DESIGNING IMMERSION ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH FOR VERY YOUNG LEARNERS IN INFANT EDUCATION

The benefits of Immersion through CLIL and O'CLILS practices

Final year project in Early Childhood Education with specialisation in the English Language

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Abstract

This study is based on the benefits immersion provides to the English as a foreign language teaching, addressed to preschool students.

In order to verify the extra input children receive by being vastly exposed to the language in meaningful situations, this study has been carried out in a real school where the EFL is taught through immersion. It consists of two analyses: the first one is a transcription of six English sessions, two in each grade, P3, P4 and P5, taking into account the language not directly related to the topic. The other, is a qualitative analysis in which the English teacher's perceptions and the Year one students' experiences are presented.

This study presents the benefits of learning EFL through immersion which include CLIL and O'CLILS practices.

Key words: language learning, immersion benefits, CLIL, O'CLILS, EFL, young learners, naturalistic context and communicative situations.

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Aquest estudi es basa en els beneficis que la immersió aporta en l'ensenyament de l'Anglès com a llengua estrangera, adreçat a infants de preescolar.

Per tal de comprovar el llenguatge addicional que reben els infants, pel fet d'estar àmpliament exposats a la llengua en situacions significatives per a ells, aquest estudi s'ha portat a terme en una escola real on l'Anglès és ensenyat a través de pràctiques d'immersió. L'estudi està compost per dos anàlisis: el primer mostra la transcripció de sis classes d'Anglès, dues a cada grau de P3, P4 i P5, tenint en compte el llenguatge que no guarda relació directa amb el contingut de la lliçó. D'altre banda, el segon és un anàlisis qualitatiu en el qual es presenten les percepcions de l'especialista en llengua anglesa de l'escola, juntament amb les experiències dels alumnes de primer de primària.

L'estudi presenta els beneficis de l'ensenyament de l'Anglès mitjançant la immersió dels alumnes en la llengua, incloent-hi pràctiques de CLIL i O'CLILS.

Paraules clau: aprenentatge de llengües, beneficis de la immersió, CLIL, O'CLILS, Anglès com a llengua estrangera, infants, context naturalístic i situacions comunicatives.

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language (FL) is always a complex process in which there are lots of aspects involved. In this project I have focused on the learning of English as a foreign language addressed to young learners.

Many studies reflect that learning a FL through immersion practices enhances the children's opportunities to learn the language in a suitable context. It also implies longer exposure time to the language, which subsequently derives in more input of vocabulary in meaningful situations. For this reason the aim of this research project is to analyse the extra vocabulary children are exposed to in a real English lesson taught through immersion. The idea is to be able to see its benefits compared to other methodologies in which communication situations are not so vastly promoted.

The project is divided into two different parts, a theoretical one and a practical one. The first one is composed by a theoretical framework whose aim is to present an accurate idea of the best ways to teach English as a foreign language (EFL), including the young learners' main traits, their characteristics, interests and learning strategies. This is followed by a brief distinction on the first language, second language and foreign language acquisition processes, completing it with the presentation of different language teaching methodologies, paying special attention to immersion. In order to carry out the practical part, with the aim to analyse the extra input children receive in English immersion lessons, I have recorded and transcripted six English sessions in preschool of half an hour each. The transcription consists of the vocabulary which is not directly related to the lesson content. Moreover, with the intention to offer a complete study on the immersion benefits, I have interviewed the school's preschool and primary English teacher to find out about her perceptions as well as interviewing two groups of Year one pupils to know their thoughts and experience.

2. Theoretical framework

With the intention to focus this research to preschool students and how they better acquire foreign languages, in this following part of the project are presented the main aspects that should be taken into account to teach EFL to children from three to five years old.

This theoretical framework aims to make this project understandable to whom it may concerns, including both people related to the education industry and those who are not. For this reason it starts with a short presentation of the young learners' characteristics, their learning strategies, the developmental processes they go through while they are growing up and the Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, in which are presented different ways of learning depending on the students' strengths. In order to introduce the teaching of English as a foreign language, a brief explanation on how young learners learn languages, including a distinction between a first language, a second language and a foreign language can be found in the second part of theoretical framework. In the third section are presented four language teaching methodologies which consequently give cause for the immersion and subsequently the CLIL and O'CLILS methodologies presentation.

Bearing in mind these different sections, the theoretical framework tries to make the abstract concept of the EFL learning more concrete and related to the research's aim.

2.1 Young learners' characteristics.

"Human beings differ from one another and there is absolutely no reason to teach and assess all individuals in the identical way" (Gardner, 2011, para 1). It is true that all individuals are different from one another. However, respecting the fact that all children are unique, some experts have carried out several researches in order to establish, in positive correlations, what children are like depending on their age. Having an idea of the interests, abilities and changes children go through during their developmental will show and give guidance on how children understand the world and what are the most appropriate ways for them to discover it.

According to Pinter, as found in Nunan (2011), young learners have a holistic approach to language; they better understand clear and meaningful messages that do not require an analysis of the language, mainly in preschool. As young children are more concerned about themselves than about others, the kind of activities to teach them should be focused on discovering their abilities and the world that is around them, mostly the one found in their closer environment, like the class, the playground or even the area around the school and their houses once they will become older. Pinter points out the interest young children pay to fantasy, imagination and movement. For this reason, activities in which the three aspects are required would be really suitable for them. For instance movement games, storytelling or theatre plays would increase the enjoyment of the activities for children, transforming the lessons into opportunities to learn, discover and experiment while they are having fun.

The psychologist Jean Piaget studied the developmental process into which children go through from birth to adolescence. In order to establish the main traits of the process, Piaget divided it into four stages, showing the most significant changes and relevant characteristics that occur:

> The Sensory-motor stage, from birth to two years of age […] the child learns how to interact with the environment by manipulating objects […]. Linguistically this stage is characterized by the rapid growth of the child's vocabulary, and the gradual transformation from "proto-language" to real language through the emergence of grammar […]. The Pre-operational stage, which extends from around two years of age to seven, the child is egocentric and thinks the world revolves around him/her. The ability to think logically is also extremely limited. Linguistically, at this stage learners consolidate their knowledge of the grammatical system and, by the age of seven, their acquisition of the target grammatical system is almost complete [...]. The Concrete-operational stage extends from around seven to eleven years of age. Intellectually, the child begins developing the ability to separate the self from the environment and to think logically […] make generalizations from the environment […].

> The Formal-operational stage marks the end of the developmental process in the child […] begins at around the age of eleven […] able to generalize beyond his/her immediate context from the instance to the general […] brain lateralization also occurs. (quoted in Nunan, 2011, p.4-6)

The four stages show the main changes, intellectually and linguistically, that children endure to convert themselves into adolescence and future adults. It has been proved that childhood is the period in which the main significant changes and learnings occurs, during this period children build up their self-image, their own world perspective, their mobility development, the discovery of the environment, and their socialization skills among others. For these reasons, childhood is a process of changes and learning in which it is necessary to offer young learners opportunities that enable them to discover and experience all these changes positively.

Howard Gardner states that: "With respect to any individual, one cannot know the strength of weakness of a particular intelligence, just because one knows the strength or weakness of another intelligence" (Gardner, 2011, para 3). The American psychologist has developed the Multiple Intelligences theory, in which he has identified eight different types of intelligences that people can possess depending on their abilities.

According to this theory, as everyone is different from each other, the ways how people learnt are diverse too. For this reason, Gardner has presented the eight intelligences as the following: the Spatial intelligence is the one in which the ability to conceptualize and manipulate large-scale spatial arrays or local forms of space stand out; the Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence consists in emphasizing the ability to use and move the whole body; the Musical intelligence makes reference to the special sensitivity to rhythm, meter, tone, pitch, melody and timbre as well as to the facility some people have to play instruments; the Linguistic intelligence means attention to the sound, inflection, meter, meaning and rhythm of words; the Logical-mathematical intelligence is the ability to logically relate symbols and actions, or conceptualize them; the Interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to be empathic with others and to have a good relationship with people; the Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to make consequential decisions for oneself, being aware of one's own feelings; and the Naturalistic intelligence consists in having a good knowledge of plants, trees and the capacity of being in touch with nature.

"An intelligence is a bio-psychological potential to process information in certain kinds of ways, in order to solve problems or create products that are valued in one or more cultural settings." (Gardner, 2011, para 5). This psychologist understands his own theory from the education, psychology and social science.

The Multiple Intelligences theory provides teachers with plenty of references to find activities suitable to strengthen the eight intelligences, in which the different kinds of abilities are developed.

It is important to build up the lessons depending on the specific students' needs. Moreover, having a general idea of the young learners' traits, their characteristics, developmental processes and also types of intelligences that can be found in the class, would increase the perspective of how the lessons should be planned. In order for children to learn and grow up in a suitable atmosphere, lessons should be the most fruitful, enjoyable and interesting.

2.2 Teaching English as a foreign language

The learning of languages is always a complex process in which there are many factors involved. There is a significant difference between the learning of a first language (L1) and a second one (L2) or foreign language (FL).

"When speaking to their babies, moms and dads speak slowly, carefully, and grammatically, providing clear models for the child's future production." (Nunan, 2011, p.17-18). The L1, or mother tongue learning, is done in a contextualized environment in which everyone around the child, speaks the language. Any daily circumstance is full of language input for the child to learn. Even though this is the optimum situation for L1 learning, children have difficulties along the process, due to the complexity of it.

Noam Chomsky defended that L1 acquisition was a mental process only, whereas it has been proved that it is also a social one, as the two strongest motivations to learn to talk are to get one's needs met and to show ones membership in the human race (Nunan, 2011). Contrary to Chomsky's theory of an automatic and easy learning of the first language, as he states that children are born with a language instinct, an innate ability to learn their L1, the psychologist Skinner, defended the Behaviourism's theory, which argued "young children acquire their first language by listening to and imitating their parents, forming linguistic habits in the process" (Nunan, 2011, p.15)

Both theories, Chomsky's and Behaviourism, show weaknesses and controversial aspects. However, what has been proved is that the learning of the L1 is acquired successfully, as everyone can speak appropriately and eloquently developing excellent proficiency in their first language.

The differences between L2 and FL are noticeable. As Nunan points out:

> Second language situations in which children have a great deal of exposure to English and opportunities to use it in authentic communication, are very different from foreign language situations, in which the children may only encounter English once or twice a week in highly contrived classroom contexts. (quoted in Nunan, 2011, p. 22)

L2 refers to a language learnt in a context to where the language is spoken by the community, which increases the opportunities for learners to listen and practise the language in real and meaningful contexts. A clear example can be found in the Catalan context, in which the first language is Catalan whereas the second official language is Spanish, both are Romance languages and belong to the Indo-European family. This is why the phonetic and grammatical similarities are significant.

Contrary to L2, FL can be a completely different language that has nothing to do with the L1 the child possesses, and is not usually spoken in the area where the learner lives, reducing the input received and the opportunity to be in contact with the FL.

Talking about the FL acquisition, if the context in which the language is taught is naturalistic or instructed, makes a big difference. Mezzi, inside Gonzalez & Taronna (2012) stated "the quality and quantity of linguistic and cultural inputs coming from a naturalistic context are continuous and different from those coming from the instructed ones" (p. 12). If a child moves to England, he/she will be living the language in a meaningful and natural context. The input that he/she will receive will be unlimited, as English can be found everywhere, in the school and outside, in any daily situation, coming from different persons and situations. This child will learn English and the cultural aspects that are involved. Nothing to do with that is the instructed context, in which the child can listen to English in just one setting, the classroom, and from one language model, the teacher. The little amount of input and variety this child can receive is limited, as the opportunities to learn are reduced to the English class.

Despite the fact that the naturalistic context presents more benefits than the instructed one, in our society young children learn English as a foreign language (EFL) in the instructed context. If some of the naturalistic aspects could be included, the learning of English would become more fruitful. The immersion methodology combines aspects from both contexts intending to teach EFL in the most naturalistic way possible. By implementing some routines, games, songs and changing the settings, the EFL input increases and so the opportunities for children to learn English too. Immersion creates contextualized situations in which children can live the FL and learn it from their own experiences.

Within the academic context, researchers agree about the fact that learning a FL is a slow process in which many factors are getting involved. Apart from the context, Edelenbos (2006) pointed out the quality of the resources, the quality of the teaching, the time of exposure to the FL, issues of motivation, different personalities, backgrounds, students' preferences, cognitive development and intellectual flexibility as aspects to consider when learning a foreign language.

The age factor is one of the most controversial aspects that has been studied by many experts without coming to an agreement. The widespread dogma "younger is better" has been the focus of different researches, trying to discover whereas if an earlier exposure to the FL makes a significant difference to the acquisition of the language.

Stephen Krashen, as found in Gonzalez & Taronna (2012), establishes the FL learning process into three parameters: route, referring to the course development, the order and sequence; rate, having relation to the temporal dimension and the ultimate attainment, concerning how far along the route the students reach after an established period of time. Taking these parameters into account, Krashen states that adults take more advantages along the route of acquisition than non-adults, as they have got strong fundaments of their L1 structures, functions and grammatical constructions, as well as the strategies learned in their L1 learning process from which they can benefit. Adults also possess the ability to better control their outputs, what can be advantageous when learning a FL.

Concerning to young children Tiziana Mezzi points out that "considering these learning context naturalistic or in immersion it is true that if one begins to expose himself/herself to a L2 very early in life, he/she generally attains higher levels of proficiency than those who start later" (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012, p.12). The same is true with EFL as far as it is taught in immersion or naturalistic context, where children can live the English language instead of just listening to it in limited occasions. Young learners can soon speak English, as they tend to imitate and reproduce simple models of language. For this reason, exposing children to real communicative situations is one of the most interesting and effective ways to teach them EFL.

Lewis stated that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis not lexicalised grammar" (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012, p. 17). For this reason words and grammar should be integrated. Teaching EFL makes more sense if the language is used for real communication, instead of learning grammar and lexis as two separate issues.

As shown in the previous section of this project, young children learn holistically. Therefore, activities as listening to words by playing a game, singing a song, or acting out a story will enable children to learn the meaning and function of the EFL as a whole. (Gonzalez&Taronna, 2012)

According to the young children learning styles Thornbury presented the "addon strategy". This consists in teaching children chunks of language, so as to learn short phrases and clause-like chunks that will allow them to communicate and extend their knowledge about the language (Gonzalez&Taronna, 2012). When children learn *Can I go to (the toilet)?* or *By the way…* they are learning grammatical structures as the question form, without studying specific grammar, as it is already embedded in the holistic learning.

2.3 Methodologies on the EFL teaching

The perfect method does not exist, as all methods have strengths and weaknesses and their effectiveness depends on a complex interplay between the aims and goals of a teaching programme; the age of the learner; the learner's preferred learning styles and strategies and the learners' previous learning experiences and expectations (Nunan, 2011).

Bearing in mind this variety of factors to consider when learning EFL, there is also a range of methodologies whose common aim is to teach a language. Some of the most popular are exposed below:

Audiolingualism sees the language as a system of structures. As in the Behaviourism, this method believes that learning involves both processes of memorization and habit formation. The objective is to teach focusing on oral language, practical commands, through accurate control of basic sentence patterns. Memorization, repetition and dialogues are included as activities to learn the language, outside a communicative context. The teacher is the one who gives the model and controls the direction and pace of the students' learning. (Nunan, 2011)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a methodology used to teach vocabulary, without memorizing or translating it. The teacher says words in English and does actions to go with them. This practice enables children to better understand and learn the words. TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) is a TPR version in which the context, provided by storytelling, is used to teach abstract vocabulary that could not be covered by TPR alone.

The natural approach (NA) defends that the essence of language is meaning. For this reason the activities proposed are designed to get learners express meanings rather than manipulating form. Comprehensible input is given as the method aims to get the students' fluency in communicative skills. (Nunan, 2011)

The silent way opposite to TPR or the NA, defends that successful language learners are independent and autonomous. They learn actively meanwhile the teacher has got a more passive role, in which he/she talks as little as possible. In this methodology it is believed that the language is composed of unique rhythms and spirit. The lessons are planned around grammatical items related to the vocabulary.

All these methodologies are thought to teach language. However, when thinking on the teaching of a FL, and even more if it is addressed to young children, immersion is the one that provides the naturalistic context exposed above, maximizes the time of exposure to the language, increases the input children receive, and fosters the development of communicative skills in a meaningful environment. Immersion is the methodology that allows young children to learn the FL in a closest way to their own L1 learning process.

2.4 Immersion

"Immersion in a foreign language is an initiative that has occurred with languages traditionally taught as subjects […] with the desire to boost student's proficiency in languages introduced more recently in the curriculum" (Johnson & Swain, 1997, p. 4). Immersion methodology started around mid-1960s in the Canadian St. Lambert School of Quebec. In this area the official language is French, for what high levels of proficiency in the language were required for the survival of the economic industry. Some children studied French at school, following a grammar and memorization teaching strategy, what limited the communicative skills children could achieve on the language. The worries of some parents, who wanted their children to be able to work and socialize in French, to provide them a proper labour future, made them organize and get advice from experts in bilingualism programs and the school staff members to change the situation. The result was the implementation of a complete new method in which from nursery, children' schooling was entirely in French, introducing English lately in grade 2. (Johnson & Swain, 1997)

"Immersion programmes are based on the L2=L1 paradigm which maintains that a foreign language should be learnt in the same way as a child learns his or her native tongue." (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012, p. 86). According to this statement, immersion shares the same aim as bilingualism programs, in which Van Hell & Dijkstra as found in Dostert, Keijzer, Köpke, & Schmid (2007) established that "corresponding lexical items in all language systems are always active to some degree, no matter which language is being used or accessed" (p.3). As Elsner (2013) says, bilingual education is the one in which teachers and students use two languages in the classroom for communicative purposes. When learning through bilingualism, the capacity to think and talk in both languages is equal. The fluency and good competence in both languages communication skills are the ones the Canadian parents who promote the implementation of immersion in St. Lambert School wanted their children to achieve.

Due to the efficacy of the immersion program, it rapidly expanded to other areas and countries, modelling it to the programs we can find today.

When learning EFL through immersion programs, the intention is to offer the most suitable environment, whit plenty of language models, meaningful and contextualized situations, in which children are able to experiment the language and its uses by themselves.

In our country, the teaching of EFL through immersion programs has become really popular. With the desire to bring a piece of the English speaker countries and their culture to our schools, many initiatives have been carried out. The most extended ones that can be currently found in Catalan and Spanish schools, according to the principles exposed, are CLIL and O'CLIL.

2.5 CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

Do Coyle, inside Gonzalez & Taronna (2012) stated "CLIL is a developing, flexible concept where content and foreign languages are integrated in some kind of mutually beneficial way to ensure that there are 'value added' experiences to educational outcomes for a wide range of students" (p. 28)

In order to implement CLIL, part of the study program is taught in the FL, persuading the dual objective of learning the language and the content. (Navés, 2011). Both learnings need to be plan and asses. (Oller, 2012)

"CLIL approaches to language learning are built on language using which facilitates content learning" (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012, p. 28-29). In this methodology the language is used as a tool to teach other subjects content and also to learn the language at the same time. For this reason, the learning of the FL is contextualized and students can experiment the uses of it. Moreover, a variety of specific vocabulary related to the subject taught, can be learned by the children, as they are continuously exposed to it.

The kind of language provided in a CLIL lesson can be identified in three different types: language of learning, referring to the language students need to construct new knowledge and understand the lesson; language for learning, the language that will let the students communicate between them and the teacher, search for information, operate in a group, between others, and language through learning, understanding it as the new language that will be associated to the new knowledge. (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012)

As it have been said, in CLIL, language is perceived as a medium of learning, for this reason content, communication, cognition and culture are the four C's this methodology integrates for the benefit of the learners. (Gonzalez & Taronna, 2012)

For the L2 or FL learning to be effective Navés states that:

> It is necessary for the instruction to focus on meaning, for the input to be just beyond the learner's competence, for there to be plenty of opportunity for meaningful learning of the language, and for exposure to be massive, encouraging spontaneous interaction between learners while at the same time focusing on form. (quoted in Navés, 2011, p. 45)

Many researchers demonstrate that the integration of language and content is highly beneficial, as in the bilingual education and immersion programs, not in a short term, but in long run results. The common denominators of effective CLIL programs are the integration and respect to the learner's culture and languages; the teachers to be equally competent in the student's native language and the FL; the programs continuity; the families' involvement and teachers high expectations for their students to succeed. (Navés, 2011)

The purposes for CLIL in nursery are slightly different from the ones exposed above, which are more suitable for primary, secondary or university studies, where the teaching is divided into specific areas of knowledge. In preschool, the learnings are interrelated and achieved as a whole, for this reason CLIL objectives are to start learning the FL as a game for children, where the language is presented through songs, stories and play time; to expose young children to the language and its phonetics; to meet the English teacher and develop complicity with him/her and to start communication in a FL. (Oller, 2012)

Due to the young children's characteristics, developmental processes and learning strategies, there is a variation on CLIL which is more appropriated to teach EFL in nursery called O'CLILS.

2.6 O'CLILS (Outdoor CLIL at School)

O'CLILS comes from CLIL methodology with the aim to increase the time of exposure to the FL, incorporate new contexts and offer meaningful input to the youngest students.

"The playground, the corridor, the dining room or even the bathroom can become very rich settings for content development and natural exchanges in an additional language especially as regards habits and play" (Corcoll & Flores, 2011, p.54). In infant education children learn from their experience and the FL encompass their capacities' development, providing plenty of educational moments and spaces that offer extra meaning to the FL learning, making it reliable and interesting for children, as they can discover the language uses in practical tasks and daily situations. (Corcoll & Flores, 2011)

In order to take most advantage of the learning situations, there are some teaching strategies that will increase the children's opportunities to learn. Daily routines allow the repetition of meaningful language; children's actions can be orally described by the teacher, increasing the amount of vocabulary children are exposed to; by showing interest to the children productions they are motivated to speak using the FL; visual aids as real objects or realia provide extra interest and meaning to the language learning or even making the gestures showing what is being said helps to better understand the message. (Corcoll & Flores, 2011)

Using a FL to carry out the routines and habits young children are incorporating to their daily life, allows them to develop a positive attitude towards the language, to get exposed to a wide amount of vocabulary and also, to work on their FL communicative skills. For all these reasons, O'CLILS is one of the most suitable teaching strategies to immerse children into a FL, highly incrementing the quality of the FL learning process.

3. Practical Part

3.1 Methodology

In this part of the project I present the school where I have carried out my research, how this one organizes the teaching of EFL and also the methods I have used to obtain the data in the school. Moreover, the procedure of the research and the analysis of the data collection are also explained.

3.1.1 School's presentation

The school I have chosen to carry out my research with, on the extra benefits immersion EFL programs provide, is Paidos School.

Paidos School is situated in Sant Fruitos de Bages, a village with 8,227 inhabitants, in the Bages area, in the centre of Catalonia.

It is a semi-private school that defines itself as non-religious and non-lucrative, respective of all the possible beliefs of their students, families and staff members. The predominantly language spoken in the school is Catalan; the majority of the lessons are taught in the Catalan language.

Paidos was founded in 1969 and nowadays, harbours students from nursery to the fourth year of secondary education. Due to the size of the school, each year group has two groups of students. The school focuses its educational task on achieving the integral education of their students, including intellectual, physical, social and emotional skills.

The main values that want to be transmitted in this educational centre are participation: children have to be an active part of their own learning process; respect, to all the people, children and adults, and autonomy in order that children believe in themselves and know how to behave and face any new situation.

This school pays special attention to the relationship with the families; it tries make children aware of the importance of sport; to introduce the new technologies in the daily school life; to exchange projects and experiences with other educative institutions; to the learning of foreign languages and to facilitate educational psychologist attention to all the children or families that could need it.

In order to provide a successful educational project, the school has forty-six staff members that work together to maintain this high and professional standard. In addition there are also three members of secretarial staff, some canteen monitors and the cookery staff that works towards the same ethos.

3.1.2 The organization of EFL in the school

The learning of English as a foreign language is crucial in the school's educational project. For this reason, students are exposed to the language in immersion programs, CLIL in primary and secondary, and O'CLILS from the young age of one year old in P1 to P5. The amount of hours devolved to this learning is higher than the ones established by the Departament d'Educació, in order to provide the best conditions for the students to achieve an excellent level of English, acquiring good competence in listening, speaking, comprehension and communication skills.

To facilitate and motivate children to learn English, Paidos is immersed in a project called AICLE (Aprenentatge Integrat de Continguts I Llengües Extrangeres) in which they intend to use the English language to learn content and at the same time to learn the foreign language. In this project children learn science in English, as well as in the "Little contes" project of Tr@ms foundation, in which the first grade of secondary education creates an English story using new technologies. The story is shared with other schools.

An English native speaker is in the school in order to provide input to the students and real contact with the English language. Children get used to the speech, pace and pronunciation by speaking and listening to her.

In early childhood education children receive English classes every week. In nursery children are exposed to one thirty-minute lesson a week in P1 and two thirty-minute lessons in P2. Concerning Early Years, in P3 and P4 children receive three lessons a week, two thirty-minute lessons and one sixty-minute one, increasing to four lessons a week in P5, with three thirty-minute lessons and one sixty-minute lesson a week.

To teach English in infant education, the school follows a three-level course book collection called *Oxford Splash*, in which the teacher can find all the didactic units to be taught, with plenty of resources that makes the English lessons interesting and fun for children. The level of difficulty is graded and this methodology of teaching by using songs, stories, worksheets and games, allows children to remember some content and learn the new one, following a well-organized didactic planning, introduced by four puppets that will go with them during the three preschool courses.

Children are completely immersed into the FL during the English lessons, and they benefit from the advantages this methodology provides.

As the O'CLILS methodology states, any situation in the daily school life is a great opportunity to learn the FL and its uses. According to it, all the routines, greeting time, weather and days of the week, toilet and wash time, snack time or the corridor, any situation occurred during the English class, is lived in the FL.

3.1.3 Data collection methods

In order to obtain the data collection I needed for my research project, I have used two different methods.

First of all, with the aim to discover the extra vocabulary children were exposed to by learning English through immersion practices, I carried out a direct observation in Paidos School, attending to two English lessons of each preschool grade, P3, P4 and P5, as each year group in the school has two groups of students.

During the half an hour sessions, I observed and recorded all the communicative situations whose purpose was independent from the lesson content that was being taught. The observation was overt, as the teacher and the students knew I was recording them. A later transcription of the extra vocabulary, allowed me to write out the vocabulary and short conversations occurred during each lesson, making visible the extra input, the students received and the output they produced.

For the second part of my research I used a qualitative method, by preparing two different questionnaires, one addressed to the preschool and primary school English teacher and the other one to the Year one students.

The teacher's questionnaire is composed by four closed ended questions and two open ended questions, six questions in which the teacher's perceptions on the benefits of the preschool EFL immersion programme are reflected. On the other hand, the student's questionnaire has got fifteen questions, ten of those are multi answer, one is a yes-no answer and the other four are open ended questions, whose aim is to point out the children's experiences and thoughts about the EFL teaching methodology.

3.1.4 Analysis of the transcriptions

Immersion vastly promotes communication situations in real and meaningful contexts. In order to make the extra input children are exposed to visible, I recorded six thirty-minute lessons, two in P3, two in P4 and two in P5. These six lessons were recorded during the same day so as to be able to observe exactly the same content with every group of learners and therefore analyse the same type of productions. Observing sessions with different topics would mean more input and output and the intention of this research is to analyse the amount of language used during the explanation of a single topic.

In order to offer a clearer organization of the findings, I have organized the data into three categories: the teacher's input, the output of the children and the short conversations section, composed by pieces of interactions between the teacher and some children.

The teacher's input category is divided into seven subgroups with the aim to organize the vocabulary according to different language purposes: pieces of advice; commands; questions; greetings; praising; other comments and strategies to capture and maintain attention. The three year groups are exposed separately, although the results are analysed together.

P3 STUDENTS

INPUT	
Pieces of advice	Greetings
- Teacher: Paula you will go to Cuncep's class. - Teacher: Paula you are the last one. - Teacher: It's the last time. - Teacher: Don't shout, otherwise Frankie will be scared, and will cry and will go to hide. - Teacher: Nina you will go out! Do you want to go out? Then be quiet and listen to Cristina and Frankie. - Teacher: At the end of the class, not now. - Teacher: I am not very happy today.	- Teacher: Hello! - Teacher: Hello children.
	Praising
	- Teacher: Very good! Give me five! - Teacher: Yes, you can do it. - Teacher: Thank you very much.
Commands	Other comments
- Teacher: Arnau you have to go to the toilet. - Teacher: Button up. - Teacher: Put on your school smock. - Teacher: Stop and sit down is not time to play, I will be upset. - Teacher: Sit down in your place. - Teacher: Sit down properly. - Teacher: Ladies come on please. - Teacher: Marta be careful. - Teacher: Munir hurry up. - Teacher: Do it again. - Teacher: Stop. - Teacher: Be quiet. - Teacher: Children listen to me. - Teacher: Let's move the body! Go there please.	- Teacher: Noemi, I saw you yesterday. - Teacher: Biel, this is for you. - Teacher: Ona I am writing your name because I have to say one thing to Meritxell, yes? - Teacher: Let's see if it works. - Teacher: Frankie is very hungry. - Teacher: Frankie is full. - Teacher: This is for the sun, sun protection. - Teacher: Let's watch a video. - Teacher: We have to make kisses.

Questions	Strategies to capture and maintain attention
- Teacher: What happens? - Teacher: Marc what's this? Is a car! - Teacher: Jana is your sister? - Teacher: Do you need help? - Teacher: Look at my box, let's see who is in my box? - Teacher: Can you be quiet? - Teacher: What's missing?	- Teacher: One, two, three, four, ..., ten. - Teacher: It's time for English. - Teacher: Frankie is going to eat your nose, and is going to eat your fingers. - Teacher: Look at Jordi, Jordi is quiet. - Teacher: Close your eyes, cover your eyes with your hands.

OUTPUT
- Girl: Cristina[1], el meu papi em diu que és a ladybird.   - Girl: I like playing in the ...

SHORT CONVERSATIONS
- Boy: Cristina tinc set / Teacher: You can go to the toilet, go and drink water.   - Boy: Mira una papallona / Teacher: Yes a butterfly, it flies and flies like Spot.   - Teacher: Hello children! / Children: Hello / Teacher: Hello to everybody, listen, listen, how are you? / Children: I am fine thank you / Teacher: Very good.   - Teacher: Didac are you happy? No? I think Didac is upset, are you upset? Angry? Or sad? Are you sad? No you have to be happy / Girl: Em sembla que plora perquè vol la seva mare / Teacher: Ui no! I can be your mum, yes? Now I am your mummy, when you finish your mummy will come.   - Teacher: Children where is Frankie? / Children: A la caixa / Teacher: In my box? Is in my box? / Girl: Si, yes / Teacher: Ok, let's see!   - Teacher: What colour is Frankie? / Children: Blue / Teacher: Hello children / Children: No, és la Dizy / Teacher: Ui Dizy!   - Teacher: What colour is Tex then? / Children: Green / Teacher: He is green? Let's see, let's see, yes, and Tex, what animal is it? /

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[1] Cristina is the preschool English teacher.

Children: A turtle / Teacher: Is a turtle and Frankie is a turtle? / Children: No / Teacher: What animal is it? / Boy: A frog / Teacher: Is a frog?
- Rodrigo: Cristina el Didac i l'Alejandro se han pegado los dos / Teacher: Ui! I don't like this, no, Didac, Alejandro, I will be upset!
- Teacher: Gerard are you sleepy? / Girl: Tenia son / Teacher: Don't sleep, it's not time to sleep is time for English.
- Teacher: Let's look outside, how is the weather today? / Children: Cloudy, sunny / Teacher: Cloudy? But I think it was cloudy in the morning and now is, let's see, let's see.
- Teacher: Alejandro what are you doing? / Alejandro: Tinc pipi / Teacher: Ok you can go to the toilet.
- Teacher: Jaume what happens? / Jaume: This ones two em fan mal / Teacher: Oh! This two teeth? / Jaume: Yes / Teacher: Oh, they are waggle.
- Jaume: I have this home / Teacher: Yes? You have it home? / Jaume: Yes / Teacher: And what's this? / Jaume: Glue / Teacher: Glue excellent, and what colour is this glue? / Jaume: Blue / Teacher: Blue very good.
- Teacher: Ok, hands up, hands down, hands up and turn around, jump and stop / Girl: And let it go / Teacher: No, no, let it go no.

P4 STUDENTS

INPUT	
Pieces of advice	Greetings
	- Hello children!
- Teacher: Keep it in your pocket or I will take it, I don't want to see it again, it's up to you. - Teacher: If you are on the chair I am going to be very, very, very angry.	**Praising**
	- Teacher: O very good, thank you very much, Frankie will be very happy, thank you, give me five. - Teacher: Thank you very much. - Teacher: Thank you very much for your help.

Commands	Other comments
- Teacher: Ok it's time to stop reading, sit down. - Teacher: Abril, Frankie wants to say happy birthday to you, come here. - Teacher: Give it to me. - Teacher: Stand up. - Teacher: Go out. - Teacher: If you know this word your fingers up please. - Teacher: Give me the flashcards please. - Teacher: Take off your school smock, put on your jacket and your school back please. - Teacher: Be careful. - Teacher: Throw it please. - Teacher: Sit down. - Teacher: Gerard and Arnau you are going by bus, your school bags, your jackets and come with me, sit down here in that corner. - Teacher: Listen to the song. - Teacher: Sit down and stop fighting.	- Teacher: I keep into my pocket. - Teacher: Let's play a game. - Teacher: I prefer this one. - Teacher: It's time to go home. - Teacher: Emma your daddy.
Questions	Strategies to capture and maintain attention
- Teacher: What's this? - Teacher: You have problems with your school smock? - Teacher: What are you doing? - Teacher: I like it, they are very nice, what colour are your glasses?	- Teacher: One, two, three be quiet please. - Teacher: One, two, three listen to me. - Teacher: Be quiet, and relax, your heads on the table, cross your arms.

OUTPUT

SHORT CONVERSATIONS

- Teacher: Marta, Aina tomorrow you will come with me at the playground time / Girl: Estan castigades? / Teacher: Yes / Girl: Al pati? / Teacher: Yes in the playground, you are not going to the playground, yes Marta?
- Teacher: I like this silence, I don't like the noise, listen to the other class there is a lot of noise / Girl: Sentim molt soroll / Teacher: Yes it's the other class / Boy: Que estan cridant / Teacher: Yes, they are shouting, I don't like / Boy: I en aquesta classe no / Teacher: No.
- Lluc: Cristina, que no l'hi dones al Frankie el dibuix? / Teacher: Oh yes Franky I have a surprise for you, look. Oh! I like this picture, you make this picture yes? I like your drawing, what's this? / Lluc: A daynosserous/ Teacher: A very good, in English, a dinosaur, a dino is a dino yes, I like it, and I read this words, listen, Frankie how are you, I am fine thank you, and he loves you, I love you, no? / Lluc: Hello / Teacher: Ah! Hello, very good, one kiss. Frankie are you happy is for you, yes I am very happy, thank you very much. Lluc I will stick it here in my box, I will stick it here with Sellotape, do you want this yes? Ok.
- Carles: Que no ho enganxes amb pegamento? / Teacher: With Sellotape, your drawing will stay with Frankie yes? Very good, Frankie is very happy and Cristina too, I am happy, thank you very much.
- Teacher: And now it's time to sing / Children: Happy birthday! / Teacher: Yes, ok let's do it all together, one, two and three (happy birthday song) / Children: Happy birthday!
- Teacher: It's time to make two kisses to Abril, mua, mua, are you two years old? / Children: No / Teacher: How old are you? / Abril: Five / Teacher: Five? Really? Then five kisses, one, two, three, four and five, five kisses, happy birthday! Five years, five kisses.
- Teacher: Where is Frankie? Frankie is not here / Children: Si / Teacher: Where is Frankie? / Children: A la teva espatlla / Teacher: Ah! In my shoulder.
- Teacher: Frankie wants to ask you one question, what day of the week is today? / Children: Monday / Teacher: Frankie is Monday? Yes, is Monday, but let's see if you know where is Monday, is Monday? / Children: No / Teacher: No, Monday has got an M / Children: M / Teacher: Yes an M, look, is Monday? Is there an M? / Children: No / Teacher: Is Monday? / Children: No / Teacher: Is Monday? / Children: No, Sunday / Teacher: Sunday yes, is Monday? / Children: No / Teacher: No, this is a W, is Monday? / Children: Yes / Teacher: Very good and I think that today we are going to change the weather, how is the weather today? / Children: Cloudy / Teacher: Is sunny? / Children: Cloudy / Teacher: It's cloudy let's see, let's see, yes it's cloudy / Children: Cloudy / Teacher: This is cloudy / Children: No, snowy / Teacher: This is cloudy? / Children: No, it's storming / Teacher: This is cloudy / Children: Yes.
- Teacher: Marc what happens? / Marc: Esta plovent / Teacher: It's raining, it's not cloudy then we have to change.
- Teacher: Do you remember the song that we did last year? / Children: Yes / Teacher: Rain, rain go away.

- Teacher: We have to change the picture because it's not cloudy, it's? / Children: Raining / Teacher: Raining, very good Marc!
- Teacher: Mariona, can you sit on the table? / Children : No / Teacher: No, sit down in your chair please.
- Teacher: What happens? Why are you crying? / Maria: La pulsera / Teacher: It's mine now, at the end of the class maybe I will give it to you.
- Boy: Cristina vaig amb autobús / Teacher: Yes, you are going by bus.
- Girl: És meu perquè m'he quedat dos dies a dormir i aquest és de casa / Teacher: Ok then, one keep it in your school bag and the other put it on, put on your jacket please, and the other keep it in your school back.
- Girl: Jo no tinc jaqueta / Teacher: No? Then put on your school bag.
- Girl: Ha dit una mentida / Teacher: Oh! I don't like if you lie.

P5 STUDENTS

INPUT	
Pieces of advice	Greetings
 - Teacher: Stop Pau. - Teacher: Adria the last one! - Teacher: You are late ladies! It's time for English class, you are very late. - Teacher: It doesn't work. - Teacher: You'll not play the game if you are not in your chair. - Teacher: Only five minutes. - Teacher: It's not time to play. 	- Good morning children!
	Praising
	- Teacher: Thank you very much! - Teacher: You're welcome. - Teacher: Well done! - Teacher: Excellent!

Commands	Other comments
- Teacher: Children jump, and now run, go there and come back. - Teacher: Let's go. - Teacher: Victor, keep it in your school bag please. - Teacher: Wait, Enric will bring the soup. - Teacher: Let's make a line. - Teacher: Let's see. - Teacher: Come here please. - Teacher: Be quiet. - Teacher: Sit down properly. - Teacher: You are not quiet, sit down properly. - Teacher: Write your name at the back, because these transports will be for me and tomorrow you will practice. - Teacher: Hold it with your hands. - Teacher: Through this papers in the paper been please. - Teacher: You have to hold it with your fingers, you can hold it like this, like this yes, with your fingers. - Teacher: Your fingers up please. - Teacher: If you have finished, come here and keep it in this box. - Teacher: Don't shout please.	- Teacher: David is the last one. - Teacher: Arnau decides. - Teacher: For example. - Teacher: It's really funny. - Teacher: I will repair yours tomorrow. - Teacher: It's time to say bye, bye.
Questions	Strategies to capture and maintain attention
- Teacher: Where is Pau? - Teacher: Do you want Spot? - Teacher: What time is it? - Teacher: Do you remember the song? - Teacher: Are you ready? - Teacher: Enric do you have a problem?	- Teacher: Hurry up I am going to count until ten: one, ... - Teacher: We are going to sing the song. - Teacher: One, two, three, be quiet please! - Teacher: Today I am going to explain you an important think. - Teacher: Look at me, listen to me! Zip!

OUTPUT
- Children: Hot air baloon, hot air balon! - Enric: Primer te danar amb bus, depres te danar amb plane, despres te d'anar amb boat, despres amb bike, després amb hot air balloon. - Boy: Frankie is a car!

SHORT CONVERSATIONS
- Teacher: Wash your hands please! / Boy: Cristina no hi ha sabó! / Teacher: No? Can you go with Oscar? / Boy: Cristina hi vull anar jo! / Teacher: Yes, go with Oscar and ask for soap please! - Teacher: Arnau, can you go with Oscar and ask for white papers? / Boy: Que vol dir? / Teacher: Like this come here (show papers) white papers for Cristina / Boy: Quants? / Teacher: Three. - Girl: Cristina està tancat / Teacher: The door? / Girl: Yes / Teacher: Which door? / Girl: La de l'laltra banda / Teacher: Ok. - Teacher: Arnau Perez / Boy: Jope i io? / Teacher: You will go later, after Enric. No you went with Marta? / Boy: Si / Teacher: Ah! - Teacher: Is everybody here? Who is missing today? Who is not in the class? Carla? / Boy: No, Carla si que hi és / Teacher: Yes I saw Carla this morning. - Teacher: Where is Aroa? / Girl: Al lavabo. - Teacher: And where is Claudia Navarro? / Girl: Aquí / Teacher: And this is not your chair, this is Carla's chair. - Teacher: Arnau do you want to repeat? / Arnau: Yes / Teacher: But, Arnau remember that you are the teacher / Boy: Ja ho ha fet molts cops / Teacher: No just once. - Teacher: This is for you and Arnau is going to ask... / Arnau: How are you? / Children: I am fine thank you / Teacher: And you, how are you teacher? / Arnau: I am fine thank you / Teacher: Very good! - Arnau: What day of the weak is today? / Children: Monday / Teacher: Is it Monday teacher? / Arnau: Yes / Teacher: Yes, remember that Monday starts with the letter M. - Arnau: What month are we in? / Children: April / Teacher: Are we in April? / Children: Yes! - Arnau: What season are we in? / Children: Sprint / Teacher: It's sprint? / Children: Yes! - Arnau: What's the weather like today? / Children: Sunny / Teacher: Sunny? / Children: No cloudy / Teacher: Ah! It's cloudy, it's cloudy or not? / Girl: I també fa fred / Arnau: Sunny and cloudy / Teacher: Sunny and cloudy? I can not see the sun outside / Girl: Cristina

també fa fred / Teacher: Yes it's cold / Boy: Arnau, avui no hi ha sunny perquè ha plogut / Teacher: Then it's cloudy yes? Let's sing the song, one, two, three.
- Teacher: This is a pop-out / Enric: No this is a stickers / Teacher: No, these are not stickers.
- Boy: Ens els endurem a casa? / Teacher: Yes but on Wednesday / Children: Wednesday? / Teacher: Wednesday, today is Monday, tomorrow Tuesday and after Tuesday, Wednesday.
- Enric: Frankie wants to write the name al / Teacher: Yes, at the back, write the name at the back.
- Boy: Mira sem ha trencat / Teacher: Yes it's broken, and I don't have Sellotape now, you can go to the other class and say to Taya[2], Taya can you give me the Sellotape please? / Boy: Ok.
- Boy: Cristina mira jo ja ho he penjat / Teacher: Yes but all of them Pau, all of them, the bus, the boat the bike the hot air balloon.
- Teacher: Maybe you will bring it home today, maybe I am not sure / Boy: What, what? / Boy2: Ho farem tots / Teacher: Yes all of them please.
- Girl: On fiquem el nom? / Teacher: At the back please.
- Boy: Cristina aquí no hi ha per trencar-se / Teacher: No the bike is different, there isn't a line.
- Boy: Se'm ha trencat el plane / Teacher: Another? Because you are running, too much I think, don't run / Boy: Ok.
- Teacher: Maria do you have your name at the back? / Maria: No / Teacher: Then write your name at the back.
- Carla: Cristina bike no es pot obrir / Teacher: No because the bike is different Carla, you have to hold it with your fingers, Frankie and the bike, hold it together.
- Teacher: What's your favourite transport? / Maria: Aquest / Teacher: What's this? / Maria: Hot air balloon / Teacher: Hot air balloon, very good!
- Girl: Els puc ajudar? / Teacher: Yes you can help them.
- Teacher: now Taya is coming, because Damaris[3] is not here / Girl: Ja ho sabem / Teacher: Is not here because Jan and Pol / Girl: Estan malalts / Teacher: Are ill / Girl: El Jan es va ficar malalt de colònies i el Pol esta malalt / Teacher: Yes, Taya is coming.

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[2] Taya is the other class teacher
[3] Damaris is the children's tutor

3.1.5 Analysis of the teacher's questionnaire results

The first approach was to interview all the English teachers of the school with the aim to complete this research. In Paidos there are six English teachers, for this reason I thought that would be interesting knowing their perspectives about the immersion practices they are carrying out. Even though, in order to facilitate the process and provide them flexibility to answer the questions I send them the questionnaire[4] via e-mail, from the six teachers I received one answer, from the preschool and Year one English teacher. Despite of this, I think that it is interesting knowing the teacher's perspective and even more the preschool and Year one English teacher perspective, as she is the one who uses the O'CLILS methodology in nursery and changes into CLIL in primary, witnessing all the students EFL acquirements.

As it has been said in the theoretical framework, the aim of teaching EFL through immersion in preschool is to allow children develop a positive attitude towards the FL, exposing them to the language and its phonetics as well as for them to get used to it and start communicating in the FL. For these reasons the teacher' questionnaire has been focused on these aspects, to know if the methodology achieves its purposes.

The six questions were about the children's attitude towards the English learning; their ability to follow the sessions; the children's capacity of interaction in the class; the benefits of immersion; the advantages of an earlier exposure to the language and the differences between primary students who did English during their preschool education and those who did not.

The English teacher's answers[5] were that children have a positive attitude towards the learning of the FL. Even though in Year two some students start to moan for some things, the students' attitude is generally positive in all grades. She confirmed that children can easily follow the English sessions and some students speak English at class, mostly in primary, as in preschool children don't have enough grammar and vocabulary.

The teacher thinks that by doing English in preschool children are more self-confident when they arrive at primary, as they are able to understand the language and are better prepared.

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[4] See appendix 7.1 Teacher's questionnaire
[5] See appendix 7.3 Answers of the teacher's questionnaire

The benefits she attributes of starting English at early stages are that children acquire better and more advanced skills; they have greater confidence; they possess the ability to learn a new language easily and also have a greater intercultural appreciation.

Referring to the last question in which she was asked about the main differences she had noticed between pupils who did English during their preschool education and those who did not, she answered that compering her students to others who start later, the first ones have better communication skills, are more confident and are able to understand and use the language, enjoying the English sessions.

3.1.6 Analysis of the students' questionnaire results

Concerning to the students' experience, bearing in mind the same immersion aims exposed in the previous section, two groups of year one pupils were interviewed. It was a total of forty-six students that answered questions, twenty-one in Year one group A and twenty-five in Year one group B. The questionnaire[6] was related to the children's attitude towards the FL; their enjoyment of the English sessions in preschool and primary; the main differences between these grades and the family involvement.

My first intention was to give one questionnaire to each student, but after talking with their teacher, we decided to ask the questions orally instead of ask them to write these out, due to the age of the students. The children better understood the questions and, even though I was worried about the fact that they could be ashamed to answer in front of their classmates, the survey went really well and all children enjoyed participating. Even though asking the questions orally did not affect the multiple answer questions, as children put their hands up, it made a difference on the open ended questions, in which just the most popular answers were written down.

Due to the fact that the questions were asked to the students in the Catalan language, the data obtained is presented in Catalan too, avoiding any possible translating change of meaning.

Question 1. T'agrada l'anglès?
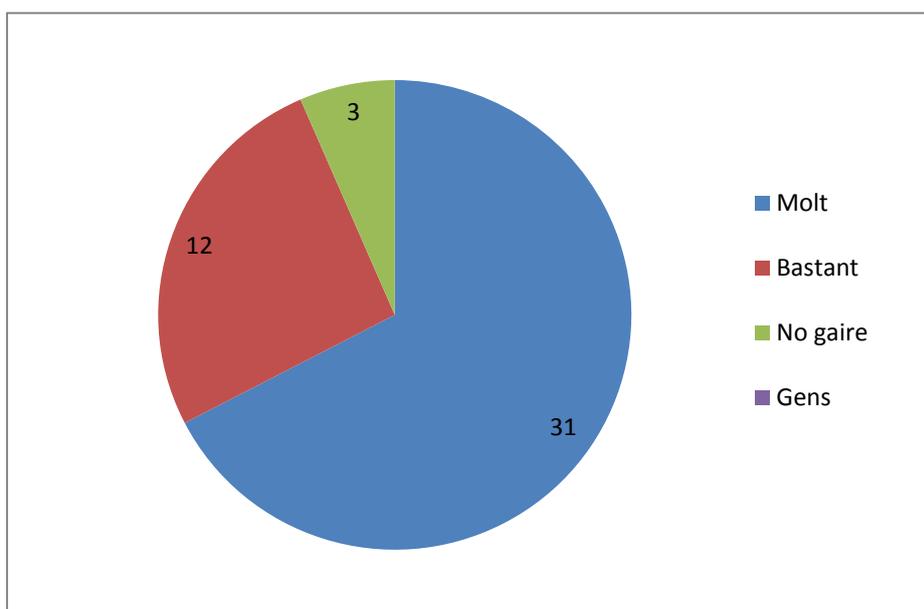

[6] See appendix 7.2 Students' questionnaire

Question 2. Creus que és important aprendre anglès?

Molt — 100%
Bastant
No gaire
Gens

Question 3. Per què?

Per tenir un bon futur

Per comunicar-se

Per viatjar

Per ensenyar anglès als pares
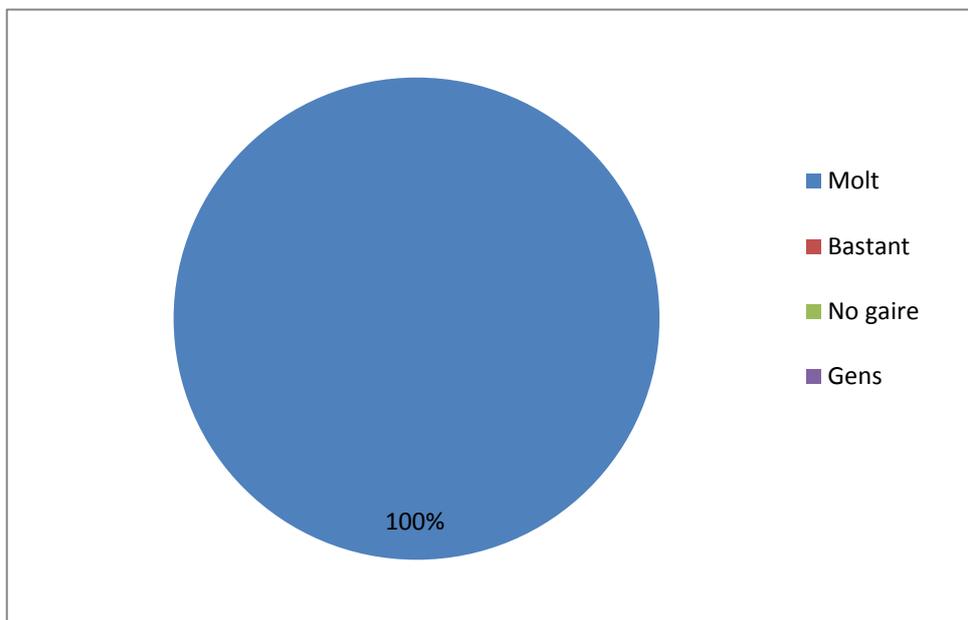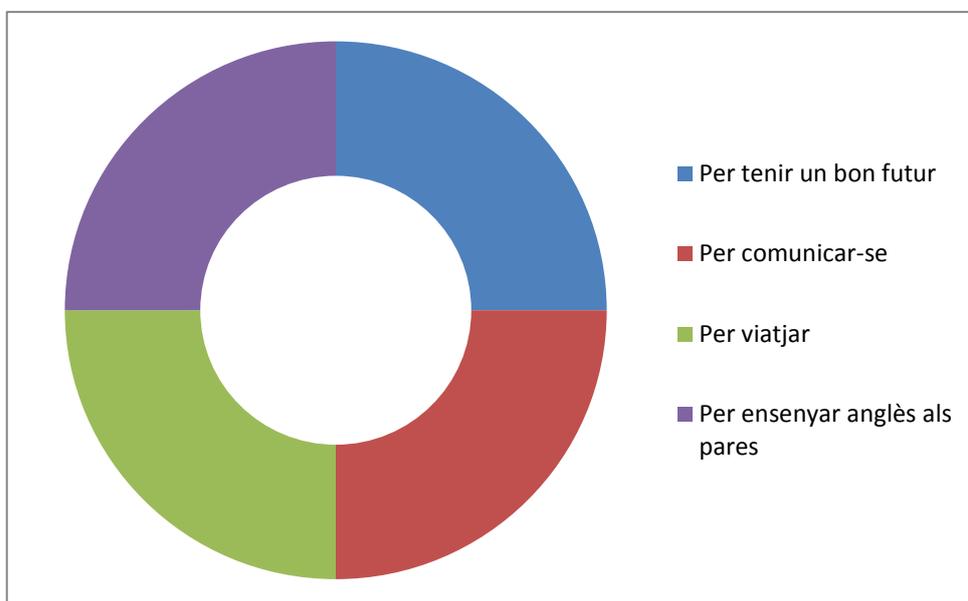
Question 4. T'ho passes bé a les classes d'anglès?
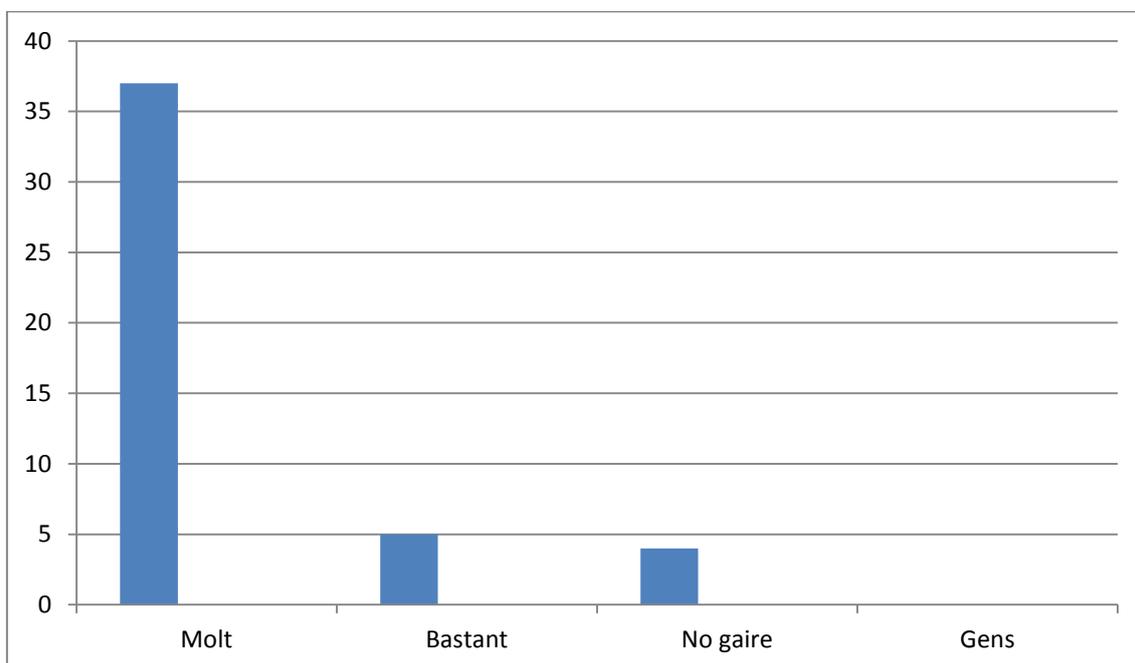
Question 5. T'agradaven les classes d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5?
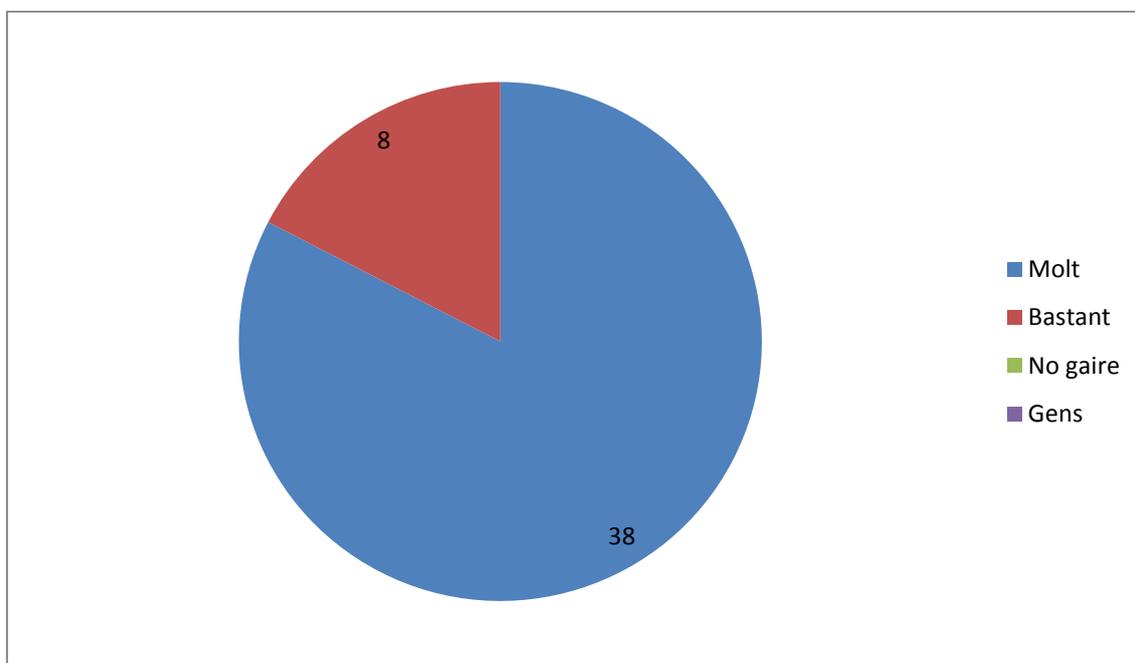
Question 6. Què és el que t'agradava més de les clases d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5?

- Parlar en anglès
- La professora
- Els titelles
- Fer jocs en anglès
- Les manualitats
- Les cançons
- L'activitat en que feiem de professors
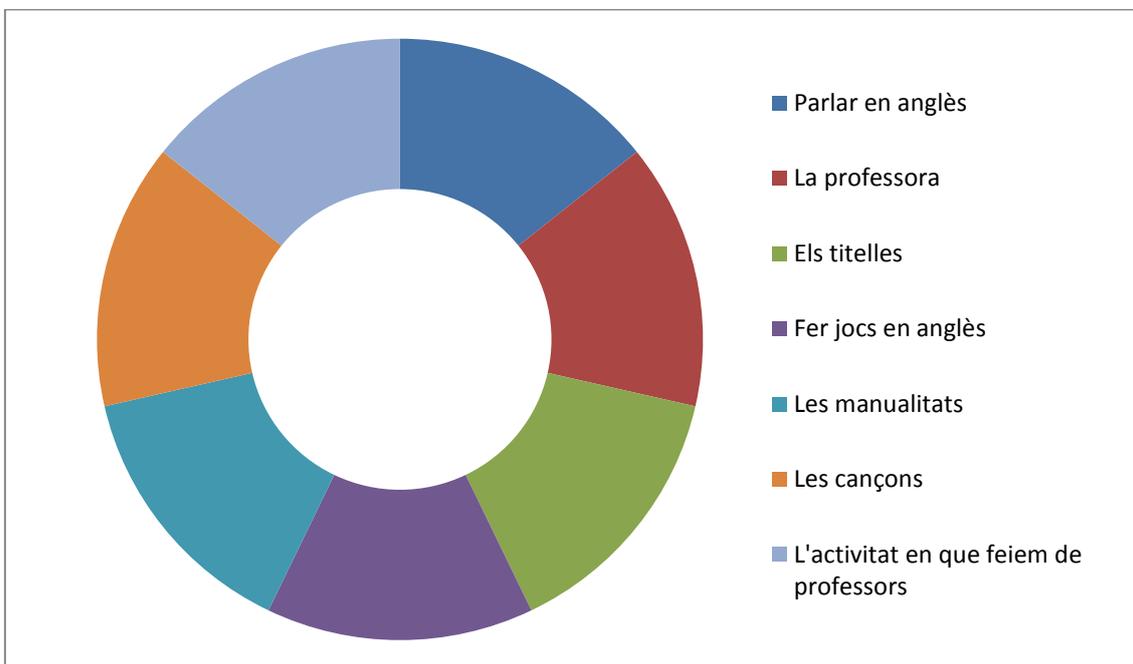
Question 7 and 8. Et fa vergonya parlar en anglès?

A la classe

Fora de la classe
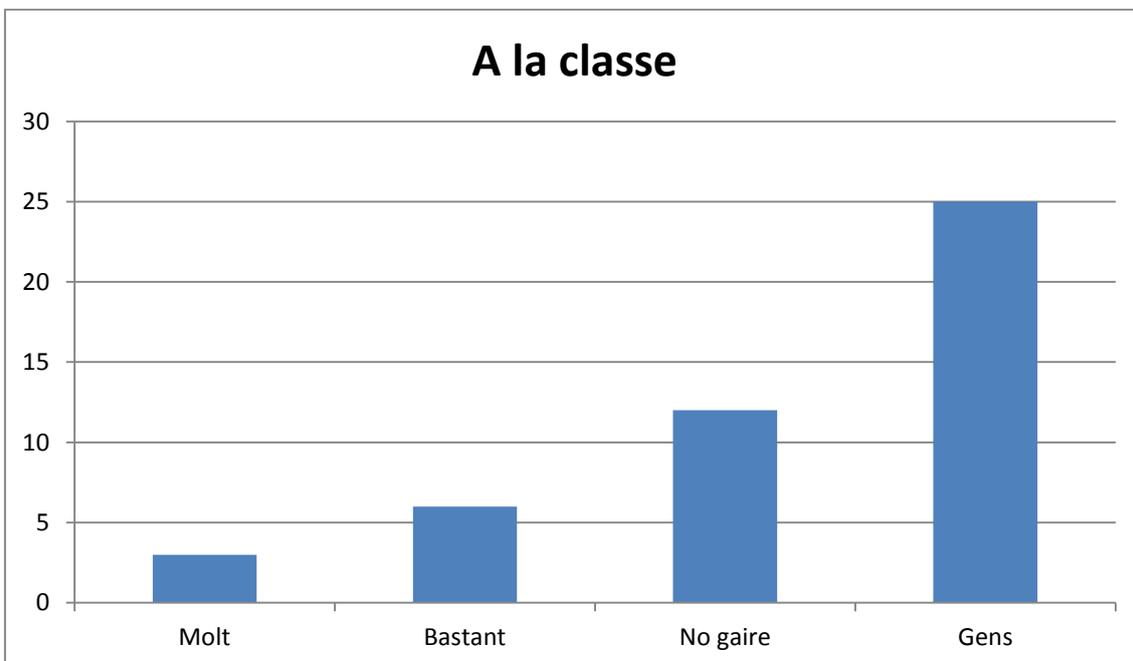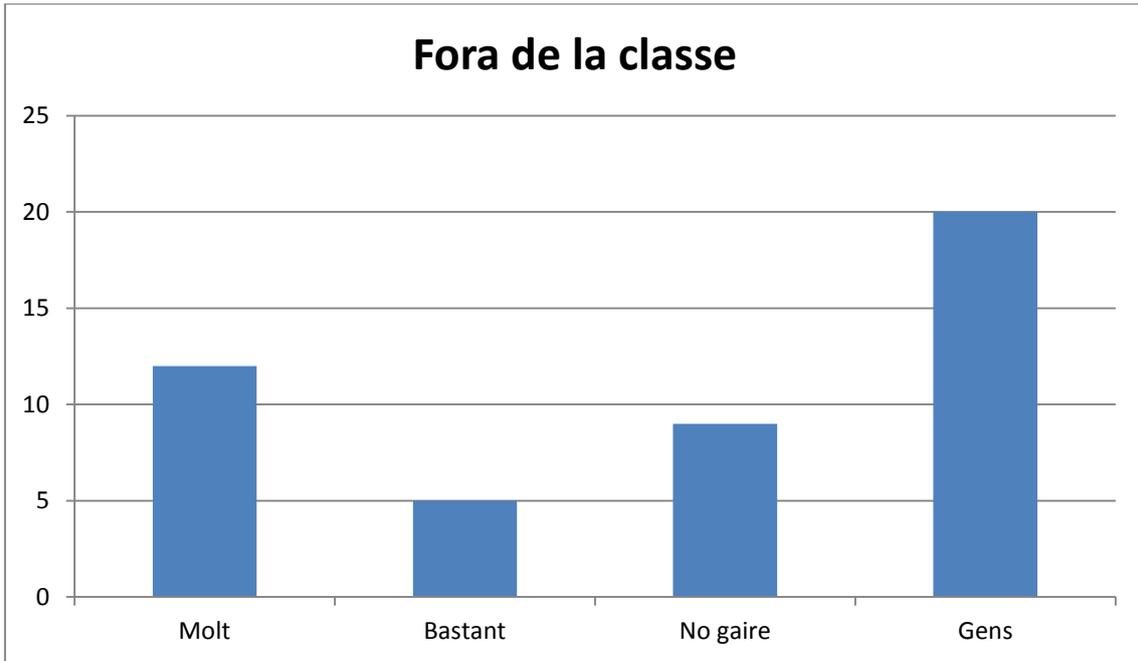
Question 9. Has notat canvis entre P3, P4 i P5 i primer de primària?

Question 10. Quins?
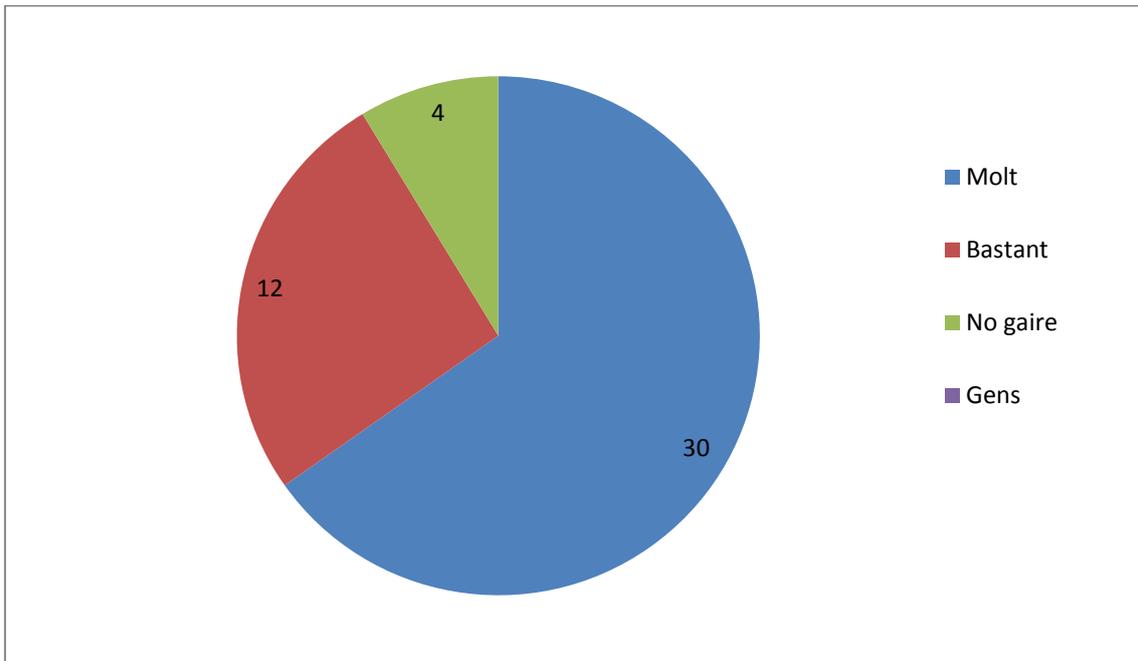
- A infantil feiem fitxes i a primària llibre
- Jugàvem més a infantil
- A primària fem activitats més difícils
- A infantil fèiem més cançons
- A P3, P4 i P5 teniem titelles
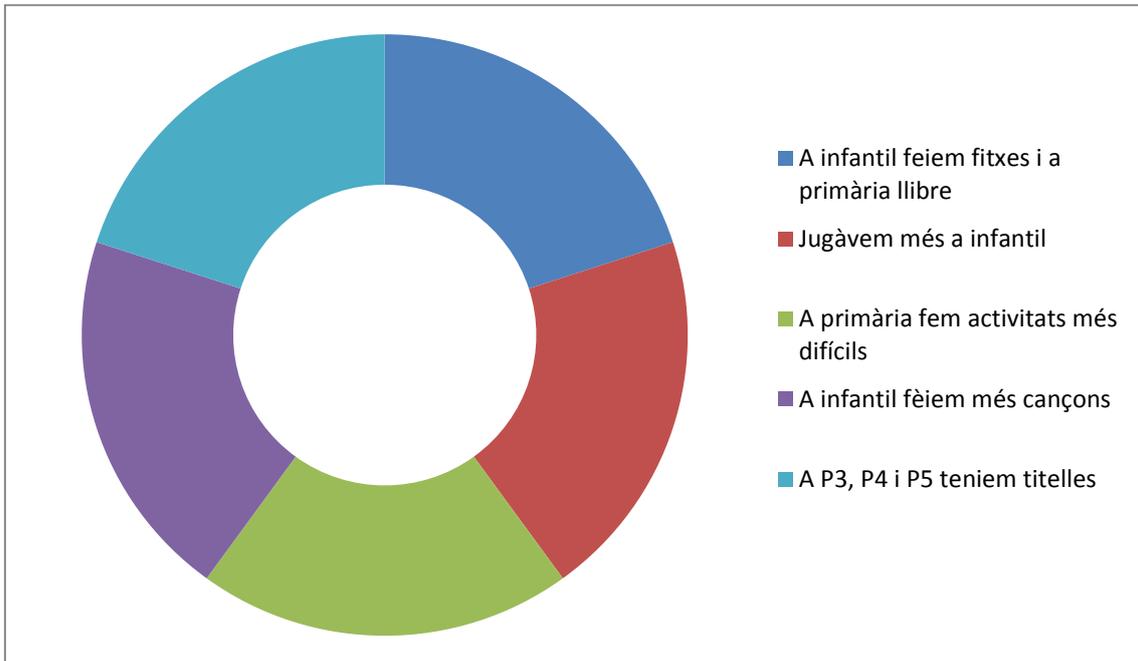
Question 11. Què canviaries de les classes d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5?

- Les fitxes per un llibre o Ipads
- Els titelles per jocs de pissarra digital
- Les activitats més fàcils per d'altres de més difícils
- Deixar de fer fitxes
- Fer més jocs a la pissarra
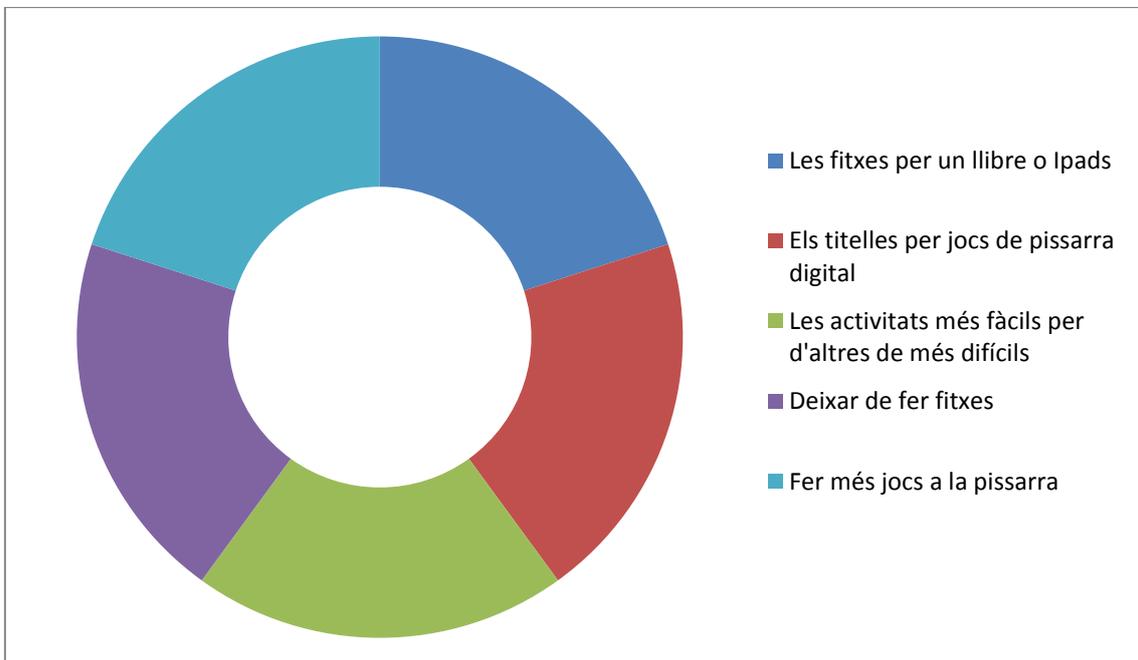
Question 12. Els teus pares creuen que és important aprendre anglès?

Molt
Bastant
No gaire
Gens
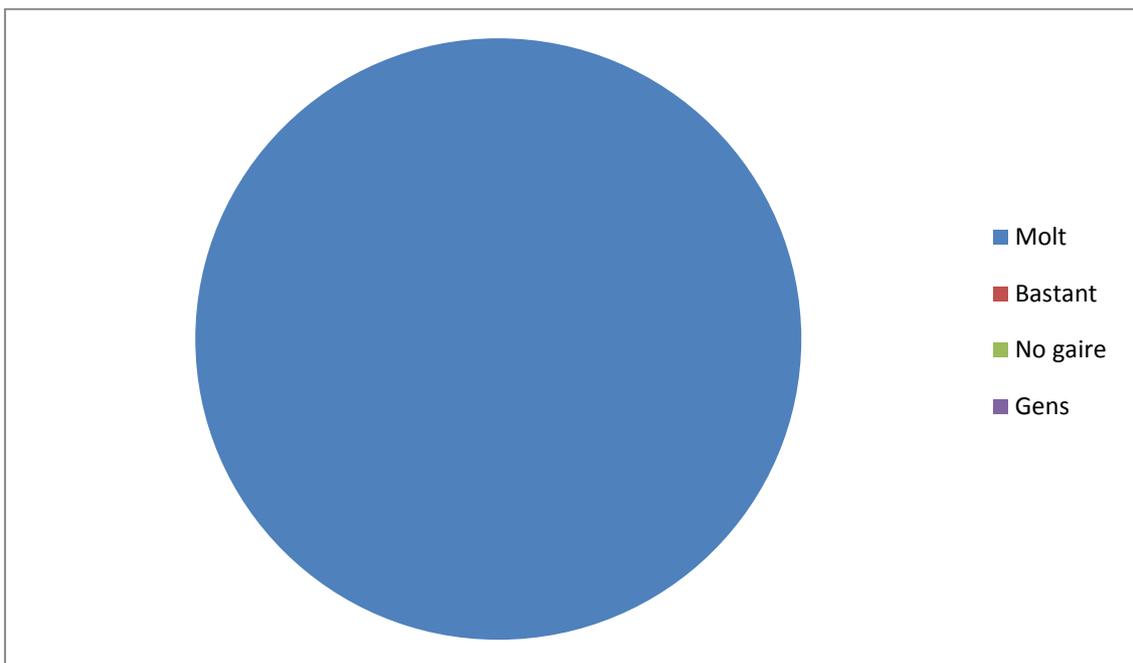
Question 13. Et demanen què fas a les classes d'anglès?

11%

4%

41%

44%

Molt
Bastant
No gaire
Gens
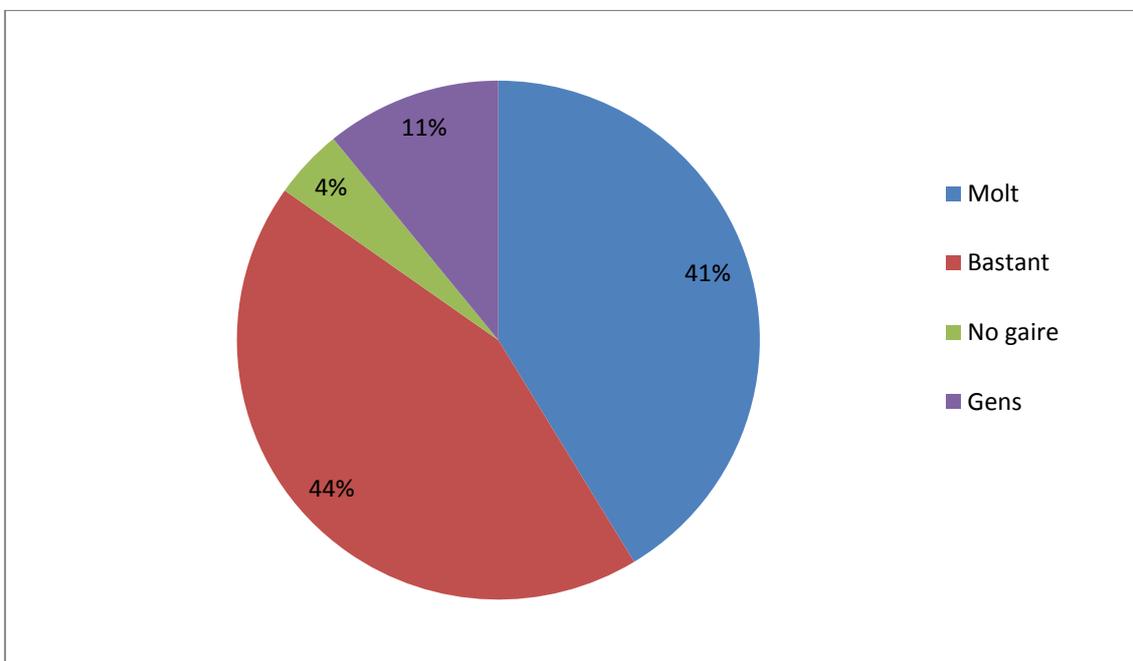
Question 14. Parles amb ells dels teus deures d'anglès?
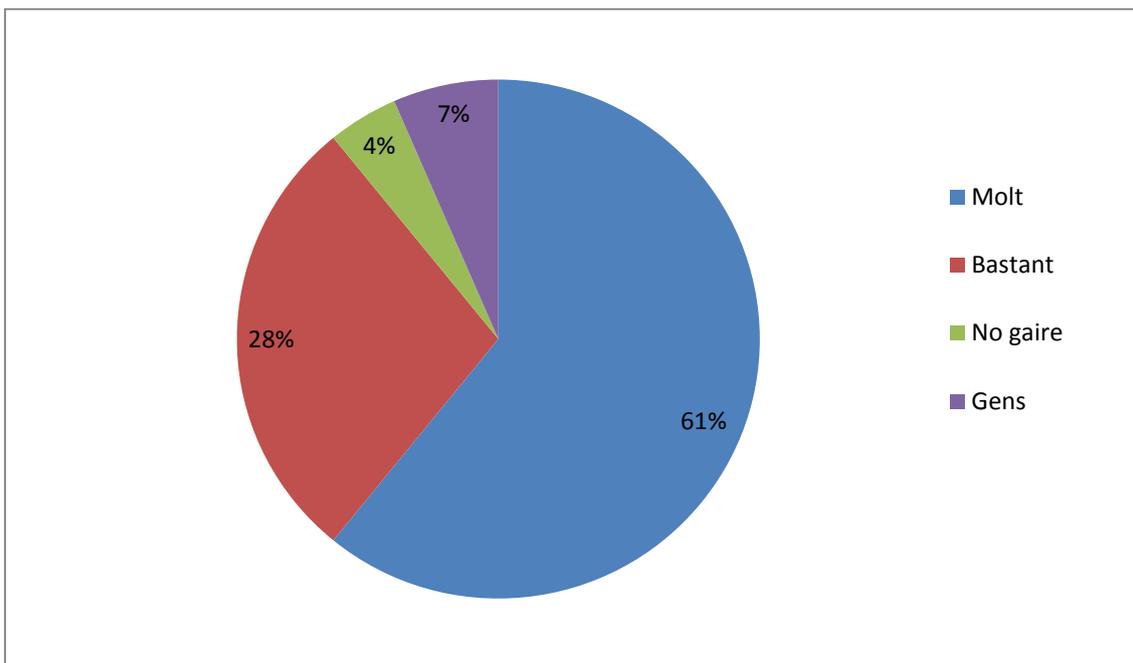
Question 15. Vas en alguna acadèmia d'anglès després de classe?
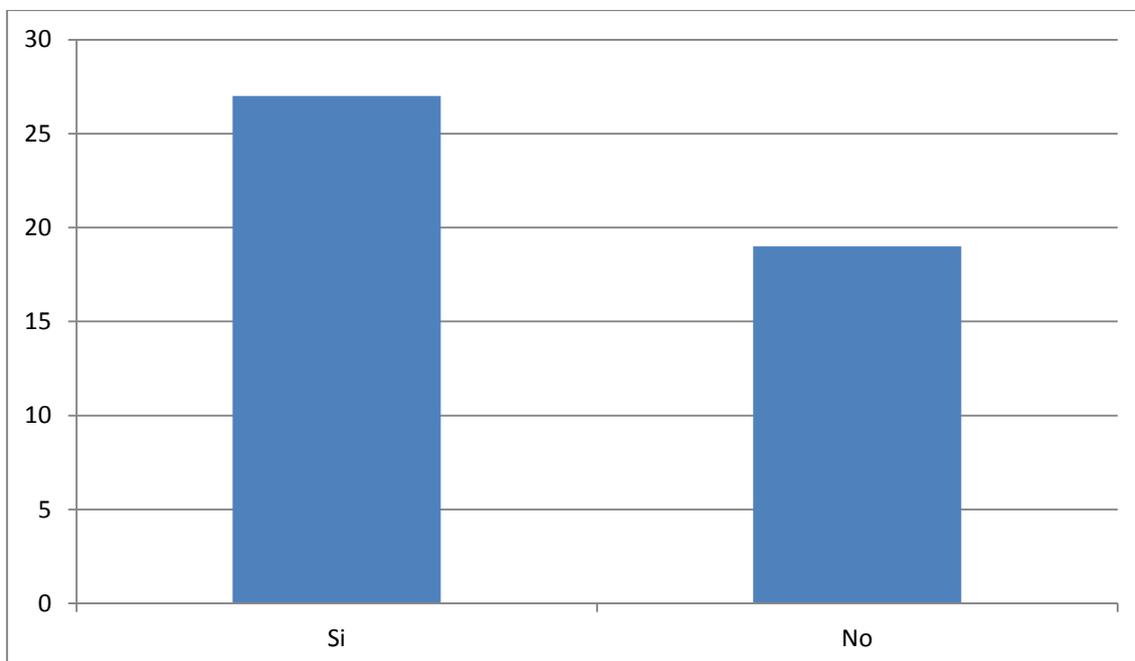
4. Results

Teaching EFL through immersion, by implementing CLIL or O'CLILS practices, allows children to learn the language in a similar way to how they learn their mother tongue, due to the real communicative situations the teaching methodology provides. The analysis of the transcriptions support the theoretical framework, making visible the language children are exposed to and the uses of it.

Looking at the language used in the transcript, the amount of input was considerably higher than the output children produced. This was not a surprize due to the fact that when learning a FL or even in the first language, students go through a silent period in which they have to get used to listen to the language, the tone and the pronunciation before being able to speak. When children feel secure they can start using the language to communicate.

Looking at the short conversations section of the three grades, in the majority of the interactions the children spoke in Catalan and the teacher answered them in English or even paraphrased what they have said in the FL. These practices allowed children to communicate, increasing their opportunities to learn the language, as part of the conversation was carried out in English. In almost all the interactions, the children gave a single-word answer, using "yes" or "no", except for the questions referred to the routines time in which they said the name of the day, the month, the season or the weather, always answering in just one word. By giving these answers, children showed that they understood what the teacher was saying, and it was an indicator of the progresses children made. In which the children started with single word answers, providing them the confidence and vocabulary needed to gradually start using language structures and produce complete sentences in the FL.

Some of the children's transcripts of short conversations reflects the immersion techniques efficacy. One example is Jaume in P3, a three years old child who said to the teacher "This ones two em fan mal" pointing at two tooth that were waggling, the same child went to the teacher's place and said "I have this home" referring to the blue tag the teacher had on her hands. Another example found in the same grade came from girl who added to the teacher's explanation "and let it go". In P4 Lluc, a boy who drew a dinosaur, explained to their classmates that he had drawn "a daynoserous" making up their own translation. In P5, Enric wanted to rectify the teacher who said "this is a pop-out" by saying "no this is a stickers". All these examples found in the three preschool grades, make visible the immersion benefits.

Jaume in P3 uses the language he has heard to make his own sentences. The girl says a chunk of language that she probably did not hear in an instructed context in which the content is the only aspect transmitted in the FL. In P4, Lluc did not translate the word correctly; however, by trying to say it in English he shows his confidence on using the language and also the process in which he is trying to decode the grammatical English rules, in order to acquire the language. The sentence Enric uses to rectify the teacher, clearly shows his capacity to pick up the teacher's input, as he uses the same grammatical structure. In all the examples, young children are able to communicate in the English language, due to the fact that they have been taught through immersion and O'CLILS practices in which any situation is an opportunity to learn the FL and its uses.

The fact that the input sections in which there were more language where the advices and the commands, reflected the amount of language needed to manage the class, extra language that provide a wide amount of vocabulary for children to learn, without being conscious of it.

Most of the children started incorporating the FL into communicative situations by using single words in the middle of their Catalan sentences. There is a girl in P3 who said "El meu pare em diu que és a ladybird", or a boy in P5 who explained "Se'm ha trencat el plane". Step by step children learn the vocabulary they need, using the English words into the place where they would say the Catalan words. This slowly process is the one that will enable them to try to make sentences in English, like in the example in which a five years old child says "Frankie wants to write the name". This sentence doesn't express exactly what the boy wanted to say, as he meant that he had to write the name at the back of Frankie's worksheet, but the approximation and effort made to say it in the FL, instead of just in Catalan, shows the motivation and the progresses made to acquire the language.

Meanwhile the transcriptions where made with the intention of verifying the wide variety of communication situations immersion provides compared to other methodologies. The questionnaires' aim was to discover if the immersion methodology, taught through O'CLILS practices in preschool, achieves its purposes.

Referring to the attitude, the teacher and the children coincided on the fact that children have got a positive attitude towards the language and its learning. From the forty-six children who participated in the survey, thirty-one answered that they like English very much, twelve that they like it quite a lot and just three who didn't like it a lot.

A wide number of students also agreed on the fact that they enjoy the English sessions very much. The teacher pointed out that even though in Year two children start to complain for some things, in all grades children have positive attitude and are motivated.

As it is shown in the graphic[7], the hundred per cent of the children agreed on the importance to learn English. The most popular reasons to learn the language were to have a better future; to communicate with other people; to be able to travel around the world and to teach English to their parents. It can be seen how at the age of six years old, these answers can be a reflection of the children's families thoughts; however, it is interesting knowing their issues of motivation.

According to the English teacher, the students are able to follow the lesson easily. Moreover some children do interact during the class using the FL. At the question related to the embarrassment of speaking in English, the majority of the children were not ashamed to speak in the class whereas it was a noticeable increment of those who were ashamed to speak outside the class. The naturalistic context provided during the English sessions motivates children to use the language and feel secure. Outside the class, children are not immersed in the FL, for what using it is not perceived as natural as it is inside the class.

Concerning to the preschool English sessions, the teacher thinks that these provide self-confidence to the children, as they are able to understand questions, dialogues and instructions once they arrive to primary. Moreover, she points out that better and more advanced skills; greater confidence; ability to learn a new language easily and greater intercultural appreciation are the main advantages of exposing the children to the FL at an early age. Children agree on the fact that they liked the preschool English sessions "a lot", and the aspects they enjoyed the most were to speak in English; the teacher; the puppets who introduced the new topics; the games and songs; the handmade activities and the routines in which the students pretended to be the teacher. As all the answers showed, children got use to the FL in a natural way in which through games, songs and fun activities, they developed a positive attitude towards the English language and felt really motivated to learn it.

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[7] See 3.1.6 Analysis of the students' questionnaire results. Question 2

The differences between preschool and primary English sessions are noticeable. The majority of the children detected big changes (65%) and some others reflected that they had noticed relevant changes (26%) between both levels. The main differences were the use of the English book instead of doing worksheets; the English level of difficulty; the limited amount of time to play and sing and the disappearance of the puppets in primary. In order to avoid being through all these changes, children propose to use IPads instead of doing worksheets; to use the interactive whiteboard instead of playing with the puppets; to increase the level of difficulty and to play using the blackboard. From their perceptions, these changes would improve the preschool English sessions and would also reduce the differences between preschool and primary lessons. Even though from the students' experience there are improvable aspects, the English teacher agrees on the benefits of starting English in preschool. Comparing the children's abilities to others who start learning the FL in primary, in Paidos children arrive to Year one with better communication skills; more self-confidence; a good comprehension level and knowledge of the language uses and enjoying the language learning, what from the school's point of view, meet the expectations of teaching EFL in preschool, shared with the immersion goals.

To conclude the results section, some questions about the role of the families were included in the students' questionnaire. In the theoretical framework has been exposed that a higher interest of the parents towards the EFL learning means a higher interest of the children to learn the English language. In order to verify this direct relation, children where asked whereas if their families thought that learning EFL was important, to what the hundred per cent of the answers were positive. Related to it, the questionnaires analysis showed that the eighty-nine per cent of the students where asked by their parents about the English sessions development, and the ninety-three per cent spoke with their families about the English homework. The results go in completely accordance to the theory statement, demonstrating the relevance of the families' role.

The last question of the students' questionnaire reflected that the majority of children go to English academies after school, showing the families desire to offer English education to their children.

5. Conclusions

Some experts state that immersion vastly promotes communication situations compared to other methodologies. The aim of this research was to analyse the extra vocabulary children were exposed to in a real English lesson taught through immersion so as to verify whereas if it was as beneficial in real practices as the experts defend.

As it has been exposed in the theoretical framework, young children learn holistically and from their own experiences. Bearing in mind the preschool students' characteristics and their learning strategies, it has been seen that some methodologies are more suitable for them to learn a FL than others.

There was a reason to choose immersion as the focus of this research. I have always thought that the best way to learn a FL is moving to the place where it is spoken so as to be able to live the language and its uses in the context where the language is required in any communication situation. Due to the fact that emigrate to another country is not always possible, after studding different language teaching methodologies, I realized that immersion was the one that offered more opportunities to learn the FL in a more similar way to how people are used to learn their mother tongue. For these reasons I decided to do the research on immersion, as the benefits the methodology provides are the most similar to the needs children have when they are learning a FL.

To promote communication situations consequently means more exposure time to the language and also an increment of the vocabulary used. The analysis of the six English sessions' transcription in preschool demonstrated that the amount of input children received in just one session was already substantially high. The input involved different language purposes, from what children could discover many uses of the language through their own experiences.

Immersion and so CLIL and O'CLILS practices, promote that students develop a positive attitude towards the FL; expose children to the language, its phonetics, pronunciation and tone; meet the English teacher and develop complicity with it; present the learning of the FL naturally, by doing games, songs, storytelling and start communicating in the FL. As the analysis of the questionnaire results showed, children experimented with all this aspects positively, it can be shown that the students have benefited from the immersion advantages.

The aim of this research have been achieved with the confirmation of the extra benefits immersion promotes and the wide amount of language children are exposed to, giving the opportunity to the students to learn and live the language and its uses by themselves, coming from any daily situation, for example, the lesson or some routine times such as snack time; wash time; toilet time or even in the transitions from one setting to another.

As the transcriptions showed, even from the very young age of three to five years old, the students were able to understand the language and were self-confident enough to start producing and communicating using EFL. The findings of this study confirmed that learning a FL through immersion vastly benefited children in their language proficiency, communication skills and learning process.

Concerning my personal experience, this research has allowed me to investigate on a topic I am really interested in, and at the same time it has been really motivating. In order to organize myself the time and the tasks that needed my attention, I made a schedule that provided me a better perspective of the steps I had to follow. Even though the schedule was really useful for me, I had some limitations during the research. Referring to the teachers' questionnaires, I made them short and sent them via e-mail so as to facilitate the teachers' job to answer these. However I didn't take into account that the school term is nearly finishing. Due to the fact that he teachers have a higher workload during this period of time, preparing the final exams and redacting the evaluations, from the six questionnaires I sent, I received just one answer on time. How to classify the input children received during the English sessions was quite challenging too, as the language was diverse. Even though there are always improvable aspects and despite the limitations, I am really satisfied of the whole process as I have learnt to better organize myself and find different ways to problem solve, skills that will surely be very valuable for me in my future tasks as a preschool teacher.

During this study, I have had the opportunity to investigate, to be in the school and to build a relationship with the teachers and the students. I have seen the organization in the school and the place the teaching of EFL takes in it. To be a teacher means to be continually learning from courses, from the students, from the other teachers or from any daily situation. For this reason, to carry out this research has been an invaluable experience for in depth learning in this topic; the process. The opportunity to network with experts and students has developed a personal enrichment that will contribute on my future labour as a teacher.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Teacher's questionnaire

Teacher's subject:

Grade:

Do children have a positive attitude towards the learning of English?

Can children follow the English lesson easily?

Do children interact in English during the class?

Do you think that, by doing English in pre-school education, children will start primary education being better prepared?

In case you think that, starting English at early stages is beneficial to children, can you say what the benefits are?

What changes have you noticed between primary pupils who did English during their pre-school education and those who did not?

7.2 Students' questionnaire

Curs acadèmic: Primer de primària A B

T'agrada l'anglès? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Creus que és important aprendre anglès? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Per què?

T'ho passes bé a les classes d'anglès? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

T'agradaven les classes d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Què és el que t'agradava més de les classes d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5 ?

Et fa vergonya parlar en anglès a la classe? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Et fa vergonya parlar en anglès fora de la classe? .....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Has notat canvis entre P3, P4 i P5 i primer de primària? ....
....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Quins?

Què canviaries de les classes d'anglès a P3, P4 i P5?

Els teus pares creuen que és important aprendre anglès?.......................................
....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Et demanen què fas a les classes d'anglès? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Parles amb ells dels teus deures d'anglès? ....Molt   Bastant   No gaire   Gens

Vas en alguna acadèmia d'anglès després de classe? .... Sí   No

7.3 Answers of the teacher's questionnaire

Grade: 1st-2nd primary and preschool

Do children have a positive attitude towards the learning of English?

In preschool and 1st of primary the attitude is positive in 2nd of primary they start to moan for some things. But in general, they have a positive attitude and are motivated.

Can children follow the English lesson easily?

It depends on the children and the type of lesson you make but they can easily follow the class. As a teacher you have to adapt the lessons depending on the type of levels and necessities.

Do children interact in English during the class?

Some of them speak English at the class. Some of them feel embarrassed when they have to speak in English. As a teacher, I think that in primary they should ask basic questions and interact in the class in English. It is important for them to develop these abilities in early ages, in preschool they don't usually speak in English because they don't have enough grammar and vocabulary to speak but by repetition they usually ask and answer questions. The routine is the basis of the language for them.

Do you think that, by doing English in pre-school education, children will start primary education being better prepared?

Yes, they do. I think that they are self-confident when they arrive at primary because they are able to understand questions, dialogues, instructions… And it is also better for them because in primary we also emphasize on writing skills.

In case you think that, starting English at early stages is beneficial to children, can you say what the benefits are?

- Better and more advanced skills

-greater confidence

-ability to learn a new language easily

-greater intercultural appreciation

What changes have you noticed between primary pupils who did English during their pre-school education and those who did not?

When I started to work in Paidos, the preschool English project was already working, for what I cannot compare the students experiences in the school. However, I have seen other schools where the teaching of English starts in primary and compared to Paidos, in which it starts in the nursery, when children arrive to primary, they have better communication skills, students are more confident and because they can understand and use the language, they enjoy the English sessions.