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UTILIZANDO UN CUENTO INTERACTIVO PARA ENSEÑAR ESPAÑOL EN UN AULA DE EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL EN IRLANDA

USING AN INTERACTIVE STORY TO TEACH SPANISH IN AN IRISH INFANT EDUCATION CONTEXT

TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

GRADO EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL. MENCIÓN EN LENGUA INGLESA

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RESUMEN

La comunicación oral es una cualidad representativa del ser humano que se desarrolla de forma innata, durante nuestros primeros años de vida, a través de la imitación nuestro entorno más cercano. En este trabajo se expondrán los diferentes procesos de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera partiendo de la base de cómo se aprende la lengua materna y continuando con las bases, los beneficios, las herramientas y los recursos que deben utilizarse para enseñar una lengua extranjera a niños y niñas del segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil. Más concretamente, una secuencia de planificación sobre la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera en un aula infantil irlandesa.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Adquisición del lenguaje, lengua extranjera, español, unidad didáctica, aprendizaje, literatura infantil, juegos, competencia comunicativa.

ABSTRACT

Oral expression is a representative quality of the human being that develops innately, during our first years of life, through imitation of our closest environment. In this work, the different processes of learning a foreign language will be presented, starting from the basis of how the mother tongue is learned and continuing with the bases, benefits, tools, and resources that should be used to teach a foreign language to children in the second cycle of Infant Education. More specifically, a planning sequence on the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in an Irish junior infant classroom.

KEY WORDS: Language acquisition, foreign language, Spanish, didactic unit, learning, children's literature, games, communicative competence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of language is the ability that differentiates humans from other living beings. It gives us the ability to communicate with each other. Communication is arguably one of the most widely used terms today and, in turn, the most important tool available to humans.

Due to globalisation, the world is evolving very fast, and people have to manage not to be left behind. A few years ago, only a minority of the population knew how to speak a language other than that of their mother tongue, there was no need to, you lived where you were born, and everyone spoke the same language. As the years went by, technology advanced, and with it, society. People started to leave their immediate environment and get to know different cultures. Nowadays, with the ease of flying from one country to another in a matter of minutes, learning languages has become a daily task.

So, when is the best time to immerse yourself in learning a foreign language? As soon as possible. However, not all countries offer the opportunity to learn a foreign language at school.

This final degree project focuses on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language in the second cycle of early childhood education, corresponding to children between 3 and 6 years old, in an environment where English is the official language, in Ireland. The purpose of this work is to highlight the importance of learning foreign languages in the early years, due to the high capacity of children to acquire all kinds of knowledge easily and in a short time and create an accessible proposal in accordance with the Irish Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

In addition, different techniques will be provided to acquire this knowledge in a playful, interesting, and attractive way for the pupils. Using games, children's literature, and the use of new technologies in the classroom as the main tools.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the degree in Early Childhood Education, in accordance with the report on Early Childhood Education, version 5, 13/06/2011 established by Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October establishing the organisation of university education, is to train professionals with the ability to face the challenges of the education system and adapt teaching to new training needs, carrying out their functions under the principle of collaboration and teamwork. In addition, to master the management of the early childhood education curriculum and develop teaching strategies that facilitate learning in their students from a globalising and integrating perspective.

2.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

According to the report on Early Childhood Education, version 5, 13/06/2011 established by Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October establishing the organisation of university education, all students should be able to achieve the following specific objectives by the end of the early Childhood Education Degree.

- Plan educational action taking into account changes in the educational environment.
- Act as a mediator, promoting coexistence inside and outside the classroom.
- Design, organise and evaluate disciplinary and interdisciplinary work in contexts of diversity.
- Have collaborative attitudes with the educational community.
- Implement information and communication technologies in the classroom.

3. COMPETENCES

3.1. GENERAL COMPETENCES

All students of the Early Childhood Education Degree must acquire a list of general competences during their studies. These are set out in Royal Decree 1393/2007, which establishes the organisation of university education, and have been modified in recent years to achieve greater specificity and adjustment to the reality of the present.

1. That students have demonstrated possession and understanding of knowledge in an area of study - Education - which starts from the basis of general secondary education, and is usually at a level which, while relying on advanced textbooks, also includes some aspects involving knowledge from the cutting edge of their field of study. This competence will take the form of knowledge and comprehension for the practical application of:
   b. The main psychological, sociological and pedagogical characteristics of pupils at the different stages and stages of the education system.
   f. Fundamentals of the main disciplines structuring the curriculum.

2. That students know how to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and possess the competences that are usually demonstrated through the elaboration and defence of arguments and the resolution of problems within their area of study - Education. This competence will take the form of the development of skills that will train the graduate to:
   a. Be able to recognise, plan, carry out and assess good teaching-learning practices.
   c. Be able to integrate the information and knowledge necessary to solve educational problems, mainly through collaborative procedures.

3. Students have the ability to gather and interpret essential data (usually within their area of study) in order to make judgements that include reflection on essential social, scientific or ethical issues. This competence will take the form of the development of skills that train the graduate to:
   a. Be able to interpret data derived from observations in educational contexts in order to judge their relevance in appropriate educational praxis.

5. That students have developed those learning skills necessary to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy. The realisation of this competence involves the development of:

> b. The acquisition of strategies and techniques for autonomous learning, as well as training in the disposition for continuous lifelong learning.
>
> c. Knowledge, understanding and mastery of self-learning methodologies and strategies.
>
> e..The promotion of a spirit of initiative and an attitude of innovation and creativity in the exercise of their profession.

6. Development of an ethical commitment in its configuration as a professional, a commitment that must strengthen the idea of comprehensive education, with critical and responsible attitudes; guaranteeing the effective equality of women and men, equal opportunities, universal accessibility for people with disabilities and the values of a culture of peace and democratic values. The development of this commitment will take the form of:

> a. The promotion of democratic values, with special emphasis on tolerance, solidarity, justice and non-violence and the knowledge and appreciation of human rights.
>
> b. Knowledge of the intercultural reality and the development of attitudes of respect, tolerance and solidarity towards different social and cultural groups.
>
> c. Awareness of the effective right to equal treatment and opportunities between women and men, in particular through the elimination of discrimination against women, whatever their circumstances or condition, in any sphere of life.

3.2. SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

All students of the Early Years Education Degree must acquire a list of specific competences during their studies. These are organised according to the report on Early Childhood Education, version 5, 13/06/2011 established by Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October establishing the organisation of university education.

A. Basic Training

1. Understand the educational and learning processes in the 0-6 period, in the family, social and school context.

4. Ability to know how to promote the acquisition of habits based on autonomy, freedom, curiosity, observation, experimentation, imitation, acceptance of rules and limits, symbolic and heuristic play.

8. Know how to inform other specialist professionals in order to approach the collaboration of the centre and the teacher in the attention to the special educational needs that arise.

15. Ability to analyse and critically incorporate the social and educational impact of audiovisual languages and screens, as well as the educational implications of information and communication technologies and, in particular, of television in early childhood.

19. To promote coexistence in the classroom and outside it and to deal with the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

23. Knowledge of the fundamentals of infant dietetics and hygiene, as well as first aid, and the ability to acquire the ability to understand the basic principles of healthy development and behaviour.

29. Understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education change according to each pupil, group and situation and have the ability to be flexible in the exercise of the teaching function.

32. To value the importance of teamwork.

34. Ability to know how to attend to the needs of the pupils and know how to transmit security, calm and affection.

B. Didactic disciplinary:

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

8. Promote symbolic play and role-playing as the main means of learning about social reality.

12. Promote interest in and respect for the natural, social and cultural environment.

13. To be able to carry out experiences with information and communication technologies and apply them didactically.

14. Know the language and literacy curriculum of the early childhood education stage, as well as the theories on the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.

18. To encourage children's habits of approaching the initiation to reading and writing.

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

24. To be able to cope with language learning situations in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

25. Know children's literature and develop strategies for children's approach to literary texts, both oral and written.

28. Be able to use songs, resources and musical strategies to promote auditory, rhythmic, vocal and instrumental education in individual and group activities for children.

29. Be able to use play as a didactic resource, as well as to design learning activities based on playful principles.

C. **Practicum and Final Degree Project.**

1. Acquire practical knowledge of the classroom and of classroom management.

2. Be able to apply the processes of interaction and communication in the classroom, as well as master the social skills and abilities necessary to foster a climate that facilitates learning and coexistence.

4..Be able to relate theory and practice to the reality of the classroom and the centre.

5.Participate in the teaching activity and learn to know how to do, acting and reflecting from practice, with the perspective of innovating and improving teaching work.

7. Be able to regulate the processes of interaction and communication in groups of pupils aged 0-3 and 3-6 years.

8. To be able to collaborate with the different sectors of the educational community and the social environment.

9. Acquire habits and skills for autonomous and cooperative learning and promote it in the pupils.

4. JUSTIFICATION

Nowadays, learning foreign languages is one of the most valued and important skills due to globalization. Learning a foreign language provides a large number of benefits, both in terms of personal growth through knowledge of other cultures, understanding a new reality, ease of communication, development of greater social sensitivity, etc. As well as benefits at a cognitive level by favouring concentration, improving memory, increasing cognitive flexibility, etc.

As I mentioned before, this work aims to give Irish children, who are used to studying a foreign language from high school onwards, the opportunity to learn Spanish for a short period of time in their first year of school, aged 4, 5, and 6. Learning a foreign language in the early years education is very enriching as they are at a stage of continuous learning, where they imitate everything and are not ashamed to produce in the wrong way. This makes the learning process faster and more effective, as well as providing them with motivation that will increase as they achieve new goals and will make them want to continue learning.

According to the above-mentioned guidelines, this knowledge will be taught through children's literature, using stories as the main tool, and through games, reinforcing the different contents with the help of movement, songs, and rhythms.

The design of my didactic unit will aim to develop the communicative competence of Spanish in Irish students who often go to Spain, but never practise the language. This objective will be achieved through playful activities, movement, a personalised interactive story, songs and dances, and certain routines that will regulate the behaviour of the pupils. These activities will be carried out with the support of new technologies to achieve a greater approach to the Spanish reality, facilitating the understanding of the pupils through the reading of images.

5.THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

5.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In a globalised and interconnected world, languages are a way of connecting countries, allowing people to travel, communicate and seek new horizons. Those who know one or more languages have more tools to communicate, so their possibilities are greater. In English-speaking countries, there is the problem that their mother tongue is the most widely spoken language in the world, a total of 1.452 billion people speak English, whether it is their mother tongue or a foreign language.

This situation is also reflected in Ireland, where students do not have the opportunity to study a foreign language until they start high school, at the age of 12 or 13. However, junior infants, 4 or 5 years old, start learning their second language, Irish. The benefit of learning this second language is reflected in the cultural awareness, as Niamh Nic Leoid (2022) says, "The Irish language is closely connected to the history of Ireland and its impact on the variety of English we speak today is notable. Through learning Irish, you can, therefore, get a new perspective or deeper insight into your own heritage".

Spending your entire childhood studying only the second language of your country can lead to problems in the future, according to an article Eleanor Brooks (2016) wrote for the College Tribune, Independent UCD News, "the lack of adequate bilingualism among Irish students compared to their European counterparts can be observed."

This context is expected to change in 2025, with the first reform of the primary school curriculum since 1999, introducing the opportunity to choose a foreign language in schools from the third year of primary education onwards.

But what age should foreign language learning begin is a question that is has been looked at in different ways. Some researchers point to puberty as a critical time after which language learning becomes very difficult due to the loss of plasticity in the brain, which prevents the acquisition of linguistic structures in an innate way. "In general, it is

reasonable to assume that little progress is made after the age of puberty" (KLEIN, 1986: 9),

There is a time in human development when the brain is predisposed to success in language learning. Developmental changes in the brain, affect the nature of language acquisition, and language learning that occurs after the end of the critical period may not be based on the innate biological structures believed to contribute to first language acquisition" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 68).

As Navarro, B. (2009) states "after that point, learning will depend on other factors, usually related to conscious learning processes, and whose outcomes will be conditioned by our mother tongue and culture.". Therefore, the earlier the foreign language acquisition process starts, the better the results will be, bearing in mind that the mother tongue must be mastered efficiently before implementing any other language.

In line with the previous idea, we find Morgado (2015) who, following studies carried out by American researchers, points out that there is a difference between where the foreign language is located in the brain depending on when it was learned. Those acquired at an early age are in the same area as the mother tongue, but those acquired later are placed in a different area.

Therefore, the ideal time to learn a foreign language would be from the age of 3-4 years, when they have already acquired their mother tongue. And the school would be the ideal environment to carry out this learning. As Navarro (2009) says "the school represents the perfect educational context to give pupils the necessary linguistic input that will be basic to their learning.". Because the teaching environment is mostly playful and oral expressions are generally linked to physical activities.

Another positive aspect of working with another language in an Early Years classroom is that children are more relaxed and unashamed when participating in different activities. In general, they do not feel intimidated or judged by their classmates if they make mistakes, so it is easier to achieve active participation and a good learning environment. Moreover, we cannot forget that, even if they do not produce at first, they are learning. As Krashen said: "The classroom will probably never be able to completely overcome its limitations, nor does it have to. Its goal is not to substitute for the outside

world, but to bring students to the point where they can begin to use the outside world for further acquisition" (1987: 59).

Some authors who support the importance of learning a foreign language are Vygotsky and Asher.

Vygotsky in his work "Thought and Language" (1934) deals with the interrelation between cognition and language, and highlights the importance of language for the cognitive development of people. This author also argues that there is a moment in a child's infancy when plasticity in the brain makes language learning easier. Furthermore, within his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, we find Scaffolding, a concept that is highly related to the work of the teacher in teaching and that shortens the distance between what we are able to learn by ourselves and what we learn with help. This help can be provided by the teacher or even by a more capable classmate, so paired or group work would be a very efficient tool.

James Asher also discusses the importance of learning a foreign language in his Total Physical Response Theory (1984). In early years education, the techniques of his theory are often used to combine speech with activities, using imperative commands in order to convey clear and concise instruction to pupils and facilitate their understanding.

5.2. SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN IRELAND

Spanish is the third language studied in terms of the number of students in the Irish education system after French and German. It is important to note that in recent years the number of students opting for Spanish has been gradually increasing. In 2006 there were 19,409 students in Ireland studying Spanish in secondary schools, in the academic year 2014-2015 the figure had risen to 44,129 students, an increase of 127%.

According to published statistics by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2019, 4.967 students took the Spanish junior certificate exam, and 33.135 students took the French junior certificate exam. Ten years later, in 2019, 12.099 students took the Spanish junior certificate exam and 31.070 the French exam. With this, we can observe that the number of students choosing Spanish as a foreign language in Ireland is steadily increasing while French, the leading foreign language, has maintained a slight

decrease over the last 10 years. "There are 45,291 high school students of Spanish in Ireland. Spanish is seen less and less as a language for tourism as the perception of its usefulness for the world of business and international relations increases".

5.3. THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

According to Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M.., (2002).

La investigación desarrollada en los últimos 25 o 30 años desde diversas hipótesis psicolingüísticas ha puesto de manifiesto la importancia del aprendiz como individuo, de su interacción con el profesor, de sus características personales, etcétera, como aspectos que influyen directamente en el proceso de adquisición aprendizaje de una nueva lengua. (p. 143)

It is important to understand the foundations of how foreign language acquisition has developed over the years and how teaching practice has been significantly influenced by it. According to the work of Hernández and Sancho (1989) from the perspective of teacher training and that of Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) from the perspective of research into second language acquisition, there are five conceptions that have shaped thinking and research in foreign language teaching.

- Learning as the result of external conditioning.

According to the psychologist Pavlov (1927) learning is the result of external conditioning on the conditioned reaction. This conception of learning was referred to by Thorndike (1913) as the law of casual learning whereby learning is conceived in direct relation to achievement, motivation and expectations. This author proposes repetition as a tool to establish the necessary connections between stimulus and reaction. Connections are reinforced when the result is satisfactory for the organism. If all this is taken to the field of foreign language teaching, the teacher must plan considering that the learner is a mere passive performer who will internalise and automate this behaviour with homogeneous and repeated responses without processing the information.

- Learning as information processing.

Gagné (1974) provides a model of learning to facilitate information processing, giving special importance to the idea of possessing a basic amount of information, which must be encoded, stored, transformed and decoded, in order to be able to learn new content. Also, he describes thepath of information from sensory uptake to its establishment in long-term memory. These processes occur continuously in language teaching contexts, and it is therefore the task of the teacher to plan and implement appropriate programming and to interact actively with the learner to facilitate the transmission of linguistic input to the learner. This requires active teacher-student interaction and cooperation. (Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. (editor)., 2002, p. 150-151)

- Discovery learning.

In discovery learning, discovery means restructuring and transforming data, which is linked to action in the environment where only what one discovers for oneself is learned.

- Meaningful learning.

This learning is characteristic of the psychologist David Ausubel (1976), who argues that the student must find meaning in what he learns and perceive its functionality insofar as it serves a purpose. This orientation should be based on the learner's prior knowledge and needs, which are determined by his or her personal experiences.

- Learning as a construction of the individual.

This learning has important biological bases where Piaget (1976) studies the following terms. Assimilation, as action on surrounding objects where each level is an eventual and dynamic equilibrium. Accommodation, as a reaction between learned and new structures. And adaptation, as a result of the creation of a new cognitive structure thanks to the balance between the two terms mentioned above, assimilation and accommodation. In other words, first, there would be a discovery of novelty (integration), then adaptation of the novelty (assimilation), and finally, the resulting new activity (restitution).

5.4. LEARNING PROCESSES OF THE MOTHER TONGUE

In order to teach a foreign language, it is crucial to first understand the learning processes of the first language or mother tongue. During the first years of life, language is accompanied by a series of communication strategies that make it easier to understand. Caretaker speech is the result of how language aimed at young children changes according to their needs. According to Littlewood (1984:15) as referred in Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. (editor)., (2002) these are some of the characteristics that caretaker speech encompasses:

- Slower and clearer spoken language, with greater tonal variation and exaggeration.
- Use of shorter sentences
- Less use of compound sentences and more limited vocabulary.
- Less variety of verb tenses
- Much repetition
- Talking about the immediate environment (here and now).

This is why Bouton (1974:167-169) quoted in Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. (editor)., (2002) suggests several factors that differentiate foreign language learning and first language acquisition at different levels:

- Neurophysiological level: informal learning takes place according to ontogenetically privileged stages, and voluntary verbal activity is controlled by spontaneous behaviour. Formal school learning, on the other hand, takes place when the brain's plasticity begins to regress, and voluntary verbal activity gives way to spontaneous activity.
- Psychological level: deep motivations are governed by the needs of the environment, where the individual must insert himself and assert himself as a social individual, while learning is governed by superficial motivations that can lead to feelings that could block his ability to express himself.
- Intellectual level: in acquisition, experience precedes verbal formulation, and in learning, experience is reorganised by the first language.
- Linguistic level: in acquisition, language as discourse comes first, and in learning, discourse is a consequence of language.

As Porquier (1998) states, the appropriation of a language is not isolated, it is related to previous and concurrent learning, and has an impact on the evolving nature of learners' learning profiles.

> Los procesos de apropiación de las LEs se desarrollan en ese lugar social e institucional que es el aula, un lugar y espacio temporal estructurado y dinámico constituido por las categorías educativas esenciales que analizan exhaustivamente Galisson (1990: 14-24) y a las que subyacen elementos específicos e interdependientes: el sujeto, el agente y el objeto. (Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. (editor), 2002, p. 162)

5.5. INTRODUCTION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM

Chomsky (1965) advocates the concept language acquisition device (LAD), an instinctive mental capacity that enables all human beings, in their first years of life, to acquire and produce language. It is a component of nativist language theory. Language is a necessary instrument to represent reality and every speaker must go through a series of similar stages until the culmination of the linguistic code.

Bruner argues that there is a similar set of structures in all adult-child interactions to develop capacities. In most cases, the following moments occur.

- Giving an example: mostly starting with movement-based games.
- Offering cues after settling on a task, as a reminder to be able to complete the task on their own.
- Scaffold attention. reduce the degree of freedom the child must control and guide their actions indirectly.
- Raise the bar. After the acquisition of a subroutine, encourage the child to incorporate it into a routine.
- Offer instructions when the child knows how to perform the task and has acquired the ability to interpret verbal instructions.

These steps coincide with those that should be applied for learning a foreign language.

Once the learning processes of the first language are known, and in order to introduce a foreign language in a classroom, the characteristics of the representation processes and learning strategies of the youngest children must be known.

Following Bruner's theories, three types of representations can be distinguished:

- The enactive or movement-based one
- Iconic
- Symbolic

It is also worth highlighting the importance of play in cognitive development, giving a special value to those games for the development of language that involve movement.

> El movimiento es fundamental para nuestra memoria espacial, recordamos canciones o hechos a través de ritmos. […] el juego posibilita ese entorno atractivo y seguro en el que la criatura se desenvuelve y el adulto puede ir incluyendo nuevos retos que suponen un riesgo asumible. (Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. (editor), 2002, p115-116)

5.6. IMPLEMENTING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Early foreign language learning has certain early benefits that we need to be aware of. According to Cummins, 1981; Swain, 1982; Bialystok and Ryan, 1985 and Genesse, 1994, these are the six major areas where the individual makes the most obvious progress.

- Increased self-esteem through self-awareness of their knowledge.
- They have greater cognitive development.
- Develops linguistic competence and metalinguistic awareness in music and mathematics.
- Their conversational competence is enhanced, and it is easier for them to learn other languages.
- Develops a higher social sensitivity.
- Increases their creativity.

These benefits emerge progressively, as constructivist theory suggests, and the constant activity and interaction will vary according to the pace of learning of each student. It is not feasible to claim immediate evidence.

> "Con todo, aún más importante parece el hecho de que ningún alumno aprenda exactamente las mismas cosas que otro, ni de la misma manera. Es decir, cada alumno parece tener una ruta de aprendizaje distinta, y aunque en ella inciden variables psicológico-ambientales…, existe un factor entre ellas…: el proceso de interacción en la clase (Vez,1998:15)."

Likewise, using the words of Cantero y Arriba, (1997:23) knowing and mastering at least one foreign language provides a richer cultural and reality vision, due to the diversity that each language provides us with. In other words, it forms part of the personal growth that is very necessary in the lives of all students.

On the other hand, there are certain requirements that must be fulfilled for the implementation of a multilingual programme according to Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M.., (2002).

- In the first place, approaching foreign language learning from the perspective of communication would be the main axis. "The early learning proposal will always be based on communicative contexts that are meaningful and of high interest for the age group in which it is carried out." (p.330).

> […] Hablar de comunicación es hacer referencia a las relaciones individuo-medio, cuanto más ricos y diversificados sean los procedimientos de comunicación, más fácilmente resultará a la persona expresarse con precisión y matices, y más posible le resultará acceder a los contenidos expresados por otras personas o por vehículos culturales. (DCB, 1989)

- Secondly, it is very important to retain the independent development of the mother tongue at the same time. The teaching of a foreign language implies the development of a new identity on the part of the learners, not imposing one culture over the other but accepting it and creating a different and more realistic perspective of the world in which they live, breaking out of the self-centred environment in which all learners find themselves in their early formative years.
- Finally, the foreign language should be seen as a great benefit for the learner. The main aim of education is to broaden and redirect their knowledge, never to belittle or change it.

5.7. FOREIGN LANGUAGE INITIATION PROGRAMME IN AN EARLY YEAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Having studied the factors, learning processes, benefits, requirements, contributions, etc., that every teacher must know in order to be able to carry out successful foreign language teaching, it is time to analyse how a foreign language teaching project from the second cycle of early years education should be integrated into the curriculum.

To begin with, according to Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M.., (2002), the following questions should be considered. What type of planning do I want to carry out? At what level are the students I will work with? Through what context can I enhance the capacities of the students?

5.7.1. HOW TO TEACH SPANISH IN AN EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM

It is said that learning Spanish as a foreign language strengthens the psychomotor, socio-affective and cognitive development of the children. So, teaching Spanish in an early year classroom requires a natural task-based approach and didactic resources that allow teaching in a playful and attractive way, awakening their interest in learning the language and also helping the teacher to fulfil his or her educational role.

An efficient way to teach a foreign language is to use the guiding activities of early childhood (play, art and stories). Play is a good tool for reinforcing knowledge in an active and moving way. Children in an early year's classroom need to move in order to concentrate and what better tool than to use movement as a driver for learning a foreign language? As for the second main activity, art, we find among other artistic expressions music.

Therefore, using songs with different rhythms, sounds and dance is a good tool as it strengthens and facilitates skills, abilities and competences thanks to the motivation and fun it produces. Arguedas (2009) states that games help develop rhythmic movements that will act as stimuli for the social, affective, cognitive and motor development. Thus, making kids enjoy when moving, and singing songs.

Finally, through children's stories, they learn about other cultures, countries and traditions. Coyle (2000) states that literature enables students' cognitive and social development by offering them the possibility of crossing their geographical and cultural boundaries, i.e. the world enters the classroom through stories.

As the article "Storytelling in the Young Learners Classroom" published by the University of Athens (2013) states: "Stories are especially important in this respect, as they provide a sound framework for the listeners and enable them to understand before they respond. By using stories to teach language we create a context in which meaningful, comprehensible communication can occur."

All these guiding activities are motivational tools that get children to pay attention and acquire different knowledge unconsciously.

5.7.2. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

As Wright (1995) said, "We all need stories for our mind as much as we need food for our bodies". From the earliest years of our lives, we have all enjoyed stories in our mother tongue, helping us to understand the world around us, providing us with knowledge and at the same time giving us experiences for our brains to let our imagination run wild. Using them as a tool during the teaching of a foreign language will be positive for the students, offering them something familiar in the face of all the new things that await them.

What reasons might we want to use storytelling as a resource in an early childhood classroom? Wright (1995) suggests the following:

-   Motivation: if you find the right time, children will always be willing to listen.
-   Meaning: when children realise that they understand the story in another language, they will be highly motivated and their interest in the language will increase significantly.
-   Fluency: situations where students are encouraged to `have a go´ must be indispensable, there is listening, reading, speaking and writing fluency.

- Language awareness: through the stories the pupils can experience the `feel´ and sound of a foreign language. Besides, these texts introduce the pupils to different scripts and grammatical structures.
- Stimulus for speaking and writing: the use of simple stories can motivate/stimulate pupils to produce certain short sentences, and on top of that, they provide a wealth of activities to discuss or comment on our thoughts about the story.
- Communication: after listening to or reading a story, there are many expressive activities where communication is carried out through dance, music, drama, art, etc.
- General curriculum: one of the greatest values of stories is that we can create them, adapt them and use them to integrate the learning of every area of the curriculum we need, stories are the main tool for transmitting knowledge.

On the other hand, today's students are digital natives, so teaching must be adapted to the demands of today's Information and Communication Society by incorporating the use of ICT in the classroom. The authors Zorraquino and Gil, (2009) in their article *"El placer de usar las TIC en las aulas de Educación Infantil"* tell us how this tool can be very favourable for increasing children's motivation if it is used responsibly. A good way to introduce ICT in the previous activities would be through literature, an interactive story.

This is why, finally, the role of the story in my didactic proposal will be relevant. All the necessary knowledge will be captured in an attractive way in an interactive story, in order to provide students with the common thread they need to learn a foreign language, the first foreign language for many of them.

To this end, motivation will be sought through the use of new technologies to tell a story, with which they can get to know another reality outside their own egocentrism and feel identified as part of a new culture.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL

6.1. GROUP AND CONTEXT

The unit design was applied in a junior infant class in an Irish school located in Sligo (Ireland). It is a public school located on the outskirts of the town where education is aimed at the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of the student. The families who attend this school have varied economic resources and the school is culturally, racially, religiously, and special needs diverse.

The infant classroom was spacious and equipped with materials and resources that greatly facilitated the implementation of my foreign language didactic unit.

The junior infant class consisted of 21 students between the ages of 4 and 6. As I mentioned before, the students have different cultural and religious backgrounds, so although they all have a good command of the language, some of them spoke other languages in their immediate environment.

6.2. IRISH CURRICULUM

According to the Irish curriculum, Aistear, education is described through 12 principles connected by 4 main themes: Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communicating; and Exploring and Thinking. According to the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, good education and teaching in the early years classroom should take into account children's feelings by caring for motivation, confidence, perseverance, and how they see themselves as learners. This is achieved through communication, thinking, and conflict resolution (Early Childhood Curriculum, 2009).

Pupils are competent individuals who are learning from the world around them and making their own decisions, so they must have support and good role models to follow. "Trust, respect, love, and care are the basis of relationships that enable children to grow, learn and develop. (Early Childhood Curriculum, 2009). Pupils' learning is most effective and successful when both environments, family, and school, work together.

Play also has a very important role in education. Pupils should be given time to develop their skills through voluntary, spontaneous, and meaningful play. There are many types of play: exploratory, constructive, creative, fantasy, socio-dramatic, physical, language, and word play, all of which are designed to develop basic skills and abilities in each child. That is why in my junior infant classroom, during a school day, there were 2 breaks, and top lay times, one sensory and the other by corners, where each corner develops specific skills. Symbolic play, construction, interpretation, measurement, logic, etc.

The success of Irish education lies in the balance between care and education, and this is achieved by a well-trained and confident professional, with the ability to support their students' early learning and understand how they develop through observation, empathy, listening, and assessment.

Based on the contents of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework and my teacher's classroom work, I programmed and planned a didactic unit to introduce students to Spanish as a foreign language. I used a task-based methodology so that the pupils could learn by communicating through interactive activities, with literature and play as one of the main tools. Always willing to listen and adapt the contents to the student's interests, I created a didactic unit that revolves around the basic knowledge that

a child between 4 and 6 years old may need/be interested in about Spain, taking into account that it is one of their main holiday destinations. All these contents were combined and put together in an interactive and personalised story, "Tim Viaja a Málaga", to be narrated by the pupils at the end of the project.

6.3.   UNIT DESGN AND IMPEMENTED

Taking into account the context of my classroom, the needs, interests, and the immediate environment of my students, the following didactic unit was designed. This project has arisen from the idea that a large part of my students spends their holidays in Spain, but they do not relate to the Spanish culture or language at any time. The main objective of my project is to introduce the junior infant class of an Irish school, where no foreign language is learned at the moment, to a new language and culture such as Spanish, so that on their next trip to Spain they will be able to interact and relate to our culture.

Moreover, most of the content covered went hand in hand with the content taught in Irish and the ones taught in the classroom, for example: if in mathematics the teacher introduced coins, I introduced money in the story.

As my didactic unit has been designed once I already knew the characteristics of my classroom, I have been able to think about it and program it, taking into account the level and needs of the students who were going to receive it. This has made it much easier for me to think of activities that could work and even so, some of them have not worked as expected.

In addition, creating each lesson a few days before carrying it out has made it easier for me to solve certain mistakes from previous lessons that I did not want to be repeated, in each lesson I have tried to improve the previous one, to have more order in the class, to capture the attention of more students each time, to achieve more participation, etc. I have been continuously learning.

The final task of my project was created to enhance the meaningful learning that Ausubel (1976) talks about. The story was created from the experiences that some of the students had during my stay and that others were going to have the following summer: going on holiday to Spain. So, before creating it, I had to talk to the children and teachers

and find out about the places they go to, how they go there, and what activities they do. Once the research was done, I was able to start creating, planning, and programming according to the content that I thought would be useful and interesting for my students.

In every lesson, we face learning as a construction of the individual, and the terms of the psychologists Piaget and Vygotsky, assimilation, accommodation, and scaffolding, are put into practice. I first taught the contents to be covered and then they were practised through games or various activities. The first lessons were used to introduce the basic knowledge they would later need to know to understand the story and, from the fourth week onwards, a fragment of the story was read at the end of each lesson.

6.4.   OBJECTIVES OF MY DIDACTIC UNIT

The main objective of this didactic unit is, as Guillén, C., Alario, C. & Vez, J. M. indicate in their book *Didáctica de la lengua extranjera en educación infantil y primaria* (2002), to develop the communicative competence in a foreign language.

On the other hand, we find some specific objectives, raised by the previous authors (2002), which are also in line with the needs raised in this didactic unit:

- To be able to understand some commands, sentences, and words in a foreign language.
- To show children a new reality through a foreign language.
- To learn about another culture with the help of stories
- To understand simple texts in which they have to get involved by means of simple answers.
- Interpret and produce images as a form of communication and enjoyment.
- Promote their self-esteem through self-assessment.

6.3.1. LESSON OVERVIEW

- **Lesson 1**

    The aim of this lesson is to introduce Spanish as a foreign language.

    Three activities will take place. The first one will be, through a power point, to locate Spain, talk to the students to find out what they know and what they don't know, etc. Then they will be taught 3 words in Spanish: *Hola, adiós y gracias*. And finally, they are taught the song "*Hola*". First without music and then with music.

- **Lesson 2**

    The aim of this lesson is to teach the numbers 1 to 5.

    To do so, two activities will be carried out. The first one will be, through Flashcards, to learn the first 5 numbers.

    o 1 and 2=UNO and DOS: es este el 1? Sí, no. ¡Bien! Señala el DOS.

    o 3=TRES: es este el 3? sí, no. Es este el 1? sí, no. Señala el UNO!

    o 4=CUATRO: pronunciation, guess the number, Es este el…? Señala el…

    o 5=CINCO…

    Then they will put into practice what they have learnt by counting building blocks.

- **Lesson 3**

    The aim of this lesson is to teach the colours of the previously learned numbers: *Rosa, rojo, azul, verde y Amarillo.*

    To do so, three activities will be carried out. The first one will be to reinforce the 5 numbers from the other day by counting Easter eggs, as we were celebrating Easter that week.

Then, with the help of flashcards, they will be taught 5 colours: *amarillo, rosa, rojo, azul y verde*. which they will later be able to associate with the colour of each number.

Finally, we will play the 1,2,3 stop game to finish the numbers and get them to produce them, with my help if necessary.

- **Lesson 4**

  The aim of this lesson is to build on previous knowledge and to learn some more colours at the student's request. *Morado, negro y Naranja.*

  To do so, three activities will be carried out. The first one will be, reinforcement numbers and colours with flashcards and online roulette, in order to produce the number and/or colour that the arrow points to. Then, with the help of flashcards, they will be taught 3 more colours: *morado, naranja y negro.*

  In addition, I will use 3 YouTube videos, as a game, to count and look for colours in an interactive way.

  Finally, we will play the traffic light game to finish with the colours. *Verde es andar por la clase, Amarillo es saltar y rojo es pararse.*

- **Lesson 5**

  The aim of this lesson is to build on previous knowledge and to learn about different food that will later appear in the story.

  To do so, three activities will be carried out. The first one will be, reinforce colours through a game where the teacher says a colour in Spanish, and they have to look for it around the class and touch it.

  Then, with the help of flashcards, they will be shown 8 different food that were chosen to be typical Spanish, such as *chorizo* and *olivas*, or for the colours we have already learnt: *berenjena, queso, naranja, tarta, chorizo, helado, oliva y pera.* In the same way as the numbers and colours were taught.

  Finally, using PowerPoint, we will count food and relate them to their respective colours.

- **Lesson 6**

    The aim of this lesson is to learn about the different parts of the body through a song. This song was integrated into the project at the request of my tutor. She thought it would be a good idea to learn a song in Spanish that they already knew in their mother tongue. In fact, the result was very positive, all the students participated with great enthusiasm. Later these contents were connected with the clothes, which were related to the story.

    To do so, two activities will be carried out. The first one will be to show the parts of the body with several repetitions and then listen to two songs. After the first listening, they will be ready to dance once without music and then with music. Once they have mastered the movements and some of the words, we will dance to a third song which starts slowly and increases in speed progressively.

    The second activity is playing a game called "manos en...". They will have to interpret the word in Spanish and place their hands on the correct body part. This is a game they already know because the teacher uses it in their mother tongue to make order in the class.

    Finally, we will end the class by introducing and singing the *adiós* song.

- **Lesson 7**

    The aim of this lesson is to reinforce the parts of the body and to learn the members of the family.

    To begin with, the body parts will be remembered pointing to our bodies and the song will be danced to again.

    Due to the great cultural diversity in the classroom and the fact that each student may have a different situation at home (I asked the teacher and they all lived with their parents) I did not want to put a picture of a standard family, but instead, I used a child's drawing and made them believe that I had drawn my family. Then each student pointed to my drawing and said who each one was in his or her family.

The contents taught were: *papá, mama, hermano, hermana y yo*. These contents will be useful to understand the first part of the story where Tim, the main character, will introduce himself and tell us who he lives with.

To finish the lesson, we will say goodbye by singing the *Adiós* song.

- **Lesson 8**

The aim of this lesson is to learn about the different clothes they usually wear.

With the help of some the flashcards the different items of clothing will be presented, and knowledge will be established in the same way as before.

The contents to be learnt were: *camiseta, gorra, bañador, pantalón, zapatos, pijama, gorro y camisa.*

Once the students have integrated the new knowledge, we will reinforce what was learnt in the story in the previous lesson by making some questions and we will continue by reading another fragment of the story.

Finally, we will close the lesson by singing the farewell song.

- **Lesson 9**

The aim of this lesson is to recall the previously learned content that will appear in the story and to learn the different types of clothes that are usually worn.

To begin with, we will reinforce what we have learnt previously, and some volunteers will go to the blackboard to say what they are wearing with the help of the teacher.

Then they will be shown the animals of the farm, taking advantage of the fact that the day before in the story we met *la vaca, el caballo y la oveja*. To do this we will watch a video* with the onomatopoeias of each animal and we will play the farm game, where the teacher is *La granjera* and the students will have to become different animals each time.

Finally, we will briefly recall what happened the day before in the story and read another fragment of the story.

- **Lesson 10**

    The aim of this lesson is to recall previously learned content and to listen to a familiar story in a foreign language.

    To begin with, we will remember what has been learnt previously and then we will do a dictation where the student will have to colour in the amount of food the teacher says with the colour the teacher says, for example: "3 olivas negras".

    In this way, they will remember the different food and will be ready to understand the story of "*La Pequeña Oruga Glotona*" by Eric Carle, an adaptation that will be part of the story created as the final task of my project.

    To finish, as always, we will sing the adiós song.
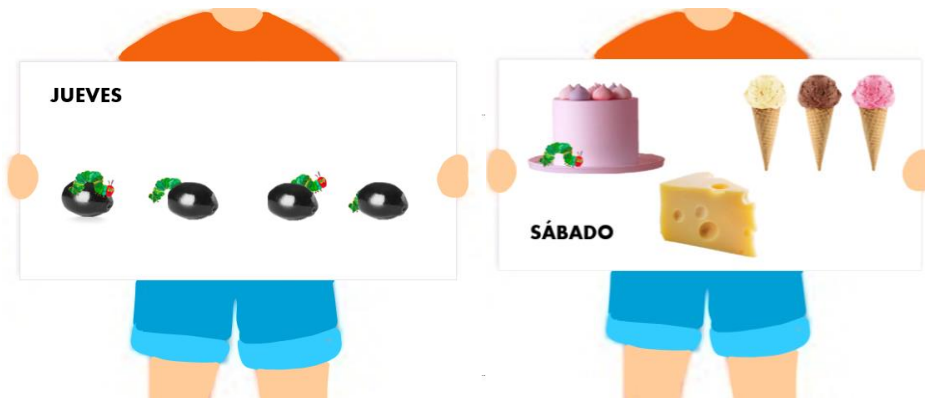
- **Lesson 11**

    The aim of this lesson is to recall the contents previously learnt with the help of the partners of each team and to play a typical Spanish game.

    To begin with, we will reinforce what we have learnt previously in teams, each team will have a different flashcard of clothes and if they hear the name of that garment they have to stand up.

    Finally, we will play to *Marco polo* game, a game that is going to appear in the story.

- **Lesson 12**

    The aim of this lesson is to finish the story and to make a reminder of the contents they have learnt.

    In this lesson, we will only finish the story and reinforce some of the contents with the help of the students.

    To finish, as always, we will sing the *adiós* song.

- **Lesson 13**

    The aim of this lesson will be to remind all the contents they have learnt through a quiz.

    To begin with, I will explain the *Normas e intrucciones* for the quiz. They will be playing in their class teams, and they will have four different *colores: rojo, Amarillo, azul y verde*. Which will be the answers to the different questions.

    In the quiz, a word will appear from the previously learned content and 2 or 4 possible answers with images. The word will be read by the teacher, and they must debate and decide which image is the correct one and pick up the appropriate colour. On the blackboard, the points will be added to each group and at the end there will be a count, in Spanish, and a winning team will come out. Which will receive a *buen trabajo* pin.

    To finish, as always, we will sing the *adiós* song.

6.4.1. ABOUT MY FINAL TASK

I have designed a story with the help of the PowerPoint program. Thanks to the use of this program, I have been able to create an attractive story, with real and fictitious images, movement, and animations. This final task aimed to create a story that every pupil in the classroom could identify with and be part of a final reading.

To achieve the magic in the story I implemented photos of their immediate environment and moving pictures that reflect the situations that a trip to Spain from Ireland entails.

The main character is Tim, a boy who lives in Sligo, walks the same streets as them, and goes to the same school. Tim is going on holiday with his family to Malaga, Spain. He will go through many different situations, meet new things and learn a lot of Spanish along the way.

Within this story, I wanted to incorporate an adaptation of "La Pequeña Oruga Glotona" by Eric Carle, in Spanish, as it is a story that works with a lot of content and the students had worked with it at the beginning of the course. The adaptation consists of the same structure but with some modified content to adapt it to the content we were teaching in the classroom. Telling a story in another language makes it easier for the students to identify and relate the contents, so that understanding the reading becomes a little easier, as well as, of course, having their participation.

6.4.2. RESULTS OBTAINED AFTER THE APPLICATION OF THE UNIT

With the unit designed in the previous point, the aim was for Irish infant pupils to learn Spanish as a foreign language through a wide variety of interactive activities. After the implementation of my unit, the results have been favourable, the pupils have been interested in the language and have shown a large majority of participants.

The repetition activities affected them and made them acquire the concepts more easily than those that were not repeated so many times.

From day one, Spanish as a foreign language was implemented in the junior infant class with success, with the vast majority of students producing some words during the first lesson and some producing them on their own during playtime.

As the lessons progressed, more and more pupils were interested in translating certain words outside the Spanish lesson time and were asking for an increase in Spanish sessions or celebrating the news that it was time for the lesson.

However, not all students' responses were positive. I was also able to observe a certain lack of interest on the part of some students and a failure to achieve the expected learning. Therefore, after a more detailed analysis and evaluation of my performance, I consider that the following should be implemented in my proposal certain new tools and resources for future improvements.

7. PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

Proposal for improvement that I would like to implement in order to improve the design of the unit and thus facilitate the learning of contents by the students.

To begin with, the duration of my project was 13 sessions, with a total duration of 7 weeks. I would have liked the project to have lasted for a whole school year, to be able to work with the pupils from start to finish in more detail and, to implement phonics in Spanish as well as in English, working in parallel with their mother tongue and their second language.

Due to my short internship, it was impossible to cover this time frame, but I would have liked to have had one or two more weeks beforehand to introduce the basic contents and contextualise the students.

7.1. GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS

Before setting out the suggestions for improvement that I would make in each of my lessons to feel completely proud of what I have created, I would like to add a certain general improvement that would encompass the whole Spanish project.

Firstly, it would have been great to have a Spanish corner where all the worksheets, drawings, and games could be collected and once the project was finished, you could remember them when looking at the corner.

Secondly, it is important to motivate the pupils, lesson by lesson and to regulate their behaviour. This would be done through a reward chart and "*Las palabras especiales*". During each lesson, a board with pupils' names and Spanish flag stickers will be placed on the front board in the classroom, so that it is visible to all. The ones with high participation or excellent behaviour will be assigned a sticker. All those who have a sticker at the end of the class will be rewarded with a "*buen trabajo*" pin and the next day they can bring to class a word they want to know in Spanish.

Thanks to this reward chart, students' actions will be regulated without the need to reprimand those who are doing badly, simply rewarding good conduct and motivating them to pay attention. In addition, these words would form an important part of the Spanish corner as they have chosen to learn them and would form part of the team's name in the final quiz.

Finally, I think it would be a good tool to achieve silence and to mark the beginning of a new activity, if, before starting a different activity, a short rhyme is recited for them to sit on the carpet, listen quietly, and participate when asked as a group.

7.2. LESSON DEVELOPMENT

Starting with the Spanish lessons, to contextualising them, it is important to learn basic skills such as *"Me llamo…, tengo x años, me gusta…, vivo en Sligo, hola, adios, perdón, gracias, cómo estás, sentimientos, cumpleaños, rutinas de relajación y orden, etc".* These concepts would be taught through songs and participatory activities where the teacher starts by acting it out and then the pupils imitate.

Lesson 1 should therefore be extended to 5 lessons in order to introduce this foreign language in more detail and cover more aspects. Thanks to these two weeks of introduction, a fixed routine would be carried out from lesson 1, starting with the relaxation routine and *hola* song and ending with the *adiós* song.

My internship project would start after the introductory lessons and would begin with the colours, supported by the teams of junior infants. The classroom is organised with 5 tables/teams of 4-5 students each, and each group is a different colour. We have the *equipo negro, equipo azul, equipo rojo, equipo verde y equipo amarillo,* therefore, these are the colours that will be taught on the first day. There will be games where they will have to find the colour in different places, games of movement such as "semáforo" or games by teams with clear commands.

It is important to start with the colours as it gives me the opportunity to start saying "*Equipo azul levántense''* as their teacher always does, calling them to sit on the carpet by colours.

Lesson 2 would be about the numbers from 1 to 5, as there are 5 teams with a maximum of 5 members. It would be a good idea to relate the colours of the teams and the number of people in them. In addition, the numbers on the flashcards will be the colours previously learnt, to provide an association between the two concepts. The final task will be to play the "*1,2,3 ya*" game. The repetition of the Spanish words will be done in unison so that those students who are shier will be able to produce certain words without worries.

Lesson 3 would be carried out in the same way, adding the building block counting game as a reinforcement of numbers and colours. As they will work in teams, in the end, we would *La canción de recoger.*

Lesson 4 is about food so it will take place just before the first break so that they keep all their food. We would start by showing what they bring for lunch, counting it, and learning about all they bring in Spanish. At the end of this new activity, we would sing *La canción de recoger*. Finally, I would show them some typical Spanish food using the interactive whiteboard.

For **lesson 5**, mini flashcards with the food learnt in the previous lesson would be brought to class and a few of them would be distributed per group. With the help of their team, they should select the food that the teacher will tell them (colour, food, and quantity) and put them in a basket that will have been provided. Finally, they will take the baskets to the teacher and sit on the carpet, where the food will be fed to the "O*ruga Glotona*" that they had stuck on the wall by individual volunteers.

Lesson 6 would be left as it is, simply adding before the story an activity of drawing our family and *La rutina de recoger*. They will understand the narration perfectly, as it begins by introducing the main character and his environment, and these contents have been worked on beforehand. As for the reading of the story, in order to get the students' attention, we will create some "*trampa*" slides that will be shown during the story to check if the students have been attentive. These "*trampa*" slides will be slides that have already appeared before but are missing some keywords. With the help of the pictures, they will have to answer orally which keyword has been deleted.

In lesson 7, we start with the presentation of the family drawings from the previous lesson with the support of a web page that brings the drawings to life, and then we will relate them to the clothes they have drawn. We will then practise the contents through flashcards and movement activities such as pointing or going to x flashcards and walking fast or slow. These contents will help them to understand the story that follows in which the main character has to choose which clothes to put in his suitcase.

Lesson 8 will be carried out in the same way, adding two prior activities. One in the playground, where the pupils will take part in the game "*Paracaídas*" and they will move depending on the clothes and colours they are wearing, how old they are, what their name is, the food they like, etc. And another in the hall, "*La Granja*", which will be carried

out in the same way as before, I will be the farmer and the pupils the animals that I say, but in a larger space where the noise does not disturb so much.

For **lesson 9,** it is necessary to tell the story of "La oruga glotona", so previously the different food is remembered through dictation and *La rutina de recoger*. This time, the story will be told in a different way, instead of through a power point, the pupils will be part of the storytelling. Since they all know the story, they will participate by becoming different food. Each pupil will have a specific food stuck in their tummy (from the ones that were previously learnt) and the teacher will have a puppet of a caterpillar. The story will be told by the caterpillar, in the first person, and the pupils will have to come to her when the caterpillar says that she wants to eat x amount of x food. If a pupil does not react, the caterpillar can go in search of him.

For **lesson 10**, it will only be necessary to add the routine of collecting the flashcards from the clothes at the end of the reinforcement activity and an activity where students draw an item of clothing on the board and the rest have to say the correct word.

In **lesson 11**, we will start by finishing the story and talking about it and their favourite parts. Then they will do a sequencing activity in their respective groups, to check if they are correct the story will be reread with their help and the exercise will be corrected.

Finally, there will be an evaluation activity in which each student will tell us what their favourite game of the ones played during the project has been, using a large cardboard with the games clearly marked and heart stickers. The game with the most votes will be played at the end of the lesson.

To complete the project, **lesson 12**. Before the test, all the flashcards learnt will be recalled, and everyone will have to choose one, they like, say what it is, and why they have chosen it. A quick group game naming the selected flashcards will be played and before starting the quiz each group will have to provide a team name, created with the "*palabras especiales*", words that the students have wanted to learn during the duration of the project and will be collected in the Spanish corner. At the end of the quiz, the

winners will receive a nice pencil as a reward and the whole class will be given a Spanish passport as a symbol of everything they know.

In this way, my didactic unit would have a duration of 1 month, with a total of 12 lessons, three lessons per week, with a duration of 30 minutes each. My total contribution to the foreign language would be one month and a half, taking into account the first two weeks of introduction to Spanish.

7.3.   EVALUATION

With this proposal for improvement, a much more adjusted and individualised evaluation process could be carried out during and after the end of the didactic unit.

The "trampa" slides, also called "filling the gaps", are a good tool to assess attention and comprehension during storytelling. With games to reinforce previously taught knowledge, e.g. "the parachute", it is possible to see which pupils have acquired and which have not yet acquired the content. So that new reinforcement activities can be planned for the next lesson.

Finally, stories can also be an evaluation tool depending on how they are used. With the story "Tim Viaja a Málaga", the knowledge learnt during the whole project is evaluated thanks to the storytelling by the students at the end of the unit. And, with the story of "La Oruga Glotona", skills such as attention, memorisation, and retention of certain information can be assessed, as well as teamwork, since if a pupil does not react in his turn, the others can help him.

8. CONCLUSIONS

English is not the most widely spoken language in the world, but it is the most studied language in the world. From this, I could see the problem that people who have English as their first language do not feel the pressure of having to learn another language to be able to communicate in the world. So, unlike the Spanish education system, they introduce the foreign language in high school instead of in the early years of education as in Spain.

Spain is a tourist country, so when Irish people come on holiday, they are spoken to in their mother tongue and stay in very touristy areas, so in the end, they leave without having produced or known our culture.

My internship in an Irish school has given me the opportunity to change that and to plant the seed of curiosity about Spanish in the brains of the junior infant students. Many of my students are holidaying in Spain, so having the opportunity to create a personalised project to bring them closer to Spanish culture, based on their previous and future experiences, was a great advantage. The first month, before starting the lessons in Spanish, none of them asked me anything about my mother tongue, I thought they had forgotten where I came from. On the first day, when I introduced Spanish, I realised that they knew more than I thought and that they were willing to learn more and more. From the first day, most of the students produced Spanish words.

I have seen that the use of stories and games is indeed one of the best tools available for teaching children. Any kind of content can be worked on in an interesting and playful way, exercising a lot of skills and developing a wide range of abilities. Moreover, a single story can be told in different ways, by different people and can take you to unreachable places.

That is why, through this Final Degree Project, I wanted to reflect on the importance of reading in the learning of a foreign language, and how through a few simple ordered images and a suitable speech they can understand concepts unknown to them. Furthermore, the acquisition of a foreign language allows them to be more tolerant and

respectful of other people, helps them to leave their egocentric zone, and to know that there are other realities close to them.

All this, together with games to create a good atmosphere in the classroom and among classmates, and the application of certain routines, makes the school the best context for learning Spanish as a foreign language.

As a future teacher, I encourage all teachers to tell stories in their classrooms, stories with a variety of characters, an infinite number of landscapes, multiple values, different languages, and varied content. Because every story that is well told and/or represented is an apprenticeship for the student.

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11. ANNEXES

Table 1

Important aspects of the design of my teaching unit

About my topic: VIAJANDO A MÁLAGA / Where this topic fits: Literacy and Digital learning plan
This topic has been developed during my internship in Sligo, Ireland. It has taken place from 21st March to 19th May. The timing of this topic has been 13 days. Each day there was a lesson with a duration of 30 minutes. This lesson took place after the tea break, from about 10:50 to 11:20. The contents covered were the following: Simple Spanish phrases and words, Numbers 1-5, colours, food-related to the colours learnt, animals they were going to meet on their way to Spain, clothes, transports used to get to Spain, family, Spanish games and places of interest they were going to visit. During my project, different types of activities will be carried out, from games to telling a story in Spanish. In this way, I introduce them to Spanish culture, and they learn things that they will be able to associate and identify with on their trips to Spain. At the beginning of each lesson, there is a review of what they have learnt previously and at the end of my project, there is a quiz, to encourage teamwork, decision-making and to find out what knowledge the students have established.

In relation to the school programmes, I worked on reading and the ICT programme using technological tools such as PDI, songs and power point, also the coexistence plan is very present as they are learning about a new culture in order to become European citizens with knowledge of other countries.

Prior Learning	Language used in the topic	Important Resources
	In this project I used an easy language with simple sentences and commands. At the same time, apart from verbal language, we'll also use non-verbal language. Some of the contents of this project are: • Hola, adiós, unos, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, azul, verde, naranja, rojo, rosa, playa, piscina, bañador, pelota, vaca,	Materials: - Power Point - Flashcards - Worksheets Technological: - Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? - Canción del Adiós - Canción cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies - YouTube videos - Digital Whiteboard

	caballo, oveja, tren, avión, autobús, España, familia...	- Computer - Internet

Expectations		
At the end of this topic all the children must	• Participate in the activities and have a good behaviour • Develop attitudes and habits of respect, help and collaboration when working in groups and pay attention to the teacher • Show interest in different activities and express their ideas • Understand some words in Spanish and be able to participate in the games • Understand some parts of the story told in class through active listening and show pleasure doing it • Have a positive attitude to both own and foreign languages	
At the end of this topic most of the children should	• Be confidence and secure during the activities • Be able to explain the new learnings in their mother tongue • Participate in the songs and story through questions, gestures, dances…	

	• Remember and/or reproduce chunks of dialogue or short phrases from simple fiction & non-fiction texts and songs.
At the end of this topic some of the children could	• Participate and make the activities without help • Produce some words in Spanish

Note: this table shows the contextualisation, the language used, the resources and the expectations of the design of my didactic unit.

Table 2

Lesson overview

Lesson	Activities	Learning goals	Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria	Language target	Resources
1	• What do we know about Spain • Some Spanish words • Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas?	• To know Spain is another country. • To show interest about Spain. • To participate actively in the song. • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the song. • To understand the song.	• Children will be able to: • Listen and making questions. • Listen and participating in the song. • Know the meaning of some Spanish words • Produce some Spanish words • Understand the instructions of the song • Show an interest in Spanish language. • Remember chunks of	• Identifying the main Spanish words • Paying attention and showing interest • Following the instructions of the song • Making questions to understand it.	• España • Hola ¿Cómo estás? • Adiós • Gracias • Perdón	• Power Point (map and photos about spain) • Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? (1st part)

			dialogue of the song.			
2	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Learning 1-5 numbers • Count with building blocks	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the counting.	• Children will be able to: • Remember the lyrics of the song. • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes	• Participating actively in the activities • Identifying the basic elements of the lesson • Paying attention and showing interest • Following the instructions • Understanding and singing the song • Making questions to understand it • Being careful when counting with building blocks	• Hola … • Números • Uno • Dos • Tres • Cuatro • Cinco • Señala	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? (1st part) • YouTube video about counting people (see annexe) • Building blocks

3	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Numbers review • Learning colours • 1,2,3, stop game	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To remember the numbers • To be able to count • To understand the colours • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions	• Children will be able to: • Remember the lyrics of the song. • Associate and identify the colours of numbers • Understand the colours • Participate in the activities with a positive behaviour in the school • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities	• Following the instructions • Understanding the colours • Making questions to understand it • Participate in the activities	• Hola... • Números • Uno • Dos • Tres • Cuatro • cinco • Colores • Rosa, rojo, azul, verde y Amarillo. • Señala	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? (1st part) • Flashcards

		• To pay attention during the explanation	• Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes			
4	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Numbers and colours review • Learning more colours • Traffic light game	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To observe, understand and identify the colours and numbers • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow	• Children will be able to: • Remember the lyrics of the song. • Participate in the activities with a positive behaviour in the school • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities	• Following the instructions • Understanding the game and enjoying playing it • Making questions to understand it • Participating in the videos and power point.	• Hola… • Colores • Rosa, rojo, azul, verde, Amarillo, morado, negro y naranja • Señala	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? (1st part) • Flashcards • Power Point • Online Roulette • 3 YouTube videos about colours and numbers

		the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the videos • To watch the videos and understand them	• Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Understand the new colours • Understand the interactive videos.			
5	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Numbers and colours review • Finding colours • Learning food • Relate food with colours	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To remember the previous contents	• Children will be able to: • Remember the lyrics of the song. • Associate food with colours and quantities. • Understand and follow the teacher	• Following the instructions • Understanding the activity and enjoying playing it • Reading the flashcards • Making questions to understand it.	• Hola… • Números • Uno • Dos • Tres • Cuatro • cinco • Colores • Rosa, rojo, azul, verde, Amarillo,	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? (1st part) • Flashcards • Power Point

	and count them	• To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the explanation • To read the images of the flashcards • To understand the activity	instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Understand the activity • Read the symbols of the flashcards		naranja, negro y morado. • Tocad el color… • Comida • ¿Cuántas? • berenjena, queso, naranja, tarta, chorizo, helado, oliva y pera	
6	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Learning body parts	• To remember the Canción Hola,	• Children will be able to: • Remember the lyrics of the song.	• Participating actively in the song • Paying attention and	• Hola… • cabeza, hombros, rodillas y pies. Ojos, orejas,	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Tres Canciones

	• Manos en… game • Canción del Adiós	¿cómo estas? • To know the song in their mother tongue. • To identify the body parts. • To participate actively in the song. • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the song. • To understand the song.	• Recognise the song. • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the song. • Participate actively in the song. • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Learning the lyrics of the song.	showing interest • Following the instructions • Understanding and singing some parts of the song • Making questions to understand it	boca y nariz. • Manos en… • Adiós • Hasta luego	del Partes del Cuerpo (see annexes) • Canción del Adiós (1 st part)

		• To learn La Canción del Adiós				
7	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Body parts song • Learning family • Storytelling • Canción del Adiós	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To recognise the body parts song • To identify family members • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow	• Children will be able to: • Recognise the family members • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Listen carefully to the story	• Participating actively in the activities • Recognising the different family members • Paying attention and showing interest about the story • Following the instructions	• Hola... • cabeza, hombros, rodillas y pies. Ojos, orejas, boca y naríz. • Mi familia • Yo • Mamá • Papá • Hermano/a • Hola soy… • Adiós • Hasta luego	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Canción de partes del cuerpo (cabeza, hombros, rodillas y pies, rodillas y pies) • Family drawing (online picture) • Story • Canción del Adiós (1 st part)

		the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the storytelling • To understand the story • To remember La Canción del Adiós	• Remember the lyrics of the song.			
8	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Learning clothes • Transportes • Story review • Storytelling • Canción del Adiós	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To learn the clothes in Spanish • To participate	• Children will be able to: • Know the previous contents • Learning the clothes in Spanish • Understand and follow	• Participating actively in the story • Showing interest in the activities • Understanding the story • Recognise the different clothes	• Hola… • Ropa • camiseta, gorra, bañador, pantalón, zapatos, pijama, gorro y camisa. • Mochila • Avión	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Flashcards • Story • Canción del Adiós

		• actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To pay attention during the storytelling • To understand the story • To remember La Canción del Adiós	the teacher instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Remember the lyrics of the song.		• Tren • Autobús • Adiós • Hasta luego • Aplaudir • Zapatear	
9	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Clothes review Yo llevo… • La granja	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas?	• Remember the lyrics of the song. • Know the previous contents	• Participating actively in the activities • Recognising the different family members	• Hola… • camiseta, gorra, bañador, pantalón, zapatos, pijama,	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Flascards • Pines • Story

	• Story review • Storytelling • Canción del Adiós	• To remember some of the clothes and food • To learn about farm animals • To pay attention during the story telling • To understand the story • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions	• Learning the animals in Spanish • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • imitate the sound of each animal • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes	• Paying attention and showing interest about the story • Following the instructions	gorro y camisa. • Yo llevo… • Oveja • Caballo • Vaca • Adiós • Hasta luego • Aplaudir • Zapatear	• Canción del Adiós

		• To remember La Canción del Adiós				
10	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Body parts song (as a movement break) • Colour and number dictation • Story review • Storytelling+ La oruga Glotona • Canción del Adiós	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To pay attention during the story telling • To understand the story • To participate actively in the activities • To understand	• Remember the lyrics of the song. • Know the previous contents • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes • Choose the correct	• Participating actively in the activities • Recognising the different food, colours and quantities • Paying attention and showing interest about the story • Following the instructions	• Hola… • Uno • Dos • Tres • Cuatro • cinco • Rosa, rojo, azul, verde, Amarillo, naranja, negro y morado. • Comida • berenjena, queso, naranja, tarta, chorizo, helado,	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Canción de partes del cuerpo (cabeza, hombros, rodillas y pies, rodillas y pies) • Worksheet • Crayons • Story • Canción del Adiós

		• and follow the teacher's instructions • To remember La Canción del Adiós • To listen to the teacher dictation	• quantity and colour • Listen to the teacher dictation		• oliva y pera • Oruga • Adiós…	
11	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Clothes review in teamwork • Story review • Storytelling • Marco polo game • Canción del Adiós	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To pay attention during the story telling • To understand the story	• Remember the lyrics of the song. • Know the previous contents • Learning Spanish games • Understand and follow the teacher instructions during the activities	• Participating actively in the activities • Recognising rules of the game • Paying attention and showing interest about the story • Following the instructions	• Hola… • camiseta, gorra, bañador, pantalón, zapatos, pijama, gorro y camisa. • Piscina • Marco • Polo • Adiós…	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Story • Un gorro • Canción del Adiós

		- To participate actively in the game - To understand and follow the teacher's instructions - To remember La Canción del Adiós	- Participate actively in the activities - Pay attention for more than 10 minutes			
12	- Canción Hola, ¿cómo estás? - Story review - Storytelling - Talking about the story - Canción del Adiós	- To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? - To pay attention during the story telling	- Remember the lyrics of the song. - Know the previous contents - Understand and follow the teacher instructions	- Participating actively in the activities - Recognising the previous contents - Paying attention and showing interest about the story	- Hola… - Playa - Flotador - Pelota - Adiós…	- Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? - Story - Canción del Adiós

		• To understand the story • To participate actively in the activities • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To remember La Canción del Adiós	during the activities • Participate actively in the activities • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes	• Following the instructions		
13	• Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • Quiz • Canción del Adiós	• To remember the Canción Hola, ¿cómo estas? • To pay attention	• Remember the lyrics of the song. • Know the previous contents • Understand and follow	• Participating actively in the quiz • Recognising the different contents • Paying attention and	• Hola… • Equipo ganador • Puntos • Sí • No • Muy bien • Adiós…	• Canción Hola ¿cómo estás? • Quiz • Buen trabajo pines

		during the game • To understand the game • To participate actively in the game • To make decisions with their team • To understand and follow the teacher's instructions • To remember La Canción del Adiós	the teacher instructions during the quiz • Participate actively in the quiz • Pay attention for more than 10 minutes	showing interest about the game • Following the instructions • Talking with their team.		• Canción del Adiós

Note: this table shows the development of every lesson that were carried out.

Online resources used

- Online Roulette: https://es.piliapp.com/random/wheel/
- YouTube:
    - o Colours and numbers
        1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xefSijGMZTg 0:00-2:29
        2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA-EAd9cyPo
        3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCKOl5Dluiw&t=1345s 0:00-2:53

    - o Number counting song
      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vghEr_wGkdI&list=LL&index=20
    - o Hola song

      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4deUxsQOGps&list=LL&index=23

      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlBZeNKCbSI&list=PLG5nAmCKi
      JrvRouaSKSfeprfJCwwEQo_L

    - o Body parts songs

      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVF6YDBQkuo

      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ovc3IG3pBBQ

      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVH4AlEoX-8