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Role-Play activities in CLIL classes for young learners

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GLAUCE TAMYRIS DA SILVA FONSECA

ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES IN CLIL CLASSES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Monograph presented as a requirement for obtaining the title of Licentiate for the Full Degree in Languages and Literature at the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, oriented by Professor D^{ra} Larissa de Pinho Cavalcanti.

Serra Talhada

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Serra Talhada, May, 04th of 2023

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RESUMO

O ensino da Língua Inglesa no Brasil tem se transformado bastante nas últimas décadas e, portanto, novas metodologias estão se tornando cada vez mais frequentes. Um exemplo a ser citado é o CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*), que se trata de uma abordagem que se baseia no ensino de conteúdo e língua de maneira integrada. Com o uso desta metodologia é possível realizar diversos tipos de atividades criativas durante as aulas, como por exemplo, atividades de *role-play* – principalmente para crianças. Assim, esta monografia tem por objetivo descrever e analisar duas atividades de *role-play* realizadas em turmas do 2º e 3º anos do Ensino Fundamental e os resultados obtidos por meio delas. Para isso, usamos como referencial teórico os estudos de Cameron (2001), Luz (2016), Scott and Ytreberg (1990) e Coyle (2005). Em nosso estudo, descrevemos o processo de aprendizagem das crianças, explicamos o funcionamento da abordagem CLIL e relatamos os resultados observados e obtidos por meio da aplicação de atividades de *role-play* realizadas em turmas do 2º e 3º anos do ensino fundamental.

Palavras-chave: CLIL, ensino de inglês; Ensino fundamental; *role-play*; crianças

ABSTRACT

The teaching of the English language in Brazil has been changing a lot in the last decades and, therefore, new methodologies are becoming more and more frequent. An example for this is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which is an approach based on teaching content and language in an integrated way. Using this methodology, it is possible to carry out different types of creative activities during classes, such as role-play activities – mainly for children. Thus, this monograph aims to describe two role-play activities carried out in classes of the 2nd and 3rd grades of elementary school and the results obtained through them. To that end, we rely on the studies of Cameron (2001), Luz (2016), Scott and Ytreberg (1990) and Coyle (2005). In this work, we describe the children's learning process, explain how the CLIL approach works, and report the results observed and obtained through the application of role-play activities carried out in classes of the 2nd and 3rd grades of elementary school.

Keywords: CLIL; English teaching; Primary school; role-play; children

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INTRODUCTION

If we consider a popular idiom that says "children learn while playing", we can say that the teaching-learning process should take place in a playful way in the classroom. Thus, the lessons must be planned to make the children interested in the content but without losing the pedagogical nature. With language classes it would be no different. Using CLIL approach, we have several possibilities to plan creative activities based on the idea of teaching content and language in an integrated way.

Wherefore, we wrote this work with the objective of describing two role-play activities performed during bilingual classes for 2nd and 3rd graders of elementary school using the CLIL approach. In addition, this work will show the results and conclusions obtained after performing the exercises.

This is a qualitative work that sought to observe the effectiveness of using role-plays in English classes for children. All the evaluations made during the lessons presented were formative. After all, we observed the development and resourcefulness of the students from the beginning to the end of the lessons.

Therefore, this monograph will start with a brief explanation about the children's learning process, followed by the presentation of the CLIL approach. Subsequently, it will explain about the methodologies applied for this work, the description of the role-play activities that were performed, the results and the final considerations. For that, we will base ourselves on the studies of Cameron (2001), Luz (2016), Scott and Yireberg (1990) and Coyle (2005).

1. TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN

Thanks to technological advances, communication between people from different parts of the globe has become easier, therefore, a new perspective has opened for learning an additional language¹. Learning English can be very useful for communicating with people from other countries, playing your favorite game, having access to a greater amount of information, getting a certain job, and so on.

Thus, with an increasing number of additional language learners, it is also possible to see that the number of children in this situation is also increasing. This is because, for a long time, it was believed that, when it comes to learning an additional language, the best moment would be during childhood, right in the first years of life. Although it is possible to recognize some advantages for the introduction of a new language during this phase of life, we must also not forget that this premature exposure is also delicate and complex – and, consequently, must be done with great care and a lot of planning, and it must be followed by consistent learning as the child grows, otherwise it is likely to miss the “golden age”.

Therefore, in this chapter we will show the implications of teaching an additional language for students in the early years of elementary school. To do so, we will bring considerations by Cameron (2001) and we will discuss what is stated in the Curricula of The State of Pernambuco for the teaching of English to Elementary School Students. In addition, we shall also discuss about bilingual classes, its benefits, and the goals of this proposal.

1.1 How easily can a child learn a new language?

To discuss how easily children learn an additional language, we must first look at the way they learn in general. In the first years of life, the contact that the child has with the world around them allows them to better develop their knowledge and motor skills through experience and action. Children are generally more active, curious, and motivated to learn something new (CAMERON, 2001). Most of the time, they are wondering about everything around them and looking for answers to their questions.

When discussing Piagetian theory in her book “Teaching English to Young Learners”, Cameron (2001) explains that, through action, children go through two processes that are part of their learning: “assimilation and accommodation”. In the first, the child assimilates what

¹ What is this? Ver o texto <https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/ling/article/download/37207/32129/120913>

they see happening around them and tries to replicate it. In the second, the child re-signifies what was learned in the first action and transforms the knowledge they acquired before in a way that adapts to their current needs.

In contrast to Piaget's theories, which focus on the child's learning as an isolated being and not considering the interaction of this child with other people around him, Cameron (2001) also highlights the studies carried out by Vygotsky, to point out children's process of learning as a social being who interact and communicate with others. In this case, children learn by observing other people, usually older ones, or with their direct help by interacting with them. It is common to see adults teaching their babies several different things, such as how to hold a spoon, how to speak certain words, how to use a napkin to clean their mouth, among others. We believe that Vygotsky's theory of interaction helping in child development can be seen as a complement to the Piaget's theory of assimilation and accommodation. Thus, the child observes what is being taught and assimilates the new knowledge to adapt it in the future.

Therefore, let us think about the implications of what has been said so far on the teaching-learning process of an additional language. Regarding the process of learning a L2 for children in the first years of elementary school, the idea of interaction, assimilation and accommodation starts to make sense when we are planning classes and choosing which methods to use. We must consider children as being generally active, curious, eager, always ready to question and to learn. We must also consider the greater ease that most children have in interacting with other people, known or unknown to them, which allows their communication skills to develop more and more.

This interaction in which adults use language as a tool to help children learn about the world, interact with it, and perform certain activities they learned through a step-by-step mediation was called "scaffolding" (WOOD; BRUNER; ROSS, 1976 *apud* CAMERON, 2001). It is the action of "breaking" an activity into smaller "pieces" and performing it first by easier steps and gradually increasing the degree of difficulty, until the child can perform the same activity alone in the future without the need to use such a method to do it.

All of this is possible doing (not exclusively) during bilingual classes. In such classes students are in direct contact with the language they are learning and can use it all the time in the classroom. In the next topic, we will briefly discuss about bilingual classes in Brazilian schools.

1.2 Bilingual classes in Brazilian schools

Initially, it is important to emphasize that the standard documents of education in Brazil do not provide for the mandatory teaching of an additional language in the first years of elementary school. However, it is possible to find institutions (usually private schools) that anticipate the contact of young students with the teaching of an additional language, most of the times English. These schools may include “conventional” English classes and/or bilingual classes. From our own experience, we know that, when adding this second option to their curriculum, the school usually forms a partnership with a company specialized in bilingual education, which will provide material for student use, teacher support material, regular training of teachers, and more.

Conversely, it is noticeable that there is an increasing number of schools “adopting the bilingual classes” system in our nation. In the countryside of Pernambuco, in the Northeast region in Brazil, there is the small city named Salgueiro. In Salgueiro, there is a private school that has decided to implement bilingual classes as part of the curriculum in the beginning of 2019. In other words, the school has now two different “types” of English classes: the regular ones, which focus on grammar and academic English, and the bilingual ones, which focus on teaching the language used daily and adopts CLIL (which will be better discussed in chapter 2) as the main approach used by teachers. In the latter type, teachers and students can use several materials to help them in the teaching-learning process such as computers, building blocks, books, magazines, puppets, pictured cards, and more.

Based on our daily direct contact with the students from this school, after the implementation of the new curriculum, we noticed how students developed their skills in English as an additional language. Also, most of the children began to feel more comfortable with the language and started to like the classes a little more. That might be because they felt differences in the new teaching methodology.

According to Scott and Yireberg (1990, p. 5-6), “Since concentration and attention spans are short, variety is a must – variety of activity, variety of pace, variety of organization, variety of voice.” And so, we believe that using such materials in the classes and adopting the mentioned methodology help students to focus on what is being taught and understand better what is being said. For instance, using pictured cards or specific objects can assist them to comprehend the vocabulary without using translations and, thus, decreasing the use of

Portuguese in the classroom. For this, teachers work using different types of scaffolding strategies, such as realia, modeling, visual aids and sentence starters.

The reason why we should go for variation and teach children using different materials and techniques might be because of what was mentioned before: young ones tend to be more active learners and can lose interest easily – especially 21st Century children (who are surrounded by technological devices that gives them the experience of doing everything they want to in a matter of seconds). So, relying only on traditional ways of teaching might not be so effective:

Don't rely on the spoken word only. Most activities for the young learners should include movements and involve the senses. You will need to have plenty of objects and pictures to work with, and to make full use of the school and your surroundings. Demonstrate what you want them to do. The balance will change as the children get older, but appealing to the senses will always help the pupils to learn. (SCOTT; YTREBERG, 1990, p. 5)

That means, during the English classes (depending on what we want the students to accomplish) we should move around the classroom, change our tones and voices, create stories, tell old ones too, talk about movies, games, everyday life, and the most important thing, allow and encourage the children to do the same. Let them know that is possible to learn while having fun and vice-versa. The class does not need to be strict, quiet, and “mechanical”. Students can learn English naturally just by being themselves and using the language freely without the fear of making mistakes, or under constant anxiety of learning and following the grammar strictly, being pressured to pronounce the words as a native speaker, and other obsolete ideas of what an “ideal English speaker” should be.

For the next chapter, we will discuss about CLIL, how it works and the positive and negative side of this approach. That way, we can understand better the impact this approach has in a bilingual class for young learners. From our own experience, usually CLIL is effective and a good suggestion for language classes.

2. CLIL – Content Language Integrated Learning

The Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereinafter CLIL) is commonly referred to as an approach used by modern languages teachers to teach an additional language by using different contents in an integrated way. Therefore, students can learn a certain content and an additional language at the same time.

However, the exact definition of CLIL is still a widely debated and the reason for that is that there is no actual concept that can be attributed to CLIL. According to Luz (2016), CLIL is a flexible method that allows the integrated teaching of content from different disciplines using an additional language. This is an interesting point of view because it shows that CLIL is not focused exclusively on language teaching. Therefore, it is not an exclusive approach to language classes, in our case, English classes. This methodology can be applied to classes in other subjects as well, such as mathematics, geography, history, philosophy and so on.

CLIL is not language teaching enhanced by a wider range of content. Neither is it content teaching translated in a different language (code) from the mother tongue. However, in adopting a CLIL approach, there will be elements of both language and subject teaching and learning which are specific to the CLIL classroom as well as emerging CLIL methodologies. (COYLE, 2005, p. 02)

Nevertheless, for the development of our research work, we choose to conceive CLIL mostly as a method for teaching languages, more specifically, English. In Brazil, this methodology has recently become more visible in some educational institutions such as private schools, language courses, bilingual schools, and universities. Notwithstanding, the use of CLIL during class is still shy and, unfortunately, most Brazilian public schools do not employ this method in their language classes.

This is partly due to the difficulty in finding teachers who were trained in the method or are aware of the pedagogical steps to teach a CLIL based lesson. For there to be an excellent continued professional development in the area, a large investment of time, money and various resources is necessary.

When we refer to specific training for teachers who decide to adopt CLIL as the main methodology in their classes, we are referring to the fact that, as mentioned before, CLIL has a dual focus (language and content). Thus, language teachers must be able to teach content

from other disciplines, just as teachers from other subjects must be able to teach their disciplines using an additional language.

To better illustrate this scenario in real life, let us take the example of international schools located in Brazil that use English as their main language, not only during classes but during all interactions inside and outside the classroom. In these institutions, teacher graduated in history, geography, physics, physical education, etc. teach their classes using English as a mean of communication to explain their content. Thus, in addition to the main graduation in their respective areas, teachers needs to be proficient in the language. On the other hand, in an educational institution where bilingual classes are included in the curriculum as a way of allowing students to experience immersion in an additional language, the language teacher must teach their classes through integrated contents of different disciplines without forgetting that they also need to be sure that students are learning an additional language. Thus, there are two different situations that demand linguistic proficiency, planning time, creativity, and pedagogical knowledge from teachers.

So, when it comes to language teachers, they should know the language should not be the focus of a CLIL class:

Um perigo latente quando se trabalha com CLIL está associado com o perfil profissional do professor. O professor CLIL na escola primária é, em geral, um especialista em língua estrangeira. O perigo para o professor é perder de vista o fato de que o ensino em CLIL não é o ensino de línguas, mas o ensino de conteúdos. O desafio para o especialista em língua estrangeira é manter isso em mente o tempo todo – ele/ela não deve recorrer ao ensino do idioma, mas criar as condições para que esse seja adquirido. (ROWE, COONAN, 2012, p. 2-3 *apud* LUZ, 2016, p. 32)

Maintaining this balance between language and content is not an easy task. After all, what we have seen so far is that the concept of CLIL can be much more abstract and broader than we imagine, and this can lead to certain difficulties during lesson planning. With that in mind, four “concepts” were developed by Coyle. These “concepts” are known as the 4Cs of CLIL: Content, Communication, Culture and Cognition. According to Professor Coyle (2005), the content should be the starting point for planning because if the language were the most important thing, then the planning options would be limited:

There are four guiding principles upon which a CLIL programme can be built. (...) However it is content which determines the learning route. If it were language, imagine how limiting this would be e.g. where learners had not yet been introduced to the past tense. Try to have a conversation with someone using only the present tense in authentic settings- it is almost

impossible. If the content requires use of the past tense and learners have not studied this, then CLIL lessons will enable learners to access the language needed in the defined context in different ways. (COYLE, 2005, p. 05)

The 4Cs are, in fact, used as guidelines during lesson planning. We can say that content and communication are always present, since the first is the starting point of planning and the second is inevitable during interactions between teachers and students. Cognition is also a fundamental step, after all it is about the thinking and understanding that the student has in towards what is being taught/studied. Culture is a principle that will not necessarily be present in every single class, but it is still frequent and important. It is through it that there is awareness about oneself and the others, thus developing intrapersonal, interpersonal and citizenship skills.

In addition to the 4Cs, the 3As were also developed by Coyle and they are Analyze, Add and Apply, also associated respectively with the expressions “language of learning”, “language for learning” and “language through learning”. These principles are even more specific than the 4Cs and are like steps that aid in lesson planning. According to Coyle (2005), the idea is to first analyze the content to be taught and what language is needed for the learning process to occur, such as “key words, phrases, grammatical functions”. We, then, focus on the student and add the necessary language discussed earlier to the lesson:

This includes metacognitive or learner strategies, classroom talk, discussion, task demands. It also involves the teacher in considering ways in which the learning will be scaffolded e.g. through the use of language frames to help and support. This is the language **for learning**. (COYLE, 2005, p. 07)

Finally, the third stage called Apply puts the previous stages to the test. It is during this stage that critical thinking skills, cultural awareness and cognitive development are developed, which requires previously acquired knowledge and a good relationship between thinking and language.

2.1 Pros and Cons of CLIL

In this topic we will briefly discuss about the positive sides of using CLIL and the downsides of it. It is crucial to explain that claims bellow is based on our own experience.

As mentioned before, the duty of a teacher using the CLIL methodology is not an easy one. There are many variables to be considered during lesson planning: student behavior; activities to be carried out in a contextualized manner and according to content; different

scaffolding strategies; skills and competencies that students should achieve, and so on. However, from our own experience we can deduce that, when we implement CLIL correctly in the language class, the results can be quite satisfactory. This may happen due to the immersive nature of the lessons. Students will be in direct contact with the language, allowing them to learn it in a contextualized way in real situations that will make more sense in real life. This is the first positive point to consider.

Let us recall the first chapter of this work, which explains the learning process of a child. Studies carried out by Vygotsky show that children are sociable beings and that they learn by interacting with the world around them. Thus, we can obviously deduce that direct contact with people speaking English, for example, can help you learn the language faster and more effectively.

Another positive side of it is that, using the CLIL approach, teachers from different disciplines will be able to work together and make interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary lessons and projects. It is possible to notice that working together is important for the teaching-learning process. After all, the student will be able to see the content studied not in one, but in two or more classes depending on the number of professors who are part of the project. Language teachers and teachers of other subjects working together can make very interesting workshops and mini-courses and will help to improve the learners' performance. Mainly because with CLIL, we have language and content teaching in an integrated way. Thus, seeing the contents in the classes of their respective subjects will help the student to recognize it in the language class as well.

But this is quite complex work. Therefore, performing it requires a great preparation from teachers. In fact, teachers need to constantly undergo through in-service education. This may be the first, and perhaps the biggest, challenge when using this approach: teachers' pre-service and continued education. Continued professional development programs are usually exceptionally expensive, and it may be difficult to keep a constancy for the teachers' education.

Another downside of it is that the teacher might lose the balance between content and language teaching. The professional must always keep in mind that none of those two elements must outstand the other but, in fact, work together for more efficiency. In addition, evaluating CLIL lessons activities may also become a difficult task for the teacher because they need to evaluate the students not exclusively about their language knowledge but also the content knowledge.

In the next chapter, we will deepen the explanation about our experiences using role-play activities in a CLIL class for young learners. We will discuss about the methodologies used to plan the classes, to evaluate students and to apply the activities during class. In addition, we shall describe the profile of the students that participated in the role-play activities and the school they took place.

3. APPLIED METHODOLOGIES FOR THIS WORK

As mentioned in the topic 1.2 of the first chapter of this monograph, the school where the role-play activities described in this monograph (chapter 4) took place is in Salgueiro, Pernambuco. It is also important to mention once more that it is a private school which has 2 different types of English classes in their curriculum: the “conventional” one (2 classes per week) and the bilingual one (1 daily class). Remembering this is crucial so we can understand that all the students from that school have to opportunity to participate in immersive English classes every day and this might influence in the results of our activities.

This institution has a partnership with a company specialized in a bilingual education. This company provides material both for students and teachers to use them during the lessons. In addition, they also give assistance to the teachers by promoting continued service education every month under the guidance of an advisor. That way, teachers have their classes being watched by the adviser once a month and get feedback to see what they need improve and what they have done greatly. The feedback is important so teachers can evaluate themselves and reflect about their own methods.

During the bilingual classes, teachers are always oriented to use the CLIL approach every class and all the lesson must be taught in English from the beginning to the end. The classes last 40 minutes for kindergarten, 45 minutes for the first years of elementary school and 50 minutes for final years of elementary school. Thus, all lessons must be well planned to match the time the teacher has available for the class.

Teachers can also take students to other environments of the school to participate in different activities depending on the content they are studying. For example, if the students are learning about science in the bilingual class, the teacher can take the students to the chemistry laboratory. If they are studying about sports, they can go the sport court of the school; or even, if they are learning about health, they can go to the nursery room. In the next topic, we will deepen about the nature of our research and describe the methodology used to plan the activities.

3.1 Describing the methodology

Our research is of a qualitative nature and all the evaluation carried out as a formative one. Our objective in carrying out the activity was to assess whether the student was able to understand the content and learn to use the studied language efficiently. Thus, even though we

had a few skills and competences to pay attention to and see if the students achieved them, the learner was being evaluated all the time during the activities.

At this moment, we will describe a little more the classes that participated in the activities of role-play, starting from 2nd grade. The group of students is composed by a total of 25 children (14 girls and 11 boys). During the activity, 22 students participated because 3 of them missed class that day. Most kids in this group are extrovert and love to role-play, thus they did well during the presentation, which the results will be given in chapter 4.

The group of 3rd grade students is composed of 18 students (5 girls and 11 boys). All students participated in the activity. The profile of this class is similar to the 2nd grade, only they demand a little more of the teacher's class management skills. All the students in this group are participative and most of them has no resistance to use English during class.

In the next chapter, we will discuss about the role-play activities, the results and how they were applied in class.

4. ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES

The main goal of this monograph is to discuss my own experience as a teacher using role-play activities during CLIL classes for young learners and my own reflections about it. Thus, in this chapter, we will discuss the positive and negative points of using this type of activity and describe two examples applied in some classes of a private school in the countryside of the state of Pernambuco, Brazil.

Firstly, it is important to explain that role-play is a type of exercise that allows the students to act out a certain character or a situation where they will try their best to use the studied language during it. For instance, we can ask students to act as if they were in a hospital. In this case, they can act alone as a patient who is waiting for the doctor to come, or they can make up a whole scene in groups (one being the doctor, another one as the patient, and the others can be the nurses, patient relatives, witnesses, etc.). It is crucial to say that during this activity in a CLIL class all the students should be speaking English all the time. They will have to try and use everything they have learnt during classes up until that moment.

However, just as any other exercise, this one must be well-planned by the teacher. The instructions must be very clear, and the activity must match the students' English level and comply with their personalities and with what they have been studying as well. In other words, the teacher can choose the scenario or let the students free to do it themselves. When we have a group filled with extrovert, creative, and motivated people, it would be interesting to let them choose their own characters, actions, scenarios and on.

Nonetheless, the opposite of those traits in a group can lead the activity to another path. When the students are more introvert, shy, and quieter than the others, the teacher must help them to feel comfortable, especially because this type of student tend to avoid this kind of exercise. Thus, the instructor can lead the students before they start role-playing by telling them what characters they will be, what actions they should take and so on.

4.1 Positive and negative side of role-play activities

From my own experience, I can state that role-play exercises help students to practice speaking and listening skills, especially when they are doing it in pairs or groups. Teachers can include this activity into their classes planning every time they want to check if their pupils are doing well in the subject they are studying. For example, if they are studying about food and they have already seen and learnt the vocabulary necessary for it, they can start a role-

play activity about restaurants, picnics, cooking at home, ordering food on the phone, and more. That way, the teacher (as well as the students themselves) will be able to analyze if the learners had understood the content they have been studying and how to use the appropriate language for that.

Furthermore, the nature of this activity allows students to use the language while simulating real life situations. That way, students will not be using/learning the language out of context. Role-play activities can be good resources for teachers instead of exercises that makes students learn words or expressions in isolation.

Another good reason to opt for role-play is that it also helps students to develop their social and collaborative skills and, perhaps, lose a little bit of their fear of using English to express themselves. And the best of it, it is a fun and playful exercise that can put students at ease and helps them relax a little when using the language.

Although we have great examples of positive reasons to use role-play activities during English classes, it is crucial to understand that there are also downsides of it. For instance, since the nature of this type of activity is to act out a certain thematic scene, shy and introvert students may show some resistance to do it. And as a teacher, we should respect the boundaries of our students. Obviously, we cannot just ignore it and let those students free from participating, but we should encourage them and make them feel comfortable to do the role-play.

However, I believe that we should not force or oblige the student to participate in an activity which he/she does not feel comfortable doing it. In this case, we can suggest that learners who show great resistance in carrying out the activity become helpers, either by preparing the scenario (if necessary), organizing the environment before the role-play takes place or helping to make decisions about the presentation with their classmates.

Furthermore, deciding on a topic that is interesting and attractive to students and, at the same time, contextualized with the content studied can also be a strategy to try to convince students to participate. However, making this choice is not easy. This may be one more point that may hinder the use of this type of activity: the difficulty of making a coherent plan that is, at the same time, attractive to students. This demands great creative, pedagogical and leadership skills from the teacher. But, once you overcome this difficulty, the results can be beyond satisfactory. In the next two sections, I will describe two different role-play activities.

4.2 Becoming an entrepreneur in 2nd grade

The first role-play activity that I will describe took place on November 25th, 2022, in a 2nd grade elementary school class. During that period, students were studying about using money to buy different kinds of things. Thus, they were learning words and expressions related to the act of buying and/or selling a product, such as “buy”, “sell”, “money”, “buyer”, “seller”, “pay”, among others. Students also learned how to ask the price of products and how to answer such questions as well.

When all students in the class were already familiar with the content and vocabulary, I realized that it would be the ideal time to include a role-play activity related to the subject in my planning. So, I decided that the class could be divided into groups to do a simulation of buying and selling a product. After this idea, it took me an entire afternoon to plan how the activity would progress. Next, I will explain step by step how the exercise was implemented.

It is worth remembering that each class has only one bilingual class per day, which lasts 45 minutes. Thus, the first challenge would be to carry out the activity in just one class, since it was an extra activity and was not part of what was foreseen in the program planning. In this way, I had to consider some important factors that could influence the management of class time, such as the behavior of my 2nd grade students, the personality of each one (to anticipate which and how many students could refuse to participate), the activity that would be performed before the role-play, among others. After visualizing the classroom scenario in my mind, I started to plan the activity.

First, I decided that it would be best to divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students. The group activity would not only allow them to work collaboratively, but would also open up space for them to talk to each other in English. Next, I needed to think about the nature of the activity. Since they were to act out a buy and sell situation, they would need a product to market. So I decided that the students themselves could make the products using the material provided by the school's bilingual program. The chosen material was LEGO bricks.

So, in the first stage of the class, the students went through the “warm up” moment and were taken to an external and broader environment. I then explained that they would be doing a role-play. As they were already used to this type of activity, it was not necessary to explain how the exercise worked. They already knew that they would have to stage something related to the content, they would just need the most specific commands. So I explained that that day they would have to stage a simulation of a buying and selling moment. I also explained which points would be evaluated during the presentations, such as the use of the

English language during the presentation, use of the vocabulary studied and the understanding they would demonstrate regarding the content.

After going through the presentation guidelines, I asked questions to probe their knowledge of buying and selling until they came to the conclusion that it was necessary to have a product to be marketed. So, I explained that they would need a product to be used during the presentation and that, to get it, they would need to use LEGO bricks to build it. I advised them that they would need to divide into groups to decide which product to sell and make it. They would have a total of 15 minutes to complete this activity and could not ask for extra time. I also pointed out that throughout the exercise, they should try to communicate in English.

When I finished the guidelines, I asked the students to divide into groups and I gave them 1 minute so that they could organize themselves. When they were already organized, I gave each group the necessary material and, when everyone was ready, I set the timer to 15 minutes and started it. During this activity, I noticed that the students were excited to build the product and followed the guidelines to communicate in English. Some of them had difficulties with some words, but their colleagues in the group helped them. That moment is very important for the child to develop their social skills as well as learn to use the language in a real-life situation. They can also learn about solidarity and empathy when they help each other.

The activity took the allotted time and was successfully completed by all groups: each group had its own product to sell. When the time came to an end, I explained that this would be the moment when they should plan how the presentation would go. They would have 5 minutes to decide who the sellers would be, who the buyers would be, and how much the product would cost. They would be free to decide any extra details they wanted to include, such as the name of the company that sells the product, the names of the characters, whether or not the purchase was made, etc. The idea is for them to use their imagination and creativity. I warned that each group would only have 2 minutes to present the scene and that for this reason they should think of something simple, but demonstrating a buying and selling scene. Finally, after the guidelines, I started the timer again and they began to talk to each other.

During that exercise, some students took the opportunity to ask questions about some words and expressions, such as “toy store”, “discount”, “furniture”, “appliances”, etc. and I wrote down the expressions on the board so that all groups were aware of them.

Finally, it was time for the presentations. I guided the students to pay attention to the other groups and, before they started, I quickly defined the order of presentation for each

group. The activity went well. Some groups took a little more than 2 minutes while others took a little less. But no group took a much longer or shorter time than what was stipulated.

There was a total of 6 groups. Four of them made the presentation using only English as a mean of communication, while two groups made a mix between Portuguese and English. However, even using some words in Portuguese, both groups mostly used English during the presentation. It is worth mentioning that the class has a total of 25 students, but only 22 participated in the activity, since 3 students missed class that day. All students present in the class participated both in the activity of making the product and in the role-play presentation. No student showed resistance in performing the exercise.

It is worth mentioning that the students in this class like to do role-play activities. A few of them are shy, but even the shyest children in this class participate in the activity if they feel confident that they can do it. That is why it is important to plan something that is within the students' abilities to do it, not allowing the activity to be too easy or too difficult.

Finally, after the presentation of the groups, I gave feedback to the students and I was able to conclude that everyone had understood the content studied and they learned to use the vocabulary related to purchases and sales. After the presentations and the moment of feedback were over, I asked all the students to help organizing the LEGO bricks in their respective boxes and to return to the classroom.

4.3 “This is my masterpiece” activity

The second role-play activity that I will describe took place on November 24th and 25th, 2022, in the 3rd grade at the same school. In that unit, students were learning about different types of art, how to describe it, what materials are commonly used in the most common types of art and so on. As in the previous class, I also saw the opportunity to promote a role-play activity in the 3rd grade.

Furthermore, a week before, I asked the students to vote on which type of art they would like to try to do in the classroom and the majority chose painting on canvas. With this choice in mind, I started planning the activity. As in the previous topic, the first step I took was to imagine all the variables such as the usual behavior of the students, possible students who could refuse to do the activity and how many classes I would need to use.

So, I decided that two classes of 45 minutes each would be enough to carry out the activity. The scenario I imagined for the role-play would be that the students would be famous artists for two days. On the first day they would have to create their masterpiece using the

studied materials that were related to canvas painting. Luckily, most of the materials used were already known to them because they used them frequently in class, such as paint and paintbrush.

The planning for the two days of classes took an entire afternoon. When I finished, I asked the coordination team to send a message to the students' parents asking them to send a canvas to carry out the activity on November 24th. The division of activities and their follow-up will be described below.

On the 24th of November, I verified that all the students had their canvases kept in the classroom. So, we started the class with the daily “warm up” and then I explained to the students that that day they would do a different activity. I also told them that in the next day they would have to pretend they were famous painters, and each student would paint on a canvas. They could be free to paint whatever they wanted, and I advised them to think of something or someone that would inspire them. Furthermore, I warned them that they would only have 30 minutes to make their artwork and that they could not ask for extra time. Finally, I told them that the next day they would act as if they were exhibiting their work in an art gallery, and they could choose whether to talk about it through a monologue or through an interview. I would be the interviewer and they would be the interviewees. In this way, they could also review the interview genre, content studied by them in the bilingual classes of the previous year.

When I finished giving the directions for the exercise, I asked them to line up and go to the school's stage so they could take advantage of all the space that is bigger than the classroom. I took the materials and guided the students until they reached the final location. I asked them to spread out comfortably around the room and follow their artistic instincts. I warned that during the painting they could feel and act free, they could sit on the floor, lie down, stand up and so on. But the main rule was that they should use English if they needed to communicate with each other.

When everyone was already oriented and organized in their places, I handed the canvas and brushes to each student, glasses with water, paper towels and, finally, distributed paints of different colors to them randomly. Thus, they would inevitably have to talk to each other to change paint colors or borrow some materials.

Once the activity started, I set the timer to 30 minutes. During that time, I could verify that the students were engaged in their artwork. It was possible to notice that they were trying to use English to communicate. But, as in the previous class, there were also children with

difficulties in some expressions. Some of the difficulties were solved by colleagues and others by me.

When time was up, I asked the students to place their paintings to dry near the back wall of the stage. Then I asked what it feels like to be an artist for a day and many of them gave their opinions. I, then, explained again that the activity they had done moments before would be the basis for the main role-play activity that would take place the next day. They would need to present their paintings as if they were a famous artist in an art gallery. Each student would have approximately two minutes to present their art and, during the presentation, the use of English, the use of the vocabulary learned during the unit and the understanding of the content would be evaluated.

After being guided about the next day's activity, I asked everyone to help organize materials such as the paintbrushes and paints and clean the place with water and paper towel. After they finished helping, I led them back to the classroom.

On the November 25th, I took all the students' paintings to the classroom, and we started the class with the daily "warm up". Then, I asked the students to arrange the chairs in a circle. After that, I explained that they would voluntarily go to the front of the classroom and present their painting work. They could choose whether to present themselves in a monologue form or whether they would answer questions as if they were in an interview.

Gradually, each of the students volunteered to present until everyone had gone through the experience. As the students finished their presentations, I gave immediate feedback and asked the other students' opinions about the masterpieces that were presented. Compared to planning, this presentation step took about 10 minutes longer. However, this did not affect the progress of the class, as I was faster and more punctual during the feedbacks.

What I could notice during the presentations is that the students fulfilled the purpose of the activity and demonstrated knowledge of the content studied. It is worth noting that the class has a total of 18 students and all of them participated in the activities on both days.

Personally, I believe that performing role-plays helps to improve students' proficiency. We can notice that these activities are developed from content that deals with issues of people's daily lives. Thus, when participating in exercises like these, students need to think about how they would act in real life, and in this way, they use the appropriate language for that specific occasion. The act of talking to other people and listening to them allows the child to learn and teach new words and expressions through communication.

Despite being a staging activity, we can consider that role-plays are a form of real language use. After all, although the students receive prior commands of what should be in

the scenario, the dialogue is often not scripted – making the students need to use what they know about English to communicate as they would in a real conversation. This allows the learners to put into practice the knowledge they already have about the language and, as we can imagine, constant practice can help in the development of the student's proficiency.

From my own experience, I noticed that as the school year went by, students improved their use of English in the classroom. I can attribute this evolution to several factors, but one of them would be the use of this type of activity. I've always tried to fit into the quarterly plan at least two role-play activities so that students can practice their English skills as naturally as possible (in addition to the constant use of the language during classes). What I noticed is that in the first role-plays performed at the beginning of the school year, the students showed a little difficulty in performing them. However, over the months I adapted the exercises according to the needs of the students and they evolved with practice, and they began to like this type of activity more and more. Thus, I conclude this chapter by leaving my positive impressions regarding the use of this type of activity in lessons.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this work we talked about the learning process for young learners and how classes work using the CLIL methodology. Furthermore, we describe two experiences using role-play activities in CLIL classes for young learners. Through the activities it was possible to verify that, when well planned, elaborated and applied, role-plays can be an excellent alternative to be used in the classroom. Although it may encounter some difficulties, such as students' resistance to it and the difficulty in preparing the lesson plan, the teacher may also find several advantages in using this resource.

We noted that students can learn and practice using the language in a practical, objective, and contextualized way. Thus, they find a meaning for what they are studying and, therefore, gradually lose their fear and concern of speaking English. From the teachers' point of view, this practice can be interesting because it allows them to immediately see whether the children have managed to learn what they have been studying and whether they are able to use this knowledge in real everyday situations correctly and appropriately. Thus, we reinforce the importance of considering using this type of activity during English classes. We conclude, therefore, this monograph with the great satisfaction of having shared such positive and encouraging results from our students after having gone through these experiences a few times.

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