TEFL in Early Years Education and Its Relation to Activity Sequencing: A Theoretical Overview

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Abstract   The present paper intends to shed light upon the traditional trends in TEFL within the Early Years Education stage by elucidating aspects having to do with the relevance of the starting age of learning English, its influence upon the learner and the assumed biological limitations. Nevertheless, learning English is a challenge for both young and adult learners inasmuch as biological and cognitive restrictions are applied in both cases, as well as the different learning paths which each of them entails. In this regard, the Spanish educational legislation does highlight the value of language learning from Early Years, fostering the necessity of a teaching methodological framework which can apply to both legislation and the biological and cognitive nature of young learners. In order to provide a clear organization to the classroom planning, activity sequencing seems to be convenient to cognitively arrange the contents and teaching procedure. Another purpose of this paper is to provide a framework of reference for this potential sequencing within Early Years, whilst taking into account the nature of the activities which can be proposed.

Keywords: *Early Years Education, TEFL young learners, Activity Sequencing, Theory of Teaching and Learning, English for Young Learners, Spanish education*

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1. Introduction

The present paper sets out several objectives: (1) to theoretically account for the current trends in ELT in Early Years (henceforth, EY) either in the classroom context or by means of a textbook; (2) to analyse the role of ELT in EY within the Spanish education system; (3) to establish parallelisms between ELT in EY and Activity Sequencing parameters; (4) to open up new research trends within EY in terms of materials organisation and their underlying theoretical foundations with reference to Activity Sequencing and cognitive patterns.

2. Learning English at an Early Age

It is universally acknowledged that English may be regarded as a *lingua franca* at present time. This aspect is seen throughout the different education systems which have endeavoured to promote the study of English from very early stages. In this regard, there have been two currents of thought in the teaching model in Early Years. As far as the Spanish system is concerned, some schools have opted for a traditional perspective in the teaching of English, that is to say, offering the early learners classes on the language itself (but, of course, adapted to the age of 3-5). Conversely, other schools have preferred to advocate for methodologies involving a more intensive exposure to the language, bordering on the principles claimed in Content and Language Integrated Learning (henceforth, CLIL) approaches. Nonetheless, much has been said about the benefits from learning a language from an early age, but few studies have been carried out in this context. In light of the aforementioned, it is believed that children are able to acquire a second or third language at a faster pace than older learners (see Horwitz [1]; Torras, Tragant & García [2]).

Thus, any methodology centred upon learning a language at an early years education stage should take into consideration the necessity that all of the material presented to the learner comply with abundant input. This is an aspect which, compared with the learning of our own mother tongue, requires that the learner be exposed to abundant material by means of considerable listening practices – coming both from the teacher and other resources – and emphasising the different phonemes or speech sounds (Fleta-Guillén, [3]: 39). As for this, it is of the utmost importance that the teacher involved is aware of developing a good English level, but more importantly, a good pronunciation. In this regard, young learners are strongly linked to their teachers' language skills, since they serve as a language model for them. Much in the

same way as it happens to L1 young learners, children in early years classrooms are intended to process the language in as natural a way as possible. Some studies, such as the one carried out by Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle [4] indicated that younger learners ended up reaching a higher level and they could overcome adult learners, even though the latter obtained better results at early stages of SLA.

Roca de Larios & Manchón [5] deal with the issue of age regarding SLA and comment on the influence and controversy fuelled by the so-called Critical Period Hypothesis (hereafter, CPH). This theoretical foundation may be stretched to L2 learning since, as put forward in this CPH, it is thought that first language acquisition must occur before cerebral lateralization (completed about puberty age) and that all language learnt during this period will be relatively fast and successful (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, [4]: 1114). Following Skehan [6], if the hypothesis of such critical period were deemed true, it would certainly coincide with the idea that humans possess internal mechanisms to acquire a language naturally and it would also suggest the existence of sequences genetically determined. Nevertheless, this critical period would lead to a more realistic standpoint in the development of materials and methodologies for language learners. In this regard, the introduction of a second (or third) language at an early stage could undoubtedly accelerate its acquisition and the prospects of children achieving a native-like command of the language when becoming adults.

2.1. Starting Age for the Learning of English

It cannot be denied that young learners do present seemingly different characteristics from other types of learners (Cameron [7], vid. Fleta Guillén, [3]: 39). In this sense, children learning an L2, especially in pre-school years, avail themselves of their innate language learning capacities (Fleta-Guillén, [3]: 39) which are rather similar to the process followed to acquire their own mother tongue. In this regard, it seems logical to expect that children make use of the language according to a series of external variables which may well affect the process. These variables are the context, the amount of input made accessible to the learners and the opportunities to use the language appropriately. In Early Years Education, learning languages is especially marked by the absence of written materials owing to the fact that young learners at this age are not supposed to be able to use much of written language. In addition to this, Gomber (1992) specifies that learning a language at this stage of life does not entail any intent on the children's part, since they learn it subconsciously. Fleta-Guillen ([3]: 39) puts forward that the advantage of introducing English in Early Years does coincide with children's biological predisposition to learning a new language. Placed within the context of the Spanish education system, it stands to reason that children start the language at age 3 (first year of Early Years Education). Nonetheless, young learners have the possibility of starting the learning of English right from their very early years, that is to say, from 0-3. In light of this, it must be stated that only private nursery schools offer this possibility, unless other variables have an influence on it (e.g. parents being native speakers or having a very high command of the language).

2.2. The Role of English in the Spanish Education System

The introduction of English language learning has overcome a series of changes in methodology as well as in the implementation within the different school stages. Thus, it must be borne in mind that the mere introduction of the language at an early stage does not necessarily allow for a guaranteed outcome (Fleta-Guillén, [3]: 40). In this regard, certain variables play a more than relevant role with regards to the correct implementation of the language.

So as to understand correctly the functioning of the Spanish education system, it is essential to underscore the main features of which it is composed or on which the different competencies and contents are based. Thus, the Organic Law enacted in October 3rd (1990), within the framework of LOGSE, a new education law, first reflected the growing interest in foreign languages, especially English. Gradually, the increasing globalisation empowered the necessity to focus on English as it was (and is) regarded as the universal language owing to its strategic and economic situation. This undoubtedly filtered down to the education context, where students are thought to get prepared for their future positions as adults in our society. The advent of the Organic Law 2/2006 (May 3rd), known as LOE, involved an important step as for the implementation of English as a Foreign Language in Early Years Education. Likewise, such implementation derived from the development of a number of experimental education programmes which were intended to provide professional educators with the key factors needed to establish a proper language learning programme in Early Years (Murado-Bouso, 2010: 9). Ultimately, a new Education Law as a predecessor of LOE has been enacted. This new Organic Law is known as LOMCE. Nevertheless, it does not modify any of the articles related to Early Years as they were presented in LOE. In this sense, the main features to be distinguished within what this law puts forward in terms of Early Years is the fact that it is a completely wilful stage and its main aim is to focus on children's attention from their birth until the age of 6.

In connection therewith, Early Years Education is organised as follows: (1) first cycle, from 0 to 3 years; (2) second cycle, ranging from 3 to 6 years. This second stage is the most important one insomuch as children are given the different tools in terms of sociology, behaviour and language skills. These aspects would further help them to get used to the subsequent stages where more complex issues will require more cognition. In the case of The Region of Murcia, the education legislation on the subject states very clearly the objectives in terms of linguistic skills: "f) developing communicative skills in different languages and ways of expression, including a foreign language, as well as starting to enjoy the literary experience"[1]. This competence is framed within the area of knowledge known as "Lenguajes: Comunicación y representación" (in English, Languages: Communication and Representation). Making reference to the Decree nº 254/2008, enacted on August 1st, it is also stated that the

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[1] "f) Desarrollar habilidades comunicativas en diferentes lenguajes y formas de expresión, incluida una lengua extranjera, así como comenzar a disfrutar la experiencia literaria" Own translation.

learning of a foreign language in Early Years allows for more positive attitudes towards languages in general, enhancing language awareness and fostering curiosity. Furthermore, a new language different to the mother tongue favours the development of the different affective, intellectual and social competencies. This leads to a higher improvement of the communicative competence.

Finally, the understanding of the legislative situation is a crucial factor in order to correctly organise and plan the lessons as well as the possible materials to be given out to children. Nonetheless, it is clear that the law takes into account very seriously the importance of a foreign language within the education framework.

3. Teaching English in Early Years Education: Pedagogical Implications and Standpoints

As described in the previous sections, English occupies nowadays a singular role in the development of the cognitive capacities in the children as well as the own mother tongue (essential vehicle for the acquisition and transmission of information and knowledge). In this regard, it seems logical to expect that a reliable teaching methodology is at least partially based upon the cognitive processes required to perform the different skills necessary for communication.

The objectives and completion goals which ELT methodologies may involve and lead students to are manifold insofar as several external and internal variables are prone to affect the teaching-learning process.

Prior to stating the different methodological proposals which are currently being used in Early Years Education, it is necessary to pinpoint the special characteristics which young learners present at the moment of learning. According to Nunan [8], young learners are not able to identify and analyse language as adults do since they have not developed their cognition to such a level of meta-analysis. Furthermore, young learners do face difficulties reading and writing words even in their mother tongue, what hinders the learning even further. In addition, young learners have little knowledge of the world and the capacity of learning, but they are more inclined to learn things based upon fantasy and movement. Thus, ELT methodologies should take into consideration the different features that are to be expected on the learners' part and what kind of activities or classroom organisation they are more prone to receive. In this regard, the reception of knowledge is seemingly dependent on the capacities deployed by young learners in that their receptive skills are largely sensorial and experiential.

As for the current teaching methodologies, Early Years Education does not leave much room for any other teaching techniques and methods other than relying upon visual and experiential activities. Thus, a series of principles are to be taken into account from a holistic standpoint before delving into in-depth features of language teaching methodologies (Ortiz [8]):

a) Individualisation, which entails the adaption of education to the students' needs on a variety of internal levels (cognitive, socio-affective, among others). Hence, these needs are materialized through a wide array of activities responding to this large number of external variables which highly condition the learning.

b) Socialisation, which supplements the previous principle and intends to foster learning situations where learners come into contact and develop social skills.

c) Intuition, which sets out to promote the understanding of knowledge in a sensitive way, either through experience or visual stimuli such as photographs. Examples, comparisons and descriptions are also thereto related techniques.

d) Motivation, which entails the degree of interest shown by the learner in terms of goal achievement. Several techniques are used in order to activate it, such as the use of intellectual, emotional or social stimuli.

e) Games, which may be used to favour and foster the learning in that it is a natural activity performed by children.

f) Globalisation, which understands the teaching and learning sequence as a set of steps or stages whereby young learners may acquire different skills within a context. In this regard, teachers are expected to act as guides and mediators in order to facilitate the construction of meaningful learning. This type of learning also favours the establishment of relations between prior knowledge and new content. The relation aids the learner to assemble bricks in the correct place and it leads to a quicker and relatively more effective retention of the new learnt material. The globalisation principle in a teaching methodology entails the organisation of didactic sequences favouring the construction of such knowledge. In this case, the learner is the protagonist in the learning core and is implicitly led by the teacher towards the expected path. Apropos, the teacher is responsible for the correct organisation of the contents in order that this globalisation may occur. Connections between prior and new knowledge are essential so as to be successful. Nevertheless, such connections may only take place when children feel the need of responding to a particular problem for which an actual learning discovery[2] must be accomplished.

In line with f), teaching English in Early Years entails approaching the subject from a holistic point of view in that the same education content could be applied to the objectives set out in other didactic areas. In addition to this, a language methodology in Early Years shall take into consideration the child biological development when organising and planning the timing which each session or didactic unit is allotted. This organisation should be as gradual as possible with regards to increasing such timing throughout the passing of the sessions (Barreira-Cerqueiras, [9]: 33). Furthermore, any methodology centred upon Early Years shall cover the field of activities, games and routines which further the integration of children in the society.

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[2] Learning discovery is a term originally coined for this paper to make reference to the idea that children may find the learning of a particular item as being a "discovery" in that they decipher the idea or content intended.

Sánchez [10] considers that language learning is an innate process which depends upon internal and external features at the beginning. In the case of internal features, it involves biological and neurological features. These aspects have been studied by scholars (see Friederici, [11]; Lewkowicz & Ghazanfar, [12]), especially neurological ones, insomuch as some of these studies suggest that neuronal activity does coincide with the different language learning models. This idea will be compared with other SLA theories later on.

Also, it is relevant to mention the different stages through which young learners go: (1) pre-linguistic, which starts after the birth and rudimentary techniques of communication are used, such as crying in order to obtain and satisfy biological necessities; (2) linguistic, which starts at age 1 via a series of communicative devices developed in the previous stage, such as laughter, gestures or slight vocalisations. Nevertheless, this stage is marked by imitation on the child's part in that he tries to reflect the actions or utterances made by the adult (López-Ornat, 2011, vid. Barreira-Cerqueiras, [9]). As a result of this interaction, the child starts to understand the intricacies of the everyday language, whilst acquiring up to 20 words. Thus, the child's ability to communicate is restricted to one-word utterances. From the second year onwards, their ability to learn is greatly improved and they can even resort to inventing words when they do not exactly know one word. Finally, the period under consideration in Early Years Education, at age 3 and 4, the child is able to produce set of words as well as giving out more detailed explanations. At age 5, vocabulary is expanding up to 2000 words, giving the child the opportunity to hold conversations with relative ease. Though it is a language still in development to its fullest command (Gallego, [13]), the child is already able to distinguish between sequences of time (using present, past and future) as well as providing detailed descriptions of his surroundings. As a result of the aforementioned, it seems more than clear – and unavoidable – that the learning of English as a foreign language in Early Years Education (either in Spain or in any other non-English speaking country) goes hand in hand with the development of the children's own mother tongue. As expressed by both Lennenberg (1982) and Moreau & Richelle (1984), as cited in Barreira-Cerqueiras [9], some studies have pointed out that children show a natural predisposition, as mentioned above, towards learning a language. When they learn the closest language to their environment and social entourage, that is to say, their mother tongue, they learn at a faster pace. Then, it is possible to assert that, if the learner has completely acquired his mother tongue by the age of 5, this would be the ideal period to start the introduction of a second language. Nonetheless, its earlier introduction is also beneficial as long as it is made sure that the acquisition of the mother tongue is not interfered by any external variables which may derive from learning a second language.

As a final thought and on the basis of the aforementioned theoretical ideas, it would seem reasonable to ascertain that any language methodology addressed to young learners should rely upon visual materials, experiential learning as well as taking into consideration the cognitive processes underlying children's mind. This assumption will be discussed in the following section and compared so that a model of activity sequencing may be drawn out.

3.1. The Role of English in the Spanish Education System

Prior to delving into the intricacies of Activity Sequencing, it is necessary to make reference to the recommendations put forward by the European Commission (2011: 17) that children's exposure to the target language should be made under conditions implying meaningful learning and authentic setting, giving rise to a natural acquisition of the language in a rather unconscious way. Thus, the European Commission gives high importance to the idea of language immersion as a procedure to understand the meaning of messages through diverse strategies (such as asking the interlocutor) and being given the opportunities to use it. In this regard, this immersion points out to a kind of learning which prevails focus-on-meaning rather than focus-on-form inasmuch as the early acquisition of the mother tongue relies much more on the "understanding" against "correction". Usually, corrections are made once the understanding of the young learner is significantly stronger. The same occurs in the case of foreign language learning since meaningful learning shall only take place if young learners are really acquiring some knowledge. In line with this, Gass & Selinker ([14]: 309) are highly clear on this aspect insofar as they consider that learning cannot take place if there is no understanding of the vehicular language. Furthermore, it could be suggested that EFL learning in EY is set in parallel with content learning – some of the vocabulary words are terms which young learners may have recently learnt in their own mother tongue – with a focus on meaning and fluency (Fleta-Guillén, [3]: 40).

In the same way, the acquisition of knowledge in young learners is learner-centred and it entails a wide array of senses and skills which children need to integrate gradually into their active consciousness and memory storage. Again, it should not be forgotten that EY learning entails a holistic perspective, with a variety of possibilities in the learning context.

After these previous remarks, it is relevant to express what activity sequencing is and the possible underlying relation with EFL in Early Years Education. First, activity sequencing may be understood as the organisation of different activities proposed within a session or didactic unit. Nonetheless, it is a much broader term including not only activities understood as practice for any grammar or vocabulary content viewed, but also explanations of different linguistic items. Framed within structuralism, activity sequencing may be underestimated owing to its apparent traditionalism related to current textbooks. Nonetheless, despite efforts to innovate in EFL teaching methodology, textbooks are still the main source to which most of teachers resort [15]. In line with this, these textbooks follow some patterns in relation to the sequencing of the different activities and explanations of any kind. "P-P-P" has traditionally been the mainstream EFL style model used in the majority of EFL classrooms. Each P involves a different meaning or learning perspective: P1 stands for presentation; P2, for practice; and P3, for production. Criado [15,16] believes that this traditional pattern of activity sequencing could be put in parallel with cognitive processes underlying second language learning. At first sight, Criado's statement may

seem somehow controversial and venturesome inasmuch as P-P-P has been traditionally overlooked (but contrarily, it is the most widespread model) for it is regarded as a model which relies too much upon focus-on-form instead of upon focus-on-meaning. The idea is that P-P-P is adjusted to a more communicative setting together with the adaptation of some dull, mechanical activities (endeavouring to combine focus-on-meaning, so much boosted by CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), and focus-on-form, typical of structurally-based methods). However, Criado's ideas are backed by a theory which understands the acquisition of skills through a sequence of cognitive processes. This theory was first introduced by Anderson and is known as ACT Production System at its earliest stage; later, it turned out to be known as the ACT-R version (Anderson 1982, 1987, 2005). This model of skill acquisition regards language itself as a skill. Furthermore, ACT-R introduces the concepts of declarative (DEC) and procedural (PRO) knowledge on the basis of cognitive psychology. In broad terms, DEC makes reference to the knowledge of the facts, that is, the 'what'; conversely, PRO points out to a more practical perspective in that it refers to 'how' to do the things (Criado, [15]: 37). In SLA, DEC could refer to knowledge about the linguistic system and PRO to knowledge on how to use the different linguistic forms. Finally, Criado ([15]: 37) proposes the sequence DEC->PRO as the most appropriate for an adult learning environment. Nevertheless, little has been researched on the beneficial of an activity sequencing pattern in Early Years Education. In this respect, Duran & Ramaut [17] affirm that language learning should include a silent period where learners have the opportunity of acquiring a receptive base in the language – just as much as it occurs in the acquisition of the mother tongue. Then, DEC would seem not appropriate for a FLT classroom in Early Years Education as young learners are still not aware of linguistic terms or concepts, such as present simple, pronouns, among many others. It seems logical to think that any activity sequencing present in Early Years should cover the different PRO phases rather than dec or DEC. In addition to this, it should be borne in mind that young learners' literacy is not complete, what leads to experiential learning (bordering on the principles of the Task-Based Approach to Language Learning) rather than to structural learning. Nonetheless, a series of principles for Activity Sequencing in EY may be established owing to the previously mentioned ideas: (1) any activity sequencing in EY should at least take into consideration learners' abilities and to which extent these could stretch; (2) young learners rely upon visual and sensorial learning as opposed to adult learning; (3) the use of written materials is highly limited to the abilities learners may deploy (they are not even able to read nor write); (4) the possible activity sequencing remains in the classroom planning or the use of external material aside from textbooks.

3.2. Classroom Planning in ELT and the Use of Activities: Materials or not?

As stated by Perry [18], children's attention is relatively short as they get distracted in a relatively easy way. This important statement reflects the necessity of using suitable resources which help bridge this attention gap. However, Early Years' teachers avoid using textbooks as they are regarded as a tiresome, excessive resource for young children aged 3-5. Sheldon ([19]: 237) claims that textbooks are "the visible heart of any ELT program", but his statement is not restricted to any particular age group. Conversely, textbooks should not be understood as being the main guiding resource in the teaching practice, but rather as a supplement to teacher's instruction.

Thus, as mentioned in the previous sections, children rely on multisensorial activities so that their learning may be as naturalistic as possible. In this regard, Fleta-Guillén ([3]: 41) proposes a series of games or activities which may be applied to the FLT context in Early Years:

Aural skills (listening skills)

Listening games and attention getters, by fostering the students to use the language by means of songs, rhymes or poems via a series of flexible variables (using or not using gestures, moving your body).

Handclapping games and body percussion, which enables students to experiment with sounds and sounds levels – allowing for phonological awareness. This activity is especially related to the development of receptive oral skills. In this regard, the teacher produces different sounds related to everyday actions or objects and these are later reproduced by children (Palmer & Bayley, [20]).

Games with sounds. These encompass a wide array of fields such as the imitation of animal sounds, the titling of objects or the environmental sounds, which aid young learners to develop the ability to listen in a foreign language (Barclay & Staples, [21]).

a) Oral skills (speaking skills). Unlike listening activities, which can be much more predictive, activities aiming at enhancing oral skills in young learners present themselves as a challenge. Learners at this age have not completed their linguistic competence yet, giving rise to problems not only in English but also in their own mother tongue (some newly learnt words may be unknown in both languages). Thus, one of the teacher's aims should be to ensure that the message is understood by the learners in each interaction process (Fleta-Guillén, [3]: 42). However, efforts must be made in order that young learners utter words in the foreign language in a variety of situations (for example, asking questions, elicitation, and repetition or recasting, among many others). Again, Fleta-Guillén [3] offers a wide selection of speaking activities for the EY classroom:

b) Circle time. Engaging children in circle games seems as more than appropriate an activity to foster students' social skills as well as promoting interaction not only teacher-student but also student-student. It should not be forgotten that these circle sessions are essentially teacher-led but learners are pretty much participative at this age, thus not hesitating at taking part in whatever is brought up by the teacher. In line with this, circle time games may take place at any time within the classroom schedule inasmuch as they are centred upon describing daily actions or boosting role-plays. Furthermore, children learn a lot of social behaviour in this circle time games, some of which could be

oracy, turn-taking or narrative skills at the time of telling some story. Children may also resort to scaffolding in that they learn vocabulary expressions from each other.

c) Musical activities. Bruce & Spratt [22] consider that using music in EFL may be a perfect tool to train the ears to the sounds and intonation of the foreign language. Thus, learners learn to discriminate speech sounds and intonation patterns through songs or rhymes. Conversely, these musical activities help to develop phonological awareness and language learning. Again, they foster the acquisition of sounds, intonation as well as the detection of grammatical structures and the improvement of attention (Palmer, [20]).

d) Storytelling. Undoubtedly, they are one of the most resorted language learning activities which teachers use in order to spark young learners' interest in the language. Furthermore, storytelling can favour the acquisition of the four linguistic skills accompanied by a series of visual aids (such as videos, images or any other resource) which motivate young learners. As stated by Cameron [7], children rely very much upon context and illustrations presented by the teacher. Nonetheless, storytelling favour both aural and oral skills in that children need first to understand and comprehend the contents of the story and, on the other hand, may develop an interest in what the story is about. In addition, should there be any songs or rhymes within the story, young learners are prone to learn them by heart and sing them together with their classmates if the intonation and sound relish them.

In light of the aforementioned, it stands to reason that owing to the sensory and visual nature of children's learning, textbooks do seem plausible only if there are some standards complied with as to these natural requirements. Besides, literacy skills on the part of learners are strictly limited to what they have acquired in their L1, thus narrowing the extent of application of the textbook itself. Along this line, it seems elucidating that textbooks are not only visual, but also interactive (either relying on face-to-face learning or using ICTs) so that young learners push their boundaries a step forward and begin accelerating the acquisition of different interdisciplinary skills, more specifically communicative ones. This is supposed to be beneficial to their L1 as it is still not fully developed.

4. Conclusions

Teaching English to young learners represents a significant challenge to those embarking upon this arduous task. As seen, L2 learning on the part of young learners is diametrically different if methodologies used for adults are compared to it. Several are the reasons which underlie these essential and learning-influencing distinctions. On the one hand, young learners are not fully cognitively ready to LEARN a language, but their readiness to ACQUIRE it is considerably higher. On the other hand, L2 adult learners are more cognitively predisposed to LEARN the language inasmuch as their cognition is fully developed and thus learning could occur with a higher degree of probability. However, their natural predisposition to acquire the language – within an instructional setting – does not seem to be fruitful inasmuch as the Cph mentioned in previous sections has already stopped. In light of this, young learners' instructional adaptation to the language cannot and must not follow the same learning and teaching pattern as if for adults. Here it is where activity sequencing acquires its importance. As mentioned repeatedly, visual and sensorial learning is the core of any teaching planning within EY. As such, activity sequencing must face this challenge by presenting the activities in an organised way according to cognitive patterns. Thus, activity sequencing in EY should start by presenting vocabulary and/or grammar points in such a way that resembles acquisition more than learning in an explicit way. Along this line, *pro+DEC* would be the combining sequence to start any teaching planning in EY. For instance, introducing young learners to the concept of adjectives when, metalinguistically speaking, they do not even know what "adjective" is, should be based upon visual learning. Inductively, students get to associate meaning with visual reactions (e.g. while teaching emotions and feelings). The subsequent stage, named *pro+PRO* stage, after this introduction to the concept, will make sure that learners are actively ready to identify these adjectives in a variety of situations and further use them on their own within a context restricted to classroom use first and later in the real life.

To sum up, this paper can conclude by stating that further research (namely empirical) should be conducted in English EY classrooms in order to unveil whether our thought on activity sequencing are correct and to establish comparisons with adult learning in ways that TEFL methodologies can be accounted for. Thus, enhancements could be provided and age adaptations to these methodologies may shed light upon further development within the field of materials development and language education.

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