Facultad de Lenguas y Educación
Departamento de Educación.

Dra. Elsa del Campo Ramírez
Mención lengua extranjera
Second language learning



SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

UNIDAD 2. El proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras: conceptos básicos

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Dra. Elsa del Campo Ramírez

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1. Language acquisition and learning

As we saw in the second unit, age is a key factor when learning a second language due to the critical period. After the cerebral lateralization, our brain loses plasticity and acquires a foreign language becomes a harder process.

In fact, some theories defend that after this critical period there is no acquisition at all but learning. That´s why it´s very important to start exposing children to a wide foreign language input as soon as possible.

What is the Critical period-Cerebral lateralization?

According to Esim Gürsoy (2011), it is based on:

-Neurolinguistic Arguments: It was believed that language acquisition process must be completed before puberty. However, it has been shown that CPH occurs at +/- age 5. It is possible to learn a second language after puberty, though not as fast or efficiently as the acquisition of the mother tongue.

-Cognitive and Affective Arguments: children do not have a culture bound view, they do not have perspective filters like adults do (acculturation). Lack of cultural distance helps them learn the language more quickly.

-Younger Children versus Older Children: Adult learners tend to score worse. Social, psychological, educational other factors affect proficiency in addition to the learners' age.

Krashen (1973) suggests that, lateralization of the brain is complete before puberty, and therefore it is "not a barrier to accent-free second language learning by adults".

According to Brown (1980), some cognitive and affective arguments to understand Critical period-Cerebral lateralization are:

1)Acculturation
Period of excitement and euphoria
Cultural Shock
Gradual recovery
Assimilation or adaptations

2) Anomie (uncertainty and dissatisfaction while learning another language).

3) Social Distance (difference between two cultures)

4) Perceived social distance (each person has a different way to perceive the environment)

Children that acquire a language at an early stage could be simultaneous and sequential bilingual:

-**Simultaneous bilinguals**. Both languages are acquired simultaneously. For example, Spanish mother and American father.
-**Sequential bilingual**. The second language was acquired after the first one. For example, our students.
Depending on the context, we find:

Compound bilinguals. Individuals who learn two languages in the same environment so that they acquire one notion with two verbal expressions.

Coordinate bilingual. Individuals who acquire the two languages in different contexts (e.g., home and school), so the words of the two languages belong to separate and independent systems.

Sub-coordinate bilingual. One language dominates. Our students are Sequential and sub-coordinate bilingual. When they come into contact with English, they have already receipt the mother tongue (Spanish) and the fundaments of this language are in their brains. So they have interferences with their mother tongue.

2. Advantages of studying English at Infant Education.

It seems obvious that learning a second language at Infant Education have the following advantages:

Students are at a motivation age and they have a better cognitive capacity. They are learning everything.

Students will have a natural pronunciation because they are in an oral phase, learning how to pronounce their L1. Moreover, as they don´t know how to read and write, they don't have reading / speaking interferences.

Students can have a wider real input because teachers don't have to focus in grammar and they can enjoy English through videos, songs, storytelling, etc.

Students don't feel stress because they don't have to pass a test and don't feel embarrassment because their pronunciation (affective filter). To know more. What is the affective filter?

The affective filter (Krashen) is an impediment to learning caused by negative emotional responses to one's environment. Certain emotions, such as anxiety, self-doubt interfere with the process of learning. These negative emotions reduce the amount of input the listener is able to understand.

3. How do children learn a second language?

Children move through a number of stages when learning English as a new language. Some

go through these stages more quickly than others, and children will sometimes have the characteristics of more than one stage at the same time as they transition between stages.

Understanding a child's stage of learning is important for planning appropriate activities. Early childhood professionals play a role in helping children progress to higher stages; however, each child's English development will follow its own timetable. Planning and programming should be based around each child's abilities and developmental level. The association Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) identifies five developmental stages for learning a new language.

Beginning Stage. Some children initially use their home language in educational settings because it is the only language they know. At some point, most young children give up using their home language quickly, realizing that it is not an effective means of communication in that context. If a few children in a setting share the same home language, they may continue to use it amongst themselves.

The silent period: young children may not use any language at all, or very little, for a few weeks or even months. They are listening and accumulating knowledge of English but are sometimes hesitant to speak much. Children often use gestures to communicate with adults and other children. Sometimes they may rehearse phrases in English quietly to themselves.

Of course, we must respect this time and not force them to speak if they are not ready yet, since we could cause a lot of stress to them and it can be very demotivating. Students need some time to listen to others' talk, to assimilate vocabulary and sentence patters and pay attention to their classmates' contributions before they feel ready to express themselves in a foreign language.

Emerging Stage. Young children at the emerging stage typically use one- or two-word responses to questions like "What's that?" or "Do you want a turn?" Their English use is also not very original. These children use a lot of formulaic expressions (words or phrases they hear others say); e.g., "what's happening?", "wanna play with me?", "I dunno," "me first," "it's my turn," "no fair!", "so what?", "lookit this!" Formulaic sentences are important because they help open the door to social interaction with early childhood professionals and other children. Whit more social interaction comes more English learning.

Developing Stage. Children gradually move from memorized sentences to original, productive and spontaneous English conversation.

4. Methodology at Infant Education

At infant education, we need to use a natural approach because our students have the necessary brain plasticity to learn a second language as the first one. They need to be expose to a wide oral input and we don´t have to rush them into speaking.

During the silent period, our students will internalize the structure, the vocabulary and the pronunciation of the English language and they will talk when they are ready to do it. They are at a reception phase and the production will be produced only through repetition (songs,

rhymes, etc.).

Nevertheless, we can check their understanding asking them to draw a story we are telling, answering in a physical way to our petitions, pointing to the image of the word we pronounce, etc.
Where is the apple? Please, touch the apple.

In general, you should keep in mind 7 key ideas:

1. Create short activities and change activities every five or ten minutes.
2. Contextualize activities, so students can relate English with their daily life.
3. Create a nice atmosphere, so students feel confident and happy in class, relating English to activities they love (cooking cupcakes, watching Peppa pig, playing,..)
4. Use realia (movies, television,..), so they get used to a wide variety of accents.
5. Establish routines (Date, days, months, parts of the body, hello /bye-bye songs) and use repetitive structures (Like orders, request,…). It helps your students to follow the class easily because they can anticipate what you´re asking or what they have to do.
6. When they are ready to talk, use communicative activities, focusing on language communication not accuracy.
7. TPR activities, so they can answer you in a physical way.

5. Teaching young children how to read and write. An approach to Jolly phonics.

5.1. Approaches to start reading and writing.

We can distinguish four different approaches to start reading and writing:

Emergent literacy: There is any teaching. The person learns through exposure.

Language experience: Learning at sentence level. Students create sentences with a set of words that increases gradually.

Word level / Key words: Learning at word level. Teachers show words on cards, so students familiarize with them.

Phonics teaching: Learning at letter level. Students learn the letter and how to combine them.

We usually teach literacy at letter level in English and Spanish, but the processes are very different in those languages. Spanish has an almost perfect correspondence between letters and sounds whereas English has a more complicate system.

The letters in English can have different pronunciation depending on their phonological context (ant; safe; also; care; message;) or even not be pronounced at all (hope; take). On the other hand, the same sound can be written through different letters (train; gate) That´s why it´s necessary to teach the letter-sounds with a very specific system.

In English, we have 26 letters and 44 letter sounds (experts' opinion vary from 39 to 45), so there is not a perfect correspondence between sounds and their graphic representation.
It´s very important for our students to become familiar with those sounds (some of them non-existent in Spanish) and then to start relating them to their letters.

iː READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	uː TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY	
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜː WORD	ɔː SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑː PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	ɑɪ MY	ɑʊ HOW

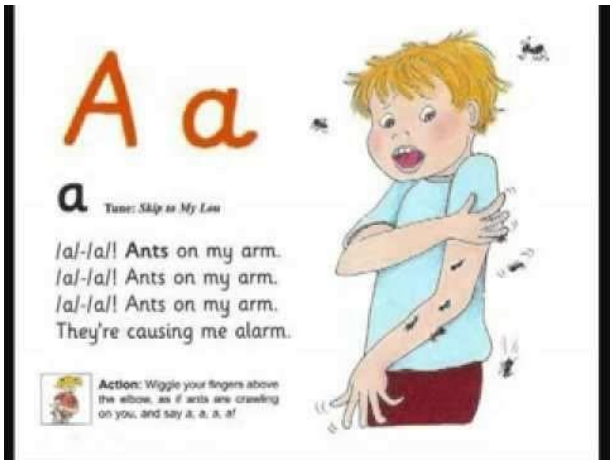
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

The most popular phonological method to teach the letters sounds in English is Jolly Phonics.

5.2. Jolly phonics.

Jolly Phonics is described as a fun and child centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children and teachers.

> The children are taught the letter sounds, rather than the letter names. For instance, the letter a should be called a (as in ant) not ai (as in aim). Similarly, the letter n should be nn (as in net), not en. This will help in blending. The names of each letter can follow later.
>
> The children are introduced to each letter sound through a story and an associated action. For example, a boy and his dog are out on a walk when the dog begins to bark. In front of them, a snake rears up out of the grass and hisses 'sssssss'. The hissing snake is making a 's' shape. Ask the children to make the same shape, saying /sssss/. This is how they learn their first sound, /s/.* The children can also sing the song for each sound.



From: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_8Tj7u2xjw

The letters have not been introduced in alphabetical order. The first group (s,a,t,i,p,n) has been chosen because they make more simple three-letter words than any other **six letters (sat; sit; pin;…)**

1. s a t i p n
2. c/k e h r m d
3. g o u l f b
4. ai j oa ie ee or
5. z w ng v oo oo
6. y x ch sh th th
7. qu ou oi ue er ar

From: http://jollylearning.co.uk/overview-about-jolly-phonics/

Sounds that have more than one way of being written are initially taught in one form only. For example, the sound ai (train) is taught first, and then the alternative ae (gate) and ay (day) follow later.

Once the children have mastered one way of writing the vowel sounds, they can start to learn the alternatives for reading (in the beginning, it is much easier for the children to read words with alternative spellings than it is to write them correctly).

Being able to read words with the alternatives exposes the children to a much wider vocabulary and will help them later on in their spelling, when they have to decide which alternative to use to write a word correctly.

Introduced as:

(rain) ai

(feet) ee

(boat) oa

Taught later as:

(play) (flame) ay

(leaf) (these) ea

(snow) (bone) ow

Notice that some sounds are different but are written using the same two letters.

There is /oo/ as in 'book' and /oo/ as in 'moon', /th/ as in 'this' and /th/ as in 'three'. To help distinguish them, they are introduced initially in different sizes. Later on, the children will be expected to work out which sound is the right one by learning 'if one way doesn't work, try the other'. For example, when the children read 'moon', the short /oo/ doesn't work, but the long /oo/ does.

ai	oa	ie	ee	or
ng	oo	oo	ch	sh
th	th	qu	ou	oi
	ue	er	ar	

Besides the letter-sounds, Jolly phonics develop other 4 skills:

1. Learning letter formation

2. Blending

3. Identifying sounds in words

4. Tricky words. Irregular words that can´t be work out through regular blending. They are learnt separately at word level.

To know more:
http://jollylearning.co.uk/overview-about-jolly-phonics/

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Online resources

ABC Fast phonics http://www.abcfastphonics.com/ Agenda web http://www.agendaweb.org/

Anglès 365 http://www.edu365.cat/primaria/muds/angles/

BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4_11/site/literacy.shtml Billy Bear 4 Kids http://www.billybear4kids.com/

CP Monreal http://cpmonreal.es/englishforinfanteducation/ Cybergrants

http://www.cybergrants.com/qrisgrants/docs/2016/Resource_Guide_for_Infant_and_Toddler_Educators_and_Providers_Pilot_Version_4_2016.pdf

Earlychildhoo teacher: http://www.earlychildhoodteacher.org/teacher-tools/ Educanave http://www.educanave.com/

Eduscape: http://eduscapes.com/tap/tapearly.html

Ednet: https://www.ednet.ns.ca/educators/digital-online-resources English club: https://www.englishclub.com/babies/

Idaa America: https://ldaamerica.org/early-childhood-resource-websites-2/ Jumpstart: http://www.jumpstart.com/parents/activities/baby-activities Kidsolr: http://www.kidsolr.com/earlychildhood/

Kiz Phonics http://www.kizphonics.com/

Learn English Kids http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/ Learning Planet http://www.learningplanet.com/

Letters to Santa http://www.aletter4santa.com/ Lil' Fingers http://www.lil-fingers.com/ Literacy center http://www.literacycenter.net/ Loving 2 learn http://www.loving2learn.com/ Magic keys http://www.magickeys.com/books/ Oxfordowl https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk

Reading Planet http://www.thereadingplanet.com/

Readingrockets http://www.readingrockets.org/

Starfall http://www.starfall.com/ Storyplace https://www.storyplace.org/es

Teaching English: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-kids Turtle Diary http://www.turtlediary.com/