HOW CAN STORYTELLING IMPROVE THE ENGAGEMENT IN EFL CLASS?

Final Degree Project

Marta Coll Autet

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Tutor: Miquel Pujol Tubau

Primary School Teaching Degree

Minor in English

Facultat d'Educació Traducció i Ciències Humanes

Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to explore the educational value of storytelling, especially when it comes to learning English as a foreign language. Bearing this in mind, it aims to answer the following two questions: "How can storytelling improve pupils' engagement in the EFL class?" and , based on the pedagogical application, "Which are the best conditions to make storytelling a worthy resource in the EFL class?"

These research questions were dealt with from a qualitative methodology approach, through a qualitative action research, where I acted both as a teacher and researcher. The data was collected during my practical intervention in schools by field notes, observation charts, video recordings, EFL teachers' questionnaires and the written opinion of students.

The pedagogical intervention, implemented in four different groups of first graders in three Primary schools of Osona, is the basis from where I would study the validity of storytelling as a resource. A small scale research was developed to check and analyse the effects of implementing storytelling and its related activities in the EFL class.

The findings obtained through observing the practice suggest that storytelling may have a positive effect in the language acquisition. Stories enhance pupils' engagement and foster behavioural factors such as attention and curiosity, which come to motivation. In addition to that, the active learning activities about each story evoked participation and interaction using English.

KEYWORDS:

RESUM

Aquest estudi pretén explorar el valor educatiu d'explicar contes, centrant-se en l'aprenentatge de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera. La proposta inicial es basa en les següents preguntes: "Com pot la narració de contes millorar l'implicació dels alumnes a la classe d'anglès?" i, des del punt de vista de intervenció pedagògica, "Quines són les millors condicions per treure el màxim profit al explicar contes com a recurs a la classe d'anglès?"

Els dos objectius van ser tractats a través d'una metodologia qualitativa, més concretament, des de la perspectiva de la recerca d'acció, on vaig actuar alhora com a investigadora i com a mestra. Les dades van ser obtingudes al llarg de la meva intervenció pràctica a les escoles, a través de notes de camp, quadres d'observació, vídeos, qüestionaris als mestres d'anglès i alguns documents d'opinió dels infants.

La intervenció pedagògica, desenvolupada amb quatre grups diferents de primer de Primària de tres escoles d'Osona, és la base de partida per estudiar la validesa dels contes com a recurs. A través d'una recerca a petita escala es comproven i s'analitzen els efectes de basar la classe d'anglès en el fet d'explicar contes.

Els resultats obtinguts a través de l'observació pràctica suggereixen que la narració de contes pot tenir un efecte positiu en l'adquisició del llenguatge. Les històries estimulen l'implicació dels alumnes i fomenten actituds com l'atenció i la curiositat, que deriven en motivació. A més a més, les activitats d'aprenentage actiu sobre cada conte van fomentar la participació i la interacció a través de la llengua anglesa.

PARAULES CLAU:

narració de contes, anglès, participació, motivació, aprenentage actiu

"Universe

is made of stories,

not of atoms."

Muriel Rukeyser

The Speed of Darkness (1968)

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a long process that requires lots of practice and exposure. As I have seen from a professional perspective as an English teacher and also as a language learner, the more opportunities we have to listen to a foreign language, the more capable we are to speak fluently and correctly. But, as it is widely known, the balance of oral inputs is not as recognized and validated in our culture as literacy ones are. That leads into most EFL teachers tending to emphasize in grammar, writing and reading skills, forgetting about the vital importance of listening and speaking in the language acquisition process. This scenario is the reason why I have chosen to focus my study on storytelling, because it is a tool that involves orality. The choice is also based on the fact that I had a particular interest in children's literature as a source of real language. I am humbly prone to thinking that introducing pupils to stories -previously selected with accuracy- would enrich their knowledge and culture.

Based on the context described above, the main aim of my action research was implementing storytelling as a resource for EFL classes to foster pupils' active participation and to create a way for meaningful language acquisition. Furthermore, I would delve into the difficulties encountered during the sessions' development and the solutions or improvements that I suggested after each one. Besides this, my second purpose was to reflect about my own practice, as a teacher and a researcher, sharing the perceptions and the personal-professional insights of the pedagogical intervention.

1.1. Objectives

When I planned my study, I decided to focus on the power of storytelling as a resource to engage pupils in the EFL class, therefore, the main question that I proposed as the aim of the project was: "How can storytelling improve pupils' engagement in the EFL class?".

However, when I carried out the first sessions, I realised that the context where storytelling is developed affects the question raised above on all levels. This is why, in order to round up the study, I decided to add a second question to investigate: "Which are the best conditions to make storytelling a worthy resource in the EFL class?"

Thus, the objective of this research project is to implement some storytelling-based sessions with four groups from three Primary education schools in order to be able to answer these two questions referring to storytelling as a good tool for EFL teachers.

To finish this introductory section, as follows I will describe how this paper is structured. First of all, it describes the methodology applied to develop the research as well as the tools for data collection used along the process. The second part is devoted to the theoretical framework, which is divided in two categories. On the one hand, an overview of literature about storytelling as an educational tool that correspond to the theme of this study. On the other, a revision of the different pedagogical approaches that may prove helpful to incorporate storytelling in the EFL class. The third part describes the practical development of the project. It is composed by an introduction of the pedagogical intervention, the research procedure and the description and reflection about the results observed during this practical part. This third block ends up with a discussion section that briefly answers both objectives. Finally, the paper is completed with the conclusions.

After describing the structure, we will now lead to describing the methodology used in the study.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Research Method

2.1.1. Qualitative Approach

Among the variety of methods available, we can clearly state that we have performed a qualitative study because it is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behaviour and engagement in the EFL class, as well as to observe the perceptions with reference to a specific issue and the results are mainly descriptive. Besides, being aware that a qualitative approach is based in observations, I have also included this parameter in the study. Observation took place in the classroom, where the participants could act in a natural way, interacting with their classmates and with me as the teacher-researcher.

According to Creswell (2007: 45), qualitative research takes into account the natural setting in which the researchers collect the data and the type of instruments to collect qualitative data that are interviews, observations and artefacts or documents. This statement confirmed my choice: using qualitative methods would help me describe what is happening and understand the effects of my pedagogical intervention.

2.1.2. Action Research

I positioned this study under the light of Action Research because, as Koshy (2005:2) explains, its main purpose is to improve practice – either one's own practice or the effectiveness of an institution. This type of research activity is usually carried out by educational field personnel in order to generate improvements through the methodologies or the resources applied in their own work. Bassey (1998: 93) describes "action research as an enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change, in order to improve educational practice".

It can serve as a useful instrument because it involves a reflective process of progressive problem-solving led by a teacher-researcher, which turns to be a deep evaluation and insight to the teachers´ practice taking into account children's development, behaviour and interactions.

Therefore, conducting an Action Research is challenging because the teacher-researcher not only conducts the research, but s/he is also simultaneously making changes while implementing a class intervention. In other words, being in the researcher role, the teacher has to be self-reflective and critical throughout all the process, identify the strengths and weaknesses and, at the same time, try to look for strategies to improve and refine it constantly. Besides, Action Research implies a systematic process that allows planning, acting, observing, reflecting; and then evaluating, refining and improving. Thus, the teacher-researcher must keep following this cycle repeatedly until the end of the process.

Action Research could be described as a four-step spiral process that involves 1) identifying a problem; 2) taking action; 3) collecting and analysing; 4) using and sharing the results. This process proves to be perfect to check how implementing storytelling in EFL class works as it provides the opportunity to study and improve my own practice, and it usually encourages change in schools and empowers self-reflection as it examines new methods or ideas.

2.2. Instruments for Data Collection

In the Action Research, the instruments to collect data include interviews, participant observation, participant-written cases or researcher field notes, among others. In my case, the instruments chosen were selected to give reliability and validity to the study, as well as supporting the conclusions reached to provide an answer to the double research question (*see* "1. Introduction").

2.2.1. Observation Chart

According to Yin (2001: 58), observation is a significant data collection instrument that allows the researchers to see and be aware by themselves without using other sources to filter the information. That is the reason why, just after each session, I tried to reflect what had happened by completing an observation chart where I specified the following

parameters: date, time, class, objectives, work done, way the work was done by the pupils, participation, attention, motivation, environment, behaviours, things that worked well and things that could be improved.

After using this chart, I am convinced it is a good tool because I can focus on the items and it helps in comparing the evolution and seeing how the same session works differently in different school settings.

2.2.2. Field notes

The use of journals or field notes helps to externalize, to verbalize and to examine systematically. This process allows the teacher-researchers to understand their own practice as well as expressing their thoughts and ideas, and later to be able to make the necessary changes and improvements not only in their teaching but also in their pupils' language learning.

This second instrument allowed me to make a written account of all the process, all the information that I considered to be valuable for the research study was written down, reflecting my insights and impressions in my journal. The notes were taken as soon as the storytelling sessions were finished so that the information collected was fresh.

2.2.3. Teacher's previous and post questionnaires

Designing a brief questionnaire for the home EFL teachers would bring me information about the previous scenario. These questionnaires have a set of questions and issues that I wanted to analyse from the perspective of the EFL teacher of each school.

I have also handed them a post questionnaire in order to collect their opinions after seeing the storytelling sessions developed with their group of EFL children. The answers would be included in my discussion, to validate my reflections of the results.

As they preferred answering it in their own, I send it by email, so they could have the flexibility to answer the questions more freely, without any limitations of time or

extension, and by not having any pressure. An example of these questionnaires can be found in the Annexes.

2.2.4. Children's evaluation of the project

The most important part of an education project is children and I was very interested in how they perceived my sessions and I wanted to see what they enjoyed the most, I think that could give us a clue of what type of activities make them interested or enthusiastic, creating a better context in order to learn a foreign language.

Therefore, in the last session I asked pupils to draw their favourite thing or things of all we have been doing during the sessions, later they told me what it was by using their mother tongue, in order to know their opinion of what I have carried out and see if it links to the conclusions I have extracted.

2.2.5. Video-Recording

This record-keeping provides me data about the intervention contributing to validate my observations. This is why, the video recordings of the sessions were made in order to have an extra support if I wanted to consult them for specific details and they just complement the observation chart and the field notes previously explained.

3. Theoretical Framework

As a foreword, I want to clarify that storytelling has been gaining importance as a tool to use in EFL recently, so it is difficult to find bibliography relating stories and the foreign language acquisition and learning. However, I have tried to collect all the information that could be useful and relevant in order to link it to my research.

The theoretical framework is divided in two categories: one referred to storytelling, as it is the basis of my proposal, and another linking with different pedagogical approaches that I have used when designing and developing the sessions in the schools. The second category has been included because storytelling application requires the use of some tasks to develop the sessions. This lead me to create a structure for the session development to use like a class routine and some following-up activities. Both the routine and the backing activities were devised based on the education theories that will also be described below (*see* section 3.2).

3.1. Literature and Storytelling

3.1.1. Children's Literature

Before the nineteenth century, very few books were specifically written for children, but since then, the attitudes towards children's development, along with the increase of technology, have led literature to create a specific genre intended for the young ones. Nowadays, children's literature is recognized as an important field, both in itself and for the insights it yields into literature as a whole, as well as into the family and society life that are influenced by it.

However, it is not a simple matter to find a definition of children's literature that can be applied with equal validity at different times and in different contexts. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (2005: 3) claim that "children's literature is good quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interests to children of those ages". Thus, we could sum up by saying that Children's Literature is a genre defined by its audience, because the stories are meant for children.

3.1.2.　　Children's Literature in the EFL class

Literature for children can be effectively used to acquire English as a foreign language in students of all ages, because pupils are challenged with language input that is slightly beyond their independent level of comprehension. This comprehensible input can be provided by listening to the reading or the retelling of a previously told story.

The use of literature for foreign language acquisition is not a new concept, in fact, it had already been used some centuries ago by certain prominent people. I have discovered three different examples of it by reading Darian (1972).

The first one was Quintilian, who used Aesop's Fables for helping people to acquire Latin as a foreign language, by listening, retelling and rewriting. His greatest contribution to modern language teaching was that correctness is derived from the exposure and the use of language. The second example took place in the 15th century, when Desiderius Erasmus based his educational methodology on exposing learners to illustrated historical and mythological stories and descriptions of natural life. He defended that the rules of grammar should be taught only after they have been acquired intuitively by reading or listening. In fact, his opinion was strong:

> I have no patience with the stupidity of the average teacher of grammar who wastes precious years in hammering rules into children's heads. For it is not learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to expressing themselves with the exactness and refinement, and by copious reading of the best author.
> (*De Ratione Studii* or *Upon the Right Method of Instruction* Part 3 Section; cited in Darian, 1972: 10)

The third one was Comenius, in the 16th century, who believed that the experiences in the foreign language should draw upon the children's background knowledge, and he advocated for the use of a controlled vocabulary. For this reason, he created a sort of a picture dictionary which is considered the first informational foreign language book for children. Together with this contribution, Comenius continued the tradition based on the argument that one acquires language by hearing and reading, followed by learning the rules of grammar.

I found really interesting that much of these early scholars' work from centuries ago is still compatible with the current foreign language acquisition situation. As Lazar (1993: 17) points out, literary texts -such as storybooks- enrich the language input in the classroom and stimulate language acquisition by providing meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language.

Stories help us improve retention and comprehension of language at all levels. One of the main reasons for this is their structure. Through the understanding of stories, children can also develop an understanding of how to properly use a language and how to boost their vocabulary, because it helps them to place the words in a context they can easily relate to.

Carter and Long (1991: 21) defend that using literature as a resource offers teachers possibilities to base language learning activities on materials that can stimulate greater interest and involvement to acquire the foreign language. Moreover, using real stories brings them real language inputs and a meaningful context to interact in English.

Duff and Maley (1990: 6) talk about three types of justification for using literary texts: linguistic, methodological and motivational. Linguistically, the use of literary texts is justified on the grounds that they "offer genuine samples very wide range of styles, registers and text types at many levels of difficulty". Methodologically, they "offer opportunities for genuine interaction between learners because of their openness to multiple interpretations". Motivation-wise, they "deal with matters that are likely to engage learners in a personal response from their own experiences".

According to Collie and Slater (1990: 3), there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use children's literature in the EFL classroom:

- *Literature is authentic material*. Real children's literature is not created for the purpose of teaching a language. Thus, learners are exposed to language intended for native speakers, so they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.

- *Literature means cultural enrichment*. Literary works facilitate understanding on how communication takes place in that foreign country and it also adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners.

- *Literature provides a language enrichment*. Through stories, learners can deal with a wide range of individual lexical and syntactic items, and they become familiar with many features of the written language, learning about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of structures, the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing and speaking skills.

- *Literature fosters personal involvement*. It is useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement. When listening to a story in a foreign language, understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. The student becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens and, perhaps, feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. Being emotionally involved can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process.

Stories provide a natural, relevant and enjoyable context for exposure to language and a great opportunity to familiarize children with the sounds, rhythm and intonation of English. The discovery and construction of meaning is supported through things such as visuals, gesture or voice, and children also develop learning strategies and thinking skills, such as predicting, guessing and inferring meaning.

In behavioural terms, stories help young children to develop concentration skills and also aspects of emotional intelligence, such as empathy and relating to other people.

Bringing stories to the EFL class provides us with a wide range of ways to awake language acquisition, thinking skills, positive attitude... Besides, children develop their ability to understand, retell, act out and create their own stories in English and this also has a positive effect on their motivation, confidence and self-esteem.

3.1.3. Storytelling

The storytelling art is much older than formalized language. Around 40.000 years ago, human beings told their stories portraying their own experience to themselves and transmitting it through the ages. That is why we consider storytelling like the most ancient form of teaching, because it has a bond with the early human communities who used it as a way to share experiences and knowledge. In fact, long before the internet, television or even books, information was passed on to new generations orally.

As we have evolved, we have been developing new ways to share our knowledge, but the ideal remains the same and, still today, every single culture in the world keeps telling stories.

3.1.4. Storytelling in the EFL class

Storytelling remains an innate form of communication because all of us tell stories: when we talk about how our day was, when we describe a situation we have lived, when we share memories, etc. Our minds are used to thinking in terms of beginning, middle and end; this is how we understand the world. That is the reason why it may fit in EFL classes, as Ghosn (2002: 172) argues "storytelling is a form of education that should be the basis of language teaching regardless if it is the mother tongue or a foreign language". She emphasizes that "storytelling promotes a natural form of language development that many children find easy to assimilate, whether they are told a story or telling one".

Although it is difficult to define storytelling in a single way, I agree with Roney (2001: 23) when he wrote the following definition:

> In its most basic form, storytelling is a process where a person (the teller), using vocalization, narrative structure, and mental imagery, communicates with the audience who also use mental imagery and, in turn, communicate back to the teller primarily through body language and facial expression in an ongoing communication cycle. Storytelling is co-creative and interactive. It is one of the most powerful forms of art/communication known to humans and this explains why it possesses such great potential as a teaching-learning tool.

As a foreign language teaching resource, storytelling can be used to introduce different aspects of the language, as well as having other positive effects for further language education. Apart from the evidences showing the benefits of using storytelling in foreign language education, children tend to love stories. Stories tell us about life, about ourselves and about others. So narrating stories is a unique way for children to develop understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures and languages.

Analysing the cognitive factors, Harmer (1991: 7) states that children are "above all curious" because they are eager to expand their relatively limited world knowledge. Furthermore, as Moon (2005: 3) explains "young children learn most effectively through experience which means that until around the age of 9, they are more likely to acquire new language by engaging in activities which require the use of language than by formal study". This is because children at a young age are still in the process of developing the conceptual framework which will eventually allow them to handle language as an abstract system. Children pay more attention to meaning than to form, picking up on visual and other physical clues, and applying knowledge from previous situations in order to understand what is happening, rather than concentrating on the words used. Moreover, children tend to be field sensitive and they perceive a situation holistically, rather than analyse it in detail.

Stories are a great source of language experience for children. Furthermore, stories are motivating, easily accessible and immensely interesting. Enough reasons to support what Wright (1995: 11) says "Stories should be a central part of the world of primary teachers whether they are teaching the mother tongue or a foreign language". In fact, as Forest (2009: 186) concludes *"The teacher must be a storyteller".* Following this consideration, storytelling has been adopted along this research as a tool for teachers, a storyteller can contribute in helping an audience of children who are facing the challenge of being active participants during their English language acquisition process.

3.1.5. Storytelling factors that help learning

To conclude the first part of the theoretical framework, we will explain three important factors that help children in their learning process from a storytelling point of view: Attention, Emotion and Motivation.

3.1.5.1. Attention

Sustained attention is the ability to look at, listen to and think about over a period of time. It is essential for the learning process, because without attention new learning simply does not happen and issues of understanding and memory have no relevance.

Attention in the classroom results from a combination of the children's internal ability to sustain attention and the power of the lesson material to get their attention, learning cannot be successful without both.

Furthermore, Heather Forest (2009: 139) underlines that listening to stories also provides pupils an engaging opportunity to exercise and nourish the ability for sustained attention which stimulates children's motivation levels, engages their interest, sparks discussion, inspires reading, etc.

When pupils are involved in an intense concentration and are focusing in the story there is a mental process going on where they make links with physical, linguistic, verbal and visual clues. In parallel to this combined process, they also produce their own sense of the story.

3.1.5.2. Emotion

Lots of authors and teachers have figured out and understood that language learning is built up from the inside out. Emotions and learning occur in the brain. Learning means acquiring knowledge or skills and it requires brain functions. Our thoughts influence our emotions and our emotions influence our thoughts. The connections between emotion and learning are complex and relevant to success. It could be stated that emotion is a vital factor to learn.

By reading or listening to stories in a foreign language we are actually experiencing it and establishing an emotional connection. A tale can arise our empathy with the characters and through storytelling we can live simulated social situations in our brain that actively move our emotions. Stories connect with our inside, which is why they are part of our life: this emotional connection gives them relevance. Emotions are bound to influence our learning and they determine how successful we will be in acquiring a new language.

In fact, there are several theories of foreign language acquisition, as we will see in the next points. One of them, Krashen's Monitor Theory (1981), includes the Affective Filter Hypothesis, based on the significance of emotional factors and motivation as key elements that control the language acquisition process. Krashen describes it in the following way (1982: 4):

> When a student is exposed to a new language, the first internal hurdles are posed by the individual's emotional state and motivations. Filtering sources are the individual anxiety levels, peer identification, and general motivation to learn a language. Together, they make up what we have called the "Affective filter" or simply "Filter". The Filter acts to control entry to further mental processing.

3.1.5.3. Motivation

Our emotions can strongly affect motivation. Motivation is a drive or desire that compels us to do something. Different authors consider storytelling an effective instrument to boost learners' motivation to learn languages, because it fosters their active participation in the language learning process. Wajnryb (2003: 4) argues that the context and meaning of stories are powerful enough to engage learners in the learning process, helping them improve their skills in the foreign language. Similarly, Wright (1995: 23) claims that storytelling increases the learners' interest in listening and reading stories, in turn playing an important role in improving their listening and reading skills too.

We could define motivation in many different ways, but in this study I will use it to refer to effective strategies that can help learners in the foreign language acquisition. As Dörnyei (1998: 73) explains that motivation energizes human behaviour and gives it a direction, which is why I consider it as a significant dimension in language acquisition.

He described the model of motivation beyond two orientations. Dörnyei (1994: 275) stated that "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on what languages where". Then, motivational model was categorized into language level, learner level, and learning situation

level. The language level refers to aspects of the foreign language (such as culture, community, values, etc). The individual level consists of the learner characteristics that language learners bring to the classroom. However, the learning situation involves different factors including the classroom environment, the teacher, learning context or the pedagogical methods. Storytelling is, therefore, considered to be a powerful tool to motivate children to learn a foreign language by engaging and encouraging them to participate actively in the language learning process.

After this reflection on the connection between motivation and storytelling, we will now focus our attention towards the educational approaches that would be applicable to the intervention that belongs to this study.

3.2. Pedagogical Approaches for an EFL learning

3.2.1. Language Acquisition and Language Learning

There are two points to take into account when we learn a new foreign language: language acquisition and language learning. The main difference is that language acquisition refers to a subconscious process where pupils learn and are able to use a language without being aware of its rules whereas language learning refers to a conscious knowledge of the target language through studying its rules.

Krashen (1982: 21) defends that language acquisition and language learning are two distinct cognitive functions. He explains that language acquisition focuses on the comprehension of the language while language learning focuses on the rules of grammar which produce a correct speech. And, of course, both functions are necessary. I coincide with Krashen in the thinking that first may come the language acquisition and then the language learning. Thus, rules of grammar are first acquired in an intuitive way through meaningful language use and, later, they can be identified and formally learned.

Thus, in my opinion, language acquisition becomes the basis from where we can construct a formal language learning. Krashen (1982: 30) also considers that language acquisition input is most effective when it is natural, interesting and understood. That is the reason why I intend to use storytelling in EFL classes, because the foreign language comes in a natural context and children are interested in what is happening. This means learners benefit from practice in listening comprehension and they are not forced to learn, they are just exposed to real language in a real context.

As Krashen (1982: 76) reflects, "providing learners with a comprehensible input facilitates their natural language acquisition" because people acquire a second language only when they are exposed to comprehensible input which means listening to or reading the target language that is little beyond their language level of competence. To clarify, Darian (1972: 15) repeats the same idea: "One acquires a language by hearing and reading, followed by learning the rules of grammar".

3.2.2. The importance of selection and preparation

Using stories in the EFL class requires that the teacher spends a certain amount of time to accurately select a number of texts, having the ability to evaluate stories and to discriminate between those that meet the learners' needs and those that do not.

Ghosn (2002: 103) argues that, as a teacher, you can use the same material at different teaching opportunities in different classes. When teachers are confident in their materials, pupils also become safe and secure in their learning. Furthermore, the material choices that we make as teachers, need to be done carefully and from a didactic perspective.

At this juncture, the prominence of the selection of stories in relation to the needs, interests and language level of the students is evident. Stories sometimes are chosen because they seem funny, rather than for providing a great language acquisition development. Many publishers produce simplified storybooks especially for children learning English. However, I prefer to use authentic storybooks written for English-speaking children which are also suitable for those ones learning English as a foreign language. The advantage of using authentic storybooks is that they provide pupils an input of real language and real content that addresses the interests and needs of children.

Not only is selection important, but also preparation time is. Simply telling a story to a class without preparation can be disastrous with the loss of pupil attention and motivation. Using storybooks successfully in the EFL class needs careful planning.
Lesson planning is essential for being an effective teacher. It is a process to synthesize our understanding of language acquisition and language teaching pedagogy with our knowledge of the learners, the curriculum and the teaching context. It is the time when we envision the learning we want to happen and analyse how all the pieces should fit together to turn that vision into a classroom reality.

The story selection requires a time and an ability to evaluate and discriminate those books that meet your pupils' needs and those that do not. There are different items to

take into account when selecting story book such as: language difficulty, appropriate contents, size of the book, meaningful pictures, interactive opportunities and extension in the follow-up activities.

It is essential to choose the books accurately and think about all the factors to make a successful storytelling session. It is also important to carefully weave the details that will help the storytelling time: organize the environment to be relaxed and comfortable, prepare the audience for listening (make a ritual of silence following the rhythm with an instrument), and foster their engagement with visual clues (opening the box to see a real object and the story book cover, situate the main character in the map…).

3.2.3. Communicative Language Teaching

The main purpose in a foreign language acquisition is that the person is able to communicate in that language, this is why I was interested in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication, so the goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972: 281) referred to as "communicative competence", referring to the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations. Its origin has to be found in the 1960s, where it arose in both America and Britain as a way of teaching the language by practicing it in meaningful situation-based activities.

Piepho (1981: 8) described it accurately by suggesting the following levels as basic principles for the Communicative approach:

> First of all, an integrative and content level, considering language a means of expression. Secondly an instrumental level, where is language as a way of learning and at the same time an object of learning. The third level consists of interpersonal relationships, as language is the mean of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others. The next level focuses on the individual learning needs and the learning based on error analysis. The last level consists of a general education or extra-linguistic goals, which is language learning within the school curriculum.

In my activities I have tried to take all these levels into account, this is why I proposed interactive and participative activities after the story time, because they can be very useful strategies to develop young learners' communicative competence as they provide a natural and meaningful context to use the language in a motivating way.

3.2.4. Real texts

One of the contributions of communicative language teaching is the insistence on authentic materials as a valuable source for learning the language because they show the reality of the language in use. Hedge (2000: 67) states that "if the ultimate goal in EFL is to enable children to deal with the authentic language of the real world, they should learn how to cope with it in the classroom".

In an EFL class, reading or listening to authentic storybooks is one of the best options for language improvement and acquisition. Not only do these texts motivate students and offer opportunities for discussion, but also they help to build confidence in their ability to use the language.

3.2.5. Active Learning

Many researchers have suggested active learning strategies to promote pupils' involvement in EFL classroom activities, for example, Dörnyei (1998: 76) reveal the need of a more pragmatic education approach to increase the motivation in learning.

The conventional pedagogies of teaching EFL have some deficiencies such as they belong to passive learning and they dissect the language into individual components and teach reading, speaking and grammar separately. Besides, lists of vocabulary outside of authentic context are learned by heart, trying to make the learner memorize words and phrases.

Active learning means a learner-centred method that approaches the new language holistically, engaging pupils by making them participate in their own learning.

Brown (2007: 24) defines active learning as a form of learning in which the learner use opportunities to decide about aspects of the learning process. Cranton (2012: 32) describes that in an active learning environment learners are immersed in experiences which involve meaning-making inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction and reflection.

Storytelling requires some active involvement of the learners by interpreting the text through noticing, inferencing and negotiation of meanings. Moreover, I have designed the follow-up activities focused on the children active learning because interaction leads to many opportunities of language acquisition such as comprehension checks, communicative practice and so on.

3.2.6. Holistic Approach

From my point of view, the methodology adopted in the EFL classroom should be taken from a holistic approach, consistent with the cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional developmental levels of the children involved.

Peck (2001: 140) sets out the following principles, that deploy the holistic perspective:

> Focus on meaning, not correctness. Focus on the value of the activity, not the value of the language. Focus on collaboration and social development. Provide a rich context, including movement, the senses, objects and pictures, and a variety of activities. Teach ESL holistically, integrating the four skills. Treat learners appropriately in light of their age and interests. Treat language as a tool for children to use for their own social and academic ends. Use language for authentic communication, not as an object of analysis.

As a teacher, I fully agree with Peck's principles and I have taken them into account to prepare and develop my pedagogical intervention.

3.2.7. Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky (1978: 61) "a learner has the potential to progress from their actual developmental level to their potential developmental level via scaffolding that occurs during interaction with superior others".

The use of stories in the EFL class can provide scaffolding to the foreign language learners in order to allow for acquisition in a meaningful and cognitively supportive way because children can develop focused and detailed understanding of language through interaction of stories.

Vygotsky proposed his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development in the following words (1978: 65):

> The zone of proximal development of the child is the distance between his actual development, determined with the help of independently solved tasks, and the level of the potential development of the child, determined with the help of tasks solved by the child under the guidance of adults and in cooperation with his more intelligent partners.

From this perspective, the zone of proximal development determines what a student is capable of learning with support, a concept that Vygotsky referred to as "scaffolding." With support or scaffolding, the pupils can learn the concept or skill and practice with their supportive mentor or more knowledgeable other until they are comfortable to do it on their own. The use of storytelling can help in the scaffolding theory if our selection of books is accurate and we propose interaction by meaningful and purposeful follow-up activities that can help pupils to get to this ZPD by encouraging retelling, promoting drawings and using realia, total physical response (TPR) or drama to make it funnier and memorable.

In other words, and according to Vygotsky, learning has to be challenging for children and it can take place only when the children are interacting with people in their environment. Therefore, a process of reaching Zone Proximal Development takes place when learners can acquire their potentials by the assistance of a peer or teacher. It covers all the practical learning activities and teaching methods in which students are able to think about their learning and to use their own knowledge to solve problems.

3.2.8. Experiential Education

In the last century, John Dewey (1997) emphasized an education for meeting the needs of the child as a whole – physical, social, emotional and intellectual. Dewey promoted an education approach that other prominent educators such as Pestalozzi, Froebel and, later, Montessori defended too: make learning real, meaningful and rewarding. He theorized that learning should be relevant and practical, not just passive and theoretical, because children acquire knowledge in a better way by participating, experiencing, doing.

Learning by doing, also known as experiential education in "an instructional approach based on the idea that ideal learning occurs through experience" as Coffey (2010: 338) sets out "And it, additionally, combines active learning with concrete experiences, abstract concepts and reflection in an effort to engage all learning styles". For Dewey, learning tasks require active participation of the student in a meaningful context and must connect content to the student's life.

In my case, I think that bringing story books in the EFL class is giving children the chance to have a meaningful context to learn a new language and, then, I have planned the follow-up activities to foster active students and to enhance their involvement in doing, by proposing different type of activities that may suit in the different ways of learning that each child has.

4. Intervention and Study

4.1. Context

This research study is linked to the pedagogical intervention, that was carried out in four different groups of first grade of Primary education pupils located in three different public schools of Osona.

As follows I am going to describe the school settings briefly:

- **Escola La Farigola**

It is a public school located in the small town of Seva (Osona). There is one group of 1st grade and there are 21 pupils. They do English using different resources: stories, songs, flashcards, videos, etc. and CLIL with Science and Arts and Craft.

- **Escola Les Pinediques**

It is a public school located in a bigger town which is Taradell (Osona). There are two groups of 1st graders, in one there are 22 children while in the other there are 21 pupils. They do English following an EFL book.

- **Escola El Gurri**

It is a rural public school in the small neighbourhood of Mont-rodon, which belongs to Taradell (Osona). They have one class group for 1st and 2nd graders, there are 10 pupils in it. They do English with different tools such as songs, videos, arts and craft, stories, worksheets, projects, etc.

On the one hand, in order to get to know the students better, I attended one EFL class before starting my pedagogical intervention to meet the pupils and see how they are used to develop in their English classes.

On the other hand, I used a previous questionnaire to collect the views of the three English teachers. I would like to highlight some of the questions answered, as I think they are a great way for having more insight about the context where I would develop my intervention as well as my research. This is only a selection of five questions that are

directly related to the context approach. To read the fully-answered questionnaires, see Annexes.

Firstly, I wanted to know what the English teachers thought about exposure to English and relate it with the school timetable to see the hours that their schools were dedicating to English.

In your opinion, do children have enough exposure to English in order to acquire that language properly?

Estefania *El Gurri*	It is never enough but we try to arrange their timetable in order to get more contact with foreign language such as providing a part of science in English language.
Laura *La Farigola*	No, they have small time in English I think it's important to have the maximum exposure to the new language and make it as real as possible. But in my opinion, the sessions should be short because small children have a limited attention span but they learn very fast through seeing. Teachers should provide meaningful contexts to increase their motivation. And need a variety of techniques to make the language understandable to children.
Ramon *Les Pinediques*	No, because in four or five days they don't speak in English. Moreover, the TV and the cinema don't help them to learn English either the society does.

Extracted from Previous Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

As can be seen in their answers, all three of them agree that the exposure of children to English language is not enough, which was my starting premise (see "1. Introduction"). What's more, Laura, teacher of La Farigola school, says that we should provide children with an exposure to English language, but always in a meaningful context and trying to make language comprehensible for them. That is one of the reasons I decided to use stories in the English class, as it can create a meaningful context and the language

meaning is inferred by learners thanks to the plot, gestures and pictures (see *3.1.4. Storytelling in the EFL class*).

Secondly, the following answers refer to the time schools give to English classes with young students from Initial Cycle in Primary:

In your school, how many average hours of English do children have per week?

Estefania El Gurri	They have 2.5-3 hours per week.
Laura La Farigola	In Initial Cycle 2 sessions per week (45 min per session).
Ramon Les Pinediques	The young ones have 1 hour and 30 minutes per week of English.

Extracted from Previous Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

Therefore, I agree with Ramon, teacher of Les Pinediques, when in the previous question he refers to the fact that only one isolated hour in one day per week is not enough for a proper language acquisition.

In my opinion, it is not only the time they spent doing EFL classes, but more importantly, how is the English approached to them. Apart from the low input of English received by children, I wanted to know what skills do teachers emphasize when working in class because, as I observe above (*see* "1. Introduction"), one of the main problems is that schools usually give relevance to grammar, reading, vocabulary and writing; forgetting about the importance of listening and speaking for the optimal development of a fluent English speaker. In other words, my point is that studying English skills such as grammar or vocabulary isolated from the rest, will never help children to speak it; it may give them knowledge of the language, but it won't give them the confidence to be able to

communicate in English. A language is a means of communication, so to acquire it we must emphasize orality: children must listen to it, speak it, interact using it, etc.

Thirdly, as follows is a brief description of how teachers developed orality:

In your classes, what percentage does orality (listening and speaking) represent in front of literacy (reading and writing)?

Estefania *El Gurri*	Generally speaking, it could represent 70% of oral abilities' exposure, but it also depends on the planning of the different activities.
Laura *La Farigola*	In my sessions with young children the oral part is about 80% because we need to create communicative contexts to learn the new language. We need materials that help them to improve their imagination and creativity and which are motivating enough to give a sense to learning.
Ramon *Les Pinediques*	More or less we spend 15 minutes for Listening and Speaking activities and 30 minutes for Grammar, Reading or Vocabulary activities.

Extracted from Previous Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

As can be read in the answers, Laura, teacher of La Farigola School, has done the same reasoning as me and this is why she always tries to give more emphasis to orality. So does Estefania, teacher in El Gurri School, who dedicates a 70% of time to oral activities that include both speaking and listening skills. Instead, Ramon is still dedicating more time to literacy skills.

My storytelling sessions would include the story time and always some follow-up activities and games centred in the children and trying to make them being active. Thus, I wanted to know what type of activities did they enjoy the most before, so I could use this information as a guidance when devising the lesson plan.

Which kind of activities do the students enjoy most?

Estefania *El Gurri*	They absolutely love those activities in which they have to interact with each other, like preparing a quiz, an interview, playing games…etc. They also love manipulative or action games.
Laura *La Farigola*	They enjoy the most activities where dancing, singing or games where interaction is involved. They love the physical response activities. Listening to stories is a must because they enjoy them very much.
Ramon *Les Pinediques*	They enjoy a lot when they can participate and be active, I mean also drawing or creating.

Extracted from Previous Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

It is easy to corroborate that most children love participating and interacting, because that is how they get motivated: when they are feeling part of the learning.

As I have been explaining in the framework (*see* "3.2. Pedagogical Approaches), my starting point consisted on several pedagogical approaches which believe in an active, participative, manipulative learning always focused in the children interests.

Finally, I will provide extracts from the last question that was relevant for me to get a clearer picture of the different scenarios where I would develop my practice and my research based on storytelling.

The aim of this question was to see if teachers were keen on using stories for its educative value and to promote language skills development.

Have you ever used storybooks in the English class? Why/Why not?

Estefania	I have already used storybooks because it is something children enjoy a lot. They are easy for them to understand because pictures come along with the corresponding explanation. Pupils get inside an imaginary world and it awakes curiosities on them.
El Gurri	
Laura	Yes, I have. For me, they are a very important part in my lessons especially with young children because they create an inviting environment, promote confidence and creativity and provide good models and values.
La Farigola	
Ramon	No, because the time we have is limited, so I can't do the activities from the school book and also add a story time, it has a comic strip and some stories, it's enough.
Les Pinediques	

Extracted from Previous Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

As a reflection on the answers, two out of the three teachers are keen on using storytelling as a resource in their EFL classes. They justify its use by mentioning some of the benefits I have also stated before (*see* "3.1.3. Storytelling" and "3.1.4. Storytelling in the EFL class") such as that the telling of stories creates an inviting context, promotes confidence, awakes curiosity, fosters creativity and, basically, pupils enjoy listening to them. The other teacher is one example of those teachers who haven't found a way to include them in their traditional classes based on text books.

4.2. Research Procedure

To begin the implementation of the study in order to reach the objectives, I contacted with five different schools by sending an email where I made a short presentation of myself and also briefly introduced my pedagogical intervention and the research project. Only three out of the five initial schools I had contacted answered the email and, fortunately, they were all very interested in my proposal.

The next step was deciding which would be the schools and groups where I would apply the storytelling sessions and do the further observation. As the three schools offered four different groups to work with, I thought it was a good scope to collect the data I wanted for my project.

To narrow my research, I also decided to apply it on first grade pupils, except in Escola El Gurri (being a rural school, the group mixed first and second graders). Therefore, I would carry out my intervention and research focusing on Primary school students between 6 and 8 years old.

As my research was thoroughly based on my pedagogical intervention in these four different groups of pupils of the same age from three different schools of same zone in Osona, I started by implementing the sessions. This could enable me collect the data I needed.

My purpose was to observe and describe the general development of each storytelling session implemented. To do so I created the observation charts with six items and four levels to punctuate, because it was easier to fill them just at the end of the class. Furthermore, I also had a notebook where I wrote my field notes combining observations and reflections made just after finishing the session in order to have fresh sensations of it.

By the time I was doing my intervention, as commonly happens in action research, I was observing what was happening in the class and I modified different things depending on how I saw they affected the children.

Following Stringer spiral, my role was: acting, observing, thinking…changing, observing, rethinking and acting. And I followed these steps constantly, because this is the way that action research works. It can be visually observed in the graphic below:
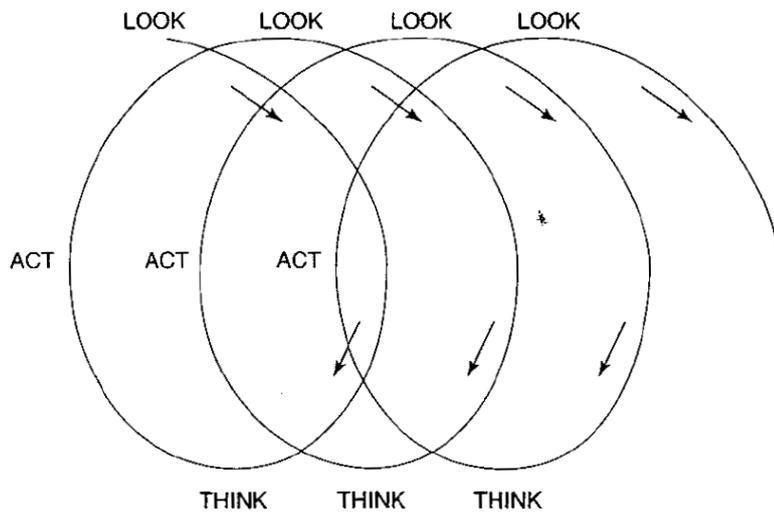
Apart from that, I had recorded in video all the sessions I have made (except session number one, because there were problems with the camera and I couldn't fix it). The video recordings were intended to work just as support material to validate my observations made by field notes and completing the charts.

Parallel to the observation made during my intervention (as I have detailed above), I also designed two questionnaires for the EFL teachers of the schools where I was implementing the project.

There was a previous questionnaire where they could explain their usual ways of teaching English. It also asked about their opinion about using storytelling as a resource. I sent it to the teachers by email before starting my sessions in school and I asked them to answer it in a week's time. All three of them sent the answers.

I also designed a post questionnaire, to recap opinions of storytelling applied in EFL to see if there were any changes after seeing my practice. I also sent it by email one week after finishing my sessions in schools and, as in the previous questionnaire, I let them one week to send it back. I received a complete to all the three of them again.

Not all the answers were relevant to the research I was doing, so I just selected the ones that fitted with the contents and reflections that I was developing in this study. To see the complete questionnaires' answers, see Annexes.

Finally, when I finished my intervention in the EFL classes before leaving I asked the children to draw and tell me their favourite thing of all the sessions I implemented. I thought it would be interesting to see pupils' perspective and, maybe, use it to compare with my observations and also with the teachers' opinion.

4.3. Pedagogical Intervention

My pedagogical intervention with the storytelling project was carried out in the second semester, from 29th of January to 19th of March 2018. I was carrying out the same project in three different schools and with four different groups of pupils, as I had detailed in the previous point. I planned one session per week and, according to the schools' timetables, each session lasted about 45 minutes each. For this intervention I selected and created related activities to five storybooks: *Mr. Noisy, Where the wild things are, The Gigantic Turnip, Room on the Broom* and *Three Billy Goat Gruff*.

4.3.1. Session Organisation

In the all the sessions I used the same structure because it helps children to feel more confident and comfortable if they know what it is going to happen next. Thus, I created it thinking of a basic ritual, so they could easily get it.

1. *Box*. "May I open the box?" before opening it and making them collaborate to open it. Presenting from the inside: first an object (what is it? what can the story be about? ...), then a storybook (looking at the cover and telling what we can see there) and finally an instrument comes out.
2. *Map*. Let's situate the story. After showing the main character, "where do you think this story takes place? Where may I place it?" They predict where to stick it.

3. *The silence rhythm*. Follow a rhythm using the instrument we took from the box and pass it around, like a ritual to get into silence and prepare us to listen to the story.

4. *Storytelling time*. Following the storybook, tell the story with lots of gestures and trying to make them interact when possible.

5. *Map*. See if the character was in the right place of the map, "did we guess it?" "was our prediction right or wrong?" "where does the story happen?".

6. *Retelling activity*. Different activities to check if they understood the story and help them to clear the plot, such as guided role-play, use of puppets, ordering a sequence, etc.

7. *Real object activity*. Take the object and use it to start a following-up activity, based on *realia* where pupils can participate and manipulate real objects related to the story.

8. *Game*. Play a game related to the story vocabulary or context, I tried to use variety of games: a board counting game, a memory, an action game, a drawing game, a song, etc.

9. *End*. Keep the object and save the book into the box. Say goodbye singing and making gestures with the song "See you later Alligator".

4.3.2. Sessions Development

In this part I will summarize the general way in which I developed the sessions. I am not going to describe each session, they can be revised in the Annexes the observation charts and the field notes describing each session extensively.

As I have told before organising the sessions, following the same structure helped me to develop them and also the pupils got used to it faster.

Although the activities proposed were different for each storybook, taking into account relevant aspects that I wanted to emphasize, I planned them following the same principles.

The previous activities were used to create a quiet environment and catch their attention for the storytelling. Besides, with the character, the storybook cover and the object from the box, new vocabulary was presented and explained to pupils to make them feel a little familiar with the story as well as helping them to predict what the plot was about.

During the story time I focused on telling the tale, making gestures and getting their feedback. Sometimes I asked them to interact with the story and verify if they were understanding it or following the plot. For example, if they recognized the characters, the places or if they could find a particular issue in the story. Therefore, pupils' participation and connection with the story was very important.

The follow-up activities were planned with two main objectives: one of the activities was thought in order to repeat the plot or a part of the story to check what they had understood and, at the same time, to help them assimilate it. Secondly, I planned one activity where they can manipulate based on a real object (that appears in the story). Thirdly, there was always a game where they had to use vocabulary or grammar drills from the story.

At the end of the session, as a closing ritual, I kept all the things back into the box and we stood up to sing a song with gestures to say goodbye.

4.4. Results

This part of the project endeavours to present and analyse the results that have been collected through the observation charts and the field notes taken at the end of each session. The data analysis is organized by following the items of the observation I recorded in the charts. However, I have used both the data from the observation charts, which were easier to see and compare, contrasted with the field notes data, which were extensive and more descriptive and so brought more details of each part.

I would like to underline that the categories stated in this part, corresponding to the items observed, cannot be seen as separated elements, because they are all interrelated and connected in a way that one factor can affect the others.

4.4.1. Organization of physical space

The place is one of the most important factors. Children need to be in classrooms that inspire them, that make them feel comfortable, to be relaxed and get ready to listen to a story. Although I asked for a big free space where children could sit in the floor during the storytelling and move around in the activities, it was quite impossible to obtain. This is why most of the observation charts mention a "basic" level in organization of physical space: I couldn't have the space I needed. Despite each school has a different classroom setup, in most cases I have used the group classroom which was full of desks and chairs and shelves, with no free space to move, with lots of things hanging on walls trying to get pupils' attention, with a computer and a digital board ready to use…
As I wanted to create a calm environment for the storytelling moment, in some cases I have tried to change the room distribution, putting the desks/chairs at the bottom of the class and getting some free space to create a circle around me and make storytelling closer. I have asked for a different space, but it was impossible to get because at that time they alternatives were occupied, only in two occasions did the school let me use a nonconventional classroom.

In one case we could use the school library space with only bookshelves around us, natural light through big windows and some cushions and rugs to sit on the floor. That space was perfect, and that storytelling session worked in another rhythm. Pupils found a place that was comfortable for them; that open space served as a community gathering spot which helped me in the story time but also in the related activities.

In another case I could use a gym, which had a big window wall, nothing hanged over the walls and it had lots of free space. Children took big pillows to sit on and they sat in a semicircle without asking them, just because they felt it. The situation was different, they felt comfortable to listen to a story, they had space to move and participate in the

activities I prepared for them. That session worked better than the others, they were having a different attitude: their willingness to listen to a story increased and silence came along. Furthermore, the social interaction was easier in the activities and games; there were no issues when they played in groups.

Afterwards, it was critical to rearrange the physical space and furniture to align with the principles of children-centred activities, manipulative activities or collective games, because those classrooms were not designed for that kind of learning and interaction. That was a real problem for me, we had to use spaces built for different purposes and sometimes it became difficult to carry on some activities or manage some group behaviours because of the space.

The following graphic describes the influence that a physical space can have on a storytelling session development. It is based in two different sessions that were carried out with the same group but in two different spaces: the regular classroom – which was full of chairs and desks, walls full of posters and shelves, with no free space – and the day we could use the gym – with free space to move, and where they could sit on the floor making a circle closer to me, and more comfortable for moving around during the activities. Graphic 1 clearly shows how the physical space can contribute to generate a better general behaviour and consequently an easier general classroom management.
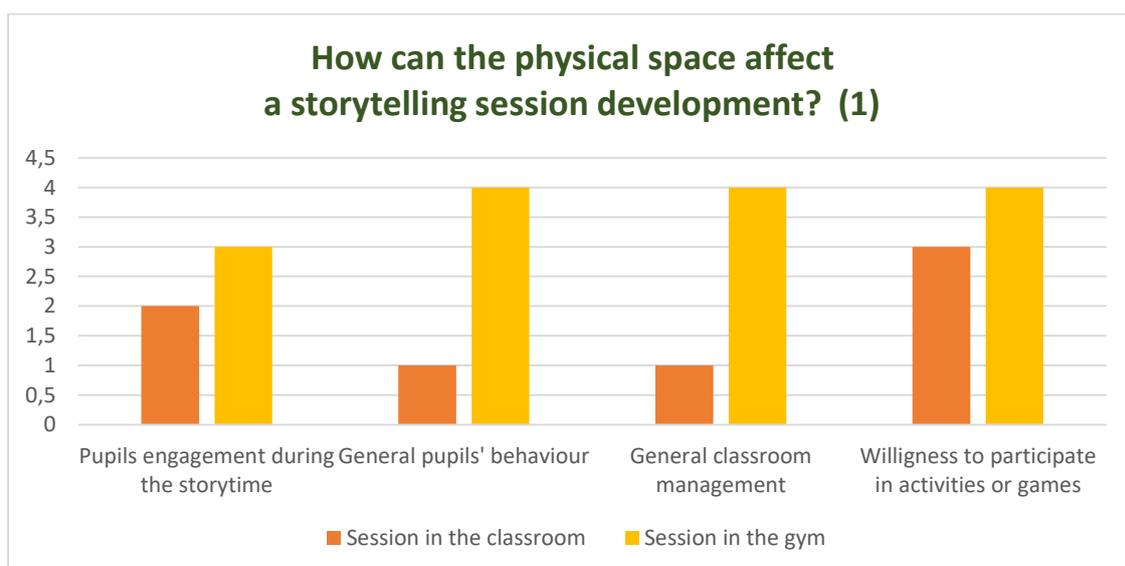
Graphic 1.

To validate this perception, I have added another comparative on changing the physical space, focusing on another group but also in two different spaces: the regular classroom – full of furniture, materials, boxes…white light, sitting on chairs – and the library – with cushions and carpets on the floor, with more space to move, with only books and shelves and a big window around us.
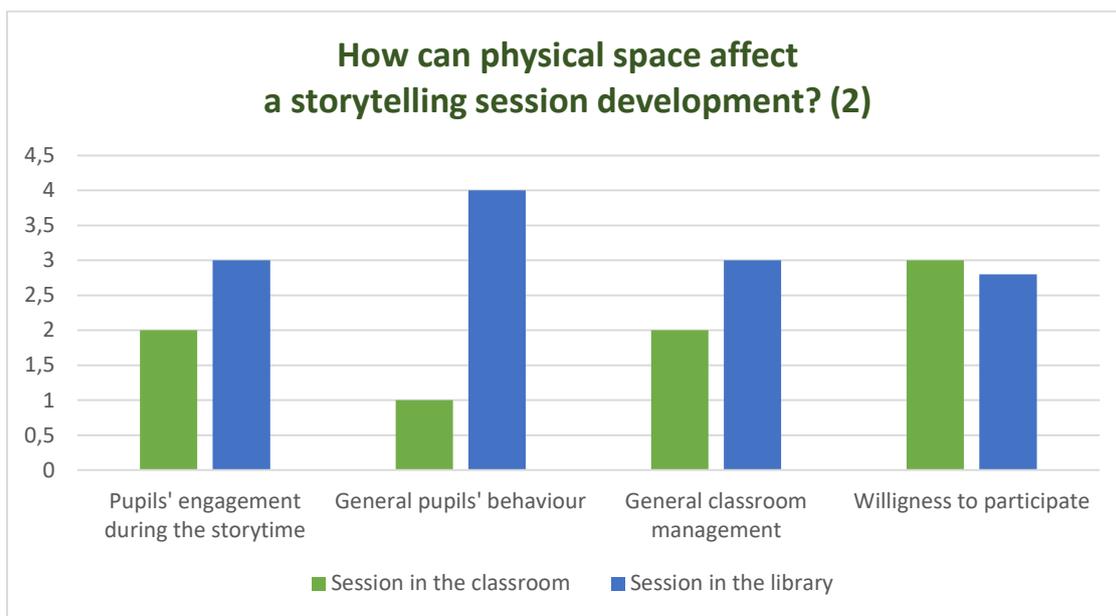
Graphic 2.

As can be seen in the graphic 2, the space influences the pupils' behaviour and obviously the classroom management. When children feel well in a comfortable space the environment is relaxed and that affects the whole session development.

4.4.2. Engagement of pupils during the story time

Through the storytelling sessions I have also observed how their interest in English language and in literature grew. Stories encouraged children to learn English and participate in class and helped to make the content meaningful for them as well. The situations narrated through the stories offer the pupils a chance to relate a real context with the one in the tale. This makes them feel comfortable as they find a meaning in what they are doing in class. Most stories I have chosen fostered pupils' enthusiasm for

the language and literature and it came along with a powerful participation and effort in the suggested activities.

In my field notes, I wrote some examples of their interest for literature: when I introduce a storybook and some of them comment about it because they recognise that storybook, when they relate the character to a similar one in their school library, when they asked if I could bring more stories about one character, when some of them asked me to have the book to look it on their own or when they share time with some classmates looking at the pages and trying to repeat part of the story.

While analysing the data from the observation charts and from the notes I wrote after each session, and comparing the students' engagement during the story time, I could perceive the storybooks they liked the most. The following graphic illustrates a comparative of the engagement of pupils by the stories told in each session.
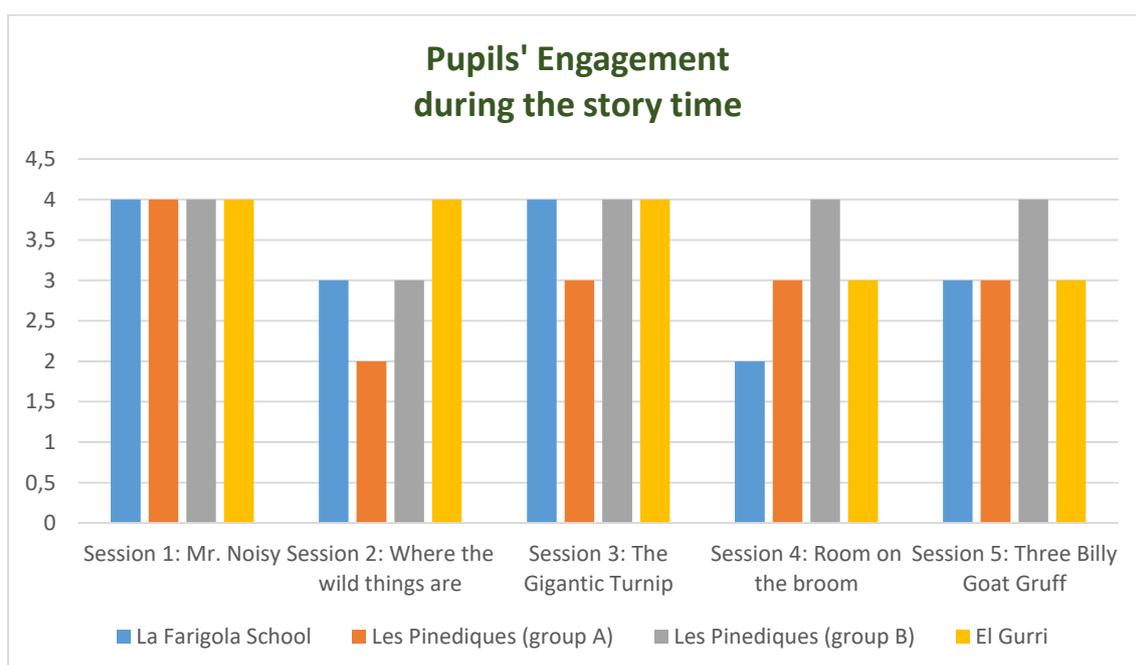
Graphic 3.

This graphic shows that *Mr. Noisy* and *The Gigantic Turnip* were the two stories that engaged the most our students. In fact, these findings could be foreseen, based on children commentaries during the sessions: they all referred to a character, a moment or a phrase that had captivated them from those stories.

4.4.3. Willingness to participate in the activities or games

My planning included several follow-up activities or games, but all of them were learner-centred. In other words, I designed them to make children be active and participatory in everything happening in class. I have not changed that point, because from the beginning I could see that they were feeling more comfortable and motivated when I suggested participative activities. They felt that they were part of the class, the emotional part being paramount in the learning process.

They also loved that activity based on real objects, that they could manipulate following the *realia* method. The main advantage of using real objects into the classroom is to make the learning experience more memorable for the learner, as I could see they simply enjoyed it and were always expecting that part where the real object was the centre.

I could see that after telling some of the storybooks they wanted to participate by acting or creating. They were willing to participate in the retelling activities, where they could act out some parts of the story using drama, puppets or masks. Children have enjoyed the action activities where they can move or do things.

And sometimes they asked me to invent a fantastic broom, to draw strange monsters or discussed how the troll could look like… I had some creative activities prepared in some sessions, but as I could see they were willing to use their creativity I provided them time and materials to keep their motivation on.

Furthermore, during some days, they keep imitating some of the characters in the story by playing with their classmates on their spare time. These are all examples of how storybooks can bring our children lots of new opportunities to create and imagine, as well as make them feel part of the class by listening to their interests and allowing them to be active pupils.

The children's participation was in most of the cases very high, as we can see in the observation charts (*see* Annexes). The following graphic is added as a recapture to it.

Willigness of pupils' participation in each session
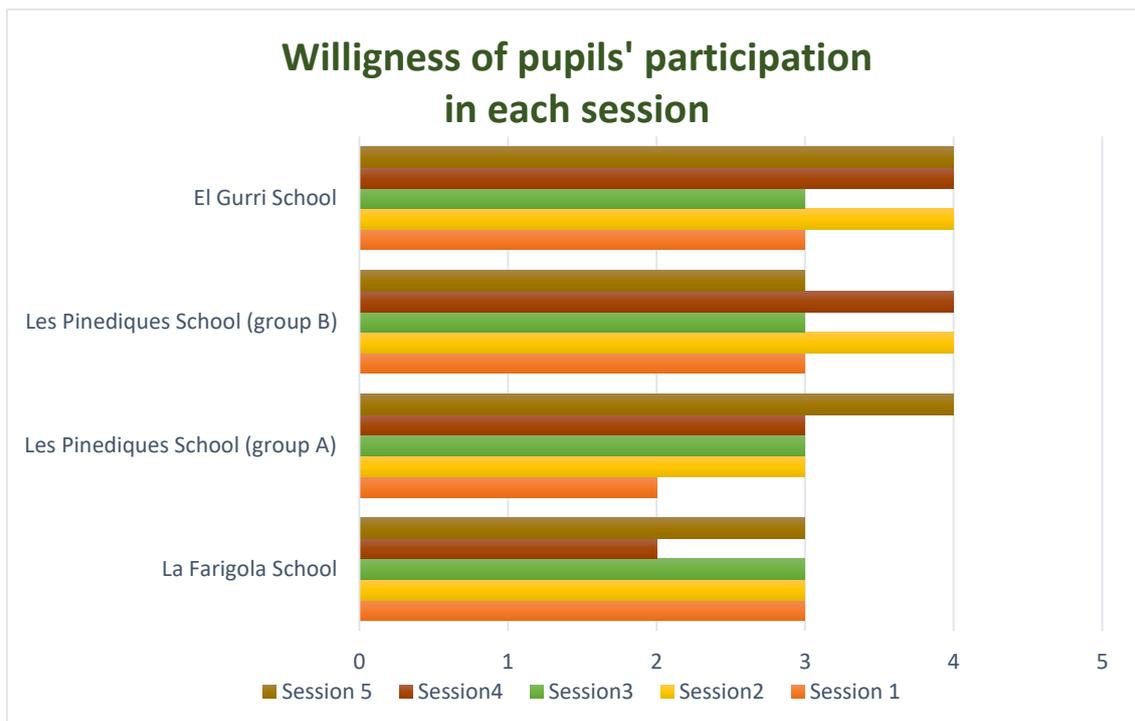
Graphic 4.

I think participation doesn't depend of the story book, but it is related to the learning environment generated by the active learning approach. From the first session until the last one, this type of activities provoked in children a willingness to participate in all the activities and games I proposed to go along with the stories.

4.4.4. Interaction or Communication using English

The interaction through activities or games offers a wide opportunity for children to correlate the story context with their own, which would connect with the meaningful learning that would help them to acquire a language.

The effect of classroom atmosphere on communicating in a foreign language is obvious. Creating a classroom environment that promotes a calm and secure space for enhancing pupils' communication is the key and stories do contribute to that. In the sessions I could see students interacting during the storytelling when I asked them to, but also because they wanted to comment something or to try to predict what would happen, or maybe

because they have seen something familiar in the pictures and they just remember how it is called in English.

The lively atmosphere and real-life situations created by stories encourage children to talk and discuss with each other. When telling and listening to a story, the learners were plunged into the plots and forgot about themselves. It also helps them to relieve their nervousness.

The retelling of activities was one of the parts that fostered students to communicate in English. Retelling gave them a meaningful context for them to use English, because they were using language from the story to retell it. It was always a cooperative work done in group so there was not only an interaction with me, as the teacher, but also between pupils.

The games were another part of the session with different levels of communication between them; they interacted from just saying a word to maybe repeating a sentence or a phrase from the story.

One important thing is, when they tried to interact or communicate, I always gave them the time and space, because I know that even the slightest sign of indifference or impatience can be immediately felt by the speaker and that would inhibit their willingness to communicate.

Another relevant point was that I never pushed them to speak or to say any word in English, I allowed them to make the decision: if they were ready and willing, they participated; if they were not, they didn't. That made them feel more self-confident and even more calm.

As we could see in the observation charts, and was also reflected on my notes, the interaction and communication using English is high for a group of first graders that is just in their second year of contact with this foreign language. That could mean that storytelling helps to create a context where kids become more self-confident to express themselves spontaneously.

4.4.5. General pupils' behaviour

Another repeated item I would use to describe children's behaviour was attention or concentration. As all teachers may agree, it is very difficult for young pupils to be quiet, to stay calm and to pay attention for a period of time. That is the reason why I was satisfied when I realized that most of them were concentrated in the story I was telling in every session. Stories have that magic thing, they manage to catch their attention and become a good exercise for pupils to get the attentive attitude that usually teachers miss in youngest students. If you want them to be quiet and interested, tell them a good story. At the end, storytellers are teachers because pupils learn a lot with them; not only language skills or cultural knowledge, but also behavioural factors.

By comparing the observation chart items, I have found out that the General Pupils' Behaviour is always related to their Engagement in the Story and also affects the General classroom management of the teacher. The behaviour of children was also related to motivation, as long as they have motivation for what we were doing their behaviour was really better. That means when children are attentive is because they are interested in what you are offering them, stories helped in awakening their curiosity and they were easily calm and quiet.

4.4.6. General classroom management

The management of the classroom is completely related with the pupils' general behaviour. If the story engages them and there is a motivation, they pay attention and usually there is a good behaviour that leads to an easier classroom management.

In general terms, it can be seen that the classroom management has been moving in levels 2 or 3; sometimes it was in level 1 which refers to unsatisfactory. There were some sessions or some moments of a session that could be difficult to manage because the students were impatient or willing to move, leading into a chaotic class.

Going to different schools allowed me to meet diversity of class groups. In the rural school of El Gurri, there were only 10 pupils per class and that was great to develop a session because it was easier to get a calm environment of attention and they were

closer to me during the story. They were also more confident to interact and when developing the activities, they could all participate simultaneously. The other groups had an average ratio: 20 to 22 pupils per group. This made it very difficult to catch their attention, to give feedback to every single student, and to give them enough space to communicate and participate. It is what teachers have been complaining repeatedly for many years now. It is confirmed to be an important change to make in the educational system.

I have also seen that storytelling works differently with fewer pupils. In the following graphic, I compared the same session (number 4) with two groups (in El Gurri with a group of 8 pupils and in Les Pinediques with a group of 21 pupils.) and focused on the pupils' engagement in the session and their interaction or communication in English:
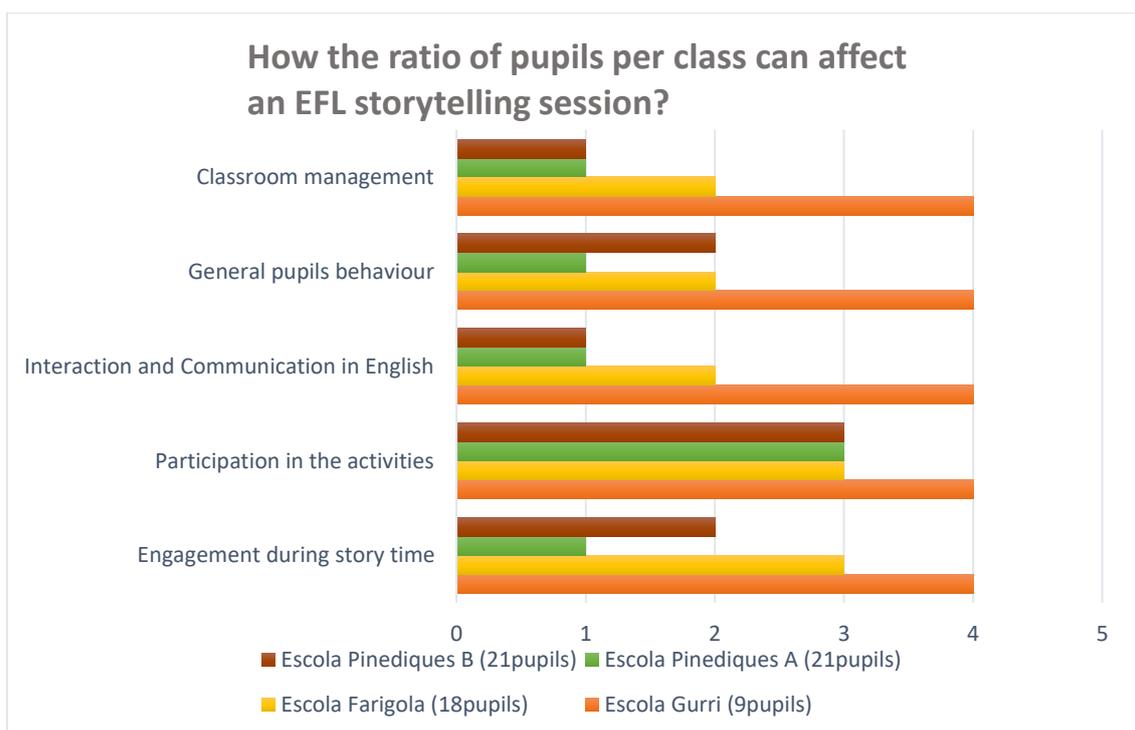
Graphic 5.

To give reliability to the last graphic and validate what I have said, I add another bars graphic to highlight that a small ratio is better for implementing storytelling.

The next graphic shows the same aspects (engagement in the session, participation and their interaction or communication in English) but in the same school group in two different sessions, one day they were all in class and the ratio was 21 pupils and another day they were a lot of students missing (they were only 13 pupils). Same space, same group, different session and different number of students.

How the ratio of pupils per class can affect a storytelling session in the same group?

Engagement during the Story Time · Participation in the Activities · Intereaction and Communication in English · Pupils' General Behaviour · Classroom Management

Session 1 (20 pupils) · Session 2 (13 pupils) · Session 3 (18 pupils) · Session 4 (21 pupils) · Session 5 (15 pupils)
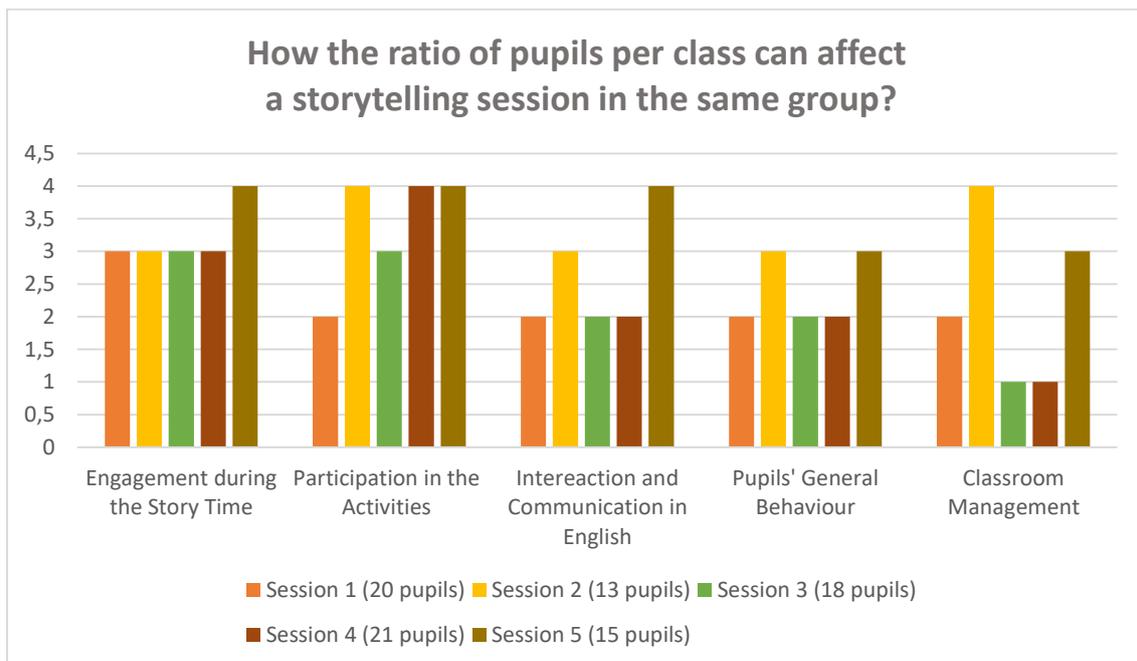
Graphic 6.

4.5. Discussion: were the objectives reached?

In this paragraph I would like to clarify to what extent the objectives stated at the beginning were reached. To do so, I will try to answer both questions with the results of the observation of my sessions. As I previously explained the results, now I am going to synthetize the most relevant points to construct a reflective response.

But, first and foremost, I would like to detail which was the children's reflections about my practical storytelling sessions. In the last session, I asked them to draw or tell me (in their mother tongue, to make it easier for them) what they had liked the most of the whole project. From their answers, we can infer that everything matters, every detail

from the materials created, the type of activities, to the storybooks selection or the classroom set up.

Thus, before coming to the intricacies of stating the outcomes of the research, I will transcribe some of the things that more children have pointed out when I asked them: *What is the thing that you liked the most from all the storytelling sessions?*

The Best Thing of Storytelling Sessions (from pupils' perspective)

- The Map
- Touch and Guess (realia game)
- Mr. Noisy
- The Box
- Sitting on the floor
- Drawing monsters
- Goats board game

Information extracted from their drawings in the last session (see Annexes).

As can be concluded from their answers, one of the things they liked the most was the map, where we started and finished every story to situate the main character. The next item was a *realia* game. I brought a bag full of real vegetables and fruits. They had to cover their eyes and try to guess and take out the vegetable I asked for. They really enjoyed it. The third place is for a character of the first story I told them. They really got along with Mr. Noisy because it is very funny.

Summarizing, the answers show different type of factors that I have taken into account in my responses for the two stated questions of this research. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will comment on the conditions that help storytelling and the effects they have in the classroom. The main one, motivation of children, becomes clear just looking at their answers.

4.5.1. How can storytelling improve pupils' engagement in the EFL class?

While I was developing the sessions, and through my observations, I identified repeated factors in the students' behaviour towards English learning. In fact, I want to emphasize that they are all positive effects that foster the learning process of acquiring a new language. Thus I can conclude that storytelling can be a useful resource to improve the engagement of children in the EFL class.

To summarize, the main effects of using storytelling in the EFL class that I spotted were:

- ✓ It motivates them to learn English.
- ✓ It fosters their creativity.
- ✓ It increases their concentration capacity.
- ✓ It brings interest for English language and for literature.
- ✓ It enhances participation and interaction.

To give reliability to my observations I would like to add the opinion of the regular EFL teachers of the groups, from the post questionnaire I handed them (*see Annexes*), to check if my conclusions coincide with theirs.

Which are the visible effects of storytelling in pupils' behaviour

in the EFL class?

Estefania *El Gurri*	Storytelling awakes pupils' curiosity for English and gives them motivation to participate. It also fosters their imagination and concentration abilities.
Laura *La Farigola*	The most visible effects are interest in English, motivation and participation to all the activities related.
Ramon *Les Pinediques*	The most visible is motivation, they want to do the class and pay attention, they want to participate all the time. And they try to speak and repeat because they have interest for the language.

Extracted from Post Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

They all refer to the same items I have highlighted previously as the main positive effects I have seen from my pedagogical intervention in the schools. Moreover, I would outline the most repeated factors the teachers have appointed: motivation, participation and concentration/attention. All three of them are important values resulting from the storytelling sessions, that I have also mentioned as an important part for the language acquisition and taken into account in my practice and study development.

There are also another two questions answered by the teachers that are related to the results obtained to state that storytelling is a good tool to use in EFL classes.

In what terms storytelling, used frequently in EFL class, can be a chance for children to acquire the English language properly?

Estefania El Gurri	In general, they're quite familiar and close to them. The lexic used is simple, repetitive and adequate for them. It means an exposure to the language, in which the use of gestures and images provides better understanding. Listening to stories is essential for being able to speak, because they get the intonation and the grammar drills.
Laura La Farigola	They are important in order to acquire new vocabulary, intonations, rhythm… Promote a critical thinking through curiosity. Stories give pupils the right attitude for learning.
Ramon Les Pinediques	By listening to stories children get used to intonation, vocabulary and grammar from the real English language. So it is a good tool.

Extracted from Post Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

These answers support the use of storytelling as a good way to approach English and develop language skills. They refer to different elements of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, intonation and rhythm. And they also see stories as an exposure

to the real language that provides a better comprehension of the language together with arising critical thinking and curiosity.

Finally, the teachers were asked for the main factors that would lead them, as teachers, to use storytelling in their EFL classes. Their answers were similar, as can be seen below.

What makes storytelling a good tool for an EFL teacher?

Estefania El Gurri	It is a good tool for the teacher because it is well known that pupils enjoy listening to stories and they are more motivated to learn the language. And, of course, it is a great way of exposure to real English language.
Laura La Farigola	In my opinion it is a very important tool to motivate children, transferring knowledge and values, as well as input in the language.
Ramon Les Pinediques	As I have seen it motivates children a lot, so it is good because students are interested and happy in the English class and they want to try to communicate and interact.

Extracted from Post Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

As I have mentioned as one of the main effects, motivation is a repeated item that the three teachers highlighted in their answers. They also point out that storytelling is a good way of exposure to real language. Which leads them to appoint two factors of the use of stories for EFL teachers: interest and interaction.

They agree with me in stating that storytelling sessions boosted pupils interest for the language, which meant more communicative attempts and interactions of the children during the EFL class.

4.5.2. Which are the best conditions to make storytelling a worthy resource in the EFL class?

Answering to the second question, as I have seen during my pedagogical intervention, there are some conditions that make storytelling work better, so during the sessions I have tried to get them, and I have made several changes to adapt my pedagogical intervention to what I reflected in my field notes after developing each one.

To sum up, the conditions that could make storytelling a worthy resource to use in the EFL class are the following:

- Classroom set-up: having a free, comfortable and calm space.
- Small groups: it is more worthy when the pupils per class ratio is reduced.
- Selection and planning: accurate and previous preparation is essential.
- Active learners: design the sessions centred in active and participative kids.

I also posed the same question to the EFL teachers in order to see if their opinions supported my conclusions when defining the best conditions for storytelling.

Which conditions are necessary in the class to be able to implement storytelling and participative activities related to it?

Estefania *El Gurri*	It is needed a proper classroom management, which is easier in smaller groups, and a prepared sequence of activities in order to cover the skills wanted to be developed.
Laura *La Farigola*	In my opinion it's important to choose the right story according to the children's age, to have all the activities well prepared. And to be in a quiet room (classroom, library...) free off any interferences. Stories in that case are the best tool to motivate and promote good values.

| Ramon

Les Pinediques | In a smaller group would be better to manage because there will be more silence and they will pay more attention. If we could use the library always it will help, because it is a calm and comfortable place to read. And a good planning of the following activities is essential. |

Extracted from Post Questionnaire to EFL Teachers (Annexes)

In their answers we can find different elements I have also identified when the appropriate conditions for developing an EFL session based on storytelling. Two of them consider that smaller groups are preferable to have better classroom environment. From their point of view, that would lead into more attentive students and also an easier classroom management. Ramon and Laura consider the importance of having a calm and comfortable physical space. And the three of them place great importance to the previous design and preparation of the sessions.

5. Conclusions

Based on the work exposed so far, this section intends to answer the research questions stated at the beginning. The first one consists on describing to what extent may storytelling enhance first grade pupils' engagement in the EFL class. The second question, which arose in the practical application, deals with outlining the best conditions to make storytelling a worthy resource in the EFL class. To do so, I am going to summarize the main points of the observation results, together with contrasting the outcomes relating them with the framework.

Referring to the first question, as a teacher-researcher of the study, the findings lead me to confirm that storytelling is not only a good tool to use in teaching languages to catch children's attention, but also to improve other kind of behaviours that may be positive towards the EFL classes for both learners and teachers.

In fact, storytelling helped stimulating the involvement of the students in the class by provoking their interest. As Carter and Long (1991:21) sustain, using literature as a resource, teachers can offer activities and materials that stimulate greater interest and involvement to acquire the foreign language. My intervention could be a proof of that because the students' role was not limited to being simply receivers and it resulted in that most of the time children were being attentive and contributing actively. My lesson plan was devised to make them active learners through activities and games that were designed to make every child feel comfortable and willing to participate.

According to Dewey (1997: 8), learning tasks require active participation of the student in a meaningful context and must connect content to the student's life. That means there is always an interaction in which the kids' contributions are as relevant as the teachers': it makes them feel more self-confident and it improves social interaction in the group, because they listen to the others and they feel listened to by the group and also by the teacher.

From my own observation and the teacher's views (expressed in the questionnaires), storytelling proved to be a natural and meaningful way for children to have a closer contact to the English language and they found themselves somehow motivated and self-confident to approximate the language acquisition. In fact, it coincides with Ghosn's

views when he states (2002:103) that storytelling promotes a natural form of language development that many children find easy to assimilate, whether they are told a story or they tell one themselves. Also Krashen (1982:10) outlines that a language acquisition input is most effective when it is natural, interesting and understood. This is why telling stories to children gives them the perfect context for learning a new language.

The results of the observation were important to clarify in what terms could storytelling affect the EFL classes development.

To begin with, the organization of the physical space is a factor that affects storytelling in order to create a better environment when it comes to a free, comfortable and quiet space. However, it can also pose a problem for storytelling sessions if the classroom set up is full of furniture, no space to move and too many things around that distract children.

A safe classroom environment helps the learners to be encouraged to express and to communicate, because they feel safe and protected. Thus, the physical space is essential in creating a safe teaching context that provides students with a comfortable place to develop their learning.

Concerning pupils' engagement during the story, it is in part influenced by the general behaviour, but mostly the engagement is directly related to the story book and even the storyteller. If they like the story, it will catch their attention only if the storyteller knows how to tell stories.

The children's willingness to participate was one of the most important positive aspects. The activities based on active learning pupils helped the pupils to feel part of the learning process and they were willing to participate in every activity or game I proposed.

When it comes to interact or communicate in English, most of the students feel confident enough to try to speak in English during the activities proposed. The best activities to foster communication were role-plays and games, because they have to interact with each other. As the participation was very high and the context was relaxing, they felt comfortable and motivated to try.

Last but not least, there were two final points considered, which were related to each other: general pupils' behaviour and general classroom management. If the behaviour

was good, then the management was easy, and the other way round. Being so, I condensed it on the following formula: stories motivate children and enlighten their interest; if they are motivated and interested, they will pay attention and their behaviour will be better; if there is a good behaviour, classroom management will be easier. Finally, as regards to the classroom management, there was a point when it was complicated because of the group size. It was better to manage in small groups because it allows for more participation, more feedback and even more calmness.

Unfortunately, after my pedagogical project was set up in the schools, most children stopped having storytelling sessions again and all the work done with them that improved their participation and motivation through English probably got stuck there. Taking this study as a reference, and based on the powerful results that storytelling and active activities brought me, I would recommend teachers to run a deeper exploration on the importance of creating meaningful contexts for language learning as well as giving learners the chance of being active, participative and interact one with another.

Considering that this investigation has been based in only four groups and after five sessions, the results and conclusions reached may not be generalized to another situation. However, for further research, I would consider it interesting to carry on the same study but with a large scale: by implementing ten sessions in ten different groups, to contrast if the results obtained are similar to the ones reached in this study.

In short, this research project has shown the most effectiveness of storytelling and active follow-up activities as a source of engagement in the EFL increasing motivation, participation and interaction by using the foreign language.
As a final reflection from my personal experience, storytelling and its related activities handed me, as an English teacher, the possibility of reaching a learning process that guides to a language acquisition through a meaningful context, finding the way to get the learners' interest, understanding, joy and interaction in the EFL class, which is the aim of most English teachers. I am certainly one of them.

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7.   Annexes

Annex 1: Sessions' Planning

STORYTELLING: BRIEF LESSON PLAN (5 sessions, 45min/session)
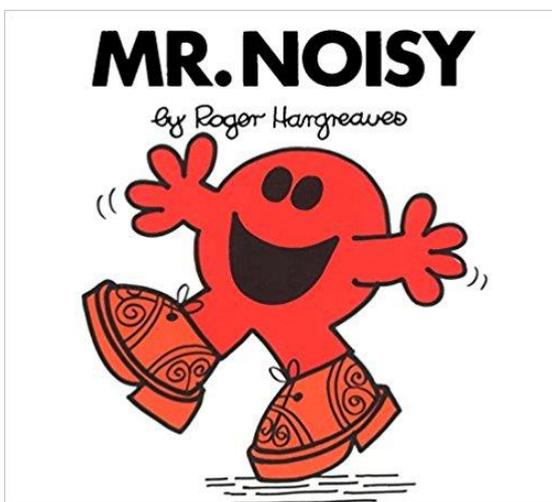
SESSION 1:

Mr. Noisy, Roger Hangreaves

Place in the map: Hill / Village

Object: small basket

Activity: Drama roleplay in three groups the baker (they have bread), the butcher (they have sausages and Mr.Noisy (they have a basket): repeating after my and reproducing part of the story. **Game:** Listen to a noise and relate it to a picture. They will have some pictures, in groups and if they listen to their Picture they must raise it up.

SESSION 2:

Where the wild things are

Maurice Sendak

Place in the map: River/Forest

Real Object: Crown

Retelling Activity: Put in order the pictures of the story. Check if they are right looking at the book.

Game: Pretending to be monsters, let's do and say some actions they do: roar, stomp, jump, roll, dance, march, climb... Now there is on king with a crown and everybody must follow the king orders.

Activity: Drawing in two. Draw the body of a monster, they swap the papers and finish drawing the head into your partner's monster body. At the end, create an exposition in the wall or in the board so they could share impressions.
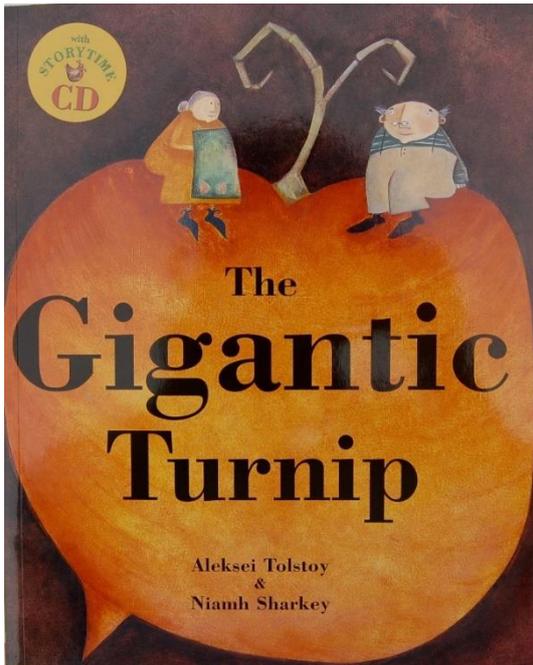
SESSION 3:
The Gigantic Turnip
Aleksei Tolstoi and Niamla Sharkey

Place in the map: Farm / Fields

Real Object: A turnip

Retelling Activity: Short role-play with masks of the characters, they have to listen to the story (told by the storybook CD) and represent it.

Game: Vegetable and fruit guessing. They put their hand inside the bag without looking and by touching they must take out the turnip, asking "Is it a turnip?" The others must say: "Yes" or "No". Then the class will tell the pupils what to look for and he/she will have to find it.
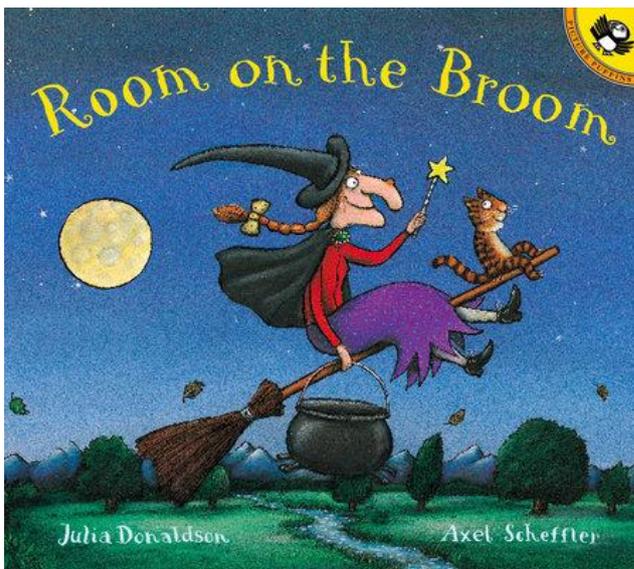
SESSION 4:

Room on the broom

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Place in the map: Mountains

Real Object: Cauldron

Retelling activity: Watch some scenes as a resume of the film story

Activity: Treasure hunt of things to put in the cauldron, they have a list each group with things they must find to add to the cauldron. We are going to make magic with it.

Game: Create and play a bingo with pictures: characters and objects from the story. They must chose and stick six pictures from the story in their paper to play bingo.
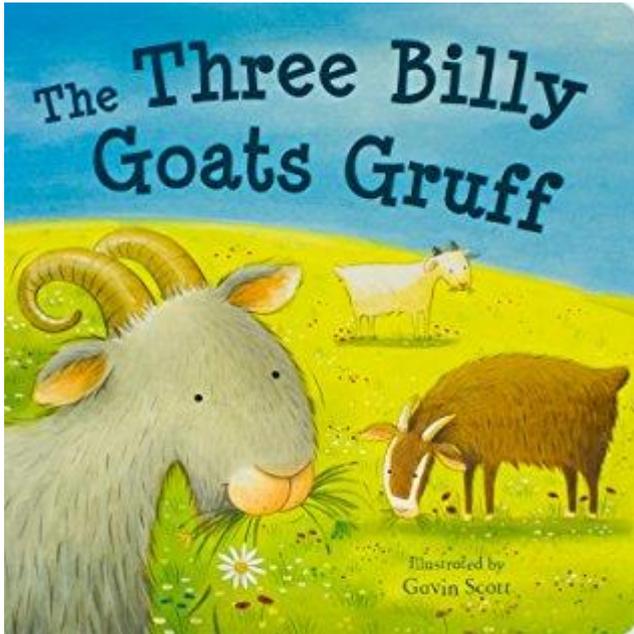
SESSION 5:

The Three Billy Goat Gruff

Mary Finch

Place in the map: Bridge/River

Real Object: green grass

Retelling activity: Represent the story on their own by using puppets, in small groups.

Activity: Create our scary trolls in small groups by making a collage using several materials such as the grass I brought.

Game: Two corners, some groups play board game while others play constructions. I have created a simple board game to play with a dice, where the goats have to cross the bridge, if they fall in the troll square they must go back. Also I have brought some wooden blocks to make them construct a bridge.

EXTRA (in case I have time)
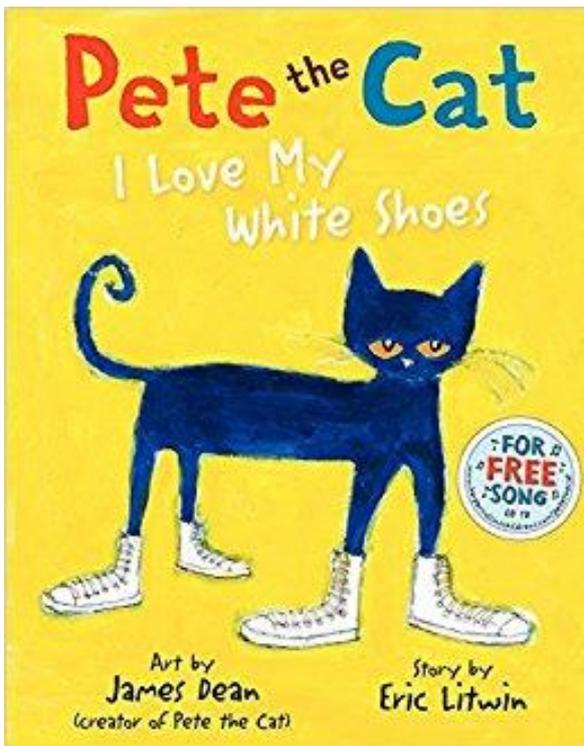
SESSION 6:

Pete the cat. I Love my white shoes

Eric Litwin and James Dean

Place in the map: Village / Street

Object: White shoes

Activity: Put in order the colours of the shoes, like it happen in the story. Check it by looking at the book. Sing the song "I Love my ... shoes" by following the colours.

Game: See what colour are our shoes, classify in groups. Touch somebody's shoes following the order "Touch some (colour) shoes." Some children can give the order too when they have understood how to play.

Annex 2: Previous Questionnaires to EFL Teachers (answered)

PREVIOUS QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Estefania – English Teacher in Escola El Gurri (Montrodon, Taradell)

1. **In your school, how many average hours of English do children have per week?** They have 2.5-3hours per week.
2. **In your opinion, do children have enough exposure to English in order to acquire that language properly?** It is never enough but we try to arrange their timetable in order to get more contact with foreign language such as providing a part of science in English language.
3. **In your classes, what percentage does orality (listening and speaking) represent in front of literacy (reading and writing)?** Generally speaking, it could represent 70% of oral abilities' exposure but it also depends on the planning of the different activities.
4. **How do you organise your English classes? (type of activities)** First, a starting routine to greet each other, revise weather, day of the week and so on. Second, we talk about the aim of the lesson and then we do the corresponding activities. Finally, we finish the lesson with a routine and we revise all that learnt.
5. **Which kind of activities do the students enjoy most?** They absolutely love those activities in which they have to interact with each other, like preparing a quiz, an interview, playing games…etc. They also love manipulative or action games.
6. **What resources or materials do you usually use?** I usually use flash cards, audios, PDI, visual objects that they have the choice to manipulate and also books.
7. **What criteria do you follow to select the resources or materials for your English classes?** Materials must be close to them, extremely visual and manipulative.
8. **Have you ever used storybooks in the English class? Why/Why not?** I have already used storybooks because it is something children enjoy a lot. They are easy for them to understand because pictures come along with the corresponding explanation. Pupils get inside an imaginary world and it awakes curiosities on them.
9. **In what terms do you think it can be useful or not for pupils to listen to stories in order to learn a foreign language?** I think it is very useful because of the fact that it consolidates grammatical correct sentences and they are quite repetitive. It also implies the practise of oral abilities to be developed.
10. **Do you think that storytelling can contribute to learning grammar and vocabulary?** Absolutely. Storytelling implies the acquisition of different skills, not only oral abilities but also the fixation of grammar because pupils listen to them several times and they can understand them by context and visual support.
11. **To what extend do you agree or not with the following statement: Storytelling enriches the language input in the class and stimulate language acquisition by providing meaningful contexts for processing and interpreting the language.** I completely agree with this statement that's why it is really important to tell them different stories because they are acquiring not only vocabulary but grammar structures, contact with the language, phonetics and cultural knowledge.

PREVIOUS QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Laura – English Teacher in Escola Farigola (Seva)

1. **In your school, how many average hours of English do children have per week?**
   In C.I. 2 sessions per week (45 min. per session) and in C.M., C.S. 3 sessions per week (50 min. per session).
   In C.S. we have Science in English (90 min. per week) and Art and Crafts in English (90 min. per week). And also reading in English (30 min. per week)

2. **In your opinion, do children have enough exposure to English in order to acquire that language properly?**
   No, they have small time in English I think it's important to have the maximum exposure to the new language and make it as real as possible. But in my opinion, the sessions should be short because small children have a limited attention span but they learn very fast through seeing.
   Teachers should provide meaningful contexts to increase their motivation.
   And need a variety of techniques to make the language understandable to children.

3. **In your classes, what percentage does orality (listening and speaking) represent in front of literacy (reading and writing)?**

In my sessions with young children the oral part is about 80% because we need to create communicative contexts to learn the new language. We need materials that help them to improve their imagination and creativity and which are motivating enough to give a sense to learning.

4. **How do you organise your English classes? (type of activities)**
   We always start with a **warm up activity**, then we follow with a **story, song or game.** After that, some **oral or written activities** related to the story, song, topic… but mostly communicative tasks (5 skills)
   To end up with a **good bye rhyme, routine**….
   Activities could be individual, cooperative or group work and make sure that they understand the given instructions. Many activities are close to real life and problem solving (shopping, restaurant, cinema, football match…). Because they are meaningful and it allows them to take part in the learning process.

5. **Which kind of activities do the students enjoy most?**
   They enjoy the most activities where dancing, singing or games where interaction is involved. They love the physical response activities.
   Listening to stories is a must because they enjoy them very much

6. **What resources or materials do you usually use?**
   Stories, songs, chants, rhymes, games, flash cards, digital board, puppets, books, maps, pictures, films….

7. **What criteria do you follow to select the resources or materials for your English classes?** When planning a lesson for young learners, first I analyse their needs, then, I choose a topic of their interest. After that, I plan the objectives and content. I always

choose the communicative tasks carefully. I try to use attractive materials to get their attention.

8. **Have you ever used storybooks in the English class? Why/Why not?**

   Yes I have. For me are a very important part in my lessons especially with young children because they create an inviting environment, promote confidence and creativity and provide good models and values.

9. **In what terms do you think it can be useful or not for pupils to listen to stories in order to learn a foreign language?**

   Storytelling is one of the most efficient and motivating approaches to teaching English to young learners.

   They can be used to develop language skills such as listening, using their imagination and predicting what will happen next.

   They want to know about the story ending and they like to hear the same stories over and over again. This repetition allows to acquire vocabulary and it helps with their concentration span.

10. **Do you think that storytelling can contribute to learning grammar and vocabulary?**

    Yes it does. It contributes to encourage children to an active participation and through repetitions of the same stories they learn new vocabulary and structures.

11. **To what extend do you agree or not with the following statement: Storytelling enriches the language input in the class and stimulate language acquisition by providing meaningful contexts for processing and interpreting the language.**

    I agree with this statement because for me storytelling is a didactic tool that covers almost every aspect of the language:

    Stories allow children to experience different cultures and helps them to understand other traditions, people, places and good values.

    They learn to listen and to improve their oral skills and acquire new vocabulary. Stories stimulate their creativity, imagination, cooperation, participation, good values and it helps them to learn the new language.

PREVIOUS QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Laura – English Teacher in Escola Farigola (Seva)

1. **In your school, how many average hours of English do children have per week?**
   In C.I. 2 sessions per week (45 min. per session) and in C.M., C.S. 3 sessions per week (50 min. per session).
   In C.S. we have Science in English (90 min. per week) and Art and Crafts in English (90 min. per week). And also reading in English (30 min. per week)

2. **In your opinion, do children have enough exposure to English in order to acquire that language properly?**
   No, they have small time in English I think it's important to have the maximum exposure to the new language and make it as real as possible. But in my opinion, the sessions should be short because small children have a limited attention span but they learn very fast through seeing.
   Teachers should provide meaningful contexts to increase their motivation.
   And need a variety of techniques to make the language understandable to children.

3. **In your classes, what percentage does orality (listening and speaking) represent in front of literacy (reading and writing)?**

In my sessions with young children the oral part is about 80% because we need to create communicative contexts to learn the new language. We need materials that help them to improve their imagination and creativity and which are motivating enough to give a sense to learning.

4. **How do you organise your English classes? (type of activities)**
   We always start with a **warm up activity**, then we follow with a **story, song or game.**
   After that, some **oral or written activities** related to the story, song, topic… but mostly communicative tasks (5 skills)
   To end up with a **good bye rhyme, routine**….
   Activities could be individual, cooperative or group work and make sure that they understand the given instructions. Many activities are close to real life and problem solving (shopping, restaurant, cinema, football match…). Because they are meaningful and it allows them to take part in the learning process.

5. **Which kind of activities do the students enjoy most?**
   They enjoy the most activities where dancing, singing or games where interaction is involved. They love the physical response activities.
   Listening to stories is a must because they enjoy them very much.

6. **What resources or materials do you usually use?**
   Stories, songs, chants, rhymes, games, flash cards, digital board, puppets, books, maps, pictures, films…

7. **What criteria do you follow to select the resources or materials for your English classes?**

When planning a lesson for young learners, first I analyse their needs, then, I choose a topic of their interest. After that, I plan the objectives and content. I always choose the communicative tasks carefully. I try to use attractive materials to get their attention.

8. **Have you ever used storybooks in the English class? Why/Why not?**
   Yes I have. For me are a very important part in my lessons especially with young children because they create an inviting environment, promote confidence and creativity and provide good models and values.

9. **In what terms do you think it can be useful or not for pupils to listen to stories in order to learn a foreign language?**
   Storytelling is one of the most efficient and motivating approaches to teaching English to young learners.
   They can be used to develop language skills such as listening, using their imagination and predicting what will happen next.
   They want to know about the story ending and they like to hear the same stories over and over again. This repetition allows to acquire vocabulary and it helps with their concentration span.

10. **Do you think that storytelling can contribute to learning grammar and vocabulary?**
    Yes it does. It contributes to encourage children to an active participation and through repetitions of the same stories they learn new vocabulary and structures.

11. **To what extend do you agree or not with the following statement: Storytelling enriches the language input in the class and stimulate language acquisition by providing meaningful contexts for processing and interpreting the language.**
    I agree with this statement because for me storytelling is a didactic tool that covers almost every aspect of the language:
    Stories allow children to experience different cultures and helps them to understand other traditions, people, places and good values.
    They learn to listen and to improve their oral skills and acquire new vocabulary. Stories stimulate their creativity, imagination, cooperation, participation, good values and it helps them to learn the new language.

Annex 3: Post Questionnaires to EFL Teachers

POST QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Estefania, English Teacher in Escola El Gurri (Mont-rodon, Taradell)

1.   In what terms storytelling, used frequently in EFL class, can be a chance for children to acquire the English language properly?

In general, they're quite familiar and close to them. The lexic used is simple, repetitive and adequate for them. It means an exposure to the language, in which the use of gestures and images provides better understanding. Listening to stories is essential for being able to speak, because they get the intonation and the grammar drills.

2.   In your opinion, is it worth retelling activities to develop speaking skills?

I think so, it is possible to revise vocabulary as well as structures.

3.   To what extend can storybooks be useful for pupils to learn vocabulary?

I think it is a basic tool for them. It encourages and motivates them in the sense that they are familiar to them. Even they didn't know the language, the telling and pictures and gestures make it easier, so children can interfere the meaning of some words and understand the plot.

4.   How can storytelling contribute to learn grammar structures?

Storytelling gives evidence of well-structured morphosyntactic sentences and at the same time they are short and simple. As they are repeated frequently, pupils integrate the grammar patterns.

5.   Do you think that stories are a good way for pupils to practice listening skills? Stories are a good choice to practise the listening skill because of the fact that pupils enjoy listening to their teacher telling stories. They are quite imaginative and they pay attention to the pictures, gestures, movements…and so on.

6.   What makes storytelling a good tool for an EFL teacher?

It is a good tool for the teacher because it is well known that pupils enjoy listening to stories and they are more motivated to learn the language. And, of course, it is a great way of exposure to real English language.

7.   Which could be the main problems that teachers meet if they want to use storybooks as an essential resource for their EFL classes?

I don't see any problem. I think it's a good choice to work English Language throughout storytelling, you can integrate all the competences by working stories. You just need time for selecting the proper storybook and preparing the related activities.

8.   **Which are the visible effects of storytelling in pupils' behaviour in the EFL class?**
Storytelling awakes pupils' curiosity for English and gives them motivation to participate. It also fosters their imagination and concentration abilities.

9.   Which conditions are necessary in the class to be able to implement storytelling and participative activities related to it?

It is needed a proper classroom management, which is easier in smaller groups, and a prepared sequence of activities in order to cover the skills wanted to be developed.

POST QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Laura, English teacher in Escola Farigola, Seva.

1. **In what terms storytelling, used frequently in EFL class, can be a chance for children to acquire the English language properly?**
   They are important in order to acquire new vocabulary, intonations, rhythm… Promote a critical thinking through curiosity. Stories give pupils the right attitude for learning.

2. **In your opinion, is it worth retelling activities to develop speaking skills?** In my opinion they are a powerful tool to promote not only motivation, curiosity, values… but very useful to learn and develop oral skills.

3. **To what extend can storybooks be useful for pupils to learn vocabulary?** Repeating words in the stories, children learn the new vocabulary in a very easy way.

4. **How can storytelling contribute to learn grammar structures**? Repeating the new structures and answering questions about different verbal times (present, past…) they have a grammar input without any knowledge. The connexion between contents gets easier and natural.

5. **Do you think that stories are a good way for pupils to practice listening skills?** Children love to listen to stories through sounds, words, images and they learn the rhythm of the English language. That's why it is very important to practice the listening skills.

6. **What makes storytelling a good tool for an EFL teacher?**

   In my opinion it is a very important tool to motivate children, transferring knowledge and values, as well as input in the language.

7. **Which could be the main problems that teachers meet if they want to use storybooks as an essential resource for their EFL classes?** One of the main problems could be that if the stories are too difficult for a particular age, children disconnect and don't pay any attention. This is why it would be necessary time for selecting an appropriate storybook.

8. **Which are the visible effects of storytelling in pupils' behaviour in the EFL class?** The most visible effects are interest in English, motivation and participation to all the activities related.

9. **Which conditions are necessary in the class to be able to implement storytelling and participative activities related to it?**
   In my opinion it's important to choose the right story according to the children's age, to have all the activities well prepared. And to be in a quiet room (classroom, library…) free off any interferences.
   Stories in that case are the best tool to motivate and promote good values.

POST QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

Ramon, English teacher in Escola Les Pinediques, Taradell.

1. **In what terms storytelling, used frequently in EFL class, can be a chance for children to acquire the English language properly?**
   By listening to stories children get used to intonation, vocabulary and grammar from the real English language. So it is a good tool.
2. **In your opinion, is it worth retelling activities to develop speaking skills?**
   Retelling is good for them to understand better the story and it also helps them to learn how to communicate in English, repeating parts of the story.
3. **To what extend can storybooks be useful for pupils to learn vocabulary?**
   Stories are fantastic to put new vocabulary in the class, and students get it easily.
4. **How can storytelling contribute to learn grammar structures**?

Because children listen to repeated structures of grammar and later they remember it and are able to use them.

5. **Do you think that stories are a good way for pupils to practice listening skills?** If the teacher does it in a good way, it becomes a great listening activity for the students. But it needs preparation to make it effective.
6. **What makes storytelling a good tool for an EFL teacher?**

   As I have seen it motivates children a lot, so it is good because students are interested and happy in the English class and they want to try to communicate and interact.
7. **Which could be the main problems that teachers meet if they want to use storybooks as an essential resource for their EFL classes?**
   Sometimes the noise makes difficult to tell a story and they don't pay any attention, if they are in split group time it is easier to manage. And the teacher have to choose a correct book and design a good activities planning.
8. **Which are the visible effects of storytelling in pupils' behaviour in the EFL class?** The most visible is motivation, they want to do the class and pay attention, they want to participate all the time. And they try to speak and repeat because they have interest for the language.
9. **Which conditions are necessary in the class to be able to implement storytelling and participative activities related to it?**
   In a smaller group would be better to manage because there will be more silence and they will pay more attention. If we could use the library always it will help, because it is a calm and comfortable place to read. And a good planning of the following activities is essential.

Annex 4: Field notes

Date: 29/01/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r A – 21pupils

Session: 1, Mr. Noisy

Observations / Reflections:

They pay attention to the story, they easily understand o predict with the map and use the instrument to make a rhythm. They loved the box and were curious about what was inside.

In the listening activity they were interested and collaborated all the time, but sometimes it was difficult to manage because they were too many children and it gets difficult to let every child participate. So, some of them get nervous during the activity because they need to be active and participate, and for some of them waiting their turn was complex.

They completely loved the role-play as a retelling activity, but as I said before, there are too many children to manage the kind of activities that are thought to be student-centred so they can participate and teachers can provide feedback. If not, they all are motivated and wanted to participate but they can't wait.

They enjoyed a lot the silent rhythm as well. And they loved the bye-bye song I decided to use as a closing ritual of each session.

In general, I think the main problems were the space and the number of pupils. It would have been better if there were 10pupils and we could be in a free space with no tables/chairs… so they could sit on the floor making a circle, feeling more comfortable and with enough space to move during the activities.

Date: 29/01/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r B – 20pupils

Session: 1, Mr. Noisy

Observations / Reflections:

They received me very enthusiastic, they saw the box and the map and it gets their attention. They asked me to open the box, so they could see what was inside. When I told them about how to use the map, to predict where the character could see what was inside. When I told them about the map and predicting where the character could live they were really interested, discussing and telling what they think. So it works, they were trying to communicate in English while enjoying it.

They respected a lot the silent rhythm so they just passed the instrument and shake it as the others listened and waited in silence.

During the story time they were concentrated and just listening to what I was telling, they laughed and loved the main character, Mr. Noisy. The role-play was a bit chaotic, because some of them couldn't understand what we were doing. So I needed to stop the activity and show them an example of what they have to do.

This little break created a little stressful situation for some of the pupils that wanted to keep moving and participating. In a smaller group a teacher could manage it in an easier way, giving feedback to them all and taking into account each pupil.

Another problem was the space, as they did the role-play sitting on their tables…because there wasn't space for them to move and make gesture. So it wasn't as I planned it.

Date: 29/01/2018

School: La Farigola (Seva)

Group: 1r – 20 pupils

Session: 1, Mr. Noisy

Observations / Reflections:

Just arriving to the school Laura, the English teacher, told me that we couldn't be in the gym where I have asked to do the sessions because the space was bigger, free and they could feel more comfortable. But I accepted doing the sessions in their regular class, I had to move the desks to one side of the class in order to have some so the children could sit on the floor. As they arrived, they took their own cushion and sat on the floor making a semicircle in front of me. I had them closer, although it wasn't the best space to listen to a story because there were too many pupils in a small space full of things such as desks, chairs, shelves, posters, boxes, digital board, blackboard, whiteboard…and it didn't help to get a relaxed environment as I wanted.

But they were very interested when I showed them the map and tried to predict what was it for. They really loved the instrument, a shaker, and they understood they had to be in silence in order to listen to the rhythm.

When I opened the box, as they saw the book, they were really happy to listen to a new story, they were just expecting me to start. They were very attentive during all the story and willing to interact; they also liked the activities we did and they were patient and respected others turn.

To improve, I think that all the sessions must have a retelling activity just after the story ends because it helps them to assimilate the plot or to understand better what happens in the story. When I think of a retelling activity I mean different kinds of activities that could help to "retell" the story in some ways, such as using a drama role-play to repeat a part of the tale, using puppets to tell a story resume, ordering a sequence of pictures, etc. So I will check my planning to assure that there is one retelling activity in each session.

Date: 2/02/2018

School: El Gurri (Mont-rodon, Taradell)

Group: C.I. (1r i 2n) – 10pupils

Session: 1, Mr. Noisy

Observations / Reflections:

I felt really comfortable during all the session, because the environment was very good for developing storytelling and the activities I planned. They are just 10 pupils and that is a perfect ratio because it enhances feedback and interaction between students and between students and teachers, as it also makes participative activities easier to manage because they don't have to wait too much time and they all can see what is happening.

Although their attitude was great and they were very attentive and respectful, the space was not perfect. It was a small classroom with the desks in a U layout, that semicircle of tables helped to storytelling because they all could see and I could see them all, but I think that the sessions would have improved a lot if there weren't desks or chairs and it was simply the pupils sitting in a semicircle in front of me.

They were very interested in the story, they laughed and enjoyed with the main character of Mr. Noisy. They were willing to interact during the story as I asked them to. During the activities they seemed very interested too, as they all wanted to be active in all the things I proposed and they loved the listening guessing game, however at the end it was difficult to manage because they were getting too loud and they were just inventing sounds and trying to guess, instead of listening to the ones in the game. But, in fact, that means that they have understood and enjoyed the game that they were just fostering their creativity, so it is a good thing.

Date: 16/02/2018

School: El Gurri (Montrodon, Taradell)

Group: C.I. (1r i2n) – 8 pupils

Session: 2, Where the wild things are

Observations / Reflections:

Today there were even fewer pupils in class as they were missing two of them, I realised that a group of ten pupils approximately is the best way to implement a storytelling session and some participative activities. In this session, with even a smaller group, I experimented that there was more silence, they were more concentrated and they also were happy and calm as they all can participate and can be listened. So the classroom management was really easy because they were just enjoying the session, they had more chances to interact and to communicate, and they were more self-confident to try to speak in English.

Although it is only the second day, the order and the routines of the sessions were well-known for them so they felt secure and willing to pass from one step to the next one, in some occasions they tried to anticipate what was next: map, box, book, instrument, story, activity, object, game…

We could do one cooperative activity of retelling, where they had to put a sequence of pictures in the right order, in a small group this activity has sense because they can discuss and decide, but in a bigger group it loses the sense.

They also loved the drawing activity where they have to create a body for a monster and then complete the head of a monster for their classmate. They liked a lot inventing a monster and, afterwards, showing and explaining it to the others. They were asking me for more inventing and drawing activities, that is the magic of stories: it promotes the use of imagination and creativity.

They loved the part where they could be kings of the monsters and they waited their turn, as well as they listened and followed their partners' orders. In fact, it is an action activity where they have to speak and listen, they loved it because they are all active: one saying the commands and the others doing it, as a TPR activity (Total Physical Response). The only problem was that the space wasn't free to move around, because of the desks and chairs, and that made it difficult for them to do some of the actions.

Date: 19/02/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r A – 20pupils

Session: 2, Where the wild things are

Observations / Reflections:

They had assimilated the routines order of each session, so they know what to do next. They love predicting where to put the character to guess where the story takes place and, of course, they enjoyed the silence rhythm as they can use a real instrument, the reason because they like it is essential: they make a short rhythm (they decide) and in that moment everybody is looking and listening to them (they feel listened and looked by the others). Maybe it can seem a stupid, but creating spaces where they can feel important and be the active part of the session is what really moves children and makes them happy.

Although most of them really loved the story because they were asking me about the monsters, I must recognise that the story plot sounded strange for them so here it comes the importance of the retelling activity where we could clarify the things that happened using a sequence order of pictures. They were relay in love with the book illustrations, they were quite different from the ones they are used to and it really gets their interest, as they all wanted me to share the book to observe the illustrations.

At one point the activity of ordering the sequence was a bit chaotic because they all wanted to speak or to participate at the same time, and they weren't respecting the turn. It happened the same in the TPR game where the one with the crown is the king that gives commands to the monsters, the most of them wanted to participate being the king and the space was limited by too many things, so I had to call them to stop some of the actions in order to preserve them from falling or braking something, that is why I keep defending and asking for another room with less furniture in the middle.

Finally, they all had fun in the drawing activity, they loved creating their own monsters and some of them asked me to look to the storybook because they really loved the illustrations and wanted to copy them. The second part of the activity, where they had to finish the partner monster created some tensions, because there were some children that don't want his drawing to be finished by others, so I had to manage the situation and try to tell them they could work together and it was just for fun. Later, seeing that they were very upset…I let them some blank papers and some time to draw more monsters, but this time with no rules, so they could work on their own and using their creativity as they asked me to do.

Date: 19/02/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r B – 17pupils

Session: 2, Where the wild things are

Observations / Reflections:

They were very happy from the beginning of the session and they were waiting for each step of the routine. They seemed to enjoy a lot when predicting where the story will take place in the map and also the part where they discover the new storybook as I took it out of the box, as well as they were waiting to see what object will it appear this time.

They were sitting in their chairs, in the same small groups of desks distribution, but when I was about to start the storybook some of them took their chair to the front row and spontaneously all the children were taking their chair to the front row, so they could see and listen better. I was happy to see that they created a semicircle of chairs to be closer and I also was feeling better when telling the story. They were very attentive and listened to the whole story concentrated and not interrupting.

They really appreciate the prediction of the map and the ritual of finishing the story to check if the character was in the right place or not, as they asked me to participate also in this part I let one pupil to stick the character.

In the activities, they were willing to participate from the very beginning. Although they were expecting the activity or game of *realia*, where we use the real object I have showed them from the box, they really enjoyed the other activity planned that was creating a monster body and then drawing a head for our partner's monster body. They were very keen on creating and

drawing monsters, they used colours and they keep showing me and their classmates the drawings they were doing. So there was a big interaction during this activity: pupils' interaction with pupils and pupils' interaction with the teacher. They tried to communicate in English when they explained and showed the monster to the rest of the class, they described big/small, they counted how many eyes or arms, they said what colour was the head, etc.

The management of the pupils' behaviour got a bit complicated in some moments because they couldn't pay attention in this part, when sharing all the monsters, I can understand they were too many pupils and for them it was difficult to keep concentrated and in silence a lot of time. So I skipped a part of showing monsters, as I hanged them all up on the wall so they could walk through and have a look to the exposition.

In the action game with the crown they participated and waited for their turn respecting and enjoying every part, so it was easy to manage the activity because they were patient and active.

Date: 19/02/2018

School: La Farigola (Seva)

Group: 1r – 13pupils

Session: 2, Where the wild things are

Observations / Reflections:

Today they were only 14pupils, which was an advantage because it was easier to manage participative activities with less children involved. Another difference is that today the school allowed me to use the gym room, because it was free in the timetable; that made a big change, a positive one I mean.

Children sat on the floor creating a semicircle around me and the box/map zone. There were cushions that they could take to sit on and they had more space to sit comfortable and next to the others without bothering nobody. The environment was more relaxed than usually and there was complete silence during all the story time.

I don't know if it was the space or the fact that they were less pupils, but the interaction during the story and in the activities was fluent and very easy to manage. They respected others turn, they listened and they participated trying to use English.

To do the activities the space was also a positive point, most of them were comfortable drawing on the floor, they chosen a place around the room and started drawing their monsters. Some of them asked me to sit on a desk that was in a corner, as I agree they just did the activity very concentrated and always willing to share their creations with the whole class.

Finally, in the action game where they have to follow the king's commands the space played an essential role, it was wonderful to play that game in the gym room because they had space to move around, they were free and they had no problems trying not to step on a desk or not to

crash into a shelf. They enjoyed it a lot, their physical movements were from dancing to rolling to climbing and they could do it freely.

They really love the closing ritual, when we keep everything in the box and sing the bye-bye song (with gestures). We repeated the song two times, because they asked for more.

Date: 26/02/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r A – 21pupils

Session: 3, The Gigantic Turnip

Observations / Reflections:

Today the general children's behaviour was difficult to manage and that generated some chaotic moments that I tried to solve, although the class environment didn't help... because they needed physical space to move around and they had to stay sitting in chairs and desks.

At the beginning I tried to see what was the problem and I could see that the difficult part for them today it was keeping in their chair without moving and that created some chaos and loud noise, because they wanted to talk to the others and moved around. I had no choice, as the room was full of things...but I tried to keep calm and try to tell the story to see if they get calm.

Finally, I started the storytelling ritual, they sat on their desks in groups of four or five. They were attentive at the beginning, in the part where I discovered the story book, the object and the instrument from the box. I had to control, the silence rhythm, where they shake an instrument, because they were just doing more noise than silence.

During the story I had to stop briefly two times in order to get some pupils' attention, because they were moving around or talking and that distracted the others from the story.

The role-play was really great, because they all could participate and it generated just what they needed: a space to move! So they enjoyed acting and pulling the turnip, and imitating the animals they were.

The activity where they have to touch and guess a vegetable or fruit (real ones) was also a great success, they all wanted to participate because they enjoyed manipulating real food and guessing with their eyes closed. The problem was that they were too many kids and some of them couldn't wait that long, so in some moments it turned to chaos again and I had to ask for respect.

So, in resume, although I started the session thinking that it would be a kind of disaster at the end it was not that bad, because the role-play and the guessing game catch their attention and as they were interested and happy to participate, the classroom environment was better at the end.

I keep thinking that to improve pupils' engagement in the EFL class and to make the storytelling sessions a useful resource it would be better to split the children in small groups because that increases the feedback and the interaction of them, as well as it makes easier the active role of students as they have space and time to participate.

Date: 26/02/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r B – 21pupils

Session: 3. The Gigantic Turnip

Observations / Reflections:

At the beginning of the session I felt the children's attention was dispersed and they couldn't focus into the part where I discover the things from the box and it was also hard to manage the prediction where we hang the main character in the map.

I tried to make them feel comfortable and, remembering last class, before starting the story I told them to move their chairs and make a semicircle in the first row, like they did last session. That seemed a good idea to them so they all agreed and moved, then they were little bit more concentrated but not much. As I was entering in the story telling the calm was growing and they were paying attention to my voice and to the storybook, the silence was not perfect, but at least there was no chaos and noises, and most of the pupils were focused on the tale.

As I finished the story, their interest grew so they were waiting for the activities or games, willing to participate. Both, the game of touching and guessing vegetables and the activity of the role-play with masks, were a great success and they loved it. There was only a bad point, they were too many children and it is more difficult for them if everybody participates, as they don't have patient enough to wait.

Although the end was a bit chaotic, I tried to ask them to stay calm and move all together to sing the bye-bye song. That was a point where I felt that the tension of the environment stopped for a while, they were singing and doing gestures in harmony, so we repeated the song twice before I left.

Date: 23/02/2018

School: El Gurri (Montrodon, Taradell)

Group: C.I. (1r i 2n) – 9 pupils

Session: 3. The Gigantic Turnip

Observations / Reflections:

They were waiting for the new story I would bring in my box, as I arrived they asked me to see what storybook and what object were there today. They really love the map, I know it is their favourite part so I tried to ask them the names of each place and then they discussed where could the old lady and the old man live.

During the story time there was high level of attention and interest, they were listening and interacting when I offered them the chance to.

They loved the mask role-play because they like acting and feeling involved in the class, and it was a good retelling activity because it helped them to understand some things they didn't catch when I was telling the tale. They asked me to repeat the role-play as they loved it, we have time enough so I agreed to repeat it but asking them to say or repeat some of the sentences this time. It was fantastic see how they were enjoying an activity and trying to use English with joy and fun.

The game of touch and guess was also a hit, they enjoyed it a lot and they asked me for more games like this in next sessions. In this case, it was easier to manage because they are a small group and it gets easier to develop participative activities as they can don't have to wait too much time. Which I think is one of the important conditions to make storytelling a worthy resource for EFL, reduced groups, however not always is possible for schools to arrange a timetable that allows them to split groups.

Date: 26/02/2018

School: La Farigola (Seva)

Group: 1r – 18pupils

Session: 3. The Gigantic Turnip

Observations / Reflections:

The session was not easy, because they were a bit nervous and it was difficult for them to keep calm. We moved the furniture to make a little space so they could take their cushions and sat on the floor, like they always do. At least it is a good point, sitting on the floor and closer to me. But they keep needing free space… and it makes complicated some situations: when I tell the story sometimes they do not see the illustrations of the book and I have to move around and when we had to do and activity or game they have to move back to the desks or do it in a reduced space crashing ones into another. For example, when we did the role-play today it was difficult because they were stuck in the middle of furniture so their movements were limited and they couldn't enjoy it as much as they wanted.

I keep thinking of important conditions for the storytelling: the physical space, the classroom set up. It could seem secondary, but it isn't. It is essential for the pupils' behaviour to be in a space that inspires warm and clam, making them feel comfortable. Experience has taught me that details matter. How quickly I am reminded of it when I see desks and chairs with no paths to

flows, walls full of visual materials, boxes stacked one on top of another and closets packed full of materials.

Paying attention to those little things and changing the classroom set up into a cleaner and less saturated place would help to create a fresh environment that would bring calm on it. Even in the small schools, like this one, it is necessary to create spaces where children can act and move naturally.

To end up with, as the session was going on their interest was growing and they were all active, wanting to participate in everything I proposed. They liked the role-play, but they really loved the bag full of real vegetables and fruit, where they have to touch and guess.

And reflecting in the last sessions, I think it would be good to add in my study a secondary question to develop that would be related to which are the best conditions to implement storytelling and participative activities in EFL class.

Date: 2/03/2018

School: El Gurri (Montrodon, Taradell)

Group: C.I. (1r i 2n) – 12 pupils

Session: 4, Room on the Broom

Observations / Reflections:

Today they behaviour was almost perfect, from the beginning they offered to participate and interact. They have acquired the routine of my sessions and it helps them to feel more confident, because they know what is the order of things that we are going to do: prediction in the map, open the box, the silence, story time… So it was a good point to create a repeated structure for the sessions.

They really loved the story book Room on the Broom, despite it is one of the longest tales I chosen, they have been concentrated until the end. They loved the illustrations as well and asked me to come closer, to see some pages.

As a retelling activity I prepared the screen so we could see some scenes of the film Room on the Broom in order to make a summary. They really enjoyed watching it and they have fun with the characters from the film, even more it helped some of them to understand better the plot.

After that, the activity of using a cauldron to make potions was good enough, but it wasn't as motivating as I expected. I think I would rearrange it into a brief treasure hunt around the school if it was possible, so they could be active and participate all at the same time, as well as manipulate real material as they have done today.

Then we played the bingo and it the environment was also good, it is always a good activity for listening because they have to be attentive and understand what you say. When we finished, as they were asking me to draw a magic broomstick since I finished the story, I let them space in

the blackboard so they could invent new magic broomsticks for the witch. They were very creative and very happy, at the end they shared their brooms and told the rest what they have designed, so they felt important part of the class and proud of their designs.

To end with, we sang the song, which they love singing.

Date: 5/03/2018

School: La Farigola (Seva)

Group: 1r – 21 pupils

Session: 4, Room on the Broom

Observations / Reflections:

The session of today was a bit disappointing for me, the pupils weren't able to be in silence or concentrated, so it was hard to develop the story and the planned activities.

From the beginning part, with the map and the box, I tell them to listen and tried to make some questions in order to see if they react and give me feedback. But not always worked.

They were not an attentive audience although I keep trying to engage them into the session. As I started the tale, there were some minutes of calm, but it wasn't that easy, some of them still kept moving and talking instead of listening to the story. I think that is simple, today they don't need stories they need action and movement, but unfortunately I could not change the session and add some activity to make them move around because the room space is very limited. I tried to stay calm and invite them to listen with some gestures and different voices.

So, I tried to continue. At least in the retelling part, when I put the video they were more quiet and concentrated and they were communicating in English when I asked them to remember what animals comes next. That means they were attentive during my story telling because they were able to remember the order and the animals that appear.

The follow-up activities worked, not too good but not too bad.

Date: 12/03/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r A – 21pupils

Session: 4, Room on the Broom

Observations / Reflections:

To start, today we could use the library so that was wonderful, because the physical space affects how students behave. In the library there was a space with carpets and cushions to sit on the floor, they felt comfortable there as they just sat in a semicircle and waited for me to start. They were more relaxed and more attentive than usually. I am sure that the space helps in that.

The story of the witch was a bit longer that the other storybooks, but they liked it. They loved the story and interacted while I was telling, they tried to predict what the witch was going to lose next or what animal would she found next.

The video was great as a retelling activity, because it helped them to link the actions in the plot and to understand things that maybe they couldn't during the story time. They were concentrated during the video and they try to predict which animal o which thing was coming next, by using English.

They loved the activity of making a treasure hunt, as we couldn't go out because of the weather, I prepared it in the corridors: in groups they had to found several elements they had in a list (picture+word), They loved looking for things around the school. They were really happy. Finally, we want back to class to use the natural elements to make potions following a recipe that each group had, they tried to communicate in English during the activity and they all had fun.

We hadn't got time enough to do the bingo I had prepared, because the treasure hunt and the potion simulation take so long. We just keep everything back and sang the bye-bye song, which they know perfectly how to sing it and make the gestures.

Date: 12/03/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r B – 20pupils

Session: 4, Room on the Broom

Observations / Reflections:

They really loved the map part, so I let them participate in that part. One child sticks each character from the last sessions. As we opened the box and they saw the storybook, some of them were happy because they know the story.

They were sitting in a row of chairs just in front of me, since they did it one session they had continued doing it every day. They were quite concentrated and there was silence enough to tell the story. They interacted in English when I asked them to predict during the story telling. They liked the witch.

But the video, as a retelling activity, was their favourite part. It helped them to clarify and remember what happens in the story. They were paying attention and they found it really funny.

After that, we started the treasure hunt around the inside of the school. As they were doing the activity they enjoyed a lot. When they finished collecting natural elements they had on their lists, we met in class again. It was a bit complicated to keep them calm, as they were still really amused because of the treasure hunt. I tried to tell them how to make the simulated potions

and they started the activity, trying to speak in English the whole time, some of them asked me how to say a word and I really appreciate the effort that some of them did without asking them to. They enjoyed a lot this activity.

Finally, we did the bingo, they liked choosing their own pictures to play with. It was a good activity that helped them to recap the vocabulary introduced by the story and to practice some listening skills. As well as that, it helped a lot to bring them back to a calm state.

Date: 9/03/2018

School: El Gurri (Montrodon, Taradell)

Group: C.I. (1r I 2n) – 9 pupils

Session: 5, The Three Billy Goat Gruff

Observations / Reflections:

Although they were not very attentive at the beginning, as I wanted to situate the characters in the map they started to participate, by saying in English the name of the story or the place in the map where I must stick them. After that, when I opened the box they saw the grass and started laughing, they wanted to know why I have brought grass and they related the book cover to it. The goats eat grass, said some of them. They seem interested in the story.

I was thinking in the coming activities and I forgot to do the retelling activity. It was my fault.

As in my other sessions I have seen that one of the main problems during the activities is the waiting time, because they all want to participate and sometimes they have to wait for their turn. As they wait they become impatient, and here starts a bad general behaviour that makes it difficult to manage the class.

Trying to solve this, when I prepared the activities for session 5 I organised them in three different corners, in order that all pupils would be active participating in an activity. In el Gurri, are fewer students than the rest of the schools, so I just created two corners here. While ones where playing a board game I created the other group was trying to construct bridges with the wooden blocks. The activity corresponding in the third corner, which was creating a troll by doing a collage in group, they did it all together as they were nine. I provide them a huge piece of paper on the floor and they worked together to create a horrible troll.

I have to say that the organization of the activities in corners was successful and the class environment was even greater. They were all active, participating, respecting the others and there was order around.

Date: 12/03/2018

School: La Farigola (Seva)

Group: 1r – 19 pupils

Session: 5, The Three Billy Goat Gruff

Observations / Reflections:

During the story time, they were respecting the silence and trying to follow the plot. This story was short, so as it finishes some of them asked me if that was the end, because they were expecting more things to happen. I told them we could continue the story, maybe inventing another ending and they loved the idea. So all together they discussed and decided an alternative ending. It was a great chance for them to work cooperatively and also a good way to use English in a meaningful way.

The retelling activity was using some silhouette puppets; we did it all together. I made four groups, one for each character, and a puppet for each child. They repeated after me the sentences, thus we could reproduce the story.

The activities were organised in three corners: a board game about the story characters, playing building a bridge with blocks, creating a troll (per group) using the collage technique. I would have preferred to do the corners on the floor, but there wasn't space enough, so I had to adapt each corner in a group of desks.

Date: 19/03/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r A – 21pupils

Session: 5, The Three Billy Goat Gruff

Observations / Reflections:

This group told me that they know the story, because last years' teacher told them. So first of all we tried to remember what happened in the story, they tried to explain me using mainly catalan, but including some English words.

They didn't remember quite well what happens. I tell the story and they were attentive, trying to see what really happened.

In the retelling activity, they used puppets to retell the story with my help. It was great seeing that some pupils wanted to advance the sentences I was saying, and they construct some acceptable phrases they have retained from the story time.

To develop the activities, I created the three corners, this time the desk set-up (it was an U) let me enough space in the middle to do the corners on the floor. They could move easily. They worked really well so they didn't get impatient. They were all active by participating in each

corner and then they change. I was just controlling and guiding them. They felt autonomous, I think that was another good point that made it worked fantastic.

Date: 19/03/2018

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)

Group: 1r B – 20pupils

Session: 5, The Three Billy Goat Gruff

Observations / Reflections:

The session was not easy to start, because they were a bit nervous and it was difficult for them to keep calm. We moved the desks and chairs to make a little space so they could sit on the floor. At least it was a good point, sitting on the floor and closer to me. Because, although they keep needing free space, it helped to calm they a little.

Chaos came back in the retelling activity, they weren't in silence and they weren't paying attention. So the puppets retelling was difficult to manage, because some of them were willing to do it and some of them were interrupting all the time. After trying it two times, we stopped and I decided to skip that activity because it was not fitting their interests at that point.

On the other hand, the activities prepared in three different corners worked wonderfully: they were respecting, playing, enjoying…. They liked the board game and the always wanted to repeat. But the challenge of building a bridge with wooden blocks worked also very well, they were very attentive trying to cooperate. But I really loved seeing how they tried to work cooperatively, although it was difficult for them. They are still too young (they want their own things) and not used to work in groups (because teachers use other approaches). They worked collaborating, trying to solve problems and helping one another. It was great seeing how they were using English when they interact, to ask some collage materials to the others or just to say "here" or "please" or "thank you".

Annex 5: Observation Charts

Date: 29th January 2018   **Session:** 1 , Mr. Noisy

School: La Farigola (Seva)   **Group:** 1r (20 pupils)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▓	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games		▓		
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		▓		
General classroom management		▓		

Date: 29th January 2018   **Session:** 1 , Mr. Noisy

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1rA (22 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up	▓			
Engagement of pupils during the story time				▓
Willingness of participation in the activities or games		▓		
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		▓		
General classroom management		▓		

Date: 29th January 2018   **Session:** 1 , Mr. Noisy

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1rB (20 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished

Organization of physical space: classroom set up	▓			
Engagement of pupils during the story time				▓
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			▓	
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management			▓	

Date: 2nd February 2018   **Session:** 1 , Mr. Noisy

School: El Gurri (Mont-rodon, Taradell)   **Group:** C.I. (10 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up			▓	
Engagement of pupils during the story time				▓
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			▓	
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management			▓	

Date: 19th February 2018   **Session:** 2, Where the wild things are

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1r A

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

	Unsatisfactory	*Basic*	*Proficient*	*Distinguished*
Organization of physical space: classroom set up	■			
Engagement of pupils during the story time		■		
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			■	
Interaction or Communication using English		■		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		■		
General classroom management		■		

Date: 19th February 2018   **Session:** 2, Where the wild things are

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1r B

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		■		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			■	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				■
Interaction or Communication using English			■	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			■	
General classroom management		■		

Date: 16th February 2018   **Session:** 2, Where the wild things are

School: El Gurri (Mont-rodon)   **Group:** CI (… pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up			▓	
Engagement of pupils during the story time				▓
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▓
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management			▓	

Date: 19th February 2018   **Session:** 2, Where the wild things are

School: La Farigola (Seva)   **Group:** 1r (13 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▓	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▓
Interaction or Communication using English			▓	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management				▓

Date: 26th February 2018   **Session:** 3, The Gigantic Turnip

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1rA (21pupils)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up	☐ (shaded)			
Engagement of pupils during the story time	☐ (shaded)			
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			☐ (shaded)	
Interaction or Communication using English	☐ (shaded)			
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		☐ (shaded)		
General classroom management	☐ (shaded)			

Date: 26th February 2018 **Session:** 3, The Gigantic Turnip

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell) **Group:** 1rB (21pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up	☐ (shaded)			
Engagement of pupils during the story time		☐ (shaded)		
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			☐ (shaded)	
Interaction or Communication using English	☐ (shaded)			
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		☐ (shaded)		
General classroom management	☐ (shaded)			

Date: 23rd February 2018 **Session:** 3, The Gigantic Turnip

School: El Gurri (Mont-rodon) **Group:** C.I. 1r+2n (9pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time				▓
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▓
Interaction or Communication using English				▓
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management				▓

Date: 26th February 2018   **Session:** 3, The Gigantic Turnip

School: La Farigola (Seva)   **Group:** 1r (18pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▓	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			▓	
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		▓		
General classroom management	▓			

Date: 12th March 2018   **Session:** 4, Room on the Broom

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1r A

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up				X
Engagement of pupils during the story time			X	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			X	
Interaction or Communication using English			X	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			X	
General classroom management			X	

Date: 12th March 2018 **Session:** 4, Room on the broom

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell) **Group:** 1r B

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up			X	
Engagement of pupils during the story time				X
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				X
Interaction or Communication using English			X	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			X	
General classroom management			X	

Date: 5th March 2018 **Session:** 4, Room on the Broom

School: La Farigola (Seva) **Group:** 1r (21 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▓	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▓
Interaction or Communication using English		▓		
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation		▓		
General classroom management	▓			

Date: 12th March 2018   **Session:** 5, Three Billy Goat Gruff

School: La Farigola (Seva)   **Group:** 1r (15 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▓		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▓	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▓
Interaction or Communication using English			▓	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			▓	
General classroom management			▓	

Date: 19th March 2018   **Session:** 5, Three Billy Goat Gruff

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1r A (19 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up			■	
Engagement of pupils during the story time				■
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			■	
Interaction or Communication using English			■	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			■	
General classroom management			■	

Date: 19th March 2018   **Session:** 5, Three Billy Goat Gruff

School: Les Pinediques (Taradell)   **Group:** 1r B (20 pupils)

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up			■	
Engagement of pupils during the story time				■
Willingness of participation in the activities or games			■	
Interaction or Communication using English			■	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation			■	
General classroom management				■

Date: 9th March 2018   **Session:** 5, Three Billy Goat Gruff

School: El Gurri (Mont-rodon)   **Group:** C.I. 1r-2n

	Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Level 2 Basic	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Distinguished
Organization of physical space: classroom set up		▩		
Engagement of pupils during the story time			▩	
Willingness of participation in the activities or games				▩
Interaction or Communication using English			▩	
General pupils' behaviour: attention, interest, motivation				▩
General classroom management				▩

Annex 6. Pupils' Document: Best things of the storytelling sessions

In the last session I asked them to draw and tell me the thing that they have liked the most of all the sessions. Here there is a short sample of different answers.

The map

Dragon of
Room on the
Broom

Marc

It's me, happy.
Because we sit on the floor,
and play on the floor (no chairs!)
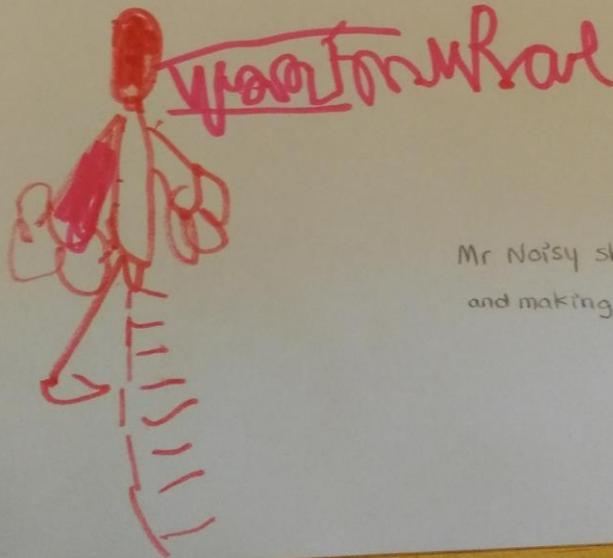
Mr Noisy shouting
and making noise

Vegetable from
touch'n'guess game

Matewrz

Me, in the touch'n'guess game,
I didn't know what
vegetable was.

Miriam

The witch

and the box

Mr Noisy

Sinasa

Box

Broom

IAN

MY FAVOURITE THING IS...
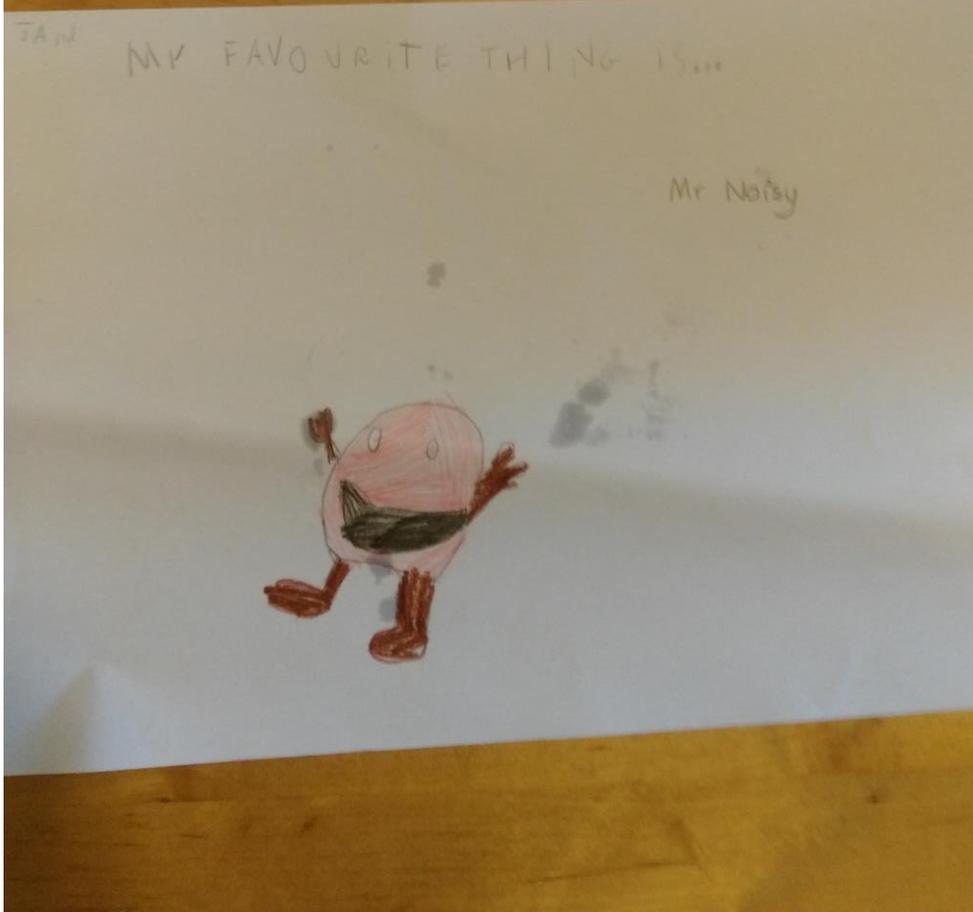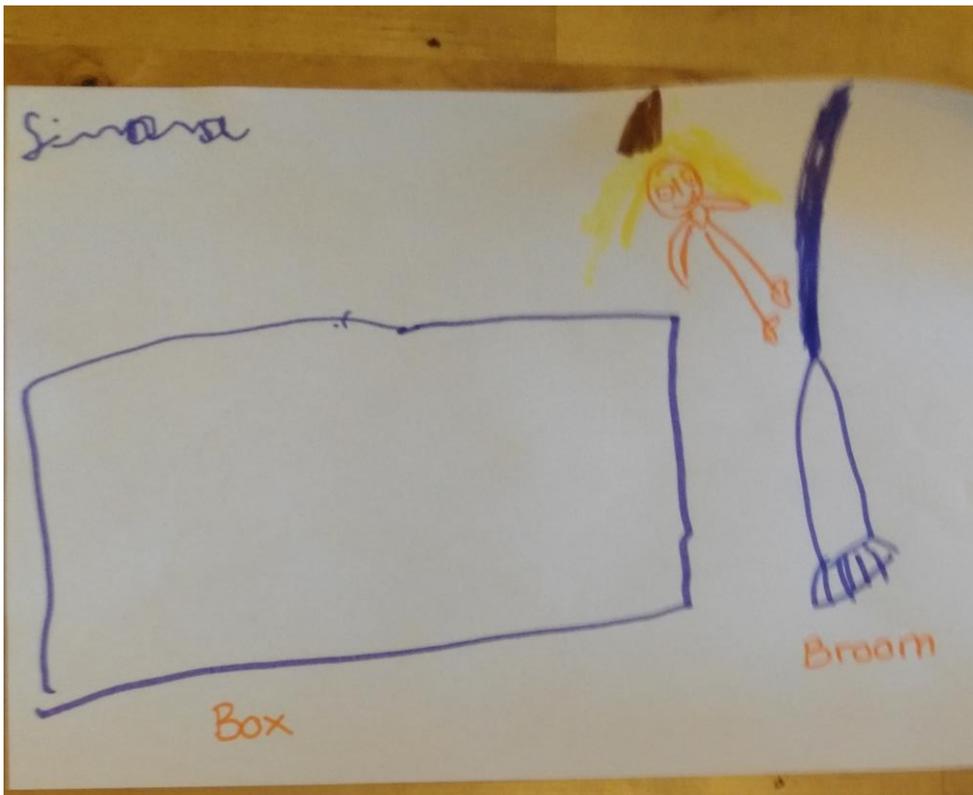
Mr Noisy

MY FAVOURITE THING IS

Box

Monsters
Where the wild things are

NÚRIA

My FAVOURITE THINGS iS... The map

BRUNO

MOUNTAINS

FIELDS

RIVER

FOREST

BRIDGE

HILL

VILLAGE

The map

MONTINS

LITTE LDS

BI R

HILL

VILLAGE

MY FAVOURITE THINGIS...

The Turnip
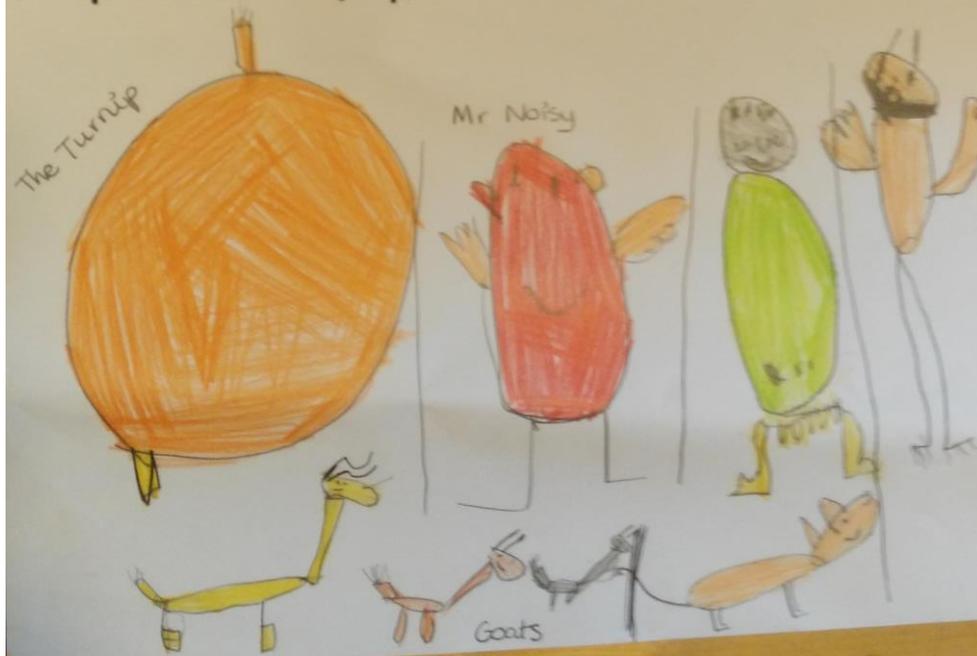
Mr Noisy

Goats

NJCR.

MY FAVOURITE
THINGiS

Mr Noisy

Goat

Cat

MY FAVOURITE THING IS

Witch

Mr Noisy

Goats