

**Strategies Mediated by Art and Play for the Development of the Communicative Domain in English of the Preschool Children in El Colegio Londres**

**Research Paper to Opt for the Degree in Elementary Education with Emphasis in English and French**

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## Content

<b>Resumen .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Context .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Statement of the Problem .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Rationale .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Objectives .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Research Design.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Appendixes .....</b>	<b>71</b>



## Resumen

El siguiente trabajo se acerca a tener una mejor comprensión de la enseñanza de idiomas con los estudiantes más pequeños focalizándose en la adquisición del inglés como lengua extranjera en el territorio colombiano. Los objetivos van ligados a determinar la contribución que las estrategias mediadas por arte y juego tienen en el fortalecimiento de la dimensión comunicativa en inglés, en los niños de preescolar del colegio Londres, y son explorados mediante diversas estrategias y herramientas que le ayudan al maestro a construir un repertorio de actividades que apoyan las decisiones tomadas dentro del aula día a día. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa en donde se aprecian resultados particulares y diversos como muestra de la singularidad humana incluso con aquellos que parecen ser totalmente iguales, y los resultados encontrados van ligados a la importancia de hacer de la adquisición de una lengua extranjera un medio de comunicación con sentido incluso para los más pequeños, encontrando todos los días una nueva manera de enseñanza.

**Palabras clave:** educación, idiomas, aprendizaje, niños y niñas.

### **Abstract**

This research study seeks finding a better understanding of the foreign language teaching process with the youngest students focusing on the acquisition of English as a foreign language in Colombia. The objectives try to determine the contribution that the strategies mediated by art and play have in the promotion of the communicative domain in the preschool children of El Colegio Londres, and are explored through various strategies and tools to help the teacher build up a repertoire of activities that support all the decisions made in the classroom. A qualitative methodology was used where particular and diverse results are appreciated as a sample of human uniqueness, and the results found are linked to the importance of making the acquisition of a foreign language a meaningful tool of communication, even for the youngest, finding everyday a new way of teaching.

**Key words:** Education, languages, learning, boys, and girls.

## **Introduction**

The acquisition of a second language has become an essential tool for the development of knowledge all around the world, and in Colombia this is not an exception. The reason why schools have been adapting overtime their curricula with the purpose of giving the students the opportunity to learn a foreign language, especially English, is because they are trying to find the best and more contextualized methods for students to learn in better ways. This research study has the objective to determine the contribution of educational strategies mediated by arts and play in strengthening the communicative domain in English of the preschool children of the Colegio Londres and the importance of this study in the learning of a foreign language is relevant in Colombia because of the necessity to find a good way to teach it effectively.

A research project like this one is important in Antioquia and Colombia, due to the necessity of considering new strategies or ways to learn or acquire a foreign language like English using different methods, with the purpose of improving teaching and learning specially in those public contexts where the communication is not the main point. Taking this into account, it is seen that some important and useful strategies mediated by play and art are not present in the different classrooms and the teachers are not well prepared to cover the many necessities the students may have related with their real lives and contexts.

The communicative domain is essential for the youngest students because they are trying to discover the world and learning how to communicate with others, so

communication is key in the different processes that surrounds them. If this is known, teachers and educators will be conscious to create and develop strategies linked to this need. When learning English, students may find this as an opportunity to acquire a new language in a contextualized and meaningful way.

The scope of this study can permeate a whole area of language where the interest of learning a foreign language in different educational institutions becomes a necessity due to the importance of acquiring different ways to communicate in this globalized world. It can help some institutions but mostly the private ones because the public ones in almost all the cases, have a good quantity of students and some ideas about the learning of a foreign language cannot be easily carried out. Anyway, this research study can be adapted to many and diverse educational settings, improving the tools teachers have to do their work in a better way.

This research study was focused on a situation presented in El Colegio Londres located in Sabaneta, because the students who were part of kindergarten did not have a teacher who could engage them in learning English with meaningful strategies, so the main objective of this study was to determine the contribution of educational strategies mediated by arts and play in strengthening the English communicative domain of the preschool children at Colegio Londres.

The theoretical bases for this project included different theories related to education, communication, play, art, and foreign language teaching and learning, among others. The communicative domain, art, and play theories were key to the study because

a good exploration of these topics can shed light on new ideas and ways to create meaningful strategies according to the students' needs and contexts.

A qualitative methodology was used because of the interpretive nature of the study, which implies understanding the situations and learning processes within particular social contexts. Some of the results and the conclusions found were related to the necessity of implementing more diverse strategies, for example, with play, art or literature so the students in the earliest school grades could enjoy the process, and in that way, they could learn more and not only in a repetitive way.

## **Context**

El Colegio Londres is an institution dedicated to the education of children and teenagers from preschool to high school. This school uses a methodology called Constructivism, which expect the student to build their own knowledge considering the tools that the teachers provide them with. The school is not a big place in terms of infrastructure but is enough for the quantity of students who are studying there. One of the main purposes of the school is to promote the learning of English, expecting students to generate meaningful communication skills, so they can have fluent conversations and be able to communicate in that language.

The Mission of this school is oriented towards the recognition of students as members of a world where they can be aware of the importance among being, doing and having. The Vision is being part of the best five institutions at the local level by 2025.



In this school English is something that goes beyond a simple obligation because it considers the acquisition of that language a priority and it can be said that is one of its main goals. They really expect their students to finish their studies having a good level of English so they can communicate in that language. The students who belong to this school are part of families who, in most cases, travel to countries like the United States or other places where the use of English is especially important. So, it becomes a necessity that is part of the children's personal life.

The learning of English is a big concern for Colegio Londres which tries to improve its acquisition working with diverse and different strategies like a good contact time with English. Eight hours of English instruction a week in the preschool grade is a key time for a strong communicative process for the youngest students. They are in a constant search of how the students can really acquire this language not only with strategies like repetition or memorization, but with those that can help make English part of them. Also, the school supports the process with good teachers who can teach that language properly, but who may require other tools and alternative methodologies to promote a good learning.

The preschool English Cooperating teacher has a good command of English because she was born in Colombia but grew up in the United States. So, she has the linguistic knowledge, but does not know enough about different strategies to teach. With the strategies she uses, her classes are mediated by books where a lot of vocabulary can be found and explored. Her classes become repetitive, and they do not provide varied opportunities to experiment with alternative strategies as noted in one of my class observations, " Some of the students asked the teacher if they were going to do something

else, because one or two of them finished really fast the activities and already know about the colors and figures in English" (Observation #3, March 15, 2019). All of this makes the classes a little bit boring and monotonous especially for these five-and-six-year-old students who need to find in the learning of English a playful and fun experience.

The students in the preschool grade are around the five years old and are children who in the most cases are part of families who have certain English level for multiple reasons. Also, they are students who appreciate the uses of diverse strategies that involve the work with new ideas and materials. Also, they like to sing, dance, and share with their classmates.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a big necessity for the students to make English a real communication tool. They need to learn how to share about their daily experiences with their classmates and teachers improving communication among them. This is relevant because the students are at an age in which they are developing their communication, using strategies that help them to share those important moments and interests. English needs to be used to ask or talk about everyday needs, for example, to express how much they like or dislike something. Thus, I found that the classes needed something different than the same repetition of some topics about simple vocabulary. As it can be read in my teaching journal, "Some students ask that sometimes they already know about the topic they are working on and show their desires to go out and make different activities out of the classroom. " (Observation #7, September 5, 2019)

Students at this age are in the process of acquiring different socializing skills that involve communication between them to participate in the integration process in school, so, it is important to bring into the classroom different strategies that include collaborative work. This is something that we do not find a lot in the English classes, because though they can share answers to the teacher's questions, they do not have a lot of opportunities to work with their partners or pay attention to what they say and do, but to themselves.

Taking all of that into account, it can be said that there exists a lack of different strategies that can be more connected with the students and with the things they need to know or want to know in English, and how they want to address certain topics, developing the communicative domain.

Play and Art can be teaching strategies to work with preschool so they can help the learning in almost any area. These kinds of strategies are also something that can be used for the learning of the English to make the classes more interesting for the students and also improve the development of the communicative domain, involving their needs.

All the information presented above leads to asking questions around the way it can be determined the contribution of strategies mediated by art and play, and the way they can strengthen the communicative domain in the English class of the preschool children in Colegio Londres.

## Rationale

There are different research studies that highlight the importance of creating ways to explore how English as a second language can be taught to the youngest students, so they can really appropriate this specific knowledge.

In the acquisition of a second language the development of the communicative domain is essential because it will allow an effective communication in this language. Presenting a possible definition of language and its importance in life, Ocampo, Pava-Ripoll and Bonilla (2011) remark the social function of language in people's life:

El lenguaje ya no es pues una función aislada, objeto de estudio exclusivo de los lingüistas y de los psicólogos; se fundamenta en la naturaleza social del hombre, facilitada y potenciada por su función comunicativa; construye al ser individual, con toda su complejidad, desde la interacción con otros en todos los contextos y en todas las facetas de la vida; permite el aprendizaje y, por consiguiente, favorece la adaptación del ser humano a todas las situaciones que deba enfrentar en su experiencia vital; es pilar fundamental en la transmisión, reconstrucción y construcción de cultura. (p.5)

Now looking at research studies about different strategies for oral development in children, the article *La adquisición y desarrollo de la competencia discursiva oral en la primera infancia* by Yolima Gutierrez Ríos (2010) in Bogotá, with a group of preschoolers, shows the importance of taking into account the development of communication since the students are at young age. This research study is a proposal to explore the activities to

engage young learners in the communication process. The study pointed out the importance of comprehensive listening and opinion sharing by the students, improving oral communication. Yolima Gutierrez Rios (2010) states,

Su enseñanza y aprendizaje busca reconocer tanto los usos orales cotidianos de los estudiantes como su papel monologado e informativo, con el fin de avanzar hacia el dominio de los mecanismos de adecuación a diversos contextos comunicativos y al favorecimiento de situaciones de diálogo e interacción en un marco de observación y reflexión permanente (p.32).

The author concluded that the oral use of language is an option that can promote in children the acquisition of a second or a foreign language allowing them to explain the world they live in, mediated by different activities and materials.

For the current study, this article provides information about the different ways how language helps young students to learn while they discover their world and how to communicate with others.

In the research study called *Nuevas estrategias didácticas para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés en el preescolar* carried out in Florencia, Caqueta by Gilma Gonzales Villamil and Maria Josefa Pinzón Ramirez (2011). with the participation of the preschool grade students in the school Institución Educativa los Pinos, the authors mentioned the importance of English to promote the acquisition of oral communication, and how English can really collaborate in the strengthening of the communicative domain

of older preschoolers when is guided in a properly way mediated by meaningful strategies. "El inglés es una de las disciplinas que contribuyen de manera significativa al desarrollo de competencias comunicativas, en cuanto a la escucha y a la pronunciación" (González & Pinzón, 2011, 46) They also said that through English play can also be promoted to allow children to feel more enthusiastic about the things they are going to learn. "El juego y la lúdica son estrategias fundamentales para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés en el nivel preescolar" (González & Pinzón, 2011, 46).

The conclusions and the statements about the diverse strategies found in this research study show that in their English classes the researchers discovered the importance of engaging activities that looked simply, but always had a meaningful purpose related to the daily life of the students, highlighting the relevance of creating classes connected to student's realities.

It is possible to help students appropriate a second language and improve oral communication by working in pairs. It is necessary to promote collaborative strategies or ideas that involve students into diverse scenarios, where others are relevant. This can encourage them to learn a foreign language in a different way. In 2014, a research study called *Descripción del trabajo en pares en el nivel preescolar en Santiago de Cali, Colombia, para potenciar la habilidad oral del inglés* by Ángela María Bueno Roa in 2014 was presented, with the participation of the preschool students from el Colegio Nuevo Cambridge Cali. Different conclusions coming from this study support the idea that English mediated by, for example strategies with play or art, can allow children to acquire a foreign language in a spontaneous way, and support the idea that the constant use of

that language in the family and in this case, in the school, allows children to interact with other classmates and create a meaningful interest in the subject. Ángela María Bueno Roa (2014) states:

-El juego y el movimiento facilitan al niño hacer uso del inglés aprendido con sus pares, por ejemplo las canciones, rimas y juegos de manos motivan al niño a utilizar el vocabulario y propician que durante los recreos o tiempo libre, éstos canten y realicen los juegos entre ellos de manera espontánea.

- El aprendizaje de una segunda lengua se da de manera similar como se aprenden a hablar la lengua materna, usándolo diariamente en el contexto escolar y familiar.

- El niño de preescolar que interactúa gran parte del día con sus maestros y compañeros, escuchando diariamente una segunda lengua, cantando y jugando, rápidamente adquiere fluidez y desarrolla una adecuada pronunciación, además amplía su vocabulario y hace uso del lenguaje con el goce e interés propios de la infancia (p.55).

The different conclusions coming from this research study show all the strategies implemented in the classes and how they significantly contributed to the communicative domain, improving social and cognitive competences in students. These can be a great source of ideas and support for this research project.

The research study called *Estrategias didácticas para la enseñanza del idioma inglés a niños de preescolar: El caso de un colegio en Colima, Mexico*, carried out in Mexico in

2016 by Pedro Mayoral, with the participation of preschool children around the five and six years old from a school located in Colima, Mexico, presented practices focused on the development of communication among children who were in a stage where the use of strategies permeated by stories or experiences related to their culture involved and got them interested in learning through their lively experiences. Pedro Mayoral (2016) expressed it like this,

En primer lugar, existe una lengua denominada meta, es decir, un objeto de aprendizaje lingüístico y de su enseñanza; en segundo lugar, es necesario un aprendiz, que es el sujeto del aprendizaje lingüístico. También están presentes las dimensiones afectiva, connotativa (o de la conducta) que participan en la configuración de creencias, identidades y actitudes hacia la lengua. En tercer lugar, el proceso de adquisición de una segunda lengua tiene lugar en un contexto, que en términos genéricos es de carácter social. Regularmente el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua se produce en un contexto social de enseñanza y de contacto con diversos miembros de una comunidad y en coexistencia con la lengua materna (p.58).

A proposal like this one takes relevance in the current study because the strategies that are going to be used will consider the ways that children use language in scenarios out of the school, something important because it creates an idea of how students can learn English in a better way, not forgetting their personal processes carried out, for example at home.



In the research study called *Beneficio del juego y la canción en el aula de inglés*, presented by Minerva Chacón Garrido in 2009, with the participation of some preschool children, the author mentioned that in this preschool age, playing is key for students to be able to take advantage of the different elements and use the brain to solve different problems while they learn, in this case a second language, using it and making it part of their lives. Again, this paragraph shows that the use of strategies mediated by play and art are going to improve the teaching and the students' learning process. Minerva Chacón Garrido (2009) says:

En la etapa del Desarrollo anterior (edad preescolar) primaba el juego como actividad fundamental, pero en esta etapa escolar el niño no deja de jugar, por lo que sería oportuno aprovechar el arte y el juego en función del aprendizaje del inglés ya que el juego es una actividad que como cualquier otra del ser humano, requiere del uso del pensamiento y cada incidente del juego constituye un problema mental que se debe resolver por medios lingüísticos (p.5).

When children are thinking, trying to solve problems or different games with a specific purpose, they are learning, even if they do not consciously know they are in the process of learning, for example a second language like English. And, different activities mediated by songs encourage children to communicate with others and improve their oral communication.

Now, having taken a look at those research studies done in different schools and countries, this research study could be useful and important to those English teachers who are immersed in schools and are teaching students because they can find here new ideas to complement the work they are already doing with their students, or recognize again the importance of the using diverse strategies to improve their learning, innovating and finding through research new proposals or different ways to teach those who need a more active teaching connected to their interests, and surely improve their classes leaving monotony aside.

In a professional consideration this study could help teachers understand how the practicum process was and how the different challenges were faced and solved, sometimes teaching needs to be changed due to facts like students' behavior or the cooperation among the different teachers who are part of the preschool group. Sometimes they do not know how to carry out processes that involve different methods, especially to teach English and that call students' attention, so it become a great challenge to learn with them.

This research process was also a personal challenge because the teacher-researcher was driven to collect different information putting into practice methods that were complex to carry out, due to facts like the student's behavior, the planning of different activities, and the various difficulties presented on the way. It is known that play and art are good strategies to improve child learning, but the way they are carried out it in classes can be convoluted. In those terms, also the personal facet was touched because this

research invites to start a recognition process where the author begins to reflect about what education can bring to her life, especially as a future language teacher.

Finally, the ideas presented in this research will lead to the question: How can it be determined the contribution of educational strategies mediated by arts and play in strengthening the communicative domain in English of the preschool children of the Colegio Londres?

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

To determine the contribution of educational strategies mediated by arts and play in strengthening the communicative domain in English of the preschool children of the Colegio Londres.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To identify the current communicative processes in the preschool children during the English classes.
2. To analyze the School Communicative Guidelines for preschool and the teaching strategies implemented by the English teacher for the promotion of communication.
3. To propose teaching strategies mediated by play and art for the development of the oral communicative domain preschool children in the English class.
4. To assess the effect of some the arts-and-play-mediated teaching strategies in the communication processes of preschool children at Colegio Londres.

## **Theoretical Framework**

In the process of carrying out this study some components around education are necessary to be considered for the development of the main supporting concepts, so that the people who might read this research can be aware of some of the key concepts mentioned here: The teaching of English, especially to children, art, play, and oral communication development.

### **Teaching of English as a Foreign language**

The learning of a foreign language should allow the real use of it, letting people be able to interact with the others, something key when learning a new language, despite the different reasons each person may have. Language must be meaningful so users can fulfill its real function: interact with the world, let them socialize and build their own culture and environment. According to Beltran (2017)

El aprendizaje de un nuevo idioma tiene como objetivo principal poder llevarlo a la práctica dentro de un contexto real de comunicación, es decir tener la capacidad de interactuar en una serie de situaciones diferentes que le permitan hacer uso de la lengua aprendida (p.94).

When teaching a foreign language to children, it is known that through its students can acquire new knowledge and develop their own abilities to improve learning different subjects. Also, it can be an excuse for interaction among students and teachers, encouraging the former to discover new ways of expression, and the later to enhance their teaching. Fleta Guillén (2006) writes about it,

Visto desde esta perspectiva, el inglés se convierte en un instrumento de comunicación, en un medio para desarrollar las distintas inteligencias de los aprendices y en un vehículo para la transmisión de conocimientos de las distintas materias, utilizándose siempre en situaciones de interacción en las que los niños comparten información de manera significativa con los profesores y con los demás niños. En suma, se trata de tener en cuenta algunos de los aspectos del aprendizaje de la lengua materna y extrapolarlos al aprendizaje del inglés L2 en la escuela (p.57).

The acquisition of a foreign language does not involve the same factors that the acquisition of a second language does. English as a foreign language (EFL) means that language being acquired is not present in the daily life of people. The country, the family, or the environment where they live in are not surrounded by that specific language, so the options to use it are a few. For example, English in a country like Colombia is present just in academic spaces, but in the people's social life is not common, and for some people does not even exist.

On the other hand, English as a second language (ESL) becomes a necessity for the people who are learning it because normally they are in a country where this language is present in most scenarios of their common life. For example, in Canada, people who speak English are also learning French because in this country those two languages are present in many places and are necessary so its citizens can interact in academic, social, and professional spaces. Some authors share their views about this important difference:

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to students who study English in a country that has a native language other than English. China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand are major locations in Asia where English is taught and normally the students in those countries learn English as part of their educational program. Thus, EFL classrooms tend to have culturally homogeneous students. In this setting, teachers may be the only native English speakers that converse with the students, as outside the classroom they have very few opportunities to speak English, as English is not the dominate language (Kim, 2001; Maple, 1987; Snow, 2006). English as a Second Language (ESL) is when students study English in a country where English is the official language (Hong-Nam & Szabo, 2013, 335).

The exploration of the above concepts of EFL and ESL are relevant for this theoretical framework, especially because the limited use of the foreign language in many countries has generated methodologies which are based on repetition, grammar patterns, and vocabulary accumulation. So, the creation and exploration of diverse methods with the purpose of promoting an authentic use of that language are necessary. Nowadays more interactive methods that promote the real use of the foreign language are being fostered, enabling learners to talk, understand and use the language for many different purposes. For example, the Theme-based methodology allows interaction with the people who are learning a foreign language because it encourages them to share ideas and build conversations around a specific interest that comes from the students. This interaction

helps the learners use the foreign language in a real situation. Cadavid (2003), talking about this type of methodology explains,

A theme-based curriculum was selected as one of the possibilities to integrate other content areas with English, in terms of both techniques used and content covered. It is thus consistent with the definition of content-based instruction presented by Met (1991): Content-based foreign language instruction uses learning objectives and activities drawn from the elementary school curriculum as a vehicle for teaching foreign language skills. The foreign language may be the sole vehicle for teaching the content, substituting for native language instruction; or instruction through the foreign language may augment and supplement content instruction in the native language (281). (p.85).

Among other methodologies, Experiential Learning can also be considered because when working with children, this methodology allows them to interact with their classmates negotiating and solving daily life problems and situation that affect them every day. Thus, the foreign language becomes something real that helps them learn, think, and communicate with others. Erazon and Moreno (2018), support this idea when they say,

El estilo de aprendizaje experiencial de Kolb es influenciado por el progresista Dewey (1997) quien dice que la manera en que aprenden los estudiantes es mediante el enfrentamiento de las situaciones en la vida



diaria. El pensamiento es una herramienta que se utiliza para resolver los problemas a través de la experiencia y así se adquiere el conocimiento que es la acumulación de sabiduría a través de la experiencia concreta, la reflexión y la aplicación de utilizar el conocimiento como un método reflexivo que consta de cuatro fases (preguntar, investigar, crear, discutir y reflexionar) (p.10).

### **Teaching English as foreign language to children**

Teaching English in Latin America, in countries like Colombia, can be a great deal of trouble for the teachers and also for those children who are learning a foreign language like this one because many of them do not find a meaningful and important interest in that learning, and they may see it as a waste of time. Correa and González (2016) state,

Students' lack of motivation to learn English. This was found in most of the studies conducted in the state of Antioquia, in the cities of Medellín, Cali, and Pasto, and in rural areas of Colombia. In the study conducted by González et al. (2001) in the city of Medellín, for example, teachers reported that most of their students came from underprivileged neighborhoods, and they had to study and work to help support their families. Therefore, instead of picturing themselves travelling and going to college in the near future, they saw themselves looking for jobs. Consequently, they were not interested in learning English (p.12).

In different elementary schools in Colombia is still found that teachers use Audio-lingual methods and grammar-translation, even if those methods are not good enough to let children develop a meaningful communication between them using the foreign language they are learning. The opportunities are not the best, because of the memorization of vocabulary or the repetition of meaningless commands. Bastidas and Muñoz (2011) explain,

Contrary to the previous assertions, observation in the classrooms showed that almost all the teachers use techniques based on Audio-lingual and Grammar-Translation Methods such as activities that emphasize writing (copying) and listening, with a constant repetition of words or short sentences. Also, the words and sentences written on the board and in the students' notebooks have their corresponding translation in Spanish; very few teachers promote teacher-student and student-student communication and interaction. These results indicate that on the elementary school level there is little opportunity for children to perform activities which foster the use of English as a meaningful communicative tool (p.100).

Being aware of the different ways that English can be taught as a foreign language should lead to the exploration of different methodologies that allow, for example, that in Colombia, English can be used in students' daily life, letting them not to only focus on memorizing words or grammar rules, but to communicate with others. Clavijo (2016) shares Eleni Korosidou and Eleni Griva's ideas,

Las autoras definen CLIL como un método educativo de doble enfoque, que tiene por objeto la educación a través de la construcción, en lugar de la instrucción. Por lo tanto, su innovación pedagógica se enfocó por igual en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y en el desarrollo de contenidos. En su estudio, a los estudiantes se les proporcionó la posibilidad de expresarse verbal y no verbalmente, y a participar en una variedad de actividades creativas en un contexto de enseñanza multimodal (p.10).

So, it is not a matter of exploring only the new and innovative methodologies to teach English as foreign language, but also the different strategies that can be coupled to those different ways of teaching; play and art can be especially useful in the classroom for this purpose.

## **Play**

Play is a tool that allows people to find new ways of joy while their mental or physical abilities are being used, letting them learn, even when they do not notice it. People play since they are young, with purposes of learning, but when some of that people grow up, they stop playing, forgetting its multiple benefits.

A specific definition of play considers it as a practice that causes pleasure to those ones who practice it, helping them discover and acquire new abilities for their daily lives. Arias (2014) explains,

Si partimos de una concepción general, el juego puede definirse como una “actividad física o mental puramente gratuita cuyo único objetivo es el placer

que procura” (Le Petit Robert, 1996: 1042). Según esta definición, esta práctica existe en tanto provoque placer y diversión en dos niveles principalmente: el físico y el mental (p.262).

Another perspective presents play as a basic way of living life, because humans are constantly creating and looking for new ways of enjoyment. Colombia Aprende in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Colombia defines play as, “El juego, entonces, hace parte vital de las relaciones con el mundo de las personas y el mundo exterior, con los objetos y el espacio. En las interacciones repetitivas y placenteras con los objetos, la niña y el niño descubren sus habilidades corporales y las características de las cosas” (MEN, 2014,14)

Torres & Torres (2007) share about play, its benefits and how it can be used as a tool to improve learning. They state,

El juego constituye, simplemente y durante las fases iniciales, el extremo de las conductas definidas por la asimilación (en tanto que la imitación se orienta hacia el polo de la acomodación), casi todos los comportamientos que hemos estudiado a propósito de la inteligencia son susceptibles de convertirse en juego cuando se repiten por asimilación pura, es decir, por simple placer funciona (p.24).

Play becomes an important tool to be able to develop meaningful and important skills, especially for young children because the different benefits it has, motivate, and guide the learners to explore the world they are living in, making them to adapt to some

real circumstances. Play provides physical, communicative, and cognitive benefits, as well. It is a tool that enables students to create, explore, and investigate, among other abilities to learn in different ways. Meneses & Monge (2001) argue,

El juego, además de contribuir en su desarrollo físico, también favorece su desarrollo cultural y emocional. Para el niño con actitudes y conductas inadecuadas, tales como el mal manejo de la frustración, desesperación o rabia, el juego es una salida para liberar esos sentimientos (p.115).

### **Play-mediated strategies in school.**

According to theorists like Jerome Bruner, playing in school helps children to acquire knowledge with multiple benefits, encouraging them to learn. Teachers need to use strategies mediated by play to have good tools to engage the students' interest in the things they really want to learn. García (2017) talking about what Bruner says about play posits,

Según Bruner, los estudiantes que participan en el aprendizaje práctico y actividades basadas en la experiencia de juego, adquieren los siguientes beneficios:

Aumento de la motivación.

La creatividad impulsada.

Habilidades de resolución de problemas mejoradas.

Un mayor sentido de la responsabilidad personal.

La alegría de la autonomía y la independencia (p.3).

Also, Meneses and Monge (2001) present Zapata's idea where play is presented like an activity that can improve the learning of children because of all the benefits it brings in the acquisition of knowledge in the different areas.

Zapata (1990) acota que el juego es "un elemento primordial en la educación escolar". Los niños aprenden más mientras juegan, por lo que esta actividad debe convertirse en el eje central del programa. La educación por medio del movimiento hace uso del juego ya que proporciona al niño grandes beneficios, entre los que se puede citar la contribución al desarrollo del potencial cognitivo, la percepción, la activación de la memoria y el arte del lenguaje (p.114).

Playing in the classroom allows children to build knowledge around the diverse issues they found in the different classes they have. Children can also enjoy all the process because playing different games are going to increase their motivation. This is something play can make through several strategies that teachers implement with a purpose. Durán (2003) presents the following idea from Piaget,

Jean Piaget, manifiesta en sus escritos que las experiencias que los niños tengan, les van a permitir manipular y explorar las situaciones u objetos, para que puedan descubrir el mundo que los rodea. Por ello manejar el juego y la observación, dentro del aula y fuera de ella, contribuye a que sean los niños quienes construyan su conocimiento, porque éstos brindan

los componentes necesarios para hacerlo. Por su parte, la contemplación del juego, también planteado por Piaget, le inyecta al trabajo, el interés y la motivación que se requiere para apoyar más directamente a esos pequeños (p.77).

The strategies mediated by play also encourage children to face diverse situations in the classroom, and in the same way help them to learn various contents or ideas for their own development. Play is more than just a tool to use in the classroom. It is an instrument with valuable benefits when teaching, especially the youngest students. About this Rubio and Conesa (2013) say,

Los juegos constituyen un medio poderoso para la enseñanza del inglés en todas las edades. Podemos usarlos como actividad de clase con el fin de enriquecer el vocabulario de nuestros alumnos o para mejorar su gramática y los diferentes acentos ingleses. Además, han servido para fomentar el trabajo en equipo, para favorecer la sociabilidad del alumno, y para desarrollar su capacidad creativa y comunicativa (p.170).

Playing in the English classroom also has many benefits for students and teachers. It can generate meaningful and funny spaces where the students can be encouraged to learn, in this case a new language, without being aware that they are learning it. For teachers, play means counting with more opportunities to engage students with the topics and the activities they are exploring. Many theorists like Erikson or Moor, sustain that using play as a strategy in the English classroom can take out of the monotony of learning

of a second or a foreign language in the school. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Proyecto Enjambre-LaSalle (2015), in Ocaña, Santander say,

Muchos autores, entre los que podemos destacar al psicólogo Paul Moor (1981), al psicoanalista Erik Erikson (1982) o al también psicoanalista Donald W. Winnicott (1986), comparten la opinión de que los niños están más motivados y estimulados en la clase de lengua extranjera cuando se utilizan materiales auténticos, tales como juegos, imágenes, objetos reales..., en lugar de los tradicionales materiales artificiales como los libros de texto o de ejercicios. Los materiales auténticos aumentan el nivel de implicación y concentración de los niños, siendo una ventaja que no debemos desaprovechar (p.3).



## Art

Another main tool besides playing that can help children acquire a new language is Art. Art as a teaching strategy provides many benefits in the English classroom.

Many definitions of art have been considered, but someone can consider that art can be given to any creative work with a specific purpose or sense of learning, coming from people's interests and experiences. So that is why people in their daily lives are surrounded by different artistic expressions. These expressions are characterized by different materials and forms like drawing, painting, origami, handcrafting, singing, role playing, and performing, among others. These expressions help children discover the world and experience it in different ways, promoting emotions and thinking and communication. Green (2014) explains about art,

Se considera cada obra creativa y cultural como arte bajo las varias ramas que surgen de ella. En primer lugar, se categorizan dos grupos: las artes plásticas y las artes escénicas. Dentro de las artes plásticas, o visuales, están todos tipos de arte que utilizan recursos plásticos, naturalmente, y que crean un producto final, o sea un cuadro, una foto o una escultura, por ejemplo. Las artes escénicas implican todo lo que son los recursos lingüísticos y sonoros; utilizando la voz y la palabra en recitales de poesía, el sonido en conciertos de música, el lenguaje corporal en espectáculos de baile, o el guion en representaciones de teatro (p.3).

Oral and written communication can also be considered as art when it is about the expression of ideas because they enable us to create new ideas or statements, for personal or specific purposes. Language lets us express ourselves and create an environment that can satisfy our necessities or desires. Gee (2000) states that,

Art is about communication. As writers and speakers, we use verbal language to communicate. We make choices about the content, choose the theme, decide on the vocabulary and form of communication we'll use to express ourselves. We hunt for just the right words, look at nuances and relationships, and make decisions about the structure and form of our communication (p.63).

### **Art-mediated strategies in school.**

In school, the strategies mediated by art give a lot of benefits to the youngest students, because they can express themselves in infinite ways, making their thoughts and ideas worthy, and taking advantage of the multiple benefits when sharing with their classmates. Freedom is necessary to let children create diverse works, so they could find and share their different talents with others "El niño al trabajar el arte se le facilita el comprender y crear diferentes formas o imágenes logradas a través de manipular materiales y los elementos básicos que son herramientas necesarias para su desarrollo integral" (Gómez, 2000, 53).

In school, art is presented in many ways. Drawing, for example, is an art expression that is usually carried out especially by younger learners to express ideas, thoughts and,

emotions while they enjoy the process of learning. Gee (2000) supports these ideas when she says,

We draw to express what we see and what we imagine. We draw to tell stories, to make diagrams, and to sketch projects we want to undertake or objects we plan to make. We draw to entertain ourselves and others, to express ourselves when words simply aren't enough (p.41).

In the classroom the teachers decide to use art as a strategy in different forms, so that children can share and learn through it. Drawing helps learners to express themselves in diverse ways, managing different activities through which they can solve problems, share ideas with others and innovate in their ways of expressions. Gee (2000) also says,

We are becoming keenly aware that children can demonstrate classroom learning and understanding through art in ways that integrate intuition and cognition. Children draw upon forms of art to process knowledge and concepts. Through art, they're able to communicate ideas that show creativity of thought and the use of complex problem-solving strategies. As Pittsburgh-based visual arts specialist Valerie Dellas says, "Art is as valid a means of expressing our knowledge as the written or spoken word (p.8-9).

## **The Communicative Domain**

It is important to recognize the relevance of the concept of the Communicative Domain that every teacher has. This concept refers to the capacity that every person has to develop his/her social potential to communicate with others. Allowing children to express themselves in different ways and situations, with their classmates, families or teachers, is going to improve their learning because they are going to be directly involved in this process. English teachers need to be aware of all the processes related to the acquisition and development of language, especially the oral mode, so they can choose the best tools and methodologies to promote communication in the classroom. The National Ministry of Education of Colombia emphasizes the importance of the development of the communicative domain in preschool children because children as human beings need to develop communication for the essential fact of living in society, expressing their needs to others. About this, the MEN (1997) states that “La dimensión comunicativa en el niño está dirigida a expresar conocimientos e ideas sobre las cosas, acontecimientos y fenómenos de la realidad; a construir mundos posibles; a establecer relaciones para satisfacer necesidades, formar vínculos afectivos, expresar emociones y sentimientos”. (MEN, 2020, 20)

The communicative domain is also visualized as a social regulator, since it has enabled human beings to create societies, stipulating norms and ways of living that will later allow life in society. An effective promotion of the communicative domain will result in an effective and efficient social regulation. Martín (2003) proposes,

El primer aspecto que debemos de atender en este estudio es la dimensión comunicativa o lingüística (siempre que este último término se entienda en

sentido amplio). Al igual que otras prácticas sociales, las prácticas comunicativas se regulan socialmente. Es precisamente, constitutivo de otras prácticas sociales, que cada comunidad organiza sus intercambios comunicativos, de manera que se establecen normas acerca de cómo hablar, cuándo hablar, quién puede hablar, de qué y con quién (piénsese, por ejemplo, en cómo podrían realizarse sin intercambio comunicativo prácticas sociales como administrar justicia, enseñar, legislar, o practicar la medicina) (p.1).

Every child can learn a language to communicate with others, showing a necessity of understanding and being understood. Because of it, teachers in schools must have different and relevant information and strategies about how students can develop their communicative abilities in a holistic way. Goodman (2014) affirms that,

In homes, children learn oral language without having it broken into simple little bits and pieces. They are amazingly good at learning language when they need it to express themselves and understand others, as long as they are surrounded by people who are using language meaningfully, and purposefully (p.40).

### **The Development of Communicative Domain in Children.**

Understanding the development of the communicative domain in children, means exploring the characteristics that are part of this process and that can show how children start to use language for many reasons and purposes. Kirkland and Patterson (2005) share Hall's ideas about this process,

Hall (1987) found that oral language emerges in children when the following conditions are present: (a) children are the major constructors of language; (b) parent, teachers, and caregivers serve as facilitators, not transmitters, of language development; (c) language is embedded in the context of the daily life of the child; (d) children construct language in their pursuit of meaning and comprehension related to their world and print; (e) the conditions for developing language are identical to those for learning about the world; (f) social interaction is foundational to language development; (g) children understand the functions of language as they use it to clarify information about themselves and others; and (h) language is learned in a child-initiated, holistic manner (p.391).

When children grow up, they start to show some specific characteristics for verbal communication that evidence their abilities to relate to other. These characteristics are different for every child because they are influenced by their context and all the possibilities, parents, caregivers, and teachers provide for the children to use language. Castañeda (1999) quoting Einsenson highlights,

A los cuatro años de edad el niño domina virtualmente la gramática, pero comienza a expresarse de acuerdo a un estilo "retórico propio", tal como Einsenson señala.

El niño empieza a utilizar los pronombres en el siguiente orden: Yo, Tú, Él, Ella, Nosotros-as, Ustedes; contando con un vocabulario de 1,500 palabras y a los cinco años, 2,300 palabras aproximadamente.

Entre los 4 ó 5 años, el niño suele estar ya capacitado para responder a preguntas de comprensión referentes al comportamiento social aprendido, dado que su lenguaje ya se extiende más allá de lo inmediato. Esto se debe a la capacidad simbólica del niño y, como tal, puede evocar y representarse mentalmente las cosas, acciones y situaciones, trascendiendo la realidad y el presente.

Esa capacidad y la necesidad de comunicarse hacen posible un mayor y rápido desarrollo del lenguaje infantil, facilitando también el desarrollo de la inteligencia (p.47).

Thus, knowing and being aware of the potential we teachers must provide the right conditions for an effective and long-life communicative process when teaching a foreign language is great importance.

## Research Design

The present research study is placed within the field of the qualitative studies because the facts presented here involve the personal life of the participants and the conditions that are part of their lives. The student's perspectives are important in all the process, including the conclusions and the decisions to be taken. From this research perspective, analyzing the context is relevant because it helps see the conditions and contextualize the responses coming from the participants. However, understanding the context is not enough; it is also necessary to consider different educational theories that support a series of proposals that converge in the present study.

In this type of research, the data collected are not specifically related with numbers; it means the information has different interpretations according to the people who analyze the study, and those ones involved in the process, even the readers of this report. Herrera quoting Lincoln and Denzin (1994, 576) explains,

La investigación cualitativa es un campo interdisciplinar, transdisciplinar y en muchas ocasiones contra disciplina. Atraviesa las humanidades, las ciencias sociales y las físicas. La investigación cualitativa es muchas cosas al mismo tiempo. Es multiparadigmática en su enfoque. Los que la practican son sensibles al valor del enfoque multimetódico. Están sometidos a la perspectiva naturalista y a la comprensión interpretativa de la experiencia humana. Al mismo tiempo, el campo es inherentemente político y construido por múltiples posiciones éticas y políticas. (Herrera, 2017, 7)



All those characteristics are part of the qualitative research paradigm and provide ideas and alternatives for methodologies. These define the roles of the participants and how they interact in the research study.

### **Action research**

This research study will use Action Research as a methodological approach that seeks not only to involve the context where the study takes place, but also the actions that the teacher, who is also the researcher, takes or improves during his/her process. Reflection and action permit the evaluation of the process so there can be improvements in this case in the educational field. This methodological approach enables the teacher to also become a researcher who can find in his/her practice innovating ideas, permanently evaluating his/her study and the proposals coming from it. This happens because the personal experience of the teacher/researcher becomes a source of contextualized knowledge, helping him/her make the right decisions and improve the teaching/ learning process. This research methodology makes the teachers the owners of the research processes, relying on their expertise and the knowledge of the context, not letting outsiders tell them what to do. A scaffolding between theory and practice becomes key for the teacher researcher to construct his/her own theories and learn from others' theories. Labra et al. (2005) presents Carr and Kemmis' ideas (1988) about Action Research like this:

La investigación-acción (Carr y Kemmis 1988) se presenta como una estrategia interesante para estudiar la realidad educativa, mejorar la

comprensión y, por ende, mejorar la práctica. Si un profesor explora su propia práctica, reflexiona sobre ella, identifica situaciones problemáticas, implementa estrategias de acción y las evalúa está produciendo mejoras en ella, así como en su formación como docente.

De esta manera, la utilización de la investigación-acción cobra sentido, debido a que ofrece una oportunidad a los distintos actores o participantes del proceso de práctica profesional, un espacio para el diálogo, la reflexión y la construcción de conocimiento que enmarcan su acción pedagógica a partir de sus experiencias y concepciones de su rol profesional. (Labra, Guarín, Iturra & Fuentealba, 2005, 140)

During the process of an action research study some stages are to be considered that allow the process to be more organized and elaborated. For this research study, there was an initial reflection coming from the observation of the classes. Then, a series of plans were designed by the teacher/researcher, with some ideas that could help the improvement of a specific situation that needed attention and some changes. The actions taken by the teacher/researcher enables him/her to put into practice the planned classes. Finally, through a continuous reflection about the process, the changes, the gains, and the challenges encountered, the teacher/researcher can have a clear view of the situation studied and the possible alternatives or solutions. In the Center for Education Innovation website, Nicholas Noakes (2016) describes the stages like,

Basically the process of an action research project consists of a number of phases: • initial reflection • planning • action • observation • reflection where possible or appropriate most projects go through several cycles or spirals of the basic phases. Like all descriptions of research endeavours, the action research spiral and the stages it describes are much more clear-cut than occurs in reality. Planning is seldom perfect, action reveals the need for further planning, backtracking occurs, and so on. Nevertheless it is useful to give an account of each phase separately in order to describe the action research process. (p.5-6)

This methodological approach is important because during the English classes the process of dialogue and reflection is always present, involving the children and making them the main characters of this research study. In the same way, the teacher/researcher is constantly observing, planning, implementing actions and reflecting on them to really understand the problematic situation and propose alternatives for its solution. All this process needs to be well documented, using different data collection tools that allow the participants' voices to be heard and valued. Thus, the teacher/researcher can analyze, find and learn new methods and ideas to be implemented in diverse educational areas, improving in this case, the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language.

## **Participants**

The participants are the children of the Colegio Londres. In this study 20 students who belong to the preschool grade, who are between 5 and 6 years old, are going to be part of it.

## Research Data Collection Process: Techniques and Tools

The next information is about the techniques and tools used for the exploration of the specific objectives during all the process.

<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Technique</b>	<b>Instrument</b>
1. To identify the current communicative processes in the preschool children during the English classes.	Participant observation	Teacher's journal

<p>2. To analyze the School Communicative Guidelines for preschool and the teaching strategies implemented by the English teacher for the promotion of communication.</p>	Documentary review	File Matrix
<p>3. To propose teaching strategies mediated by play and art for the development of the preschool children oral communicative domain in the English class.</p>	Planning analysis	Matrix

<p>4. To assess the effect of some the arts-and-play-mediated teaching strategies in the communication processes of preschool children at Colegio Londres.</p>	<p>Interview with the Cooperating Teacher</p>	<p>Semi-structured interview script</p>
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### **Participant Observation and the Teacher's Journal**

The participant observation technique allows to visualize the processes that are happening, and which information needs to be compiled. Here, it is important be aware of the participants' involvement in the research process, their behavior, conduct, and responses. When the researcher is a participant in the process, he/she takes an active role making important contributions and also making decisions to improve all the needs presented. Marshall and Rossman (1989) in Kawulich (2005) define this observation like, "la descripción sistemática de eventos, comportamientos y artefactos en el escenario social elegido para ser estudiado" (Kawulich, 2005, 79). As a data collection tool closely related to this technique, **the Teacher's Journal**, helps to collect information about the students' main processes and their responses, also letting the teacher reflect about his/her actions and outcomes.

### **Documentary Review**

A documentary review allows to search into different and diverse documents relevant information to analyze data on a specific subject or issue. Rodríguez, Avella & Pineda (2016) point out,

La revisión documental, como herramienta ayuda en la construcción del conocimiento, amplía los constructos hipotéticos de los estudiantes y como enriquece su vocabulario para interpretar su realidad desde su disciplina, constituye elemento motivador para la realización de procesos investigativos de los estudiantes, posibilita presentar la producción de los estudiantes a la comunidad académica nacional como internacional, así



como su fundamentación en la indagación y utilización de fuentes fidedignas en bases de datos reconocidas. (p.53)

The use of a **Matrix** to manage and separate the information collected in the documentary review allows finding the main ideas to be highlighted with the specific objective and connect the information found to the research purposes.

The **planning analysis** could be considered part of the documentary review technique for it allows in this case the carefully analysis of how art and play strategies were incorporated in the class proposal. With use of a matrix these elements could be checked to be aware of how the teacher-researched put together the teaching and learning plan.

### **Interview**

The interview is a technique that allows recognizing and understanding different points of view based on the perception of others about a specific idea or topic. It allows taking into account different perspectives.

Para Denzin y Lincoln (2005, p. 643, tomado de Vargas, 2012) la entrevista es “una conversación, es el arte de realizar preguntas y escuchar respuestas”. Como técnica de recogida de datos, está fuertemente influenciada por las características personales del entrevistador. (Vargas-Jimenez, 2012, 121)

Now a semi-structured interview counts has a special a characteristic where the interviewer prepares with anticipation a set of questions to guide the interview around and specific topic. The answers to those questions are open-ended answers, so the

interviewed is opened to express his/her ideas in an open way, exploring maybe also other ideas or thoughts. (See Appendix 1)

## Findings

To analyze the collected data, I read the data several times, highlighting and taking notes about the common elements and patterns that I noticed. First, all the instruments and the techniques for every objective proposed in this research study were considered. For example, to recognize and become aware of the current communicative processes in the preschool children, the teacher's journal was read and analyzed to select those major ideas or topics found in each class. The characteristics presented here could show an important impact on the children's communication process during the English class, shedding light on the students' prior knowledge and needs, regarding the development of communication.

Second, analyzing the Communicative Guidelines the school proposed for the English classes in the preschool grade, and the strategies implemented by the English teacher, made it possible to understand if they both went hand in hand or not, according to the topics that the students must learn and how much they helped to develop their communicative domain while they learn English. The concordance among those guidelines and the necessity by the children to develop English in a communicative way was seen or not during the classes they had. Though the guidelines were not clear stated, they were analyzed from the activities and topics proposed and how they were organized and sequenced, again finding patterns and common elements.

About the strategies mediated by art and play for the development of the preschool grade children communicative domain, the analysis was focused on finding evidence of

the oral development in English as a key to start verifying better ways to implement classes according to the students' needs and also their preferences. There were various lessons to be carried out in the English classes, centered on the implementation of strategies mediated by art and play, showing that the students were more able to learn and enjoy these classes using those strategies. Here, it was highlighted through notes that showed the relevance in students' responses and reactions to the different strategies presented, remarking those categories that were important.

Finally, it was decided to evaluate the impact on the communication process of the strategies mediated by art and play in the preschool children. To do that, all the planning that was carried out during the English classes and the opinions of the researcher and the English Cooperating Teacher were considered, to find the contribution that those classes had to the communicative domain. The semi-structured interview in which the opinion of the English Cooperating Teacher was presented, in terms of seeing if the process could really engage and allow children to find new ways of expression, at the same time if they were learning English, was all transcribed and analyzed, highlighting the comments and opinions that showed some relation to the promotion of more solid communicative processes.

All the data collected was triangulated, focusing on the major categories that emerged from the analysis of the objectives. These categories shed some light on the effect of the different teaching strategies, and what the children's responses revealed about it. There were many categories presented in all the process, but some of them were relevant to support how the strategies mediated by art and play could really strengthen

the communicative domain in the preschool students from El Colegio Londres. The following categories are the ones to be explained and elaborated: The Use of English as a Foreign Language for the Expression of Children's Authentic Lives and Socializing as a Tool through Strategies to Improve the Communication during the English classes.

### **The Use of English as a Foreign Language for the Expression of Children's Authentic Lives**

The use of a foreign language becomes an amazing tool to encourage children to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts. In this case the learning of a foreign language can make sense to the children who are learning it, not only because they use it to repeat and memorize meaningless topics, but especially because they can use it to talk about things that are part of their lives. As suggested by Sanz, learning is important when it is contextualized, and students can learn living the real life also in the classrooms, using different activities to improve their knowledge and the things they have to learn. About it, he says, "para poder llevar a cabo este aprendizaje es necesario que los alumnos interaccionen con el contexto y se vean expuestos a situaciones en el aula que simulen estas posibles circunstancias que encontrarán en su vida futura" (Sanz, 2017,10). So, it is understood that for learning English, when children have the possibility to integrate the knowledge presented in the classroom with their lives and create meaningful connections, there will be better responses and reactions to the learning purposes planned for each class. In the data analysis of the different objectives, it was seen that the students could really learn if they expressed in the classes, their interests and needs, connecting them

with the things that the teachers were going to teach them. For example, when playing English charade as the main activity this is what is written about the class:

The kids were happy when I told them that we were going to play a game. My explanation started being clear and by steps in Spanish and English. They played a similar game a long time ago, so they knew a little bit how it was. I had to explain to them first what the verb we were going to play was. Almost all of them wanted to stand up and go to the board to make the performance. (Teacher's Journal, Observation # 2, September 16, 2019)

Here the game was an important tool to encourage the children to start playing and learning using English, also improving their participation and therefore communication, for they were sharing their own thoughts and ideas.

Also, the use of strategies mediated by art and play allowed the children to explore in their lives different ideas and interests that helped them to find new proposals and opportunities to learn English, to have fun and enjoy the process. Those strategies were important to engage the students into the things they wanted to learn in the English classes, because it brings with it a more relaxed atmosphere, making learning easier and funnier.

When there was a topic to learn in the English class, and the students saw it and could relate it with things that happened currently in their daily lives, they felt more encouraged to pay attention and learn different information about it. Also, at some point in the development of the class, they showed interest in doing the proposed activities.

Here it is presented a class where an activity about the animal's movements was carried out:

The kids wanted to participate in the video paying attention to the movement of the animals, also they were singing the song and trying to pronounce better. That was seen because some of them asked me if the way they were singing the words were good or not. The idea is that at the end, one by one could move their body as one of the animals presented in the video and say the name of the animal and the name of the movement in English.

(Teacher's Journal, Observation #1, September 11, 2019)

In this class the students were happy to do the different activities related to the animals' movements, learning by the way different vocabulary, grammar, and English expressions while learning moves through their bodies, making it more experiential, and at the same time, enjoying seeing how their classmates also had fun doing it.

Also using English to encourage students to learn, helped them to be happier children, because they found in the English class a safe place where they could express themselves and understand that all their realities were amazing places, and no matter the different circumstances, or at least despite the difficult ones, it is important to try to find new ways of seeing their own worlds. The strategies mediated by art and play take an important role because the students can enjoy the learning process. As Gee (2000) mentions:

We are becoming keenly aware that children can demonstrate classroom learning and understanding through art in ways that integrate intuition and cognition. Children draw upon forms of art to process knowledge and concepts. Through art, they're able to communicate ideas that show creativity of thought and the use of complex problem-solving strategies. (Gee, 2000, 8)

This shows that the strategies mediated by art allow children to learn, but also to communicate with the others, making all this process something meaningful and making all this process something meaningful and important for them and for their classmates as well.

### **Socializing as a tool through strategies to improve the communication during the English classes**

Socializing becomes an important thing to improve and develop in the younger students. In the preschool grades, this is not an exception, and being aware of using strategies mediated by play and art is a good idea to encourage the younger ones to learn while they enjoy the process. If the students are feeling well in their English classes, they will want to share ideas, thoughts, and feelings with their classmates, also with their teachers, most of the time. As Goodman (2014) mentions, "they are amazingly good at learning language when they need it to express themselves and understand others, as long as they are surrounded by people who are using language meaningfully, and purposefully" (Goodman, 2014, 40)



Socializing enables the children to find purpose in the use of the language, allowing them to learn, for example a second or a foreign language easily. In the moment that socialization comes in the classroom bringing strategies mediated by like art and play, children take advantage of the activities presented in class communicating with their classmates and teachers, something that was found in the English class teacher's journal.

At the end when they finished the activity, we played "Guess the fruit". The kids were really interested in thinking what the fruit the riddle said was. Some of them were laughing when the fruit was guessed. And they really enjoy the game. Almost all of them wanted to talk and share the options they had. They knew it they had to try to say what they wanted to say in English. (Teacher's Journal, Observation #5, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019)

This game allows the children to socialize and share their ideas participating using English in the class, also learning new grammar patterns and some vocabulary.

In terms of using art as a tool to develop communication and socialization among the students, good results were found that showed children who wanted to express their creativity, ideas, dreams or thoughts using diverse materials. On September 24, the students made an activity for the "Día del Amor y la Amistad" celebrated here in Colombia. A note in the journal said,

They were happy about to make hearts in different materials like cardboard and clay, it made them to use some words in English so they could have the

material. Some asked about if they could make a draw in the heart and I said yes but in the other part, because the idea was that the heart had clay.

(Teacher's Journal, Observation #3, September 24, 2019)

By using activities like those ones, the students could share their personal interests with their classmates and with the teacher. Something that shed light on the things the students might like to do and how they can learn in a better way, trying then to learn a foreign language with a purpose of communicating and improving the creation of friendship bonds within the classroom and out of it.

When children socialize, they are aware of the importance of the other as a human being and how collaborative work makes the personal ideas and preferences about something more interesting, helping them discover the world while they learn a foreign language, making it an important tool to do this exploration.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Connecting all the process with the main purpose of finding the contribution of the educational strategies mediated by arts and play in strengthening the communicative domain in English of the preschool children of the Colegio Londres, there were many ideas and processes that suggest ways to develop the necessary tools to reach the planned goals.

1. First, when analyzing the strategies implemented by the English teacher in the preschool grade it was found In the English class that the children wanted and needed to express themselves in the different moments of the day, despite the spaces they might be in, but some things did not work in a proper way and students were focused on learning many words or doing repetitive exercises. Then, having seen and known the importance of the school as a place for the youngest students to express, it was seen that the children needed to have different ways and spaces not only to practice pronunciation or learn words, but express their needs, desires and thoughts about different topics and personal situations. This becomes something important for any preschool teacher to recognize in the classroom, so he/she finds the way to present good proposals and ensure that there is the possibility of a good teaching so the students have the real possibility to learn meaningfully.

2. The Communicative Guidelines presented by El Colegio Londres so the children could acquire English as a foreign language could be sometimes below the children's real capacity or the prior knowledge of English. Connecting this to the

strategies presented by the English teacher for the preschool grade students the lack of diverse meaningful activities was little productive, especially because the real context of most of the students was not considered. All the planning could bring boring or repetitive classes focused on the learning of a second language despite the multiples ways available to teach children because the activities were not challenging for the students. Though there were good responses from the children to the diverse activities they had to do, no matter how boring or repetitive they could be at the beginning, after a while, students may begin to have tedious responses to the same activities making the learning a harder process.

3. Considering the needs in the English classes for learning English as a foreign language and the purposes of the strategies presented by the English teacher and the Guidelines of El Colegio Londres, it becomes important the use of various strategies that are consistent with children's learning needs and ages. Using strategies mediated by art and play for the preschool students can really improve the learning, in this case of English, due to the different tools that can be used to make the classes better and more interesting to the students, so they can really learn. These strategies help them appropriate the communication of a foreign language taking, for example, into account that one of the major purposes of learning a foreign or a second language is being able to communicate with others.

4. Then, the assessment of the strategies mediated by art and play implemented showed that those strategies could help the children to start acquiring a foreign language, making it part of their lives. The use of the different strategies showed

results, for example, in the students' behavior in the classes, also the self-confidence, the successful communication with their peers, and the importance for the youngest students to express themselves to others, discovering then, a good opportunity for their own benefit, using English to improve communication.

### **Recommendations**

1. It is important to understand that a good knowledge of English or any language does not provide enough tools to teach that language and encourage children to acquire that second or foreign language due to the needs that the students may have. The strategies found in the implementations done by the English teacher were important for the development of skills like memorizing, following instructions or learning essential vocabulary in English, but not to acquire in a long term the possibility for a real communication. Classes must be focused on promoting and improving real communication, using diverse strategies that could involve the purposeful use of language.

2. Sometimes schools are focused of being productive to show results in the learning of English, but when it comes to the use the language to communicate with others, children and students might show that their knowledge goes around repetition and memorization. So, it is especially important to encourage and show to schools that good guidelines related to the importance of use the second or foreign languages to communicate with others and not only to get a good evaluation process is important.

3. In every class the use of strategies that can be related to the students' needs is important so they can really learn, for example a foreign language, being able to communicate with others. The future teachers and the current ones might understand the importance of planning classes that can be useful in terms of teaching and mainly learning. Using strategies mediated by play and art is going to encourage students to acquire a foreign language easily, because they are going to enjoy and have fun experiencing the different activities, sharing them with their classmates and teachers. Play and art are going to be important to encourage children to communicate with each other, letting them also to be active participants in their own learning. in the classroom.

4. The assessment in every process is important to know those things that worked in the implementations and which ones must be changed in a future, because they did not have a good result in terms of the acquisition of a foreign language in this case. The evaluation in every process is also key to find those strategies that could bring, in this case, more communicative experiences among the students, improving the teaching and learning processes. Also, the assessment process should be interesting and fun for the little ones, not a only a process of finding the right answer to questions, allowing them to find students' shortcomings and abilities, when using strategies mediated by art and play because of the interest that students have for them.

5. The assessment process should help teachers improve, change, or rearrange class strategies and materials with the purpose of making learning a meaningful process for children, taking into account the changes that the world is having in terms

of making language learning and teaching more contextualized, engaging and fun processes.

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### Appendixes

Objetivo	Técnica	Instrumento	Hallazgos .
<p>Identificar los procesos comunicativos de los niños de transición del Colegio Londres durante la clase de inglés.</p>	<p>Observación participante</p>	<p>Diario de campo</p>	<p>-Los niños usan algunas palabras para socializar- a veces en inglés- o para ayudar al otro en sus dificultades</p> <p>-Los niños expresan su emoción al ver una docente que conoce un nuevo idioma y muestran su inquietud para conocerlo mejor.</p> <p>-El lenguaje es usado para expresar</p>

			emociones y contar anécdotas.
Analizar los logros planteados en la institución para la clase de inglés de los niños de preescolar del Colegio Londres y las estrategias implementadas por parte de la docente de inglés.	Revisión documental	Matriz	<p>-Las estrategias que la docente implementan logran abarcar muchos temas que el colegio plantea para que los niños logren.</p> <p>-Las estrategias implementadas por la docente son repetitivas lo que vuelve monótono el aprendizaje.</p> <p>-La mayoría de temas planteados por la institución logran ser aprendidos pero la</p>



			manera en la que se enseña motiva o desmotiva.
<b>Proponer estrategias mediadas por el arte y el juego para el desarrollo de la dimensión comunicativa en los niños de transición del Colegio Londres.</b>	Revisión documental	Matriz	<p>-El arte y el juego brindan novedosas ideas que permiten que los estudiantes aprendan sin estar conscientes de estar haciéndolo.</p> <p>-Los estudiantes esperan novedosas ideas e incluso temáticas diversas para trabajar en la clase.</p> <p>-Los estudiantes proponen ellos mismos la</p>

			intención de aprender nuevos temas.
<p>Evaluar parcialmente el efecto del arte y el juego mediados como estrategias de enseñanza en el proceso comunicativo de los niños del grado transición del Colegio Londres.</p>	<p>Entrevista semi estructurada.</p>	<p>Guion de entrevista</p>	<p>-El efecto del juego y del arte impulsó a que los niños se comunicaran entre ellos con más ánimo de usar el inglés en las clases.</p> <p>-Los niños socializaban entre ellos más que al inicio del año escolar y prestaban más atención y emoción para aprender inglés.</p>

			<p>-El comportamiento mejora cuando el estudiante da de su parte para el desarrollo de diversas actividades.</p>
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