

Analysis of the teaching methods, approaches and techniques employed in Magic Book 2

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to reflect on three lessons taught to Young Learners and identify the teaching approaches, methods and techniques used. In the first part, there is a description of the teaching situation. In the second part, there is an analysis of the teaching methods, approaches and techniques used, while the extent to which they agree with how learners learn L2 is presented, too. In the third part, there is an activity suggested to supplement the lessons.

1. Description of the teaching context

Magic Book 2 (MB2) is intended for Young Learners attending the third grade of Greek State primary School (Alexiou & Mattheoudakis, 2015). The group's competence level is A1 (CEFR, 2010), since learners can understand short phrases around topics familiar to them, while they are introduced to literacy (reading-writing) (Gregory, 2008).

2. Teaching methods, approaches and techniques used in the 3rd unit of MB2

MB2 is a child-centered book, appropriate to learners' needs, interests and experiences, maximizing learners' language acquisition (Slabakova, 2016). Both the whole book and the third unit of MB2 called 'The ant and the cricket' follow the story-based framework (suitable to YL) as they are exposed to stories in their L1 (Ellis & Brewster, 2002), while the narration and storytelling techniques are apparent. Additionally, topic vocabulary (numbers-seasons) is taught in context through context-based texts and activities, while most of the activities invite learners to experiment (Fahim & Vaezi, 2011) working collaboratively in groups to perform the tasks developing many of their cognitive, metacognitive and interactional skills and finally, learn in an enjoyable way (Cameron, 2001).

2.1 The teaching methods and techniques employed

The third unit of MB2 is subdivided into three reading lessons, each one including a reading text and some relevant activities.

In the first activity of the first lesson, learners are supposed to look at the pictures, calculate and tell the answers aloud. The method employed is Task-based-language teaching as learners work collaboratively towards the completion of a task and present their findings in class, while the theory used is Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (1983), as they use their logical-mathematical intelligence to deal with the task (Appendices, p.VI). In the second and third activity, where learners are asked to listen to some vocabulary items (seasons), show the correct picture and repeat the word or say the tongue twister respectively, the Audiolingual method is followed. According to it, words are modeled, imitated and repeated by learners while the emphasis is on pronunciation (Alexiou & Mattheoudakis, 2013: 49). The theory used is Behaviorism as according to Pavlov's principle of repetition, learners succeed in learning new items through repetition (Williams & Burden, 1997: 5-13), learning in this way L2 (Appendices, p.VI). In the fourth activity, learners are asked to mime (sleep), while their classmates guess what they are doing. The method used is the Direct Method (guessing, oral presentation, realistic situations, such as walk) (Appendices, p.VII). The theory used is Vygotsky's Social Constructivism as learners interact in short dialogues, learning new linguistic items that they wouldn't have on their own (Zone of Proximal Development) in a supportive environment of positive reinforcement (Cameron, 2001). Also, Gardner's intelligence theory is followed (1983) as learning is delivered in ways that can trigger learners. In this case, learners use their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and the teaching process is enriched through their experiences (Sternberg), which is the most successful way for a YL to learn L2 (Dendrinis, 2013). In the fifth activity, learners act-out-the story in groups. The method followed is the Task-Based Language Teaching, while the learning theories are Social Constructivism (pair-work) and Multiple Intelligences (kinesthetic), as learners engage in a role-playing (ant-cricket) using L2 (Van den Branden, 2006) (Appendices, p.VII).

In the first activity of the second lesson, learners are asked to read the text, look at the visual elements and replace them with vocabulary from the TL. The method used is TBL (reasoning-gap task), while the theory employed is Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (visual-spatial), as learners produce new items derived from pictures (Appendices, p.IX). In the second, learners are asked to find the wrong number in every line. So, the methods followed are TBL (problem solving/ inductive task) and Multiple Intelligences (logical-mathematical) (Appendices, p.IX). In the third task, each learner is supposed to describe a character and another one to guess which character is described. The method used is TBL, as learners exchange information and discover new things through some given information and the theory used is Social Constructivism (interaction) (Appendices, p.X). In the fourth task, learners are required to listen and choose the correct picture. The theory used is Bruner's Discovery Learning (problem solving) and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (aural).

in the first activity of the third lesson, learners look at the pictures and call out the correct season. The method used is Direct method (visual elements/ prediction) and the theory is Multiple Intelligences, as learners' visual-spatial intelligence is employed to capitalize on information coming from pictures (Appendices, p.XII). In the second, learners are asked to look at the pictures and mark them using T/F. The method followed is the Task-Based (problem-solving), while the theory is Multiple Intelligences (linguistic-visual), as they must read the statements based on the visual elements and complete the task (Appendices, p.XII). In the third task, learners are asked to say a tongue twister. The method used is Audiolingual and the theory is Behaviorism (Appendices, p.XII). The fourth task is TBL as learners follow certain steps to play a boardgame, while the theory is Social Constructivism as they cooperate (Zone of Proximal development) (Appendices, p.XIII).

2.2 The teaching approaches and techniques employed

MB2 is a student-centered book as learning is personalized and adapted to learners' needs and pre-existing knowledge (Slabakova, 2016). It is a content-based book, whose purpose is to use language meaningfully, develop learners' interaction and learn through experience (Experiential Approach) (Fahim & Vaezi, 2011). It also follows the Lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) as the majority of activities are meaningful and aim to make learners aware of the use of various lexical items in context leading to real communication.

The third unit of MB2 follows the Eclectic Approach, a combination of teaching methods and approaches to achieve all the goals set (motivation, cognitive skills) (Alexiou, 2015; Kumaravadivelu, 1994). This combination has numerous cognitive and emotional advantages for learners (Resnick, 1979; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1991) among which their interaction and holistic development. The approaches employed are the Natural, Phonics, Cooperative and the Personalized Approach.

Regarding Phonics Approach, it engages learners to decode words by sounds rather than recognizing words as a whole (Bald, 2007:10), while simultaneously learners apply this knowledge when reading. This approach is profound in the second and third activity of the first lesson and in the third activity of the third lesson, as the focus is on the correct pronunciation of specific words, while this is mostly achieved through exposure and the repetition technique (Appendices, p.VI, XII).

Another approach is the Cooperative learning, since learners work in groups, developing their interaction-interpersonal skills (Richards & Rogers, 2014). It is found in the fourth activity of the first lesson and in the fifth activity of the first lesson, where learners work in groups (Appendices, p.VII). Additionally, in the third activity of the second lesson they work collaboratively describing people and in the fourth activity of the third lesson, they engage in a game working in groups (Appendices, p.X, XIII).

Moreover, Natural approach is profound, as learners engage in game-like activities, problem-solving tasks while the purpose is to motivate the use of the second language and decrease their stress levels, maximizing thus L2 acquisition. It is followed in the first (problem-solving) and in the fourth task of the first lesson (pantomime), in the second (problem-solving) and in the third activity of the second lesson (grammar-vocabulary practice and a game-like activity) and in the fourth activity of the third lesson (boardgame, activation of grammar-vocabulary in a playful way) (Appendices, p.VI, VII, IX, X, XIII).

Finally, the Personalized Education Approach is followed as learning is adapted to learners' needs and strengths, while their pre-existing knowledge seems to be a key element in language learning. This approach is profound in the first task of the second lesson (text full of pictures activating learners' prior knowledge) and in the first and second activity of the third one (Appendices, p.IX, XII).

2.3 How much these methods/ approaches agree with how learners learn L2

A wide range of methods and approaches are used in the particular unit of MB2. Some of their features and techniques leading YL to successful L2 learning are imitation and repetition of lexical items, learning through experiences, action, games, motivation, cooperation-interaction, activation of background schemata and presentation of new knowledge in context familiar to learners (stories) (Cameron, 2001). So, the activities are mostly interactive and logical-reasoning, developing learners' cognitive skills, leading them to foreign language learning through many techniques, such as the storytelling, narration, prediction, repetition and imitation (habit formation) technique.

3. Suggested activity

In this part, an activity is proposed (Appendices, p.III). to substitute the fifth activity of the first lesson, as it lacks real communicative purpose and learners can only use specific phrases to act-out the story. According to this, learners are asked to participate in a role-playing in groups and act-out a part of the story freely, developing their interaction-collaboration skills, using language meaningfully, learning through experiencing, while simultaneously there is activation of background schemata, as they can recall prior-knowledge when necessary. The method used is TBL, while the theories are Social Constructivism and Multiple Intelligences (kinesthetic). Finally, the approaches used are the Cooperative and the Communicative approach, as there is real communicative purpose.

The particular unit of MB2 follows a variety of teaching methods and approaches, while it is composed of activities requiring repetition, miming, cooperation, action and prediction. Finally, a supplemented activity was proposed improving some of learners' skills, such as their interaction and communication.

Finally we have to underline the role of digital technologies in education domain that is very productive and successful, facilitates and improves the assessment, the intervention and the educational procedures via Mobiles [22-30], various ICTs applications [31-67], AI & STEM ROBOTICS [68-86], and games [87-90]. Additionally the combination of ICTs with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation and emotional intelligence cultivation [91-136] as well as with environmental factors and nutrition [18-21], accelerates and improves more over the educational practices and results, especially the language learning domain.

5. References

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Appendix I: Supplementary Activity

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROCEDURE</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
Group Activity	Learners read all the three reading texts around the fable ‘The Ant and the Cricket’. Then, they are asked to take part in a role-playing activity pretending to be the ant and the cricket and two other forest animals. For this task, they are supposed to work collaboratively in groups of four and choose a part of the story to act-it -out in a meaningful way.	30 min.	Learners read the three reading texts around the fable ‘The Ant and the Cricket’. Then, their teacher asks them to take part in a role-playing activity. So, she divides the class in groups of 4 and she assigns them roles (ant, cricket, two other forest animals). Then, she explains that they must work collaboratively and choose a part of the story to act-it -out in a meaningful way.	<p>To practise the pre-taught vocabulary, activating their background schemata</p> <p>To develop learners’ cooperative skills</p> <p>To develop their cognitive skills</p> <p>To engage Ls in a playful, creative and motivating activity.</p>

Appendix ii :The 3rd unit of Magic Book 2

Unit 3: The ant and the cricket

Look, Lenal It's Aesop!

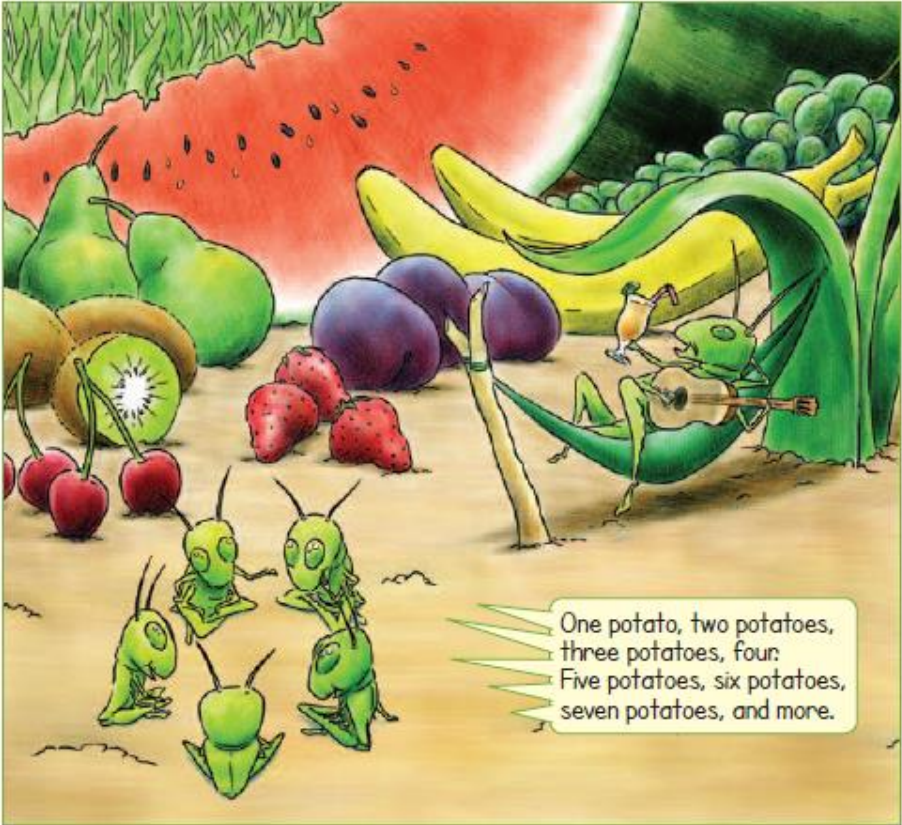

Hello, children. Let me tell you a story about the ant and the cricket.

Unit 3

The ant and the Cricket

Lesson 1: It's summer

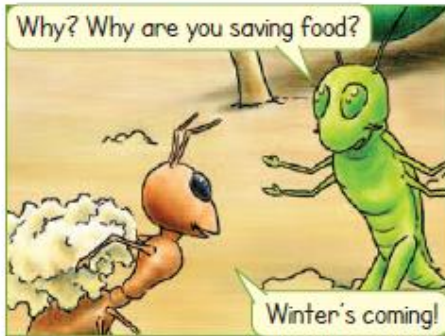
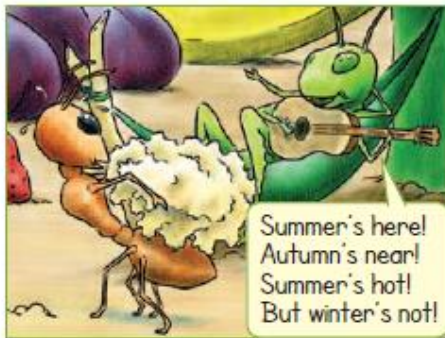
Listen and read.



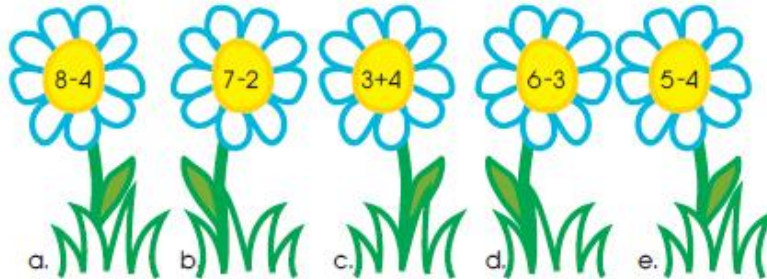
One potato, two potatoes,
three potatoes, four
Five potatoes, six potatoes,
seven potatoes, and more.

47

Ants: The ant and the cricket



1. How much is it? Look and say.



2. Listen and say.



3. Can you say it?



Jack and Jill jump for joy in June and July.

Unit 5: The ant and the cricket



4. Let's mime.

- sleep
- read a book
- play
- walk
- eat pears
- sail



Are you sleeping?

Yes / No



5. Tell the story.

Why?



A



Winter's coming!

What are you doing?



B



I'm saving food.

It's hot!



C



Don't be lazy!

Summer's hot!



D

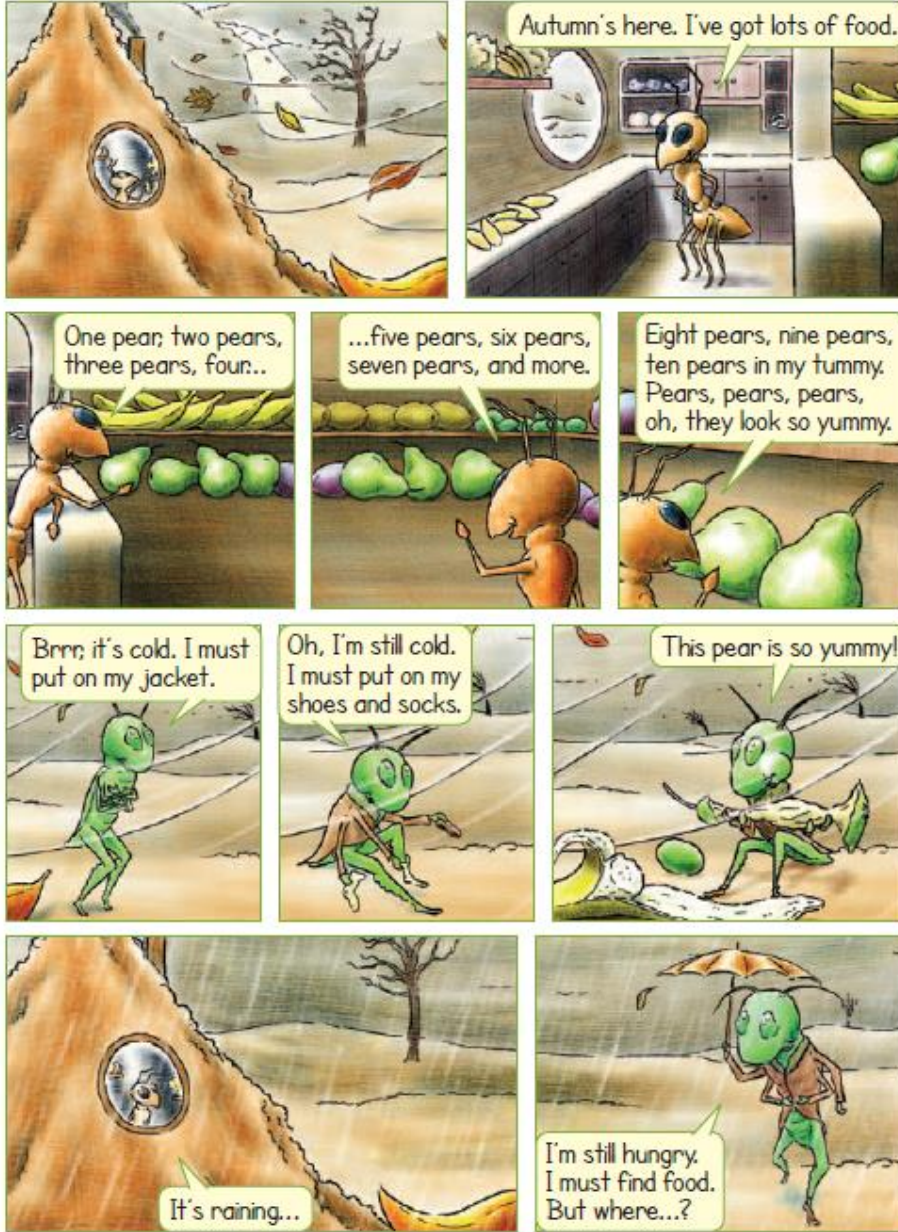


D

Winter's not!

Lesson 2: Autumn's here!

Listen and read.



birds, the air and the cricket



1. Read and say.

<p>I'm hungry! I'm  hungry !</p> <p>I want food in my  !</p> <p>The  look so yummy.</p> <p>I can eat 1, 2 or 3 !</p>	<p>I'm hungry! I'm  !</p> <p>I want food in my  !</p> <p>The  are yummy.</p> <p>I can eat 3, 4 or more!</p>
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2. I spy the wrong number.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 |  |
| b. | 2 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 10 | |
| c. | 6 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 10 | |
| d. | 10 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 6 | |
| e. | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 10 | |
| f. | 10 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 2 | |

Unit 3: The ant and the cricket

3. Guess who.



I'm wearing a brown jacket and green shoes.

You're Mr Cricket.



4. Listen and choose.



1 a b

2 a b

3 a b

4 a b

5 a b

6 a b

Lesson 3: It's winter

Listen and read.

The comic strip consists of ten panels arranged in three rows. The first row has three panels. The second row has three panels. The third row has two panels. A green arrow points from the top row to the bottom row.

Panel 1: A green ant character is in a snowy field. A snowman is in the background. The ant says: "It's snowing again. I don't like winter!"

Panel 2: The ant is in a green field with a blue sky. The ant says: "I like spring when the sky is blue..."

Panel 3: The ant is in a field with a bright sun. The ant says: "...and I like the sun in the summer, too."

Panel 4: The ant is in a snowy field. The ant says: "Winter is cold. Spring is warm. Summer is hot. Autumn is not."

Panel 5: An orange cricket is sitting in a green armchair in a room with a fireplace. The cricket says: "Mmm, yummy. I've got lots of food for the winter"

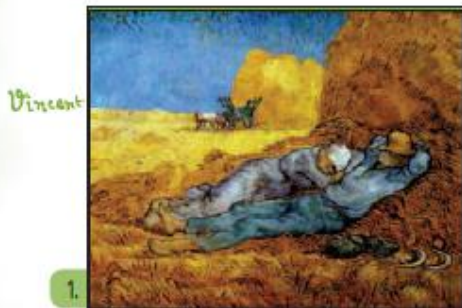
Panel 6: The ant is at the entrance of a hole in the ground. The ant says: "Mr Ant! Mr Ant! I'm so hungry! Please give me some food."

Panel 7: The ant is talking to the cricket through the hole. The ant says: "Mr Cricket, you are so lazy. In the summer you play all day. Why don't you save for a rainy day?"

Panel 8: The ant is talking to the cricket through the hole. The cricket says: "Here you are! In the summer save for a rainy day!" The ant says: "Thank you, Mr Ant. You're right."

Unit 3: The ant and the cricket

1. Is it spring, summer, autumn or winter?



B Gauguin



2. True or false?



A
It's snowing.



B
The sky is blue.



C
I've got lots of food.



D
I'm so hungry!



E
You're so lazy!



F
You play all day!

3. Can you say it?



It's not hot and I play a lot!

Unit 5: The ant and the cricket



4. Let's play!

40 finish	39 Where's your umbrella? Go to 34	38 	37	36
31	32 Put your hat on. Go to 36	33	34 	35
30	29	28 Are you working? Go to 38	27	26 Are you hungry? Go to 23
21	22	23 	24	25
20 You don't like winter. Go to 19	19 	18	17	16
11 You are lazy. Go to start	12	13	14	15 It's snowing! Go to 16
10	9 	8	7	6
1 	2	3	4 Put on your socks. Go to 9	5