**FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN DE PALENCIA**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID**

# FROM THE SIGN TO THE WORD: THE USE OF BIMODAL AT EARLY AGES IN A NON-BILINGUAL ENVIROMENT

## DEL SIGNO A LA PALABRA: USO DEL BIMODAL EN EDADES TEMPRANAS EN UN AMBIENTE NO BILINGÜE

**TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO**

**EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL**

**MENCIÓN LENGUA INGLEA**

**AUTORA: Nuria de la Rocha Labajo**

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## ABSTRACT

This project aims to analyse how bimodal language is applied in English classes as a means of facilitating communication. Through its use in the classroom, the aim is to observe the influence it has on pupils' communication and understanding. To this end, a proposal has been planned for a group of four-year-olds, through which these pupils are exposed to its implementation in the classroom. This is done by means of several techniques such as the use of signed songs or the reinforcement of the language through signs. Accordingly, the purpose is to demonstrate the impact of this application of bimodal language on the learning of a foreign language, as well as to introduce the pupils to the learning of American Sign Language.

**KEY WORDS**: Communicative competence, Foreign Language, Bimodal, TPR, CLIL, communicative approach of the language, Early Ages.

## RESUMEN

El presente proyecto pretende indagar sobre la aplicación de la lengua bimodal durante las clases de inglés como medio facilitador de la comunicación. A través de su uso en el aula, se pretende observar la influencia que este tiene en la comunicación y la comprensión del alumnado. Para ello, se ha planificado una propuesta destinada a un grupo de cuatro años, mediante la cual se expone a este alumnado a su uso en el aula. Esto se realiza por medio de distintas técnicas tales como la utilización de canciones signadas o el refuerzo de la lengua a través de los signos. De acuerdo con esto, se pretende demostrar la influencia que tiene este uso de la lengua bimodal en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, así como introducir al alumnado en el aprendizaje de la Lengua de Signos Americana.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Competencia comunicativa, Lengua Extranjera, Bimodal, RFT, AICLE, enfoque comunicativo de la lengua, edades tempranas.

# INDEX

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of learning a foreign language during the first years of schooling has been demonstrated in numerous research studies. With this in mind, the present document tries to use bimodal language as a resource to favour this language acquisition.

When a Foreign Language is used as a vehicular language, communication and comprehension in the classroom can often be hampered. For this reason, the proposed project aims to use this bimodal language in the classroom as a tool to facilitate comprehension and communication. Through this proposal, the goal is to observe the influence that bimodal language has on the learning of a foreign language, since, as has been seen in many studies, it has a great influence on the development of the mother tongue.

In terms of content, this document presents the general lines of the aforementioned research, as well as its justification and theoretical basis. Likewise, the objectives, both general and specific, of the research are also explained in more detail.

After this, there is a section intended to develop the proposal elaborated to realise the observation of the research. In this part, the objectives of the proposal, the expectations, and the activities to be developed in order to achieve them, are explained in depth, as well as a sub-section dealing with the competences to be developed with this proposal. There is also information related to the unit' methodology and its evaluation.

This is followed by an analysis of the data and a reflection on possible modifications to the proposal, as well as a chapter on conclusions detailing the achievement of the objectives and a small sample of the research that has been conducted in the classroom.

Finally, in the appendices section, a more detailed development of the research can be found, as well as the evaluation rubrics used for the observation.

# 2. OBJETIVES

## 2.1 MAIN OBJETIVES

For the development of this research, the main objectives have been established in relation to the learning of a foreign language at an early age. With this, a proposal has been developed in accordance with these objectives and to observe the impact on the pupils.

One of the main objectives of this study is the use of bimodal in the infant classroom as a tool to facilitate comprehension and communication. As it is an Augmentative Communication System, the aim is to demonstrate that bimodal serves as a support for communication and to use it as a non-verbal language during the lessons. With this objective it is intended that the pupils acquire confidence and enhance the skills necessary for learning a foreign language as well as the development of thinking skills.

## 2.2 SPECIFIC OBJETIVES

In order to achieve the objectives described above, more specific ones have been set:

- To use English as a vehicular language in the classroom.
- To use bimodal as an aid to communication and not as a substitute.
- To reinforce the language used by pupils with bimodal language already in use.
- To promote autonomy in pupils and their participation in activities so that learning is meaningful.
- To implement actions that promote communicative intention in the classroom.
- To promote thinking skills in pupils.
- To achieve individualised learning, promoting the personal characteristics of the pupils and adapting to their needs.
- To use content that is contextualised to the learner's life so that the learner feels familiarity and security.

# 3. JUSTIFICATION

This proposal is contextualised in a public school in Palencia, Castilla y León. For this reason, the bases of this proposal precede the curriculum of Infant Education of Castilla y León (DECRETO 122/2007, 27th of December) which regulates the bases of learning in communication, as well as the contents to be dealt with during this stage. Besides, the use of a foreign language as a vehicular language is regulated through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR) which reinforces this communicative approach to languages.

The importance of language development at this early age is a factor that is highly present. Therefore, the relevance of learning a foreign language at an early age is becoming increasingly significant. For this reason, it is necessary to acquire the tools, skills, and competences to be able to transmit the contents of everyday life through the English Language. This is why the need arises to use bimodal language in the classroom as a method of communication facilitation which, through non-verbal language, enhances communication in the classroom.

According to Santana & Monreal (2000), a deaf child seems to be able to combine the visual and auditive information in their speaking perceptions. Applying this capacity to the sound structure of the speaking, give us a mental representation of the abstract speaking. If this ability or skill is used in a Foreign Language environment, the results should be the same. Thus, the comprehension and interaction will be greater.

Another factor that is very present and of utmost significance is the fact that bimodal language can be adapted to the individual characteristics of each pupil. This greatly enhances the integration and inclusion of pupils in the classroom.

## 3.1 RELATION WITH THE DEGREE COMPETENCES

General competences

- To be able to recognize, plan, conduct and evaluate good teaching-learning practices.

- Be able to critically analyse and argue decisions that justify decision-making in educational contexts.

- Be able to interpret data derived from observations in educational contexts to judge their relevance in an adequate educational praxis.

- Be able to reflect on the meaning and purpose of educational praxis.

- Be able to use effective information search procedures, both in primary and secondary sources of information, including the use of computer resources for online searches.

- Knowledge, understanding, and proficiency in self-learning methodologies and strategies.

- Ability to engage in research activities

- Fostering a spirit of initiative and an attitude of innovation and creativity in the exercise of their profession.

- Knowledge of the intercultural reality and the development of attitudes of respect, tolerance, and solidarity towards the different social and cultural groups.

Specific degree competences

*Basic competences*

- Be familiar with scientific methodology and promote scientific thinking and experimentation.

- Be able to plan activities jointly with all teachers at this level and at other educational levels, using flexible groupings.

- Know the evolution of language in early childhood, know how to identify possible dysfunctions and watch over its correct evolution.

- Recognise and value the appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal language.

- Be able to use games as a didactic resource and to design learning activities based on playful principles.

- Be able to relate theory and practice to the reality of the classroom and the school.

- Acquire habits and skills for autonomous and cooperative learning and to promote it in students.

*Foreign Language (English)*

- Be able to transmit to children the functional learning of a foreign language.

- Be able to cope with language learning situations in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

- Express themselves appropriately in oral and written communication and be able to master techniques to promote their development through interaction.

- Favour the development of oral and written communication skills.

- Know the linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and didactic foundations of language learning and be able to assess their development and communicative competence.

# 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 4.1 OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

This proposal follows the guidelines set out in DECREE 122/2007, of 27 December, which establishes the curriculum for the second cycle of Infant Education in Castilla y León. According to which:

> *"Las secciones lingüísticas de lengua inglesa creadas en centros públicos de Castilla y León por la Consejería competente en materia de educación que, de acuerdo con lo previsto en el artículo 6.6 de la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, impartan el currículo integrado de enseñanza del sistema educativo español y del sistema educativo británico, se regirán por sus disposiciones específicas."* (Decreto 122/2007, pp. 8)

In this area, the aim is to develop communicative skills which will evolve over a gradual period. This will be, in the initial stages, through corporal and gestural expression to the acquisition of the codes of different languages. This is mainly to produce, interpret and understand increasingly complex messages in a personal, effective, and creative way.

As stated by the Spanish/English Infants Integrated Curriculum (2013), the general lines of the teaching of English for pre-school children are closely related to the Spanish curriculum for this cycle. This focuses on the development of the whole child through the physical, emotional, cognitive, and cultural development of each child's personal context, i.e., their school and environment. The acquisition of language, literacy, numeracy, and science skills in both Spanish and English will have a thematic focus. This means that they will consider the whole child's development and interests throughout the three years of the kindergarten cycle.

Children's understanding of English in the early stages is largely demonstrated through non-verbal responses to linguistic input. These may be physical responses to songs, games, stories or creative responses through art and craft activities or expressions of enjoyment of songs, stories or rhymes. (Agudo et al., 2012)

According to the children's interests, a meaningful context needs to be created in which the English language can be understood gradually through various learning activities. These are assimilated and then produced by the children gradually at their own pace. Just as they acquired their mother tongue, as their understanding develops, children begin to use English. That is, first single words, then words are put together until complete sentences are created. Thus, English is used in a natural way in kid's environment, and they are not just learning, they are communicating themselves.

All the topics covered, based on the integrated curriculum, have been selected because they are motivating and meaningful for young children. Furthermore, they are familiar to the children in their native language. Thus, the concepts are easier to grasp and allow them to assimilate the new language in the context of the topics presented. This means that, when topics and aspects of everyday school life are integrated, speaking, and listening skills have a stronger basis on which to develop knowledge, communication skills and learning.

## 4.2 SIGN LANGUAGE

Sign Language has many aspects in common that parallel spoken language acquisition. It can therefore provide an alternative for early children to recognise words as they acquire language. (Lieberman & Borovsky, 2017) An example of this would be the fact that when perceiving a Sign Language sign there are several simultaneous phonological components, whereas spoken phonemes are sequential in nature. For this reason, it can be a means of facilitating language comprehension.

About Sign Language (SL) there are several myths that are often present. This is the case of thinking that it is universal, easy to learn and that it can be used in any country, and everyone will understand it. However, this is far from reality, as different sign languages are used in different countries, even in the same country different signs can be used for a term depending on the area you are in. An example of this would be that American Sign Language (ASL) differs much more from English Sign Language (ESL) than the two languages differ orally. (Alonso et al., 1989, pp. 8-22)

Another myth that is commonly held is that SL is an iconic language. According to Alonso et al. (1989), it is true that a large number of signs are represented iconically. However, even if some signs have these characteristics, it cannot be said that all Sign Language is iconic, since in addition to these signs there is a large majority of them that are absolutely arbitrary. Therefore, in many respects this Sign Language can be intuitive, but not in all cases as mentioned above. Besides this, there is also the cultural factor. Many of the existing signs are related to cultural aspects of the country or the context in which it has developed. If these signs are not explained, it is not possible to understand the relationship between the sign and the term in question.

### Bimodal

This project will focus specifically on the use of bimodal communication in the classroom. According to Monfort et al., (n.d), bimodal communication involves the simultaneous use of spoken language and signs. That is, it uses the sign lexicon of mimic language, but signing all words in the order of the language being spoken. In this way, artificially elaborated signs are added for certain words which, in SL, would be omitted. This would be very difficult to do simultaneously as SL has its own syntactic structure.

The combination of spoken and signed languages is used in educational settings in order to improve communication and comprehension in the classroom. In this way, it takes advantage of all the means available to achieve total communication, one of the main objectives of education.

According to Alonso et al. (1989) a "bimodal system" or "signed language" is:

> "*The simultaneous manual and oral expression of the language of a hearing community, using for its manual emission, whenever possible, the vocabulary of the sign language of its deaf community*." (Alonso et al., 1989, pp. 20) Own translation.

These statements make it clear that bimodal is not the combined use of two languages, signed and spoken, but rather the use of only one language - spoken, accompanied by signs - taken from SL.

In this system, spoken and signed information are simultaneous, but not complementary. This means that the same message is expressed in two diverse ways. Bimodal tries to ensure that the information is understood, and so it is delivered simultaneously through two communicative channels.

In short, the bimodal communication or bimodal system has a specific purpose, which is to reduce communicative problems and to support access to and understanding of spoken language. Thus, using this system at an early age there are two clear functions for its use, communication and oral language learning. (Alonso et al., 1989)

As a consequence of this, among other factors, *Introducción a la comunicación Bimodal* (Alonso et al., 1989) lays the foundations for the use of bimodal. It is about presenting the semantic and syntactic structures of spoken language so that they can be seen and heard simultaneously, following the below principles shown in *Figure 1*. As can be observed, these bases are interconnected and related to each other in order to achieve an appropriate use of it. This is related to the above-mentioned complementary use of signs as well as their key features.
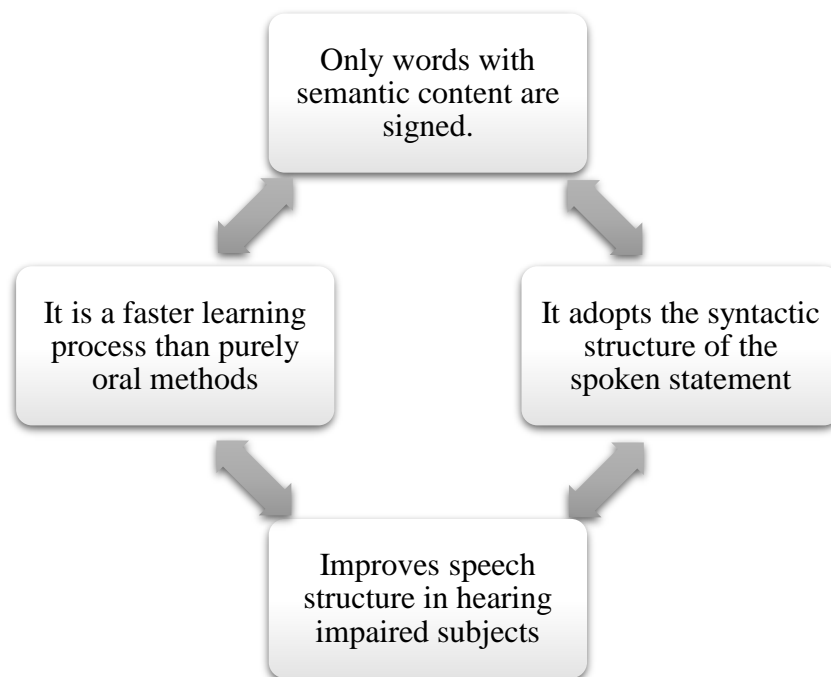
Only words with semantic content are signed.

It is a faster learning process than purely oral methods

It adopts the syntactic structure of the spoken statement

Improves speech structure in hearing impaired subjects

*Figure 1. Bases of bimodal (Alonso et al., 1989)*

It should be noted that depending on which is prioritised, signed, or spoken language, communication will be more fluid or not. If priority is given to oral language learning, everything we speak will be signed, so that the transmission of oral language is complete,

but it also becomes more tedious and distant, losing, to a certain extent, the communicative purpose. This happens because it takes a long time to express a sentence and visually it loses its meaning. On the other hand, if you sign according to what you want to express, either the key contents of the speech or just more freely and less rigidly, communication will not be so affected. In this way, signs can be better adapted to the rhythm of spoken language, even if the linguistic information we convey with our hands is not complete. (Alonso et al., 1989)

As well as this communicative purpose which this type of communication has intrinsic, it is also an integrating and inclusive tool as it is "*a bridge between two communication channels, between two communities (hearing and deaf)".* (Monfort et al., n.d., pp.6) Own translation.

These factors can also be applied to the development and learning of a second language, even if it is not the learner's native language. Some authors have concluded that the use of signs does not hinder communication, but enhances understanding and communication, thus increasing the communicative purpose that a language, whether foreign or native, must have. This approach is known as bimodal bilingual in ASL and English. This is because it includes language foundations and access to learning through two modalities, visual and auditory. (Novogrodsky & Meir, 2020); (Nussbaum et al., 2012)


## 4.3 METHODOLOGY


The proposal that has been put into practice for the development of this research has been based on a series of methodologies. Some of them, as well as the key aspects that have shaped the proposal, are described below.

These methodologies seek to enhance the different intelligences of children. In this way, it is intended to make a more complete approach to English as well as to achieve a greater involvement of learners. Thus, creating an ideal communicative situation for students, as it adapts to their needs.

In accordance with Widodo (2005), the teaching and learning of a foreign language should mirror the naturalistic processes of the first language. This reflects three fundamental processes: (a) children develop listening competence before the ability to

speak. This means that in the early stages of mother tongue acquisition, children are able to understand and comprehend complex utterances even if they are barely able to produce or imitate them spontaneously. Thus, the learner may be developing a mental schema of the language in order to be able to produce spoken language later; (b) the acquisition of children's listening comprehension ability comes through the need for physical response to parental speech; and (c) from a base in listening comprehension, speaking evolves effortlessly from it. (Widodo, 2005)

### Total Physical Response

Jame Asher (1977) was the founder of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method after observing that children, when learning their first language, they seem to listen long before they speak and that this listening is accompanied by physical responses such as grasping, looking, moving, etc. According to Asher (1977), all motor activity is a function of the right side of the brain, which must precede language processing in the left side of the brain. In this way, this idea arose from the need to find a method that would facilitate language teaching, since in many situations' learners feel anxious or embarrassed when is time for that language. Hence, a TPR classroom was one in which learners deal with listening and acting. For this, teacher has to direct the performance: "The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors" (Asher, 1977, p. 43).(Drachsler & Kirschner, 2012)

According to Widodo (2005) it is a method designed to focus students' attention on listening and responding to the oral commands of the language being taught. This means that it is a language teaching method based on the coordination of action and speech; so, to speak, it aims to teach language through physical or kinaesthetic activity, then promoting other types of intelligence.

There are a number of elements that characterise this model; (1) prior to the uptake of spoken language there is speech, meaning that, although there is no comprehension of the spoken message, there is an oral production with a communicative intention; (2) all comprehension is developed through body movement, making it a means to enhance and facilitate communication; and (3) the listening period is of great importance in the development of speech, as it helps the learner to be prepared to speak. (Widodo, 2005)

All these elements are very characteristic of this model, so it does not force the learner to speak, but to understand the message and to communicate through movement and gestures, a factor which it has in common with bimodal language teaching. Despite this, it is important to keep in mind that the use of TPR is recommended for a short and specific period as the learner gets tired of doing it.

### Meaningful Learning

According to Ausubel (1963), meaningful learning is the process by which added information, or knowledge, is related in a non-arbitrary and non-literal way to the learner's previous cognitive structure. This entails being one of the main mechanisms by which people process and store information. In this way, the information nearest and closest to their lives is the most likely to be stored. (Contreras Oré, 2016)

The basic characteristics of meaningful learning are non-arbitrariness and substantivity. Non-arbitrariness means that there is a relationship between the content and the learner, so there is already a prior cognitive structure to that knowledge. New concepts or ideas can be learned meaningfully by relating and anchoring them with other previously established ideas, thus making a kind of "scaffolding" of conceptual ideas. As for the substantivity or non-literality of concepts, it refers to the fact that the knowledge that is incorporated into the cognitive structure is the idea or concept of the new knowledge, and not the literal words that have been used. (Contreras Oré, 2016)

This means that the essence of the process of meaningful learning lies in these two basic concepts. From this interaction emerges the potentially meaningful meanings for the learner. In addition to this, as well as acquiring new knowledge, knowledge that may previously have been erroneous or misconceived is also modified and exchanged for other knowledge. (Contreras Oré, 2016)

Following the guidelines of Dewey (1966) about the constructivist approach, he argues that learners must construct actively their knowledge through their own experiences. In this way, learning is given a meaning and importance to them since it begins from their own reality. This is made by testing their ideas and concepts based on their experience and prior knowledge. Thus, they can apply those ideas to a new situation therefore integrating the new concepts with the pre-existing ones. (Roussou, 2004) In other words,

knowledge must be integrated within the context of the learner and not compartmentalized in different sections. In this way, when the concepts are linked and related between each other, we can learn making it meaningful. (Ausubel, 1986)


**Learning By Doing**

The term learning-by-doing or also called active or experiential learning is a trend whereby the learner is at the centre of learning. For this reason, most experts agree that students learn better when they take an active role in their own learning, whether by doing a discussion, applying concepts to a particular task or taking action. (Smart & Csapo, 2007)

Bonwell and Eison (1991) define this theory as "*anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing*." (pp.19) According to these authors, some general characteristics of this type of learner are: (1) the role of the learner is central to their learning, therefore, their participation goes beyond simple listening; (2) the main objective is the development of skills rather than the mere transmission of content; (3) Thanks to this technique, students develop thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation; (4) Students judge and explore their own values and attitudes. (Bonwell & Eison, 1991)

Following the approaches established by, among others, Locke (1963/2000) or Dewey (1938), they postulate that experience provides a rich environment for the learner to better understand and retain knowledge in such a way that it lasts longer. In other words, putting knowledge into action and giving it meaning and purpose facilitates understanding and assimilation. (Smart & Csapo, 2007)

Learning-by-doing involves many factors on the part of the learner to consider. It involves planning the strategy, analysing the possibilities for action, and reflecting on what has been experienced. This can be applied in different situations, whether at school, at work or in everyday life. These principles are basic and fundamental to developing thinking skills and abilities that can be used in a variety of situations. (Smart & Csapo, 2007)

**Content Language Integrated Learning methodology**

Referring to Darn (n.d), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology:

> *"Was originally defined in 1994, [...] to describe educational methods where 'subjects are taught through a foreign language with dual-focussed aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language'.*
>
> *The essence of CLIL is that content subjects are taught and learnt in a language which is not the mother tongue of the learners. Knowledge of the language becomes the means of learning content, language is integrated into the broad curriculum, learning is improved through increased motivation and the study of natural contextualised language, and the principle of language acquisition becomes central."* (Darn, n.d., pp.2)

Many studies clarify that CLIL for young learners should be similar in many aspects to the approaches of their mother tongue language learning. In other words, the learning of a Foreign Language is focused on performing actions and activities such as singing, drawing, or playing. It should be noted that the teacher role at these ages is highly significant so the oral communication should be clear and structured. (Anderson et al., 2015)

As Farjardo-Dack et al. (2020) mention, the main characteristic of this methodology is its "dual-focused approach" which includes the teaching-learning processes that makes an equal emphasis on content and language. All this implies that both content and linguistic subject competence can be enhanced within this integrated concept more successfully than when language and content are taught in isolation

Based on the theoretical foundations, Coyle (2007) established the 4Cs framework of CLIL -*Figure 2*. This framework supports its pedagogies and provides bases on the integration of its components. It makes an emphasis on the subject matter (Content), the language (Communication), the learning and thinking (Cognition); and the social awareness (Culture) (Fajardo-Dack et al., 2020)
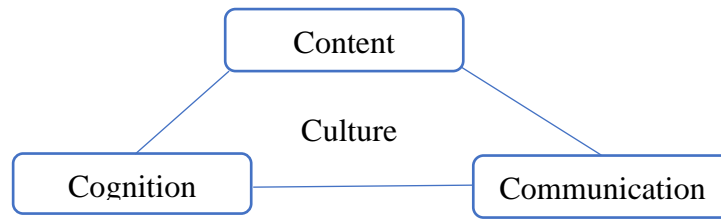
*Figure 2. CLIL 4Cs Framework (Fajardo-Dack et al., 2020)*

Coyle (2007) argues that and effective CLIL methodology needs progression in knowledge, understanding of the content and skills; engagement in cognitive processing – i.e., thinking skills – which has an influence on learning; make and interact between communicative context and development of skills and language; finally, go deeper in intercultural understanding since permeates all "Cs". This means that learners have an integral learning through different perspectives based on attitudes and values.

# 5. PROPOSAL DESING

## 5.1 CONTEXT

The school on which the proposal was based is a public school located in the centre of Palencia. The school is intended for both Infant and Primary Education. Its location is significant as it is situated remarkably close to both historical buildings and the river Carrión, so Nature and History are very present in the centre.

In terms of pupils, the ratio has fallen over the years due to the decrease in the birth rate in Palencia. In the infant classrooms, four- and five-year-olds have two lines, while three-year-olds have only one. This has also been affected by the Covid measures taken in the classroom.

Regarding the building structure and layout, there are three buildings, two for Primary and one for Infants, leaving the playground in the centre of the three buildings. As far as the Infant building is concerned, there are a total of six classrooms and a multi-purpose room, five of these classrooms are intended for a specific group and one of them is the English room. The layout of the classrooms is as follows: two classrooms and in the middle a hall with a bathroom at the back and so on with the other three classrooms. In this way, the personal development and autonomy of the pupils is promoted.

The centre also has an "early risers" programme and a school canteen. These facilities are also located in one of the primary buildings. The pupils will attend the canteen in a staggered manner, with the Infants' turn being the first. For this reason, pupils attending the canteen have to leave half an hour before lessons end.

An important part of the school are the programmes, projects and special events that take place in the school. These programmes have been greatly affected by the current situation and the measures that are present both inside and outside the classroom, so that not all of them are developed to the same extent. Furthermore, as far as Infants is concerned, in previous years they started an autonomy programme at the school which, due to the COVID situation, has suffered a slowdown.

Regarding English in the Infant classrooms, the time allocated is one and a half hours per week in each class, divided into half-hour groups. In this way, the aim is to achieve total

immersion in the classroom, trying to transmit the language and culture. This is done using English as the vehicular language and applying a multicultural methodology, to transmit culture, festivities, and traditions in the classroom. Thus, different events are organised throughout the course to promote the acquisition of traditions such as Easter or Halloween.

All this implies a general development of the different competences of the pupils, particularly the communicative competence, as the communicative intention is always encouraged. Besides this, there is also a great development of cultural and social competence as it is very much involved in the use of other languages which allows pupils to perceive reality from other perspectives.

As for the description of the groups on which the proposal was based, the pupils are hugely different, and each child has his or her own characteristics. The groups are formed by twenty and nineteen pupils in which there is a great diversity of cultures. In one of these classrooms there is a Ukrainian refugee who came at the beginning of the third trimester, so he is still adapting to the established routines. As for the rest of the group, there are from different countries and places in Spain. There is also a child with ASD who has a support person during some classes, but this pupil is not present during English lessons.

There are some differences between both groups. One of the groups is more disruptive than the other. They constantly demand attention as well as movement and activity changes, so attention span is greatly reduced. In both groups there is also a great willingness to carry out the activities, although the working environment in class A is calmer than that in class B. For this reason, the development of the lessons is significantly different in one class and the other, even though the content of the classes is carried out at the same time.

## 5.2 PROPOSAL

### About the unit

The title of the proposal is "Let's go shopping!" and it would fit in the third term of the course. The unit consists of six lessons distributed over two weeks. Being developed in a

non-bilingual public school, the number of hours of English per week is one and a half hours, half an hour three days a week. As the classes are so brief, the unit is designed to be dynamic and cyclical, so that the pupils can follow it easily. Therefore, at the beginning of the class there is a pre-established time at the beginning of the course for the development of routines such as the day of the week, the weather or counting how many of us are in class. In this way, pupils are highly exposed to English in a way that is close and familiar to them, which makes them feel safe and confident to participate.

The main objective of this unit is to bring English closer to the pupils through a communicative context. In this way, it is intended to use bimodal language as a mediator to achieve this objective. The use of this type of language is used as a tool to facilitate communication and language comprehension. In the same way, an initiation to Sign Language in the classroom is intended to achieve a greater integration as well as to favour the development of the child's language both in his/her native language and in the foreign language.

Regarding the contents, and in relation to the objectives that have been set to carry out this DU have been: Differentiation between different types of food; Production of language through the use of objects, images or gestures that reinforce it; oral discrimination of food and relating them to their image, object or gesture; and, oral or physical participation in the programmed activities. It is also worth knowing the pupils' previous knowledge, as it will be used in the design of the programme. This knowledge is related to the previous units, in which prepositions and colours have been developed.

### Competences developed

This proposal aims to deepen some of the key competencies present in Infant Education:

- Competence in Linguistic Communication: This competence is present during the whole proposal since one of the goals of it is the development of the communicative competence in Early Ages. This could be reached by creating a communicative environment in which pupils feel secure and confident to produce the language.

- Competence in Mathematics, Science and Technology: Through the development of certain activities such as counting people or food, or through geometric figures, this competence is being developed. It is present in each of the lessons, so that the pupils are fully aware of what is happening and what is being asked of them.
- Learning to Learn: Pupils are developing this competence through the development of thinking skills both in the routines and in the activities themselves. In this way, through the anticipation or guessing activities, they are working on this competence by themselves.
- Social and Civic Competence: is worked on through respect for other people and for the objects that are being used. As there are activities that involve the collaboration of more than one person, pupils are helped to work with and respect other people.
- Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship: Work is carried out through the enhancement of personal autonomy in each of the lessons. One of the main objectives of the proposal is the personal development of the pupils. For this reason, the activities proposed are a challenge for the pupils to achieve, with the teacher always being the guide.
- Cultural Awareness and Expression: As another language and culture is being transmitted, this competence is developed throughout the proposal.

### Development of the proposal

The unit is composed, as mentioned above, of six lessons. These lessons are divided into three per week, with half an hour for each one. It must be considered that on one of the days, some of the pupils are not in the classroom, because it overlaps with lunchtime. *(In the Appendix I. Unit, could be found the unit template with the development of the lessons in detail)*

<u>Lesson 1</u>

The first lesson focuses on introducing some foods in the classroom. For this, after the routines, five fruits (pear, apple, banana, lemon, and pineapple) are introduced. This is done through Realia. In this way, pupils are fully aware of the food being discussed and can more easily associate the characteristics of the food with its appearance. This is

followed by the bimodal, relating each fruit to its sign. (*Appendix I. Bimodal songs*) In this way, the sound can be clearly associated with the image and gesture and the song can be more easily interpreted. In other words, the whole song is performed with only the gestures and sounds to clearly mark what a word is and then the song is sung. Special emphasis is placed on the signs of the fruit so that they can relate the sound to the sign.

Afterwards, a fruit tree from which fruit was falling was used to reinforce the actions and the communicative intention. In this way, the aim was to make the pupils aware of what was happening and what they had to do about it. This ensures language production, as they must discriminate which fruit has fallen off and put it back on the tree, producing orally what they are doing.

### Lesson 2

Lesson two was aimed at the sensory and motor development of pupils to enhance communicative competence. This was done through the fruit tree, from which, when the fruit dropped, the pupils used it to make juice, which they then drank. All fruits that fall on the ground are first reinforced by signs and then given several options for them to discriminate if they are not clear.

With this, communication was enhanced, as the pupils produce what they are doing and what is happening. Furthermore, communication between sender and receiver is intended, in which the pupils are aware of what they have to do and how they have to do it, as well as being able to express whether they like or dislike the juice.

### Lesson 3

Lesson three focused on reinforcing the language learnt in the previous lessons. To do this, six elements have been taken, banana, apple, pear, cheese, lettuce, and tomato. The aim of this is to reinforce interaction with the pupils and to encourage communicative competence so that they are able to express what they are doing. To do this, the food is presented, and emphasis is placed on its pronunciation and that they produce it. As in lesson one, the food signs are presented, and then the song is sung, reinforcing the language (*Appendix I. Bimodal songs*).

Then, through the soil we are going to reinforce the prepositions seen. In this way, we make sure that they are aware of where the soil is placed, and they are the ones who put the soil in the pot and produce what they are doing. After this, a fruit will be placed in the pot and covered with some soil. They will have to say which fruit is in the soil and proceed to take it out and clean it, and so on.

### Lesson 4

Lesson number four is oriented to reinforce the foods already seen and, in addition, to strengthen the oral language and the comprehension of the pupils. In this way, new structures will be introduced through action. The same sequence as in the previous lessons will be followed, the bimodal will be presented in the classroom by using sounds, and then it will be sung. Afterwards, the food seen so it will be refreshed, and cake and broccoli will be added. After this, the pupils will pass the food while singing "pass the fruit". When the song stops, the question will be asked, "where is _____?" and the person who it has, has to pick it up and say here it is. Other fruits will be added to this fruit until they are all there to encourage communication as well as to reinforce the new food.

### Lesson 5

As for lesson five, the intention is to continue with the same theme and carry out an activity related to grocery shopping. For this, as in the previous lessons, the bimodal is presented, followed by the song, and then the food to be used are presented in detail. The question "Can I have the _____ (Food)?" is going to be asked and the pupil takes the food, saying "Yes, of course", so the answer is "Put it in the basket". In this way the understanding of the pupils is observed.

### Lesson 6

Finally, lesson number six, the final task. It aims to combine all the objectives and contents seen previously with the elaboration of a pizza. In this, the pupils must be able to choose the food and express orally what they are doing. In addition to this, other contents such as prepositions, what I like and what I don't like, what it tastes like, how it smells, etc. are also included.

To this end, as has been done throughout the unit, the discourse will be reinforced through the use of the bimodal. In this way, they can be given clues about the food through the signs.

With all this, it is intended that there will be a global assessment of the contents seen and a continuous assessment of the different terms. There is also a clear self-assessment of their knowledge as they are aware of their progress through the making of the pizza and what foods are put on the pizza.


## 5.3 EVALUATION

About the assessment, there will be an initial continuous and final assessment. In this way, it will be possible to see the progress of the pupils and to adapt the contents to their needs. For this purpose, the main instrument to be used is an observation rubric, in which conceptual, attitudinal, and procedural contents will be assessed.

The rubric that has been developed is based on the rubrics that are used to assess these pupils in order to follow the same line of procedure. To do so, we have taken the expectations that have been established for them and assessed them on three degrees of achievement: (*Appendix II. Evaluation*)

    1: needs improvement         2: developing         3: achieved

There is also an observation part, in which it could be clarified the items or factor that are not specify in the grid itself.

The items selected, as mentioned above, are partly a reflection of the content. These contents are related to food, communication, and the use of bimodal in the classroom. In this way, it will be possible to observe in a more accurate and effective way the influence that this method has had on the development of language and communication in the classroom.

## 5.4 METHODOLOGY

In order to develop this proposal, a constructivist methodology has been used, in which the pupils are the centre of their learning, and the new learning is related to the previous one. Being focused on early ages and the main theme of the unit being food, the methodology to be followed is mainly manipulative and experiential, therefore, realia will be used during the lessons.

Related to this are the principles of scaffolding on which this proposal is based. In connection with the aforementioned, this proposal aims to relate the contents that are being seen with the previous ones, to build their learning based on their previous knowledge. Furthermore, the aim is to develop the pupils' thinking skills, thus enhancing their critical thinking. In this way, pupils are given the tools to communicate and express themselves in a foreign language.

Besides, the use of rhymes and songs will be promoted to enhance the understanding and assimilation by the pupils. In this way, it is intended to use bimodal language as if it were a Total Physical Response (TPR) methodology to facilitate the pupils' comprehension.

These principles are very present in the CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) methodology, which is based on cognition, communication, culture, content, and competence. All this is done through the construction of a learning environment, in which the English language is the vehicle and communication is based on it. With the help of gestures, signs and paralanguage, a communicative intention is built up.

Even though the school in which the proposal was made is non-bilingual, the CLIL principles are very present in the infant classroom. The increase in the number of hours per week and the way of working with the content means that these aforementioned guidelines are part of the teaching and use of the foreign language both in the classroom and in the school.

Moreover, a key factor to bear in mind is that the proposal is based on learning through play and experiential learning. Thus, the contents are meaningful as pupils are participants in the activities. In this way, they are the ones who produce and get involved in the communication, with a constant response from them, both verbally and gesturally. This indicates understanding and promotes communicative competence.

# 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND REFLEXIONS

As far as the development of the unit is concerned and its results, it is important to mention that the whole unit has not been put into practice, only some of the main activities designed. Despite this, it has been possible to observe how some kids have been able to relate the name of the food to its sign just by performing it in a song. Thus, during the small sample that was developed, it could be observed that pupils highly understood the signs and communicated through them.

In some cases, the expectations were clearly overcome since the time that they were exposed to the ASL was brief. Nevertheless, most of the children do not follow the signs, only by seeing them, they understand the meaning of the sentence and respond accordingly. All of these implies the improvement of the language comprehension by using signs. According to this, the use of the ASL in the English classroom could be a useful tool to improve the communication and understanding between teacher-students.

With the implementation of the whole unit in a class, it could probably be observed a grand number of pupils using it to communicate. Although it is important to mention that it cannot be used as a way to communicate without the oral language, because it tends to be complementary. In this way, they are developing their oral and listening skills as well as their performance skills.

Some factors that have been observed after the sample implementation and which could be reasons for improvement are related to the sequencing of the contents. Regarding the use of the bimodal in the classroom, it is important to mention that, with the sample seen, it can be observed that it is important to sequence and go more deeply into its prolonged use during the activities.

In relation to this, the importance of using the same songs more frequently has been seen. This is because, with the proposal that has been programmed, the songs, rhythms and activities are only developed once. Despite this, it has been seen that it is more beneficial to use the songs in different contexts and situations so that communication is enhanced, and learners are confident enough to produce in a foreign language.

# 7. CONCLUSIONS

With the practical application of part of the proposal in a classroom, it has been possible to observe some key factors to bear in mind. These factors are influenced by how it has been developed in the classroom, and a few conclusions and suggestions for future projects have been drawn.

As for the use of bimodal itself in the classroom, it has been observed that it does have an influence on communication. Even so, in some cases this influence is more noticeable than in others. Although, this factor is not entirely true, as the presence of bimodal in the classroom has been moderate.

In the case of applying the complete proposal, with the improvements indicated in the previous section, it could have a major influence on the development of communicative competence in pupils. This statement is based on the small sample that has been implemented and the influence it has had on pupils.

Regardless of that fact, there are still certain factors that need to be further developed and explored. These factors could be the focus of future research or classroom projects to encourage communication and learning in pupils at an early age.

Bimodal language has often been used in the classroom as a means of "communication enhancement". Despite this, it has been used with the pupils' native language and Spanish Sign Language. This makes the introduction of American Sign Language in the English classroom a challenge, since a different sign language from the one that they already know is being used to represent a foreign language. That means that pupils can be confused with the signs and do not get it properly or mix it with the ones that they already know.

Therefore, I believe that a remarkably interesting topic for future research could be oriented towards the inclusion of the bimodal language completely in the classroom and associating the sign with the language and not going beyond signing the key word. In this way, we would be introducing Sign Language in the classroom, but without the grammatical structures, making it easier to understand.

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# 9. APPENDIX

## APPENDIX I. UNIT
Unit template

| About the unit/ Where this unit fits |
|---|
| This proposal is designed for a 4-year-old group of about twenty pupils. The title of the proposal is "Let's go shopping!" and it would fit in the third trimester of the course. Being developed in a non-bilingual public school, the number of hours of English per week is one and a half hours, half an hour three days a week. As the classes are so brief, the unit is designed to be dynamic and cyclical, so that the pupils can follow it easily. Therefore, at the beginning of the class there is a pre-established time at the beginning of the course for the development of routines such as the day of the week, the weather or counting how many of us are in class. In this way, pupils are highly exposed to English in a way that is close and familiar to them, which makes them feel safe and confident to participate. <br><br>The main objective of this unit is to bring English closer to the pupils through a communicative context. In this way, it is intended to use bimodal language as a mediator to achieve this objective. The use of this type of language is used as a tool to facilitate communication and language comprehension. In the same way, an initiation to Sign Language in the classroom is intended to achieve a greater integration as well as to favour the development of the child's language both in his/her native language and in the foreign language. |

Being focused on early ages and the main theme of the unit being food, the methodology to be followed is mainly manipulative and experiential, therefore, realia will be used during the classes. Besides this, the use of rhymes and songs will be promoted to enhance the understanding and assimilation by the pupils. In this way, it is intended to use bimodal language as if it were a Total Physical Response (TPR) methodology to facilitate the pupils' comprehension.

| Prior Learning | Language used in the unit | Important Resources |
|---|---|---|
| They already know the colours and prepositions as it is a cross theme in all the units and has been worked on since the beginning of the school year.<br><br>In addition, some pupils already know few bimodal words even though they are not closely related to the topic. | Food items<br><br>• Fruit: banana, apple, orange, lemon, pineapple, and strawberry.<br>• Vegetables: potato, carrot, pepper, aubergine, courgette.<br>• Junk food: pizza, chocolate, ice cream, cake.<br><br>Simple instructions and questions:<br><br>• Do you have_____?<br>• What fruit is missing?<br>• What is on the floor?<br>• I put the _____ on the pizza.<br>• … | • Flashcard<br>• Realia food |

| Expectations | |
|---|---|
| At the end of this unit all the children must | - Recognise most of the signs of the food.<br>- Identify the image of the food.<br>- Relate the sign with the image.<br>- Relate the food items with their daily lives.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and with support. |
| At the end of this unit most of the children should | - Recognise all the signs of the food.<br>- Identify the image of the food and try to pronounce it.<br>- Use the sign as a support of their comprehension.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and with support and name some foods that are healthy.<br>- Name and classify several foods that form part of a healthy diet. |
| At the end of this unit some of the children could | - Recognise all the signs of the food and used it as a support in their speech.<br>- Identify the image of the food and pronounce it.<br>- Use the sign as a way of communication.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and without support and name some foods that are healthy.<br>- Name and sort a wide range of foods that form part of a healthy diet |

**Lessons Overview**

| Lesson | Learning goals | Learning outcomes | Main activity | Assessment criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | - To identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.<br>- To identify and name a range of secondary colours.<br>- To recognise some fruits: banana, apple, orange, lemon, pineapple, and strawberry.<br>- To connect the name of the fruit with it sign.<br>- To participate physically when singing action songs. | - Identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.<br>- Identify and name a range of secondary colours.<br>- Recognise some fruits: banana, apple, orange, lemon, pineapple, and strawberry.<br>- Connect the name of the fruit with it sign.<br>- Participate physically when singing action songs. | Fruit's song and fruit tree. | **All the children must:**<br>- Recognise most of the signs of the food.<br>- Identify the image of the food.<br>- Relate the food items with their daily lives.<br>- Follow the song instructions.<br>- Copy the signs. |
| 2 | - To identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow. | - Identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.<br>- Identify and name a range of secondary colours. | Fruit taste | **All the children must:**<br>- Recognise most of the signs of the food. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - To identify and name a range of secondary colours. <br> - To conduct good personal hygiene habits. <br> - To differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour. | - Conduct good personal hygiene habits. <br> - Differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour. | | - Copy the signs. <br> - Try the fruit. <br> - Differentiate basic tastes with help. |
| 3 | - To participate physically when singing action songs. <br> - To identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow. <br> - To identify and name a range of secondary colours. <br> - To recognise some vegetables: potato, carrot, pepper, aubergine, courgette. <br> - To connect the name of the vegetable with it sign. | - Participate physically when singing action songs. <br> - Identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow. <br> - Identify and name a range of secondary colours. <br> - Recognise some vegetables: potato, carrot, pepper, aubergine, courgette. <br> - Connect the name of the vegetable with it sign. | Mystery pot | **All the children must:** <br><br> - Recognise most of the signs of the food. <br> - Identify the image of the food. <br> - Relate the food items with their daily lives. <br> - Follow the song instructions. <br> - Copy the signs. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | - To identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.<br>- To identify and name a range of secondary colours.<br>- To recognise some vegetables and fruits<br>- To connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- To recognise the prepositions. | - Identify and name primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.<br>- Identify and name a range of secondary colours.<br>- Recognise some vegetables and fruits<br>- Connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- Recognise the prepositions. | Food in a plate | **All the children must:**<br><br>- Recognise most of the signs of the food.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and with support.<br>- Identify the image of the food.<br>- Follow the instructions with help. |
| 5 | - To conduct good personal hygiene habits.<br>- To differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour.<br>- To connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- To recognise some vegetables and fruits. | - Differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour.<br>- Connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- Recognise some vegetables and fruits.<br>- Distinguish between the fruit and the vegetable. | The missing fruit | **All the children must:**<br><br>- Recognise most of the signs of the food.<br>- Identify the image of the food.<br>- Follow the instructions with help.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and with support. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - To distinguish between the fruit and the vegetable. | | | |
| 6 | - To conduct good personal hygiene habits.<br>- To differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour.<br>- To connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- To recognise some vegetables and fruits.<br>- To distinguish between the fruit and the vegetable. | - Conduct good personal hygiene habits.<br>- Differentiate basic tastes: sweet, savoury, sour.<br>- Connect the name of the food with it sign.<br>- Recognise some vegetables and fruits.<br>- Distinguish between the fruit and the vegetable. | Make a pizza | **All the children must:**<br><br>- Recognise most of the signs of the food.<br>- Identify the image of the food.<br>- Relate the sing with the image.<br>- Relate the food items with their daily lives.<br>- Classify some foods into groups and with support.<br>- Recognise simple instructions |

*Lesson 1. Fruit tree*



*Lesson 2. "Squeeze the fruit"*



*Lesson 3. Mystery pot*



*Lesson 5. Put it in the basket*



*Lesson 3. Pizza*

# UNIT

## LESSON 1 ➔ "Apples and bananas"

**I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas.**

*Eat: with your fingers together, bring your hand to your mouth and move it around.*

*Apples: with your index finger bent at the side of your mouth and moving your wrist downward.*

*Bananas: With your left index finger straight in front of you, make a movement of peeling a banana with your other hand.*

**I like to eat, eat, eat pineapple and orange.**

*Eat: with your fingers together, bring your hand to your mouth and move it around.*

*Pineapple: With your thumb and index finger together and the rest of your fingers straight, twist your wrist in front of your eye*

*Orange: open and close you fist in front of your mouth.*

**I like to eat, eat, eat lemon and pear.**

*Eat: with your fingers together, bring your hand to your mouth and move it around.*

*Lemon: with your fingers in an L shape next to your mouth, move your index finger down and up.*

*Pear: With the left fist closed, raise the right hand from the fingers open and covering the fist to the fingers together and up.*

## LESSON 3 ➔ "Look inside the basket"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPhSiFByWLY&ab_channel=Learnwithme-ABC123International-howtolearnlanguagesfast

**Look, inside the basket,**

*Basket: raise your cupped hands sideways.*

**There is the carrot,**

*Carrot: Open a close you fist and move to you mouth.*

### long and orange x2

*Long: open your arms.*

*Orange: open and close you fist in front of your mouth.*



### Look, inside the basket,

*Basket: raise your cupped hands sideways.*



### There is the potato,

*Potato: touch your close left fist with two fingers.*



### Round and brown. X2

*Round: make a circle with your finger.*



*Brown: move your straight hand and your bent thumb in front of your mouth.*



## LESSON 4 → "Can I have this?"

### Can I have this pineapple please?

*Pineapple: With your thumb and index finger together and the rest of your fingers straight, twist your wrist in front of your eye*



*Please: Make a circle in your chest with your hand.*



### Yes of course, put it in the basket.

*Yes: with your fits close move your wrist up and down.*



*Basket: raise your cupped hands sideways.*



### Can I have this pear please?

*Pear: With the left fist closed, raise the right hand from the fingers open and covering the fist to the fingers together and up.*



*Please: Make a circle in your chest with your hand.*

**Yes of course, put it in the basket.**

*Yes: with your fits close move your wrist up and down.*

*Basket: raise your cupped hands sideways.*

**Can I have this potato please?**

*Potato: touch your close left fist with two fingers.*

*Please: Make a circle in your chest with your hand.*

**Yes of course, put it in the basket.**

*Yes: with your fits close move your wrist up and down.*

*Basket: raise your cupped hands sideways.*

**Can I have this carrot please?**

*Carrot: Open a close you fist and move to you mouth.*

*Please: Make a circle in your chest with your hand.*

## LESSON 5 ➔ "Go bananas!"

**First you peel bananas, peel peel bananas. X2**

*Peel: place your left-hand face down slightly arched (as if holding something). Now with your right hand with your index finger in the shape of a hook, make an up and down movement as if you were peeling a potato.*



**Then you slice bananas, slices slice bananas. X2**

*Slice: with your left fist close put your right hand next to it and move your writs up and down*



**Then you eat, bananas, eat eat bananas. X2**

*Eat: with your fingers together, bring your hand to your mouth and move it around.*



**Then you go bananas, go go bananas. X2**

*Go: dance in the sit.*

**First you peel potato, peel peel potato. X2**

*Peel: place your left-hand face down slightly arched (as if holding something). Now with your right hand with your index finger in the shape of a hook, make an up and down movement as if you were peeling a potato.*



**Then you mash potato, mash mash bananas. X2**

*Mash: turn your close fist on your open left hand.*



**Then you eat, potato, eat eat potato. X2**

*Eat: with your fingers together, bring your hand to your mouth and move it around.*



**Then you go bananas, go go bananas. X2**

*Go: dance in the sit.*

**First you pick some corn, pick pick some corn. X2**

*Corn: close your hands and move them left to right like you were eating a corn.*



**Then you peel some corn, peel peel some corn. X2**

*Peel: place your left-hand face down slightly arched (as if holding something). Now with your right hand with your index finger in the shape of a hook, make an up and down movement as if you were peeling a potato.*



**Then you pop, some corn, pop pop some corn. X2**

*Pop: open and close your fists.*

**Then you go bananas, go go bananas. X2**

*Go: dance in the sit.*

## APPENDIX II. EVALUATION

| NAME: | Levels of achivement | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Recognise some of the signs of the food | | | |
| Identify the image of the food | | | |
| Relate the sign with the image | | | |
| Relate the food items with their daily lives | | | |
| Produce language with a image support | | | |
| Follow the sign instruction during the song | | | |
| Participate in the activities and follow the lesson | | | |
| Identify the food that she/he likes and which one not | | | |
| **OBSERVATIONS:** | | | |
| | | | |