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HOW CAN TEACHERS ENHANCE READING TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Final Dissertation on Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Language acquisition and literacy development can be achieved by reading. Engaging young learners to learn English through stories provides them a meaningful context, it is an enjoyable and fun way to learn the language, and it has benefits in their emotional and behavioural learning. Therefore, this study analyses how teachers enhance reading in English language learning in Preschool Education. It was carried out in a Danish international school in Aarhus, Denmark. The interpretative case study relies on naturalistic methods, in which it is based on three different tools: interviews, observation (data will be gathered by observing behaviour, characteristics of each child, and so on), and reviewing existing documents and analysis of texts, such as the educational project or different educational programmes. Through these methods I would be able to recognise the methodology used to teach reading in Infant Education and to discover how teachers enhance reading in English. The results of this study are presented in this thesis.

Key words: reading strategies, English language learning, preschool education, Danish reading methodologies, ESL.

Resum

L'adquisició del llenguatge i el desenvolupament de l'alfabetització es poden aconseguir llegint. Involucrar els joves estudiants per aprendre anglès a través de les històries els proporciona un context significatiu, és una forma divertida i agradable d'aprendre la llengua i té beneficis en el seu aprenentatge tant emocional com conductual. Per tant, aquest estudi analitza com els mestres milloren la lectura en l'aprenentatge de la llengua a l'educació infantil. Es va dur a terme en una escola internacional danesa a Aarhus, Dinamarca. Es tracta d'un estudi de casos interpretatiu, que es basa en mètodes naturalistes, utilitzant tres eines diferents: entrevistes, observació (es recopilen les dades observant el comportament dels infants, les característiques de cada nen i nena, etc), i revisant els documents existents i l'anàlisi de textos, com ara el projecte educatiu o els diferents programes educatius. A través d'aquests mètodes es reconeix la metodologia emprada per ensenyar la lectura als infants, i es descobreix com els

mestres milloren la lectura en la llengua anglesa. Els resultats d'aquest estudi es presenten en aquesta tesi.

Paraules clau: estratègies per la lectura, aprenents de la llengua anglesa, educació infantil, metodologia de lectura danesa, anglès com a segona llengua.

Research question

How teachers can enhance reading in English language learning in Danish Preschool Education?

Research objectives

1. To describe and analyse the methodology used to teach reading in Infant Education.
2. To identify the strategies for learning reading.
3. To discover which ways English teachers use reading in Infant Education.
4. To describe and explain how Danish preschool education is.

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1. Introduction

Reading in Preschool education might result a little bit complex because there are lots of aspects involved in it. In this project, I have focused on the teachers' role during the reading learning, especially, how can they enhance children to read in English.

The following sections are based on the study about how can teachers enhance reading in English language learning in Preschool education, carried out in AAGE (Aarhus Academy for Global Education) in Denmark. Along this study there are reflected different topics about reading such as methodologies, strategies for helping children read, useful materials to engage boys and girls to read, and the importance and benefits of literature in preschool.

First of all, the reasons why I chose this topic for this project are reflected in the justification section. With more extension we find the theoretical framework, where there is all the information needed to verify my research question, as well as my objectives. It is classified by the main topics for this research: there are reflected the techniques for teaching English at Infant school, the importance of learning English through stories, and the benefits of literature in preschool. Next, there is the methodology section, which starts with a paragraph mentioning how I could confirm the research question and research objectives. Moreover, it is the part where I mentioned the techniques used to carry out with this project, such as the use of reviewing existing documents, interviews, and observations. Straightaway, we can find the case study section, where there is an explanation of the school where this study was conducted, its situation, and its philosophy. Furthermore, there is an analysis of this context and the classroom, and finally, a discussion about both parts: the context and the analysis.

Before ending with this project, we can find a general discussion of the project, in which I specify how I could verify the hypothesis elaborated, which agreements and disagreements I could compare between authors and the teacher's practice, and what aspects about reading are the most important to take into account. Afterward, the conclusion section is connected to how teachers can enhance reading to English language learners in Preschool education, which is the research question of this study. Moreover, a description and analysation of the methodology used to teach reading is reflected, as well as an identification of the strategies for learning reading.

Finally, there is the bibliographical section, in which I mentioned all the articles and sources used for this project, and the appendices section, where there are the transcription of an interview, and some documents needed for the project.

2. Justification

The topic selected in order to carry this project out is focused on enhancing reading in English language learning in Preschool Education. I chose to work on this aspect for several reasons. First of all, during one of the subjects of the University, in which was related to literature in Infant Education, I found it very interesting for us, as future teachers, and for teachers because it dealt with the topic of how to introduce reading and how to manage different stages of reading. In addition, this topic is the one that we will have to face, and we will have to know how to manage it, because it is one of the main processes children have to overcome. Moreover, I really enjoyed it, and I just wanted to know more about this topic.

Secondly, some afternoons I used to help two little boys, who were 5 years old, to read. But I realised that I found some difficulties while I had to introduce reading. At the beginning, I did not know how to introduce a new sound, neither how to help them read. I felt I did not have any resources, tools, neither strategies; therefore, I wanted to expand my knowledge about this topic in order to have more confidence, more techniques and strategies, and to be able to help them successfully.

Finally, due to the fact that I was going to Denmark to realize my internship, I was curious about how another country, in particular Denmark, introduces reading in Infant Education. I wanted to observe if there were differences between ways of reading from one country to another. Moreover, it was the first time I could observe how another country teach English as a second language, so I wanted to discover which strategies and methodologies they use in order to succeed in the language acquisition.

3. Theoretical framework

Children are considered natural language learners, and according to second language acquisition theory, they can learn faster and with less difficulty than adults, but they need to be exposed to natural learning environments, as well as to real communication situations, and the teaching practices should make the learning meaningful and enjoyable. Teaching should be focused on children as well as on the development of their communicative skills, which will enable them to communicate in real social contexts.

It is very important that children receive during their first learning stage quantity and quality of the input because it helps them to figure out their future learning. That is why teachers should give a lot of qualitative input because it means that children would be surrounded by lots of listening and reading materials that will allow them to get familiar with the new language in a meaningful situation. Naturally, this input should be introduced little by little to be comprehensible and in a natural and meaningful process.

3.1 Techniques for teaching English at Infant school

To begin with, the acquisition of the foreign language is achieved by internalising new linguistic structures from the models we provide them, respecting the learning rhythm of each student, planning group situations and also individual situations. Furthermore, it is important to attempt the role of different techniques that teachers may use in their daily routines in schools because they can help to contribute to some factors that might be found in classrooms. Moreover, it can be a tool to attract students' attention, to make them interested in the subject and eager to learn more, to stimulate their minds, and also to help them remember what they are doing rather than just memorising. Due to the diversity in the classroom and the different processes that children do to learn a language, teachers need to have a wide range of materials and different techniques to attend to this diversity. It is studied that children learn best through play, games, storytelling and songs. There are many techniques that teachers can use, such as oral activities, songs, colour, oral comprehension, tales with drawings, stories with dramatizations, tales using books, descriptions, illustrations, mimics, riddle games, memory games, realia, pictograms, rhymes, and so on.

When babies start to learn the language, they imitate their parents and repeat after them. In our very first attempts at learning English, we most likely memorised simple phrases by repeating after the teacher. But when we became more comfortable with the language, we stopped mimicking native speakers. However, it is the first step children follow to learn a language. The more used resource at Infant school is the mimic because it is used to make the comprehension of words more accessible for children, and it is followed by stories, rhyme and songs. Rodríguez argued that mimics make easier self-confidence, help them to interrelate, respond to diversity, allow children to customise the language and reflect it in a specific context, and change the lesson's rhythm (as cited in Phillip, 1999, p.6). Mimics and drama education involve active participants in role-taking contexts, it provides a positive learning atmosphere and develops communication skills. Furthermore, it provides stimulating, fun and creative environment in which developing the students' language learning potential is a need, as well as it promotes student's creativity and social interaction among each other. According to Kavakli (2016, p.124), "the use of drama techniques for teaching English as a foreign language has yielded productive and positive results for skills developments". Besides, it has been studied that "the use of drama techniques in teaching English as a foreign language has brought to a successful conclusion on the reduction of speaking anxiety" (Atas, 2015, p.968). Despite this, another resource also very used is about pictograms. Rodriguez (2004) states that because of the drawings represented, they facilitate the comprehension of words clarifying the meaning of the words that are understood due to the picture, and thus, avoiding the translation. The same author confirms that the visual support is important at this stage because children need to see and touch almost everything.

Repetition and imitation are among the oldest second language teaching approaches and are frequently used in the context of L2 learning and language therapy, despite some criticism. Rodriguez (2004) affirms that verbal repetition refers to articulating a word after hearing it, which is an essential process in the language acquisition, both developmentally and in learning a second language. However, repetition is relevant as a learning strategy, which constitutes the basis of memory. Children learn new vocabulary and expressions through repetition, in which this technique allows them to memorise input without an explanation. Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003, p.169-170) agreed that "the love of repetition, common to all young children, is a feature of their natural

games, stories and groups which is usefully applied to learning English". The use of repetition as a learning tool stems from behaviourism who authors such as Watson and Skinner, argued that the environment affects human behaviour, and advances the idea that learning occurs as a result of repeated exposure to a given stimulus. Repetition has been used and proven to be popular among L2 teachers and learners, at least for word learning and accurate pronunciation. Moreover, Tugrul (2015) affirms that repetition of stories enables young learners to master the language better.

Two main sources from which students receive input are listening and reading. Storytelling and story reading become two powerful strategies in the early stages of language development, since they provide learners with a lot of exciting and enriching input. Moreover, they are the most used in this phase and also for learning English as a second language. Stories can be explained in many ways, such as using puppets, using drawings, using body expression, and so on and its use in the L2 classroom creates a good environment and provides meaningful and comprehensible input. Krashen (1981) claimed that through stories, the language acquisition device is activated, and it is easy for children to induce the language elements from the data supplied by the stories. Children enjoy stories because they can be involved, and they participate by imitating and repeating the most common vocabulary. Storytelling has particular pedagogical values for the foreign language classroom.

Rossiter's (2002) study found the following:

> Stories are effective as educational tools because they are believable, rememberable, and entertaining. The believability stems from the fact that stories deal with human-like experience that we tend to perceive as an authentic and credible source of knowledge. Stories make information more rememberable because they involve us in actions of the characters. In so doing, stories invite active meaning making. (p.3)

Sometimes teachers struggle to maintain learners' interests throughout the lessons, which makes them be very creative in the techniques they use. Music is a great teaching tool because of its universal appeal, connecting all cultures and languages. Songs are one of the best and most motivating resources in the classroom, regardless of the age or background of the children, thus they are very used, especially to learn new vocabulary. This technique allows children to sing, move, dance, gesture, and so on. What it is critical to take into account is the process of selecting a song in a lesson because teachers should carefully

examine what they want to learn in the lesson, whether they want to focus on vocabulary, pronunciation or a particular topic. Furthermore, the language level of the class will determine not only the songs teachers can use but also what other activities the teacher will use to develop the lesson. The same will happen with the age of learners, which is an aspect significant to consider adapting the activities according to the children's needs. At the first stages, teacher would use songs that are simple, repetitive and very easy to understand in order to help children comprehend and memorise. Moreover, this kind of repetition is fun and motivating, and children enjoy while they are memorising. Catalan (1998) stated that:

> Memorizing is closely linked to the process of understanding and the process of learning. This fact is demonstrated in the acquisition of the mother tongue, as well as in the learning of a foreign language where we understand and transmit messages due to our ability to recognize and understand previously recorded phonemes, words and structures. (p.799)

In order to know the knowledge that children acquire, there is a kind of activity related to questions that are based on basic questions that require different types of answers. The simple ones imply physical answers such as pointing to, move, and so on. The more complex questions need some words or some sentences. Nearly the same process as the one before, there is another one which is about following instructions. Children can show their knowledge and comprehension giving a physical response. In this way, they demonstrate their understanding of the teacher's rules.

Puppets are excellent tools to encourage and motivate even the shyest children to practice speaking in a new language, as well as they are inherently engaging, often humorous and first-rate storytellers. Interacting with a puppet is much less intimidating for most children than interacting with an adult. These tools consist of using puppets of all kinds: hand puppets, finger puppets, with sticks or strings, and so on. Teachers might have a "class puppet" who becomes a regular foreign visitor to the classroom and children know that the puppet has its personality and they must speak to him or her in the foreign language because the puppet doesn't understand their mother tongue. It is beneficial for the puppet to be seen as belonging to the teacher as it has a role to play in the class and is there to help with teaching and learning. This little performance brings focus and interest to a subject matter, and it is a way to teach without students recognise they are

being taught. Teachers usually use this technique because it is motivating for children and also for the lessons of a foreign language. Apart from that, puppets are one of the media to improve speaking and allow children to interact and participate, and thus, they prompt children to speak.

In any class, no matter the subject, it is essential to vary the activity type to maintain interest. Teachers deal with different kinds of learners, some prefer singing songs, and some enjoy listening to stories, while others prefer working on their own. With very young learners it is especially important to cater to the different learning styles in the classroom as when learning stops boredom can quickly take over. There are two techniques related to each other that can be successfully integrated into the lessons without becoming overwhelmed. Arts and crafts or colour and paperwork can be useful for children because at this age they don't know how to write, and the paperwork shows some paintings representing the vocabulary, and at the same time, they look over the colours.

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their knowledge, their interest in discovering the world, the ability to establish bonds with other pupils and their love of learning. Children can develop all these abilities through play. For many people, it is considered as the key of the learning because play has an impact on a child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive development, and language development, as well as it allows children to experiment, imitate, learn and interact with others. Games help children to learn because while they are playing, they feel comfortable with no stress and they can learn easily.

3.2 Learn English through stories

Some studies have shown that teaching the language through stories allowed children to learn in a fun, motivating, rememberable and lasting way. However, those stories must base on student's interests and likes, and they should be in context to teach the language around stories. According to Krashen (1981), the use of storytelling in the L2 classroom creates an excellent learning environment and provides meaningful and comprehensible input. Through stories, the language acquisition device is activated, and it is easy for children to induce the language elements from the data provided by the stories.

Some authors agreed that stories help in the language learning in the fact that they make information more rememberable because they involve children

inaction of the characters, and also because as the language is repeated, this encourages students to participate. Moreover, stories help children to develop different abilities, such as the ability to comprehend spoken language and engage in thinking skills. Besides, children design strategies such as predicting, guessing the meaning, listening for general meaning and hypothesising.

Stories in early stages have to include vocabulary representing the home and the school environment of the children, to help them relate it to their reality and experiences. Children have a fantastic ability to absorb language when activities are familiar and enjoyable to them. Besides, if it is something they can compare and relate to their reality, it is much easier to comprehend and get meaning in the story. Furthermore, we should consider the importance of reading aloud. As Nohora (2010) said, it allows children to make connections between oral language and the print that represent that oral language. Nohora (2010) believed that "while reading aloud, the teacher should point to the word or line to emphasise those connections" (p,98). The aim of reading stories is to give students input in oral language and help them connect between the pictures and the written text. For reading stories aloud there is a very good tool, which is the use of big books. The pictures in the big books help children to associate pictures and words and thus can help them to understand better the story, as well as to learn to anticipate what is about to happen next in the story. Children love listening stories over and over again, and the repetition of these books is what makes children remember and acquire the language, with new vocabulary and some structures in an unconscious way.

For reading stories there is a process that can be useful for children to follow with the understanding of the stories. It is about three stages that teachers can follow the steps: pre-reading stage, while-reading stage, and post-reading stage. These three stages are also stated by Nohora (2010).

Pre-reading Stage

Before starting with reading stories, teachers should first do a lot of pre-reading work which prepares the learner to be able to understand the story. Pre-reading work is based on extending vocabulary through different kinds of activities such as songs, games, puzzles, activities to match, and other types of activities that help learners to get familiar with the new language. They can also create an

environment to introduce the story by decorating a part of the class with some pictures and posters.

Contextualisation can also help children to comprehend the story, so the teacher can do several things to start activating and help children to update their prior knowledge. For instance, the teacher can either give general information about what he/she is going to read to involve children to relate their prior experience or help children to focus on specific details of the text that might contribute to activate it too.

While-reading stage

After the first stage, it comes the part of using body language and pictures in order to help children understand better the story. According to Nohora (2010), teachers introduce stories by making comments and asking students about the story in order to know their prior knowledge, because it is in this stage that they can activate their prior knowledge by making some connections between the story and their life. The same author confirms that it is also in this phase that children start making predictions about what could happen next and answering questions about the story. Thus, it is useful for teachers to see if every child has understood the vocabulary learnt in the previous stage. While reading, teachers should be aware of pointing to the words and show the pictures in the book to help children start distinguishing between words and images and make some connections. Another tool for the teacher for check comprehension is predicting. Nohora (2010) states that this action allows children to think and imagine, as well as they can anticipate information. Besides, this strategy can be used to engage students to be concentrate on the story. Tugrul (2015), mentioned that young learners exercise their imagination through stories. Ellis and Brewster believed that "they can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations. This imaginative experience helps students develop their own creative potential" (as cited in Tugrul, 2015, p.104).

Post-reading stage

Once they have read the text, it could be interesting to dedicate some time to do activities related to the story using the new vocabulary learned, maybe some typical structures of stories, some drawings and paintings. Winch et al., stated

that through literature-based activities "guided discussion promotes many literate oracy behaviours: it improves vocabulary, offers opportunities for more sophisticated sentence constructions and syntax, and lets the children hear the sounds of words as their peers say them" (as cited in Tugrul 2015, p. 104). Moreover, teachers can verify comprehension and the process of each child. Although comprehensible input has a meaningful impact on the understanding of the stories, Nohora (2010) claimed that it is also necessary to engage children in the previous stages of reading. Such activities help to make the stories more comprehensible, fun and meaningful and motivate children to participate in an active way.

Reading stories is a beneficial strategy to teach the language to children for several reasons. First of all, children love listening to stories, and they want to know about the characters in each one of the stories and want to repeat it until they remember the details. Ellis and Brewster's study found that "children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This frequent repetition allows specific language items to be acquired while others are being overtly reinforced. Many stories contain natural repetition of fundamental vocabulary and structures. This helps children to remember every detail, so they can gradually learn to anticipate what is about to happen next in the story. Repetition also encourages participation in the narrative" (as cited in Tugrul, 2015, p.104). Secondly, through stories teachers can contextualise new language, and students can get meaning and understand the use and functions of the language.

The use of stories and the ludic methodology involved in it, make the language learning process fun, motivating and meaningful for children. Tugrul (2015) found that stories are stimulating, challenging and great fun for young learners. Besides, if stories are created or chosen taking into account children's likes and interests, they can be a great tool for their learning process. Another important consideration is that children, especially in the early learning stage, need to be surrounded by meaningful, comprehensible and enjoyable input to help them develop and grow in the language learning process. Children learn in a confident, secure and stress-free environment while they are having fun if teacher uses a well-planned activity or game with a pedagogical aim. Tugrul (2015) mentioned that "stories are the most valuable resource we have. They offer children a world of supported meaning that they can relate to" (p.103).

3.3 Literature in preschool / Emotional intelligence through literature

Teaching English through literature has become the new tend because it contributes in the children's learning and can act as a potent change agent by developing their intercultural awareness, providing a tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence. Literature will also promote language learning by enriching learners' vocabulary and modelling new linguistic structures. Moreover, it can promote a motivating and low- anxiety context for language learning. There are many good reasons for using literature in the classroom: literature is authentic material because the skills children acquire in dealing with difficult language can be used outside the class, it encourages interaction due to its multiple layers of meaning that can be worked for discussions and sharing opinion and feelings. Moreover, literature is motivating because it holds high status in many cultures and countries   There are some literature-based strategies offered to help teachers develop children's personal and emotional intelligence, as well as developing language skills.

According to Ghosn (1999):

> Nowadays children seem to be low on emotional well-being in general, and consequently lack of the ability to empathize, negotiate and cooperate […] and this has potentially negative consequences, first on their academic achievement, and second, on their interpersonal relationships. The same author pointed out that literature has the potential of nurturing emotional intelligence by providing vicarious emotional experiences that may help shape the brain circuits for empathy (p.3).

If the literature is carefully selected, it can also introduce the L2 child to the language of empathy and care in the new language, and thus facilitate recognition and expression of empathic feelings. Pat Pinset (1996), argued that lack of exposure to the story may limit the development of empathy in children. Stories can represent emotions in order to help children identify them, thereon make them participate in the discussion about the emotions involved and the different characters' role, and thus they are having an active role involving in the reading. Moreover, they can be invited to share their own similar experiences and maybe to think about themselves in the position of the characters of the book.

At this age is common to work on emotions and learn to identify our own feelings and let others know how we feel. For little kids, and for adults as well, it might

be difficult to know what to do or say to someone if we do not know how others feel. Using literature can be a good opportunity to help pupils "read" feelings, to interact with others, to practice language, and to learn new vocabulary. Furthermore, the meaningful context helps children to comprehend better what they are doing. Through illustrations children can think and read body language, thereon they can start telling how a person feels by looking at them.

Another compelling strategy to reinforce vocabulary in order to express feelings in real situations is making a list of appropriate words or making it easier a list of characters. Children should think about stories they already knew and match the characters to the feelings of the characters in the stories. The teacher is the one who has to encourage pupils to tell and express how they determined the match. There are several activities that requires students to reflect on their own emotions in a given situation as experienced by story characters. Children have the opportunity to exchange ideas about their reactions and thus, they are practising language in a meaningful, enjoyable, and comprehensible way.

Literature might provide a variety of contexts to encourage emotional development. Studies found that emotional intelligence skills were significant predictor of academic achievement. There is a definite relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning strategies. Drawing on this idea, Oatley stated that "emotions aroused by fiction are related to individual goals which are relevant to readers, and when emotions of reading are combined with contexts of fictional simulations, they help develop insight" (as cited in Roohani, 2009, p.44). To move further, Roohani (2009) confirmed that:

> [Emotional Intelligence]'s potential to improve the acquisition of language in learners is claimed to be great as "language comes to have a distinctive emotional feel by virtue of being learned or habitually used in a distinctive emotional context" (Harris, Gleason, Ayçiçegi,2006, p.272). As Duraiswamy (1999, p.1) states, learners remain unconscious of language until it is dealt with emotionally. This emotional awareness and experience could be the vehicle that evokes consciousness, enabling the learners to understand and communicate ideas better. (p.41)

Literature provides rich linguistic input and can help children to practice their skills, such as listening and speaking, it promotes stimuli for students to express themselves in other languages, as well as to use their imagination, enhance their empathy for others and lead them to develop their creativity. It also engages in children's emotions, and it can help learners to improve their understanding of

other cultures. At the same time, literature has a potential source of learner motivation because it can deal with universal themes such as love, war, and so on. Ghosn (2002) pointed out that, literature can promote a gradual development of the understanding of self and the world. With this comes insight into the behaviours and feelings of others that is necessary for empathy, tolerance, and conflict resolution. And besides, as Tugrul (2012) concluded:

> Stories are motivating for young learners, and stories can create a happy and enjoyable learning environment. Stories are the ideal sources for young learners in effective language learning. Children like stories and they find stories easy to access and understand. They provide an outstanding opportunity for young learners to master the foreign language. (p.105)

4. Methodology

4.1 Research question and research objectives

Enhancing reading in Infant Education can be very beneficial for children if there is a positive and enjoyable environment, if there are different tools and techniques to improve their language learning if materials are appealing and interesting for them, and if stories have a meaningful context which children can relate them with their real lives. All these aspects help the process of language learning, and thus, it becomes the research question of this study: to know how teachers can enhance reading in English language learning in Preschool Education. There is one author, Rodríguez (2004) that describes some techniques to improve reading, another author, Porras (2010) analyses different activities according to a specific stage (pre-reading activity, while-reading activity, after-reading activity). Moreover, the same author claims that implementing children's stories for teaching English to young learners is a fun, enjoyable and meaningful process for them.

Bearing in mind that there are many factors involved in language learning, I will focus on describing and analysing methodologies used to teach reading in Infant Education, identifying strategies for learning reading, and discovering which ways English teachers use reading in Infant Education. These points become the research objectives of my study.

4.2 Paradigm and method

Paradigm

The belief system that is involved in the way I do things or establishes a set of practices during my final dissertation, it is the constructivism, more formally, interpretivist. Because of the fact that each individual construct his/her reality, there are multiple interpretations. Therefore, interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative. Regards to my research question, which is about how the teacher could enhance reading in English in Infant Education, I would do the observation and carry out my project in a Danish school. However, there won't be any implementation because I do not have the security that its system allows it, but I would do a lot of observation, interviews, reading and analysis.

This paradigm assumes that reality is constructed intersubjectivity through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially. This means that findings emerge through dialogue, and it is through this dialectical process that we can create a more informed understanding of the social world. In other words, the knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined and perceived. According to Neuman (2000), Hudson and Ozanne (1988), "the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects". The same authors stated that "interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which time and context are bound.

Method

Interpretivist approaches rely on naturalistic methods, such as interviewing, observation and analysis of texts. Thus, these methods ensure an adequate dialogue between the researchers and those with whom they interact in order to construct a meaningful reality. One example of these methods is the case study approach, which it uses surveys or interviews for data collection. It is agreed that "case study research is ideal for looking at research questions which are closely connected to their context or situation" (Stake, 1995, p.8). The focus of the research is to concentrate on understanding and interpretation, so researchers want to experience what they are studying, and they accept influence from both science and personal experience.

According to Stake (1995), case study research is an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of study. Researchers who use case study are urged to seek out what is common and what is particular about the case. This involves careful and in-depth consideration of the nature of the case, historical background, physical setting, and other institutional and political contextual factors (Stake, 1998).

4.3 Techniques

4.3.1 Reviewing existing documents

First of all, one way of collecting data that I used was by reviewing existing documents, such as the educational project or different educational programmes. Reviewing existing documents helped me understand the history of the school, its philosophy, and other relevant aspects that I had to take into account to carry on this project. Moreover, it helped me to understand better the program and organisation that I was evaluating such as formulating questions for interviews, questionnaires, or develop an observation guide. Therefore, it was essential to consider all these aspects to make a proper planning of the school. Through this data collection method, I had a good source of background information of the school, as well as I could discover some topics that may not be directly observable.

Most of the information I could obtain from the school is from the AAGE school PYP 3 Language Learning Outcomes. Throughout this document, I could follow and understand children's reading process because in this document there are all information teachers need to have to work on reading, speaking, listening or visual language. This document seems to be like the curriculum, where there are the overall expectations, targets and clarifications.

According to the Learning Continuums of the AAGE Primary Years Programme (PYP) Language Learning Outcomes, the process of reading is interactive and involves the reader's purpose for reading, the reader's prior knowledge and experience, and the text itself. It begins to happen when the reader realises that print communicates meaning. Parents and teachers' contribution could be to provide a captivating range of pictures books and illustrated materials to share with children. It is essential to promote the desire to read with enthusiasm and curiosity. Reading helps us to clarify our ideas, feelings, thoughts and opinions, because it offers us a means of understanding ourselves and others, and has the power to influence and structure thinking. Children learn to read by reading. They need to have extended periods of time to read for pleasure, interest, and information, experiencing an extensive range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts.

These beliefs carry on having overall expectations. Teachers from AAGE school expected learners to show an understanding that language can be represented visually through codes and symbols. Moreover, they also believe that learners are extending their data bank of printed codes and symbols and can recognize them in new contexts. Finally, they should understand that reading is a vehicle for learning and that the combination of codes conveys meaning. There is a list of the expectations and targets for written language, reading in PYP 3, which is the following one:

Students can…

- Express opinions about the meaning of a story
- Show empathy for characters in a story
- Distinguish between pictures and written text, for example, can point to a picture when asked
- Indicate printed text where the teacher should start reading
- Handle books, showing an understanding of how a book works, for example, cover, beginning, directional movement, end
- Join in with chants, rhymes, songs, word games and clapping games, gaining familiarity with the sounds and patterns of the language of instruction
- Self- select and revisit favourite texts for enjoyment
- When listening to familiar stories, notice when the reader leaves out or changes parts
- Participate in shared reading, posing and responding to questions and joining in the refrains
- Participate in guided reading situations, observing and applying reading behaviours and interacting effectively with the group
- Listen attentively and respond actively to read aloud situations; make predictions, anticipate possible outcomes
- Continue building sound- symbol relationships and begin recognizing familiar sounds/ symbols/ simple blends and words
- Introduce high frequency and high-interest words, characters or symbols
- Begin to read and understand the meaning of teacher-selected texts at an appropriate level

AAGE PYP Language Learning Outcomes (p.13 2017)

4.3.2 Interviewing

Another method for data collection is about interviewing, which consists of asking quantitative questions orally of key participants. These types of questions may be closed-ended questions or open-ended questions. I interviewed a teacher after my observation in order to get more in-depth information about their perceptions, attitudes, experiences and beliefs. Through the interview, it was useful for gaining insight and context into a topic, it allowed me to discover her perspective and what is crucial for her, and it was helpful for gathering quotes and stories. Throughout my internship and attendance in PYP 3 classroom, where I carried out my observation in reading, I had several conversations with children and the teacher about reading, her methodology, her strategies, and so on, but I decided to interview her at the end of my internship to conclude my observations. Therefore, it took place the last week of my internship in the PYP3 classroom, one afternoon while children were doing After School Activities. The conversation last 20 minutes approximately, and she talked about how she introduces reading at the beginning of the course, the strategies she uses to enhance reading, the materials, the monitor and follow up children have of reading, and so on. Here, I attach a table with all the questions:

How do you introduce reading at the beginning of the course?
What strategies do you use to enhance reading?
What materials do you use?
Which monitor/ follow up children have of reading?
How do you identify those children who have problems while reading? Which resources do you use for them?
If the qualifications are low, what do you do to improve it?

How many hours to you implement to read?

4.3.3 Observation

Finally, I used observation as a data collection method for evaluation. I gathered data by watching behaviour, events, characteristics of each child, and so on. I tried that the observation was overt and covert, to distinguish the differences between the behaviour of children when they were conscious that I was doing an observation and when they were not aware about it. By doing observation, it allowed me to directly see what people do rather than relying on what people say they did.

Every Wednesday I went to the PYP3 classroom, where children were 5 and 6 years old because it was the stage where reading started being necessary for their learning. I began by observing the materials the teacher used, and how she motivated children to read. Then I focused on the strategies she used to deal with the diversity of the classroom. Finally, because she used books, I observed the different levels.

To begin with, the teacher used several materials to carry on with the reading. Letter land is a system of reading that consists of giving names and little stories in each letter sound in order to make the pronunciation easier and motivating for children. For instance, the sound /a/ has the name of "Annie apple". The stories are written in a big book with lots of pictures and very colourful that engage children in listening to the stories. Once the whole alphabet had been learnt, the teacher started using books.

There was a collection of books, all of them with the same characters that were interesting and funny for children because of its characters, stories and colours. Those books had little stories that could be familiar for children not only because the characters were not fictitious, but also because the stories were real, and children could relate those little anecdotes with their real life. For instance, one story was about a birthday party; another was about a little boy who forgot a teddy bear in the bus; thus children can quickly think about their own experiences and comprehend better the stories.

Another material used to help children recognise and remember the letter sounds is the cardboard alphabet. The teacher used it when children cannot remember one name of a letter or one sound; then she showed the cardboard and children remember it visually.

About to the strategies, the teacher was acutely aware of the needs of each child, and she could use and adequate different strategy depending on the child. Thus, she used five distinguish strategies in total. One option was hiding letters while the child was reading, in order to help her/him read the letters one by one. This tactic was used for children who prefer reading, at the first-time, letters one by one, and later without hiding any letter.

Another strategy is called "Roller Coaster", which aims of helping children to blend sounds. It consists of pretending to put the letter sound in the child's arm: the first at the top at the shoulder, the middle letter by the elbow, and the last one by his/her wrist, and then she/he does it nice and flow, and then they can go faster and faster on the reading roller coaster.

Everyone in some point of his/her life has used the finger to follow the words of a book in order not to neglect any word. But this way of reading may result a little bit boring for a 5 years old child. However, children from PYP3 use a funny strategy to follow with the finger all the words in order to make sure that all of them are read. Therefore, for children who tend to guess while they are reading, the teacher used a "reading finger" strategy in order to avoid speculating. It consists of giving a small sticker in his/her finger, and then the child has to point letter by letter of the words with his/her finger while she/he is reading; thus children do not forget to pronounce any sounds of the word because they have the reading finger as a guide.

The last strategy the teacher used was called "Bubble game". This strategy was mainly for those children who could not pronounce some sounds, such as /sh/ correctly. The aim of this tactic was to help the child practice the sound in a funny and motivating way, using bubble game.

Due to my curiousness, I was wondering how the teacher enhances children in reading. I consider that teachers have an essential role, which is having the skill to engage children in the class activities and avoid frustration and boredom. That is why I ask to the teacher how she manages to keep motivation, in reading in

particular. After discussing with the teacher about it, she answered me that there were several factors involved in the engagement of the child in the reading. At this age, children are caught their attention by very colourful pictures and realistic facts; thus the teacher opted to use a collection of books with lovely and bright illustrations. Moreover, those stories are about a family and its adventures that children can relate those stories in real life and they can get familiar with the vocabulary. If children can see a relation between those little stories with their own life, it becomes meaningful for them.

Children really like to receive positive feedback after they have finished one activity. Miss E. knows that, and that is why she offers one cute sticker after a child has read a book. They have a reading notebook, and in its cover, they can stick all the labels they obtain. Although stickers are not the reason for reading, it might help to keep children's motivation.

As I mentioned before, children remember sounds because, at the beginning of the reading course, the teacher insists on reading the little stories that each letter has. It is helpful for children to use a strategy to remember the name of the letters and its sound; thus they use those little stories, which they have rhythm, in order to comprehend and remember them.

Some children give up or fail because they find extremely difficult to follow with the classroom lessons. But these results mean that the planning and elaboration of activities are not adequate for all children and do not take into account the diversity of the class. Therefore, there is a significant aspect to consider while a teacher is designing activities in order to avoid failure, which is the ability to adequate activities and tasks according to the children's needs. In the reading sessions, the teacher used books with different levels depending on the child's process. Miss E. used four different levels of books: the first level were books without words with only pictures. Those books were used for children who had some difficulties, basically, with the language, in order to help children make up stories, learn and practice new vocabulary, structures and language. There were several boys from India and a new student from France, who needed to use those books to have the first contact with English. Thus, to introduce new vocabulary, the principles structures of stories such as "once upon a time", and practice language, those books were really good tools to begin with.

The second level were books with short and necessary words with a repetitive structure along the book, in order to help children practise the first words. For example, "it is a dog", "is it a dog?", "yes, it is", "no, it isn't". The following level were books with words a little bit more complex because there were more structures. However, they followed the same pattern as the 2nd level books with a repetitive structure along the text. In this case, children could read sentences like: "Mom is running", "Dad is helping my sister".

Finally, the fourth level were books where children could start reading some sentences. Again, the structure was repetitive along the book in order to help them to practice reading. For instance, some sentences could be like: "There is a race on Monday morning", "I missed the bus and I arrived late at school".

5. Case study

5.1 Context

The school

Aarhus Academy for Global Education (AAGE), founded in 2011, is a private day school for students who come from other countries and Danish families interested in an English language programme of studies which prepares students for higher education. Moreover, AAGE is also recognised by the Danish educational authorities as it obeys with Danish requirements for international school.

The school is divided into two separate campuses, with the pre-school and kindergarten located in Hojbjerg, a suburb of Aarhus (Denmark), while facilities for grades 1-10 are on Dalgas Avenue near the centre of Aarhus (Denmark). At an enrolment now of over 300 students from 34 different nationalities, AAGE is fulfilling the Municipality's goal to provide English language education for children of parents in its growing international and Danish populations.

AAGE follows two of the International Baccalaureate's educational programmes; PYP and MYP. The IB is a recognised leader in the field of international education, and its programmes can be found in over 4000 schools across some 155 countries. Whereas the PYP curriculum focuses on the whole child with an emphasis around essential elements such as attitudes, concepts, knowledge, skills and action the MYP curriculum covers a range of subjects including language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, mathematics, science, the arts and physical education. IB curriculum and pedagogy are focused on international perspectives of learning and teaching and allows students to explore local culture and language.

AAGE school has as the main goal to provide a high quality holistic education, so that each student meets personal, social and academic needs while acquiring a healthy sense of self-confidence, thinks critically, creatively, scientifically and is solution oriented, develops communication skills and practices responsible use of technology, embodies responsibility, initiative and follow-through, honesty and generosity, effective team work and democratic leadership, appreciates cultural differences and diversity of perspectives.

Pre-school/ Kindergarten at AAGE is open to children from the age of 3. At AAGE it aims to provide the best possible learning experiences for young children. Because students progress through the programmes, they continually build upon and develop their independence, self-confidence and sense of responsibility for their learning, providing them with a learning continuum that prepares them emotionally, socially and intellectually for the more formal environments of the main school.

Because of the flexibility of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP) allows teachers to encourage and develop each child's interests. The Early Years programme acknowledges that young children are constructing their meaning and provides a framework that gives support for them to be active learners and inquirers, while nurturing their necessary skills and needs, providing a sound beginning to the continuum of learning that goes on throughout the Primary Years.

According to the Early Years Philosophies, children learn through their experiences, through their play and interactions with each other and the environment they construct meaning and make sense of the world around them. At this stage, game is essential in supporting children's learning and development. Play occurs in both indoor and outdoor environments. It provides a context for them to feel comfortable, express themselves and satisfy their natural curiosity. In play, children can learn in a variety of ways as they engage socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually with each other, adults and the environment. Due to the safety and security of the environment, children are handy with trying new things, take risks, and solve problems and master learning situations.

Learning is all about building on prior experiences. For young children, many of these experiences have taken place at home or within the family; therefore, the link between home and school is essential, and communication is vital.

The classroom

The PYP 3 classroom is made up of one homeroom teacher, one teacher assistant, and 18 children from all over the world; India, Hungary, Morocco, Dubai, America, Spain, Australia, France, United Kingdom and Denmark. These 18 children are divided into six girls and twelve boys. Only a few of them have English as their mother tongue, the others speak other languages, and English is their second language or even their third language. Even though most of the children can comprehend English instructions, not all of them can express themselves in English because they are new arrivals to the school.

Children can take advantage to the diversity of cultures that the classroom has. It is a great opportunity for them and for teachers to experience this diversity and to manage it. The big difference that I could observe between children it is when they read. The majority of them really like reading, but there are many different levels that teacher has to manage with several strategies for each child. Even though they read during the whole week, on Wednesday it is the day to read individually, which means that the teacher and each child individually read together for a while. While it is time to read for one child, the others are doing several activities with the teacher assistant. It has been during the literacy time where I could observe the variety of difficulties that each child may have, as well as observe how the teacher enhances reading and deal with this diversity.

The teacher monitors every single child to follow his/her process and to find the strategies to improve. Some of them need to start making up their own story according to some pictures; thus they have to relate their thinking with the images of the book. This fact is due to the lack of imagination and ability to connect thinking and pictures. The teacher observed that some of them could not make up a story because they did not know how to keep continuity from one page to another; thus she decided to start by using wordless books. Moreover, this way helps children practice the structures of the stories, to know how to introduce and end a story, how to use connectors, and so on. The truth is that they have made really good progress because they started with describing what they could see in each page only, and now they can create a story using the beginning patterns, connectors and ending patterns. Besides, the teacher has to face with one case that a child cannot pronounce several sounds correctly and this requires more time to practice. It seems to be a muscular issue because he has some difficulties to collocate the tongue in the right position.

Children follow a routine for every day of the week, in which all of them know it very well. To begin with the routine, they start every day doing "morning circle", which it consists of saying hello to everyone, talking about the weather, the day and the month. Later, the teacher talks about what are they going to do during the day, also she explains to them if there are some important news or some changes that they should know. This time lasts 30 minutes, and then they have 15 minutes to eat their morning snack. Every week two helpers collocate the mats they use to eat around the table, and each child finds his/her rug. Afterwards, they start doing activities related to the topic of the week or the unit for 1 hour and a half. After that period, they dress with their snowsuit, and they go to the playground for 1 hour. In this zone, they can play to many things, for instance, swinging, sliding, climbing, riding with bicycles, playing with the sand or with the snow, they can also play football or just free game. Once this time finishes, it is time to get ready for their lunchtime in the classroom, where again, all of them have a place to sit. After lunch time, they have two hours more where they usually do arts and crafts, P.E, dancing, yoga or meditation. Afterwards, most of the children leave school at 2 pm, but other stays longer since 4 pm or even 5 pm. In this time, they play outside and to the playroom.

5.2 Analysis

Every Wednesday I attended to PYP 3 classroom for the literacy time, and when children saw me in their class they knew it was the day of reading. All of them were excited to read and wanted to be the first one. The day began as the other days of the week; they sat on a big carpet they have in the classroom as a semi-circle waiting for the teacher to introduce the day. She began with asking for the day, the month and the weather. She used different questions every day, such as how the weekend was, if they like playing with the snow, and so on, to take attendance if everyone is in the classroom. Consequently, she explained what they will do during the day and she wrote it on the whiteboard. Some Wednesdays she read a book to introduce the reading day. She sat on a chair in front of the children, who were sitting as a semi-circle, and she started reading one story using a book. She used different voices to catch the attention of children while she was reading, as well as she knew how to interact with them in order to make the story more enjoyable. Sometimes she took advantage of digital boards to help them calm down when it was the end of the day; thus she used a digital book and let children listen to it.

When it was time to read, she had all the children's reading folders, her notebook, stickers, a collection of books, and the materials she needed to use with some children. One by one, children came to a small room where they did the reading and sat next to the teacher. The teacher started asking several questions, such as if he/she enjoyed the book, if he/she could explain what the book was about without reading, and later the child started reading the book. Depending on the child the adult used different strategies to help her/him, which could be by using a sticker in his/her finger to point each word, or using a cardboard with the alphabet written, and so on. Later, she gave a sticker to be stuck in the child's notebook, wherein this notebook the teacher wrote some comments about the reading to the family, and she received some feedback from them. Afterwards, she found another book for the child to be read for the following week, which the level of the book may vary depending on his/her difficulties.

During reading time, it is also a special time for children because she/he is alone with the teacher where she/he can share some information with her. According to what the teacher told me, it is in those moments when the child feels secure with the teacher to explain her some experiences, feelings, or fear. The adult's role is to listen to the child careful and supports him/her in all situations. There have been some cases that children confessed relevant information, in which the teacher had to take part in difficult situations to help them.

Regarding the second aim of my final dissertation, which it is about the strategies for learning reading, I could observe and identify how the teacher managed the diversity of the classroom. One of the most crucial task for the teacher was to know precisely what each child needed depending on their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, she used different techniques to help and enhance children read. For children who could not blend sounds yet, she used books without words in order to help them make up stories according to the pictures. This way promoted children to relate their imagination with the images, as well as to practice the structures of the book, such as "once upon a time...", and language. Focusing in those children, they were Indian, and according to the teacher, it might be because they were not used to be imaginative or creative when they had to relate pictures with the reality.

One strategy she used with some children was called "roller coaster", which consisted of pretending that in their shoulder there was a sound, in the middle of the arm there was another sound, and in the palm there was another one.

Then, children imagined that the sounds were in their arm, and they pronounced the sound one by one trying to blend the sounds until they achieved to know the world.

Another strategy the teacher used is by using a "reading finger", which was for those children who tended to guess while reading, and in order to avoid that, the teacher could give a little sticker in the child's finger, and he/she should point all letters and words with that finger. Therefore, they did not forget to pronounce any words. Some children needed to read words reading sound by sound; thus the teacher hided the rest letters of the word while the child was reading the first one. Afterwards, the child could blend the sounds.

The teacher also had a different strategy for those boys and girls who did not know the sound of the letter or they did not remember them. Thus, she showed a cardboard with the alphabet and some examples of each sound that helped them recognise the sounds. Previously to this cardboard, children were taught to little stories for each sound to remember them. Furthermore, when children saw the letter and its drawing visually, then immediately they knew which sound it was.

The teacher indeed observed each child to know which strategy was better for him/her and which material could be useful and meaningful for each pupil. For instance, for children who could not pronounce the sound /sh/ correctly, she used a bubble game to practice that sound, in which helped children to try and practice it. It was a motivation way and funny game that promote children to face their weaknesses.

5.3 Discussion

Bearing in mind the research objectives, throughout my internship in AAGE school, I could give an answer to the questions and verify some hypothesis elaborated. According to its philosophy and its context, children start reading at the age of 5, but at the very beginning, they are surrounded by lots of literacy. The homeroom teacher considers very important to start introducing literacy when they are three years old (when they start infant education), by reading lots of stories for them and singing nursery rhymes. Thus when they are five, they are familiar with listening to stories and books and it is more comfortable and meaningful to introduce reading. As Tugrul (2012, p.101) affirmed, "motivating

young learner to learn English through stories at an early age provides them the opportunity to widen their horizons and stimulate their early enthusiasm and enhance their awareness of the rich use of English". Drawing on the same idea, Porras (2010, p.96) believed that "teaching the language through stories allowed (children) to use varied strategies from different language methods. This combination had a great impact on learners because learning became fun, motivating, rememberable and lasting". This idea was shared with the homeroom teacher because she tries to find different strategies and ways to enhance reading to make the reading process enjoyable and meaningful for children.

To understand and comprehend the targets of the classroom, I went into detail about the AAGE PYP Language Learning Outcomes, mentioned in the techniques section, page 23. About to those aims, I could observe the process of reading of each child, their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, all students were able to express their opinion about the meaning of a story, but not all of them could participate in shared reading, posing and responding to questions and joining in the refrains. Afterwards, the teacher used different strategies depending on the child and his/her language learning process. Furthermore, after the observation and interviews I carried out during my internship, I could give an answer to my research question, which was how teachers enhance reading in English in Infant Education. Teachers should take into account several aspects to help children to achieve good learning, and it has to do with three distinguishing factors: the right choice of the materials, find the adequate strategies and level, and keep children's motivation.

This year the teacher decided to change the material for reading, and she chose to use a collection of books with lots of colourful pictures and real little stories. She used to use books with a few words and abstracts stories that resulted meaningless for children. She found that those new stories were much more motivating for children because they could relate and think about their own experiences. Thus, it became meaningful for them, and they were willing to read to know more about the story.

An international school is emphasised by its huge of diversity, and when it is time to design activities, it is the moment to attend this diversity. Therefore, the teacher used several different strategies to manage the reading time. She tried to focus on each child to know her/his strengths and weaknesses and then find one way or another to help her/him to read. As Rodríguez (2004) claimed, there

are some techniques in which teachers should be aware in order to help children to participate and to be involved in the process of learning. Moreover, she used different materials, and she adjusted the level of reading depending on each child. Again, she believed that every boy and girl have different needs; thus her task is to find solutions for each one. It is for these reasons that I could observe and analyse several strategies, different materials as well as various levels. In this way, it resulted much more motivating for children because they felt they could progress and it was meaningful for them. It is important that children feel confident while they are learning to foster that learning. According to Tugrul (2012), children like stories, and they find stories easy to access and understand. The same author added that stories provide an outstanding opportunity for young learners to master the foreign language.

6. Analysis and discussion

To verify and answer my research question, I carried out a lot of observation, interviews and data collection, such as the school project and their learning outcomes. Moreover, I collected different articles that were of my interests, which are about the main topic; reading in Infant Education. Afterwards, I could observe some agreements but also some disagreements between the actions of the teacher with the beliefs and studies from different authors. To begin with, some of the authors that I got inspired for this project, believed that techniques for teaching English at Infant school are essential for the learning development. According to Rodríguez (2004), techniques are fundamental in the development of learning in the Early Childhood Education, in which they are practically the only resource, so that the choice will be decisive in the success or failure of all the process. In the case of the AAGE classroom, I could observe that the teacher used several techniques for teaching English, such as stories, paintings and drawings, games, videos, songs, and so on. Therefore, I could observe that there is a concordance between the practical part of the teacher with the theory.

In relation to one part of the theoretical framework, where I mentioned the importance of literature in preschool, most of the authors agreed with the idea that reading is a way of learning in which children have many opportunities for their knowledge and life. The learning is based on a meaningful and enjoyable context for them, which helps them to be involved and participate in the learning. Both authors, Tugrul (2012) and Ghosn (2002) agreed that motivating young learners to learn English through stories at an early age provides them with the opportunity to widen their horizons and stimulate their initial enthusiasm and enhance their awareness of the rich use of English. Moreover, it is essential to give children the opportunity to read in different styles to help them to be able to distinguish the different aim of each one. In the classroom of PYP 3, I could observe that the teacher followed the same style of reading, mainly the same books. However, Koutsompou (2015) claimed that:

> Literature should be used in language teaching, because it provides the learner with genuine, authentic samples of language, and also with real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers. It is crucial for foreign language learners to be trained in a variety of register, styles and genres and to be able to differentiate the purpose of each of them. (p.75)

On the one hand, one of my interests was knowing about learning English through stories. After reading some articles about this topic, I could conclude that there are many positive aspects of the learning through stories because teaching the language through it allows children to use different strategies from different language methods. Thus, learning becomes fun, motivating and rememberable. According to Porras (2010), storytelling and story reading become two powerful strategies in the early stages of language development because they provide learners with a lot of exciting and enriching input. Moreover, she claimed that the use of storytelling in the L2 classroom creates an excellent learning environment and provides meaningful and comprehensible input.

The homeroom teacher was aware of the importance of storytelling and that is why she implemented books and story reading in her classroom. She believed that through stories children could get a lot of input and they could have a proper learning development. Besides, I could observe that children who were newcomers received most of the vocabulary through books. Therefore, for these boys and girls, this tool became almost the first source of input. In relation with this, Porras (2010) defined different stages for reading stories, in which allow teachers to prepare children for reading the story and check their comprehension. In this case, the homeroom teacher from AAGE school did not follow any guide neither any stages. In other words, she introduced books according to the children's interests and level, she identified different strategies to help them read, but I realised that she did not carry on with any pre-reading activity neither after-reading activity.

Despite that, she used questions to help them to be involved in the reading, such as, "what you think the book is about?", "what you think it will happen next?", and so on. However, Porras (2010) claimed that for reading stories in the early language stages, the teacher should first do a lot of pre-reading work which prepares the learner to be able to understand the story. Despite that, the homeroom teacher took into account stories created based on children's likes and interests, and in connection to this, Porras (2010, p.101) stressed that "knowing students' preferences and interests helped to implement a pedagogical proposal that children found meaningful and interesting". Moreover, she emphasised that children can get involved in the process, and learning could be interesting and enjoyable for children if the teacher takes into account their likes and interests, and also because they can connect the new learning with their real

lives. The teacher of PYP 3 always commented that she chose that collection of books because she believed that children could relate those stories with their real lives., due to the fact that those stories were real, familiar to children, fun, and interesting for them.

According to Ghosn (1999, p.11), "literature has the potential of fostering emotional intelligence by providing vicarious emotional experiences that will shape the brain circuits for empathy and help the child gain insight into human behaviour". After reading some articles about emotional intelligence through literature, I could make a relation between this theory with the teacher's decisions. I will contextualise a little bit the situation to have a general idea. In PYP 3 classroom, there was a boy who was always in trouble; he was always arguing and fighting with his friends, even with his teacher. The homeroom teacher tried different ways to solve the situation; talking with him, talking with his family, punishing him, and so on, but she could not find any solution. One day, while he was reading a book about relationships with her, the teacher thought it would be a good opportunity to introduce and talk about his situation through the book. And that was what she did. She asked him some questions related to the book about the importance of behaviour, friends, and family. She realised that through books the child could express his feelings and emotions, and she discovered the reasons of his behaviour.

In relation to this, Ghosn (1999, p.4) claimed that "today's children seem to be low on emotional well-being in general, and consequently lack the ability to empathize, negotiate and cooperate, and often cannot feel optimistic and hopeful about the future", and "a child who lacks personal experiences with empathy may, through repeated vicarious experiences provided by literature, develop some readiness for empathy". Even though I could observe a little bit of the process of this child, I could identify relationship between the theory and the reality.

Concerning the research objectives elaborated previously, during this study I could describe and analyse the methodology used to teach reading in Infant Education. The teacher chose a collection of books which were classified by different levels, and she dedicated one day of the week to do reading individually with each child. The answers for all these questions were achieved by observing children and teacher in their reading time. Moreover, I could identify the different strategies she used for learning reading, as well as the materials she used.

Besides, by interviewing her, I could expand my knowledge about reading in Infant education, for instance, I could discover her perspective about reading, how she could motivate children to read, and so on. Furthermore, I was allowed to obtain some documents of the school, which helped me to describe and explain how a Danish preschool education is. By reviewing existing documents, I had the opportunity to extend of the targets, ideas and philosophy the school follows, and comprehend better its system.

7. Conclusions

To conclude this work, I could firmly defend that using children's literature can be an enjoyable, useful and motivating way to teach the language. The use of stories and the ludic methodology around them made the language learning process meaningful and fun for children. To help children have a successful language learning process through stories, it is essential to take into account that stories should be appealing and exciting to them. Children can learn while playing and having fun if the pedagogical purpose is well-planned and considers children's interests and needs, as well as if the learning environment is confident and stress-free, where children can feel secure.

Afterwards, I could give the answer to my research question about how teachers enhance reading in English language learning in Danish Preschool Education. There is a meaningful and long process since the child starts pronouncing some sounds until he/she can read. The teacher's role is to make sure that she adopts the appropriate strategies, the adequate level and materials for each child, to help them feel comfortable and to able to read and learn in another language.

Apart from that, I could also determine the research objectives proposed at the beginning of this study. First of all, I could describe and analyse the methodology the teacher uses to teach reading in Infant Education. Reading is always present in the PYP3 classroom; they read every morning the days of the week, also the months, the routine the teacher writes in the whiteboard, and so on, but they have one day only for reading. This time consists of spending the time needed to read some books individually with the teacher. Those books are the tools they use to practice English reading, and the collection has a wide range of levels depending on each child. Therefore, the homeroom teacher decides which book the student has to read. Secondly, I could identify the strategies the teacher uses for learning reading. According to their needs, she practices different strategies to help them overcome their challenges. Those options can be hidden letters and words, use the body to blend sounds, observe a cardboard with the alphabet written and with pictures, use some stickers to avoid guessing words, and using a bubble game to help children practice some sounds. Finally, I could discover the ways she uses reading in that stage: everywhere in the class children have the opportunity to read, either the names of the months, the days of the weeks, motivational sentences, work done by children, some notes for their families, or

the planning of each day. The homeroom teacher wants to create a reading environment, where children realise the importance of reading, and they arouse their desire to read.

During this study, I realise that doing research is not as easy as I thought. First of all, it means that you have to investigate questions you make yourself about a specific topic, and then you have to find the answers to these questions. Moreover, it means that you have to look for information, interpret it and analyse it. Thus, to go deeper into one topic, it is essential to collect as much data as possible, and also to have the main objectives clear. I had never done a study like this one, and at the beginning, I did not know which my primary objectives were, and the information I had to collect. It is a task that requires being constant, flexible, respectful and unambiguous. Personally, it has been a big challenge for me, but at the same time, I had the opportunity to investigate, to be in an international school and to build relationships with teachers and students. I believe that being a teacher means to be continually learning from different perspectives. For this reason, to carry out this research has been a fantastic experience for learning. The opportunity to share moments with professionals and students has developed a personal enrichment that will contribute to my future labour as a teacher.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Transcription of the interview

How do you introduce reading at the beginning of the course?

Start working with letter sounds, according to the letter programme (letter land). Normally I follow the teacher guide but this year I felt comfortable enough to go with the children's interests, which was running words, blending sounds. It works really well this year to go with the interest rather than following the teacher guide, but the letter sound is the basic, which starts in PYP 2 and we can go a little bit this year. Letter land, which is a phonic programme that provides flash cards, work books, tricky words, and so on. At the beginning, they have reading homework which they have a couple of words and some of the tricky words and once they realise that they can actually read the word, they are super excited. I think it is important to make the reading exciting for them, it is something fun when they understand, they read a word, or spelt the word, you can see in their faces, it's amazing. Keep the excitement going, I think that is really important.

What strategies do you use to enhance reading?

When we work on the letter sound using mirrors, they can see how they form their mouth and the face. And the difference between the different sounds how we form the lips, and where we put the tongue. It's quite good for them to see that. And we do that throughout all the letter sounds, and not really depending the level, but I use it specially for the once who struggle a bit to make the sounds.

What materials do you use?

There is a song favour letter sound that we sing and a little story, and we always refer back to those. We do a lot of hands on activities and games (smacking game, flash cards, so on). We have been talking about the reading roller coaster as well, where you put the letter sound in your arm, the first at the top at the shoulder, the middle letter by the elbow, and the last one by your wrist, and then you do it nice and flow, and then they go faster and faster on the reading roller coaster. I think it is quite important for children to have something to connect the words or the letter sound that they have strategies to use and not only decoding words of a paper, so songs or actions is very useful.

Collect materials, come out with creative ideas how to introduce sound or reading, do little work sands, smacking game or any crazy idea. Make them write in the sand, or paint or draw, any sensory staff.

Which monitor/ follow up children have of reading?

All I want to do is I want to see try and then I can assess while I am watching them write or read, or the strategies they use, if they actually know the letter sounds. I think it's worth to spend time on reading comprehension.

How do you identify those children who have problems while reading? Which resources do you use for them?

When I sit down with them, I think it is important to have the one to one time to make sure or assess where we are and do it along the way, so you don't end up during all and you realise that the group don't have a clue. But on going assessments it is quite clear when we do the writing if the child doesn't make a connection with the sounds.

The children who struggle a little bit we keep more on the sounds instead of reading, when we find sounds that may be difficult, for example /n/, I put tongue up and we spend more time doing silly sounds including that sound or we take it slowly, we don't rash anyone into decoding words because that will just stress them. I think that it's important that they feel confidence enough to do it.

The resources could be again use the mirror is a great tool, and also to use straws, I also check if they can blow bubbles with the blow sub bubbles or if they can blow through a straw, to see if their muscles are strong enough. And often I can see that they are not able to blow bubbles or blow through straws. But it is good to practice for them to do that, we actually do a lot of that pre-reading activities, because if you cannot make the sounds then you can really move forward.

If the qualifications are low, what do you do to improve it?

We can differentiate the levels, we have some children who are involving pretty fast that need to be challenged as well as once who has difficulties so, it is important that all get challenges their level.

With the more advanced once we have started to discuss the "magic e", why it changes to vowel, or why two vowels make a special sound, and the once with more difficulties I rather take step back again and talk about the basic sounds and how we put them together, and also, as International school we meet with children with English as their 2nd or 3rd or 4th language, so for them to build vocabulary before the reading starts is also important.

How many hours to you implement to read?

We read from the beginning but we set a reading day and that when we read, when I sit one to one with them to keep monitoring their progress and follow up, and now we use Oxford Reading Tree as a reading programme, and they have the wordless books with pictures where children can practice sequence in the story, and I use that even for children who can define and read but they don't make a connection, so we work on a reading comprehension, so they are sequencing stories and they develop vocabulary and being able to tell a story that makes sense with the pictures. And once they can do that we have moved into the basic books with few words in each page and we talk about the pictures all the time, before we opened, what was the book about, why do you think this happened in the book, we talk about the characters, why do you think they feel this way, what do you think will happen next, and try to connect to real situations because again, the reading has to make sense to the children, the cannot just read for the reading day, it has to be texts or words that they can connect.

We spend a lot of time on reading, the reading that we do once a week it takes a full day to read with the class. It is exciting, the kids are excited, I'm excited, it is also tired in many ways but to see their progress make it worthwhile. I also know that we have a collaboration with parents, so when we send home a book, the parents read it at home, some of them read it many times some read it fewer and they make a little comment in their notebook, so we can keep close communication regarded the child's progress. We do put a lot of hours in the beginning when we start with the letter sounds, we put lot of time at the beginning of the year, because I know that will pay off at this time at the second term, because then we spend so much time with the sound that we can now use to put them together.

I think it is also important to mention the connection between reading and writing, because one of our learning outcomes is that they should be able to read back what they have written, because if they started by writing and they write random letters and they want me to read it back to them or an adult to read they are very proud because they make words or a story and then what we do now with the writing, I ask them again to say loud the words slowly that they want to spell and use their phonic knowledge of the letter sounds they know and try to spell the word. And then read is back either to me or to a friend or to themselves. The more advanced group now are able to figure out if there is something missing. For example, if they want to write "went" and they write "wet", they read it back and they realise that something is missing.

9.1 Language Learning Outcomes

Conceptual Understandings

Illustrations convey meaning
Print conveys meaning
People read for pleasure
Stories can tell about imagined worlds
Printed information can tell about the real world
There are established ways of setting out print and organizing books
The sounds of spoken language can be represented visually
Written language works differently from spoken language

Expectations & Targets for Written Language
Reading PYP 3

Students can...

- express opinions about the meaning of a story

- show empathy for characters in a story

- distinguish between pictures and written text, for example, can point to a picture when asked

- indicate printed text where the teacher should start reading

- handle books, showing an understanding of how a book works, for example, cover, beginning, directional movement, end

- join in with chants, rhymes, songs, word games and clapping games, gaining familiarity with the sounds and patterns of the language of instruction.

- Self-select and revisit favourite texts for enjoyment

- when listening to familiar stories, notice when the reader leaves out or changes parts

- participate in shared reading, posing and responding to questions and joining in the refrains

- participate in guided reading situations, observing and applying reading behaviours and interacting effectively with the group

- listen attentively and respond actively to read aloud situations; make predictions, anticipate possible outcomes

- continue building sound–symbol relationships and begin recognizing familiar sounds/symbols/simple blends and words

- introduce high frequency and high-interest words, characters or symbols

- begin to read and understand the meaning of teacher-selected texts at an appropriate level

9.2 Letterland documents

Letterland

Initial Sound Assessment Checklist

www.letterland.com

Annie Apple is a vowel. The Letterland vowels are special as they share their letter shape with another Letterlander. Annie Apple shares her letter shape with Mr A, the Apron Man. He says his name, 'ā', in words like age, April and apron.

Annie Apple is a very happy little apple who lives in an apple orchard in Letterland. She has lots of animal friends. Can you see an anteater, an alligator and an antelope? She has other astonishing visitors. Sometimes an acrobat swings by or an astronaut drops in! The only visitors Annie doesn't like are ants, as they tickle her back!

Sometimes you will see Annie and two friends sitting on an applestand. Can you see her applestand at the top of this page?

Annie Apple is often very active, appearing in lots of words. She knows how to make a special sound in them. It's the sound you can hear at the start of her name, 'a'.

apron   Annie Apple   ant   arrow   axe
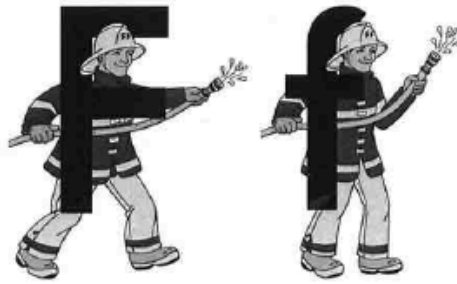
Help! There is a fire in the Letterland forest. Never fear, Firefighter Fred is here to put out the flames. He's a friendly firefighter who looks after everyone in Letterland. Fred is fit and fearless. If ever a fire gets out of control, he rushes off in his fire engine to put out the flames with lots of foam.

Can you see which animals are running away from the fire? How many frogs can you see?

Sometimes Firefighter Fred goes to the Letterland school and talks to the children about fire safety. He tells them never to play with matches or fireworks. Then he lets them climb onto his fire engine. His sound is a bit like foam coming from a hose. Put your teeth on your lips and gently blow, 'fff'.

Firefighter Fred   flag   fox   frog

There are five very important men in Letterland – the Vowel Men. You may have already met them. There is Mr A, the Apron Man, Mr E, the Easy Magic Man, Mr I, the Ice Cream Man, Mr O, the Old Man from over the ocean and Mr U, the Uniform Man. The five Vowel Men are the only Letterlanders that ever say their alphabet names in words – A! E! I! O! U!

But what happens when you see these Vowel Men out walking together in Letterland? Most of the time, all you need to do is remember this simple rhyme:

'When two Vowel Men go out walking, the first one does the talking.
The first one says his name, but his friend won't do the same.'

So in a word like **easy**, Mr E says his name "E!", while Mr A stays silent. That is because he is busy looking out for robots who cause trouble by capturing Vowel Men as they walk through Letterland. Let's join some of the Vowel Men while they're out walking!

Mr A   Mr E   Mr I   Mr O   Mr U