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**Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo de Fin de Máster**

**Teaching English to Autistic Students of Spanish
Primary School Education**

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ABSTRACT

As the term "Autism Spectrum Disorder" has evolved, there have been great advances in the educational and social fields, promoting better diagnosis and treatment which has generated positive results in development and learning. Notwithstanding, there is still a long journey to be made in terms of inclusion and attention to children with ASD, especially at early ages such as in primary education. This Master's Dissertation investigates the idiosyncrasies of the term "Autism" as well as the learning barriers and difficulties that should be borne in mind before attempting to teach them. A didactic unit is then proposed, paying attention to the teaching of a foreign language to an autistic child, encouraging a commitment to a responsibility that will allow the acquisition of certain linguistic and social skills which are essential for a satisfactory future adult life. Thus, taking into account the importance of foreign languages as a vehicle of communication and the learning capacity of children with Autism, an effective methodological diversity will be demonstrated.

Key words:

Autism Spectrum Disorder, foreign language education, inclusive education – Foreign language teaching for special needs, primary education

RESUMEN

Dada la evolución del término "espectro autista", son grandes los avances que se han hecho dentro del ámbito educativo y social propiciando un mejor diagnóstico y tratamiento que ha generado resultados positivos en su desarrollo y aprendizaje. No obstante, aún queda camino por recorrer en cuanto a términos de inclusión y atención hacia los niños con TEA, especialmente en edades tempranas como es la educación primaria. A lo largo de este trabajo final de Máster indagaremos tanto en las particularidades del término "autismo" como en las barreras que se encuentran tales niños y que deberían tenerse en cuenta antes de comenzar a enseñarles una lengua extranjera. Proponemos a continuación una unidad didáctica en la que se promueve un compromiso de responsabilidad que les permita adquirir ciertas habilidades lingüísticas y sociales que son esenciales para una futura vida adulta satisfactoria. De esta manera, teniendo en cuenta la importancia de los idiomas como vehículo de comunicación, se demostrará la capacidad de aprendizaje de los niños con autismo considerando sus características a través de una diversidad metodológica efectiva.

Palabras clave:

Trastorno espectro autista, enseñanza de una lengua extranjera, educación inclusiva, educación primaria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the rise of English as a second language as well as a vehicle for communication between people, learning this language has increased the need for people to broaden teaching in new horizons or areas, especially for the most vulnerable. In the last few decades, therefore, authors such as Cummins (1984:234) have implemented programmes based on bilingual teaching methodologies in order to provide a culturally and linguistically appropriate educational context for students with learning disabilities. Nevertheless, despite the improvements made in research, more work is still needed, as Fernández Batanero (2008: 26) points out:

We are moving towards the construction of an inclusive and equitable school in which all students can participate to reach their goals. An effective school is a quality one, where educational research must be oriented to the improvement of that centre, to find a quality educational response to the diversity of the alumni.

Assuming the fact that there is incredible frustration today with the paradoxical nature of education for special needs, this has led to many practitioners adopting the idea of inclusive education as an alternative. Indeed, inclusive education is based on the principle that local schools should serve all children, regardless of any other perceived difference, disability or other social, emotional, cultural or linguistic difference. Nonetheless, it would be very appropriate to focus on pedagogy at this stage of the development of inclusive education, where authors such as Corbert (1996, cited by Gardiner, 2017: 6) argue that there is a need to bring inclusive learning into the classroom by making our students active and respected citizens as well as more enriched and respectful citizens.

Besides the aforementioned information, the report by the European Commission, 2005 cited by Mc Coll, (2005: 105) during its study, has found evidence of considerable success in language learning by Special Education Needs (henceforth SEN) pupils concluding that all young people in the European Union, whether they have a disability or not, will have the same right to learn foreign languages. No matter what type of school, be it public, private, unique, segregated, etc.

Likewise, McColl (2005: 104) considers that language learning is a powerful tool for building multicultural, tolerant, peaceful and inclusive societies. In this way, through an increased linguistic and cultural diversity, it promotes a more flexible and tolerant view of other people, especially those with more specific educational needs.

So, this Master's Dissertation will be focused on students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (hereafter ASD) since these students present a particularly significant challenge for teachers. Notwithstanding, due to the complexity of their problems, education has been designed to adapt to children and young people employing the same development as those individuals whose minds do not function like the rest of the students instead of presenting a set of barriers in the current educational system. Hence, meeting their needs requires substantial adaptations in the school environment as well as in educational practices which will contribute to a better acquisition of the foreign language.

Moreover, these changes in education are not only necessary for people with ASD or other special learning needs, but are crucial to creating an education system for all. To ensure that each student develops the necessary skills they need in their lives, teachers must become inclusive in their teaching. The process of inclusion requires a study of the learners' needs and a reorganisation of the current system. On a smaller scale, teachers can do their own research and apply the knowledge gained to make their practice more inclusive López-Vélez (2018: 36).

2. JUSTIFICATION

In the Real Decreto 126/2014, which establishes the laws about education in Spain, article 19 includes particular attention to the diversity we find in our classrooms. Having said that, the specific law of attention to diversity, namely from 25th of July 2008, establishes the curriculum for the autonomous community of Andalusia. Additionally, the law, 17/2007 on Education in Andalusia, states that the educational administration will ensure that the curriculum will be adapted to those students' specific needs. Besides, the above-mentioned law also regulates the attention to diversity general framework without forgetting to mention all those measures which centres should put into practice with educational intervention. For this reason, we must take into account all possible

disabilities, needs or readjustments within the scope of foreign language teaching since the main objective will be to reach and promote its acquisition, through avoiding language barriers among students.

According to the European Commission report (2005, cited by Lorente, 2015: 53), we do not have enough data about the real situation of the teaching of foreign languages to pupils with special educational needs. Overall, one can observe how teachers are very responsible by introducing and performing the appropriate adaptations as well as getting involved in the application of methodologies which facilitate the acquisition of a FL in children, in this case with ASD. So, teachers are concerned about the diversity of problems and difficulties that they experience when adapting their teaching to these students. For this reason, authors such as Casado Muñoz & Lezcano Barbero (2012: 146), suggest a reflection, as well as a promotion of certain recommendations such as

to establish properly, imaginary and well-defined strategies to find, help and coach good teachers. Nevertheless, these strategies must address this new teacher's role preparing the student to a significant learning influenced by technology. In addition, they must understand diversity in the classroom as well as those learning styles including physic and intellectual students' development by means of creating motivational and participant learning environments.

Regarding specific barriers that arise, one could highlight the lack of methodological resources to deal with students with autism and the excessive number of students per classroom at the same time, as the different characteristics of each student can be a barrier to learning. Especially, bearing in mind that the English language is an instrument of communication, we can observe that a deficit in the mother tongue can lead to possible dysfunctions in the development of a second language Casado Muñoz & Lezcano Barbero (2012: 3).

Similarly, authors such as Kay-Raining Bird et al. (2016: 9) confirm that despite presenting certain difficulties when acquiring a second language, as well as one's exposure to it, this does not mean that they are not able to acquire these abilities. Although the rhythm may vary or be slower depending on the student's exposure to it, one should not be afraid or reject the idea that due to the characteristics of students with special needs,

they are incapable of learning. Furthermore, if families help the school, we will see how children with ASD will be able to use both languages, always taking into account the mismatch between understanding and expression that we will analyse in this paper.

To summarise, concerning the practice of teaching, several studies and investigations have focused on how students with ASD acquire both languages, their mother tongue and a second language, in this case, English. Thus, the main objective of this work is to investigate and provide a possible response to what is happening with the development of language in autism while offering a possible intervention in the area of the foreign language, in which we can identify the most effective methods as well as the various learning strategies that are effective with them.

Hence, the aim of this research is threefold:

- (1) To investigate how Students with Autism Disorder acquire English as a foreign language*
- (2) To discover possible language inferences and difficulties that students with ASD present towards English learning.*
- (3) To propose a didactic unit which promotes English abilities and tools for language acquisition for ASD students in order to provide them with autonomy and life-long learning skills.*

2. METHODOLOGY

Considering the evolution and growth of special education in recent decades, it is necessary to analyse and observe the peculiarities that special education needs (SEN) students present throughout the teaching and learning process. In fact, among all disabilities and necessities, we could highlight the term Autism, which has assumed vital importance in recent years since numerous studies and research have shed light on the characteristics of these children. In the same line, in this Master Dissertation I will focus on the acquisition of a foreign language providing certain strategies and techniques in order to favour a successful development.

Notwithstanding, children with ASD present a symptomatology as well as a series of learning problems among which we must highlight social skills (at the time of interacting with others) or the lack of linguistic and communicative abilities. Therefore, bearing in mind that in order to acquire a language we must be able to express ourselves and communicate, it is important to work on different communication systems by employing some tools and strategies which can facilitate language comprehension. It is worth mentioning the fact that through interaction in the classroom, games, role plays etc., other areas can be improved, such as the flexibility and imaginative ones, which are also altered for children with Autism. Besides, there are also certain barriers throughout their learning that must be removed by means of facilitating and promoting their inclusion as several studies have pointed out. Thus, research has demonstrated that Autistic children can develop and acquire great communication skills especially in the subject of English as a foreign language and even more so if their motivation for the subject is greater.

For this reason, my work is especially focused on solving problems in the communicative area by carrying out and practicing strategies or techniques within the foreign language classroom in order to promote an inclusive classroom environment in which children with ASD will be able to interact and acquire a second language in the same line as their peers. Thus, in order to achieve my objectives, I have carried out a literature review on ASD, taking into account the characteristics of the language, difficulties and theories that may have some influence on it, as well as those difficulties both at the communicative level and the different communication systems that can be used during the teaching and learning process.

Finally, my proposal is to demonstrate that children with ASD, through a series of guidelines, techniques, strategies and adaptations, are able to acquire a language in an appropriate way, removing the barriers that up until recently could be observed in education. In this way and given that students with autism will find themselves in our schools, it will be easier to work with them trying to improve each of the social, communicative and imaginative areas which are .As a consequence, we will help them to become citizens with total autonomy, developing social, communicative and flexible skills, also giving them some tools to solve all those complicated situations that may arise throughout their lives.

3. LITERARY REVIEW

3.1 AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER PERSPECTIVE

The vision of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has experienced numerous changes and conceptions both in the Scientific Community and in the current society. Up until the middle of the 20th century, people with this spectrum have been considered as extravagant creatures from another world because their pathology seems to follow a more fanciful than a neurological one. In contrast, authors such as Bettelheim (1959) and Houston & Frith (cited by Wolff, 2004: 202), investigated similar cases of children whose characteristics resembled those of the wild child of Aveyron.¹ But some years before the beginning of the twentieth century Maudsley (1867:260) introduced the term autism, describing cases of child psychotic disorders which could be seen in individuals whose behaviour was too awkward as they seemed to have no self-determination.

Indeed, the father of Autism, known as Leo Kanner (1943: 219) was a pioneer in using the terminology. He described it as a group of children who presented a lack of adequate or social contact with other people; an obsession and insistence on elaborate routines which became repetitive, absence of language or alterations in it, extreme attention to particular objects and a normal physical development compared to their peers, even though there were some conditions in several areas (Kanner, 1943, quoted in Wing, 1998: 32). At the same time, the Austrian scientist Hans Asperger (1944: 76) consciously used the term “autistic psychopathy” in children who presented a series of similar characteristics, although they had a higher level of functioning.

Several decades later, Lotter (1966: 126) carried out a series of tests and investigations on his own son, in which he discovered a series of symptoms with an autistic dimension, whose functional disability was not related to other disorders that had been considered until that time, including aspects such as epilepsy or intellectual disability (Hervás et al.,

¹ Following Contreras Pulache's (2019: 223) words, the case of the so called “The Savage of Aveyron”, later named “Victor”, is about a wild child found in France around 1784 with the appearance of being eleven years old, in which was evidenced the lamentable misfortune of the assassination attempt through a cut in the neck, which was not able to bring about his death, and then abandoned in the forest for about 7 years; therefore, the conditions are fulfilled that not possessing a social environment that provides “artificialization” leads to not determining himself as a social human being; because of this, when we found him, he was a feral who only lived according to the instinct of survival, he did not know how to speak or write and did not possess sufficient “reasoning” to be able to carry out activities as a social being.”

2011: 781; Lotter, 1966: 126). Even so, one of the first authors who differentiated schizophrenia from autism was Rutter (1978: 1187) because he agreed on the deterioration that individuals with autism present in the areas of social skills, communication deficits, as well as a series of repetitive patterns, but without any associated schizophrenic traits. By the end of 1970, this spectrum was considered a kind of childhood schizophrenia (Fernández-Mayoralas et al., 2013: 221; Rivière, 1997: 3; Rutter, 1978: 1190). Similarly, posthumous researchers such as Hans Asperger, the aforementioned Austrian doctor, established the term “Asperger's Syndrome” (henceforth AS) (Wing, 1981: 116), in which he explained that the child with ASD suffers a series of symptoms in which he separates an internal reality from the stimuli coming from the environment, defining them as “people enclosed in themselves”.

However, Wing and Gold (1979: 16) introduced the notion of spectrum disorder by changing the view of autism affecting children of different ages. She was also the one who brought Asperger's ideas to the Anglophone world with a review of her work. She studied the cases of 34 individuals between 5 and 35 years of age who presented characteristics similar to those described by Asperger. In honour of his contribution to discovering this disorder it was called Asperger's Syndrome . Then, Asperger classified what was classically considered autism and AS as the same disorder, assuming that AS belonged to the spectrum of autism due to their common disabilities.

Yet it is not so easy to define the nature and origin of ASD and there have been differing opinions offered over the years. According to Bettelheim (1967: 125) in his article “The Empty Fortress”, autism should be considered as a reaction whose origin lies in cold, unloving mothers being a possible cause of the appearance of autism. Nevertheless, Michael Rutter (1978: 1193) carried out a rigorous study in which he showed that biological parents with children with Autism were no less careful than parents with children without disabilities. He, therefore, dismantled the Bettelheim idea and marked a milestone in empirical research into the causes of Autism (Rivière, 1997: 4).

On the other hand, most of the current studies, such as Frith (1991, quoted by Stanton, 2000: 1), define Autism as an alteration that occurs during development and that causes a significant influence on specific aspects of it such as the social, linguistic and cognitive environment of the child, even considering the possibility that it is an organic disorder

that affects the brain and may be genetic. As a result of further research, Baker, Holtz and Ziegert (2004: 46) have presented a more complete concept of Autism, defining it as a neurological developmental disorder that affects more men than women, in a ratio of 4:1. This brain disorder influences the child's ability to communicate and interact socially and makes its initial appearance during the first three years of life, although unfortunately, it has no cure. This is the main reason why Autism has a place in all cultures and does not distinguish between socioeconomic levels or race. Thus, the characteristics may vary from one person to another; in fact, not all children with this disorder present the same behaviour, nor are their peculiarities precisely the same. In fact, nowadays, the word Autism refers to what we know as “Kanner's Autism”, which describes the disorder presented by a group of children that includes classic patterns from a very early age. Alternatively, Asperger's syndrome is also used to name those individuals whose characteristics on the Autism spectrum are less evident and who have a higher intelligence, although they are conscious of their limitations or difficulties, Stanton (2000).

3.1.1 Disorder Manual (DSM) and International Classification of Diseases (ICP) in ASD Evolution

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are the entities which have regulated the diagnosis of mental disorders that people can suffer from. For this reason, they included the term Autism as a new disorder just after the contributions made by Lorna Wing in 1991. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (henceforth DSM) (APA) and the International Classification of Diseases (henceforth ICD) agree with the idea of classifying Autism in a general category named as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that, many of the named conditions present similar characteristics to Autism such as severity, variable, early-onset, delay in cognition, difficulty in social relations, as well as lack of communication. But, as we will see afterwards, thanks to more recent research and studies, many new symptoms have been appearing which are associated with the spectrum leading these manuals to be updated (Lopera, 2015:97).

According to Volkmar et al (2012: 231), as aforementioned, both manuals have undergone changes to update the term Autism. Here there is a figure where we can analyse those differences:

ICD (WHO)	DSM (APA)
• ICD-9 CM Version from 1979. The Pervasive developmental disorders were classified as: -Autistic disorder, - Childhood disintegrative disorder -Specified pervasive developmental disorders - Asperger's syndrome • -PDD-NOS • ICD-10 version from 1994 Pervasive developmental disorders were modified including: - Autism disorder - Rett's syndrome - Other childhood disintegrative disorder - The Asperger's syndrome - Atypical autism • ICD-11 Until nowadays 2020	• DSM-III version from 1985 • The Pervasive developmental disorders classified it as an Autistic Disorder • DSM-III-R version from 1987 • The Pervasive developmental disorders was defined as Autistic Disorder • DSM-IV version from 1994. The Pervasive developmental disorders were divided into: • Autistic disorder • Rett's disorder • Childhood disintegrative disorder - Asperger's disorder • PDD-NOS • DSM-V from 2013. The most current one is well-known as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Figure 2 Adapted from: Volkmar et al. (2012). “Classification of Autism and related conditions: Progress, challenges, and opportunities”, in *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience*. 14. 229-37. Retrieved from: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23226949

Just as we can observe, in the DSM a specification process is involved where the term has been reduced to a more defined diagnostic group. Since it is necessary to take into account the different types of autism which will be analysed later, the characteristics and differences between the individuals who suffer from this spectrum must be considered. Notwithstanding, not all the individuals that are shown in the different subgroups present the same difficulties or needs since many researchers have noticed that a significant difference can exist between members of the same subgroup despite suffering the same syndrome.

Authors such as Griswold and others (2002: 189) determined that, in order to propose a final diagnosis, an observation should be made in students or children for some more specific information about the autistic disorder. These studies were complemented with the support of school psychologists and the participation of families, who provided information about the behaviour that each child had at home.

In the same line concerning the previous edition (DSM-IV, 1994), the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM V, 2013) makes some adjustments to the term ASD. Amongst them, Rett syndrome, which only affected women, was demonstrated that it was caused by a series of exclusively genetic pathologies eventually disappearing. As a result, considering these factors and attempting to ensure no further confusion, it was suggested that the single category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) should explain all the disorders previously classified in PSD. Consequently, a general term was established to avoid examining the individual characteristics of each person (De la Iglesia et al., 2007: 67; Konza, 2005: 128).

3.1.2 Current Definition of ASD

Today, the DSM-V (APA, 2013: 869) has recently defined Autism Spectrum Disorder as a persistent deficit that primarily affects communication and social interaction. This disorder reflects two main evident characteristics, such as repetitive or restricted behaviour, interests and activities, as well as a problem at a communicative and social level. Thus, in order to determine that a person has ASD he or she must meet the following criteria:

- Children who present persistent difficulties in communication and social interaction that are not due to a general developmental delay. Likewise, they show certain conditions (past or present) of social-emotional reciprocity including some unusual social approaches, difficulty in a fluid conversation as well very reduced interest in sharing interests or initiative with peers' interaction.
- Appearance of repetitive and restricted patterns amongst which we can highlight a certain number of motor, verbal or stereotyped behaviour, echolalia,² frequent use of objects such as alignment, ordering and use of idiosyncratic phrases.
- Individuals with ASD have certain limitations in their daily functioning and require constant assistance to function autonomously, bearing in mind they have an excessive

² As Mergl and Alves (2015: 2073) point out, in ASD children with predominant use of verbal communication, echolalia is a persistent phenomenon which is characterized as a language disorder, defined as the repetition in eco of other's speech. This phenomenon is usually distinguished into two categories: immediate or delayed being also considered as constant and prolonged difficulties.

adherence to routines with a strong opposition to change, while at the same time a hyposensory reactivity to environmental factors.

- Autistic people do not present the same degree of disability, but in order to state an effective diagnosis, we must take into account their general level of development

In a nutshell, the DSM-V mentions that there are different levels of severity of individuals with Autism. Having said that, their intellectual capacity, as well as their verbal and non-verbal production and expressive and communicative capacity will be of vital importance by the time they acquire a foreign language (APA, 2013: 879).

3.1.3 ASD classification

Although DSM-V (2013: 145) has grouped ASD individuals into a single general term, there are certain differences among these children. Below we see the most important characteristics of each one according to the authors McCoy and Hermansen (2007: 189). These are:

- **Asperger Syndrome.** Gena P. Barnhill (2016: 3) defines the concept of Asperger as “a developmental disability, which is defined by disorders in social relationships and in verbal and non-verbal communication and by restrictive and repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities”. However, unlike Autism, those affected are very intelligent and able to handle their daily life whilst also presenting a greater pattern of social interaction.
- **Pervasive Developmental Disorder, not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS):** Hernández, et al, (2011: 26) defines Pervasive Developmental Disorder, not otherwise specified (henceforth PDD-NOS) as a disorder in which all the features of Autism are incompletely altered in development, all three areas (social, communicative and affective) are not altered, and the age of onset does not correspond to that of Autism.
- **Autistic disorder.** Autistic disorder, also called typical Autism, is defined by McCoy and Hermansen (2007: 189) as a disorder that does not resemble Asperger syndrome, but that is rather a neurological dysfunction of a more intense level that in turn affects several areas such as communication, social interaction, as well as the child's interests or activities and PDD-NOS.
- **Children's disintegrative order:** This disorder, also known as Heller syndrome or disintegrative psychosis, means that the individual will lose the functions and capacities acquired in previous stages. The subject shows a normal development

until approximately two years of age. This constitutes the rarest and most severe part of the spectrum. Often, these children also develop a seizure disorder (Charan, 2012: 55)

3.2 Diverse theories which influence ASD

3.2.1 Wing's Triad of Deficiencies.

Regarding the Autism construct, one of the main theories that have influenced it is “the Triad of Deficiencies”, described by Wing & Potter (2002: 152). This term was coined by Lorna Wing (1991:48), who considers that there are a series of “triads” and similar characteristics between individuals where social and communication disorders are combined, it being impossible to communicate without maintaining social connections and speaking with others. These characteristics match with the different manifestations which these individuals possess, such as specific difficulties in communication, lack of social interaction and imaginative deficiencies, (see figure 3). Likewise, authors such as Bogdashina (2006: 23) and Cashin et al. (2005: 21) also classified this impaired functioning into three areas which we will analyse in depth below



Figure 2. Adapted from Bogdashina, (2006: 23).

In turn, Wing's account of the deficiencies caused by ASD is in line with the required symptoms proposed by the DSM-V, focusing on those most necessary for its diagnosis, so the author herself carried out a more specific investigation of each of these.

3.2.1.1. Impairments in social interaction

Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright (1999: 485) stated that communication is a crucial factor in establishing social skills. In this sense, if contact is affected, it can lead to some problems or difficulties which are focused on the behaviour's interpretation and a deficit

related to the theory of mind. Due to this fact, individuals with ASD may not be aware that other people have separate thought processes as well as each having a different interpretation of their feelings and thoughts. In addition, Attwood (1998) (quoted in Cashin et al., 2016: 73) pointed out that the restriction of standing in the place of others, or otherwise known as empathy, is a source of anxiety that generates social problems especially for people with Autism.

Assuming then that the first element of the triad refers to the difficulty of people with ASD to participate and maintain social contact, Wing (1991: 117) highlighted a range of impairments in social interaction due to lack of understanding of non-verbal communication and consequently divided individuals with ASD into four subgroups, which she lists as:

- A first remote group that does not initiate or react to any social interaction also named by Wing as “distant” children. They seem to be indifferent to other people although they enjoy some form of physical contact.
- The second group are “passive” individuals who show specific responses to interaction but have no initiative of their own.
- Thirdly, there is an “active” group who have no reciprocity or two-way interaction, so they approach other people but do not have enough confidence or they act inappropriately.
- And finally, a fourth group who Wing calls “stilt” initiate interactions and contact with other people, but in a rigid and unemotional way. This subgroup shows a great diversity of manifestations of social impairments and projects within an unanimous character of the autistic spectrum Bogdashina (2006: 22).

3.2.1.2 Impairments in social communication

Individuals with ASD have a different understanding of language as compared to other people. Considering that human beings use language to express feelings, thoughts or to transfer information, they perceive it more as a tool that they can use to deal with issues of their interest. In fact, Cashin (2005: 22) adds to this third impediment an affectation at the level of both verbal and non-verbal communication, which can exhibit signs of poor language or in some instances, even none at all. To some extent, the variation in tone and intonation of the speech that people with ASD may develop will also be affected, presenting a monotonous speech quality. At the same time, the author Bogdashina (2006: 25) states that the lack of abstraction of language, as well as the non-understanding of

irony produces particular frustrations in the individual, since he or she does not differentiate expressions such as having a tear in one's eye from having a tear in one's trousers, taking it to a mainly literal field. As a consequence, they are not able to understand each other's body language, which leads to numerous misunderstandings on both sides and therefore, to isolation.

Notwithstanding, Wire (2005: 126) states that when introducing foreign languages the communicative factor and speech are indispensable factors to take into consideration. Besides this, when children with Autism start to acquire a second language, attention must be focused on those possible difficulties that these students present (127). As a consequence, it is worth mentioning that there are a series of affectations or problems which can be inferred from this which are:

- Some possible appearances of echolalia or even parrot-like repetition of words or phrases.
- Invention of pronouns such as "I" which are combined by extreme literalness or little sense of non-literal comprehension of terms.
- Use of metaphorical language as well as use of neologisms or words of one's own invention.
- Continuous statements by repetition and poor control of prosody or speech that cause a monotonous tone and idiosyncratic, arrhythmic and stress-free intonation.

3.2.1.3 Impairments in Imagination

In addition to the impairments noted above, Konza (2005: 129) points out that lack of creativity and imagination is another characteristic feature of individuals with ASD. In the words of the author, "the lack of creativity in these individuals leads to atypical behaviours [such as] repetitive motor movements, a global interest or obsession, or the need for a particular routine or ritual". Indeed, individuals with Autism have great difficulty in dealing with the unpredictability which life puts in their way so they prefer concrete and predictable actions and situations. For this reason, they feel satisfied with stereotyped behaviours, because they know and feel safe with what precedes them.

In the same way, they cannot live without equality in their life that is mainly focused on the use of gradual routines such as eating the same food every day or refusing to change

clothes. As a consequence, they insist on equality in their lives, adhering to non-functional routines and rituals such as demanding to eat the exact same meals every day or refusing to change clothes. So, ASD children are very resistant to any change in their environment, as change threatens their sense of control over their lives. Therefore, transitions must be carefully planned, and people with Autism must be informed and prepared in advance to avoid the anxiety caused by unexpected events Church, et al (2007:16).

Wing (1993, quoted by Bogdashina, 2006: 26) & Konza, (2005: 132) agree that another remarkable feature of ASD is the obsession sufferers have with specific or concrete issues such as distance between cities or car brands. They become extremely interested and dedicated to spending their free time looking for and acquiring relevant information about it. As a consequence, these children present a very reduced and atypical discourse since they do not accept any other topic of conversation beyond that of their interest.

Therefore, the inflexibility they show in these areas causes a great deal of trouble for individuals with ASD. Firstly, because it is a factor that impedes them to advance in their routines and learning, causing great anguish and nervousness, and secondly, because it can also appear self-injurious or disruptive behaviours that make it more difficult to intervene or deal with these children (Fuentes et al., 2014: 23).

3.2.2 Flexibility, the new triad

Whilst it is not entirely clear that flexibility is an external factor, the absence of this ability is also directly related to the communication or skill-setting deficit that individuals with ASD present (Cashin & Yorke, 2018: 534). To some extent, this lack of flexibility or anticipation results in a restricted range of interests and activities and restrictions on acting in an orderly or appropriate manner. In this sense, it could be factor that can vary according to the age of the individual, ranging from people who are tolerant of specific changes to individuals who exhibit disruptive behaviour. So, having given its relation and connection with the patterns and characteristics of the imaginative impairment presented by autistic children, authors such as Cashin (2005: 22), after having remastered which was proposed by Wing (1993: 45), added that impairment of flexibility would go hand in hand with the triad of imagination, forming both the same concept.

3.2.3 Other theories and difficulties in ASD children

3.2.3.1 Theory of mind

According to research within the field of cognitive neuroscience, it should be noted that the Theory of Mind (ToM), initially proposed by Premack and Woodruff (1978 cited in Gómez Echeverry, 2010: 115) consists of the attribution of mental states to both oneself and others, including an inference system. Besides, following Rivière's words (1991: 131), the study of this theory implies two tendencies; on the one hand, the computational cognitive one and on the other, the social one. Thus, based on Cohen (1999: 180) or Leslie and Frith (1985: 126), children with ASD have particular difficulty in attributing mental states to themselves and to others. Therefore, it is shown that children with ASD are not able to imagine or understand another person's way of thinking which leads to certain difficulties in the social sphere. In the same line, authors such as Astington (1998: 46) and Baron-Cohen (2010: 47) have added to this theory, the inability to control their own behavior even showing a certain arrogance when they look at other people.

3.2.3.2 Theory of executive dysfunction

Several subsequent kinds of research on ASD have named other theories that influence this disorder. One of these is the theory of executive dysfunction, defined as the inability to control an action, which in turn may be motor or linked to one's attention or thoughts. Thus, subjects with ASD show difficulties in planning activities (executive control) while they are unable to inhibit or control movements towards some aspect they are carrying out. The main reason may be due to damage in the prefrontal cortex and more specifically in the frontal lobes (ventromedial, dorsolateral cortex, etc.). Researchers who have defended this theory respond to the repetitive behaviour of individuals with ASD, since finding an alteration in the executive components can cause stiff behaviour in an individual (Ozonoff et al., 2000: 180; Pennington, 2000: 191). As a consequence, this lack of executive control and planning generates specific difficulties in the educational field since a constant change of activities requires good organization and previous anticipation with these students.

3.2.3.3 Other additional problems of ASD

Assuming the fact that these theories have certain influence on children with ASD, there are also several additional problems to bear in mind. Firstly, they may present motor

deficiencies (either in gross or fine capacity) as well as individual emotional responses which are not appropriate. Besides, they have abnormalities in physical functions such as changes in sleep patterns or eating disorders such as pica³, etc. Secondly, there are other objections to consider where it can be mentioned hypersensitivity to external stimuli as well as challenging behaviours such as aggression or self-harm (Konza, 2005: 130).

A striking aspect is the sensitivity they shown above all by shouting, sunlight or physical contact with other people (either through hugs or a simple caress) which cause a blockage on ASD children. Moreover, certain investigations have pointed out that noisy environments such as the school, a shopping centre or even the street are identified as threats to their senses, which generates a lot of anxiety or stress in autistic children's reactions. (Bogdashian, 2006: 27).

3.3 POSSIBLE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF ASD CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

3.3.1 Some barriers of ASD children within the school and classroom context

As this Master's Dissertation is based on language learning for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, we have to take into account specific difficulties, as well as the barriers children with ASD may present during the primary stage. Furthermore, these pupils attend all kinds of schools, specialized, public or private, where they receive various degrees of support and help from teachers with specific training for this purpose Preece and Jordan (2010: 11).

Among the barriers of Autistic students must face by the time of starting school or within class, it is worth mentioning the lack of infrastructure within the playground, during lunchtime in the school canteen, as well as those changing levels or travelling when they go or return from school (Konza, 2005: 135). In addition, as mentioned above, these periods generate autonomy and freedom for the students, however, students with ASD

³ Authors such as Valera-González et al. (2011: 217) have defined the concept of "pica" as a condition associated with the chronic, compulsive consumption of a particular substance or material which is not considered as food. In fact, this behavior is associated with autism disorder instead of not having a clear etiology.

could present uncertainty at the time of comprehending changes in these periods since they are not able to accept alterations in their routines.

Furthermore, since time in primary school is limited, authors such as Church et al. (2007: 12) point out that during recess activities are not directed, which can cause some confusion and disruption to Autistic students. However, in many schools, workshops and cooperative games have been set up in order to promote social as well as communication skills. Notwithstanding, both teachers and students should provide guidelines and instructions to avoid frustration in children with ASD as they have some difficulty in planning or understanding when the game is over.

Likewise, currently schools where our ASD attend, have generally narrow and busy corridors. So, this is an aspect which can make students with ASD hypersensitive since noise and noise pollution can aggravate their behaviour producing a feeling of disintegration. Besides, physical closeness to peers could also produce a certain rejection to school days but which can start decreasing once they have acquired the educational routines and their maturity has grown too (Jordan, 2010: 221).

Finally, it is worth mentioning these particular problems shown by ASD students at the time of interacting with others. As the primary stage is known as the period when pupils lay the first foundations of social relations, these processes will take place both inside and outside the classroom. However, there is a tendency towards the exclusion of this type of student, either because of their lack of understanding or their poor skills development when they have to speak or understand other classmates. Nevertheless, with the presence of the teacher, communication seems to be successful as they feel supported and backed up by an adult guide who will help them to correct their language. (Church et al., 2000: 13). Indeed, the main difficulties which are generated in the social environment of students with ASD are the inappropriate comments they make, more commonly at ages 7-8 and upwards as a result of inhibition and control of their emotions.

Notwithstanding, despite the lack of understanding by the individual with Autism about why people are offended, they may feel victimized and isolated during the school period. Besides, they are sometimes teased or harassed in specific ways, which leads to rejection and greater inequality within the class group. At the same time, since not all students deal

with Autistic children with the same respect, they may be bullied at certain times of the day when there is less supervision by teachers. As a consequence, they may have confidence in other students but in contrast, they are also made fun of and sometimes or used as mere toys (Konza, 2005: 135). As a result, students with ASD show greater confidence in playing on their own or take refuge in conversations with the teacher with whom they feel most comfortable.

3.3.2 Certain difficulties for students with levels of Autism and language development

Since the ASD contains biological components that affect the brain functions, as mentioned before, not only does it interfere with the ability to communicate, but also the knowledge and acquisition of language are altered. While some individuals will have some speech delay, others may be unable to develop language, being also mute. Still, there is a fact which could have some influence. Although the person with Autism can hold a conversation with another, the range of understanding of people with ASD is not what it should be. For this reason, problems will start to arise during the class in which children with Autism do not understand correctly what the teacher wants to convey (Jordan & Powell, 1990: 779). Considering then, at the time of working on aspects of oral and written expression, as well as comprehension, the teacher often uses metaphors and simulations bearing in mind that this could be somewhat difficult to understand for individuals with Autism. As a result, metaphors are abstract concepts for people with ASD, since they do not manage to understand literal expressions or irony (March-Miguez et al., 2018: 141).

Furthermore, the fact that there is a setback in the appearance and development of the speech could also produce an unusual development of the language which does not take place naturally. So, children who have Autism present monotonous speech without intonation and repetition where the term echolalia appears, and there is great confusion between the personal pronouns “I” and “you” as we mentioned before.

Notwithstanding, when working with students with ASD it is important to know which are their weaknesses in terms of syntax, pragmatics and semantics in order to work on

those functions of language, especially when it is a foreign language (Koegel & Koegel, 1995: 43).

Additionally, in case of the language, syntactic aspects include the fact that there is a later development of syntactic rules while, they are capable of elaborating simple but not complex sentences. Due to this lack of knowledge of syntactic words such as prepositions, articles or conjunctions in their speech they refer to other people with the third person pronoun (he/she) instead of using the first person. Lastly but not less important, people suffering from ASD may misinterpret verbal tenses either in any form or tense as well as direction verbs (Artigas, 1999: 120).

Continuing with the functions of language, we can highlight the semantic aspects where children with autism present particular difficulties. Although there is much evidence of them not showing problems when acquiring simple concepts, there is a deficiency when learning concepts related to inanimate objects. This is due to the lack of knowledge and implementation of verbs whose purpose it is to express feelings, moods, etc. In the same way that, as we mentioned before, there is no use of verbs, as s they do not use spatial or temporal terms as before yesterday, there, etc. (Marchena González, 1992: 415).

Assuming, that there are also certain conditions in the field of language, it is worth highlighting the various difficulties in pragmatic aspects. Thus, according to Tordera Yllescas (2007: 308), the different rules of language used in a social context is well-known as pragmatic, which at the same time is highly connected with the theory of mind mentioned above and is related to the ability of putting oneself in the place of others, to understand classmates' feelings etc. In a similar line, the difficulties which Autistic children present constitute a barrier in the communicative field so we can point out four areas based on speech or social interactions:

- **Paralinguistic characteristics:** Regarding this aspect, authors such as García de la Torre (2012: 415) states that prosody and control of intelligibility are involved. In fact, they are closely related to the deficiency in communicative intentions, meanings of statements' being altered due to stress patterns, intonation, tone and intensity. As a result, the speech of children with ASD could be very monotonous.
- **Extralinguistic characteristics** (also known as non-verbal): This point refers to those linguistic aids, such as gestures and different movements which the body

could make during communication. However, children with ASD do not show any arm or hand movement in order to provide some linguistic support, they do not express any, facial feelings nor do they change their posture.

- **Linguistic intent:** As mentioned before, both social discourse and knowledge of the children with Autism present a deficiency in answering requests, making statements or controlling their behaviour during a conversation. Nevertheless, ASD children have the ability to use language correctly. Furthermore, the intention to communicate is affected by two areas: on the one hand by the non-need to interact in pairs, and on the other hand their unusual language skills' development is correlative to their poor **social competences** too. As a direct consequence, these children will need to practice social skills such as respect for turn taking, pause time, courtesy, changing the subject, etc. (Martos and Ayuda, 2004: 42).

3.4 INCLUSION OF ASD CHILDREN IN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS WITHIN A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

3.4.1 Moving towards an inclusive education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (henceforth UNESCO) report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century chaired by Jacques Delors, well-known as "Education: The hidden treasure" (UNESCO, 1996: 67), inclusive education can be defined as the process of promoting social learning which is based on four fundamental pillars: "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live and learning to be". Consequently, the main objective will be to train citizens with a culture of peace whereas we must contribute to form democratic societies. In particular, learning to live together with others is a fundamental pillar of inclusive education that seeks to promote values of respect and care for all students (López-Vélez, 2018: 52).

However, the Salamanca Framework for Action⁴ introduced the term "special educational needs", following the arguments suggested by the Warnock report (DES 1978: 143) whose main objective was to state the fact that schools are merely responsible for the educational process of each student, regardless of their individual characteristics or medical diagnosis. In this sense, the members of the Salamanca Conference intended to provide a pedagogical framework focused on a social model where the barriers or difficulties encountered by special education needs children are eliminated while they receive adequate educational care in class, making available to them resources and conditions favourable to learning. However, in order to continue with inclusion in education, the UNESCO, has continued to advance regarding the commitment of countries to achieve improvements towards more inclusive educational systems and schools by defining the term inclusion and equity as:

Inclusion and equity in and through education are the cornerstones of a transformative education program and therefore we are committed to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No educational goal should be considered achieved unless it is achieved for all. We therefore commit ourselves to making the necessary changes in education policies and to focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially the disabled, to ensure that no one is left behind. (UNESCO, 2015 cited in López-Vélez, 2018: 33).

3.4.2 TEA inclusive education

Previously, for children with ASD, their education has not been easy since they have suffered from certain difficulties throughout past decades. On the one hand, there was little knowledge about the term, which resulted in deficiencies when trying to teach these sufferers. Thanks to Kanner's work, ASD has been discovered by investigating and researching even though in the past, autism was considered to be a mental illness (Rivière, 1997: 18).

⁴ Cruz (2019: 77) states that "The Salamanca Framework for Action" is a document that represents the commitment signed by several countries that declare a firm intention to provide quality education to all children, especially those who were historically excluded years ago as children with physical, motor, intellectual disabilities etc.

After the 1960s, authors such as Alegre (2000: 40) and Arnaiz (2003: 13) state that there was a normalization in the area of families with children with disabilities and their integration into society. This process consisted of the implementation of different measures which favoured a living condition for people with disabilities so that they were as integrated as possible within the rest of society. Having said this, parents of children with ASD in 60s decade started a fight where they wanted to eliminate the segregation of their children, defending their rights and carrying out the integration in general education centres

Notwithstanding, the society has slowly changed and people have started to consider and get worried about those individuals with special needs. In fact, nowadays we are better informed about the nature of their disabilities, endeavouring to eliminate the stigma surrounding these people. Nevertheless, there is still much to do because it will be necessary to change society's perspective in order to establish an inclusive education foundation throughout the world (Ocampo, 2015: 10).

In 1990, thanks to the enactment of the LOGSE (the legislation regulating education), Spain was able to put into practice ideas which favoured the integration of all pupils with special educational needs into the mainstream (Arnáiz, 2003: 14). In addition, the study of Autism began to have great importance, and the limits of diagnosis started to be extended. As a consequence, all children with ASD, will be attended within general education, although not all of them were placed in regular classrooms (Jordan, 2010: 223).

Currently, Spanish education has introduced certain progress towards inclusive and real practice. So, the main objective is to be able to eliminate barriers and limitations, as well as to offer the same teaching opportunity to children by providing them with the same opportunities for academic, work success, as well as to prepare them for a good quality of adult life (Ainscow, 2006: 146).

Besides this, in order to ensure this integrated curriculum, teachers must be aware of following the principles of inclusive education paying special attention to students who have more learning difficulties or who are at risk of exclusion. In fact, it will be essential to know that inclusive practice is not about giving equal attention to each student, but about helping each student according to his or her needs.

While current models of education are not yet genuinely inclusive, diversity now plays an essential role in classrooms, as it is understood as an enriching characteristic in groups of students. Notwithstanding, different institutions have started to accommodate the basic needs of people with disabilities so for this reason these places prevent children with disabilities from begging on the streets or living in isolation. As a consequence, many authors such as Torres González et al. (1997: 226) postulate the fact that an adequate knowledge was begun, considering it vital to cover their basic needs, as well as to be able to eliminate the barriers or limitations which these people presented during the 1900s.

3.4.3 Different systems of communication in children with Autism

Since children with Autism present very heterogeneous communication, it is necessary to establish diverse forms of communication and expression. Among them, one needs to mention the oral language itself. For this reason, the absence of language favours the use of signs or very reduced words so individual communicative intentions must be developed using some resources such as gestures, drawings, images and even movements (Cuadrado, 1991: 110). In addition, the importance of oral language acquisition should be tackled, and it would be advisable to work within the classroom on different communication processes favouring social interaction, as well as the development of social competences. As we have already mentioned, this is one of the areas most affected by the TEA, for this reason Potter and Whittaker (2001: 56) define the act of communication as a spontaneous action, laying particular emphasis on acquiring it naturally without paying too much attention to understanding. Besides, we must choose the most appropriate communication system taking into account the learning and teaching context in which we find ourselves, in this case, primary education.

3.4.3.1. Oral communication

It is worth mentioning that children with Autism who have acquired the ability to speak have some difficulties or barriers when they have to put it into practice. Therefore, the language that an individual with ASD has differs in quantitative and qualitative terms from other children's communication development without any disorder. One of the primary diseases in language skills is echolalia, which as we have defined before refers to the repetition of what the child with Autism has heard but does not imply

communicative intention (Soto Calderón, 2007: 5). Having said this, oral communication implies the use of words as well as gestures where two subgroups can be perfectly differentiated:

- **Bimodal system:** where ASD children employ oral language and hand signs combined in a logical and natural way.
- **Complementary word:** Autistic children use lip reading and visual- phonetic codes. However, the use of oral communication is complicated for children with ASD since not all of them acquire the ability to speak. As a consequence, they will not be able to express their own feelings, a fundamental factor to communicate and learn whilst socializing with other individuals (Santana, Torres & García 2003: 326).

Even so, when having a conversation with Autistic children, the structure must be clear and targeted, so that if we let the child start the conversation, it may not make any sense.

3.4.3.2. Non-verbal communication

On the other hand, gestural communication is used by children who have autism to obtain and ask for what they want to know. Nevertheless, on the other hand, they also show their interests by taking people by the hand and pointing out the object they need. Indeed, gestures such as smiles, cries or shouts can appear and communicate some feelings felt by individuals with ASD, although the level of difficulty in translating it into words is relatively high. For this reason, authors such as Tamarit (1990: 113) states that children with ASD are able to communicate if they are stimulated and by giving them certain help to develop communication skills using for example gestures, signs and even implementing dactylogy. Among them, we can point out:

- **Sign language:** as a universal language using manual signs being more visual and characteristic of a group of people.
- **Dactylogy:** known as the spelling of words. It is a complement to sign language as there are words that do not have a sign of their own. In this way, when communicating with people with Autism, teachers could employ the so-called SSAAC (Alternative Communication Systems).

3.4.3.3. Mixed communication

Finally, thanks to mixed communication, authors such as Kasari et al (2013: 6) have set up three types or subgroups which have favoured the development of speech and the

interaction of individuals with ASD. In this way, words, gestures and signs are involved being several flexible systems and the most known among people with ASD. One of the most famous programmes is the so-called "*Schaeffer Method*" which strengthens the oral language allowing progress in the expression of desires, making references when indicating, the concept of the human being, conversing, playing symbolically and finally, developing spontaneity. The main objective is to be able to focus on the individual characteristics of each child with ASD, favouring reinforcement in everyday situations and allowing for evolution with backward chaining.

Another method of teaching and stimulating communication with ASD children is the Treatment and Education of Autistic related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) method, which was created by Dr Schopler at the University of North Carolina in 1966. The main objective of this programme was to promote comprehensive care of people with ASD while relying on the collaboration of the family. In this way the family can contribute to their quality of life and, therefore, they can work more effectively in an autonomous manner in schools, at home or in the community, to reduce to certain extent, stereotyped behaviours and conduct that they present. However, according to Schopler (2001: 5), the application of this method at school implies developing autonomy at work. Therefore, it is governed by a series of principles, among which we highlight: effective intervention, collaboration and cooperation between family and professionals, emphasis on cognitive and behavioural theory, early and effective intervention, and optimal adaptation of teaching through the use of audiovisual or technological means, among others (Tortosa, 2000: 4).

And finally, there is the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) which is considered as a communication system through the exchange of images (known as the famous pictograms used in the educational field with children of these characteristics). It was developed by Bondy and Frost (1994: 7) with the aim of helping young children with this disorder, although it is also intended to be used with people who show communication and language disorders. With this system of communication, we teach the individual to communicate, through a series of cards or pictograms that are represented with the drawing of the object he wants, both for the child and the other person or his environment. However, in order to implement this system correctly, we must first recognize the interests and reinforcements that motivate the subject with ASD,

whether they are food, books, etc., so that through the shaping of the behaviour we can inspire these children to develop a communicative intention. For this reason, the images will be presented one by one, and as the child advances we will introduce image two, then three and so on, until we reach a wide range of them (Tortosa, 2000: 5).

3.5 STUDENTS WITH AUTISM. COMMUNICATION IN A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Once we have seen the different forms of inclusion and communication in people with Autism, we will analyze and develop how the acquisition of the foreign language takes place.

3.5.1 Autistic children and second language development

Up to now, the initiative to establish spontaneous communication in the mother tongue is not one of the strengths of individuals who have ASD, thus producing a lack of it in a foreign language. Due to this fact, the main objective as a foreign language teacher when intervening educationally with children with Autism is to catch their attention by providing them with real situations in the classroom in order to encourage communication (Lindgren and McDaniel, 2012: 350). Indeed, my work has focused mainly on teaching a foreign language to children with ASD, promoting inclusion and attention to diversity that will foster an atmosphere of equality with these kinds of children.

3.5.2. Strategies to help children with Autism to access a foreign language

Firstly, after an exhaustive search, few studies have focused on the provision of strategies for teaching foreign languages to children with Autism. It is well known that effort is needed from the teacher as well as from the educators who cohabit with the pupil day by day in the classroom; however, the concern for good attention as well as curricular performance leads to the search for measures, methodologies and resources to educate children with special educational characteristics in an appropriate way. Wire, (2005: 126) claims that there is a lack of flexibility among teachers exemplified in the absence of reasoning of some students when sitting in a different chair than their own or even difficulties in adapting to a new teacher or subject. For this reason, students with ASD may become uncomfortable during the course of a foreign language class, causing a lack

of listening as well as disruptive behaviour towards the teacher, anger or denial in following instructions. As a result, the teachers involved in the class must be able to adapt the subject as well as time, space and methodology taking into account the characteristics of these students Esmaeeli (n.d: 56).

As mentioned above, authors such as Alcantud et al. (2012: 34) point out that these children literally understand words and phrases with more than one meaning. Nevertheless, they are able to learn a vast vocabulary, figures and grammar directly but it is worth mentioning that Asperger's pupils have an intrinsic potential to learn a second language which will be not affected by a lack of creativity and abstraction.

In the same way, Wire (2005: 127) states that English children suffering from Autism tend to speak too quickly using a very low or inappropriate voice which can limit oral production when speaking their language. However, both the imitative behaviour and the ability to acquire languages presented by some pupils can serve as a support for teachers when integrating them into the class or introducing grammatical patterns Wire (2005: 127).

The same author, stated after dealing with students suffering from Autism:

Having worked with students with Autism for several years, I am well aware of their strengths and am prepared to contradict the widespread view that they are unlikely to make much progress in a foreign language and that this issue should be the first to be discarded. I believe that the difficulty of adapting to change when moving to secondary school, where there are constant transfers from one subject and room to another, is a serious problem for them and is particularly noticeable in relation to the foreign language class [...]. It is a real challenge for these students to organize themselves quickly at the beginning of the class. Instructions in the foreign language are easily lost and this, more than a lack of skill, can also explain poor results in the early stages of language learning. There is one aspect of their lack of flexibility that can be used constructively by the foreign language teacher: their love of routine. These are learners who go over familiar material again and again, and some even become enthusiastic about returning to familiar phrases, sequences, exercises, games, numbers and lists (2005: 127).

In short, assuming these words, the task of teaching will involve receiving an adequate qualification, as well as putting into practice various strategies in the classroom that are related to the patterns and methodologies that are carried out when acquiring a second language. In this way, teachers should try to follow stable routines and behaviour that facilitate understanding and integration with peers. Other authors such as Torres González (1997: 234) add the importance of using visual elements to teach any lexicon or word by saying it aloud and favouring familiarisation with the new language. At the same time, this treatment, as well as other essential aspects, must be modified in our methodology, among which it could be highlighted:

- Establishing sequences of activities to participate.
- Definition of the role of each person.
- Establishing rules and guidelines to be followed both in class and outside it.
- Knowledge, guidelines and resources to respond to children's actions.
- Knowledge of the environment and material needs of children with Autism.
- Employment of positive reinforcement not only when his behaviour is good, but giving him some responsibility in the classroom or with another classmate.
- Focusing on more than one skill and working cooperatively on different aspects and deficiencies that ASDs suffer from.

3.5.3 Educational strategies for teaching children with Autism

As quoted literally by McDonough (1995: 84, quoted in Wire, 2005: 228), “Teachers are involved in learning strategies in two obvious ways: knowing about, supporting, managing and occasionally teaching the strategies used by their students, and using a range of strategies of their own”. So, concerning this aspect, the main objective of teaching a language is to be able to acquire basic notions for communicating. Belinchón, Rivière and Igoa (2011: 13), in terms of functional conversation, postulate that two primary structures are required (in addition to anatomical and physiological structures): on the one hand, having developed specific basic psychological processes that function correctly, including attention and memory for pragmatic and communicative competence and the perception and expression by a gesture of paralinguistic competence and, on the other hand, a correct structure and form of language.

However, when dealing with Autism cases in structured teaching, a series of adaptations, guidelines and recommendations must be made that favour the acquisition and stimulation of language, as well as helping to communicate with peers or their environment. For this, as we mentioned before, the TEACCH programme has meant a turning point that reduces distracting factors, helps memory as well as being very functional in the educational field. It also contributes to the understanding of non-verbal gestures by explaining them and helping the student to use them to allow learning and independence. It also addresses the structure and form of language by creating an individualised system of communication that is functional for the learner and the caregivers and can be generalised to different settings (Gandara Rossi, 2007: 175).

Along the same lines, authors such as Cuadrado (1997: 232) also point out some recommendations and guidelines that should be followed when teaching children with ASD, among which could be highlighted:

- The student's learning process should be personal without forcing him/her to participate or do something that he/she does not want to do, so patience is fundamental.
- When introducing some natural processes of learning, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the child, so it is required to point out and ask certain things always.
- The learning environment must be adapted in the best possible way taking into account the characteristics of our student.
- Preferably, we should avoid mistakes in learning and focus more on correct teaching to encourage the motivation of this student.
- When carrying out complex tasks, they can be divided into different sections, making it easier to carry them out and understand them.
- During the learning and teaching process, we must have a clear objective and at the same time, have resources and activities that help to put it into practice.
- We should also consider using positive reinforcement techniques with different prizes or rewards to develop self-confidence. At the same time, correcting and reducing disruptive behaviour as well as making them aware of the consequences of their actions.

- Since ASD is mainly governed by a very marked routine and scheduled activities, it is preferable to show the student beforehand what he is going to do and even what is happening at each moment.
- As teachers, we must take into account their motivations and interests when creating tasks or activities by providing more significant attention to their needs or characteristics.

Having said this, authors such as Konza (2005: 227) or Gándara Rossi (2007: 176) claim that the teacher is a critical figure in the teaching of TEA students. There is a need for predictability of certain factors or aspects to be taken into account when organising, distributing and implementing the class. Firstly, the use of routines, providing consistent practice and some elements of the day that do not change, as well as the use of calendars or news corners is recommended. In this way, we will start the session with some activity, song or dynamic that will allow us to identify the subject. However, in the case of having to alter these routines, the teacher should pay attention and avoid any disruptive situation among students, especially with the ASD children.

3.5.3.1 Regarding classroom organization

Classroom organization is an essential aspect of teaching and learning. Due to the fact that their location may favour dispersion or overwhelming sensory stimuli, children with Autism must avoid exposure to doors or windows or even to areas where there is heavy student traffic. In this way, the anxiety caused to these students by the unwanted physical proximity of the rest of the students can be limited. In the same line, authors such as Koegel (2005: 46) have pointed out the importance of the organization of the desks as well as the places occupied by TEA students in the classroom. First of all, it is necessary to try to find safe places where the rest of the students do not see any intimacy, whereas we must allow them to have total access to the elements which form part of classroom's methodology without any distraction. Therefore, it will be necessary to make adjustments in the level of light, noise, decoration, posters, etc., which should be highly organised and well explained from the beginning of the school year.

3.5.3.2 Concerning classroom materials and spaces

It is also worth mentioning that both the materials in the classroom and those which are used by Autistic students must be well organized and selected, allowing them personal

space, providing a comfortable space where they can feel calm and establish their work time. Finally, all information to be given as well as instructions must be signposted using the different systems we mentioned before, such as TEACCH or PECS (Corsello, 2005: 78), since the way to work with them depends on task anticipation without forgetting that each activity will use pictograms and a visual calendar on their tables.

3.6.3.3 Bearing in mind work organization and tasks

Teachers should pay special attention to students with ASD when choosing either cooperative or classroom teams. They are usually “poorly chosen” students and those who are often rejected by their peers, either because of their characteristics or because of their inability to adapt. In this way, heterogeneous groups should be given priority, favouring tolerant attitudes, respect and equality among them (Gándara Rossi, 2007: 177, quoted by TEACCH center, 2007).

One of the positive aspects that can contribute to self-directed work and a good, participatory classroom climate is to establish specific roles in the classroom, from the role of captain, moderator, to the one who collects or cleans up, avoiding monopolization and adopting attitudes of responsibility towards the group. Besides, when working with TEA students, it is essential to provide visual support through systems such as PECS (Mesivob et al., 2005: 345) which will favour the comprehension of the verbal instructions that they will have to carry out, also taking into account on some occasions they may be dispersed and not consider these instructions to be for them, so the teacher will have to repeat them. These orders must be short, direct and straightforward, avoiding very abstract language so that the student with Autism can understand it. It will also be even more beneficial if, once the work has been introduced or explained, the student is asked what he or she should do, so that we can ensure that the work is fully understood and not dispersed.

3.5.3.4 Dealing with planification and timing

As mentioned above, students with ASD have some difficulty in planning tasks correctly and become nervous when they do not understand the steps to follow in an exercise. So, we must divide the tasks into several sequences, assigning them one by one, completing them and not moving on to the next until it is finished. As has been said, these students

do not perform well in sequential instruction, so complex tasks should be divided into many different jobs and assigned one at a time.

Another essential point to bear in mind is the flexibility of time because when we carry out an activity in class that has time limits, they can become saturated and show a refusal to participate. Therefore, we must be flexible and give Autistic children a little more time to process their answers (Konza, 2005: 228).

Continuing with the planning and tasks' execution, we may encounter specific difficulties when completing or finalizing them. Due to a lack of flexibility, attention and planning (altered executive functions) even when they are not related to their interest, can lead to uncomfortable situations in class. For this reason, a system of rewards can be established in class either through cards with stamps that allow students to carry out activities at the end of theirs if they have been done correctly. Or, given that children with Autism are very attracted to ICT, we can encourage their motivation and participation through games or interactive activities that make them finish their homework. In this way, their attention, participation and motivation are maximized, awakening a particular interest in the inclusion of the classroom (Ozonof, 2000: 189).

3.5.3.5 Concerning memory and different abilities.

As mentioned above, the fine motor skills such as writing are very challenging for children with Autism. From making diagrams, summaries or drawings to retrieving information or memorizing data, it can help to improve and provide Autistic children with specific tools that will be useful in the future. In this way, they will be able to answer a series of questions or respond to information that they have previously been taught. In the same way, the teacher can provide key words or concepts that the student already knows that will allow them to remember and establish relationships in their knowledge (Taylor, 2015: 34).

3.5.3.6 Concerning new language acquisition

Learning a foreign language, in this case, English, is more complicated as it will depend on the language ability of the child and can also cause some confusion for children with Autism. However, authors such as Wire (2005: 230) and Jordan and Powell (1995: 782) both state that the simpler the explanation without additional verbal complements, the

better the learning of the language. In other words, use a natural method, as pointed out by Krashen (1962: 64), introducing the concepts directly in English by associating them with visual support as well as oral sources.

Corpas (2008: 25) stipulates that when teaching a foreign language to children with ASD, the same guidelines can and should be followed as in their mother tongue. However, for certain aspects of the language (where they can present specific difficulties which we will see below) the best way is to set up individual sessions. This is quite beneficial as it can contribute to the acquisition of formal language skills, vocabulary or social communication with peers. So, this method should be carried out in a practical, communicative and social way trying to develop individual skills as well as trying to improve fluency in oral and written expression, if applicable (Jordan & Powell, 1995: 782).

3.5.3.5.1 Difficulties in EFL

Nonetheless, authors such as Frith (1992: 13) point out that when it comes to learning another language, specific difficulties or barriers must be considered in the development of the four skills involved in the fluent acquisition of English. As mentioned above, we depend on the level of linguistic, communicative and cognitive development that our students have, without forgetting that on many occasions they are not able to express their feelings, desires, concerns, needs, etc. This can lead to a situation of distress and rejection that must be avoided from the outset, trying to provide both visual and oral systems of communication that serve as support and help for understanding. At the same time, it is essential to respect the student's feelings and try to adjust our methodology to them (Frith, 1992: 13).

3.5.3.5.2 Difficulties in speaking

Assuming that not all students with ASD have no speaking skills, this may pose a barrier in the language class as no communication is generated. In the same line, Baso (2008: 47) points out that children with Autism may have not developed correctly producing some errors in their speech. In addition, this could create certain barriers at the time of completing sentences and organizing texts. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that this disability could produce demotivation and rejection to participate in the different activities or games proposed.

3.5.3.5.3 Reading difficulties

Along the same lines, Baso (2008: 51) states that another of the essential skills to be developed in the acquisition of a language is reading comprehension. However, given that oral comprehension presents specific difficulties, when reading and concentrating on a text, various situations of discomfort can arise, as they will only focus on those parts that are of interest to them. Therefore, it will be difficult for them to acquire a constant reading habit which will imply a selection of resources and tasks that are of their attraction in order to motivate and try to make them feel immersed in the normal development of the class.

3.5.3.5.4 Writing difficulties

When writing, difficulties are generated, thus producing interruptions in communication or expression of thoughts. Furthermore, Baso (2008: 52) also points out the difficulty that students have in using specific vocabulary terms in a foreign language because they are not written as they sound. For this reason, it is crucial to work repeatedly and continuously on the association of pictures and words as well as on listening comprehension skills.

3.5.3.5.5 Difficulties in listening

The most significant difficulty presented by children with ASD is the ability to understand speech. So, for the teacher to be heard, he or she must use easy words in an obvious way since these students find themselves in a particular world whose dispersion and attention is altered unless the subject to be dealt with is of their own interest (50).

3.5.2 Strengths of ASD sufferers

While ASD presents many deficiencies, it also shows many strengths which could be used as some advantages at the time of learning a foreign language. According to Happé and Vital (1995: 1370), they placed particular emphasis on a list of these where they gathered information from previous authors from the 1960s to the 1990s onwards. Among the autistic children's abilities, their extensive memory stands out as well as easy facial recognition which could improve linguistic abilities when they have to memorize or recognize some words. Additionally, they can identify expressions such as people's joy or sadness providing some opportunities to work with drama or role play within the classroom. In the same way, children with Autism present great capabilities when it

comes to establishing logical rules, as well as following sequences and order in their day-to-day life so this could help when introducing grammar references or building some sentences.

Besides, another greatness of these people is their honesty, since they are people whose literal expression cannot be altered so they show themselves as they are. Indeed, this honesty could be an advantage to express and use the language without being shy participating and playing while they are using the foreign language. Nevertheless, this honesty sometimes leads them to develop several problems with other people as they do not understand irony and respond without understanding the feelings of others. Again, this is due to their lack of empathy. Last but not least, another of the strengths of these individuals shown by Happé & Vital (2009: 1371) is objectivity, so as a result it could help Autistic children to reach foreign language objectives sooner than expected.

It is also worth mentioning that, according to APA (2013: 68), individuals with ASD also have very defined interests, which leads to a positive development in specific skills that are of interest to them. In this way, they are allowed to improve their teaching and learning process while at the same time, opening a door for them to enter the labour market. Besides, people with ASD who do not have a severe intellectual disability excel in the use of digital tools or ICTs as well as in the area of science or technology

3.5.3 Good practices and recommendations for teaching English to children with Autism

As authors such as Jordan and Powel (1995: 783) or Koegel (1995: 60) suggest there are some strategies of direct intervention, which we can subdivide in order to deal with certain groups. In this sense, depending on their cognitive competences, social skills as well as the executive functions' development which are specially altered, some tasks which promote mental flexibility, memory, planning, etc should be implemented at the time of acquiring a language.

Firstly, the students can start to use, organise and plan foreign language tasks in the classroom, using a schedule of study, work and attention that is developed routinely and always anticipating what is intended to be done in order to avoid behaviour and rejection on the part of the student. Equally, it is possible to teach the use of the bilingual dictionary

for the elaboration and writing, to improve the attention and concentration or understanding of the concepts. Secondly, the activities must be planned, taking into account the interests and motivation of the student and must be short, varied and attractive. Therefore, if we want our individual with ASD to read a text, he or she must know at least 90% of the vocabulary and identify visual elements to avoid running the risk of becoming demotivated and abandoning the book.

Concerning the learning process, the instructions given within the educational environment and especially in the foreign language class must be clear, continually reminding the students what they have been told. This would contribute to the understanding of orders or concepts, always keeping in mind the ability of the child, and could lead to a process of greater or lesser duration. Nevertheless, the motivation of the student is a key factor that can lead to an extension of vocabulary and the use of long sentences when the child notices his progress (Jordan & Powell, 1995: 783).

Authors such as Koegel (1995: 61) also point out that the methodology used in the classroom should be varied, allowing for primary interaction by the teacher, who is also an active subject in the teaching and learning process) as well as favouring language, interaction and the introduction of social skills where the child is obliged to communicate.. Following these recommendations, Corpas (2008: 27) adds that students with ASD will show their social difficulties when it comes to controlling their emotions, attitude in class as well as expressing feelings, thoughts or interests, so that in order to face and develop specific social situations, a sense of humour can be used, for example by employing familiar characters such as Mr Bean.⁵ It is also essential to teach them conversational skills such as greetings, saying goodbye, asking for forgiveness or social habits and signs where emotions are present, and they can recognise them in order to identify them.

Related to the acquisition and implementation of the four skills, students with ASD will show a certain reluctance to write, read or listen. Hence, certain strategies are considered, such as the use of visual support, posters, listening exercises, videos adapted to their age

⁵ Mr Bean is an English character who has appeared in some movies and series. He is well-known for his sense of humour and his naughty adventures.

as well as communication systems with which they are familiar. For this reason, written texts or images should be accompanied by oral support and explanations that contribute to greater understanding by the student. At the same time, the teacher should play the videos or the audios which are used during the teaching and learning process twice, without forgetting to leave enough time and pausing to answer questions. In this way it will be more comfortable and less stressful to cope with the new language, allowing students to be more immersed in the normal development of the class (Gately, 2008: 34).

Similarly, when it comes to increasing ASD sufferers' ability to express themselves in writing, they can make use of new technologies as they are a more motivating and exciting resource. Thus, using their own computer, they can help to write short texts or words through applications or games (always taking into account the age and cognitive development of the student) and on the other hand, they can implement different activities where they can organise ideas, ask short questions or follow a series of instructions.

However, when the task is more complex, it will have to be divided into several mini-tasks that will be presented one by one and will have to be completed to move on to the next one. For example, they can write short texts such as stories or comics, oral summaries, pre-sequencing activities, classic gap-filling activities, or writing books following models. This process must be carried out always under the supervision, help and observation of the teacher (Harrower et al., 2001: 770).

- **Concerning grammar**

Since the grammatical structures used in the Spanish language are far from those of English, students with ASD will have particular difficulty in producing correct sentences in the language. However, several strategies can be used to acquire linguistic expressions using self-initiated consultations, which are defined by Koegel (1995: 56) as a series of structures that encompass communicative competence where terms that have been acquired in the mother tongue are used in relation to those first used in speaking. Various strategies or practices can be distinguished by differentiating questions from affirmative sentences which will increase vocabulary as well as produce more successful results in the learner's natural language by focusing on their particular interests. These include:

- Placing personal objects of interest to our student with Autism by asking: What is that? In this way, the student is encouraged to say by name the item in question. Thus, when he learns this word, we can proceed to the next one, thus increasing his vocabulary and contributing to a good development of the language (Koegel, 1995: 57).
- - Another strategy used to teach children certain prepositions includes games such as hide and seek. In this way they will be asked: “Where are you?” or “Whose is it?” to try to learn personal pronouns as well as improve memory and vocabulary. Especially the teacher should encourage the students to name their classmates by their own name and to use articles and personal pronouns considering that this will be a difficult period since ASDs tend to name themselves instead of using the pronoun “I”.
- - Along the same lines, questions such as “What happened?” are used to introduce grammatical strategies to sequence and differentiate temporal events. In this way, we should be able to contribute to our students with Autism being able to describe situations in the past, present or future tense, always under the supervision and repetition of the teacher, thus helping to develop the temporal and conversational space we need when acquiring a foreign language (Koegel, 1995: 67). The same thing happens with the use of personal pronouns since children with Autism have no temporal sense when they ask questions.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, Bryan (1997, quoted in Bolderson et al., 2011: 349) proposes a system known as “colourful semantics” in which through visual supports such as cards or tools we can contribute to the development of sentences and the learning of simple grammatical structures. In this way, each part of the sentence should have an associated colour that will be easily recognized by the student, being for example red for subjects, blue for verbs and green for complements.

However, the most complicated part will come when putting into practice the writing or reading skills, as children with Autism have great difficulty in recognizing English phonetics. Therefore, we must teach them that although in Spanish they write words as they sound, in English, the same does not happen. For this reason, many authors have

also proposed as a communicative strategy the method Jolly Phonics (Ariati et al., 2018: 42), which consists of teaching sounds and phonemes first and then forming words and phrases. In this way, if the students differentiate the sounds and associate them to a drawing, it will be easier for them to acquire a new language and at the same time, it will allow an improvement in the writing and literature of the same (Golshan et al., 2009: 63-69).

On the other hand, for an improvement in the ability of reading comprehension, some habits or practices can be carried out within the area of the foreign language such as the explanation of English literature texts that are attractive to the student, easy to understand and already know the vocabulary. Thus, we will facilitate the development of the student's autonomy where he/she can make predictions about what is going to happen, describe characters, prepare activities for before/during and after the reading, deduce illustrations, write paragraphs etc. However, it is essential to stop at each page as it will be necessary to check how much has been understood. Besides, it will be necessary to pause to explain grammatical or striking aspects in order to relate them to Autistic students' previous knowledge, both before and after reading the text. Then the teacher could carry out a wide range of activities such as multiple-choice questions, drawing a comic, propose another final, describe the favourite character, etc. (Corpas, 2008: 30).

3.5.3.1 Other particular strategies for foreign language learning

Despite the emphasis on the techniques described above, it is fundamental the fact that additional methods should be worked on during the teaching and learning process employing targeted manner. So, we can highlight some of them:

1. The synonymy of words as their different meanings, even the use of them for different contexts or situations should be worked on with Autism children. In this way, it will be necessary to organize and explore the multiple contexts and examples where a word can be used, bearing in mind that it will take the students' time to comprehend and assimilate meanings.
2. Adjustment of the timing, methodology, variety and typology of activities, environmental and climatic conditions of the class is also crucial. Especially, considering the hypersensitivity that these students show to certain noises, texts, sounds, etc. (Caguana et al., 2013: 145).

3. Finally, assuming that feelings are a crucial factor in teaching, relaxation and self-control activities should be encouraged. In the foreign language class, it will be standard for students suffering from tension or anxiety due to the use of a language which differs from their mother tongue, either because of insecurity, shame or lack of resources. For this reason, taking into account the characteristics of our TEA students, we must avoid these situations which can generate time limitations for communication, through motivating and encouraging them to expose themselves to new communicative situations. In this way, programmed relaxation should be encouraged in class, as well as calming down and activities such as: making faces, relaxing and tensing muscles, as well as activities for the recognition of emotions, the use of songs which imply movement and changing the rhythm. In this way, in EFL classes it is essential to plan exercises with movement and dynamism, as well as tasks and activities that involve being calm, such as picture dictation, TPR, games, drama, role-playing, etc. (Golshan, et al., 2019: 69)

4. A DIDACTICAL PROPOSAL FOR A CHILD WITH TEA IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

4.1. Context

4.1.1. Characteristics of the school

The school where we are going to put into practice this intervention is a new one situated in the province of Málaga. It is located in a big village with 75,953 inhabitants approximately and which have changed in last years. The school is situated in the middle of the village next to the town hall and some commercial shops with a high socioeconomic level. The relationship between parents, teachers and the rest of educational community is extraordinarily good. Parents and teachers represent this association too, who celebrate some regular meetings to earn money with charitable acts for school support. The school includes pre-school and primary education levels and is housed in a big building with three floors.

On the ground floor, we can find pre-school classes and the lobby with a reception and a locked room for teachers' clothes. There are six pre-school classes. On the first floor is 1st Primary level, 2nd primary level and 3rd primary level with two classrooms for each one. There is a special needs room for children too, next to third primary's level. It has special material for speech therapy. On the second floor, fourth, fifth and sixth primary's level can be found with two classrooms for each one of them. The playground of this school is very big although we have some spaces for different sports, activities and games. There is not an English classroom, so each student has to move class by class. In spite of this the English teachers have a lot of material at their disposal, such as CD players, games, flashcards and TVs. Furthermore, the school has a kitchen and they provide parents with a canteen and early morning classroom service. There are two English specialist teachers, one for Infants and the first cycle of primary education and the other one from the second and third cycle, including a P.E teacher and a Special Needs one.

Nevertheless, we are going to focus on the *4th level of Primary Education* (2nd year, 2nd cycle), where children are between nine and ten years old, being a group of 25 students with a different number of girls than boys. They learn English three times per week during 45 minute' lessons. We have a heterogeneous group and their stages of maturity are dissimilar. However, the focus here will be on the Autistic student who has been learning since pre-school and who is totally integrated with the other classmates.

4.1.2. Methodology

The methodology which is used in this Primary School is designed and established by current legislation. Assuming this, the methodological proposal to be developed in the foreign language classroom will follow the following fundamental principles:

- Develop all the key competences established by the framework.
- Use ICT and multimedia as learning tools and appreciate the achievements and contributions of others by reading stories about different types of heroes.
- To develop multicultural understanding through research on six different countries.
- Participate fully by doing engaging activities such as storytelling, dialogues, games and problem-solving tasks.

- Communicate confidently through a wide variety of well-conducted speaking tasks.
- Promote study habits and personal autonomy through activities, homework and class participation.
- Develop oral fluency and pronunciation through integrated practice of connected expressions, accent, rhythm and intonation.
- Establish connections between the use of English and real life by using it to represent everyday situations.
- Develop reading and writing skills with motivating and fun real-life texts based on key reading and writing skills.
- Acquire the four language skills in a balanced and integrated way.

Having said this, the objectives and content proposed for this level should aim to achieve the key competences according to the curriculum as well as determine the assessment of these competences. In addition, the multidisciplinary nature will require some coordination between the actions of the teachers, promoting teamwork as well as the Special Needs teacher on an ongoing basis.

Similarly, the teacher must implement the necessary teaching resources to achieve the learning standards of the subject in order to implement the key skills and achieve its objectives. However, it is important to note that our methodology is interdisciplinary and cross-cutting in nature, favouring more meaningful learning that helps to achieve it. Therefore, the teacher will be responsible for seeking out situations that are close to the students, more specifically situations and subjects of interest to our students with ASD that involve the four fundamental pillars of education (knowing how to do, knowing how to be and knowing how to be). Likewise, they will create contexts and situations that represent challenges for the students; that invite them to question their current knowledge; that force them to broaden their perspective and contrast their opinions with those of their peers, to justify and interpret rigorously, etc.

Finally, our methodology and class must take into account the characteristics of our students with Autism, making their precise adaptation as well as modifying the contents, objectives, necessary skills as well as the furniture and sequencing or timing of the same

4.1.3. Characteristics of the student with ASD

The Autistic child is a 4th grade student with great skills in the foreign language since he enjoys singing and dancing songs. He is very interested in *Disney books* and he has a big collection. He has an excellent memory and he can pronounce very well. However, he is very sensitive and he feels nervous when you speak loud to him. In addition, he prefers working alone during English lessons, only with the teacher supervising. He feels more comfortable when you ask him about his interests and Walt Disney characters so the rest of teachers try to relate with his point of interest. Besides, he follows a strict routine following some pictograms which are located both on his table and on the wall so when he loses his concentration, he can look at these resources.

Apart from this, he has a diary where he notes down his activities using some images and that serve as a guide to communicate with his parents. Notwithstanding, when he feels stressed, he starts to cry and he needs to take a book and read. So, we normally give them enough time to relax and continue. Finally, he also has three meetings per week with the pedagogical therapist and the language teacher who help with the most difficult subjects too.

4.1.3.1. Relationship with peers

Our student with Autism stands out because of his endearing way of speaking, as well as his behaviour which is somewhat more childish with respect to the rest of his classmates. On numerous occasions, his obsession with Disney characters and stories can cause him to clash with the rest of the students. He also makes inappropriate comments as well as having little or no social behaviour as he usually plays alone in the playground and does not interact with his own classmates. However, his classmates have accepted him in a very positive way and it can be added that they have been together since childhood so they know him and know how he feels at every moment, as well as acting when he gets stressed or angry.

Another positive point regarding his relationship with his classmates is how they understand and they help in all subjects, especially in the foreign language class, where when he does not understand a word, they explain it to him and leave enough time for him to respond. He has needed the reinforcement of the teacher and very clear indications of tasks to be carried out. In addition to this, it should be noted that the family is also very

involved with the school and the teacher, which facilitates the teaching and learning process of this student.

The vast majority of his classmates volunteer to work with him because they also know his ability with new technologies and the great memory he has. However, when the task does not motivate him at all he tends to refuse to do it and even gets angry. This has obviously caused some friction between his classmates because they have not understood his attitude.

Finally, our student has made great progress in recent years as he used to have an imaginary friend with whom he would chat and play at recess, but he has evolved a lot and is beginning to have certain features of very short interaction during breaks or in class that allow him to gradually acquire social skills and competences.

4.2. Adaptation of English lessons

4.2.1. Routines in the Foreign Language Classroom

Once we have introduced the context as well as discussed, the characteristics of the class group, and more specifically of our student with Autism, it becomes necessary to establish a clear routine in the area of English.

4.2.1.1 Structured learning

Each session will be previously structured following the same routine to avoid frustration or lack of motivation in the students. In the case of having to change this routine, it should be communicated beforehand so that the possible changes can be anticipated. This means explaining the activity or changes to be made several days in advance so that they can become familiar with the new proposal. Having said that, the sessions always begin with a short assembly where the students greet each other, we go over concepts from the previous day either through a game, using flashcards or the blackboard or any classroom object. Afterwards, we usually introduce the session either by reading a text, explaining it or playing a game in which, the children interact and ask questions. In this case, we explain through pictograms what we are doing to our students with ASD. Then we usually

do some interactive activity with the board, either joining sentences, repeating, or pronunciation, in which we ask the student to repeat or correct another partner.

Finally, to work on what has been learnt, we do the corresponding page from the activity notebook or a short task in the notebook, so our student will be asked to do the same. And to conclude the session we usually say a farewell rhyme that we already know about the class because we have been working on it for quite some time.

4.2.1.2 Grouping:

Within the class group the roles and working groups are very formalized and marked. On the one hand, they have group consciousness as they are seated in groups of 4 in which each one has a different role. On the other hand, when it comes to working in pairs, we try to make sure that there is change between the partners and thus enrich each other. These groups have been formed after evaluating the different skills and abilities of each one, allowing for a group with mixed abilities that can tutor the rest of the partners and therefore not be too unbalanced. However, it is important to assess where our student with Autism will work as it must be reinforced and accepted at all times. Even so, his peers support him and usually work well with him as they explain the concepts they do not know and value the effort he makes. However, as it is positive to change the group, these changes should be notified in advance to avoid our student with Autism feeling excluded or not integrated and to understand why we change the group. Having said that, it is also very effective to be able to attribute a clear role to our student with ASD, since we must make him understand that he is part of the class and is a key part in the development of the foreign language class. Therefore, his work, collaboration, dedication and effort will contribute to the task at hand.

4.2.1.3 Directions:

All the students of 4th grade are used to following instructions given by the teacher both displayed on the screen or oral ones. In fact, they follow an English routine so they could remember what they are supposed to do at each moment. As a consequence, it will improve students' autonomy and their collaborative work too helping also those students with special needs too. In addition, our Autistic child is used to follow our English instructions since he was in kindergarten but we must repeat them several times because he might sometimes have trouble in understanding oral instructions.

4.2.1.4 Time management:

In order to establish a sequence routine, we will dispose a timer on our classroom wall. This will be used to mark the end of each activity as well to determine when the class is ended. So, it will be accompanied with a ring which has a countdown giving students the possibility to organize their time to do activities. Additionally, thanks to this device our Autistic child knows each activity time and they recognize the signal to stop working. However, we must be flexible providing slow students with extra time when they need it using this timer as a resource to control classroom organization too.

We have to bear in mind that lessons are 55 minutes leaving a margin of 5-10 minutes to introduce and close the session with each song or rhythm as we mentioned before. Therefore, in case of our child with Autism we will provide some minutes to do other kinds of activities which are connected with his interest in order to control his behaviour avoiding disruptive situations.

4.2.1.5 Organization of materials:

The material in the foreign language classroom is organized by corners. In one corner we have the library and each student's locker where they deposit their book, notebook and personal work at the beginning and end of each session. There is also an extensive library of books that can be borrowed to read at home. In a second corner we have the ICT area (which we will talk about in the next section) which is made up of several computers and tablets with which to play, carry out interactive activities as well as digital games. In the third corner we have the classroom material with the flashcards, teacher's books, radiocassette, games etc which will help us to have a record of the material as well as in case of loss or failure in the ICT System we can use these resources. Finally, we have a fourth corner where we will hang the work done as well as serve as a calendar and agenda for our students. In the case of our student with Autism, we have provided a space where he can go whenever he is more nervous or his attention begins to be scattered. He can read, play a game or even do some revision work. In addition, each student will have a portfolio to complete with the class tasks and that will be exposed after completing each unit.

Apart from this, our class has the google classroom platform where students who miss class can follow the methodology and activities that have been carried out in class. In the

same way, a direct connection is established with the parents in order to improve the teaching and learning process.

4.2.1.6 Use of ICTs:

Since the use of new technologies is an indispensable factor in the classroom, we will take advantage of the digital resources available to us to encourage the acquisition of the English foreign language. Having said that, taking into account that our student with Autism is a loyal ICT lover, we will be able to use various games, songs, applications as well as videos for teaching, improving attention of the students, participation and assimilation of the contents. Moreover, since they work in groups, the student himself will be able to help the rest of his classmates by organizing and explaining how to use the technological resources or by proposing some activity to them. However, we must ask them to do this well in advance and explain in detail what they have to do and what their function is, since their dispersion and social interaction is quite reduced.

On the other hand, it will be more motivating and attractive for the rest of the students to use the computer as well as the tablets for activities where they can work on their pronunciation, reading comprehension, oral expression and writing as well as develop their skills and digital competence.

4.1.2.7 Behaviour management

In relation to the behaviour of our class we work with a system of rewards and points that they obtain at the end of each session as well as medals at the end of each unit. We will use the ClassDojo⁶ as a tool to reflect behaviour and attitude in the classroom, which is connected to the parents directly and can be accessed through their mobile device.

With respect to our student with Autism and given that social interaction and behaviour are very altered aspects as we have analysed above, we will work following a system of rewards that he will obtain every day. If he finishes the task and participates within classroom development, he can choose for example an activity to do in his corner. If, for example, he does not finish the task or his behaviour is not appropriate, he will be left in

⁶ ClassDojo is an interactive tool which serves to communicate with students' parents and it is useful to record their behaviour. It has got some characters where students are represented so the teacher can add some points for doing tasks, good or bad behaviour. etc.

your thinking corner and will not get a reward that day, even if he is never punished. We will also put a stamp or a smiley face in his diary so that his parents can see whether his behaviour was appropriate or not.

Finally, at the end of each unit, if the student has surpassed the established objectives, he will be given a medal that he should stick in his notebook, completing the notebook or portfolio that we have mentioned previously.

4.2.2 Modification in the unit of work

Due to the different levels that we find in the class and according to what was mentioned throughout this Master's Dissertation, it is essential to carry out a series of modifications in the unit of work, so the unit of work A visit from Canada in the textbook *Heroes 4* (Mohammed and Ormerod, 2017: 4) must be adapted to the needs that our student with Autism presents. Therefore, when it comes to achieving the established objectives and contents, it will be less difficult to do so, while at the same time achieving more significant learning. The unit starts on page 4 and ends on page 14 where we will carry out the appropriate activities as well as adjust the objectives and contents depending on the way of working.

On the other hand, the unit aims to acquire skills in both expression and oral and written comprehension that will favour the personal description of friends or people close to students, as well as the situation of expression of feelings and/or emotions. This is a fundamental aspect that must be worked on with our students at ASD, since social interaction and communication skills are in decline.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that our unit will last 6-8 sessions in which we will detail the activities, tasks and projects to be carried out in each one of them. In addition, a written test will be taken to check whether the objectives have been achieved. This test will be anticipated and prepared with our students of ASD so that they can review and organize their learning, thus avoiding possible blockages or lack of motivation for learning.

5. DIDACTIC UNIT

Unit of Work: *I have a new friend next to me!*

Duration of the sessions: 6 sessions (3 hours per week)

Students: There are 24 students at 4TH Grade Level but this teaching unit will be mainly focus on work with our Autistic child in order to avoid possible barriers that we have mentioned before.

Aims: At the end of this unit the students will be able:

- To identify people's personal characteristics and their occupation.
- To recognize people's feelings and emotions.
- To ask and talk about personal appearance.
To describe different people characteristics including their mood.
- To write short compositions about friends and family appearance.
- To perceive differences and similitudes among cultures.
- To conceive ASD problems with non-verbal communication and social abilities.

In order to carry out these objectives students will learn to describe personal appearance and feelings bearing in mind that the main topic is descriptions of people and their emotions.

Syntactic-Discursive Structures

In the present unit we will introduce the verb *have got* using the structures: *She is/He is*, *She/He has got*, */She/He hasn't got*. Moreover, we will start using also the verb "to be" in the 3rd person to introduce *He/She is/isn't* in order to describe people's feelings. As a result, our students will be able to present and describe people.

Vocabulary of the unit

Personal appearance: Curly Hair, wavy hair, glasses, moustache, straight hair, beard, ponytail, short hair, dark and fair, fringe...

Feelings: Sad, happy, smiley, sporty, medium height, angry, hungry.

Key Competences

Key competences are all considered equally important because each of them contributes to a successful life. Nevertheless, many of those competences overlap and interact because competences are the fundamental basic skill of language, literacy, numeric

competence etc., being a support for the learning to learn competence in all kinds of activities. For this reason, when we are learning a foreign language, we directly contribute to the acquisition of the first competence, the linguistic one. As regards the contribution of learning a foreign language, we may even state that the subject also contributes to the mastering of the other key competences because:

Linguistic communication competence (LC)

The linguistic competence is a result of communicative interactions between students and familiar situations. In this one, oral and writing skills are involved as much in individual activities or collective purposes.

Teaching a foreign language gives special emphasis to develop linguistic competence, which is a fundamental objective in our planning. Linguistic competence is also present in students' mother tongue, which could help us to explain specific contents. For this reason, in this teaching unit we are going to focus on developing linguistic skills in an integrated and systematic way bearing in mind that our ASD child should acquire communicative and social abilities too. So, by means of role plays, classroom interaction, games in pairs and activities whose objective is communicating will be presented. Besides, it is important to mention that we are going to use the TEACCH method⁷ to communicate with our ASD child so in each lesson we will show all those pictograms which are connected with the type of activity.

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (MC)

Mathematical competence includes the ability to apply mathematical reasoning and tools to describe some situations and interpret determined contexts. Science and technology competence also help students to understand a physical word and involves pupils in their sustainable development using individual and collective activities. Having said that, the following unit will pursue the opportunity to develop technology notions as well some mathematical concepts which are related with the students' daily life.

⁷ TEACCH method is a pictogram system which is used to communicate with ASD. In addition, it could be essential in order to organize and anticipate each type of activity or task that we are going to do during the lesson.

Digital Competence (DC)

A variety of activities will be carried out using technological material being a natural support for written and oral texts. Digital competence forms part of the linguistic one because we communicate with both students and parents and we even promote interaction between them. For this reason, we should have knowledge about tablets, computers, laptops and even interactive whiteboard since they can be considered as a necessity to use didactic resources in each unit. Besides, our Autistic child is good at technologies and the use of ICT, so we can take advantage of employing them even using them as classroom support.

Learning to learn Competence (LLC)

Learning objectives and strategies are our point of reference as well as lifelong learning, as all these competences are necessary to achieve a correct citizens' development at the end of the academic year. It is important to motivate, encourage and help our pupils to achieve those goals, proposing different activities and getting them involved in the teaching-learning process. In fact, one of the main objectives of this Master's Dissertation is to provide certain autonomy and life-long learning skills to our ASD child helping to communicate and interact in future situations.

Social and civic competences (SC)

Using a foreign language inside our class promotes a good relation between our students giving special emphasis to values and respect. In addition, we have to bear in mind that our points of reference are different cultures, sexes as well as religions too. Respecting people from other countries and other customs must be our fundamental factor to work inside our syllabus.

Children have to learn how to work in groups, using a cooperative way, forgetting egocentrism and encouraging a positive atmosphere in foreign language classes. Working on values, customs, traditions, etc., will be a useful learning experience that will help our students to be good citizens as well as people in a future life. In this sense, we have to lay special emphasis on our autistic child who should develop certain social strategies as well rules in order to promote his interaction difficulties.

Cultural awareness and expression competence (CC)

This competence involves knowing, showing, expressing, and understanding different artistic points of view considered a good way to enrich our student's creativity. We as teachers have to introduce other countries culture's curiosities using an attractive way to motivate and make them participate in the activities proposed. It is important that students know about their culture, in our case, Andalusia, being identified with our traditions and even our customs.

Developing creativity is a main factor, which our students can achieve, concretely our ASD child. So, he must understand the metaphors of the language, performances, songs and role plays introduced by means of the use of non-verbal communication, rhythm, mime and drawings.

Sense of initiative and Entrepreneurship (SE)

Entrepreneurial initiative and spirit is a competence to carry out between students; this implies the beginning of understanding about taking decisions in a certain context. Notwithstanding, the present unit will be only focused on promoting discussions in order to develop coeducational situations as well as certain classroom rules including executive functions such as memory, planification, or attention.

Contents:

Block 1: Oral Texts Comprehension

- Listening for the main ideas and details when students describe people .
- Recognizing oral frequently lexis and structures related to physical appearance and emotions.
- Understanding non-verbal gestures and movements.
- Practice of communicative functions: personal description and feelings.

Block 2: Oral texts production: Speaking

- Express physical description about people including their profession, in simple and short interaction using properly English intonation, rhythm and sounds.

- Employ non-verbal communication to interact and share information with peers.
- Using linguistic and paralinguistic strategies to avoid communication breakdown or misunderstanding (paraphrasing, miming, rephrasing, etc.).
- Appreciation and respect for different ways in foreign language serving as a vehicle to communicate and understand Andalusian culture.

Block 3: Written text Comprehension

- Reading for the main idea, predicting, summarizing and identifying personal descriptions patterns.
- Reading for specific details, recognizing feelings and physical appearance when we read about them.
- Comparison among different cultures summarizing the main idea and relating with their environment.

Block 4: Written Texts Production

- Fill in the gaps and giving short answers about physical appearance questions.
- Using linguistic and paralinguistic strategies to avoid communication breakdown or misunderstanding (paraphrasing, miming, rephrasing, etc.).
- Writing about people physical appearance making comparisons or introducing.
- Completing simple personal descriptions and inventing ones.

Values and Transversal Elements

Regarding the present unit, it will be essential to deal with certain values and transversal elements which are also reflected in our curriculum. For this reason, we are going to work on equality among men and women by means of physical and personal description, as well as work with respect to others. In this sense, we will work with empathy too since we have an Autistic child in the classroom, so our students will feel and work with him from a kind and respectful point of view:

- *Respect for self and others*
- *Equality among men and women*
- *Oral and written Expression*

Lesson 1

Before starting the unit, we always have the habit of singing the Hello! song at the beginning of each class. Thereby we invite the pupils to start with motivation and pleasure by reviewing some of the different emotions and feelings using gestures. The transcription of the song is:

*Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?
Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?*

*I'm good.
I'm great!
I'm wonderful!
I'm good.
I'm great!
I'm wonderful!*

*Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?
Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?*

*I'm tired.
I'm hungry.
I'm not so good.
I'm tired.
I'm hungry.
I'm not so good.*

*Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?
Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?
Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?
Hello, hello, hello, how are
you?*

Lyrics taken from: Entertainment, S. (2020). *Super Simple Songs*. Retrieved from <https://supersimple.com/super-simple-songs/>

Here is the link too:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVlcKp3bWH8&feature=emb_logo

Activity 1 *Can you describe a partner?* (speaking assembly, whole class group) (10'):

This unit of physical description will begin by introducing the vocabulary to our students. To do this, we will hold an assembly in which we will sit in a circle, then students have to try and say a quality of the partner next to them. The teacher will have the unit flashcards closer in order to name all the physical characteristics that we are going to work on, so after naming them, students must repeat and memorize them. In this way we will be saying the name of the classmate and a characteristic that he or she has, for example, freckles. Previously, we will have taught the pictogram of the English subject to our student with Autism, as well as the one of the assembly. As a consequence, we will facilitate becoming familiar with the vocabulary and at the same time he can anticipate our intention. In this way we are working on the planning, as well as the attention and memory of these ASD children, some areas which are affected.



Image 1: Adapted from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017:4). *Teachers' Book*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Here we can see the cards that we are going to use for the vocabulary, as well as the pictograms that we have in the table to be able to organize and to facilitate the understanding of our student.

Activity 2: Guessing and finding game (speaking and reading activity in pairs) 15'

Once we have presented the vocabulary, we will ask our students to pair up. The teacher will name each pair and choose a card on which the word of the physical characteristic is written, for example, curly hair. Each pair should look for two or three students in the class with that characteristic, bringing it to the blackboard. There, they should describe it using the structure "He's got/She's got". In the case of our student with Autism we must pay special attention to the social skills component due to the fact that sometimes they do not understand the rules or procedures of the game. For that reason, the partner must repeat the word at all times, as well as teach the image allowing him to make an association even finding a partner with that characteristic. In this way, through games we are promoting social interaction and communication while working on some of the

executive functions such as memory and attention.

freckles

smiley

Image 2: Selected from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 15). *Cards' Resources Book*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Activity 3 Listening and guess who (10')

To continue, we will give our students a card with the following images. They must listen to the audio and circle the character which they have heard. Notwithstanding, we will repeat the sentences several times as this is the first time, they are becoming familiar with the structure “He’s got/She’s got”.

It is worth mentioning that we should sit as close as possible to our student with Autism so that we can give clear and concise orders on the task. For this reason, he must listen and circle the character which the audio is describing. If the student starts to be nervous, we can provide him with a tablet or portable digital device with headphones allowing him to do it autonomously in his place so we can avoid the frustration or noise that can be caused by the speakers.



Image 3: Adapted from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 10). *Wordbook's Resource*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Activity 4: My classroom dictionary (Reading and writing activity) (10')

Students should make the cover of the unit indicating the title of the unit (*I have a new friend next to me!*) by copying the vocabulary words that we have worked on during the session. In addition, they can use a template like the one in the picture or copying the word and drawing a picture next to it. In the case of our student with Autism, as we have mentioned before, he likes the world of Walt Disney very much, so in order to facilitate his attention and understanding of the vocabulary we have prepared some images with some of the characters that he will paste in his notebook. Next to them, he will write the words in English indicating it with a line. Here we have the cover:



Image 4: Adapted from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 9). *Wordbook's Resource*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

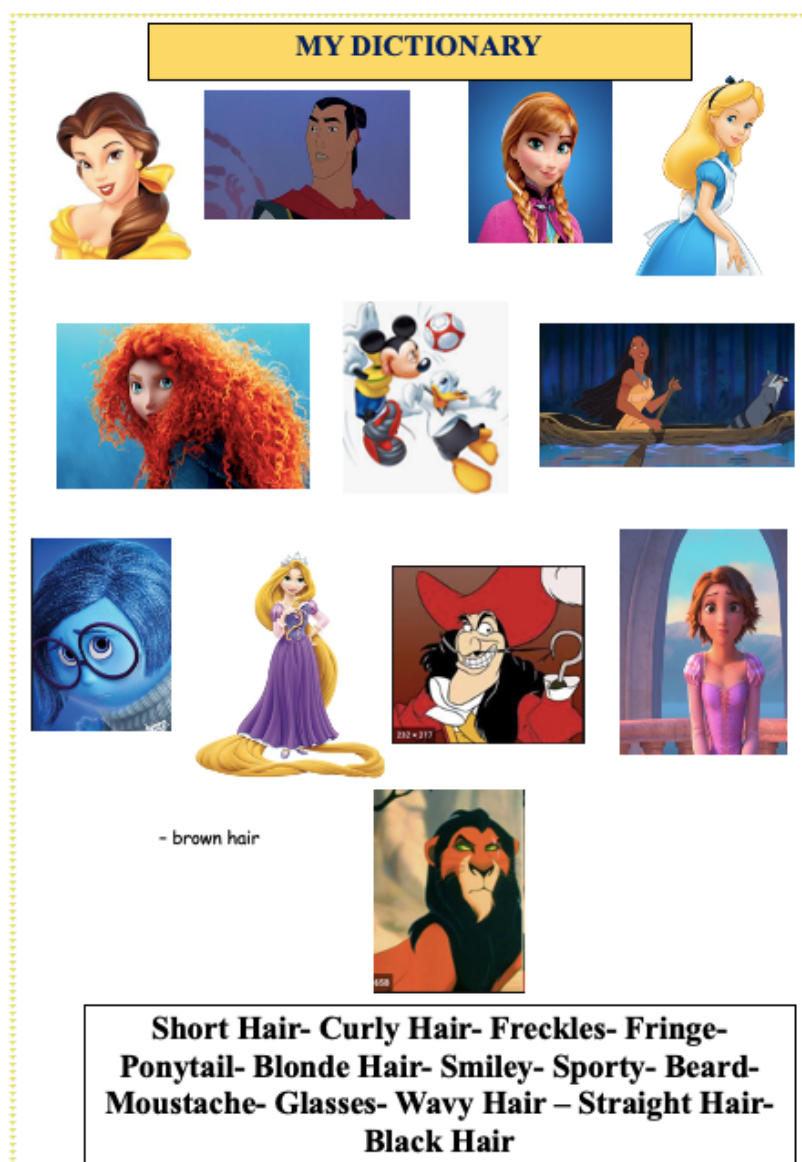


Image 5: Adapted from Laszlo, P. (2014: 1). *Hojas de trabajo ELE. Physical Description Disney Sheet*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

Activity 5: ICT Activity find the pair (group activity) 5-10'

The last minutes of class will be dedicated to reviewing the vocabulary learned. To do this, as our book has interactive material, we will take our students out to the blackboard in pairs. Once they are at the blackboard, we will put several cards and they will have to find the person who the audio is talking about.

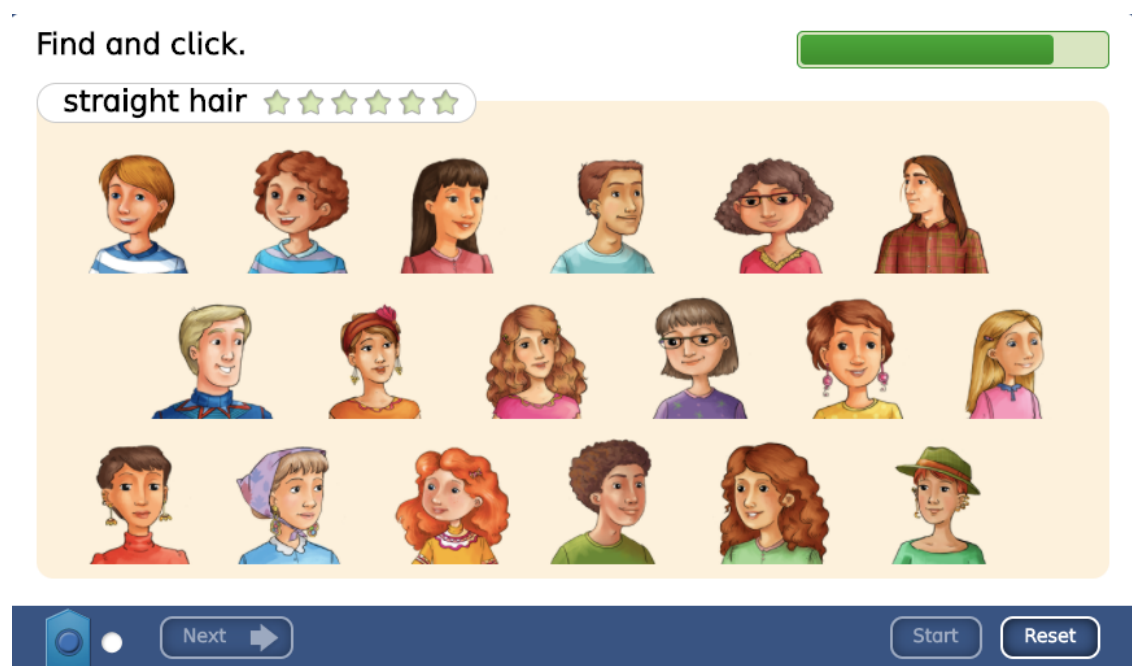


Image 6: Adapted from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 20). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Interactive digital book*. Unit 3: My best friend. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

We will do the same activity with our Autistic student with the only exception that we can allow him to go to the computer corner where we will put the screen for him to work independently. Once he finishes, we will put his behaviour and work point through the ClassDojo⁸ tool so that his relatives at home can see his progress, attitude and daily work.

⁸ ClassDojo tool will be used every day after finishing the tasks. We will point out our ASD child's behaviour, participation and work within the classroom.



Image 7: Adapted from Diez, A. Santiago, R. (2019). *The Flipped Classroom*. Retrieved 27 October 2020, from <https://www.theflippedclassroom.es/>

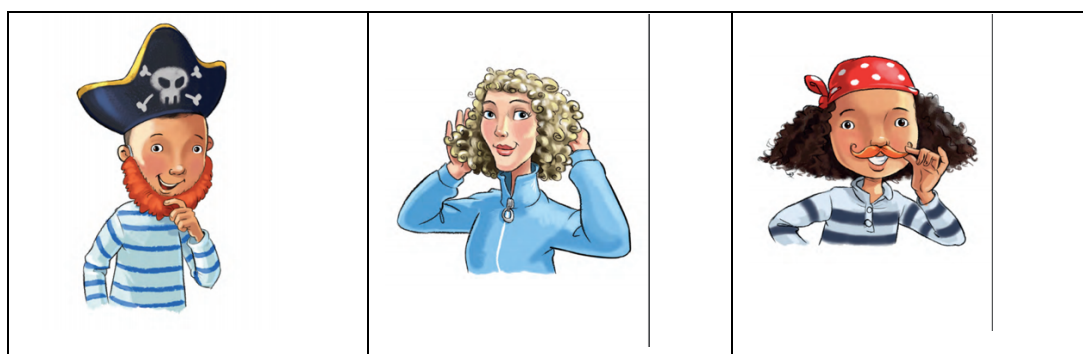
🎨 Lesson 2:

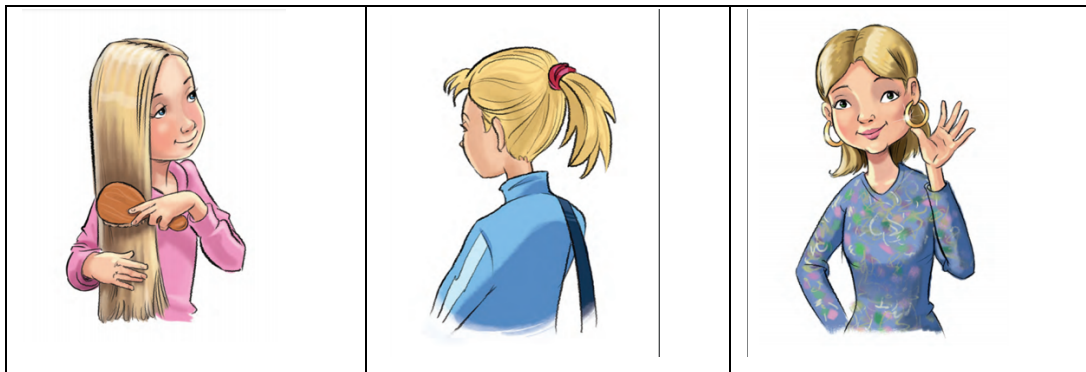
Activity 1: What does your friend look like? (Speaking and writing activity whole class) 15'

To revise the vocabulary previously introduced the day before, we will bring to class several cards with pictures of characters. We will remind the students of the structure we are working on which is “He/She has got/hasn’t got” so that we can make more complete sentences. Once we have reviewed these concepts, we will put the cards on the board and ask questions:

Has she got curly hair? (by pointing to the photo) Yes, she has/ no she hasn't

The student must answer and choose the next partner. Then they will put the date and make a short description in their notebooks too.





Images 8-13: Taken from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 24). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Teachers' Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

We must bear in mind that our student with Autism may feel slightly unmotivated if the activity is repetitive so we can use Disney characters in order to ask him:

Has Belle got long hair?

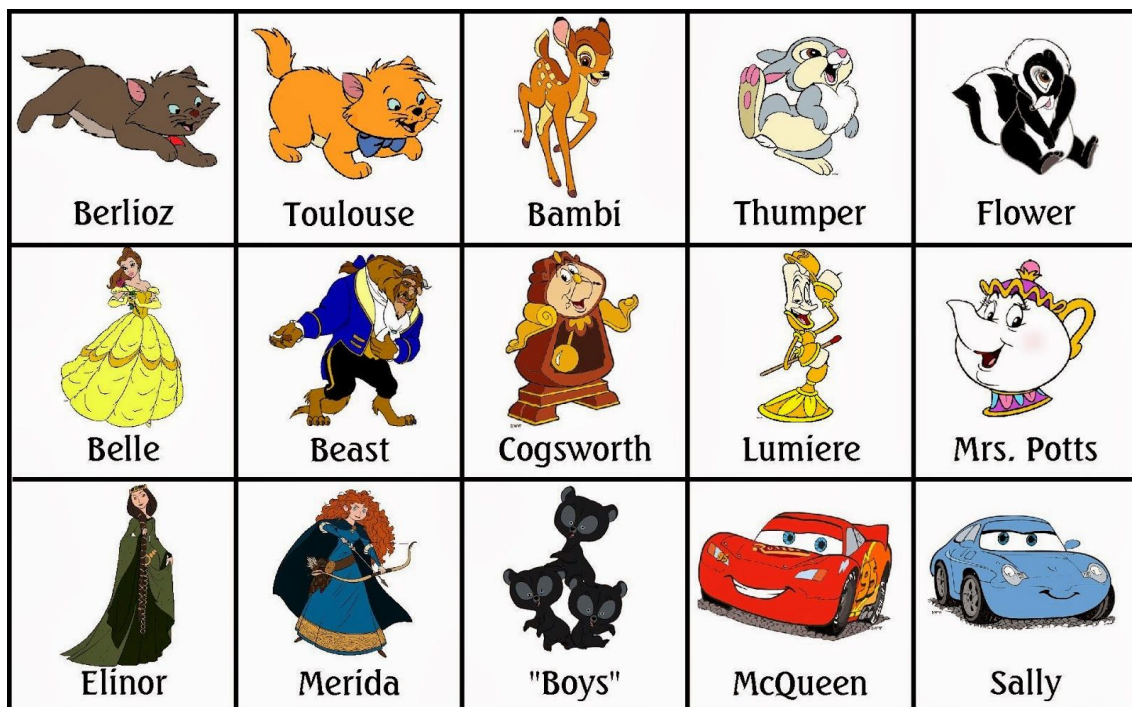


Image 14: Adapted from Laszlo, P. (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Disney Characters Guessing Game*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

After this activity participants will be paired up. The teacher is going to give each pair a card, trying to get only one to see it. Then, the partner will have to ask questions such as: "Have you got...?" in order to guess which character it is. After that, we will do the same with the student with Autism trying to anticipate the activity by explaining what question he must use before it.

Activity 2: Reading, writing and circle (individual activity) 10'

In the first activity we propose our students to observe the drawings on the sheet. They should read carefully the characteristics of each one and circle the right one. Once they have finished the activity, they can continue with the next one, trying to answer a series of questions about a picture as well as elaborating another set of questions concerning a different picture.

In the case of our student with Autism, we can propose that the fastest companion can help him by using the peer to peer technique, which deals with the figure of the peer tutor in order to explain and solve possible doubts.

1 Read, look and circle.

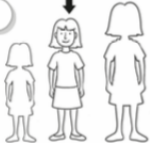
1  a He's got straight hair. b He's got curly hair.	2  a She's got blonde hair. b She's got brown hair.	3  a She's got a ponytail. b She's got a fringe.	4  a He's sporty. b He's smart.
5  a She's got a fringe. b She's got freckles.	6  a He's smiley. b He's sporty.	7  a He's got long hair. b He's got spiky hair.	8  a She's tall. b She's medium height.
9  a He's got a fringe. b He's got freckles.	10  a She's sporty. b She's smiley.	11  a He's tall. b He's medium height.	12  a She's got wavy hair. b She's got straight hair.

Image 15: Selected from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 1). *Reinforcement and Extension Resources*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

2 Look and answer Yes, he has or No, he hasn't. ✓



- 1 Has he got straight hair? _____
- 2 Has he got a moustache? _____
- 3 Has he got earrings? _____
- 4 Has he got a beard? _____

3 Communicate Write questions. Swap books and answer.



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

Image 16: Adapted from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 24). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Activity Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Activity 3: Speaking and writing activity 5'

The students will paste the following image with pictures of characters in their notebook. The teacher will write some sentences on the blackboard and they will have to join them with their corresponding sentences. However, our students with ASD can also do this with the help of the teacher or the student tutor.



Image 17: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 20). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Pupils' book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

- A) *This person has got long blonde hair. The person is happy.*
- B) *This person is serious. The person has got curly hair and a moustache.*
- C) *This person has got long brown and straight hair. The person is smiley.*
- D) *This person hasn't got black hair and spiky hair.*
- E) *This person has got short and curly hair. The person is not tall.*

Activity 4: Describing a friend (speaking game) 10'

The next activity is a class game in which students must guess which classmate is the one someone is describing. The teacher will start by giving an example and talking about a student like: "He's got curly hair. He's got blue eyes. He's smiley". Students will have to raise their hand and guess who it is. The student who gets it right will have to choose another partner.

However, since our ASD student may have some problems understanding the game, we can provide the cards and indicate which partner has this characteristic. In this way he can repeat the phrase *He's got* by pointing to the picture on the card.

Activity 5. Reviewing with ICT (10')

Bearing in mind that new technologies facilitate the assimilation of concepts, as well as improve the attention of our students, we propose that the last 10 minutes of the class be spent reviewing what has been learned. Therefore, we will carry out two interactive activities. In the first one the students will come out in pairs and they will have to find their equals. Each pair is allowed one attempt, otherwise it will be the turn of the next pair.

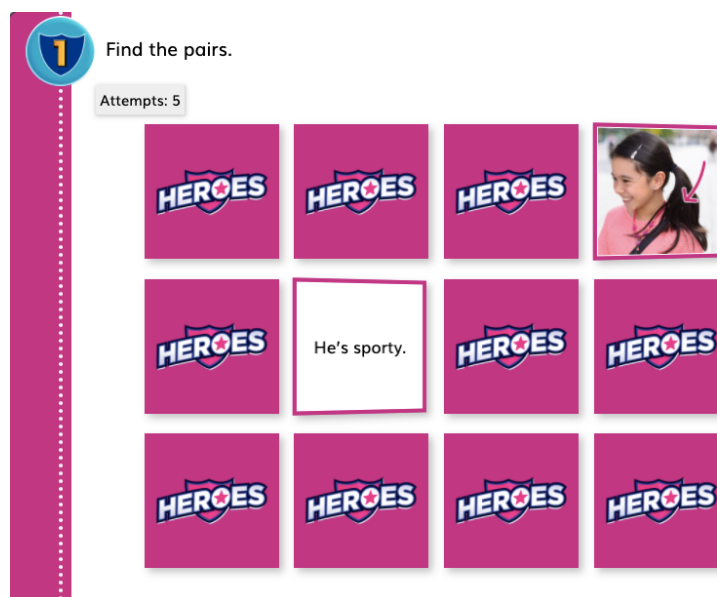


Image 18: Selected from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 4). *Pupils' Interactive and Digital Book*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

On the other hand, the second activity deals with a series of listening that must be linked to the image of the corresponding description. They can help each other as a couple.

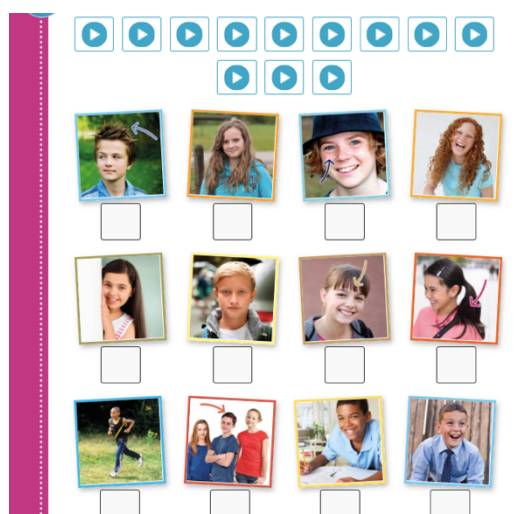


Image 19: Chosen from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 5). *Pupils' Interactive and Digital Book*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

For our autistic student we propose the same activity as it improves interaction with peers, as well as encourages social skills and communication. In case we notice some frustration or nervousness we can leave him/her time to play in the technological corner of the class so that he/she can do the activities by him/herself

Lesson 3

During today's session we are going to begin to work more deeply on emotions because, as we have analysed throughout the Master Dissertation, one of the areas with the greatest difficulty is understanding emotions or feelings. Having said that, we will start by reviewing concepts discussed previously, but introducing people's emotions and feelings.

Activity 1: How do you feel today? (Listening and speaking activity) 10'

This video link will be used for this exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkyKyVFnsS>

In the film we can see the characters of the film *Inside Out* which represents the main feelings that people have. Once the video has been shown we will show our students some cards with representative drawings of emotions or feelings. The students will have to repeat and try to memorize them.

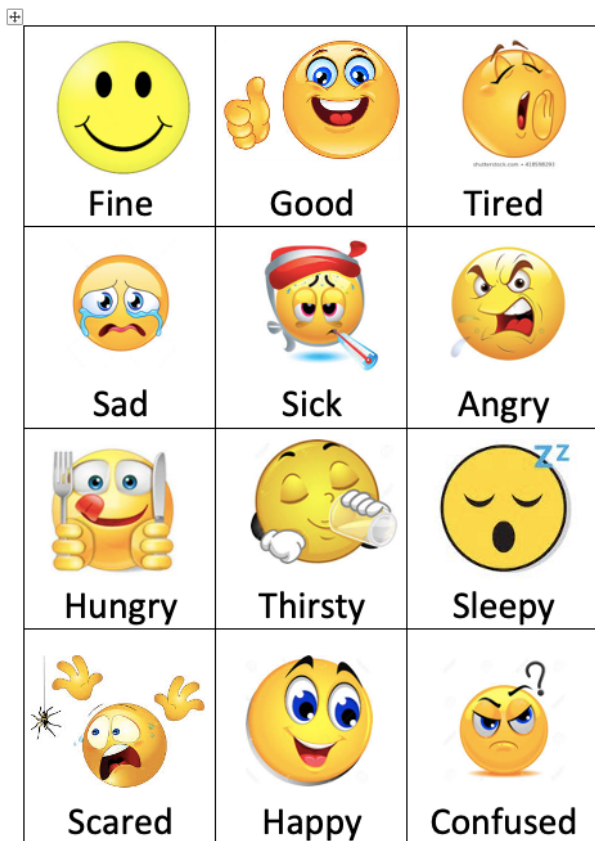


Image 20: Adapted from Laszlo, P (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *FeelingsFlashcards* Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

Activity 2: Miming Game in pairs (10')

Non-verbal communication is considered as a difficulty and a barrier for ASD, as we have discussed previously during the development of this project. Therefore, as a strategy and technique to promote the use of a foreign language, we want our students to begin to express themselves through their bodies and emotions.



Image 21: Selected from Depositphotos, I. (2014). *Niño cara sorprendido*., from <https://mx.depositphotos.com/>

Having said that, we will propose to our class that they try to remember the emotions that we have repeated previously. They will then be asked to form groups, although the teacher will change each shift, so as to encourage work with their peers and improve social skills among peers with whom they have less contact.

Once the students are ready, the teacher will give a card to a member of the team, named as a spokesperson, who will have to make gestures so that the rest of the students can guess what the emotion is. The points of each one will be written down on a board to make a final count when everyone has finished. However, we must bear in mind that the group in which the student with ASD is in is the one that we must pay the most attention to, especially because it is a question of non-verbal communication. Therefore, the teacher will accompany the student with Autism at all times to check that his or her reactions and communication are correct.

Activity 3 Picture dictation (Listening and writing activity) 5'

In the following activity, we propose to make a picture dictation. To do this, the students must draw the characteristics indicated by the teacher, for example he's got spiky hair including also the emotions (he's sad). In this way, they will have to draw first and then write down the characteristics of each one. As mentioned above, we will sit close to our student with ASD anticipating the activity and reminding them that they can look at the

vocabulary

words

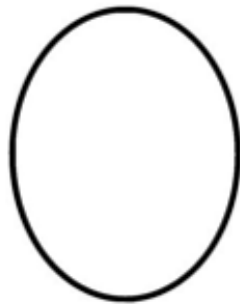
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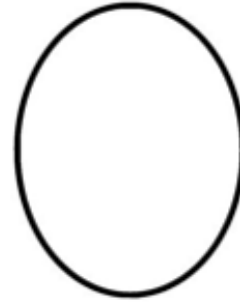
beforehand.

Picture Dictation Name: _____

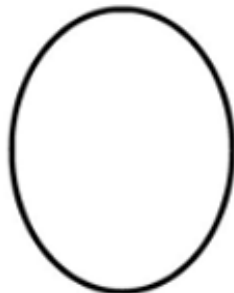
DRAW AND WRITE THE FEATURES



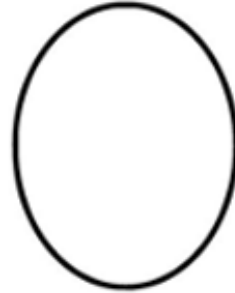
He/ She's got
He/ She is



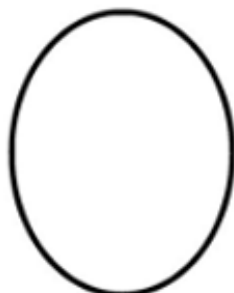
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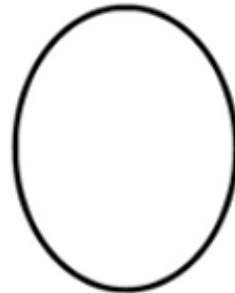
He/ She's got
He/ She is



.....
.....



He/ She's got
He/ She is



.....
.....

Image 22: Adapted from Laszlo, P (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Picture Dictation*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

In the case of our student with ASD, we can simply ask him/her to draw the emotions that the teacher has dictated in addition to reinforcing the contents with the following card.

On this card he should relate each feeling to the correct number. If he finishes it properly, he can be rewarded with a sticker or a smiley face.



Image 23: Adapted from Laszlo, P. (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Feelings Matching Activity*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

Activity 4: Remembering emotions (Listening and speaking board game) 10'

To review what we have learned today, we will make use of new technologies as a motivating and playful tool for our students. Therefore, we propose that students form pairs to listen to a feeling or emotion and join it with the correct drawing. We will use the British Council website, specifically the following link:

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/emotions-and-feelings-1>

We must take into account that in order to make our students feel more integrated with their classmates, we can make it easier by choosing their partner or just having a break before playing and interacting with their classmates.

At the same time, given that the Autistic child's attention is shorter, he can also be rewarded if he has worked correctly, giving the opportunity to choose a corner where he can work, whether it is the reading, game corner or others.

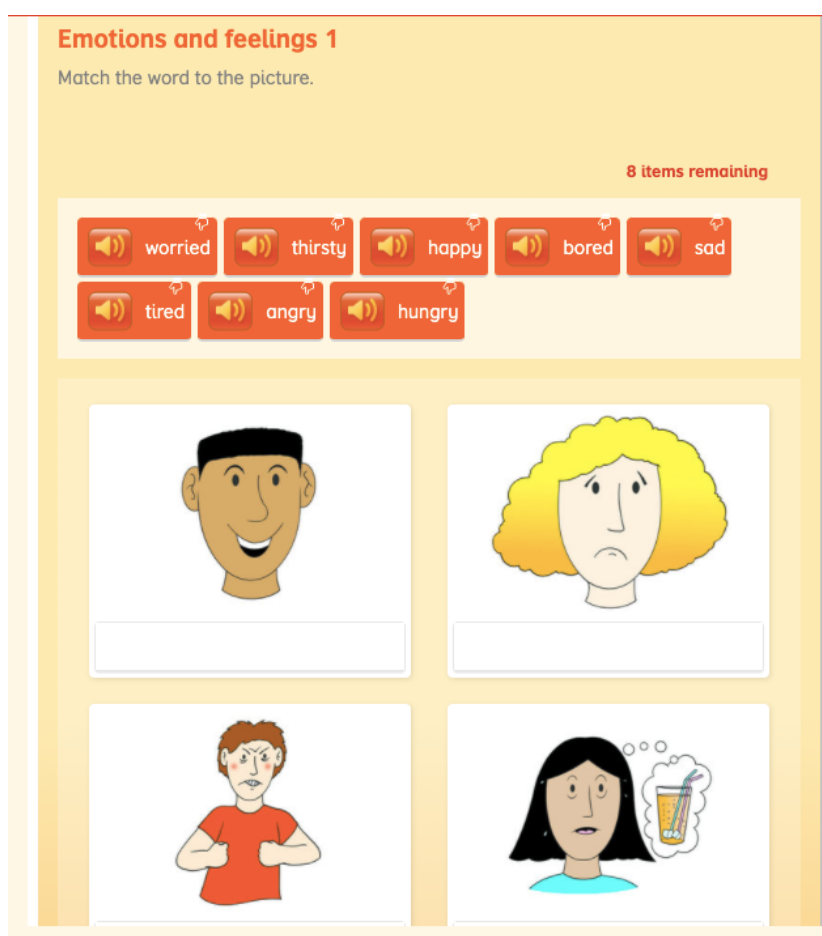


Image 24: British Council International Organization, U. (2012). *Emotions and Feelings 1 Game*, from <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/emotions-and-feelings-1>

🌈 Lesson 4

Activity 1: Before reading think and answer (5')

Before starting the reading comprehension, we will take a look at the comic book photos.

Students will have to answer the following questions:

- A. *How many characters appear in the story?*
- B. *Where does this story happen?*
- C. *What do you think the story is about?*
- D. *Which character DOES NOT appear in the story?*

A PUMPKIN- A GHOST- A WOMAN- CHILDREN

Activity 2: Listen and read the story 5'

Students will hear the following story twice” **THE NUMBER ONE FAN**”:

2 Lesson 5 Vocabulary and Story

The number
one fan

1 Communicate Do you like a famous person? Who?

2 Listen and point to a–f in the pictures. 🔊 25
Listen again and repeat.

a earrings
b a moustache
c a beard

d straight hair
e curly hair
f a ponytail

3 Listen and read. 🔊 30 🎧

1



Tamsin: Let's help my mum and dad in the shop.

Dylan: Yes, good idea. I love this shop. It has all my favourite clothes.

Ruby: Look at that pirate mask! It's great.

2



Dylan: Hey, look! It's Veronica Peel.

Ruby: Who's Veronica Peel?

Dylan: The tennis star!

Tamsin: Oh, she's famous!

Dylan: Yes! She's fantastic!

3



Tamsin: What's the matter, Veronica?

Veronica: Look! Photographers! I don't like photographers.

Photographers: Veronica! Veronica! Smile!

4



Veronica: Help! Where can I go?

Dylan: Hide in the fancy dress shop! Quick!

20 Vocabulary facial features

🎮
🎧

Images 25 and 26: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 21-22). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Pupils' Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>



Photographer 2: Where is she?
Dylan: Over there!
Ruby: Over there!
Photographer 1: Hey! She's in here.
 She's in the shop!



Photographer 1: Can you see her?
Photographer 2: No, I can't. Has she got a ponytail?
Photographer 1: No, she hasn't.
Mrs Green: Can I help you?



Photographer 2: Has she got curly hair?
Photographer 1: Yes, she has.
Photographer 2: Oh! Oops!
Mr Green: What are you doing?



Ghost: A - tish - oo!
Photographer 1: Bless you.
Ghost: Thank you.
Photographer 2: She isn't here.
 Let's go.
Tamsin, Ruby and Dylan: Bye!



Ghost: Bye! Phew!
Mrs Green: The ghost! The ghost can talk!
Veronica: I'm not a ghost.
 I'm Veronica Peel!
Mrs Green: Oh! Veronica Peel! Hello!



Veronica: Thanks for hiding me.
Dylan: Can I take a photo?
Tamsin and Ruby: Dylan! No!
Dylan: I'm your number one fan.
Veronica: It's OK. I don't like photographers, but I like fans!



What's your favourite part of the story?

Literacy information / digital

21

Activity 3: Speaking, reading and writing about the story 15'

Once we have read the story, we will ask our students to give the general idea of what happens in it. They will then have to arrange the sequence of images in the story by means of the following task:

The number one fan

Story Worksheet

2

1 Read the story again. Order the pictures.



2 Who says what? Match.

1 Let's help my mum and dad in the shop.

2 I don't like photographers.

3 The ghost can talk!

4 I'm your number one fan.

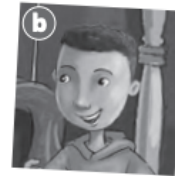


Image 27: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 2). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Teachers' Resources Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Since sequencing is a somewhat complicated task for our students with ASD, they can be given a series of cards with images of the reading that they order themselves so that they can check if they have understood the general idea of the story.

Activity 4 Act and do the Role Play! (10')

In order to improve expression, communication and interaction, the following activity will focus on role-playing. To do this we will divide the characters between the students in the class, including our student with Autism. We must explain very well that he has to read using gestures always helped by the teacher. In this way, social skills are also set in motion, as well as imaginative skills that favour the development of creativity among equals.

Activity 5 Correct the following mistakes and write true or false from the story 5'

In the next activity, students should correct the sentences taking into account what they have read in the story. However, given the complexity of the story, our student with ASD can adapt it by using drawings instead of letters to make it easier to understand.

1) Look at and correct the mistakes:

- A) Veronica has got long and straight hair.
- B) Dylan is scared at the end of the story.
- C) Ruby has got freckles and a fringe.
- E) The ghost is sad at the beginning.
- F) The photographer has got a read beard.
- G) Ms Green hasn't got blonde short hair.

2) Write True or False

The number one fan

2 Read the story again. Circle **True** or **False**.

1 Veronica is a famous tennis player.	True	False
2 The photographers want a photo of Veronica.	True	False
3 Veronica hides in the school.	True	False
4 The ghost says, 'Thank you.'	True	False
5 The ghost is Dylan.	True	False
6 Dylan can take a photo of Veronica.	True	False



Image 28: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 26). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Activity Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Activity 6 Homework! Writing 5-10'

For home they will be asked to choose a character from the story and make a brief description. They will have to indicate the physical appearance, as well as their state of mind. You can use the following template:

He / She is	_____
He's got	_____
He hasn't got	_____

He is	_____

Image 29: Adapted from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019: 27). *Amazing Rooftop 3 Activity Book*. Unit 3. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

• **WORKSHEET FOR OUR AUTISTIC CHILD**

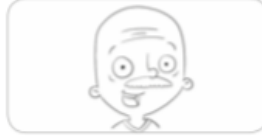
3
Reinforcement Worksheet



Name: _____
 Class: _____

1 Look and write.

long short hair straight hair curly hair a moustache a beard

 1 She's got _____ hair.	 2 He's got _____.	 3 _____.
 4 _____.	 5 _____.	 6 _____.

2 Read and tick (✓) or cross (X).

	
1 She's got long hair. ☐	4 He hasn't got short hair. ☐
2 She hasn't got fair hair. ☐	5 He's got a beard. ☐
3 She's got straight hair. ☐	6 He hasn't got dark hair. ☐

Image 30: Chosen from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017: 4). *Activity Book Resource*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Lesson 5

The end of the unit is coming up, so we must take into account what the final task or written test will be. Having said that, for the present unit, we will propose a final task that students will carry out during the last session.

Activity 1 Listen and sing the song 5'

The first activity we are going to do is to listen to a song. To do this we will bring to class the flashcards of the vocabulary we have worked on; freckles, short hair, curly hair, medium height... to take them out during the development of the song. The song is the following one:

*Hi! Today we are going to talk about
people look like*

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

*My name's Jan. I'M medium height
I've got long purple hair, a colour
that I like*

My eyes are green my skirt is blue

I'm wearing funky clothes

*I look really trendy from my head to
my toes*

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

*His name is Dima. He's looking
pretty good*

Her hair is short

He's wearing a top with a hood

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

Her name is Louise.

Her hair is long and brown

She's tall and look so cool.

*When she's walking around the
town.*

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

*Now here comes Wish, wearing his
favourite clothes*

*He's got black hair and his eyes are
brown*

He's got a piercing in his nose

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

Lyrics taken from: Cambridge English Online Ltd (n.d). Home[Youtube Channel].Retrieved from:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhWV4fzchq4>

Activity 2 Speaking and writing group activity 5'

Once we have heard the song twice, we will ask our students to put themselves in groups. We must bear in mind that our student with Autism may feel some discomfort when singing or interacting, so we must anticipate this and provide a device whereby he can

follow the song. Having said that, we will hand out to the class the following paper which contains the lyrics, but from which we have removed 8 words. Each team must pay special attention and complete the song properly if they want to win a badge.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE SONG! COMPLETE

Hi! Today we are going to talk about people look like

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

My name's Jan. I'm _____

I've got _____ purple hair, a colour that I like

My eyes are green my skirt is blue

I'm wearing funky clothes

I look really trendy from my head to my toes

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

His name is Dima. He's looking pretty _____

She's got _____ hair

He's wearing a top with a hood

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

Her name is Louise.

Her hair is long and brown

She's _____ and look so cool.

When she's walking around the town.

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

Now here comes Wish, wearing his favourite/clothes

He's got black _____ and his eyes are _____

He's got a piercing in his _____

What do you look like?

What colour is your hair?

What do you look like?

What clothes do you like to wear?

Image 31: Activity adapted from Cambridge English Online Ltd (n.d). Home[Youtube Channel].

Activity 3 Choose a character from the list and describe it! Writing activity 10'

Students will be able to choose one of the characters from the film Greg's Wimpy Kid film which appears on the following card. Then, they will be able to describe it in their notebook applying what they have learned, as well as trying to express their mood.

We will remind them of the structure previously: *Has he/ she got....? Is he/ she....?*



Image 32: Selected from Laszlo, P. (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Guess Who Game* Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

However, for our student with ASD, we have prepared the same activity but taking into account their interests and preferences. For this reason, we will give him the opportunity to choose a Disney character from the following sheet. Then, he will describe and indicate how he feels. In addition, with this activity we hope that he will try to imitate his mood in order to work on the non-verbal communication and social skills of these students. Before starting, we will also remind of the structure: *Has he/ she got? Is he/ she?*.

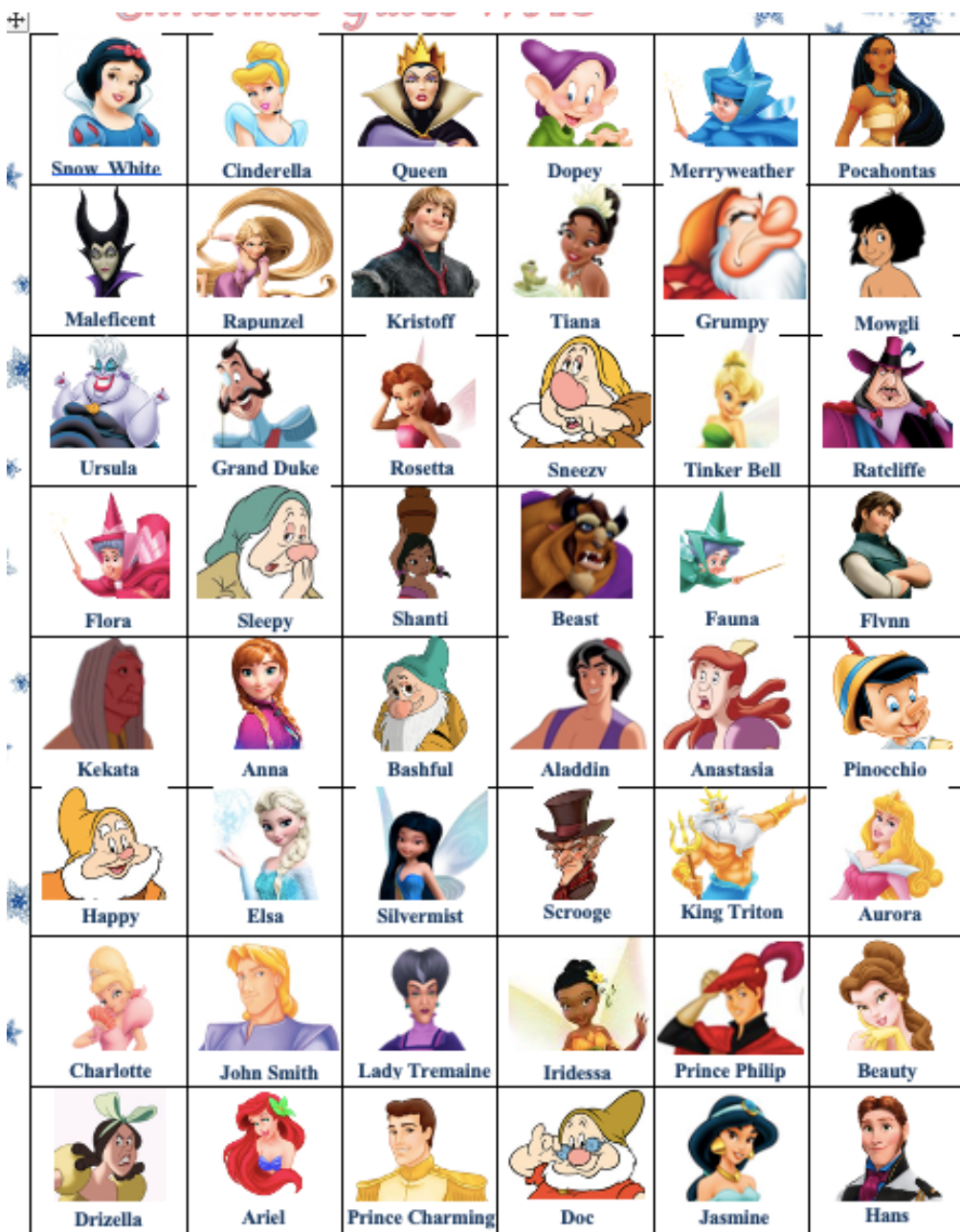


Image 33: Adapted from Laszlo, P. (2014: 1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Disney Who's Who Game*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

Activity 4 Who's Who game (Group activity) 15'

It is time to apply certain entertaining and motivating strategies within the foreign language class. Thus, as we have seen through this Master Dissertation, students with Autism are lacking in social skills as well as communicative intentionality beyond their immediate environment. Having said that, through this unit, we are going to achieve certain communication skills such as interacting, asking, singing, as well as non-verbal communication which will be activated within this game. As a result, we will have a

group of students who are more motivated to acquire a language, together with a pupil who is integrated during the normal development of the language, removing the barriers and difficulties which may arise during his teaching and learning process.

We will divide the class into several groups, forming pairs. These pairs will play at different stations situated throughout the class and which have different cards. Each group will make its own count of the points it makes in order to make a ranking. We can propose different themes such as Disney characters, story characters etc.

Finally, we must bear in mind that our students with ASD can participate as long as they are tutored by a peer to peer student who will help and guide them through the rules of the game. They will be able to write down in a notebook the phrases or words, as well as the successes they have had so that they can later reward them and give them their merited reward. We can use this type of flashcards.

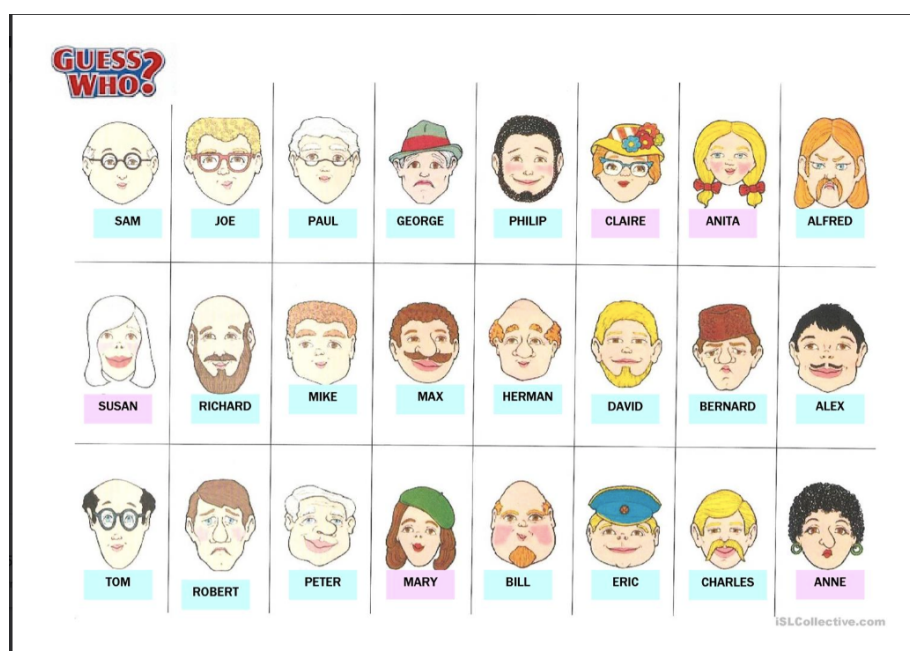


Image 34: Requena, D. (*Guess Who?* .Blog Agora Catala from <https://agora.xtec.cat/escolamartamata/massagrans/aa6/guess-who/>

Image 35: Selected from Engvalson, A. (23rd of July,2019). *Most People Can't Identify 25 Of These Pixar Characters — Can You?* Web. Retrieved 28 October 2020, from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/audreyworboys/most-people-cant-identify-25-of-these-pixar-characters-can>

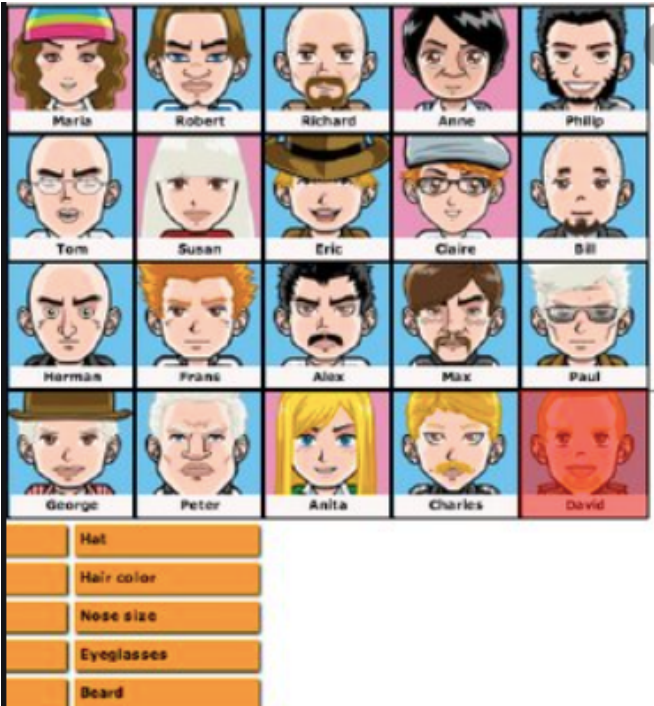


Image 36: Selected from Virvou, & Papadimitriou. (2014). Use of digital ‘Guess Who Board Game’ in teaching English. IISA 2014. Retrieved from:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269270762_Use_of_digital_%27Guess_Who_Board_Game%27_in_teaching_English.



Image 39: Chosen from Lawrenzlano. (31 st August,2015). *Guess Who? SUPERHEROES (RED)* by Lawrenzlano on DeviantArt. Retrieved 28 October 2020, from <https://www.deviantart.com/lawrenzlano/art/Guess-Who-SUPERHEROES-RED-557290266>

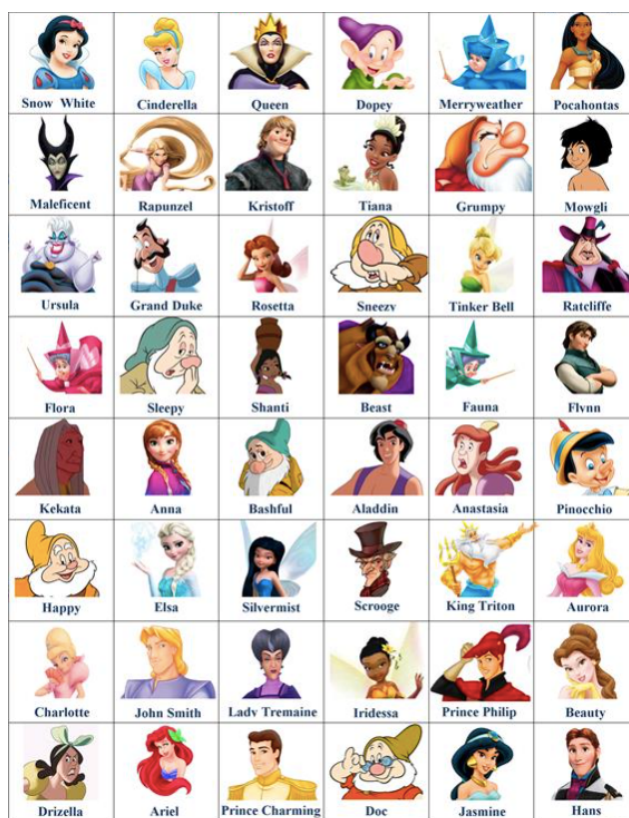


Image 38: Adapted from Laszlo, P (2014:1). *Hojas de trabajo ELE. Disney who's who game*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

Activity 5 Recognizing feelings. Speaking, reading and writing activity (5')

To close today's session, we are going to revise some concepts we have learnt, especially feelings. For this reason we have prepared the following photographs which we will give to our students.

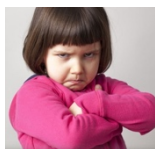


Image 39: Selected from: Caraballo Folgado, A. (14 th July,2017). *Guia Infantil* Web. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/autism-learning-foreign-languages.html>



Image 40: Taken from Gelpi Diaz, J. *Es.dreamstime.photos(n.d)*. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://es.dreamstime.com/fotos-de-archivo-libres-de-regal%C3%ADas-ni%C3%B1o-sorprendido-con-el-pelo-rubio-image19363738>



Image 41: Selected from Cuidate Plus (25th of October,2019). *Trucos para que los niños se adapten al cambio de hora*. Web Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://cuidateplus.marca.com/familia/nino/2019/10/25/trucos-ninos-adapten-cambio-hora-171163.html>



Image 42: Gelpi Diaz, J.(n.d) .Adorable niño hambriento en el momento de comer un sobre fondo blanco.123F web. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from https://es.123rf.com/photo_756608_adorable-ni%C3%B1o-hambriento-en-el-momento-de-comer-un-sobre-fondo-blanco-.html

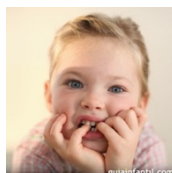


Image 43: Marciel, M. (14 th may,2015). *Aromaterapia para niños nerviosos*. Guia Infantil. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/autism-learning-foreign-languages.html>

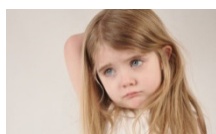


Image 44: Chando, M. (18 th of August,2018). *nina-triste* | Monserrat Chando, Psicología terapéutica web Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://www.montserratchando.com/fracaso-escolar-deficit-de-atencion-en-ninos-abusados/nina-triste/>

abusados/nina-triste/

We will give our students the following form to complete and paste into the notebook as a portfolio.

<i>How does these children feel?</i>	
-The girl n°1 is _____ She has got _____ She hasn't got _____	-The girl n°2 is _____ She has got _____ She hasn't got _____
-The boy n°1 is _____ He has got _____ He hasn't got _____	-The girl n°3 is _____ She has got _____ She hasn't got _____
-The boy n°3 is _____ He has got _____ He hasn't got _____	-The boy n°3 is _____ He has got _____ He hasn't got _____

Image 45: Selected from Laszlo, P (2014:1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Feelings description*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

However, for our autistic student, we must try to put the picture next to the question and thus adapt the task to his or her linguistic ability. In addition, we will ask you to surround the words instead of writing.

How does these children feel?

-The girl n°1 is



happy/sad/ angry
She has got a fringe/ a ponytail
She hasn't got blonde hair/ dark hair

-The girl n°2



is excited/ tired/ nervous
She has got long/ short hair
She hasn't got glasses/ tails

-The girl n°3 is sad/ happy/ hungry



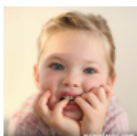
She has got straight/ wavy hair
She hasn't got green/ blue eyes

-The boy n°1



is tired / Surprised/ hungry
He has got spiky hair/ curly hair_
He hasn't got brown/blue eyes

-The boy n°2



is.
Nervous/ happy/ sad
He has got wavy / straight hair
He hasn't got freckles/ a fringe

The boy n°3 is hungry/ angry/sad



He has got long/ short hair

Image 46: Elaborated by myself Adapted from Laszlo, P (2014:1). Hojas de trabajo ELE. *Feeling worksheet*. Retrieved from: <https://es.islcollective.com/>

🌈 Lesson 6

In order to review the contents learned so far, we will make a revision card in class that will serve to reinforce the contents, structures and vocabulary. Given that throughout this Master Dissertation we have mentioned that it is important to anticipate the activities of our students with ASD, we will do very similar activities in class that will serve as a prelude to the final task.

Activity 1 Listen and number 5'

Listening

1 Listen and number.



/ 8 marks



Image 47: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019:36). *Amazing Rooftop 3. Tests' book*. Unit 3 Standard Test. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Activity 2 Read and write the correct letter 5-10'

Students should read each description and put the corresponding letter

Read and write the number.

/ 8 marks

- 1 She's got straight hair. It's black.
She hasn't got a ponytail.
- 2 He's got short hair. He hasn't got a beard. He's got a moustache.
- 3 He hasn't got straight hair.
He's got curly hair.
- 4 She's wearing black earrings and a grey dress.
- 5 She's wearing a white dress.
She's wearing gloves and a belt.
- 6 He's got a beard and a moustache.
He's got glasses, too.
- 7 She's got short hair. It's curly.
She's also got earrings.
- 8 He's wearing a mask. He's wearing a black sweater.



Image 48: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019:37). *Amazing Rooftop 3. Teacher Tests' book*. Unit 3 Challenge Test. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Activity 3 Read and write the questions 5'

Write the questions.

/ 4 marks

- 1

b	a	e
d	r	

Has he got a _____? Yes, he has.
- 2

c	y	u	h	i
l	r		r	a

 _____ Yes, he has.
- 3

h	t	u	s	o
a	m	e	c	

 _____ Yes, he has.
- 4

y	t	p	o	l
a	n	i		

 _____ No, he hasn't.



Image 49: Selected from Phillips and Palin, S. (2019:37). *Amazing Rooftop 3. Teacher Tests' book*. Unit 3 Standard Test. Retrieved from: <https://oxfordpremium.oupe.es/app/>

Activity 4 Order the words. Writing activity 5'

4 Order the words to make questions.

1 Have / curly / got / hair? / straight or / you

2 Have / blonde / got / you / hair?

3 best friend / Has / your / freckles? / got

Image 50: Chosen from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017:12). *Teachers' Test Book*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Activity 5 Writing. Look and describe 10' Complete.

Tall- happy- blonde-freckles- sporty- medium height- curly-spiky hair

3 Look and write.



Tony is _____. He has got
_____ hair and _____

Archie is very _____. He is
_____ and he has got _____
hair

Lucas is _____. He hasn't got
_____ but he is _____ too.

Image 51: Adapted from Mohammed and Ormerod (2017:13). *Teachers' tests resource*. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillaneducationeverywhere.com/>

Activity 6 Speaking. Talking about photos 5'



Image 52: Taken from Linardo, A. (n.d,2012). *Niños Sonriendo - Fotos de Alegres Bebes*. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://www.fotoblogx.info/2012/02/ninos-sonriendo-fotos-de-alegres-bebes.html>



Image 53: Selected from Freepik company. (n.d,2010). *Hombre Joven Serio En Gafas Con Barba*. Freepik.es. Retrieved 28 October 2020, from https://www.freepik.es/fotos-premium/hombre-joven-serio-gafas-barba-no-hay-emocion-cara_9393688.htm



Image 54: Taken from Barrios Bresciano, C.(n.d,2020) Tristeza en los niños: *Síntomas y causas de este sentimiento*. Sapos y princesas web. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://saposyprincesas.elmundo.es/consejos/psicologia-infantil/tristeza-en-ninos/>

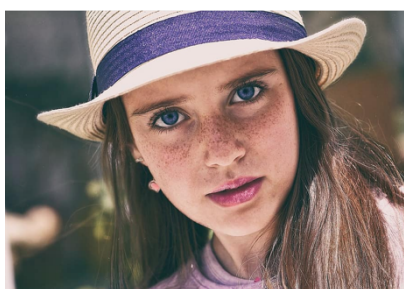


Image 55: Selected from Pikist(n.d). *DMCA report*. Pikist.com. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://www.pikist.com/free-photo-ssacq/es>

These activities would be reviewed for the final test which would be very similar. In addition, as a final task, students will be asked to describe a member of their family and hand it in. In this way the students will complete the portfolio and conclude the unit.

It should be noted that we will adapt the number of activities to be carried out to our student with ASD, anticipating and explaining that they should describe a member of their family using phrases and structures already worked out.

To conclude, we would add up the points obtained in Class Dojo and if the student has achieved the established objectives, we would leave him/her some free play time in the corners that we have arranged in the classroom. In this way he can choose either play time with the ICT, or to do puzzles, reading, etc.

Evaluation

When acquiring a language, it is also important to consider the evaluation instruments as well as the process. Therefore, **direct observation** will be the fundamental element that we will use to assess whether the competences and objectives have been satisfactorily achieved. Furthermore, it should be noted that this evaluation will be **formative** for both the student on a personal level and for the teacher. And finally, it will be **continuous**, establishing three moments: initial evaluation (at the beginning of the unit or year) continuous; during the development of the class, the performance of activities, tasks, games, interaction, etc., and final evaluation where we can check whether the objectives have been achieved or not and which we should continue working on. In the same line, the variety of instruments and resources for assessment is wide so we can also use a series of headings in which we will analyse the degree of acquisition of each one of them from a series of items. Likewise, these **rubrics** can include oral expression, written expression, oral comprehension or behaviour. In addition, we will also use the **teacher's notebook** as a class diary where we can write down anecdotes and events that have occurred, **self-evaluation sheets** to assess our own progress and the **final task** as a way of assessing whether we have achieved the objectives set at the beginning of the unit. Without forgetting to mention that in relation to our student with ASD we are going to pay special attention to their behaviour board, digital ClassDojo application and non-verbal expression rubrics such as the following one:

Criteria					
	 4	 3	 2	 1	
Body language	Movements are fluid helping audience to understand them	Made movements and gestures that enhanced articulation	Very little movements or gestures.	No movement or body gestures	
Eye contact	Maintenance of eye contact the majority of time	Good eye contact with the rest of the audience	Display minimum eye contact with the rest of classmates	Students don't maintenance eye contact with the audience	
Introduction and closure	Student can present and opening or closure to catch the attention of the rest of classmates.	Students remained clear introduction and closure	Students only use clearly introduction or closure but not both	Students don't use an introduction or closure in his/her exposition	
Fluency	Use of fluency and direct speech with a perfect intonation.	Satisfactory fluency and direct speech but with correct intonation	Correct fluency but not with a direct speech.	Low fluency with short direct speech not using an understandable intonation	
Expression	Student displays relax and self-confidence without any mistake	Students feel relax but with not totally selfconfidence	Displays mild tension producing intonation mistakes.	Tension and nervous is obvious making mistakes	
Voice	Employment of a loud and understandable tone of voice during all the exposure.	Use of a tone of voice medium loud and understandable	Use of a quiet tone of voice although understandable.	Consistently use of a monotonous voice.	

Evaluation Rubric 1: (My own Creation)

Attitude and Interaction Rubric

Criteria					Points
	4	3	2	1	
Cooperation in group	Student participates and collaborate completely with his/her partners	Student participates and collaborate usually with his/her partners	Student doesn't often collaborate and participate in group activities.	Student hardly ever or never wants to participate and collaborate with others	
Interest in class	Student shows and maintain interest almost time	Student maintains interest in class in part times	Student shows interest in class few times	Student doesn't show any interest on the class	
General attitude	Student presents a good attitude in foreign language classroom	Student presents a correct attitude in foreign language classroom	Student presents a difficult attitude in foreign language class but sometimes	Student presents a bad attitude in foreign language classroom	
Motivation in class	Student feels very motivate and he/she wants to participate all the time in classroom activities	Student feel motivate and he/she wants to participate sometimes in classroom activities	Student doesn't feel motivate but he/she tries to participate	Student feels unmotivated and he/she doesn't want to participate in classroom activities	
Respect and help other classmates	Student respects and helps other classmates always the teacher indicates.	Student respects and helps other classmates sometimes	Student often respects other classmates with the attention of teacher	Student hardly ever respects or help always with the attention of the teacher	
Explorer Diary	Students always brings the completely explorer diary to the class with proposed activities.	Student sometimes brings the explorer diary to the class with proposed activities	Student sometimes forgets to bring the Explorer diary complete	Student often forgets to bring the diary and also the activities.	
					Total→

Evaluation Rubric 2: (My own Creation)

Attention to Diversity

As we have mentioned throughout this Master dissertation, communication with Autistic students must follow a routine and anticipation. Therefore, during the normal development of the class as well as throughout the unit we will have pictograms (as mentioned above PECS) facilitating understanding and interaction with them. Here are some pictures and examples of how the board and pictograms would be organized, which can be used:



Image 56: Palau and Rodriguez, S. (2nd of September, 2019). *ARASAAC Materiales*. Gobierno de Aragón. Web from <https://arasaac.org/materials/es/1781?>



Images 57 and 58: Palau and Rodriguez, S. (20 th September,2020). *ARASAAC pictogramas inglés*. Gobierno de Aragón.Web. Retrieved 29 October 2020, from <https://arasaac.org/materials/es/1781?>

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Having investigated the question of teaching and learning a second language in children with Autism, I have found many limitations in doing so. Firstly, the number of information, articles, journals, other works and so on have not been as abundant as I had expected. On the one hand, there are many authors who have researched the possible origins of ASD, typology, the development of communicative and social skills, as well as their different behaviours, but there is scarce information on the teaching of languages and its level of effectiveness. As we have seen throughout this work, there are many guidelines, strategies, techniques, etc. which should be used in the classroom, but when it comes to acquiring a language, some of them may be more difficult to achieve. Similarly, there are no scientific or empirical studies showing that these children, despite their difficulties or lack of skills, are able to acquire the language or not. Therefore, since school is now an inclusive place, it is necessary to carry out certain research, studies and experiments in order to demonstrate the ability of students with ASD to learn in any given area. Despite their limitations, as we have seen throughout their work, they are students who can be integrated fully with their peers, always bearing in mind that their communication system and work methods will always be adapted.

On the other hand, I have been aware that some authors such as Wire or Baso have placed special emphasis on methods and strategies which can be put into practice in the classroom, thus facilitating the development of language skills in a second language. Even so, these contributions are quite brief, giving general guidelines in terms of organisation, planning, evaluation and attention, which thanks to other studies have been completed. For this reason, when it comes to caring for and teaching a student with ASD, we must take into account certain factors such as their particular characteristics, environment, family cooperation and relationship with peers. Therefore, given that the authors consulted postulate a positive rate of development and work, it will be possible to remove those barriers or difficulties that these children present, favouring the acquisition of English within a motivating framework adapted to each individual's characteristics.

7. CONCLUSION

Assuming that, Autism Spectrum Disorder is currently one of the most frequent disorders in the educational field, it is necessary to investigate and research about it in order to shed some light including attention to diversity on those Autistic students. At the same time, numerous authors have begun to point towards new approaches and horizons, favouring the integration of these students in any educational field, more specifically in the teaching of foreign languages. Following the words of Rita Jordan (2007: 13), the more our teaching recognises and respects diversity, the easier this will be" so, as a consequence, the better the process of adaptation and inclusion will be, bearing in mind the fact that the teacher's primary objective is to provide all accessible resources, different methodologies and necessary attention taking into account the characteristics of students with Autism. In this way, according to the same author, there is a process of research for teachers in which providing important linguistic, social and creative skills will improve the teaching and learning process of these students. Interaction with peers and the development of values such as respect and tolerance towards peers are also beneficial to ASD children in terms of avoiding these communicative and interactional barriers.

Since it is important to know the characteristics of our students, as well as the possible barriers or difficulties that can be generated, it is precisely what I have achieved with my work, providing certain knowledge of Autistic children's needs as well as to make known systems, methodologies and strategies which will facilitate communication and language acquisition, by helping to create a comfortable and satisfactory environment where ASD students are totally integrated. Along the same lines, my Master Dissertation is informative in nature, with the aim of serving as a guide at the time of programming, organising or sequencing foreign language classes, which favours the education and integration of these children with the rest of their classmates and teachers. For this reason and given the complexity of the subject, it is of vital importance that each teacher is committed to taking responsibility when an Autistic student is immersed within his or her classroom. So, the teacher needs to carry out exhaustive and appropriate research to solve any problems during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is also necessary to adapt our subject and practice to the ASD's needs with the objective of achieving the goals previously set up. However we must be aware of that they can fail, so the lessons or methodologies which have been used must be readjusted.

Finally, taking into account the variety of communication systems, resources, and activities that can be implemented within the language class, it is necessary for us as teachers to be aware of the use of them. Besides, in order to facilitate and promote communication, interaction and creativity development in students with Autism, teachers should not forget that they are part of the integral learning of other areas. In this way, our students will feel that they belong to the class group, connecting with their peers and also enjoying learning a language such as English, which is usually a very pleasant subject for children with ASD.

From this moment, my perspective as an English teacher of those Autistic children has changed, because with this work I have been able to become a little more sensitive to their needs and characteristics, which will facilitate my intervention during the teaching and learning process by promoting the inclusion and passion that I have for these children. It will be a challenge and a pleasure for me to put into practice what I have learned so far favoring an inclusive and equitable classroom climate, especially in the foreign language field.

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