Furthermore, monocultural education does not develop the capacity for imagination, since it consists of the capacity to conceive alternatives and it is difficult to do so when it is not presented with more options than a single society and culture.

c) <u>Intercultural education is for everyone</u>. By its very nature, education in and for interculturality is necessary for all societies and cultures and for all categories of people.

d) <u>Intercultural education must carefully weigh the relevance of cultural factors</u>, whether ethnic, religious or linguistic, in order not to generate counterproductive effects [...]. Intercultural approaches must address the physical separation of students from different cultures.

e) Education in interculturality requires the <u>participation of all the collectives</u> of the community (school, family, administration...).

In order to promote this intercultural education, the foreign language teacher must try to connect his students with new cultures. Castro, Méndez & Sercu (2005) speak of a process of interaction where the student develops his own interpretations from the relationships between the mother tongue and the culture of the language he learns (cited in Arana, 2013 , p. 12) In other words, encourage empathy towards the members of the other culture, and try to get students to reflect critically on their own culture and the teacher must convey that successful communication is not just about understanding words, but about understanding the cultural context, which is essential for properly decoding a message.

The importance of the development of an intercultural competence, which refers to the ability to interact effectively with individuals from cultures different from one's own, can also be stressed and according to Castro, Méndez & Sercu (2005):

La incorporación de la competencia intercultural en la enseñanza de las lenguas ha supuesto no solamente un cambio en la concepción de los planteamientos metodológicos sino también, y como ocurre en todo proceso de innovación pedagógica, un cambio de mentalidad en aquellos que participan en el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje (cited in Barón, 2014, p.13).

2.2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

In this section I will explain some useful and important methodologies that are used in education to help learning a foreign language. These methodologies are cooperative learning and Total Physical Response (TPR). Cooperative learning refers to the organization of classroom activities in small groups and TPR is a methodology that is based on giving orders that the students have to follow. They are very beneficial for language learning and I will explain how in the following sections.

2.2.1. Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is, as many authors such as Johnson & Johnson (1991), Slavin (1995), and Kagan (1999) have defined, a systematic and instructional method in which students work together in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals. The data in a large amount of research shows that compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, cooperation has positive effects on a wider range of outcomes (cited in Zhang 2010, p. 81). Cooperative learning as said before allows teaching students in groups by giving them clear instructions, and then evaluating them as they observe different groups engaging in the group activities. This helps and encourages individual skills and abilities learned during the group activities.

In comparison to traditional education cooperative learning supports each student to demonstrate a learned skill to each other, creating an environment that better aids the retention of newly learned skills.

From the table below, proposed by Zhang (2010) we can easily see a comparison between cooperative language learning and traditional communicative language teaching. With this comparison we can see that cooperative language teaching has more benefits than the traditional way of teaching languages and to a large extent the comparison illustrates the characteristics of cooperative language learning (p. 82).

Table 1. Zhang's methodological comparisons:

	Traditional language teaching	Cooperative language learning
Independence	None or negative	Positive
Learner roles	Passive receiver and performer	Active participator, autonomous learners
Teacher roles	The center of the classroom, Controller of teaching pace and direction, judge of students' right or wrong, the major source of assistance, feedback, reinforcement and support.	Organizer and counselor of group work, facilitator of the communication tasks, intervener to teach collaborative skills.
Materials	Complete set of materials for each student.	Materials are arranged according to purpose of lesson. Usually one group shares a complete set of materials.
Types of activities	Knowledge recall and review, phrasal or sentence pattern practice, role play, translation, listening etc.	Any instructional activity, mainly group work to engage learners in communication, involving processes like information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction.
Interaction	Some talking among students, mainly teacher-student interaction	Intense interaction among students, a few teacher-student interaction
Room arrangement	Separate desks or students placed in pairs.	Collaborative small groups
Student expectations	Take a major part in evaluating own progress and the quality of own efforts toward learning. Be a winner or loser.	All members in some way contribute to success of group. The one who makes progress is the winner.
Teacher-student relationship	Superior-inferior or equal	Cooperating and equal

2.2.1.1. Benefits of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning used in language learning classrooms can contributes to improve productivity and achievement and allow more opportunities for communication. In order to make the advantages of cooperative language learning clearer, this section examines in detail the benefits of using cooperative learning in foreign language classrooms.

The author Zhang (2010) presents the benefits of cooperative learning as follows:

A. Providing the Chances of Input and Output (p. 82)

Cooperative language learning provides much more opportunities for learners to comprehend input and output of the topic of study and the processes of negotiation. In cooperative group settings, when communicating in a group, students need to make themselves understood so they adjust their language to suit others. As a result, there is a much higher proportion of comprehensible input. So the students will speak in different way on the same topic, ensuring their pears to listen to and understand language from various sources and to obtain modeling and feedback from their peers. Thanks to this cooperative language learning is beneficial in the oral practice and listening comprehension.

B. Creating an Effective Climate (p. 82)

If we want to make a place where individuals can practice communicating with each other in the foreign language, we have to make a good social and affective climate in which students

are not restricted, aggressive, or feared. Authors such as Brown (1994) and Crandall (1999) said that cooperative learning, like other group work, offers a relaxed climate in the classroom, while it also increase student motivation (cited in Zhang 2010; p. 82). With a good climate the students have the opportunity to rehearse their answers in a small group before being asked to speak in front of the whole class, so their anxiety and fear of failure may reduce. It gives them time to think and receive feedback form the group, and therefore, more students will want to participate and at the same time it will increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. Another affective benefit of cooperative learning is an increase in student motivation.

C. Increasing a Variety of Language Functions (p.83)

Cooperative learning can be used to mimic real-life social settings in which language is normally used. Cooperative groups can be helpful to students in developing their social abilities, because students can find themselves involved in requesting, clarifying, making suggestions, encouraging, disagreeing, negotiating and exchanging conversation during group work. Working in cooperative learning groups will foster the students discourse control and moreover ensures opportunities for language learning.

D. Fostering Learner Responsibility and Independence (p. 83)

The final aim of cooperative learning is to make each student a stronger individual through doing work cooperatively. Cooperative learning emphasizes individual accountability by placing the responsibility for action and progress on each of the members of the group. Johnson & Johnson (1991) stated that positive role and goal interdependence help students become more autonomous and self-controlled and less dependent upon outside authority, and over time, they will gradually move from interdependence to independence (cited by Zhang 2010, p. 83).

There are some additional benefits of cooperative language learning, such as that cooperative activities around the curricular content can provide more opportunities for use of the new items and lead to the development of both academic language and social language. In addition, as Johnson & Johnson (2000) state in their studies, there are beneficial effects of cooperative learning in more higher level reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions, and greater transfer of what is learned within one situation to another than did competitive or individualistic learning (cited by Zhang 2010, p. 83).

In conclusion it is clear now that cooperative learning has many benefits when it comes to learning foreign languages, such as English, because the objective of learning foreign

languages is not only to teach some grammatical rules and vocabulary, but also how to use that knowledge in a practical way to express or narrate thoughts and ideas (Zhang 2010: p. 83)

2.2.2. TPR: Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching that coordinates speech with action and aims to teach the language through physical-motor activity. James Asher, a psychology professor that developed this methodology said it is easier to memorize structures and lexical elements if they are associated with some physical activity. When using this method, the teachers give a series of commands in the foreign language (e.g., jump and clap your hands), while the children are expected to respond with whole-body movements (e.g., to jump while clapping their hands). TPR is supported by several theoretical approaches to learning situations (see Khorasgani & Khanehgir, 2017).

The objective of this method is to teach basic expression skills, making children capable of communicating in an uninhibited and intelligible way for a native speaker.

This method is widely used in Early Childhood Education, because children at an early age are not developmentally prepared to focus and sustain attention for long periods of time while staying still in their seats, and that learning at this age is usually more kinesthetically-oriented, so using TPR to teach foreign languages is more appropriate for early childhood classrooms.

Experimental studies that focused on the efficiency of teaching a FL using the TPR method indicated that TPR can lead to a significant increase in the vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension skills of FL learners when compared with the control groups (Khorasgani & Khanehgir, 2017, p. 2).

3. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

Based on the literature review I can say that learning a new language should not be focused only on the language components, it should be focused on creating learners who have intercultural competent as well as linguistic competence, and because of that teachers, students and the community should be involved in projects that promote intercultural education and learning about the different cultures that surrounds us.

In this part I will propose a playful and motivating didactic proposal with the aim of working on cultural pluralism and respect for diversity, while improving the learning of the English language. The Didactic Proposal will consist of specific objectives and contents, an explanation of all the activities, as well as evaluation criteria and timing. I will be using TPR and cooperative learning as methodologies to teach the English language. These activities are made for children of the second cycle of Early Childhood Education (3-6 years), the activities are global and adaptable to this age group, always considering the needs of the children. With these activities I pretend to promote values such as equality, tolerance, solidarity and teamwork in the students.

3.1. Objectives and Curricular content

3.1.1. Objectives

Within this section of objectives there are two types of objectives, general and specific objectives, those will be detailed below. These objectives have been obtained from the curriculum of Early childhood education by the Govern de les Illes Balears (2008). In the curriculum there is only one general objective that refers to learning a foreign language, the rest of objectives are directed to the learning of Catalan and Spanish language, although this is the case, I have found it opportune to use these objectives for the learning of a foreign language. In addition to the objectives related to learning a new language I will focus on the objectives related to cultural diversity and the acquisition of values that promote a positive vision of cultural diversity and cooperative learning.

- Develop communicative skills in different languages and forms of expression.
- Observe, explore and reflect on their familiar, natural and social environment, maintaining an attitude of curiosity.

The early childhood education curriculum is divided into three areas, each of which has the following specific objectives for children in the second cycle (3-6 years):

Self-knowledge and personal autonomy:
- To know and to represent his body, differentiating his elements and some more significant functions, to discover the possibilities of action and of expression and to coordinate with progressive precision the gestures and the movements.
- Recognize and identify one's own feelings, emotions, needs, preferences and interests, and be able to express and communicate them to others, respecting those of others.
- Have the capacity for initiative and planning in different situations of play, communication and activity. To participate in collective games respecting the established rules and to value the game as a means of relationship and a resource for leisure and free time.

Knowledge of the environment:
- Identify the properties of an object and discover the relationships established between them through comparisons, classifications, series and sequences.
- Get to know some animals and plants
- Act with tolerance and respect for personal differences and social and cultural diversity, and value those differences positively.
- Participate in cultural events associated with the countries where the foreign language is spoken.

Languages: communication and representation:
- To express ideas, feelings, emotions and desires through oral language and other languages, choosing the one that best suits the intention and the situation.
- To use language as an instrument of communication, representation, learning, enjoyment and social relation.
- Understand and respond, verbally and non-verbally, to oral productions in a foreign language, associated with usual classroom tasks and with abundant visual support.

3.1.2. Curricular contents

The proposed activities help to work on some contents of the areas of the Early Childhood Education curriculum, these contents are from the second cycle of Pre-school (3-6). Next, I expose the contents by areas of knowledge that appear in this didactic proposal:

Self-knowledge and personal autonomy:

- Recognition of the identity and characteristics of others, accepting them and respecting personal, physical, social and cultural differences and rejecting discriminatory attitudes.
- Identifying, understanding and expressing one's own feelings, emotions, experiences, preferences and interests, while also respecting others.
- Attitude of help and cooperation, coordinating one's own interests with those of others and expressing one's own preferences in a respectful way in front of others.

Knowledge of the environment:

- Establishment and evaluation of interpersonal relationship bonds with the family members to whom they belong, showing interest and favorable disposition to establish respectful, affective relationships with children of other cultures with an attitude of acceptance of the differences.
- Interest and respect for cultural diversity, sexes, languages, ethnicities, roles, professions, ages... of people.

Languages: communication and representation:
- Progressive use and assessment of the oral language to relate and narrate facts, express and communicate ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences and to help in the regulation of one's own conduct and that of others.
- Creative participation in linguistic games for fun and learning.
- Expressing and communicating facts, feelings, emotions and fantasies through drawings and plastic productions made with different materials and techniques, with an attitude of curiosity, initiative and interest.

3.2. Timing

This lesson plan is scheduled to take place throughout a school year because it has seasonal activities. At the end of September, beginning of October we can start to prepare everything and start to carry out the lesson plan. It will be a resource that can be used throughout the school year since, in education, it is always necessary to encourage positive intercultural attitudes in the classroom and, if possible, in all curricular subjects.

3.3. Evaluation criteria

In this lesson plan the evaluation of the students' learning process will be based on evaluating whether the students have learned and understood the contents and have therefore achieved the proposed objectives, as well as their motivation and interest in the activities.

In early childhood education the evaluation has to be global, continuous and formative. Direct and systematic observation will be the basis on which the teacher evaluates the students. When evaluating, the learning rhythm of each child must be taken into account and respected. For each activity there is an evaluation table for every student (Appendix 4.2).

Not only will the students be evaluated, the teacher also has to evaluate their own practices Appendix 4.1) in order to improve as much as possible.

3.4. Activities

The activities in this lesson plan will focus on teaching culture through the English language by starting first with activities about the English culture, followed by storytelling of books that promote diversity and ending with activities that introduce the children's different cultures in the classroom by inviting the families to participate.

3.4.1. Learning about the English culture

In order to understand and learn about the different cultures in a classroom with English we need students to become familiar with the English culture in order to better understand the language, as we have seen in the theory.

The didactic resources that can help us to know some cultural aspects of a society and its language better are music, literature, cinema, music, press, festivities… I will focus on two festivities that are well known by everyone and are also close and significant for the children. This session will be a first contact between the teacher and the students, to help the students to be aware of the scope of the English language in today's world.

Activity 1: Halloween

To begin the activity there will be a chat to talk about the subject, in this case Halloween, in this assembly we will be able to introduce the subject and see the previous knowledge that the children have. We will introduce them to the theme by showing them the following pictures:

Pumpkin lanterns

Trick-or-Treating

Costume parties

Scary stories

We will ask the students some questions, these will be first in Catalan or Spanish and then in English.

The objective of this activity is to know the previous knowledge of the children and to introduce the subject and its vocabulary little by little by using flash cards to elicit the vocabulary. The teacher will ask the following questions:

- What is Halloween?
- Do they give candy?
- Have you ever dressed up in a costume?
- What would you like to dress up as?

- You think Halloween is scary?

We will work on the following vocabulary: sweets, Trick-or-Treat, witches, vampires, ghosts, pumpkin, costume.

To give continuity to the theme we will make Halloween pumpkins with the children. So they will make a typical activity of this party and also set the classroom to celebrate this holiday. In addition, if we do this activity during Halloween we can celebrate the holiday at school and thus help children learn about English culture in a fun and meaningful way for them.

Activity 2: Christmas

This activity will work on the theme of Christmas, which is a festival celebrated in many places and cultures of the world. And that makes it closer to the children and makes it possible for us to talk about the different places where it is celebrated and how it is celebrated in each of them. In this way we will be able to see the similarities and differences between different cultures.

We will introduce the theme of Christmas by showing the following pictures and asking some questions:

- *Do you know what Christmas is? Who is this?*

- *What is this?*

After introducing the topic, we will ask a few questions to find out what they know about this holiday, so that we can talk to them about how they celebrate Christmas in their homes and how English cultures celebrate Christmas.

To help the children better understand the differences between English and Spanish culture we will do an exercise with images that represent Christmas in both cultures. For the English culture we will use images such as reindeer, sled, Christmas tree, gifts, sweets, turkey, snowman, sock, etc. and to represent the Spanish culture we will use images of: Belen, camel, nougat, tambourine, star, zambomba, etc. We will work in groups of three children at each table and put the images on each one. We will divide the table in two with a ribbon and put the Spanish flag on one side and the English flag on the other side, then the children will have to place each image in its place, for example nougat on the side of Spain and the snowman on the side of England.

We will also work with the Total Physical Response method, where the teacher will give orders and the children will have to carry out that order. In the classroom there will be cards distributed with images with Christmas symbols, for example: tree, star, present, Christmas and turkey. We will put pictures in different places of the classroom, for example the table, the door, the window, the chair, etc. The teacher will give an order to each one of the children, that they will have to execute as in the following example:

- Point to the Christmas tree
- Stand next to the sled

To conclude and to extend the new knowledge about this festivity we will make a video of how they celebrate Christmas in each house, in this way we will make families participate in their children's learning. It will be a short video where families will show us and explain what they do at Christmas, whether they celebrate it or not, what they cook, where they go, and so on.

In the video parents and students, especially parents could try to speak in English, just say a few words in English, speaking in English will not be dispensable, but we can encourage and motivate families to speak English. After these videos are made, we will project them in the classroom, for everyone to see, in this way we are encouraging children to have the feeling of belonging to a group, as well as seeing that their families are part of this group, that they are not an external agent and that they are appreciated and recognized by the school.

Activity 3: The Gingerbread Man

Continuing with the Christmas theme we can tell the story of The Gingerbread Man (Appendix 1) adapted by Arengo, S. (2015), this tale is very representative of English culture, this story is about a gingerbread man running away from different pursuers and then at the end dying between the jaws of a fox. This way we can get to know a little bit of England's literary

culture. In addition to knowing an interesting and fun story, as well as an important moral background, such as not trusting strangers.

Wright (cited in Lorente 2017, p. 20) says that when it comes to telling stories we have to take into account the following three moments:

❖ <u>Before the story activities</u>: to help the children understand the story.

This stage is to introduce the story, the theme and the characters. First, we will show the cover of the book and the children have to say that they see on the cover, what they think will happen on it, what the characters will be like, and so on. We will do this orally with all the children and show them pictures of the characters to introduce them to new vocabulary.

❖ <u>During the story activities</u>: to make sure the children are paying attention.

In this part we tell the story, while we tell it, to keep the children's attention, we will assign the characters of the story to some children, by giving them images of the characters stuck to a stick. This way when we mention the characters, the children will have to wave the character's picture in the air.

Another activity that we can do is to give the children a cartoon worksheet and they will have to put the pictures in the order of the story, while we are telling the story.

❖ <u>After the story activities</u>: to understand the story better, talk about the characters, to learn the vocabulary, to Role Play, etc.

After we finish telling the story we will do an activity that has something to do with the story, in this case we can do a cooking workshop for children to learn how to make their own Gingerbread Man. We will make groups of 2/3 children for each table and we will give them the recipe of how to make a Gingerbread Man.

First of all, the teacher will show them how to make the recipe and then each table will make its own recipe. This activity will make the children work cooperatively to reach a goal, which in this case is to make a Gingerbread Man. They will have to share the tasks among themselves, as one child will give the instructions while the others prepare the ingredients. The recipe could be written in English for the older children and for the younger ones we could put pictures of the steps to follow (Appendix 1.1), this way we make sure everyone understands it.

To address this topic, we could also use songs and have children create their own story with a few cartoons of the story, do a TPR activity with the vocabulary of the tale (Appendix 1.2), as well as Google Maps to learn more about the geography of England.

Activity 4: Places to go

In this activity we will present images (Appendix 3) of different well-known places in England, such as Stonehenge, London eye, Big Ben, Buckingham palace, Swinton Park, and so on. First of all, we will use Google Maps to see these places from the computer with the projector, while showing these places we will ask questions such as:

- What do you see?
- What do you think this place is?
- What do you think can be done here?

We will make groups of 3 children, each group will have an image to work with. The images will be divided like a puzzle and the children will have to look very carefully at the image and try to remember the elements that compose it. Then join the parts of the image.

This activity is designed to bring the most popular places in England closer to the classroom in order to see what the structures and buildings look like and to see the differences and similarities between those there and those here.

3.4.2. Storytelling

In this session we will tell stories in English that encourage diversity and interculturality. As I have said before, whenever we work with stories we will establish three fundamental moments, therefore, the proposed activities will be distributed in the following way:

- ❖ Before the story activities
- ❖ During the story activities
- ❖ After the story activities

Elmer

Elmer by David McKee (1968) in its English version (Appendix 2) is one of the most popular kids' books in many languages around the world, the story conveys values as important as respect, kindness, friendship and, above all, diversity. The story makes us see that we are all different and special, that we must love and accept each other as we are and value diversity as an opportunity and as an enriching element of society.

❖ **Before the story activities:**

To begin with we will show the cover of the story, make an assembly asking what they think of the cover, what story they think it tells, etc. With some questions like:

- What do you see on the cover? How does it make you feel?
- Are elephants colorful?
- What do you think of the elephant?
- What story do you think it tells?

❖ **During the story activities:**

To tell the story, we will put ourselves in a quiet and comfortable place and we will get as close as possible to the children so that they can keep their attention and see the story well. Before telling the story in English we will give them a short summary of the story in Spanish or Catalan, so they know what to expect and understand the story better. We will tell the story with the book, but with the help of complementary materials that represent and reflect some parts of the story. These elements can be the following: elephants of different sizes and colors, jungle animals and colorful papers shaped like squares. While we are telling the story, we can ask the children questions to make them pay attention and feel part of the story.

❖ **After the story activities:**

After telling the story we will ask the children a few questions to find out if they have understood the story and its values. We will ask some questions like:

- What's Elmer like?
- Was Elmer loved by the other elephants?
- Why was Elmer sad?
- Have you ever felt like Elmer?
- Tell me something that makes you different from others?
- What's more fun? Things that are the same or different?

After these questions we will do an activity where the children will make their own Elmer, they will be able to draw and paint as they want. We will provide them with different materials: waxes, markers, clay, glitter, colored papers, glue, scissors, etc. Everyone will have their Elmer and then at the assembly will have to introduce their Elmer and say why they made it like that.

A color of his own

A color of his own by Leo Lionni (Appendix 3) is a story about a chameleon that had no color of his own, he does not have a color of his own because chameleons change colors to fit their surroundings. This chameleon does not understand why he does not have a color of his own and he goes around different surrounding and he changes color every time until he finds another chameleon that becomes his friend and they travel to different places and they change every time, but this time they do it together.

This tale can help children understand that we are all different and at the same time we have similarities that makes us the same.

We can use the same pattern of activities explained in the previous story (Elmer) and include some new activities such as:

❖ **A rhyme with colors:**

In this activity we will recite a color rhyme in class. We will use TPR while we recite the rhyme and point to the color we are saying. This way children will learn with movement and rhythm. Thayer. A. (2014) in her blog Teaching Mama, shows different rhymes about colors that can help make the activity more fun. One of them goes like this:

<div align="center">

If your clothes have any red,

Put your finger on your head.

If you're wearing any blue,

Put your finger on your shoe.

If you're wearing something green,

Wave your hand so that you're seen.

If you have on something yellow,

Give a smile like a happy fellow.

If your clothes have any brown,

Turn your smile into a frown.

If you're wearing any black,

Put your hands behind your back.

If your clothes have any white,

Stamp your feet with all your might!

(Author Unknown)

</div>

❖ **Find the chameleon:**

One of the activities that we could do after we told the story is making chameleons of different colors and after that we could play a game of finding the chameleons that the kids made. We will split the classroom in two groups, one of them will hide the chameleons while the other are waiting outside. We will tell the children to hide the chameleon on objects that match their color, that way they can blend in with the surroundings. After they are done hiding the chameleons the other group will enter the classroom and start searching. After that we will switch the groups, that everyone will get to hide and search the chameleons. This activity is a group activity that can help children to learn teamwork, strategy and to put themselves in different positions.

Multicultural books for children

In order to the promote an intercultural competence it is important to select the topics and the materials that we are going to use very carefully. In this case I am going to focus on children's books that have quality when it comes to showing all kind of diversity (racial, gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, economic class, disability, etc.) and representation in a good light.

We have to choose a selection of children's books that must be good and beneficial for them. As Derman-Sparks (2016, para. 1) said "depending on the quality of the book, they can reinforce (or undermine) children's affirmative self-concept, teach accurate (or misleading) information about people of various identities, and foster positive (or negative) attitudes about diversity".

In the blog Social Justice books there is a diverse selection of multicultural and social justice books for children, young adults, and educators. Those books have different topics such as Africa, Afro-Latinx, American Indians, Arabs, Asians, Disabilities, LGBTQ, etc.

In the section that shows books about different ethnicities we can find books like:
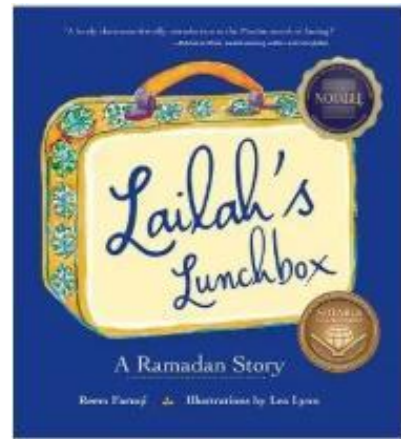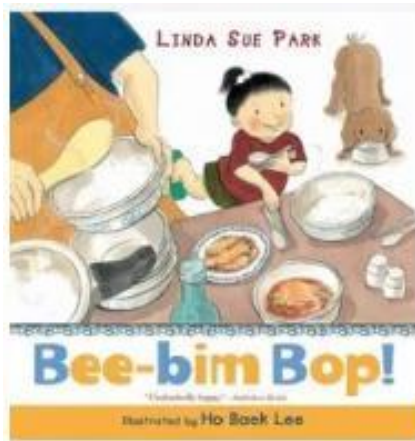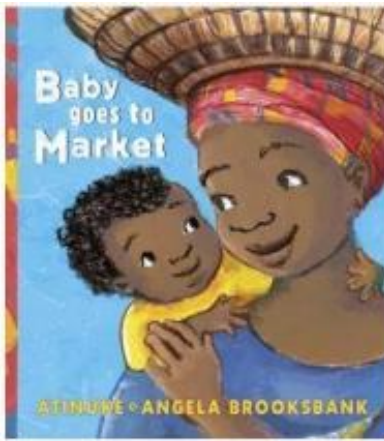
There are other topics such as disabilities, LGBTQ, families and gender identity for those there are books such as:
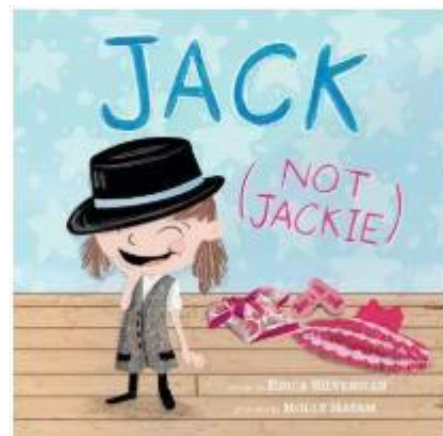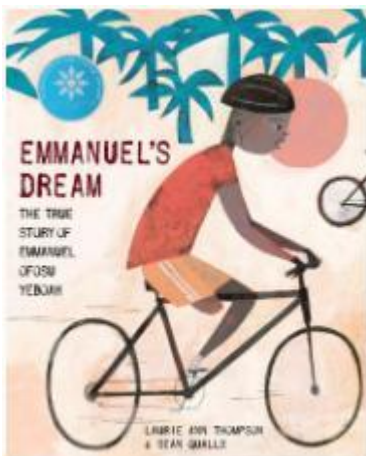
We need to avoid books that are stereotypical because they can be harmful and negative. These types of books should be in the school library, in the classrooms for children to look and read and we should work with them because they can be very beneficial for them when it comes to learning English, as these books are written in English.

3.4.3. Involving the families

In this session I will focus on activities that encourage interactions and exchange between cultures, as well as including the families in their children's learning process by giving them visibility and voice to share with everyone aspects of their cultures.

❖ **Travel around the world:**

In this activity we will travel around the world to the countries of origin of some students, in order to do that we have to involve the families and ask them questions about their background and cultural traditions that are important to them.

Because we are going to "visit" different countries we need to have passports, the children will make passports of their own with small blank notebooks, everyone will make and personalize their own by putting their name or drawing and painting the passports.

After making the passports the families will be invited to the English classroom to talk and share some aspects of their culture, they can bring props like photos, food, books, etc. The families will be encouraged to talk in English, but they can always do it in Spanish if there are not familiar with the language. If they do speak in English it will be very beneficial for the students, because they can see that English is spoken in other countries and learn their English through their culture too. After the families visit the teacher will ask questions about what the families said, how they felt about it, etc.

Everytime we "travel" to a different country, children will earn a passport stamp to certificate that they have been in that country. With this activity children learn thing about different places and their costumes, they learn that they have diversity around them in the classroom and children and their families get to feel represented and part of a group.

❖ **Learning with instruments**

This activity is related to the previous one because it involves the families but in this case the theme is music. Learning a new language is always more fun with music and because of that we will ask the families to bring or show in the classroom some musical instruments that are common in their countries. If we they do not have or can't bring any instrument the

teacher will use the computer to show some instruments from around the world, such as the following:

Djembe: African instrument

Maracas: Latin American instrument

Güiro: Latin American instrument

Banhu: Asian instrument

If the families know how to play the instrument they can show the children different rhythms and songs to play.

After learning about the instruments, they will do another activity with TPR, to help learn the new vocabulary. The instruments (or images of the instruments) will be placed around the classroom and the teacher will make a command like touch the Banhu and the students will have to move to where the instrument is and touch it.

With his activity children will learn new vocabulary, see different musical instruments and hear different sounds.

❖ **Let's celebrate**

In this part I will focus on the cultural and religious celebrations around the world, because getting to know different festivities will make the students excited and curious about diversity and help them learn about different cultures, their traditions, their music and their food.

Because we have such diverse classrooms we should be able to celebrate different festivities such as the Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Dia de los Muertos, etc. These celebrations can be added to Christmas, Halloween, and other celebrations throughout the year.

With books and online resources children can learn the importance of each celebration, that way the diversity of the classroom can be represented and celebrated.

With the students we can do a lot of activities around every festivity such as:

- Create their own paper skulls for Dia los Muertos (November 1 and 2), festivity celebrated in many Latin American countries, the holiday celebrates and honors the loved ones that have passed away. We can benefit from this holiday to talk about death with the students as well as talking about cultural practices.

- For the Chinese New Year, the children can make lanterns and learn the Chinese zodiac by matching the animals in the zodiac with their zodiac representation as well as their name in English.

- For Ramadan, which is the holy month for Muslims all over the world, we can introduce the children to concepts such as fasting, praying, giving to charity, etc. The kids can create their own Ramadan calendar (30days) in groups of 2 and share with each other every day a good deed that they have done. At the end of the month we will donate a symbolic sum of money to the people in need, and the children and their families can donate toys, books or clothes too.

4. CONCLUSIONS

With this work I wanted to highlight the importance and benefits of acquiring intercultural competence in the English classroom in Early Childhood Education. The learning of a language does not only involve learning linguistic concepts, but also learning cultural aspects. As Brown said "language is part of culture and culture is part of language, they are related, meaning that they can't be separated without losing their meanings*" Cakir, I. 2006, p. 154). Language is part of the culture of a place and that is why it is so important to understand culture in order to understand a language.

In this work I have achieved, on one hand, the objective of showing a multicultural and dynamic view of the way the English language is taught in the classrooms by understanding how culture affects and conditions the way a language is learned.

And on the other hand, I have created a didactic proposal that displays a broader perspective on how to teach English or any language by using cooperative learning and total physical response (TPR) to promote peer work and small group work for a better understanding, respect and representation of everybody.

I have also included storytelling as a methodology for teaching and promoting diversity, respect and representation, following the three moments of Wright (cited in Lorente, 2017, p.20) when telling stories, so students pay more attention, are motivated and are part of the story. These three steps in storytelling help students acquire an understanding of the English language, as well as its characteristics and vocabulary.

This didactic proposal could not be carried out due to lack of time and because in the context where I have done the Practicum II (3-6-year-old) in CEIP Llevant in Inca, the 3 year old children only do half an hour of English and this has prevented me from being able to do different activities. It is a pity that I was not able to carry out the proposal, but the proposal is globalized, open and scheduled to be carried out throughout the school year. In addition, the activities are accessible and transferable to different contexts and classrooms, so they can be useful to promote respect, understanding and exchange of different cultures. My objective with this proposal was to expose the children to different cultures, I wanted them to learn in a multicultural and intercultural education and learn English with others and from others with cooperative learning, and I think that with this proposal I have achieved this objective.

To conclude, I have to say that the use of a multicultural perspective and the teaching of intercultural competence is not very developed yet in the subject of English in Early

Childhood Education, but I think that this stage is the best to start teaching and promoting a multicultural vision, because as I said before we live in a diverse and globalized society and the classrooms reflect that diversity and as professionals of education we must respond to this reality. We must deal with multiculturalism in all subjects, but above all I believe that its inclusion in the learning of a foreign language can be beneficial to students. Since the learning of a language entails the learning of its culture, it is necessary to deal with the subject of understanding culture through different activities that help students to understand different cultures better. I hope that in the future there will be more research and work from interculturality in the classrooms, starting with Early Childhood Education which is where children begin to understand themselves, their environment and their language.

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6. APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The Gingerbread Man's tale

An old woman lives here.
An old woman
and an old man.
They don't have any children.
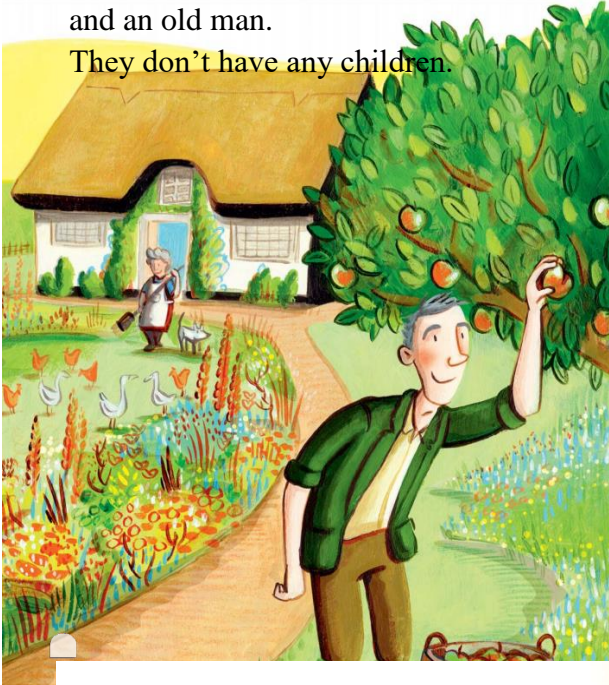
The old woman's in the kitchen.
She's making something. It's a gingerbread man.
He has a head. He has arms and legs.
He has two eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

The old woman is happy.

'You're a little boy,' she says.
'My little boy!'
'In you go!' says the old woman.

But soon the old
woman hears a little voice.
It's coming from the oven.

The old woman opens the oven door.
And the gingerbread man jumps out.
'Oh!' says the old woman.

Come

'Stop!' says the old woman.
'Come here!' But the gingerbread man
doesn't stop. He runs across the kitchen
and out of the door. He runs across the kitchen
and out of the door.

Stop!' shout the old man and
the old woman. 'Come here!'
But the gingerbread man doesn't stop.
He runs faster and he shouts:
'Run, run! You can run.
Yes, you can! But you can't catch me.
I'm the gingerbread man!'

The little gingerbread man runs
and runs. Soon he sees a cow.
'Stop!' says the cow. 'Come here!
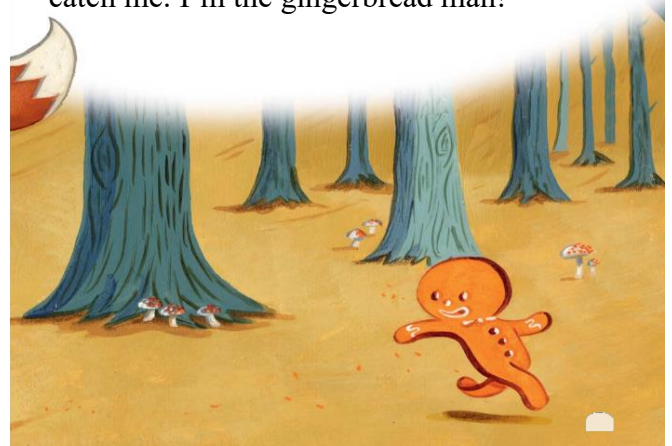I want to eat you.'But the gingerbread man
doesn't stop. He runs faster.
And now the cow runs after him.

'I can run away from an old woman,'
says the gingerbread man. '
I can run away from an old man.
So I can run away from a cow!'

They ALL run after him, AND the GINGERBREAD MAN shouts: `Run, RUN! You can run. Yes, you CAN! But you can't CATCH me. I'm the GINGERBREAD MAN! `
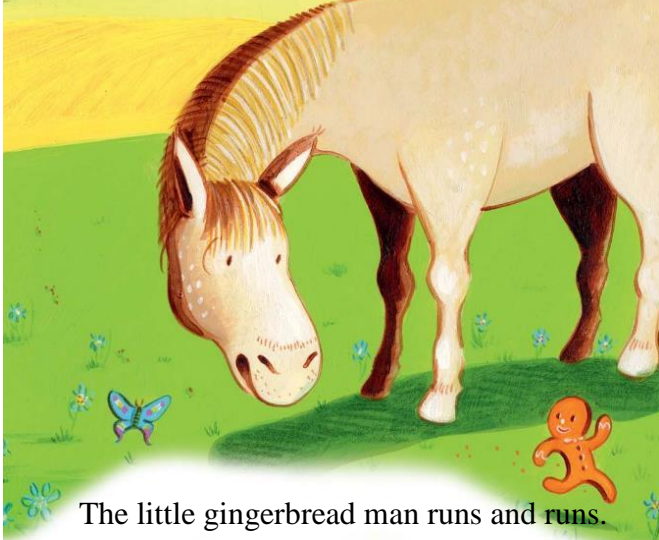
The little gingerbread man runs and runs. Soon he sees a horse.'Stop!' says the horse. 'Come here! I want to eat you.'

'I can run away from an old woman,' says the gingerbread man. 'I can run away from an old man and a cow. So I can run away from a horse. Yes, I can! You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man!
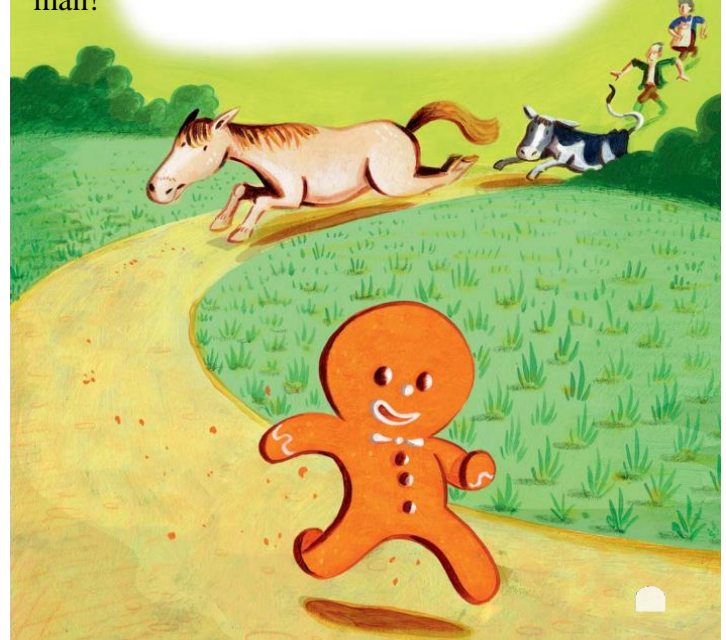
The gingerbread man runs and runs.
'They can't catch me!' he says. 'Nobody can catch me.'
Just then he sees a fox.
'Stop!' says the fox. 'Come here!'
But the gingerbread man doesn't stop. He runs faster. And now the fox runs after him.

'I can run away from an old woman,' says the gingerbread man. 'I can run away from an old man. I can run away from a cow and a horse. So I can run away from a fox!'
They all run after him and he shouts: 'Run, run! You can run. Yes, you can! But you can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man!'

The gingerbread man runs and runs. Soon he sees a river.

'Oh no!' he cries. 'A river! I can't swim!'

'Listen,' says the fox. 'I can help you. I can swim across and you can sit on my tail.'

Stop! Says the fox. `I don't WANT to EAT you. I WANT to TALK to you. I WANT to be friends with you!'

But the GINGERBREAD MAN doesn't stop. He runs FASTER. And now the fox runs faster too
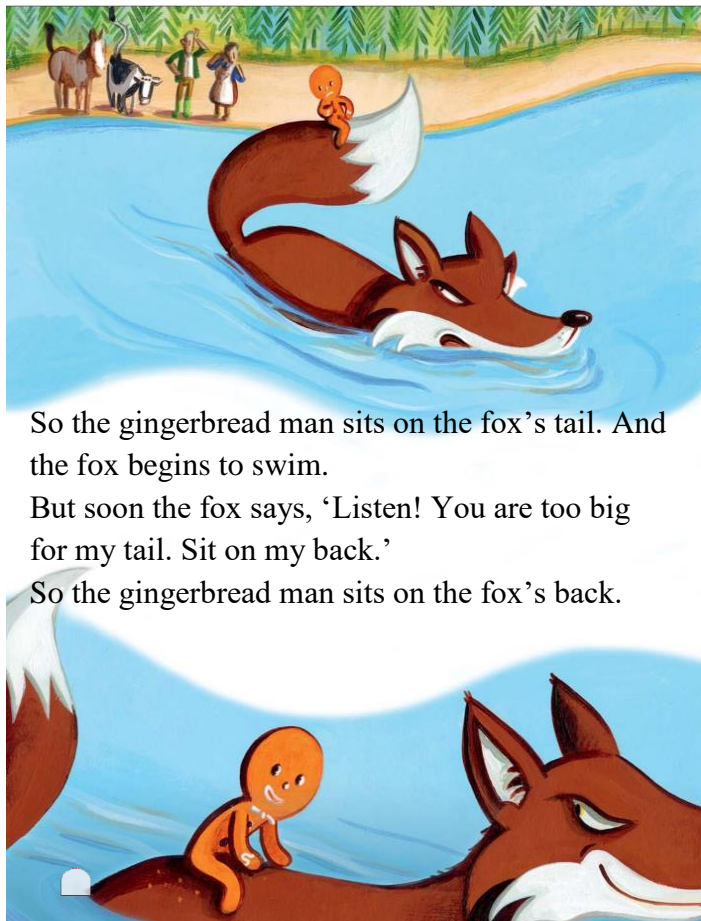
So the gingerbread man sits on the fox's tail. And the fox begins to swim.

But soon the fox says, 'Listen! You are too big for my tail. Sit on my back.'

So the gingerbread man sits on the fox's back.

But soon the fox says, 'Listen! You're too big for my back. Sit on my nose.'

So the gingerbread man sits on the fox's nose.

The fox swims across the river and
jumps out.
The fox throws the gingerbread man up.
Up! Up! Up

'Help!' he says. 'My legs! My legs!' 'Help!' he says. '
My arms! My arms!'

Then the fox eats the gingerbread man's head. Now the
gingerbread man doesn't say anything.

And that is the end. Yes, that is the end of the
gingerbread man.

Appendix 1.1: The Gingerbread Man's Recipe

Ingredients

100g butter

175g brown sugar

100g currants

350g plain flour

5g bicarbonate of soda

1 egg

15g golden syrup

500g icing sugar

5g ground ginger

FIRST the teachers has to do this:

1. Pre-heat oven to gas mark 5.

2. Melt the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a saucepan.

3. When melted, remove from heat.

INSTRUCCIONS:

Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ground ginger into a large mixing bowl, and add the egg.

Stir the melted ingredients into the bowl until you have a fairly stiff dough.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface

Cut out your gingerbread man using the cutter.

Carefully lift it onto a baking tray.

Bake in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes.

Remove from oven and leave to cool.

Decorate with icing sugar.

Appendix 1.2: The Gingerbread Man's Vocabulary

across *the river*

eyes

arms

fox

back

hear

legs

mouth

run away

Appendix 2: Elmer's tale

There is a herd of elephants. Young elephants, old elephants, tall elephants, fat elephants and thin elephants. All elephants have the same color: GREY. All, except Elmer.

Elmer is different. Elmer is patchwork. Elmer is yellow and orange and red and pink and purple and blue and green and black and white. Elmer is NOT elephant color. He isn't grey.

Elmer keeps the other elephants happy, because he tells them lots of jokes. When he laughs, all the other elephants laugh too.

One night Elmer can't sleep. He is sad because he is different. "Have you ever heard of a patchwork elephant? No wonder they laugh at me." In the morning, all the elephants are sleeping. And Elmer walks away.

Elmer walks through the jungle. Elmer meets other animals. The tiger says: "Good morning Elmer." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!" The lion says: "Good morning Elmer." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!" The hippo says: "Good morning Elmer." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!"

After a long walk, Elmer finds what he is looking for. A very big bush. A very big bush with lots of berries. Elephant-colored berries. Elmer shakes and shakes and shakes the bush. And all the berries fall on the ground.

The ground is full of berries. Elmer lies down, rolls over and over and over. There is no more yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, blue, green, black or white. When he has finished, Elmer looks like a normal elephant. He's GREY.

After that, Elmer walks back to the herd. Elmer walks through the jungle. Elmer meets the other animals again. The turtle says: "Good morning elephant." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!" The crocodile says: "Good morning elephant." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!" The giraffe says: "Good morning elephant." Elmer smiles and says: "Good morning!"

When Elmer joins the herd, all the elephants stand still and quiet. None of the elephants notice Elmer. All the elephants are standing still, quiet and serious. Elmer wants to laugh, so he lifts his trunk and shouts…

The elephants are surprised. They jump and say: "Oh my gosh and golly!" Then they see Elmer. Elmer is laughing. They say: "Elmer, it must be Elmer!" And all the elephants start laughing.

It starts to rain. The raindrops wash away the grey color. Elmer is back with all his colors. "We must celebrate this special day every year. Today is Elmer's day".

On Elmer's day, all the elephants decorate themselves and Elmer paints himself grey. He is the only grey elephant on this day.

THE END

Appendix 3: A color of his own

A Color of His Own

Parrots are green, goldfish are red, elephants are grey, pigs are pink…

All animals have a color of their own

except for chameleons, they change color wherever they go

on lemons they are yellow,

in the heather they are purple

and on tiger they are striped like tigers.

One day a chameleon

who was sitting on a tiger's tail said to himself,

"if I remain on a leaf, I shall be green forever,

and so I to will have a color of my own".

With this thought he cheerfully climbed onto the greenest leaf,

but in autumn the leaf turned yellow

and so, did the chameleon.

Later the leaf turned red,

and the chameleon too turned red,

and then winter winds blew the leaf from the branch

and with it the chameleon.

The chameleon was black in the long winter might,

but when spring came, he walked out into the green grass,

and there he met another chameleon.

He told his sad story:

"Won't we ever have a color of our own" he asked.

"I'm afraid not", said the other chameleon,

who was older and wiser. "But" he added,

"Why don't we stay together?"

"We will still change color wherever we go

but you and I will always be alike"

And they remained side by side.

They were green together,

and purple,

and yellow,

and red with polka dots.

And they lived happily ever after.

THE END

Appendix 4: Evaluations

Appendix 4.1.: Teacher's evaluation

Items	Evaluation	Observations
The teacher has anticipated the aids between the members of the groups?		
Did the teacher's help serve the children to solve their doubts?		
Are the proposed activities consistent with the benchmarking criteria?		
Has the organization of the class and the dynamics of the activities allowed the infants to feel comfortable and interested?		
Has the teacher been able to motivate the infants in the activities?		
Have the explanations we have given at the beginning of the activities been clear and short?		

A: Always   S: Sometimes   AB: A bit   N: Never

Appendix 4.2.: Children's evaluation

Evaluation chart		
Children's name:		
	YES	NO
Shows interest in the teacher's explanation		
Participates in the conversation by commenting on their		

previous knowledge on the subject.		
Works cooperatively in the small group		
Listens to his classmates and respects speaking time.		
Expresses its ideas with freedom and security		