THE USE OF GAMES TO PROMOTE THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Universidad de Zaragoza. Facultad de Educación
Grado en Maestro en Educación Infantil

Curso 2013/2014

AUTOR: Beatriz Puig Cascajo

DIRECTOR: Enrique Lafuente Millán

12 / 09 / 2014

ABSTRACT

A considerable amount of research and publications have dealt with games in Infant and Primary Education. Nevertheless, little is known about the role games can play in Foreign Language Acquisition with young learners. The aim of this project is to investigate how Infant Education teachers use them to promote SLA and whether their use can help to achieve this objective. Firstly, this study briefly reviews the techniques of English teaching and how these can influence the use of games. Subsequently, key theories and research concerned with the importance of games in Infant Education, are reviewed, as well as the suitability of using games as a methodology for teaching English. Moreover, eight games provided by several teachers from bilingual schools are analyzed and the extent to which they promote the SLA is evaluated. Finally, data from interviews with two teachers is examined to investigate their opinion about games as an educational method.

Keywords: GAMES, methodology; SLA; focus on meaning; communicative competence; bilingual teachers; bilingual education

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a common belief among researchers that children need to play in order to have an adequate (cognitive) development and learning the different basic competences in the childhood. Since they are newborn, children enjoy playing. Firstly, children show this fun with body movements but, with the passing of time, they play in order to develop their creativity, express their feelings and relate to other children and adults. Because of that, playing during childhood is essential for having a wholesome personal and mental development.

In the last decades there has been much discussion about the difference between *play* and *game.* There is now some consensus in literature in viewing *Play* as the activity by which children play without any rules, developing their creativity and their personality by themselves. Conversely, a *Game* is an activity in which children play but they have to follow some rules.

Because of these two factors, some researchers such as Fröebel, F. (1885) *The Education of Man* ; Decroly (1914) *Educational Games*; Elkonin (1995) *Phsicology of Play*; Bruner (1957) *Thinking and Language* or Ortega (1990) *Jugar y Aprender* among many others, proposed using games in classes of Infant Education as a new teaching tool. In this way, they defended the idea that through the use of games children can learn better since they are motivated, and this becomes something natural for them. Their theories became key ideas for the development of the learning and teaching process and its improvement.

However, just a little research seems to have investigated the use of games as a tool to promote the FL (Foreign Language). Some years ago, English teachers thought that English learning had to be acquired through repetitive sequences and exercises, focused on memorizing English. This learning concept was not compatible with the use of games as a tool to promote the learning of English. Nevertheless, most English teachers today share a common purpose: to develop the children's abilities to communicate by using English as a vehicle for communication. For this reason, games may be a good tool for this goal nowadays.

Despite what it may seem, introducing games as part of our methodology to teach English in Infant Education is not without difficulties. To start, there is little research about what it makes a game appropriate or effective for teaching a foreign language. Furthermore, there is no general agreement among researchers on which games promote the SLA. In addition, as games have only relatively recently been introduced as a tool to teach a FL, many English teachers lack sufficient training when using games in the FL class or selecting those games that are effective. Besides, although most teachers are aware of the benefits of games at this stage of education, there is still a strong tendency among teachers to perceive them as non-academic activities and to favour the use of textbook activities instead.

For all these reasons, the purpose of this project is to investigate which games are used by Infant Education teachers to promote the SLA and how they use them to achieve it.

In order to do this, I will try to answer the following research questions:

- Research question 1: Is there agreement among teachers on what constitutes a game?

- Research question 2: What is the attitude of teachers towards games and their role in promoting the learning of contents and the acquisition of a FL?

- Research question 3: Which features of a game are perceived by teachers as the most useful for promoting SLA?

- Research question 4: What aspects of games are taken into account by teachers in the selection of games for their classes?

- Research question 5: Can games effectively promote SLA at Infant Education Level?

In order to elaborate this research project, eight games used in two Infant Education classes by two English teachers are going to be analyzed according to Parcerisa's theory (1996:32). Moreover, these English teachers will be interviewed so that they can express their views on the content. Finally, my own direct observation of games will be taken into account.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME

Along the history, there have been different theories about games as an educational method in the process of learning and teaching and their importance.

Wikare, Berge and Watsi (2002) sum up in their book different scientific studies related to games at the beginning of the 1900s, expressing the importance of playing and using games in the childhood. Since then, some writers as Piaget, Vygotsky or Olofsson have postulated different theories about this topic.

There is not agreement about the importance of games and their aims. For instance, Olofsson (2003) points out that students learning a second language through different games are practicing it unconsciously. Piaget (1956) concludes that games are an excellent tool as long as they have a purpose that is used as an agent of change in order to learn.
Nonetheless, Vygotsky (1924) adds a new agent in the process of learning and teaching through games. He considers that the teachers' role in the process is important. According to what he says, the teacher and his knowledge of the language determine the SLA. Vygotsky thinks that it is important that teachers play with children in class so children can learn by imitation.

There is also a recent research *Play in Other Languages* carried out by Susan Fraser (2009), which shows the importance of games in order to learn. In this research, the author observes how children with different languages and cultural basis can communicate at school. She studies during a year two different classes and their teachers in Canada in order to check which methods are used in communication and which ones are the most efficient. Finally, she concludes that games are the main tools for children to learn and communicate.

However, as the previous paragraph shows, it is not the same what teacher thinks about English teaching that they actually do. Moreover, there is another problem because nowadays many schools want to be bilingual but there is not an agreement about what is the aim of bilingual education. Different teachers have the idea of focusing their teaching on grammar. In addition, there are others who think that focusing their teaching on communication is the best method in order to teach a second language.

That is why *the tradicional view* of the language, and *the communicative view* are the views most renowned among English teachers.

The methods before the 1970s are based on repetitive exercises, where children had to learn the grammar structures through repetitions, that is *the tradicional view.* Sheen (2002) claims: "*Focus on forms is based on the assumption that classroom learning derives from general cognitive processes".* Nevertheless, these methods were not useful for SLA because learners simply memorized but did not use English as a vehicle for communication, which should be the aim in teaching a FL. However, this problem started to be solved with the appearance of Krashen's monitor model (1981) – "Acquisition of a Second Language" – which suggests making a comprehensible input through, for example visual aids or the teacher talk by using a variety of structures and a frequent exposure to input involves SLA, that is, *The Communicative View*. This model incorporated some Chomsky's views[1] concerning the acquisition of a first language. First of all, learners acquire the L2 thanks to their exposure to it in real communicative situations. Their internal representations of their new language develop gradually and in predictable stages. Also, in this theory it is important the idea that the learners' internal processing mechanisms work on the second language input from the environment. In other words, the comprehension of the new language is necessary so that its acquisition takes place. To sum up, Krashen develops the natural order hypothesis according to which there is not a predictable order to learn a L2. Learners learn grammar structures naturally.

Finally, Krashen's hypotheses have been criticized for their lack of empirical support and for the evident inconsistencies that they show.

Concerning these previous ideas, other theories and authors have appeared in order to discover which view is more useful to promote the SLA and how teachers have to use it to achieve it. One of this theories promotes giving comprehensible information to children in class so they can develop their own intra-language in L2. In this way, the negotiation of meaning is encouraged. Furthermore, children are more motivated because they can speak without fear, and they can also develop their ability of auto-correction by testing their hypotheses.

---

[1] Chomsky argues that human brains have a language acquisition device (LAD), an innate mechanism or process that allows children to develop language skills. According to this view, all children are born with a universal grammar, which makes them receptive to the common features of all languages. Because of this hard-wired background in grammar, children easily pick up a language when they are exposed to its particular grammar.

Few years later, Long (1985) highlighted the role of interaction. Unlike Krashen (1980), Long believed the aim of learning is not the input that children receive but the comprehension of this input, that is, the negotiation of meaning. As Long says (1985): *"The alterations of the interactive structure of a conversation produce a comprehensible input (...); The comprehensible input entail the L2 acquisition (...); The conversational adjusts favor the acquisition"*

This vast amount of theories is harmful to the use of English games as an educative method and their purposes, because depending on the teacher's idea of English teaching, games will be used in one way or another. For instance, during the period of *traditional view*, games were not used by teachers because they used exercises of repetition. Yet, in *communicative theories* some games started to be used by teachers in order to use the English as a vehicle for communication, without paying attention to mistakes, as the important thing was the use of English in real communicative situations.

Consequently, contrary to the *traditional view*, the aim of the new English teaching methodologies such as CLIL[2] (*communicative view)* is to manage the proceduralisaition of the linguistic knowledge, automatizing it and being able to make use of the language without thinking about the purely metalinguistic and grammatical aspects of it. With this purpose, all the declarative knowledge should be transformed into procedural memory.

This change from a declarative knowledge to a procedural one can be achieved by redundant practice and pretty frequent repetitions. According to Macedonia (2005), this procedure of the declarative knowledge about a foreign language can be reached through games.

> *Language games serve the function of redundant oral repetition of grammar structures (morphological, syntactic) and vocabulary in a playful way. Students are not always aware that they are practicing grammar… practice proves fun, repetition is not boring, and declarative knowledge is converted into procedural knowledge.* (Macedonia, 2005, p.139)

---

[2] The procedural memory is the memory in charge of the performance of particular types of action. Procedural memory guides the processes we perform and most frequently resides below the level of conscious awareness. When needed, procedural memories are automatically retrieved and utilized for the execution of the integrated procedures involved in both cognitive and motor skills.

Holden (1980) states that *"children cannot concentrate on one thing for a long period and that lessons should therefore be divided into a series of activities lasting no longer than five or ten minutes"* Consequently, infant education teachers should look for catchy activities that keep children´s attention and are also useful for the process of learning. That is to say, as Allison and Duncan (2000, p. 106) assure, *"When I stop to think about it I realize that an important part of the state of mind is enjoyment. I get so involved in what I´m doing, I almost forget about time"*.

Children at an early age acquire knowledge when it is meaningfulness and interesting for them, that is why teachers must consider their previous knowledge since it is a solid base for subsequent knowledge. Quoting Ausubel (1986) "*Si tuviese que reducir toda la psicología educativa a un sólo principio, enunciaría éste: el factor más importante que influye en el aprendizaje es lo que el alumno ya sabe. Averígüese esto y enséñese consecuentemente*".

Because of this, nowadays games can be useful as an educative method as teachers can propose some games where children have to use their English knowledge. In this way, English will be a vehicle for communication. It is important to say that games as a vehicle for communication are useful in English classes with a communicative purpose.

Furthermore, there is another difference between the two views in relation to children. In *the traditional view*, children learn what is taught and, by contrast, in *the communicative view* children learn what they need and when they are ready. This is an important aspect of the L2 teaching because there are some situations where the teacher uses *the traditional view* but it is likely that some children are not ready to follow him so they get lost. Therefore, the communicative view is the best method to teach a L2 because the teacher creates different situations where children must use words that they do not know so they finally learn them. Also, they will realize what they need, step by step. As Broughton says *"the language student is best motivated by practice in which he senses the language is truly communicative, that it is appropriate to its context, that his teacher's skills are moving him forward to a fuller competence in a foreign language"*

That is why if the English teachers want to use games as an educative method, they have to think that games have to develop the communication between children through English because the aim is using English as a vehicle for communication.

Nevertheless, regarding the paragraph above, apparently everybody clearly know what a communicative method is and how teachers must use it in class. Still, there are some conclusions about this made by Boumová (2008). She studied what view did teachers used the most.

The majority of teachers believe that they are using a communicative view. However, their students think these methods are traditional and very repetitive. This lack of agreement prompts a question: *Do teachers fully understand the difference between modern and traditional methodologies?*

This could mean that teachers who use games in order to teach the second language probably think that by using them they are using *the communicative view* itself. Nevertheless, they just use *the traditional view* and do not differentiate between the two views. However, the importance is not only the "games" but their aim. Depending on the purpose of the games, they will be using a traditional view or a modern view.

This is the reason why teachers who use games as a tool do not use them correctly due to different aspects. On the one hand, they do not understand clearly what the communicative view is or its aims. On the other hand, they consider that they are good English teachers because they are using games in order to learn English, but the problem is that they are not paying attention to their aims. Thus, most of the time, children just play without learning anything new.

As there is not a common idea about what an English communicative class is, there is not a common idea about whether learners have to start learning the L2 at the same time as the target language or not. With respect to this question, Selinker (1972) was the first author who investigated about this. He said that the principle behind interlanguage theory is that the language of second-language learners is governed by systematic rules, and that these rules are different from those of the language being learned and from those of the learner's native language. Hence, at every stage of learning, language learners do not merely copy what native speakers do, but create an entirely new language system unique to themselves. Selinker named this interim language system an *interlanguage*. Furthermore, he claimed that interlanguages have all the normal properties of natural languages. In other words, they are systematic and bound by rules in the same manner as any other language. Moreover, Selinker said that interlanguage is based on three basic principles: *over-generalization* from patterns found in the language being learned, *transfer* from patterns found in the learner's native language, and *fossilization*, the phenomenon of a learner's language ceasing to develop.

Focusing on games, which are the main aim of this research project, it is important to emphasize that there is not a common idea among researchers on what is an educational game and its characteristics, as we have shown in the paragraphs above. Some definitions of games are:

- A game is played when one or more players compete or cooperate for pay-offs according to a set of rules. (Jones 1986)

- Games are activities that children naturally and universally engage in. Games may be seen as a route by which children come to terms with their social environment, presenting as they do a social situation which is firmly governed by rules but whose outcome is known.

Although there is not a common idea about games, their aims or if they are educational, it is known that it is through games that children comprehend, learn, investigate and understand the world around them.

In spite of the pleasure that children obtain from playing games, games have also a didactic purpose as they are a tool for learning and acquiring knowledge and hence, they foster the development of the children.

Infant children see games as a way for having fun and get entertained, reason why these are so motivating for them. Moreover, pedagogically, the learning that games imply is authentic and meaningful for the learners; they acquire curricular knowledge and contents, they develop several competences and they socialize without being aware of it.

There is no much research about the characteristics of an educational game, but even less about games that promote the SLA. Consequently, nowadays educational games are not very common at schools. What is more, there is yet another problem concerning the English teaching process, which is most schools are bilingual. Hence, bilingual teachers need some tools in order to promote the SLA. The aforementioned lack of theoretical background causes bilingual teachers to use different kind of methods that do not promote the SLA.

Parcerisa (1992:32) is one of the few authors that provides us with information about the characteristics that an educational activity must include. For this reason, his analysis and, more specifically, seven essentials characteristics to create an educational game through which children can learn, are going to play a decisive role in

this research project. According to his theory, if a game has all these characteristics, it will promote the SLA.

Parcerisa (1992) suggests an educational game should be:

1. <u>Meaningful:</u> The game does not use repetitive sequences. It is necessary to use different materials that allow children to develop their creativity.
2. <u>Clearly organized:</u> It is easy to understand. There is an explanation, a plot and an ending. Children know the aim of the game.
3. <u>Incentive:</u> It is necessary to use the previous knowledge to resolve the game.
4. <u>Mediated by a teacher:</u> In the significant learning theory, the teacher is an intermediary between knowledge and children. Children have to construct their own knowledge by themselves. The teacher, on his part, has to use the children's mistakes to reflect with them and to create the new knowledge.
5. <u>Cognitive learning:</u> Children learn some English aspects. The game has an educational aim.
6. <u>Adaptable:</u> Children with different English knowledge can play together. The game takes into account all the different levels.
7. <u>Innovative</u>: It is something new for children. They are motivated.

If a game contains all of these characteristics, it would be an educational game and children could learn properly. With respect to the learning of English, it must be noticed that if a game contains all of them, children will be learning a bit of content and will see English as a vehicle for communication, which implies they will be able to use it in a real context (the aim of learning a L2).

To sum up this theoretical frame, it is easy to see how the concept of game has many different meanings that make teachers to share a common idea. Furthermore, both the *tradicional and communicative* view, have disadvantages. However, the tradicional view has more than the communicative one because it is older. Nevertheless, many teachers use the latter nowadays, and this is the reason why they do not use games to promote the SLA.

3. METHODS

As I pointed out in my introduction, three analysis tools have been used to respond the specific research questions: the analysis of eight games according to Parcerisa's theory (1992), an interview with two English teachers of Infant Education and my own direct observation of games.

3.1 Analysis of games

With the aim of explaining in more detail each tool used in this research, I shall begin with the analysis' explanation. The main purpose of analyzing some games used in English classes is to discover which games are used by English teachers nowadays, and also if they are rightly used to promote the SLA.

In order to elaborate this research project, the games had to be analyzed by an author who presented some key necessary aspects so that games become a useful tool to promote the SLA.

According to the previous idea, I would like to mention how difficult it is to find an author who gives some features to be able to analyze the games. As mentioned in the introduction of this project, there is little research about the role of games as a tool for FLT (Foreign Language Teaching). Finally, Parcerisa (1992) is the author chosen because he is an expert analyzing and creating educational materials. Because of that, if the Parcerisa's features to create and analyze different activities are followed, an effective scientific analysis of different games would be available in order to discover if they were a good tool to promote the SLA.

Still on this subject, I would like to mention that, the games analyzed were given by two English teachers working in the same school and with similar age groups. They sent me lots of games and, of all the games that were sent, only eight were selected to analyze depending on whether I had had the opportunity to see the implementation.

Finally, eight games which were observed personally, were selected to analyze. These games have different purposes and they are significantly different.

(*See Appendix 1*)

The games proposed by *Teacher 1* addresse creating sentences linking different flashcards, learning the interrogative questions through different pictures and memorizing vocabulary. However, *Teacher 2* proposed games which are about

speaking with a classmate to achieve the purpose of the game, singing a song or carrying out a performance.

Eventually, with all of these materials, the games were analyzed according to Parcerisa's criteria (1992) and analyzing the main aspects - meaningful, clear organized, incentive, mediated by a teacher, cognitive learning, adaptable and innovative - with particular attention, adding to the analysis my own direct observation of games.

3.2 The interview

Following the analysis of games, an interview with these teachers took place in order to know their ideas and opinions about this topic. It was a semi-structured interview in which improvisation depending on the teachers' answers ocurred.

In spite of being a semi-structured interview, eleven key questions were prepared to know how to guide the interview, although the order of the questions can be changed or more questions could be added.

1. What is a game in your opinion?
2. Do you think children can learn a SL only by games? Why?
3. What are the advantages/disadvantages of games?
4. In your opinion, what is the best method to teach a SL?
5. Which aspect is the most important in games, form or meaning?
6. How must be an educational game in your opinion? Which features?
7. Do you use games everyday as a *chunk*, or your children play them just in special moments? Why?
8. How long have you been using games? Where did you learn them?
9. Do you carry out the review of mistakes of a game after having used it in class?
10. Do you create the games before the class or during the class?
11. Would you use games in all ages in order to teach English? Why?

Table 1: Eleven questions to be resolved in the interview

The teachers who were interviewed had the following features:

Teacher 1: She is 38 years old. She is an Infant teacher but also, an English teacher. She studied at the University of Zaragoza. During her first years as a teacher, she was an English teacher. Nevertheless, she became an Infant teacher only 10 years ago. This year was her first year as a bilingual teacher in a school of Zaragoza.

Teacher 2: He is 35 years old. He is an English teacher. He was born in Worthing (England). He studied English philology in Spain and he has always worked here. He has always been an English teacher, but this year was her first one as a bilingual teacher at the same school as *Teacher 1.*

The interview took place at the school C.P Hermanos Marx. The meeting with these teachers took place on the same day but at different times, so two completely different interviews were made.

Once the interviews were finished, they were transcribed by listening to them again, with the aim of adding more true data to this research project .

Finally, using the insights derived from my analysis of the eight games, the interviews and my own direct observation of games at the school, I got to some general conclusions about *which games are used by Infant Education teachers to promote the SLA and how they use them to achieve it.*

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Analysis and evaluation of the sample

4.1.1 Analysis of games

(See Appendix 2)

To perform this analysis, Parcerisa's criteria have been the basis. The specific analysis of each criteria allows us to get specific results, adding some data to this research project. To discover if a game allows us to promote the SLA, these aspects have been analyzed:

1. Meaningful

2. Clearly organized

3. Incentive

4. Mediated by a teacher

5. Cognitive learning

6. Adaptable

7. Innovative

Once the analysis is made, these are the findings:

	Teacher 1				Teacher 2			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
a. Meaningful	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
b. Clearly organized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
c. Incentive	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
d. Mediated by a teacher	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
e. Cognitive learning	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
f. Adaptable	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
g. Innovative	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	2/7	4/7	4/7	4/7	6/7	6/7	3/7	7/7
	Total: 14/28				Total: 22/28			
	Average: 5				Average: 7.8			

Table 2: evaluation of the 8 games in the sample using Parcerisa's 7 criteria

As we can see in Table 2, on average, the activities suggested by *Teacher 1* complied on average with fewer criteria (14 out of 28, an average of 5) than the activities provided by *Teacher 2* (22 out of 28, an average of 7.8). As seen on the table above, there is a majority of "Yes" answers that could apparently prove that both teachers use games correctly to promote the SLA. Still, *Teacher 2* has obtained more "Yes" answers than *Teacher 1.* This could be attributed to the fact that *Teacher 2* has

had much more experience with games, or his English teaching view allows him to use games as a tool.

Thoroughly analyzing Table 2, interesting appreciations about games can be observed.

The *meaningful* aspect is not taken into account by *Teacher 1* because 3 out of 4 of her games have obtained "No" as an answer. However, *Teacher 2* does not keep in mind this aspect in his games, in which he has obtained three "Yes" as an answer. This aspect could be interpreted as the most important aspect in this analysis because if a game does not contain meaning, playing with this game does not have an educational value. So, according to this reflection, *Teacher 1* was using some of the games without an educational value.

The Clear organization is an aspect that both teachers take into account because all of the games have obtained "Yes" as an answer. This might mean that both teachers in their games' explanations pay attention to the children's level and their age, helping them with body language, for example, to supplement the oral explanation.

The *incentive* aspect is taken into account by both teachers because only 1 game of each teacher has had a "No" as an answer. This shows that both teachers have used the games to strengthen the children's previous knowledge.

The *mediation by a teacher* is an aspect that gets a lot of attention because all the games with the exception of one are not endowed with the necessary attention by the teacher. This might reflect that errors are not used by teachers to improve the learning of their pupils.

The *cognitive learning* aspect is another critical point in this analysis according to Parcerisa's criteria (1992) because it is generally recognized that all the games used in an Infant Education class, have to have a main purpose. That is, games must content cognitive learning. As reflected in Table 2, this aspect is very present in both teachers. Only 1 game of each teacher has obtained a "No" as an answer.

The *adaptability* aspect reflects the importance which has been attached to the children's needs by both teachers. It is reflected in the Table 2 that *Teacher 1* may always tend to use the same games without paying attention to the children's needs and possibilities because only 1 game of all, has obtained a "Yes" as an answer. However, *Teacher 2* may tend to change his games depending on children and their possibilities or needs, because only 1 game has obtained a "No" as an answer.

Finally, the _innovative_ aspect is another important point because it could be reflecting the personality of both teachers. The games of T*eacher 1* have obtained 2 "No" and 2 "Yes" as answers. And this might mean that she is a teacher who uses traditional games but she is trying to change them. However, all of the games of *Teacher 2* have obtained a "Yes" as an answer, so this might reflect that he is a teacher who uses innovative games, then drawing the children's attention.

Consequently, once we have considered these aspects, each teacher's personally can be deduced. *Teacher 1* is organized and does not like the improvisation because she does not innovate depending on the children's motivations and she does not adapt the games depending on the children's needs. She never thinks on the children's motivations because, as I could see in the implementation of games, there are some children who play unconsciously because they have already memorized the game. Unlike *Teacher 1*, T*eacher 2* is very innovative so he keeps in mind the children's motivations and depending on them, he modifies the games. Also, he is not organized because he adapts the games depending on the children's needs and possibilities. This idea is also reflected in the interview when this teacher says: "*if we do not take into account the abilities of children to learn English, it is impossible that they can achieve an aim. However it is true that this is difficult because each child learns better with a different method, so sometimes teachers have to do a big effort to create an excellent teaching atmosphere where all children can learn in all time*".

Finally, once the results from Table 2 have been analyzed, it can be noticed that according to Parcerisa's criteria (1992), only 1 game among all is a useful tool to promote the SLA. Because of this, it can be concluded that none of the teachers know which games are useful or how to use them correctly in order to promote the SLA.

4.1.2 Interview

(See *Appendix 3)*

The second tool is an interview that will complement the analysis data so as to achieve a reasoned justification of why these teachers use games in that way.

Owing to the implementation of the interview, various data have been obtained, producing some general conclusions of this semi-structured interview following the eleven questions proposed in Table 1.

In the first question, both gave a definition of "game" in which it is included the idea of "fun" and "essential" in Infant Education. Both have a clear idea of what a game is and that the use of games is something natural in childhood and, because of that, teachers have to use them as a tool to teach English. Nevertheless, this is appealing because, despite they apparently share their concept of game, in the analysis of games none of them gave me the same game. Furthermore, their games are focused on different aspects of English (form or communication). That is, both have the same idea about what a game is, but they do not use the same games, and sometimes they use games which are not fun as can be clearly seen in the analysis of games and in my own direct experience at the school.

The second question is another example of the common idea which they have about games, because both think that games are a perfect tool in Infant Education. Also, they agree on the belief that when teaching older children, they have to use other educational methods such as books. However, all the games they gave me are intended to five-year-old children. Because of this, I wonder: *Are games a good tool to promote the SLA only with children who are five years old? How do these teachers teach in other ages?*

Nevertheless, in the third question, they do not always agree. Both think that games are useful because children learn unconsciously. Yet, disagreement starts when regarding the benefits of a game. *Teacher 1* thinks that games are useful in Infant Education but only says as benefits the idea of "fun". On the contrary, T*eacher 2* thinks that games are beneficial because children can express their feelings and use the English they have learnt in order to achieve something, emphasizing the use of English as a vehicle for communication. Also, he says that he does not pay attention to mistakes but enjoys seeing how children of three, four or five years old try to say something in English. Furthermore, he gives an advice by saying that English teachers have to make that children are not scared to speak in English. Only in this manner children can learn faster. This reflection illustrates this teacher's training and experience and how he knows what the real problem is in the English teaching. It is possible that as this teacher knows the real problem of the English teaching, he uses communicative games.

The forth question is very interesting because it shows the things English teachers know about what is the best method to teach, but because of different reasons, they do not use them or they use them by chance. *Teacher 1* says that she knows that in Infant Education books are not useful to teach something. Nevertheless,

she accepts that it is easier for her to use a book. Because of that, her pupils use a book with photocopies that they have to match, paint or cut. She says that children are happier when they are doing these activities. She explains this affirmation by saying that sometimes children that are playing with games get bored. Obviously, she does not understand that the real problem is her games are not funny. On the contrary, *Teacher 2* explains that a good teacher should mix both games and books, because he thinks books are a good way to introduce new topics or words within a context. However, he rejects individual teaching (each kid has a book) but promotes the use of the new technologies by using a digital blackboard where the book is reflected and which all the children can see simultaneously. For him, individual books do not promote oral or corporal expression. This is the reason why he invents games that promote these aspects.

The fifth question is another key question because teachers do not agree. *Teacher 1*'s games, as it can be seen in the analysis of the games, are focused on form since children have to match different flashcards or memorize in order to learn some grammar. That is, she defends that it is important to teach grammar first so that the children can speak properly. She explains that if teachers allow children to speak without explaining them the grammar, they will never learn. This is a clear idea of the traditional view. Nevertheless, *Teacher 2* prefers that children speak through English because his teaching purposes is that children are not scared to speak in a FL, then promoting the oral and corporal expression. He thinks that when children are older, they will learn grammar with other methods. These ideas are clearly reflected in the analysis of the games.

The sixth question is of special relevance because the two teachers provided me with their ideas about when a game is useful to promote the SLA and when it is not. Both agree in the idea that a game has to have a main purpose. Nevertheless, they accept that, sometimes, when they do not have the time to make a new game, they use the same one repetitively, which is not funny for children. Other times they use the games aimlessly in order to fill the time. These answers show that they know the theory but sometimes they do not want to pay attention to it.

The eighth question reflects the teachers' lack of training because *Teacher 1* admits that she had no idea about games so she had to read some books. Nevertheless, she read the books some years ago, so nowadays she uses old-fashioned games because she has been using the same games since then. She does not pay attention to the different levels, motivations or personalities as we can see in

17

the analysis of games. By contrast, *Teacher 2,* who learnt through games when he was a child, admits that at the beginning of the course he always used the same games to observe the children, their levels, personalities, etc. After that, he looks up in his favorite games and takes the ones that are useful in that class. If he considers that he does not have enough games, he creates others, although he admits that he tries to create as few as possible. This question shows that they know the theories but time or their attitude cause them to always use the same games, which are not funny for children. For this reason, they are not educative according to these two teachers, because in the first question they have said that an educational game has to be funny.

As can be noted from these conclusions, it is obvious that there is not a common idea about the conception of a game, how games must be used to promote the SLA and which aims they have to achieve. Moreover, in this analysis there is a reflection about the importance of a teacher's training as well as his experience. This way it is easier to select the methodology and the tools to promote the SLA. Also, it is important the idea that English teachers know the theory of games and their importance during childhood. However, sometimes they prefer to use tools which are easier to prepare, forgetting that the main purpose of Infant Education is not that children have a good time with their classmates, but that they can learn something about English.

4.2 Discussion

One of the most striking things about this research project is the disagreement between both teachers in relation to the games' concept. Both have a clear idea about what are the main features that a game must have to be considered a tool with an educational value. However, none of them gave me the same game to analyze. This could derive from the fact that there is not a common agreement about the games' concept or which games are the best to promote the SLA.

Moreover, another important aspect to consider is the importance of a teacher's training. This might have an influence in the teaching style. This can be seen for example in the idea that *Teacher 1* prefers using always the same games without thinking in the children motivations or needs. On the other hand, *Teacher 2* always takes into account the children's needs or motivations. Also, the importance of the training can be observed when *Teacher 1* focalizes her English teaching on the form, that is, she considers the high importance of teaching grammar before children develop

their oral skills. This idea can be clearly noticed not only in the games analysis but also in the interview. *Teacher 1* claims "*I can not imagine a class where children speak without learning grammar rules before. If we allow them to speak as they want, they can learn and internalize something wrong"*. Nevertheless, *Teacher 2* uses more communicative games in which he wants children to use English as a vehicle for communication so that they can improve their creativity and keep motivated.

Obviously, it is important to underline the common mistake in the *mediation by a teacher* aspect in the analysis of games, done by both teachers. It is a serious error because children's mistakes are very useful as a tool for teaching English. Children can learn through their own mistakes with the teacher's help. According to Moon (2000:76), if the teacher makes error corrections and feedbacks, children learn better. There are different techniques as elicitation, indirect, direct or recasting. Furthermore, if the teacher uses these different techniques, children improve their ability to communicate and they can prove English is a vehicle for communication. Besides, each child has a different rhythm, overall in Infant Education. Children have to learn English step by step by themselves and the teacher must be their guide.[3]

Following with the analysis of some of the most interesting aspects of this research project, it should be stressed that the majority of games are targeted to five-year-old children so this might explain that these teachers only use games with old children. However, it is surprising because in the interviews, teachers affirm that games must be supplemented by other methods as books with older children. Yet, they claim that if children are 3 or 4 years old, they do not have as much English knowledge, so it is more difficult to carry out games which promote the SLA. But with these incongruities there comes the following questions: *Are games only good for the age of five years old? How do these teachers teach in the first years of Infant, with photocopies or with games without any aim?*

---

[3] Vygotsky stated that a child follows an adult's example and gradually develops the ability to do certain tasks without help. Vygotsky's often-quoted definition of zone of proximal development presents it as

"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. For example, two 8 yr. old children may be able to complete a task that an average 8 yr. old cannot do. Next, more difficult tasks are presented with very little assistance from an adult. In the end, both children were able to complete the task. However, the styles methods they chose depended on how far they were willing to stretch their thinking process."

Following the discussion about the results, my own direct observation is not yet used. Comparing some results with my experience at the school, it can be argued that the results obtained from the analyzis of the games according to Parcerisa's criteria (1992) are valid. On the basis of my own, the teaching method used by *Teacher 1* is not necessarily good because of some different examples. For instance, there were children who had lower abilities than others and they did not want to play because they did not know the aim of that game. Moreover, children did not practice oral communication. That class looked like a Primary class where children had to learn some grammar rules, so children wanted to run, stand up or go to the bathroom immediately because they got bored. Because of that, it can be said that the methodology used by *Teacher 1* is not very suitable for Infant Education. However, *Teacher 2* was quite the opposite. These teacher's pupils were always motivated because they linked English with fun. Furthermore, they spoke always in English because they were used to it since they were three years old. For this reason, when they played with these games, they did not have any problem. Yet, as this teacher says in the interview "*It is important to pay attention to children who do not have a good English level or they are shy. The shyness is a problem with this type of games because these children do not want to play because of that.*" *Teacher 2* took into account each child's personality. He split always the shy child with a friend of him in order not to be embarrassed. Also, he was placed next to the child who had lower level in order to take notes. However, he did not participate during the game. This can be clearly seen in the analyzis of the games where teachers do not pay any attention to the mediation of the teacher.

5.CONCLUSION

The main aim of this project has been to *investigate which games are used by Infant Education teachers to promote SLA and how they use them to achieve it,* so the opinion and ideas about the games of two different English teachers and the analysis of different games have been taken into account.

Based on the data generated from the first research question, *Is there agreement among teachers on what constitutes a game?* It can be argued that there is not a general agreement among English teachers on what constitutes a game and which ones are useful to promote the SLA due to different factors. First of all, only a

few authors suggest features to create or recognize a useful game, and also these authors are difficult to find. Moreover, the lack of teachers' training about the use of games and the lack of experience could explain this disagreement.

In spite of this fact, together with the results of the analysis and the semi-structured interview, it might be concluded that teachers know the difference between play and game. Also, they know the big theories about games—including their benefits during childhood—and highlight the idea that games are something natural for children, so they can be useful as a tool to teach a SL having a great effectiveness in both basic competences and SLA.

Data derived from the second research question, *What is the attitude of teachers towards games and their role in promoting the learning of contents and the acquisition of a FL?,* we may conclude that neither of them believe in the idea that games can be used as the unique tool to promote the SLA. This conclusion can be seen in the interview when both admit that games must be complemented with other tools as books or activities in a digital blackboard. Moreover, most of the teachers understand games as a funny and essential activity in Infant Education. However, their perception and use of games is not the same, because in some games they tend to use repetitive sequences, admitting the possibility that children get bored. This can be understood if it is taken into account the lack of teacher training, which causes them to use other tools in order to feel confident about the quality of their teaching as *Teacher 2* expresses in his interview.

Another conclusion extracted from this research question is that teachers sometimes have an excessive positive attitude towards games, over-estimating them, believing that all of them are useful to learn. This is noticeable in the analysis of games when each teacher had to give me games which they used in class. According to their opinions, all of the games which they gave me were appropriate to promote the SLA. However, in accordance with Parcerisa's criteria (1992), only one of the games is useful to achieve a meaningful English teaching in Infant Education.

The results obtained from the third research question, *Which features of a game are perceived by teachers as the most useful for promoting SLA?*, are used to conclude that the most important features of a game to promote the SLA depend on the teaching view of each teacher. That is, if a teacher considers the English grammar is the most important aspect in the English teaching, the main feature of a game to promote the SLA will be the grammar. By contrast, if a teacher thinks the use of English as a vehicle for communication is the most important aspect which a game has to teach, this

teacher will carry out games in which children have to speak in English to achieve something. This might be one of the causes that explain why there is not a common idea about which games are useful to teach English. Depending on the teacher's kind of view, the goal of his games will coincide with the aim of his view. This research project is a cautionary example, since each teacher that has been analyzed has a different teaching view and what each teacher told in the interview, then this can be seen in the analyzed of games. Therefore, the goal of their games will be different. As can be seen in the interview, *Teacher 1* would like to achieve a perfect learning about English grammar. By contrast, *Teacher 2* would like to develop the children's oral skills. And this is because each teacher has a different teaching view.

Based on the data generated from the forth research question, *Which aspects of games are taken into account by teachers in the selection of games for their classes?* It can be argued that the most important aspect which a game must have is that it has to be funny as both teachers have expressed in their interviews. This may explain why only one of all the games analyzed is an educational game according to Parcerisa (1992).

However, according to the results in Table 2, it can be concluded that the aspects which should be taken into account by teachers, should be the communicative aspects. According to Parcerisa (1992), the games which promote the SLA most effectively are games which have a communicative aim. That is, the games in which the children have to use English as a vehicle for communication to better promote the SLA. Furthermore, the Infant Education curriculum says that a main purpose of this cycle is developing the oral and corporal expressions. The writing and the reading are not compulsory in this cycle. Because of that, the games that are used with a communicative purpose follow the law.

Finally, derived from the fifth research question, *Can games effectively promote SLA at Infant Education Level?,* games that are created correctly with an educational aim and keeping in mind other aspects, can promote SLA effectively as Parcerisa (1992) proves.

Still, the lack of theories about games and their use as a tool in Infant Education, the large amount of English teaching views, the lack of teachers' experience using them as an Educational tool and also, the lack of a common theoretical frame about the main features which a game has to have, do not allow to promote the SLA through games.

A number of implications can be drawn from all these findings. First of all, English Infant teachers should receive training about how to use games as an Educational tool as well as they should be taught how to modify their activities or games depending on the circumstances. Moreover, there should be an agreement among English Infant teachers on teaching contents in Infant Education through games because it is something natural to children and this would be advantageous for the English teaching, without using other tools as books which are bored for children. Finally, one of the deficits of the English teaching of this country is the lack of oral training. Because of that, teachers should use games as a tool because as it has been shown in this research project, games are perfect to develop oral skills. In this way, two problems can be solved: the English teaching in this country, and also, the children's boredom using other tools to learn English.

6. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

When the research project has concluded, some limitations from the method paragraph can be noted. First of all, the conclusions get from this project are only useful to speak of these two teachers. If I had analyzed more games from more teachers, I would have obtained different results and more general conclusions.

Moreover, if I had seen these two teachers working with different age groups, I could get more information about how they use games with younger children. Also, it is an important aspect because all of games analyzed are prepared to implement with five-years-old children, so I do not know how they will use these games with children with three or four years old.

Also, it would be interesting to interview teachers from different schools in order to discover if the school influences the teachers. Moreover, it would be useful too, interviewing teachers from public schools and also private schools to get some differences and conclusions.

Finally, if I had had more time, interviewing older children in order to discover what they think about the games used by their teachers would have been interesting. As getting conclusions about games interviewing children from Infant Education is difficult, the option would be to interview older children because these two teachers said in the interview that they use games with them too.

For example, this type of research was carried out by Susan Fraser (2009), which shows the importance of games in order to learn. In this research, the author

observes how children with different languages and cultural basis can communicate at school. She studies during a year two different classes and their teachers in Canada in order to check which methods are used in the communication and which ones are the most efficient. Finally, she concludes that games are the main tools for children to learn and communicate.

To sum up, I would like to say that it would be valuable to English Infant teacher investigating more about games as an Educative tool, because excellent results can be obtained through games. However, nowadays teachers prefer doing what they have always made without be interested by improving the English teaching. From my point of view and after making this research project, I consider that games must be used in Infant Education as an educational tool, but as we do not have lots of information about them, we could mix both tools, books and games, contributing to the development of oral skills and also, grammar learning. In this way, if children play with games, they are not afraid to speak in English and express their feelings, achieving the Infant curricula.

So, after reading the conclusions of this research project, we have to discover more positive aspects of games and as Infant teachers we have to use them in class because the benefits are excellent to promote the SLA and develop the children's oral skills.

For all these reasons, I consider highly important to continue studying games in order to have an agreement among teachers about the conception of game and its main features to promote the SLA, the same way that it is important to have an agreement about what is the most important aim of the English teaching.

7.REFERENCES

Ausubel, D (1986) *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Barrios Espinosa, M. (2005) *Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenido y Lengua Extranjera.* Málaga: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Málaga.

Brumfit, C. ,Moon, J., & Tongue, R. (1995) *Teaching English to Children.* London: Nelson, pp

Cameron, L. (2001 *Teaching Languages to Young learners*. Cambridge University

Chomsky, N (1984) cited in *Theory construction in Second Language Acquisition.* Karen Roehr, Lancaster University.

Cook, G. (2000) *Language play, Language learning*. Oxford University Press, 97-205.

Dögg Sigurðardóttir, S. (2010) *The use of games in the language classroom.* Lokaverkefni lagt fram til fullnaðar B.Ed.-gráðu

Eckman, F.R., Highland,D., Lee, P.W., Mileham, J., Weber, R.R. (1995) *Second Language Acquisition Theory and Pedagogy.* New York: Academic Press.

Escobar Urmeneta, C. (2009). *Enseñar en Inglés: Cuando la lengua de la escuela es diferente de la lengua familiar.* Cuadernos de pedagogía, Nº395, 46-50.

Holden (1980) cited in Sociocultural Perspectives on Language Change Diaspora. Georgetown University, Washington DC

Kahn, J. (1995) *Using games in teaching English to young learners*. University of Warwick, England.

Krashen, S. (1981) *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* University of Southern California

Lee, W.R. (1991) *Language teaching games and contents*. Oxford University Press

Long (1985) *Negotiated Interaction in Target Language Classroom Discourse.* Opinion Papers; Speeches/Meeting Papers

Macedonia, M. (2005) *Games and foreign language teaching*. Austria: Universität Linz

Moon, J. (2000) *Children learning English*. Oxford: McMillan Education.

Murado Bou, J.L. (2010) *Didáctica de inglés en educación infantil: Métodos para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa*. Vigo: Editorial Ideaspropias, 11-22.

Musbalat, M. (2012) *The Effect of Using Educational Games on the Students´ Achievement in English Language for the Primary Stage*. Amman, Jordan.

Ojeda, A. (2004) *The role of word games in second language acquisition: second language pedagogy, motivation and ludic task*. University of Florida.

Olofsson, B. (2003) *In the world of play.* London: Whurr.

Parcerisa, A (2012). *Materiales curriculares. Cómo elaborarlos, seleccionarlos y usarlos.* Barcelona, Editoral GRAO

Rixon, S. (1981). *How to use games in language teaching*. London: Macmillan.

Selinker, L. (1972) *Interlanguage*. IRAL; International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching,

Sheen, R. (2002) *Key Concepts in ELT "Focus on form" and "focus on forms".* Oxford University Press

Stojkovic, M. & Jerotievic, D. (2011) *Reasons for using or avoiding games in an EFL classroom*. 1st International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics: Sarajevo.

Fraser, S. (2009) *Play in other languages.* Douglas College, New Westminster, BC Canada.

Tomilson, B. & Masuhara, H. (2009) *Playing to learn: A review of physical games in second language acquisition.* Leeds Metropolitan University, Southport UK

Uberman, A. (1998) *The use of games: For vocabulary presentation and revision.* Vol 36 No 1, January – March.

Vygotsky, L.S (1982) *El papel del juego en el desarrollo.* L.S Barcelona, Crítica.

Wikare, U. , Berge, B., Watsi, C (2002) *Pre-school, school, leisure center.* Oxford University.

APPENDIX

<u>APPENDIX 1</u> - The games

<u>Teacher 1</u>

Game 1 – <u>Creating sentences</u>

Name	"Creating sentences"
Age	5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	One poster to each word of the sentence
Objectives	- Consolidating the structure of English sentences. -Working in group
Development	Each group has different posters to creat some sentences. They have to order these posters to create sentences. The first group which finishes, will be the winner.
Observation	Each poster has a number. Children can collocate the posters correctly, following the order of numbers.

Game 2 – <u>Interrogative questions</u>

Name	Interrogative questions
Age	5 years old
Number of players	4 groups
Resources	Pictures and posters with each interrogative question
Objectives	-Using correctly the meaning of each interrogative question. (Who, when, where)
Development	There are different groups. Each group works in a different corner of the class. In each corner there are three pictures which answer the interrogative questions. So, children have to paste the posters of interrogative questions behind pictures. For example, the picture of three tigers answers the "who" question. Or the picture of the jungle answers the "where" question. The first group which finishes will be the winner.
Observation	-

Game 3 – <u>Fly-swatter</u>

Name	Fly-swatter
Age	3, 4 and 5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	Flashcards with different pictures
Objectives	Memorizing vocabulary
Development	The teacher spreads out some flashcards on the floor. The teacher says a word and children have to pick up the correct flashcard one by one.
Observation	It could be a competition between 2 or more children. The teacher says a word and the first child who picks up the correct flashcard, will be the winner.

Game 4 – Hangman

Name	Hangman
Age	5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	-
Objectives	-Memorizing the writing of some words -Practicing with the alphabet
Development	The teacher thinks a word. The children say a letter one by one in order to guess the word.
Observation	-

Teacher 2

Game 1 – Who is who?

Name	Who is who
Age	5 years old
Number of players	In pairs
Resources	Flashcards with people pictures
Objectives	- Guessing the flashcard of your pair - Using the English for communication
Development	The children have to make pairs. Each child of the pair has the same flashcards. Each child pick up one and the other can't see it. Each child has to guess the flashcard of his pair. They have to use the english to communicate.
Observation	Depending on the age, children only say words as "blonde", or if they are older, they can make some sentences as "Has she got a cap?"

Game 2 – Numbers on back

Name	Numbers on back
Age	4 and 5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	Flashcards with different vocabulary
Objectives	-Memorizing some vocabulary -Using English for communication
Development	There are different pairs. Each child of the pair has a different flashcard pasted on the back. Each child has to guess his flashcard making questions to his pair.
Observation	-

Game 3 – <u>Hot potato</u>

Name	Hot potato
Age	3, 4 and 5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	A ball
Objectives	-Memorizing a English song -Uniting the class
Development	The children have to make a circle and they have to pass the ball while they sing "*Hot potato, hot potato, hot potato, hot. Hot potato, hot potato, hot potato, hot. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten... you're out!*" When the song finishes, the child who has the ball is out.
Observation	If children are old, the child who has the ball when the song finishes, could realize a test.

Game 4 – <u>Performance</u>

Name	Performance
Age	5 years old
Number of players	-
Resources	Disguises and materials for the scene
Objectives	-Playing a famous tale -Improving the pronunciation
Development	During the last trimester, children with the teacher's help create a story. Each child has a character and allmtogether creat the plot of the story. Teacher allocates the rol to each child and one day per week children practice In that way, children improve their pronunciation and they learn some sentences and vocabulary. The last day of school children perform.

<u>APPENDIX 2</u> – The analysis of games

Teacher 1

1. *Creating sentences*
2. *Interrogative questions*
3. *Fly-swatter*
4. *Hangman*

Creating sentences

<u>Meaningful:</u> It is not a meaningful game because this game uses repetitive sequences and as each flashcard has a number, there are children who order the numbers but they do not think about how the sentence is made (the aim of this game).

<u>Clearly organized</u>: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

<u>Incentive</u>: It is not an incentive game because a child, who does not anything about English, can resolve this game ordering the number of the flashcards.

<u>Mediated by a teacher</u>: The teacher does not interact during the game. She only explains and says the winner.

<u>Cognitive learning</u>: Children do not learn anything about English because the order of words in the sentences is a complicated part of English to teach in Infant Education. Furthermore, each flashcard has a number so a child who does not know anything about English can participate in the game too.

<u>Adaptative</u>: This game keeps in mind the different possibilities of each child because children who do not know creating correct sentences can use the number to create the sentence, but children who know English can reflect about the order without paying attention to numbers.

<u>Innovative</u>: It is not a new game for children. Children are used to order flashcards in different knowledge areas.

Creating sentences	
Meaningful	No
Clearly organized	Yes
Incentive	No
Mediated by a teacher	No
Cognitive learning	No
Adaptability	No
Innovative	No

Interrogative questions

Meaningful: This game uses repetitive sequences. Children only have to link the interrogative questions with their correct answer.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: It is an incentive game because children have to know the meaning of interrogative questions to link the interrogative questions with their answer correctly.

Mediated by a teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children practice and internalize the meaning of some interrogative questions.

Adaptability: This game does not keep in mind the different levels of English knowledge. Only the children who know the meaning of interrogative questions can play with an educative aim.

Innovative: Linking two flashcards is very used as and educative method in Infant Education, so it is not an innovative game.

Interrogative questions	
Meaningful	No
Clearly organized	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediated by teacher	No
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	No
Innovative	No

Fly-swatter

Meaningful: This game uses repetitive sequences because each child only has to pick up the correct flashcard so it is not a meaningful game.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: It is an incentive game because children have to know the vocabulary to pick up the correct flashcard. The children memorize the vocabulary with this game.

Mediated by a teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children link the word with the correct picture with this game. Because of that, children practice vocabulary with it.

Adaptability: This game does not keep in mind the different level of English knowledge, because only children who know the correc vocabulary can play correctly.

Innovative: This type of game is very used in Infant Education so it is not an innovative game.

Fly-swatter	
Meaningful	No
Clearly organized	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediated by a teacher	No
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	No
Innovative	No

Hangman

Meaningful: Children have to use the alphabet with repetitive sequences, but also they have to use their previous knowledge and their creativity in order to guess the word. So, it is a meaningful game.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: It is an incentive game because children have to use their previous knowledge to guess the word.

Mediation of teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children memorize new vocabulary.

Adaptability: This game does not keep in mind the different levels of English knowledge because only can play children who know the alphabet.

Innovative: Children are not motivated because they do not use materials where they can express their creativity or things like that. They only use their knowledge.

Hangman	
Meaningful	No
Clearly organized	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediated by a teacher	No
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	No
Innovative	No

Teacher 2

1. Who is who?
2. Numbers on back
3. Hot potato
4. A performance

Who is who?

Meaningful: It is not a groupal game so there are not repetitive questions because each child makes the necessary questions to guess his flashcard.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: Children have to use their English knowledge to creat correct sentences so that their classmates can understand them. Children use the English as a vehicle for communication so it is an incentive game.

Mediated by a teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children practice English.

Adaptability: Each child uses the words which he knows. Because of this, it is a game which keeps in mind the different levels of English knowledge.

Innovative: It is an innovative game because children can use their creativity to creat sentences.

Who is who?	
Meaningful	Yes
Clearly organized	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediated by a teacher	No
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	Yes
Innovative	Yes

Meaningful: It is not a groupal game so there are not repetitive questions because each child makes the necessary questions to guess his flashcard.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: Children have to use their English knowledge to creat correct sentences so that their classmates can understand them. Children use the English as a vehicle for communication so it is an incentive game.

Mediation of teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children practice English.

Adaptability: Each child uses the words which he knows. Because of this, it is a game which keeps in mind the different levels of English knowledge.

Innovative: It is an innovative game because children can use their creativity to creat sentences.

Numbers on back	
Meaningful	Yes
Clear organization	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediation of teacher	No
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	Yes
Innovative	Yes

Hot potato

Meaningful: Children only have to sing the song so it is not a meaningful game.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable.

Incentive: It is not an incentive game because children only have to sing the song so a child who does not know English can play too.

Mediated by a teacher: The teacher does not take part in the game. She only explains and says the winner.

Cognitive learning: Children do not learn anything. It is only a funny game.

Adaptability: This game keeps in mind the different levels of English knowledge because a child who does not know English can play too. Children only have to sing.

Innovative: It is not an innovative game. The songs are an old resource to teach in Infant Education. Furthermore, children can not use their creativity.

Hot potato	
Meaningful	No
Clear organization	Yes
Incentive	No
Mediation of teacher	No
Cognitive learning	No
Adaptability	Yes
Innovative	No

A performance

Meaningful: This activity (because it is not a proper game) does not have repetitive sequences because each child has to create a different role. Also, children can develop their creativity and furthermore, children use the English as a vehicle for communication, the main aim of English teaching.

Clearly organized: It has a clear organization beacause there is a plot and an ending. Furthermore, the explanation is easy understable

Incentive: It is an incentive game because children have to use their previous English knowledge to creat the plot of the story and the dialogues. Furthermore, they will learn new vocabulary in order to creat a funny story.

Mediated by a teacher: The mediation of the teacher is important in this activity in each rehearsal because he helps the students with their pronunciation. Furthermore, he gets through questions and reflections that children can create their own dialogues and story. Also, teacher use different tecniques to achieve children reflect about their mistakes and learn thrugh them.

Cognitive learning: Children learn new vocabulary and expressions which are necessaries to creat a funny story.

Adaptability: Each child creates his dialogue depends on her possibilities.

Innovative: Children are motivated because they are using the English as a vehicle for communication and also, they can check that they can express their ideas through a new language. Furthermore, they can develop their creativity with the dialogues, with the disguises etc.

A performance	
Meaningful	Yes
Clear organization	Yes
Incentive	Yes
Mediation of teacher	Yes
Cognitive learning	Yes
Adaptability	Yes
Innovative	Yes

– Interviews.

Teacher 1

(A: me; B: Teacher 1)

A: Good morning Ana. Well, first of all, thank you for allowing me to make this interview.

B: Oh Bea, you know that it is not a problem for me. You are welcome.

A: Well, we are going to start in order to not waste time. Ok, mmm…My project has as the main aim investigating how Infant Teachers use games in class and which ones promote the SLA.

B: Ok, perfect. Besides I am Infant Teacher but also now I am working as bilingual teacher, so it is perfect.

A: haha, Because of this, I thought of you to make this interview. Ok, so I would like to start asking you what is your concept about a game? …What is a game in your opinion?

B:Well, as all Infant teachers have to know, a game is something funny for children. Children with 3, 4 or 5 years are always playing alone or with their friends depending on their ages and their development. But well, when I think in a game, the first idea which appears on my mind is a funny activity.

A: So, in your opinion, all funny activities are games?

B: haha, no. A game is an activity in which there are some rules which have to be followed by children but also, this activity has a fun aspect.

A: haha, well, so .. I have got more information about your conception of games. For you, a game is an activity with rules and it must be fun, is not it?

B: Yes, for sure.

A: Ok.. and if I asked you about the difference between play and game, do you know it?

B: haha, of course. It is something that all English teachers know. Play is an activity without any rules in which children can develop their imagination, creativity.. what's else..mm..their personality too, and more things like these. And by contrast, games have some rules which have to be followed by children, and they are specific aims.

A: Ok, see your point. As a bilingual teacher that you are, do you think that children can learn a SL only by games?

B: Uff.. it is an interesting and difficult question. Well…I do not know where to start but I am going to try to answer with real feeling. Well, all teachers know that Infant Education books as a tool to teach a SL is not effective because children get bored and

they may hate English. In these type of books children have to paint, match or cut and they are sick and tired of doing that. However, when I finished my degree I tried to teach English without using a book and all my colleagues told that I was crazy because my classes were going to be a chaos. Well, effectively that classes were a chaos haha, and for this reason, I found out that children need a book to learn something. I mean, when I started to play with games thinking that I was going to have more positive results than with a book, I found out that children need to learn basic vocabulary, grammar rules etc. which must be used in the games. So, in my opinion, tourning to your question haha, No, children can not learn a SL only by games. They need a book or something like this through they can learn and memorize vocabulary, grammar rules in order to use them in the games.

A: But it is contradictory to think this, when you know that children use games and they play naturally, do not believe it?

B: Well Bea. When you are in the degree you learn lots of things about the children's mind, their development etc. But when you are in the school you can not waste time, you have to be effective, so although all researchers say that memorizing English is a wrong way to teach, with my experience I tell you that children have to memorize grammar rules and vocabuary in order to play with games.

A: I do not know why but most of Infant teachers, who I have spoken during my degree, told me that what we learn during the degree is really different with the truth.

B: You will realize, haha.

A: haha, tourning to the questions, Also, I would like to know what benefits or disadvantages have the games, in your opinion.

B: Well, the answer is similar to the question before. Obviously, games have lots of benefits in the childhood because they are funny and children learn unconsciously.

A: And disadvantages?

B: If I linked this question with the question before, I would say that games can be the only tool to teach English. They have to be accompanied by others tool as book, for example.

A: So, in your opinion, what is the best method to teach a SL?

B: I know that my answer does not like so much, but in my opinion a best method is memorizing and using a book to have a guide in which children can observe what they are going to learn or what they have already learnt.

A: But in the case of Infant Education, do you use book too?

B: Yes. My children have a book in which there are some main characters and through them, children learn different concepts and vocabulary. The books present games too, but it is true that these games are not educational.

A: So, your children of Infant Education learn English trough a book so, when do they play?

B: haha, well first of all children do not come to school to play. They come to school to learn something. On the basis that games are useful in these ages, my children play when they finish the homework as a reward or in speacial moments like Christmas or the last day of school.

A: haha I have a clear idea about your opinion about games. But, with the methodology that you use, how can children use English as a vehicle for communication? Do they speak in English in class?

B: Buff..This is another difficult question to answer because all teachers of my department are not agree with me so..haha Well, in my opinion and using my experience to answer, using the English as a vehicle for communication in the Infant Education classes is difficult. First of all, they have to learn some grammar rules and vocabulary to be able to speak English, so when they start the shool they do not know anything so I do not know how children can speak in English. Besides, if we allow them to speak without pay attention in their mistakes, they can learn wrong structures, for example. Haha, that is, I can not imagine a class where children speak without learning grammar rules before. If we allow them to speak as they want, they can learn and internalise something wrong.

A: But the main aim of teaching English is using it as a vehicle for communication, is not it?

B: All theories say that, but nobody says how and with which tools, Infant teachers have to promote the SLA. Can you imagine Bea, a class with children of 3 years old, without having a book with which entertain them and trying to children speak? It is a chaos. They only speak in Spanish and most of them, have still problems with the Spanish... so, you can imagine the situation.

A: So, for you is it more important the form than the meaning, is not it?

B: Yes, without doubt. Firstly, we have to teach the basis of English, that is, grammar, vocabulary, question marks...And then, we can try to children speak, but when they are older, I am sorry but in Infant Education I think is impossible.

A: Although you do not use games every day, in your opinion, which features they have to have to be an useful tool to promote the SLA? Which common features had the games which you sent me?

B: Well, overall that they are fun, and also that they have a clear aim. If you have analized my games, you can see that in all of them children learn something about grammar rules or vocabulary.

A: Ana, after analyzing your games, I would like to tell you that, from my point of view, they are very repetitive.

B: Of course Bea, but being repetitive is the way through children learn something.

A: I see your point, but you have told me before that games they have to be fun, and if they are repetitive, they are not fun..

B: Well, children have to learn by repetitive exercices, as you know. And they can play with the same game lots of times, so, I do not think that the games with repetitive sequences are bored for them.

A: Ok.. After finishing my degree, I have not received lots of information about games which promote the SLA. So I would like to know how do you learn them and since when did you use them.

B: Obviously, I do not learn them in the degree. But in my first year as a English Teacher, I had to look for lots of books in order to learn something. So, there I have learnt main games to use in class.

A: But do not you think that you should change the games? Because the society changes, and the children's needs too so..

B: I agree with you , and I see your point, but when you know the results of a game, although it is old-fashioned, I prefer continuing using this that learn a new game.

A: And why do you prefer that?

B: I am a old teacher haha

A: haha…Ok Ana.. mmm well..So as you use always the same games, you do not modify the results after realizing it in class, is not it?

B: When I started to use them, yes because I wanted to have a useful game, so everyday I changed what I did not like it. But nowadays, all is perfect and I obtain always the same results.

A: And, to finish this interview, I would like to ask you if you use games too, in the older classes.

B: No, but we make a performance the last day of the course, so in this manner we practize the communication through English.

A: Ok Ana, thank you very much and see you soon.

B: Ok Bea, you are welcome, and I am sure that in few year you will be agree with me. Haha

(A: me; B: Jorge)

A: Hello Jorge. Well, first of all, thank you for allowing me to make this interview.

B: You are welcome Bea. You know that I am always available for speaking about English.

A: Well, we are going to star in order to not waste time. Ok, mmm…My project has as the main aim investigating how Infant Teachers use games in class and which ones promote the SLA.

B: Well, about the Infant Education I do not know so much because I studied English teaching, and this is my first year as bilingual teacher in a class of Infant Education. But because of this, I have read lots of theories about this cycle to carry out a good teaching.

A: haha Does not matter. We are going to start. Well...As we know the games are very important in the Infant Education because is something natural for children, so, what is a game in your opinion?

B: Well… In my opinion a game is a situation in which the pupils are the protagonist of their own learning and because of that they are interesting.

A: So, in your opinion a game is an activity where teacher does not participate and children has all the responsability of their own learning?

B: Of course, teacher should participate to correct their mistakes or to reflect with them, but it is very difficult although I try to do these things.

A: And how do you this "mediation of teacher"?

B: Well..When I start with a new class at the beginning of the year, I try to guess the abilities and the difficulties of each child. So, when they are play to different games, I collocate next to the child who has the difficulties to analyze his problem and his progress during the year. In my opinion, if we do not take into account the abilities of children to learn English, it is impossible that they can achieve an aim. However, it is true that this is difficult because each child learns better with a different method, so sometimes teachers have to do a big effort to creat an excellent teaching atmosphere where all children can learn at the same time.

A: So you try to do a specific teaching of each child.

B: At least I try to! Haha I have read that in this cycle each child has a different rythm to progress, because of that I think that it is very important to carry out a specific teaching.

A: I agree with you! Haha. Tourning to the questions and the games as a tool to promote the SLA, do you think that children can learn a SL only by games?

B: haha, I like games as a resource, but obviously, not only by games, but they are very important resources for the learning process.

A: Why do you think that?

B: Well, it is easy. I have read that the Infant Curriculo says that children have to develop their oral and body communication, so the writing, reading and listening are not binding. However, only by games it is impossible because they need make other activities apart from speaking. In my class, I toggle between digital blackboard and games. My children do not have book, because I consider that children will have more time to be sit down and reading or painting. I want my children enjoy with the English and they are conscious about through English we can speak with other people, for example. So, haha sorry, but I speak a lot, you know haha. Well, I toggle between digital blackboard and games. We use the digital blackboard to learn new vocabulary in which children have to link the name which the computer says and the correct picture, have to circle the objects with start by "o" or things like these. Then, we play with games in which they have to use the vocabulary learnt. The first day when they have to use the vocabulary which they have not internalized, it is a chaotic class, but after, it is amazing observing as children with 4 or 5 year speak in English to achieve an aim. Haha I get goosebumps.

A: Woo, haha I agree with you. It must be incredible.

B: Yes it is. Haha

A: Well, So in your opinion games have more advantages than disadvantages, is not it?

B: Of course! Haha! The main benefit is that pupils feel free to practice the language, and it is something great. Also, they can develop their abilities of body communication for example, and besides, it is something funny because they keep motivated and they want to play more and more, using English as a vehicle to achieve the purpose of the game.

Disadvantages? Mmm..May be that games depends a lot on the day of each child. That is, children in Infant Education are 3, 4 or 5 years old, so sometime they do not want to go to the school, or they are sick, or they are angry with their mums and because of that they do not want to play..haha Things like these can be transform a perfect day in a chaotic class. That is, although I have prepared a fantastic game, if the day is grey..I can not do anaything and I know that it will be a horrible day, but well haha.

A: It is very interesing what you have said because you think that games are useful to promote the SLA but it is a resource with some limitations because you have to prepare always a plan B, because you do not know never how the children feel today.

B: That it is.

A: And Do you think that because of that, most of English teachers do not use games as a resource?

B: haha May be. It is more comfortable opening the book and painting the spider and the mouse. Jaja It is a pity because with this type of activities, children are wasting the time, but well.. The are lots of teachers who prefer doing this.

A: Tourning to the question of the best method, in your opinion the best method is mix different methods?

B: Of course, mixing several methods bearing in mind the characteristics of the pupils is the best option, but always using games, overall in Infant Education because we do not have to forget that it is something natural for children.

A: And in this mix of different methods, I know that you practice the communication through English. Is it difficult in Infant Education?

B: What I say always is that my main aim as a English teacher is achiving that children do not feel afraid speaking in English aloud. I want that they are able to express their feeling, doubts or opinions through English although they only say a word. However, in my opinion, there must be a balance between the proper form of the game and the avaliable meaning. I should not say this, but I think that the main problem in this country with the English teaching is that there are lots of teachers who has a traditional view..mm you know what is a traditional view, is not it?

A: Yes yes haha

B: Well, so, their excercices are focused on form forgeting the meaning. We have to change the mentality of the most of English teachers, because it is correct and it is necessary teaching grammar, of course, but then we have to give children the possibility of use it, because if not, they do not understan the real aim of learning English. However, sometimes, I have had some difficulties with shy children because they do not want to play. It is important to pay attention to children who do not have a good English level or they are shy. The shyness is a problem with this type of games because these children do not want to play because of that.

A: I totally agree with you. So, for you, all games to be a good resource have to promote the communication among children using English?

B: Without doubts! Haha children and overall with these ages, they want to run, jump etc. But also speaking, they will be all day speaking so we have to build these desires to speak, providing them games to speak in English.

A: And which other features have to have a game to use in class?

B: Buff...It must be funny and with a clear aim, in order to children know what they have to know to achieve the aim.

A: And, could you tell me how did you learn these games?

B:haha well it is a long story. Well..I start haha When I was a child, I studied in England (Worthing)..Do you know where is it?

A: Oh yes haha near of London, I think.

B: Yes haha well, so there the teaching is very different in Infant Education because they take the opportunity of games to teach contents. For example, we went to the playground and we saw a beetle and after that, we made a project with different games, and activities.. were exciting. I have never had a book in that school! Besides, we usually played with the same games so I remember still them. Then, when this year started as Bilingual Infant Teacher, I have read lots of books about Infant cycle and the importance of games, because I remembered that in England we did not have books and we went happier to the school. So, haha I have learnt these games through my experience as a child and after reading lots of books.

A: So in your case, your experience it is very important.

B: Of course. In all teachers I think that the experience is important because the human tend to imitate what we have seen. Because of that, if we have had bad teachers, may be, we will be bad teachers too. Haha

A: haha It is a risk affirmation, I think haha

B: It is possible haha but the factor of the experiences and the imitation is true.

A: I agree with you. Haha tourning the questions, you have said before that you try to make a specific teaching, so do you check the mistakes of a game after implementing it in class?

B: Of course.

A: Ok haha And as you have been English teacher in older courses, I would like to ask you if you use games there.

B: Yes, of course! Why not? In my opinion, the important is using the proper games bearing in mind the age of the pupils. It is the best way so that the pupils practice the language. But it is true that in these course, they have a book in which they have to learn vocabulary, grammar rules and also, writing some papers. Step by step, children have to develop all competences of English to have a perfect learning. And to achieve this, I think that games are very useful.