The effectiveness of TPR Storytelling methodology in EFL for Very Young Learners.

FINAL DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The main aims of this study are to describe and analyze TPRS methodology, to identify the aspects implicated in comprehensible input for very young learners and to know the researcher's point of view regarding the topic. The research is developed by comparing the theoretical information with the data collected from the answers given in interviews with teachers and professors. In this way, the results of interviews are presented, analyzed and later discussed according to the authors statements. Finally, the conclusions of the research are presented in order clarify the main question.

Keywords: Comprehensible input, EFL, Storytelling, TPRS, Very Young Learners.

Resum

Els principals objectius d'aquest estudi són descriure i analitzar la metodologia TPRS, identificar els aspectes implicats en l'*input* comprensible per a infants molt joves i saber quin és el punt de vista dels investigadors pel que fa al tema. La investigació es desenvolupa contrastant la informació teòrica amb les dades recollides a través de les respostes dels mestres i professors durant les entrevistes. D'aquesta manera, els resultats de les entrevistes es presenten, s'analitzen i es discuteixen posteriorment d'acord amb les declaracions dels autors. Finalment, es presenten les conclusions de la investigació per tal d'aclarir la qüestió principal.

Paraules clau: *Input* comprensible, EFL, Narració de contes, TPRS, Infants molt joves.

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1. Introduction

Comprehensible input is the language that learners can hear and see in communicative situations, which can also generally understood (Lichtman, 2018). This way, TPRS methodology was intentionally developed for the purpose of providing as much comprehensible input as possible through the use of different strategies and skills. Therefore, this research aims to analyze and explore the relationship between comprehensible input and TPRS methodology through the second language acquisition for very young learners.

The following information will be displayed in a concrete structure. First of all, the main aims of the research and the research question are explained and then the theoretical framework is presented. The theoretical section intends to define the connection between comprehensible input and TPRS methodology. Therefore, the intention of this study is to collect appropriate information in order to describe the researcher's conclusions about TPRS through its relationship with comprehensible input for very young learners with English as a second language. In parallel with this, an interpretive and naturalistic paradigm is used in order to study TPRS methodology. The information has been collected by the means of interview questions to teachers from different schools and an interview focus group with teachers of Infant Education in Can Puig school, located in Banyoles. Moreover, to gather more data, an interview with Karen Lichtman, an Assistant Professor of Spanish Linguistics in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University, is conducted via email.

1.1 Research question and research objectives

➢ Is TPRS methodology effective in EFL with Very Young Learners?

- To describe and analyze TPRS methodology.

- To identify and describe the aspects implicated in comprehensible input for Very Young Learners in English as a second language.

- To understand and analyze what researchers say about the TPRS focusing on comprehensible input.

1.2 Justification

The concept of globalization has been changing in recent decades and different points of view have emerged. Political, economic and technological factors have usually influenced the understanding of languages and the reasons why they are taught and used (Block & Cameron, 2002). According to Enever (2006), since the early 1990s the practice of teaching English as a foreign language to young learners (TEYL) has experienced an expansion of provision. In agreement, Pinter (2006) describes that nowadays, all around the world children are learning more and more English as a foreign language or a second language in different contexts.

There is a constant debate around the acquisition of a second language at young age and some experts like Singleton & Cook (2014) agree that age is a really important factor to consider and add that the effects of starting at an early age are consistently positive. Another expert like Carmen Muñoz (2014) summarizes that very young learners could experience input limitations and as a result they do not have long-term advantages in second language acquisition. Despite this fact, age is not in itself a predictor of second language acquisition, and everything depends on the amount of comprehensible input and the level of the affective filter (Krashen, 1982). Karen Lichtman (2018) defines input as "the language that learners see or hear in a communicative (meaning-bearing) context" (p.1) and explains why it needs to be comprehensible. According to her, comprehensible input is "the language that a learner can, in general, understand; language whose basic message is comprehensible by the learner." (p.4).

With these concepts in mind, new research has started to go further and investigate how comprehensible input can be included in teaching practice of English as second language with young learners. In 2018 there was news about information collected regarding the idea of comprehensible input and young learners. A methodology called TPRS (*Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling*) created by Blaine Ray in 1990 has been studied since it came out by some researchers in order to understand the relation between comprehensible input and the methodology. They wanted to see if TPRS could be applied with very young learners, even though it was created to be used for secondary students, but very few conclusions have yet been reached.

Therefore, to understand and foster comprehensible input in English classes as a second language for young learners, teachers need to know which methodologies are useful. TPRS could be an interesting methodology to introduce comprehensible input as much as possible for young learners although not enough studies have yet been done.

2. Terminology

This section contains the main vocabulary related to the topic. Here are some definitions for ease of general understanding of the final dissertation.

Acquisition: According to Waltz (2015) is the natural process by which a person becomes able to comprehend and speak a new language.

Comprehensible Input: The language that a learner can, in general, understand; language whose basic message is comprehended by the learner (Lichtman, 2018).

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

Input: The language that learners see or hear in a communicative context (Lichtman, 2018).

L1: The first language or mother tongue that each person uses to communicate.

L2: The second language or foreign language that each person uses to communicate.

Listening: Is an active skill as the mind actively engages in making meaning (Pinter, 2006).

Storytelling: Teaching and learning resource since antiquity to transmit knowledge (Mello, 2001).

TPR: Methodology developed by James Asher based on giving commands followed by children in order to learn a second language.

TPRS: *Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling* (Waltz, 2015).

Very young learners: Children from 3 to 6 years old who are attending preschool or who are in the first couple of years of schooling (Pinter, 2006).

THEORETICAL PART

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. English as a second language acquisition for Very Young Learners

This part of the research reflects on how young children learn a second language, collecting different aspects to consider while teaching and exposing children to the new language.

The teaching of languages at younger ages been a growing phenomenon in education systems worldwide in recent years. This change is due to the increase in parental demands and increasing understanding by the authorities of the need for language skills (Enever, 2011). In 1999 the field of Teaching English to young learners was experiencing big expansion (Cameron, 2001). Pinter (2006) and Slattery & Willis (2001) define very young learners as children from 3 to 6 years old who are at preschool or in the first couple of years of schooling. They highlighted the distinction between young learners (7-12) and very young learners (under 7). Furthermore, Scott and Ytreberg (2004) stress that in very young children understanding comes through hands, eyes and ears. In fact, the physical world is always dominant for them. It seems that this stage is characterized by the holistic approach of learning which represents the idea that children understand messages, but they cannot analyse language itself yet. For example, Johnstone (2009) suggests that very young learners do not develop knowledge about how language works (grammatical structures) and sometimes an early beginning can be a disadvantage in grasping new concepts. In contrast, children with an early start in a second language develop some advantages, such as listening comprehension and pronunciation in the longer term (Cameron, 2001). For that reason, it is understood that very young beginners need to start through listening practice to enrich input and then, utterances constructed between teachers and children will lead speaking (output) interactions. Very young learners start speaking by copying simple phrases, singing songs, answering questions and memorizing short dialogues. Thus, the "unanalyzed chunks" appear as the first speaking interactions without conscious analysis (Pinter, 2006).

For a long time, researchers have described how L2 should be introduced during young childhood. Rosberg (1995) argues that cultural content is essential to motivate young learners while learning a foreign language. This means that second language learning must be meaningful and relevant for them. There must be a reason for learning a new language, for example, the necessity of communication. Related to this idea, Kang Shin (2006) agrees and explains that L2 instruction through listening should include language structures presented within a context to create meaningful and communicative learning. Johnstone (2009) for example, declares that an early start can be a good thing as long as we ensure that it is set in a supportive context.

Many authors have investigated how we acquire a second language, and there is a huge variety of perspectives and theories. Some of them have been refuted and other ones are still valid today. For example, Krashen (1982) developed the well-known Input hypothesis as a result of multiple researches. The theory is based on the following claim: " a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage $i+1$ is that acquirer understand input that contains $i+1$, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message" (p.21). In short, we are able to understand language without acquiring the structures; understanding messages in a second language using the context, our knowledge of the world and extra-linguistic information. To acquire language input must contain $i+1$ and if there is enough input and communication is successful, $i+1$ is automatically provided.

3.2. Teaching a second language to very young learners

This section includes some relevant aspects of teaching English to early beginners. Moreover, it includes the treatment of the fluency and pronunciation aspects regarding second language classroom management.

According to Bland (2015) teaching preparation must be always in accordance with the age of children, and hence the skills needed for teaching EYL. Different strategies and methodologies are used as resources by teachers in order to plan English classes, and evidently, all of them include output from the teacher. Bland (2015) suggests some essential abilities that every teacher should consider while teaching very young learners. The teacher would need an advanced level of language fluency and the ability to implement methodological skills according to the age of the children. It is important to remember that it is the teacher who is presenting the input to the children, and for that reason the teacher needs an advanced level of language fluency in order to be able to respond to the many informal uses of language that can occur in the young-learner classroom.

It is important to establish the meaning of two concepts that can influence on the input of children. The first one is intelligibility and the second one is comprehensibility. As Derwing & Munro (2011) state, intelligibility is: "The degree of a listener's actual comprehension of an utterance" (p.479), and comprehensibility is defined as: "The listener's perception of how easy or difficult it is to understand a given speech sample. This dimension is a judgment of difficulty and not a measure of how much actually gets understood" (p.478).
The authors summarize that comprehensibility is based on the amount of listener effort it takes to understand an utterance, and speech does not have to be native-like to be intelligible.

Sometimes very young learners can feel isolated from the teacher's speech or English classes if L1 is not used. L1 can be applied in different situations to improve communicative skills. Kang Shin (2006) reminds us that, instead of spending time trying to explain concrete words, teachers can use realia, gestures and visuals to let children figure out the meaning of some words. But, sometimes this is not enough, especially if there are children who have very low proficiency, and L1 can be included as a resource to ensure their comprehension. In addition, without being too reliant on it, the teacher could answer in L1 and recast in L2, or indicate directions for activities in the mother tongue.

In conclusion, Munday (2006) states that listening is an active process because the mind engages in making meaning. Consequently, teachers need to ensure that the materials are comprehensible to very young learners, and in order to acquire as much as possible in the second language, they have to respect the listening processes of children.

3.3. Storytelling for second language acquisition

The objective of the following section is to describe what is storytelling and how it can be taught and adapted to very young learners.

Storytelling has been a teaching and learning resource since antiquity for the transmission of knowledge (Mello, 2001). Stories have transmitted values and fostered community for thousands of years (Kosa, 2008). Through the time, it has become a useful strategy in education and it still being used nowadays in kindergarten and primary schools. Thanks to storybooks children can discover new cultures and see different varieties of English (Ellis & Brewster, 2014), which allows them to understand better our world and also to share it with others (Wright,1998).

In early years senses are being developed and because of the short-attention span of very young learners, teachers need to engage them through the use of lots of colored visuals, toys, puppets or objects (Kang Shin, 2006). Stories or songs motivate children and help make the language input comprehensible and make better associations regarding vocabulary development (Krashen, 1989). Furthermore, Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) suggest that telling stories contributes to language learning, as it provides meaningful context. Providing a meaningful context, is not in any case an easy task, but through storytelling children can find it in stories, which indicates that they can listen with a purpose (Wright, 1998).

Mello (2001) affirms: "Storytelling is a constructed experience that involves both listener and teller in a highly interactive and creative process. Stories told by children contain world views and storytelling assists children in theory building and language fluency" (p.4). To conclude,

some of the main benefits of storybooks are that they can be cross-curricular and help to develop children's learning strategies such as predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

3.3.1. Teaching-Learning through Storytelling for very young learners

This section contains the main considerations of the teaching-learning process when storytelling takes place.

Some of the good points that storytelling can provide according to Wright (1998) are related to the children's reactions. Firstly, Ellis and Brewster (2014) recommend teachers first read the storybook, and then, create a relaxed atmosphere sitting children around them in a semicircle. It is important for the teacher to know the story, the environment and children as the teacher can feel confident of knowing where the pauses are to ask questions of the children.

It is said that very young learners can feel more involved within storytelling because of hearing someone telling a story without reading. It could help them to understand the meaning better if the story goes well with gestures. Nonetheless, the risk of not having read the story aloud before can be an issue for teachers who are telling a story in their second language and some mistakes in relation with the pronunciation can be made. An effective classroom talk and social interaction is the key to using storybooks successfully with young children learning English. Thus, their autonomy, creativity and competence in English can be increased (Enever & Schmid Schönbein, 2006).

There are a huge variety of materials and resources that can be used in early years to foster better comprehension and engagement when telling a story. Audio-visual aids, puppets, real objects or flashcards are very useful to motivate and to help very young children with vocabulary and meaning (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

There is a relation between teacher practice and learners with the regard to confidence, and sometimes the techniques used during storytelling can support the understanding of young foreign learners (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). Pinter (2006) declared that repetitions, comprehension checks and modifications in language while telling stories can benefit children by solving misunderstandings, and in a similar manner, using interactions and gestures can involve more children and assist input. Enever & Schmid Schönbein (2006) pointed out some considerations for storytellers:

> "When storybooks are chosen appropriately, attractive illustrations combined with meaningful content and relevant discourse structure have a strong socio-affective appeal and provide contexts with a powerful potential for acquiring and learning language in ways that are enjoyable and enduring. However, the potential of storybooks as a vehicle for developing a foreign language within a formal teaching context is by no means automatic and requires a great deal of sensitivity and a wide range of varied skills by the teacher in supporting language and learning in ways that are appropriate to the age and level of the learners" (p.11).

Focusing on the skills that a teacher may need for a classroom management, Ellis and Brewster (2002) found that the way to involve learners and link their experience with the story is to provide a context. First, the main characters are introduced, and then the teacher can relate the story to important aspects of children's lives. Once the context has been understood, they will be able to identify with the characters and then comprehend better the vocabulary.

3.3.2. Storybooks for very young learners

Ellis & Brewster (2014) give some advice for teachers on adapting vocabulary and making input more comprehensible when telling stories. In order to make a story more accessible without simplifying too much the content, they state that teachers can change some unfamiliar words for the already known or more familiar. Sometimes, if it is necessary, some ideas can

be rephrased as well to clarify the story's theme. For instance, the stories can be accompanied by more examples to make the meaning comprehensible to children. Moreover, when selecting storybooks, it is useful to keep in mind if the topics, themes and values which are suitable for the age of the children. There are a few concepts to check to provide more comprehensible input when telling stories. Firstly, the vocabulary should include familiar words to very young learners as they can use them in basic communication situations. Nonetheless, the additional vocabulary that appears in storybooks is fun to learn and easy to understand because of the context and offers comprehensible input, a feature of an acquisition-based methodology.

Secondly, stories help to introduce children to grammatical structures of English through context and illustration. This way, they can understand the meaning in a natural way while they are enjoying listening and can learn new structures without these being explicitly introduced. If it is necessary, teachers can check and simplify tenses, structures or word order.

3.4. Comprehensible input with very young learners

The next section explores in more depth information on the topic of comprehensible input and how this affects very young learners.

Very young children are not yet cognitively mature, which means that they have not started developing metalinguistic process. For that reason, their main acquisition in a second language is vocabulary. Listening is the most advisable skill to work on input in early ages (Waltz, 2015). Usually, the teacher tends to be the main source of input, although there are other ways of exposing very young beginners to input. For example, recordings, songs or videos are great sources.

To understand how children can achieve comprehensible input, first the word needs to be broken down. On the one hand, Waltz (2015) describes input as the language coming in

through listening or reading. Additionally, listening is described as an active skill, as the mind actively engages in making meaning (Pinter, 2006).

On the other hand, it is understood that comprehensible input is the language that a learner can understand. Thanks to the latest contemporary approaches regarding second language teaching, it has been discovered that learners need lots of input (Lichtman, 2018). Nowadays most contemporary approaches are based on Communicative Language Teaching (CTL). For example, approaches like Input-based approach can be found within this as well, leading the way to CLIL or Content-based instruction. Both are components of the Natural Approach, which is focused on communication through talking and aims to make second language learning as stress-free as possible in a communicative and input-rich environment. Natural Approach was developed by Tracy Terrell in the 1970s with the purpose of providing students with amounts of comprehensible input in the target language. Students can get involved and participate when they feel ready to speak giving limited responses such as *yes/no*. Students errors are not corrected and if they want, they can create full sentences. Furthermore, the comprehensible input is based on the Comprehension hypothesis, which states that the process of language acquisition via comprehensible input is subconscious (Krashen, 2004). It affects the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and it depends on the learner filter. In essence, the hypothesis of the affective filter according to Krashen (1983) is: "the amount of comprehensible input the acquirer receives and understands, and the strength of the affective filter, or the degree to which the acquirer is "open" to the input" (p.9).

Patten and Benati (2010) emphasize that the main source of data for language learners is input. Considering the input helps them to build their competence or mental representation of the language based on the examples provided in the input. Grady (2011) highlights that in some cases of second language acquisition lexical development is directly shaped by the input. Therefore, the language acquisition process depends upon the availability of appropriate language input. According to Gass & Selinker (1994) there are four stages that concern input during the process of second language acquisition. During the first stage called

apperceived input, some of the language input is noticed by the language learner because of frequency, prior knowledge and attention. The second stage is related to comprehension of the language input that is provided. At the third stage, which is a mental activity, language input is comprehended and internalized and during the fourth stage the input is integrated with any prior knowledge. This way, the language learner arrives at the fifth stage which is output in the form of written or spoken language. However, Long (1982) suggests that by modifying speech, providing linguistic and extra-linguistic context and modifying the interactional structures, input can be made more comprehensible and therefore improving the likelihood of learners acquiring a second language. In contrast, for White (1987) there is a relation between comprehensible and incomprehensible input. He concludes that when language input is incomprehensible, students tend to be aware of the aspects which they have not yet acquired and thus, their attention is focused on the specific feature they need to acquire.

3.5. Checking comprehension with very young learners

This section presents the main considerations of how comprehension should be checked by teachers in order to adapt methods of teaching and guide children in the process of second language acquisition.

Introducing new vocabulary is not an easy task even if it is done by the means of the storytelling strategy. There is a thin line that divides children's understanding and comprehension when new content is presented, and it could be difficult for the teacher to know what misunderstandings children have in relation to this. Ellis & Brewster (2014) recommend some strategies to check comprehension. First, they advise presenting a word by illustrating its meaning in one of the above ways. Then, if a child knows the word, the teacher should ask them to say it. The key is to ask children for repetitions in order to check their acquisition and if it is necessary, first ask them individually and then with the whole class again.

Another way to check vocabulary or sentence structures according to Kang Shing (2006) is to ask them to do a drawing after telling a story. They can draw or color the main characters, but if they are too young the teacher can use puppets to check comprehension and have students practice the language by retelling the story. Moon (2000) reminds us that creating the visuals can ensure that children get involved and engaged in the learning process. Moreover, it can help to introduce them to the context of relevant vocabulary items. In addition, arts and crafts can be related to language, making students feel more interested in the lesson. Ellis & Brewster (2014) produced an in-depth study about checking comprehension once a new word has been introduced. To provide opportunities for students to practice and understand better the new vocabulary, they enumerate a variety of activities and games such as: Memory games, matching games, mime games, sequencing games, labelling games or TPR games.

3.6. Total Physical Response

In the following section the Total Physical Response methodology is analyzed in order to clarify concepts and understand better TPRS methodology.

The TPR methodology was created by James Asher in the 1960s in America, and it was designed to foster listening comprehension through commands (Asher, 1969). Such listening uses imperative sentences, which means that non-verbal responses are required from children. Thus, comprehension is checked through the children's responses. When applying this methodology, first the teacher introduces the new language with visual support and body movements, and through the context and the materials provided children grasp the meaning (Pinter, 2006).

The language development of early beginners seems to be an accelerated process, and TPR works with children's needs. Therefore, is a suitable technique that can be applied with very young learners because they need to move and tend to have short-term attention spans (Er, 2013). The interaction between children promotes the development of a good atmosphere and better engagement with the activities presented (Rokhayani, 2012). Asher (1984) explains that

the benefits of such methodology could be a result of the fact that language activities are carried out in the left brain, while physical actions are coordinated by the right brain.

3.7. TPRS methodology

This section intends to bring together in an in-depth way all the information regarding TPRS methodology. It's structure, how it is applied and the skill needed to use it.

TPRS is an input-based method based in TPR and it was developed in the late 1980s by Blaine Ray, a high school Spanish teacher in California. Since then, lots of studies have researched what benefits and disadvantages have emerged from this methodology and until now, most of them showed good effects on vocabulary and grammar. *Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling* appeared because of the necessity of working more intensely on abstract vocabulary, considering that TPR was only used to work on concrete vocabulary.

In the very beginning, the method was called *Total Physical Response Storytelling* but around the year 2000 the name was changed because the approach became less similar to TPR and emphasized reading, as it was created for high-school students.

Ray defined TPRS with three main ideas: TPR, mastery learning (the idea that each student should get as much time and instruction as they need to understand what the teacher is talking about) and the indispensable role of input in acquisition. Besides, the approach has also developed some concrete principles that help teachers to organize classes when applying the TPRS (Lichtman, 2018).

Set of principles (Lichtman, 2018):

- Students need huge amounts of Input to acquire language. The idea is to spend as much time as possible providing comprehensible input through teacher speech and through reading.

- Languages should always be comprehensible. The teacher has to try to ensure that every student can understand what is said. Gestures, visual, proper nouns and comprehension questions can help to check this. L1 can be used when necessary to give the meaning.

- Students should learn a small number of high-frequency words and phrases to mastery. The mastery learning is an educational view that encourages teachers to try different ways of teaching until all students can achieve a certain mastery goal. TPRS wants students to learn the most high-frequency words in the second language to mastery, making reference to the most common vocabulary or verbs (*to be, to do, to have, to say…*). These words should be introduced in early childhood through stories, and then the teacher may continue using them frequently in communication situations in order to ensure their comprehension.

- Words should be introduced in a form in which they are commonly used. The idea that verbs or vocabulary should be included in communicative situations rather than explain the rules about when and how to use each verb or word.

- The class should be centered around students and their interests. The topics for class discussion can be chosen by the students, which fosters their participation and engagement with the activities and helps with comprehension.

- Input must be structured to ensure high frequency for key items and also be varied and compelling. Learners need to hear and see repeatedly what the teacher is presenting to them.

- Students work on comprehension (listening and reading) before working on production.

● Only minimal class time should be used for learner output. Language is best acquired when the internal learning mechanisms of students are processing comprehensible input. Therefore, student output needs less practice time.

3.7.1. The three steps of TPRS

There are three highlighted steps that shape and detail how class time should be organized in TPRS (Lichtman, 2018):

1. *Establish Meaning:*

The objective of the first phase is to familiarize students with the new words and phrases used during the subsequent phases. The teacher starts by introducing the new vocabulary and structures in the target language using gestures, visuals or glosses in their first language in order to clarify the meaning. Three structures are introduced each day, but the pieces and parts of grammatical structures are introduced as parts of words or phrases. Thus, grammar teaching is exposed in a natural required situation and through examples from the teacher. These examples are communicated through gestures or actions, but it is desirable to explicitly give the meaning of the words in order to avoid misunderstandings. Moreover, the phrases can be accompanied by pointing at pictures or visuals in interactive way. Teachers may use the structures as many times as possible in their input as they can provide different communication situations in which a word or a phrase can be used. In this case, Total Physical Response can be the method used by teachers to illustrate the many uses of the new phrases. For example, if the new structure is, *I wanted to dance*, the teacher can give commands or let the children give commands as they practice the structure: "*I wanted to dance in a circle", "I wanted to dance like Michael Jackson".* The teacher creates a communicative situation based on TPR and provides examples and input in natural contexts. At this point, the PQA (*Personalized Questions and Answers)* can take place as personalized questions directed to the children in order to exchange information.

By following this first step, the teacher creates different and meaningful contexts, which means that the structures are used in different sentences in communicative situations.

2. *Ask a story:*

The goal of this phase is to create a shared context for communication between the teacher and students in order to co-construct the story. Story-asking provides diverse comprehensible input and engages children by the repeated exposure to new language structures. The teacher, instead of telling a story spends the class time asking students questions and incorporating their answers into the story. There are three typical outlines of TPRS when the teacher starts to ask a story: The story involves a problem, the story goes to more than one location to solve the problem and the story has an eventual solution. Then, the teacher waits for the students' answers by using the previously learned vocabulary. In order to maximize input and not force student output, beginners can answer with *yes/no* or *either/or* questions. For instance, lower-level students can answer with a simple word and the teacher can build a full sentence to introduce it into the story. Furthermore, the teacher can offer different answers and the children can pick the ones they want. Once the story is created, it is acted out by the students with constant direction from the teacher. It can be done voluntarily and the teacher can explain to them how to act it by whispering what to do in their first language or in the target language. In this way, children can reproduce dialogues and more opportunities of dialogue between teacher and children can be created. In fact, story-asking provides lots of level-appropriate input through repetitive question techniques such as *Circling* or constant comprehension checks. Some activities to do after co-constructing the story to check comprehension might be: Listen to the teacher and retell the story, draw the story as the teacher retells it or order and match the main statements of the story. Other ones to foster output and check their comprehension can be to retell the story orally or write different endings for the story. Finally, output and input can be combined in different activities.

3. Reading:

The last phase of TPRS is focused on providing additional comprehensible input and acquainting students with the written word. There is a transition from processing input to processing written input, which means that the teacher has to carefully select appropriate materials for it. The vocabulary for the reading activities has to be already known so that students can easily understand the text. These texts can be novellas or free voluntary readings. The benefits of letting each student choose their own text is that it helps learners build both vocabulary and productive skills and it also gives them the opportunity to read at their level. Moreover, this can provide more comprehensible input and engage children. After children or students read the stories or texts, there are a few activities that the teacher can use to check comprehension. They can draw pictures of the story, rewrite it or ask the students questions.

3.7.2. TPRS Skills

TPRS has developed some new skills since it started because of the necessity for reflection or taking account of the different situations of students. Below are the main skills that can be used with very young learners.

Lesson and Unit Plan

TPRS suggests that the week should follow a particular order so that the method can be introduced in the proper way. Nonetheless, maybe teachers need to "slow down" stories in order to make sure that structures and vocabulary are understood. One way to plan the unit is to divide the main story into groups of structures, choosing the important non-cognate structures from the story and then working on it separately creating new small stories. For example, if the teacher is working on the *Three little pigs*, with the first group of structures *wolf, hid in* and *worked very hard,* the teacher can create a new story in order to establish meaning.

Comprehension Checks

Teachers can check the comprehension of students by applying different techniques. They can ask students to hold up their fingers to see how much they have understood of the structures or vocabulary. Ten fingers indicate perfect comprehension and one finger a lower comprehension. Nonetheless, if students and teacher speak the same L1, teacher can ask a word or structure in the L2 and children can answer by giving the meaning in their L1.

Circling

The circling technique is another skill to check comprehension and it is based on repetitive questions asked by the teacher while telling the story. The answers of children can be *yes/no* or *either/or* and *questions,* including longer answers. For example:

- *The caterpillar ate the green pear*

- *Did the caterpillar eat the green pear? (yes/no)*

- *Did the caterpillar eat the green pear, or did he eat the red apple? (Either/or)*

- *What did the caterpillar eat on Tuesday? (question)*

Adapting a Textbook

Choosing which vocabulary words needs to be more worked on in more depth is a difficult task. For that reason, TPRS specifies how to achieve this. First of all, cognates should not be selected as focus structures because they are easy to comprehend. Cognates should be worked on through storytelling, discussion or written input. Instead, high-frequency words and phrases (the ones more used in daily life) should be the focus structures taught instead of low-frequency words because students tend to do not remember the latter.

Assessment

It is important to assess students' progress in order to know what areas need to be worked on. TPRS assessments have some features such as including a focus on comprehension, presenting stories that have been taught in class without prior warning and measuring fluency

in some way. The activities for the assessment could be vocabulary quizzes, reading and answering questions, listening and answering questions and timed free writing (writing as much as students can in a certain time).

3.7.3. Application with young learners

The last decade has seen a period of exponential growth in the pursuit of second language acquisition with very young children due to high demand and globalization. Therefore, the most widely used methodologies in early education have been in the spotlight, and because of the evident expansion of English language, the most innovative as well. Thus, there are methodologies that, despite their not being designed for kindergarten, have proved beneficial for very young learners. TPRS has been one of these approaches, and although there are not enough researches showing in-depth results with very young children, the first results have begun to show huge benefits on lexical development.

Demir & Çubukçu (2014) carried out a study in which TPRS was applied with a group of twenty six-year-olds. The researchers were interested in the effectiveness of TPRS on lexical development, and for that reason, they used two groups of children in order to observe the results of applying TPRS in one group and The Communicative approach in the other. The twenty lexical items used in both methodologies were selected from the preschool English language teaching curriculum. They chose the ones more frequently used by children as they were learning these words with a storybook at the time. At the end of the study, the researchers concluded that the experimental group, which was taught the lexical items with the TPRS method, was more successful than the group taught through The Communicative approach. For that reason, they pointed out that TPRS has a huge impact on lexical competence for young learners in second language acquisition. In addition, they stated that TPRS can be a flexible methodology, since it puts emphasis on how to teach rather than what to teach.

Gil (2015) reached similar conclusions to Demir & Çubukçu. On the one hand, they summarized that TPRS was a good method to provide lots of comprehensible input on high frequency vocabulary and structures in a contextualized way. On the other hand, TPRS emphasizes comprehension first and then production. Very young children have not completely developed their first language yet, and therefore output is not a primary consideration.

Kara & Eveyik-Aydin (2019) developed the last study with 19 four-year old pre-schoolers. It was carried out in a private school in Istanbul, Turkey, where children were exposed to English 13 hours a week in two to three 40-minute sessions every day. The *The red band* story books were chosen by the researchers because they were already known to the children and the vocabulary matched the learning needs of very young children. The next step in this study was to find the appropriate words to be presented to very young learners. The vocabulary chosen was as concrete as possible and therefore, a total amount of 12 items were selected. The considerations for choosing those items were based on curriculum, children's dictionaries and "Lextutor (an open-access online tool)" (p.138).

The main part of the study consisted of five cycles of teaching, dedicating one story for each cycle, and one week for each cycle. The first step of the process and TPRS was to *establish the meaning,* introducing the target vocabulary through pre-teaching using flashcards, props, gestures and PQA (personal questions related to the topic) sessions. Then, during the next step (*asking a story),* the story was told by the means of circling questions after every new word appeared, and finally voluntary students acted it out with physical movements and repeating after the teacher.

The last stage of TPRS method (*reading)* was adapted due to the lower level of language development of very young learners. Thus, the last lesson consisted of listening to the teacher reading aloud the same story. To conclude, the researchers declared that receptive learning

was more successful than productive learning in all weeks. Nonetheless, the study supported

the effectiveness of TPRS in teaching vocabulary in the target language to preschoolers.

PARACTICAL
PART

4. Study

4.1. Research method

This research is based on an interpretive or naturalistic paradigm because the reality studied during the process has not been modified. Thus, information needs to be collected and analyzed through different instruments under a subjective perspective. In contrast to the means used by scientific methodology, truth is sought through experiences and philosophy in order to understand and comprehend the data collected. Interpretation is in a sense a re-creation, a representation of what is understood (Gadamer, 1996). According to Van Manen (2003), interpretive methodology can be understood as a critical methodology of action because pedagogical competence implies sensible behavior and active thinking to access new experiences. Cantrell (1993) agrees and states that the ontology of interpretivism is characterized by the diversity of realities and the exploration of them. Moreover, he declares that the inquirer's mental processes of interpretation are influenced by interaction and its social contexts. Therefore, knowledge is constructed through active processes by experiencing real life or natural settings. According to Willis (1995), interpretivists are anti-foundationalists and for that reason their approach remains constructivist. Thus, there is no correct and singular answer or method of learning, which means that an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest is needed.

Kvale (2007) states that qualitative research is needed to comprehend, describe and in some cases to explain the phenomenon of the outside world from the inside. Sometimes the inside and outside can be confusing concepts regarding inter-subjectivity. Laing (1967) explains the following idea:

> "This distinction between outer and inner usually refers to the distinction between behavior and experience; but sometimes it refers to some experiences that are supposed to be "inner" in contrast to others that are "outer". More accurately this is a distinction between different modalities of experience, namely, perception (as outer) in

contrast to imagination etc. (as inner). But perception, imagination, phantasy, reverie, dreams, memory, are simply different modalities of experience, none more "inner" or "outer" than any others (p. 4)."

4.2. Instruments

The information presented in the theoretical framework forms the basis of the correct structure of this research. However, the practical part is needed in order to complement and reinforce the evidence provided by the literature. For example, through data gathered during interviews, the researcher might discover different facts that are directly related to the information collected previously. However, due to the risks involved when information is filtered under a qualitative methodology, this new data needs to be contrasted with different instruments (Van Manen, 2003). According to Gillham (2000) the role of researchers is to find answers and through interviews they can achieve this. Usually, interviews are based on an indirect one-way dialogue. According to Kvale (2006) there is a hierarchical relationship with different distribution of power which is established between the interviewer and the interviewee. Nonetheless, Gillham (2000) stresses that the process is always about achieving agreement between both parties. For that reason, interviews are not exclusively either subjective or objective, they can be understood as intersubjective (As Laing, 1967). Philosophy developed this concept at the very beginning of XX century, when the idea in between objectivity and subjectivity was understood as the solution to get accurate conclusions. For example, In Seale (2018) describes intersubjectivity as the shared meanings and agreement established when social or cultural interactions take place. Moreover, the author clarifies that interpretivism is based on discovering what things mean to people and how they act when faced with particular situations. Thus, questions and communication are needed in order to exchange information.

Some of the general advantages of the interview method of collecting data are that direct contact with users can lead to constructive suggestions, they can be a good resource to obtain

detailed information and through them the inquirer can gather substantial information without too many participants (Genise, 2002).

Of course, not all the interviews have the same purpose. This can vary according to the focus and purpose of the interviewer. There are different techniques when using this tool and its application depends on the type of interviewee. For example, questionnaires do not have the same structure as semi-structured interviews because the purpose is not the same (Gillham, 2000). Semi-structured interviews require an "in depth" response, which means that the issue or questions are concrete and well defined, and the response is left open (Flick, 2009). This way, the naturalistic interview involves a progressive clarification of the questions (Gillham, 2000).

In order to gather all the information Gillham (2000) indicates that in a research project observation is essential. Watching, listening and asking are the three actions needed in order to get accurate information. The participant observation is the qualitative kind of observation mainly used because the observer is involved during the interview. This observation must be descriptive in order to detail the reality of the interview situation as much as possible. Moreover, it can be used as a supplementary technique to give the illustrative dimension or as a multi-method approach. Nonetheless, while doing an interview, observation is not the only way to collect data. Recording is a crucial method for researchers during the interviews and later for analysis of the information. This method of interpretation helps to produce the main knowledge and transcription facilitates the examination of this information (Flick, 2009). Thus, basing this research on recommendations from the previous literature, observation and recordings were used during the interviews in order to get accurate information.

Next, in order to contextualize the interviews, the data sheets of the interviewees are presented.

The first one belongs to Daniela Campodonico, a storyteller and teacher assistant from South Africa currently working at Can Puig School. Can Puig is a public school located in a neighborhood of Banyoles. The school defines the students and itself as a heterogeneous and diverse community. There is a variety of socioeconomic levels among the pupils due to the class or status of families living in Banyoles. The existence of many different cultures in the area means that there is a huge diversity of languages in the school. In spite of that, the common language is Catalan. Furthermore, the general faculty understands education as an integral process and Can Puig is defined as an inclusive, secular, active, co-educational and non-sexist school. The teachers at the school have created many projects to introduce the new requirements that the world presents. Additionally, families are very involved and help as much as possible in order to develop the projects. AMPA Association has assisted the elementary school with diverse tasks and offers additional educational information on their online platform. For example, one of the projects that they have reinforced is eTwinning. For these reasons, the school decided to employ a teaching assistant from the TEFL program, Daniela, into the English classes.

The following three interviews were done via e-mail as a consequence of Covid-19. The interviewees selected were teachers of Infant Education from SEK school in La Garriga. SEK is an international, private and educational institution that teaches children from 3 to 18 years old and it is based on the pedagogical principles of individualization, perfection and freedom. Moreover, the school puts emphasis on personal effort – both intellectual and physical – and interactive learning.

In order to combine the instruments for the practical part, the next type of interview used for this research is a focus group interview. According to Patton (2002) a focus group interview is: "An interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. Groups are typically six to eight people who participate in the interview for one-half to two hours (p.385)."

The basic features that an interviewer must take into consideration are: flexibility, objectivity, empathy and persuasion. Flick (2009) details that objectivity can only be achieved through mediation between the different participants. This way, the inquirer's main task is to avoid single participants dominating the interview. The interviewer should encourage the engagement of all participants involved in the interview in order to cover as much of the topic as possible. However, according to Patton (2002) there are some weaknesses when using this type of interview. The author states that the interviewer has to present a limited number of questions. Moreover, the inquirer could have problems when taking notes because of the multiplicity of tasks. Therefore, he suggests the employment of pairs of interviewers if at all is possible.

As the focus group was conducted in the same school where the Daniela Campodonico interview took place, they share the contextualization of Can Puig school. During this interview there were 6 participants, all of them teachers of Infant Education. Five of them, were tutors of P3, P4 and P5 and the last one was the English teacher of Infant Education and Initial cycle.

To conclude the set of information for the practical part, the last interview was done with Karen Lichtman. This interview was undertaken via email because the interviewee was from Illinois, United States. Lichtman is a distinguished assistant professor of Spanish Linguistics in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University. She is well-known for her most recent research regarding TPRS methodology and her journal and book publications. She started research on TPRS when she was only 19 years old, and later on she was employed as a teacher in a before-school program during college. After her first degree she taught Spanish in a middle school for three years and then she went back to university to study linguistics. In 2009 she started research on TPRS methodology which she continues to do up to the present day. Currently, she is specializes in second language acquisition, the implicit factors of this, and language teaching. Moreover, she also does work in the area of L1 and L2 phonology because this is closely related to comprehensible input and language acquisition. Therefore, although her recent studies have been focused on high school students and primary students, this study wanted to interview her in order to discover what information regarding very young children and TPRS she could provide [Appendix 2].

5. Results

❖ Storytelling with very young learners

According to the answers collected during the first interview and the focus group, the participants agreed that storytelling is the most efficient teaching-learning resource for very young learners. The general view was that this strategy motivates and engages children.

Some of the interviewees from the focus group stated that stories are a good way of boosting confidence and thus, of developing the first or second language with very young learners.

"Hi ha nens que clar, com que no tenen el català com a llengua vehicular a casa, doncs realment això és molt bo perquè van agafant confiança. S'atreveixen a començar a parlar i els ajuda bastant. El tema del conte i els personatges són elements molt motivadors (Focus group interview, Participant 3)."

In contrast, during the second interview, T2 stated that storytelling strategy is used for triggering conversations and introducing new vocabulary, but it was considered as "just another strategy". In the course of this interview, the participant didn't agree with the vast majority. The response stated that very young learners improve and accelerate second language acquisition depending on their motivations and their way of learning. In addition, T2 pointed out that nowadays ICT tools are more attractive than the storytelling strategy. This was not the case with Interview 1. T1 answered that storytelling was a powerful resource to improve language acquisition: "I think that storytelling helps to do it because it is visual, and you are listening to it".

As regards the third interview, the response was that storytelling offers input that children are not accustomed to in their daily lives and for that reason it could be more engaging and therefore accelerate second language acquisition. Interview 4 is linked to this idea because the response was that through storytelling children can acquire new vocabulary about different topics. This way, it was concluded that their understanding gets better thanks to listening input. Additionally, the interviewee stated that storytelling allows work on other aspects such as phonic sounds, visual perception and spatial awareness. During the third interview, the concept of storytelling was defined and related with very young learners in a different way:

"Very young children are introduced to language, culture and social norms through interaction. Storytelling is another form of interaction and, in a foreign language, in

which the child is not expected to have that much input, storytelling becomes the input and a great aid as an introduction to the language, culture and social norms of the target language." (T3)

Some relevant conclusions from the focus group were that storytelling allows teachers to work on different skills such as listening, reading and speaking. But, in order to provide input and help children to develop vocabulary it is essential not to just read. Other strategies such as images, intonation and repetitions were much mentioned by all participants during the interviews as the key to grabbing children's attention and therefore improving their language acquisition. Furthermore, Participants 3 and 5 highlighted that storytelling is a great resource to develop vocabulary related to philosophical concepts. This way, teachers can help to develop learning strategies such as predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing. Teachers remarked as well that they usually introduce the main characters at the beginning of the story in order to create an emotional link between children and the charecters. Thus, the context is presented and understood, and very young learners can better understand the vocabulary. The information collected regarding lexical acquisition was less revealing.

❖ The comprehensible input

The theme of comprehensible input was investigated by means of different questions in each interview. Therefore, after the analysis, the results were split into three aspects. The first one is the time of input exposure. During the first interview, the response indicated that the time of children's input exposure with a native speaker was shorter than that with the nonnative teacher. In fact, children were exposed to the native speaker for fourteen minutes during storytelling activities and consequently the T1 explained that some kids felt anxious and didn't listen properly. Next, she added that she usually repeated the stories twice or three times for each group in order to get the children familiarized with the vocabulary.

In the second interview the participant stated that they introduced children to Storytelling strategy and to English input from P3, and added: "When they get to p4 they are already used to it and they have the habits needed to make it effective, such as active listening" (T2). For the focus group, the opinion of participants was quite similar. They explained that story repetitions were essential for first or second language vocabulary acquisition.

During both interviews the second aspect related to comprehensible input was answered in more detail. There were a lot of resources and strategies used in order to provide comprehensible input and develop speaking and listening. The teacher in the first interview mentioned flashcards and visual media as the main resources to make vocabulary comprehensible. Songs, videos and recordings were included in order to expose children to listening, and the third interviewee agreed. Through these resources and body movements the teacher can motivate children and refresh their memory. Nonetheless, T3 stated that it is important to stop the video and offer more detailed explanation when using visual media. The teachers from the focus group answered along the same lines and added that puppets were a great resource to make vocabulary comprehensible. It was also commented that they tried to contextualize as much as possible the vocabulary through real experiences to create meaningful learning.

Providing comprehensible input is not an easy task for the teacher. What are the best techniques for providing it? Karen Lichtman replied that comprehensible input can be provided in big or small groups, but smaller groups would be easier to monitor. Children's engagement could be a difficulty if it is done with big groups and for this reason it may be difficult to determine what is the real level of the children's understanding. The following answer from Interview 3 reflects this idea: "Children do understand; however, their understanding might not be what is expected."

❖ Comprehension checks

Comprehension checks are one of the main skills of TPRS that can and should be used with very young learners. They are very important because without detection of the knowledge gained by children it is not possible to find out what they are learning. In addition, it is essential for teachers to monitor the learning process when introducing new vocabulary, sentence structures and content. It is not an easy task, so it is very important to check if knowledge has been understood and assimilated in order to adapt it for the children.

The results of the Interview 1 showed that individual repetitions were a great technique for the teacher because this way you can be sure that everybody has been familiarized with the new vocabulary: "You have to ask everyone to repeat and then you make sure that everyone says it." This is not the case for interviewee 2, a P4 English teacher, who claims that children asked about anything that they didn't understand. Moreover, during the interview the response indicated that the teacher asks questions and asks the children to repeat specific parts of the story as a role play to check if they have understood the story or not through observation. This answer is quite similar to those given by Participant 2 and 5 during the focus group interview: "També va bé fer preguntes sobre el que pregunten. (Participant 5)", "Està be això, una pregunta directa o enredar-los." (Participant 2). Another way to check comprehension is proposed by the teacher in Interview 3. In this case the response was that when the interviewee is telling story just by looking at the children's faces, she is able to know if they are following or not. Afterwards, she normally asks questions to check their understanding. If they do not understand the content the teacher affirms that it is good to recapitulate or rephrase the story.

There are as many different ways of checking comprehension as there are different ways to teach English. For interviewee 4, the best way to do it is with activities and using materials such as sand, whiteboards or iPad games after telling the story. To conclude this section, the TPRS researcher Karen Lichtman stated that the best way to assess and check very young

beginners' comprehension is one-on-one to see if they can comprehend words and sentences. She also recommends asking them to act out the words/sentences or to translate them into their first language.

❖ TPRS with very young learners

Although the information presented in the previous sections is directly related to TPRS methodology, more information is given here below in order to clarify some aspects of the method. This item is subdivided into five further sections:

The first one regards to TPRS step, *Establishing meaning.* This step is crucial to provide comprehensible input, therefore it is related with the *Comprehensible input* item. Interview 1 stated that flashcards are essential when vocabulary or sentence structures are introduced. The interviewee explained that examples are a good resource to contextualize and introduce new content because they are presented in natural situations. During Interview 2 the response highlights that when introducing new vocabulary, the teacher needs to use pictures to relate the vocabulary to things the children already know or have done. In addition, for sentence structures the response indicates that this is just about repetition. Nonetheless, the interviewee affirmed that the most important thing is to make sure that the children use the new vocabulary and sentence structures in different contexts. She added that children learn through daily situations and not through a specific strategy: "I don't use them (strategies) to introduce sentence structures, they learn them during everyday activity not through a specific activity such as storytelling, the same happens with vocabulary." The analysis of focus group interview emphasized the way that teachers engage and provide input to children through different questions about the story: "A P3 fem moltes preguntes referents a les emocions. I com està ara aquest porquet? Perquè fa aquesta cara a espantat?" (Participant 1). Moreover, the information collected during this interview complements the previous answers revealing that TPR is used by Participant 1 to create communicative situations.

The second section belongs to the *Ask a story step*. As it is shown in the theoretical part, this step is based on co-constructing a story with children. It is done through questions posed by the teacher and the answers of children. Then, once the story has been created, the teacher asks for repetitions and gets the children to act out the story in a voluntary way. There is no information regarding the creation of stories between children and teachers. Nonetheless, the interviews showed some relation with TPRS methodology in regard to this step. Teacher questions and children's answers are the basis of this step as it is with *Circling or Comprehension checks* skills. In this way, the teacher checks the children's understanding through questions in order to engage them and correct their misunderstandings. The English teacher of Infant Education commented that she used to ask this type of questions to see which children were engaged during the storytelling activities: "A vegades els enredo, per exemple amb el conte de *Caterpillar.* Què va menjar el dilluns? A pear? I hi ha algun que està alerta i et respon: No! An apple!" (Participant 6)

Another relevant piece of information related to TPRS methodology was mentioned during the focus group interview. Teachers commented that sometimes they use drama in order to develop language and offer natural situations where children can repeat the vocabulary used during the storytelling.

> "Ho anem combinant. Hi ha l'expressió més corporal. Hi incorporem titelles o disfresses, per fer tota l'escenografia. Per exemple, ara jo hi he posat les tres cases perquè estem treballant els tres porquets. Perquè hi participin tots jo hi he posat botigues perquè facin joc simbòlic." (Participant 4)

> "Per fer-ho vivencial, per no treballar només sobre paper, sinó que els a més a més siguin els protagonistes i es posin en la pell del personatge. Llavors és més fàcil que verbalitzin perquè estan immersos en la història i d'aquesta manera també treuen el llenguatge. És un treball més sistemàtic." (Participant 3)

The last fact in relation to this step is that there are not many different types of stories for infant education, and thus, less subjects for learning vocabulary are provided to children (Interview 1).

In relation with the final step of TPRS, the data collected suggests that instead of *Reading* skill, other skills should be developed for very young learners. Karen Lichtman explained that it should be replaced by other strategies:

> "I guess the teacher could read to the students. I've heard of something called a "Gouin series" where students repeatedly act out a series of short sentences, which seemed like a version of reading for very young learners."

Other interviewees stated that children enjoyed "reading the story" to their friends after they have worked on it (Interview 4). Nonetheless, this step also includes other activities for checking comprehension after the storytelling such as drawing.There are two more questions that were asked to understand better how TPRS could be applied with very young learners. Thus, the next section is related to production skill. In this case, the researcher Karen Lichtman stated that comprehension always precedes production in the learning process and added: "The longer you teach the kids, the more they will be able to produce language." To conclude, Lichtman wants to show the limitations that she exposed when using TPRS although she affirmed that it can be used with very young beginners.

> "The difficulties would be that you would need even more repetition, you'd need students to pay attention, and you couldn't use reading and writing. I think people who teach very young learners tend to use more TPR and less TPRS. I would say the disadvantages are that it doesn't teach culture (the characters tend to be from the children's culture and themes are suggested by the children, so they can only suggest things they already know about)

and that it can play into stereotypes (assuming that the characters are heterosexual, girls like to go shopping, boys like to play sports, etc.)".

6. Discussion

Through the results of different interviews, this study has been able to submit some responses that agree or disagree with the literature presented in the theoretical framework. Following these guidelines, this section contrasts the information from the practical part with the information from the theoretical part following the order of the items presented above.

❖ Storytelling with very young learners

The first group of answers relates to views about storytelling. Interview 1 and the participants from the focus group interview agreed that storytelling is the most efficient teaching-learning strategy for very young learners because it motivates and engages children. According to Krashen (1989), stories and songs motivate children and help make language input comprehensible as well as making better associations regarding vocabulary development. Participant 3 answered that stories provide confidence to children and help to develop language skills with very young learners. This idea agrees with Ellis & Brewster (2014), who state that there is a relationship between teacher practices and learners with the regard to confidence because such practices support young foreign learners' understanding. In the third interview, the responses indicated that storytelling offers input that children do not normally have in their daily lives and for that reason it might be more engaging and accelerate second language acquisition. In this line, Ellis & Brewster (2014) agrees with the opinion of T3 because stories help to introduce children to the grammatical structures of English through context and illustration. This way, they can understand the meaning in a natural way while they are enjoying listening and learning new structures without these being explicitly introduced.

Another definition of storytelling was proposed by T2 and T3. The strategy was defined as a form of interaction where children are exposed to lots of input. Enever & Schmid Schönbein (2006) agree and state that an effective classroom talk and social interaction is one of the keys to using storybooks successfully with young children. Their autonomy, creativity and competence in English can be increased if there is interaction. In contrast, storytelling was considered as "just another strategy" for T2 . She remarked that very young learners improve and accelerate second language acquisition depending on their motivations and their way of learning. Contrary, Enever & Schmid Schönbein (2006) pointed out the following considerations for teachers:

> "When storybooks are chosen appropriately, attractive illustrations combined with meaningful content and relevant discourse structure have a strong socio-affective appeal and provide contexts with a powerful potential for acquiring and learning language in ways that are enjoyable and enduring. However, the potential of storybooks as a vehicle for developing a foreign language within a formal teaching context is by no means automatic and requires a great deal of sensitivity and a wide range of varied skills by the teacher in supporting language and learning in ways that are appropriate to the age and level of the learners" (p.11).

The general conclusion of participants from the focus group was that storytelling allows teachers to work on different skills such as listening, reading and speaking. But, in order to provide input and help children to develop vocabulary it is essential not to just read. It has been proven that very young learners can feel more involved with storytelling because of hearing someone telling a story without just reading. It could help them better understand the meaning if the storytelling is accompanied by gestures. Furthermore, some of the main benefits of storybooks are that they can be cross-curricular and help to develop children's learning strategies such as predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). This was mentioned by Participants 3 and 5. They highlighted that storytelling helps to develop vocabulary related to philosophical concepts such as predicting, guessing meaning

and hypothesizing. Teachers remarked as well that they normally introduce the main characters at the beginning of the story in order to create an emotional link between children and the characters and to contextualize the new language content. Again, Ellis & Brewster (2002) agree and advise that the main characters should be introduced at the beginning to relate the story to important aspects of children's life. This way, once the context has been understood, they will be able to feel connection with the characters and then comprehend better the vocabulary.

❖ Comprehensible input

The researcher Lichtman (2018) declares that input must be varied and compelling and structured to ensure high frequency for key items. For this reason, learners need to hear and see repeatedly what the teacher is providing to them. On the one hand, the results after analyzing the interviews showed that T1 and participants of the focus group tend to ask children for repetitions in order to provide more comprehensible input. T1 affirmed that she repeated the stories to familiarize the children with the vocabulary. For the focus group participants, the opinion was that story repetitions were essential for first or second language vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, T2 explained that they introduce children to Storytelling strategy from P3 and added that it is a way to develop the active listening. Waltz (2015) concurs because recognizes listening as the most advisable skill to work on input in early years. Additionally, Pinter (2006) describes listening as an active skill, as the mind actively engages in making meaning.

Usually, the teacher tends to be the main source of input, although there are other ways to exposure very young beginners to input such as for examples, recordings, songs or videos (Waltz, 2015). This idea is quite similar to the responses given by interviewees. For example, T1 and T3 mentioned flashcards and visual media as the main resources to make vocabulary

comprehensible. Songs, videos and recordings were included in order to expose children to listening. The teachers from the focus group answered following the same line and added that puppets are a great resource to make vocabulary comprehensible. It was also commented that they tried to contextualize vocabulary as much as possible through real experiences to create meaningful learning. This idea is related to suggestions made by Long (1982). He claims that by modifying speech, providing linguistic and extralinguistic context and modifying the interactional structures, input can be made more comprehensible.

In a different way, T3 expressed that children's understanding might be not what the teacher expects sometimes. This could be an accurate observation. Krashen (2004) declares that the process of language acquisition via comprehensible input is subconscious. Nonetheless, language acquisition needs to be processed before it becomes comprehensible (Gass & Selinker, 1994) and this requires interaction between teachers and students (Long, 1982).

❖ Comprehension checks

The results regarding checking comprehension showed that T1 prompted individual repetitions because these are a great technique to familiarize children with new vocabulary. T3 affirmed that it is good to recapitulate or rephrase the story if the children do not understand the content as well. Pinter (2006) agrees with T1's opinion because she declares that repetitions, comprehension checks and modifications in language while telling stories can benefit children by correcting misunderstandings. Moreover, Ellis & Brewster (2014) express that if a child knows the word, the teacher should ask them say it. The key is to ask children for repetitions in order to check their acquisition and if it is necessary, first ask them individually and then ask the whole class again. According to the author, T3 asked questions to check children's understanding. In contrast, another way to check comprehension was presented by T2. She claimed that she posed questions and ask the children to repeat specific parts of the story as a role play. In order to highlight this information, Lichtman (2018) states that this is one of the activities when using TPRS during the *Ask a story* stage. It is used after co-

constructing the story with children to check their comprehension and foster output. But other activities can be used for checking comprehension such as drawing the story as the teacher retells it. For example, T4 explained that the best way to do this was with activities that include materials such as sand, whiteboards or iPad games after the telling the story. According to Kang Shing (2006) teachers can ask children to do a drawing after telling a story. They can draw or color the main characters, but if they are too young the teacher can use puppets to check comprehension of the story and have students practice the language by retelling the story. In a similar manner, Moon (2000) reminds us that creating visuals can ensure that children get involved and engaged in the learning process. Moreover, it can help to introduce them to the context as well as to relevant vocabulary items. In addition, arts and crafts can be related to language, involving students more in the lesson.

❖ TPRS with very young learners

Although the items presented before included some aspects that are part of TPRS methodology, in this section data from the interviewees contradicts some findings of the main TPRS researchers.

Firstly, regarding *Establishing meaning*, T1 stated that flashcards and examples are essential to introduce new vocabulary and to contextualize it because it is presented through natural situations. During the second interview, T2 claimed that the most important thing is to make sure that children have the opportunity to use the new vocabulary in different contexts and in daily situations. In agreement, Lichtman (2018) states that vocabulary and grammar teaching should be exposed in natural, required situations and through examples given by the teacher. These examples are communicated through gestures or actions, but it is desirable to explicitly give the meaning of the words in order to avoid misunderstandings. Vocabulary and verbs should always be included in communicative situations rather than explaining the rules about when and how to use them (Lichtman, 2018). Patten and Benati (2010) agree, considering that providing examples helps to construct learner's competence or mental representation of

the language. This way, it is understood that Participant 1 applies this theory using TPR in order to create communicative situations. Participant 1 emphasized that personalized questions are used to engage and provide input to children. This type of questions are another feature of the first step are PQA (*Personalized Questions and Answers),* a strategy used to exchange information and contextualize vocabulary (Lichtman, 2018).

Secondly, regarding answers related to the *Ask a story* step. Mello (2001) states: "Storytelling is a constructed experience that involves both listener and teller in a highly interactive and creative process. Stories told by children contain world views and storytelling assists children in theory building and language fluency" (p.4). Thus, interaction is needed in order to develop language. Regarding to this step, another typical feature of TPRS was used by Participant 6 in the focus group interview. In order to check children's understanding, the teacher explained that she used to pose repetitive questions to engage them. Lichtman (2018) describes that *Circling* skill is based on repetitive questions posed by the teacher while he or she is telling the story. Then, questions with simple answers, such as yes/no or either/or as well as questions with longer answers, are posed to the children.

Another relevant piece of information related to TPRS methodology was mentioned during the focus group interview. Teachers commented that sometimes they use drama in order to develop language and offer natural situations where children can repeat the vocabulary used during the storytelling. Thus, comprehension is checked through children's responses. Drama is one of the main traits of TPR methodology. First the teacher introduces the new language with visual support and body movements, and through the context and the materials provided children grasp the meaning (Pinter, 2006). When they are asked to act out the story, there is constant direction from the teacher. For instance, the teacher can help very young learners by whispering what to do in their first language or in the target language. Lichtman (2018) states that the class should be centered around students and their interests. This way, the topics should be chosen by the students because this fosters their participation and engagement and

helps with comprehension. In contrast, T1 answered that in her school there is not a great variety of different types of stories for infant education, and thus, fewer subjects for learning vocabulary are provided to the children. Nonetheless, she had not considered the idea of co-constructing a story with children.

The last step of TPRS methodology is the most controversial when using it with very young beginners. Demir & Çubukçu (2014) declare that TPRS can be a flexible methodology, since it puts emphasis on how to teach rather than what to teach. In agreement, Lichtman expressed throughout the interview that the *Gouin series* can be substituted for this step. In contrast, T4 affirmed that sometimes children from the international school enjoyed reading stories to their friends after they had worked on them in class. To conclude, the results of the Karen Lichtman interview showed that comprehension always precedes production in the learning process. The same was concluded by Gil (2015) arguing that very young children have not completely developed their first language yet. Kara & Eveyik-Aydin (2019) shared the same affirmation after concluding in their study that receptive learning was more successful than productive learning in all weeks.

7. Conclusions

After describing and analyzing TPRS methodology, this study concludes that teachers introduce new vocabulary or sentence structures establishing meaning. In this way, input is contextualized and provided in natural situations, with different resources and strategies, and there is interaction and communication throughout.

Moreover, in general it is recognized that storytelling is the most efficient strategy to provide input, but it must be complemented with other such as questions or drama. Furthermore, TPRS skills are used to check comprehension during the whole process of language acquisition. Nonetheless, even though almost all the steps, skills and bases of TPRS are used in public and private schools, there is no evidence of the co-construction of stories with children. For this reason, the study concludes that input in second language exposure depends on each school and their pedagogical principles.

With regard to the latest studies and interviews about the topic of using TPRS with very young learners, the results indicate that the methodology is suitable for this age. The approach is considered flexible enough to be applied, although some aspects need to be changed in order to use it with very young beginners. For example, the "Gouin series" should be substituted for *Reading* step. Also, it is recommended that as much input is provided as possible, but that this should be done in small groups. In addition, more repetitions and the use of more materials are needed to ensure children's understanding. This study also concludes that output precedes input when teaching very young learners through TPRS, but it is an interactive and engaging methodology which helps to create the appropriate environment for providing comprehensible input and for developing enough confidence to future speakers. Therefore, the study answers the research question by stating that the methodology is effective with very young beginners because of its adaptability. Furthermore, it is suitable due to the multiple ways of providing and ensuring comprehensible input. In this way, although the goals established at the very beginning have been achieved and the conclusions have been positive, future studies would be needed in order to gather more information about the topic.

8. Limitations

The topic chosen for this study was focused on a methodology created for high school students, and for this reason there was a lack of information about research into using TPRS with very young children. Furthermore, it is not in common use in public or private schools although a lot of aspects of the methodology are included in their methods of teaching.

Taken into consideration in this study was the fact that the first interview was done face by face while the other three interviews (T2, T3 and T4) were done via email because of Covid-19. Because of this, Interview 1 does not share context with Interview 2, 3 and 4 because the pedagogical principles and the first language taught are not the same. Finally, I would have liked to have interviewed more researchers for this study, but it was not possible.

9. Reflections

From the beginning this study has been risky and new for me. It was not easy to find a topic that caught my attention. In fact, I spent months researching in order to find a topic that really generated curiosity in me. However, I considered this opportunity as a challenge to develop my qualities as a teacher and as a person. Thanks to this process I have learned to improve my critical opinion from a professional point of view. I also feel that I have gained a new perspective on education and ways of teaching English thanks to interviews and information from great researchers in the same field. This study has allowed me to deepen and better understand the relationships between teachers and children, and how communication works in relation to how we acquire a second language. However, I made some mistakes that also taught me a few things. Firstly, I would not repeat the way in which I prioritized and organized the information. I think that I should have read and contrasted all the information from both the theoretical and practical parts before starting the interviews. In this way, perhaps it would have been easier for me to write them up and choose the right questions. In addition, it would also have helped me to develop and improve the analysis because the items would have been

previously chosen. Lastly, it would have been interesting to interview more researchers in TPRS methodology to complement and balance the information I collected.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interviews' questions

- **Interview with four English teachers of Infant Education**

1. What ages do you work with in the school?

2. Do you use the Storytelling strategy? Why?

3. What complementary techniques (examples, TPR, visual media…) do you use when you tell a story to establish the meaning and introduce new vocabulary?

4. Can children grasp the meaning despite you speak English?

5. Have you seen any particular improvements on children since you started using the Storytelling strategy?

6. Do you think that Storytelling help very young learners to improve and accelerate second language acquisition? Why?

7. How do you check the comprehension of children when you are telling a story and introducing new vocabulary or sentence structures?

- **Focus group interview with teachers of Infant Education in Can Puig school**

1. Creieu que l'estratègia de l'*Storytelling* a Educació Infantil és una eina útil per desenvolupar el llenguatge? Perquè?

2. Quins recursos complementaris (gesticulacions, titelles, repeticions, preguntes…) feu servir per acompanyar l'*Storytelling?* Perquè?

3. La utilització de l'oralitat per part de la mestra o el mestre és essencial per desenvolupar una llengua, però a vegades és difícil saber si els infants comprenen allò que es diu. Com ho feu per comprovar la comprensió dels infants després d'incorporar noves paraules o nous conceptes?

4. Degut a que els infants encara no reflexionen sobre la mateixa llengua, no fan un procés conscient de l'adquisició de la llengua. Per aquest motiu, és molt important contextualitzar el vocabulari que desconeguin per tal de donar-li significat. Quina creieu que seria una bona manera de contextualitzar el vocabulari desconegut per als infants?

5. Durant el dia a dia, utilitzeu alguna de les estratègies que fonamenten la metodologia TPRS? Si és així, quins efectes en el desenvolupament del llenguatge creieu que produeix en els infants?

- **Karen Lichtman interview:**

1. When and why did you start researching on TPRS?

2. What main advantages and disadvantages of TPRS method would you highlight?

3. Have you ever applied the methodology with Very Young Learners or visit any center that use it to teach a second language?

4. During many years TPRS has been used with high school students or primary students. Do you think that a new methodology could emerge in order to use it with Very Young Learners?

5. In the case of applying the methodology with preschoolers, which would be the best way to organize the groups (very small groups, small groups, whole groups) of children in order to provide more comprehensible input?

6. Considering that *Reading* step can not be developed with 3-5 year-old children, what alternatives would you recommend as teachers or researchers can use for further applications?

7. In your last book published in 2018 you mention some complementary skills for TPRS that can be used by teachers. The skill focused on the assessment describes different techniques and activities related with the comprehension. Which ones would you choose or add in order to assess Very Young Learners after work with TPRS?

8. The following results are from Kara & Eveyik-Aydin (2019):

Table 1. Means of the receptive and productive tests conducted throughout the study

Weeks	Pretest		Immediate posttest		Delayed posttest	
	Receptive mean	Productive mean	Receptive mean	Productive mean	Receptive mean	Productive mean
Week 1*	0.05	0	1.95	1.84	2.00	1.52
Week 2*	0.21	0	1.95	1.63	2.00	1.58
Week 3**	0.26	0	2.95	2.53	2.95	2.68
Week 4**	0.31	0	3.00	2.63	2.95	2.63
Week 5*	0.16	0	2.00	1.53	2.00	1.31

*Maximum score equals 2, **Maximum score equals 3

9. " The answer for the second research question of the study, *Which type of lexical knowledge, receptive or productive, benefits from TPRS instruction more in the context of very young learners' L2 vocabulary acquisition?* is also revealed by the mean scores presented in Table 1. The Table shows that the means of the receptive tests are higher than the means of the productive tests on both immediate and delayed administrations of each week. It is clear that receptive learning is more successful than productive learning in all weeks of treatment" (p. 140). Do you think that TPRS methodology should be used by the teacher during the full-year course in order to achieve better productive results with very beginners?

Appendix 2: Data sheet of Karen Lichtman

Table 1. *Professional information about Karen Lichtman:*

Karen Lichtman	
Location	Northern Illinois
Studies	- Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Linguistics - M.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Linguistics - B.A., Williams College, Spanish and Psychology
Actual job	Assistant Professor of Spanish Linguistics and Director of Teacher Licensure in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University, USA.

Previous jobs	- Spanish teacher - 3 years - Associate Professor of Spanish Linguistics and Director of World Language Educator Licensure - 2 years
Published books, journals and research	- Lichtman, K. (2018). Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS): An input-based approach to second language instruction. New York: Routledge. - Lichtman, K. (In press). Research on TPR Storytelling. In B. Ray & C. Seely, *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling*, 8th ed. Berkeley: Command Performance Language Institute. - Lichtman, K. (2015). Research on TPR Storytelling. In B. Ray & C. Seely, *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling*, 7th ed. (364-380). Berkeley: Command Performance Language Institute. - Lichtman, K. (2014). Comprehensible input through storytelling. *The Language Educator*, October/November, 46-47. - Lichtman, K. (2012). Research on TPR Storytelling. In B. Ray & C. Seely, *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling,* 6th ed. (304-311). Berkeley: Command Performance Language Institute.

Appendix 3: Interviews' transcription

*Analysis of the data

- **Storytelling with very young learners**

- **Resources to provide comprehensible input**

- **Relating teaching strategies with TPRS.**

- **Comprehension checks**

Interview 1 (T1):

1. Do you use the Storytelling strategy? Why?

D.- My opinion or the way I started using this is because I am living with family members with little kids, so the story strategy avoids the fact of just reading in general. It is always a great activity to do, and now for the sessions in the school I never read...so yes I use the method.

E.- When you arrived at school, they asked you to use the storytelling strategy or did you start using it by yourself?

D.- What I am supposed to do in the school is basically just employ conversation and with the younger grades this is the easiest way to do it because can not really sit and have a discussion with them, so it easier for them to listen to English and have fun while doing it.

E.- And how did you apply to this job here in Banyoles school?

D.- So what I did is a TFEL course, which is teach English in a foreign language and then I applied for being a language assistant through the offer job on the website. So then I choose to come here.

E.- That's great!

2. What ages do you work with in the school?

D.- I work with P3 to six grade.

E.- Wow. That it is a lot of kids!

D.- Yes, but all the kids from 3th, 4th and 5th, I let them read the stories and then I explain what they have just read. I don't read to them, not like with the younger kids. With them, I explain it later because sometimes they don't understand what they just read.

E.- You mean you try to clarify it?

D.- Yes, with the pictures and visual media.

E.- Do you think that it is a good idea to separate kids in different groups to tell stories?

D.- Mmhh… Yes and no because it has its positive and negatives. Sometimes for children to stay forty minutes only with me it is a lot of time, and those kids are like anxious and they don't listen to me properly. They are like: Oh… it is the English teacher…

I try to explain games with them, but after the first or the second game they start to being tired.

3. What complementary techniques (examples, TPR, visual media…) do you use when you tell a story to establish the meaning and introduce new vocabulary?

D.- I use lot of flashcards, I will say that it is really helpful. And a lot of examples, like pointing and refreshing the memory like: Oh… What shape is this?

E.- When you say examples… How do you do it, with the computer?

D.- Yes, but no, because it is helpful but I don't have access to the computer or the projector all the time. Most of the time I am only just reading and then I have to use the storybook as the main reference, because for everything I have printed out flashcards for every book. Every week and every grade has sometimes a different book, and it can be too much, but it is repeating and going back. Showing and pointing…

E.- With the young kids, do you use any puppet or songs?

D.- I have used the puppets once, but the problem is that I don't plan the lessons fully because sometimes I just do what L. does. I don't prepare the lessons I week ahead or so... I don't have too many materials in terms of when I have to explain. So, I have the book, I read the book and I go through the book… But, I would like to use puppets because especially like P3 or P4, they love the idea of something cute talking to them. So, to get their attention more, yes I would use it.

E.- Sure! But you don't have facilities to work with this resources right?

D.- Yes, but not for every single book that I do. With L. we are doing the hungry caterpillar now, and with that we have a lot of resources. We have the caterpillar teddy bear and she printed out each fruit, so you can have the visual numbers to see the fruits and the plants, and after that she did the activity and then I helped her with that. So, she planned it and then we split the groups.

E.- Okay. So you don't have to prepare the activities or the story that much?

D.- It depends. Because I just use the storybooks that they have here, and they don't have too many books as well.

E.- That it is true. I heard that now L. is asking for buying more books…

D.- Yes, because L. before I came she ordered books and now I am using the books she ordered before.

4. Can children grasp the meaning of vocabulary despite you only speak english?

D.- I would say yes but no. Sometimes they understand properly because they can own to me properly in catalan but can never own to me properly in english. So if I have to say sometimes: Oh! What color is this and what object is it? They can reply to me in catalan and they get a correct but no directly in english. So, the whole process is it in catalan, but I think yes… they can get the meaning. Cause' it's all visual, it's not just listening.

E.- Do you think they can create an association?

D.- Yes, they can pictured in their mind and understand it then in catalan and then relate it to what I am saying. They be like: Oh! That's what it means in english. Then they can link it.

E.- Do you use a lot of repetitions?

D.- Yes, I think that repetitions are very important because if you do it once is like: Okay, great! But then if you do it twice or thrice you can see the kids starting to understand. For example, now we are doing Go away, big green monster! and that's like different body parts. I'm doing it with P4 and P5 and I think I've done it twice now and with one group I've done it thrice and they went a lot quicker. They started to say me: That's the mouth or that's the teeth. Of course not all the students, but they remember the names.

5. Have you seen any particular improvements on them since you started?

D.- I would say yes, because in 3 to 6 year-old classes we have done a lot of listenings but it has been around the same subjects like colours and numbers. In P4 and P5 it is a lot of repetition when it comes to the little kids as well, so we have done the colours and now we are doing the numbers and the weather.

E.- Yes, I have seen how L. have taught the weather vocabulary in classes.

D.- Yes! I have seen improvement on them because they remember more the words.

E.- Do you think that through storytelling you can complement what L. does in her classes?

D.- Yes, but no. Because there is not many stories for like the numbers or anything like that. Like none of a specific subjects… For example, for colours there is only one or two books here and they are like: Oh, find the yellow elephant! And I can not always do that book because if I do it more than twice they already know where is it the yellow elephant. They do, they remember everything!

E.- Do you think you need more materials to complement your stories?

D.- I would say yes, but I work with all grades, and I only see younger kids once a week. My planning it's with all grades, and what I like to do is to prepare one story for level. For example, 3th and 4th have one activity and 5th and 6th they have one activity. For P4 and P5 if I find a song, I focus on it with the two groups. They do the same activities because they are mixed in "Tallers", but in P3 we never split the groups. I focus on them having the same level, I don't separate them as different groups, I prepare the same materials for both.

E.- Yes, I have seen that during "Tallers" for example, they can help each other.

D.- Yes, but I never plan "Tallers", L. does.

E.- Sorry!

D.- Don't worry, but for the P4 and P5 I look for songs and games for them.

6. Do you think that Storytelling help very young learners to improve and accelerate second language acquisition? Why?

D.- Yes, I think that storytelling helps to do it because it is visual and you are listening to it. You can always relate it back to the story and understand what is been said… and like the movements helps… I would say definitely yes. Storytelling is the most efficient way of teaching because it has all the different aspects, not just listening… It is listening, reading…

E.- Do you think that it is a tool that can be used for all grades?

D.- Yes, definitely. For example, with the 6th grade we are reading the Scooby doo book. So even that, it is a more accomplish english but it is getting the same idea across and then you can see the pictures and read and understand the context. You can introduce all the new vocabulary and with the visuals…

E.- Can they understand it by the context or do you need and support as well?

D.- So… What I do is to ask them to read two pages each but they don't show the pictures to the class. Then, I'm like… Oh! What did they say? And then they explains me what just they read and finally I show them the picture. Otherwise they get the idea just looking at the picture, so that's why I always ask them before: What do you think that means… ?

E.- Mmh… That's good, it is a good technique…

7. How do you check the comprehension of children when you are telling a story and introducing new vocabulary or sentence structures?

D.- I only spend fifteen minutes for each class and sometimes L. takes the one half and I take the other half of the group. So, sometimes I only see the group of children every two weeks. All depends, but I think that repetition is the most important because sometimes L. does the same work that I do. I can see she is really introduces the book or the subject and I just link it and continue with what she is doing. Then, you can see their improvements and see if they can remember the small things. It is not about the whole idea…

E.- I am curious about what happens when there are children that always answer the questions and other that never do it. How do you manage it in order to get their attention?

D.- There is always a big difference in all classes because there are children that go to english lessons and kids that don't. I can always see kids that don't know how to speak english and the ones that go to lessons and know the answers because they are repeating the topics. In those situations I try to make them repeat individually after me. Otherwise, if it's a lot of more kids that are over shy or don't want to speak up, you just tell the whole group to do it. You have to ask everyone to repeat and then you make sure that everyone say it. There is always someone that has a high level of english and someone that never reply or it is interested …

E.- It is difficult to catch their attention?

D.- Definitely… Because some kids are very interested and then some just hate english. I remember a situation where I told: We are going to read a book… And there was a kid saying: Noooo! It will be in catalan? And I just said: No... Sorry I only speak english...

E.- Yes, that is because they don't understand english, right?

D.- Yes, they hate it because they don't understand it.

E.- So, how do you think a teacher can catch the attention of those kids who don't like english because their don't understand it?

D.- Well, obviously songs and movements are great. Videos are always fine, because they like videos but they really don't understand it.

E.- But there is that input behind, isn't it?

D.- Yes, sure! There is one beautiful song from a Youtube channel called Super simple songs and they have the best resources. We used them a lot. For example, it is much better if I count with them through the songs and movements that if I do it alone without music. It is more interactive and fun.

E.- It is great to have this resources because they can get bored of you easily if you are speaking all the time…

D.- Yes, the activity needs to be changed and switched up to be fun because the whole lesson should be fun. I am not here to teach them, I am here for them to listen to english and to hear it more. So, I can't do just always storytelling with them. I do cooler and warmer activities as well, a five minute activities at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. For example, you can have a quick song at the beginning to start the lesson to say hello which can count as a cooler to introduce new vocabulary to them.

E.- They enjoy this little routines?

D.- Yes! Because I always do this cooler activity and they know it, they come excited for it.

Interview 2 (T2):

1. What ages do you work with in the school?

   4- 5 years old

2. Do you use the Storytelling strategy? Why?

   Once a week to trigger conversations, introduce new vocabulary or concepts

3. What complementary techniques (examples, TPR, visual media…) do you use when you tell a story to establish the meaning and introduce new vocabulary?

   I show the read aloud stories (from youtube) on the Smartboard but I never use it just to teach them written words, it is not done in infants.

4. Can children grasp the meaning of vocabulary despite you only speak english?

   Yes, when they don't understand, they are used to ask for anything they don't understand.

5. Have you seen any particular improvements on children since you started using the Storytelling strategy?

   They have Storytelling sessions since p3. When they get to p4 they are already used to it and they have the habits needed to make it effective, such as active listening, raising hands if there are questions...

6. Do you think that Storytelling help very young learners to improve and accelerate second language acquisition? Why?

It is just another strategy, it depends on each child's individual motivations if it is the best way they learn or not. I think reading books is important to make children get used to use books but nowadays ICT tools are more attractive to our children.

7. How do you check the comprehension of children when you are telling a story and introducing new vocabulary or sentence structures?

I don't use them to introduce sentence structures, they learn them during everyday activity not through a specific activity such as storytelling, the same happens with vocabulary. To check if they have understood the story, I make questions and ask them to repeat a specific part as a roleplay and I check if they have understood the story or not through observation.

Interview 3 (T3):

1. What ages do you work with in the school?

   3 to 4

2. Do you use the Storytelling strategy? Why?

   Yes and very often. Very young children are introduced to language, culture and social norms through interaction. Storytelling is another form of interaction and, in a foreign language, in which the child is not expected to have that much input storytelling become the input and a great aid as an introduction to the language, culture and social norms of the target language.

3. What complementary techniques (examples, TPR, visual media…) do you use when you tell a story to establish the meaning and introduce new vocabulary?

Visual media, re-telling the story (stopping the video and offering a more detailed explanation).

4. Can children grasp the meaning of vocabulary despite you only speak english?

Children do understand, however their understanding might not be what expected.

5. Have you seen any particular improvements on children since you started using the Storytelling strategy?

Difficult to tell, I have always used storytelling so I have to information to compare.

6. Do you think that Storytelling help very young learners to improve and accelerate second language acquisition? Why?

It does at it offers them the input they do not have in their context and it engages them as the presentation is, usually, interesting and engaging.

7. How do you check the comprehension of children when you are telling a story and introducing new vocabulary or sentence structures?

During the storytelling I look at their faces and I am able to know if they are following (engaging) or not engaging. I also ask questions to check their understanding and have an idea if they are in line with my rethorial intention. I recapitulate or rephrase if I think something is difficult to understand. For vocabulary I use pictures and if I can I relate it to things they know or have done. For sentence structures is just about repetition, so I introduce it and I make sure they try to use it.

Interview 4 (T4):

1. What ages do you work with in the school?

3-4 years old

2. Do you use the Storytelling strategy? Why?

   Yes because it is a good way to allow children to enjoy and have a nice time , at the same time that you can work other aspects as phonics sounds, visual perception, spatial awareness, etc.

3. What complementary techniques (examples, TPR, visual media…) do you use when you tell a story to establish the meaning and introduce new vocabulary?

   I use flash cards or visual media.

4. Can children grasp the meaning despite you speak english?

   Yes of course, because they have the visual support that helps them.

5. Have you seen any particular improvements on children since you started using the Storytelling strategy?

   Yes, their vocabulary has improved and also they enjoy "reading the story" to their friends.

6. Do you think that Storytelling help very young learners to improve and accelerate second language acquisition? Why?

   Yes, because they acquire new vocabulary about different topics and also their understanding gets better because they get used to listen this second language.

7. How do you check the comprehension of children when you are telling a story and introducing new vocabulary or sentence structures?

   With activities related to the book using different materials as sand, whiteboards, ipad games etc.

Focus group Interview:

1. Creieu que l'estratègia de l'*Storytelling* a Educació Infantil és una eina útil per

   desenvolupar el llenguatge? Perquè?

Participant 1. - I tant! Fins i tot a p3, en tornant del pati, amb tot aquest treball dels contes

tradicionals, el bo que té és que els hi agrada i els motiva, i com que els vas repetint, t'agafen

frases o estructures del conte que hem treballat, i també vocabulari.

Participant 2. - Exacte, enriqueix vocabulari.

Participant 3. - Quan són petitons va molt bé perquè busques contes repetitius i que fan allò estructures repetitives i això també anima als nens perquè van agafant. Hi ha nens que clar, com que no tenen el català com a llengua vehicular a casa, doncs realment això és molt bo perquè van agafant confiança. S'atreveixen a començar a parlar i els ajuda bastant. El tema del conte i els personatges són elements molt motivadors, i llavors a mesura que van creixent, a P4 i P5, pots anar canviant l'estil de conte. A P3 t'has de basar en contes amb molta imatge per exemple.

Participant 1. - A P3 comencem amb contes molt repetitius, amb la mateixa estructura.

Participant 4. - Després s'emporten un mini conte per explicar-lo després a casa. El conte que s'ha treballat durant P3 se l'emporten i amb un foli s'acaba fent un foli perquè després el puguin explicar a casa.

Eli.- A P3 us focalitzeu més en el lèxic o en la gramàtica? És a dir més en el vocabulari o en les estructures gramaticals?

Participant 1. - Depèn de cada nen. Amb tot, però si que potser amb un nen que la seva primera llengua no és el català i que li costa perquè potser té un llenguatge una mica immadur, si identifica una paraula del conte treballat durant tot l'any tal i com deia la G., com per exemple "palla", doncs dius perfecte, però hi ha nens que no, que els vas estirant per desenvolupar una bona estructura de frase. Fins i tot l'entonació.

Eli.- A vegades intenteu que ells mateixos actuïn el conte treballat?

Participant 4.- Ho anem combinant. Hi ha l'expressió més corporal. Hi incorporem titelles o disfresses, per fer tota l'escenografia. Per exemple, ara jo hi he posat les tres cases perquè estem treballant els tres porquets. Perquè hi participin tots jo hi he posat botigues perquè facin joc simbòlic.

Participant 3.- Per fer-ho vivencial, per no treballar només sobre paper, sinó que els a més a més siguin els protagonistes i es posin en la pell del personatge. Llavors és més fàcil que verbalitzin perquè estan immersos en la història i d'aquesta manera també treuen el llenguatge. És un treball més sistemàtic.

Participant 1.- T'estem explicant el treball més sistemàtic i que en són més conscients, però per exemple la L. que fa un taller a P3 de temàtica de titelles i ombres, també és una manera de treballar el conte.

Totes- El conte està molt present.

Eli.- És transversal, no?

Participant 2.- És un recurs fantàstic que es fa servir molt, sobretot a infantil.

- S'incorpora una mestra.

Eli.- Estàvem fent la primera pregunta. Estàvem comentant si creieu que és important utilitzar l'estratègia d'explicar contes.

Participant 5.- Ja ho veus a la classe, si no és cada dia, sempre acaba vinguent un conte. Aquests contes que porten ells, que se'ls acaben fent seus i fins i tot els poden explicar ells en part. El que l'ha portat de casa està content i fins i tot el pot explicar, veus que l'ha explicat amb el papa i la mama a la seva manera. És una manera d'estirar-los a nivell de llenguatge. És molt ric també que portin contes de casa seva, o de la biblioteca.

Eli.- Parlàvem també de la dramatització, de posar-te a la pell del personatge per tal de verbalitzar.

Participant 3.- I després a P4 i P5, el conte també és una eina quan treballem la filosofia. És una manera molt bona per empatitzar amb els personatges, i a partir d'aquí llavors treus el

==treball que volem fer de filosofia. Treballem les unitats de pensament com les hipòtesis, l'empatia amb els altres, és una manera que tens de que el nen es motivi.==

Eli.- Allò que parlàvem l'altre dia dels verbs de pensament a través dels contes, no C.?

Participant 5.- Sí, el jo penso que… jo crec que… Fins i tot ja comença a sortir a P3, però veus més l'explosió a P4 o P5. El dir: I què creieu que passarà? Ha passat això que havíem dit? Com creieu que continuarà la història? És això de fer-los anar una mica més enllà per veure si les hipòtesis es compleixen o no en relació a les seves expectatives.

Participant 1. - ==A P3 ja comencem a jugar amb això. Quan tornem del pati, durant l'última sessió juguem a canviar el final del conte.== I a tu com t'agradaria que acabés el conte? Què hi podria passar? Costa, però.

Participant 2.- Ara per exemple amb el conte d'en Patufet, ara estem veient que hi ha diferents versions. Això també dóna molt de joc. És un conte que té el mateix fil argumental, però que canvia el final. També ara a P3 també parlem molt de la portada per fer hipòtesis. Els àlbums il·lustrats també donen molt de si.

Eli.- Creieu que l'Storytelling té parts. És a dir, quan comenceu a explicar el conte us focalitzeu més en uns aspectes i a mesura que l'aneu explicant més en altres?

Participant 3.- Un abans, un durant i un després, no?

Participant 1. - Si potenciem diferents parts del llenguatge, si potenciem més la gramàtica o més el vocabulari?

Participant 3.- Jo entenc més el que parlàvem de l'abans, el durant i el després oi?

Participant 5.- Jo penso que és tot més global, perquè quan estàs explicant el conte continues fent èmfasi en les hipòtesis. Durant l'explicació i quan estàs acabant també ho fas, però també depèn de la seva participació.

Participant 2.- O depèn del conte. En algun faràs un treball més previ a partir de la portada i en alguns contes et focalitzes més en l'argument.

Participant 3.- A vegades és com escoltar un poema, cal gaudir del conte i canviar la tipologia de contes perquè no s'avorreixin. No cal perdre els moments de l'hora de la lectura, de gaudir, el plaer de llegir.

2. Quins recursos complementaris (gesticulacions, titelles, repeticions, preguntes…) feu servir per acompanyar l'*Storytelling?* Perquè?

Participant 2.- Entonacions, tons de veu diferents. També hi podriem incloure materials de suport, com titelles?

Eli.- Sí

Participant 2.- No sempre fas servir aquest material, però sí que en un moment donat el pots fer servir perquè també ajuda. També imatges en moviment o fixes…

Eli.- Sí, és el que parlàvem, hi ha d'haver varietat, no?

Participant 1.- Per captar la seva atenció més que res.

Participant 3.- Inclós les repeticions, explicar el conte dues o tres vegades els hi encanta. A vegades els nens et diuen que el conte no anava així perquè canvies les paraules, i és genial poder-ho explicar més vegades. Ja saben que vindrà, s'avancen.

Participant 2.- Al principi és molta imatge, però després pots explicar contes i treballar-los de manera oral. A vegades també va bé explicar contes sense imatge de manera oral perquè

jugues amb uns altres recursos i estimules aspectes diferents. Els tons de veu. Per exemple, alt, fort, fluix.

Participant 3.- No hauríem de perdre els contes de tradició oral.

Participant 5.- A vegades has explicat un conte amb suport visual, i després l'expliques sense suport visual. Sobretot va bé pels nens que no tenen el català com a primera llengua. I així, com que ja tenen les imatges al cap ja saben de que parles.

Participant 3.- Això és com quan els adults llegeixen un llibre i t'imagines els personatges i després fan la pel·lícula i no és el que t'imaginaves, si o no?

Participant 2.- Sí, a vegades quedes una mica decebut.

Participant 3.- A vegades els hi donem tot, i també està bé que facin volar la imaginació.

3. La utilització de l'oralitat per part de la mestra o el mestre és essencial per desenvolupar una llengua, però a vegades és difícil saber si els infants comprenen allò que es diu. Com ho feu per comprovar la comprensió dels infants després d'incorporar noves paraules o nous conceptes?

Participant 5.- N'hi ha que per si sols ja pregunten. Què és això? Et senyalen i et fan preguntes. El que està molt bé és que s'ajudin entre ells i demanar-los-hi si algun altre company li pot respondre i explicar. Per exemple: Què és un hipopòtam? I un nen que portava un peluix d'hipopòtam li ha ensenyat.

Eli.- És veritat, a classe s'ajuden molt uns als altres. Avui m'ha fet gràcia la Joana perquè quan passàvem llista estava ajudant a l'encarregat tot fent "rrrr" com donant-li una pista perquè ho llegís.

Participant 5.- És el fet d'explicar-ho. <mark style="background-color:red">També va bé fer preguntes sobre el que pregunten.</mark> Per exemple: Tu tens una moto a casa? Hi jugues?

Participant 6.- <mark style="background-color:magenta">En el cas de l'anglès per exemple va bé acompanyar-ho de moltes *Flashcards*, moltes imatges i</mark> <mark style="background-color:lime">moltes preguntes. A vegades els enredo, per exemple amb el conte de *Caterpillar.* Què va menjar el dilluns? A pear? I hi ha algun que està alerta i et respon: No! An apple!</mark>

Participant 2.- Està bé això, <mark style="background-color:red">una pregunta directa o enredar-los.</mark>

Eli.- Feu preguntes específiques als nens que en determinats moments han perdut el fil?

Totes: Sí, sí!

Participant 1.- <mark style="background-color:lime">A P3 fem moltes preguntes referents a les emocions. I com està ara aquest porquet? Perquè fa aquesta cara a espantat?</mark>

Participant 3.- Hem d'intentar cridar l'atenció d'alguns quan estan despistats.

Participant 2.- Per exemple a vegades dius: En Jan ens ho dirà! Perquè ha passat això?

Totes: riuen

Participant 2.- Connecta de cop!

Participant 5.- Has d'anar buscant estratègies d'aquestes per estirar.

Eli.- Per veure si hi ha comprensió treballeu a través del moviment? És a dir, donar ordres o directrius per a què ells responguin? Per exemple, després d'introduir vocabulari preguntar: Que em podries anar a buscar el vol de color rosa?

Participant 1.- Jo no sé si vols dir això, però per exemple un joc que fan molt a classe és buscar alguna cosa que sigui de color vermell, i així tots es posen a buscar-ho. O també per exemple diem, què tenim a la classe que tingui forma de cercle? Et refereixes a això?

Eli.- Sí, també ho apliqueu amb els contes?

Participant 3.- Sí, no ho sé.

Participant 1.- Sí, fins i tot amb el projecte del barri també busquem els números de les cases per crear una relació.

Participant 3.- Sí amb el projecte del barri també estem utilitzant el Google Maps per veure a on són els supermercats. Hi apareix un carro allà a on hi ha supermercats i així els nens també poden veure a on està.

4. Degut a que els infants encara no reflexionen sobre la mateixa llengua, no fan un procés conscient de l'adquisició de la llengua. Per aquest motiu, és molt important contextualitzar el vocabulari que desconeguin per tal de donar-li significat. Quina creieu que seria una bona manera de contextualitzar el vocabulari desconegut per als infants?

Participant 5. - Que el puguin vivenciar.

Participant 2.- Sí! Vivenciar! Per exemple, el joc simbòlic dóna molts recursos o els recursos que tenim. Manipulant també.

Participant 5.- Per exemple, ara que hem vist els fruits de tardor. Hem vist la magrana, l'hem tocat, la tastem…

Participant 2.- Tocar, manipular i situacions vivencials.

Participant 3.- Jo recordo una anècdota. En Daniel, recordes? Fa anys no teníem les pantalles digitals i recordo que parlàvem del raïm i jo vaig anar a mercat a comprar raïm. El vaig portar amb més fruites de tardor, i quan el vaig treure en Daniel va dir: Aaah! Uvas!

Totes: Riuen

Participant 5.- Clar! Va dir: Ara se de que parles, no?

Participant 3.- Jo penso que el recurs digital ens va molt a favor perquè les imatges que surten són reals i de seguida ho capten, però abans que no teníem el recurs… De totes maneres, és molt important manipular.

Participant 2.- Més que veure, tocar. Veure a través dels sentits.

Eli.- Llavors creieu que manipular i treballar a través dels sentits ajuda a desenvolupar el llenguatge, oi?

Participant 5.- Sí, ajuda molt a contextualitzar-ho i a situar-se.

Participant 3.- Inclós a memoritzar.

Participant 2.- Exacte, perquè llavors per a ells té sentit!

Participant 5.- Després és significatiu perquè poden incloure les paraules en el seu ventall de vocabulari i poden parlar. Per exemple, ja poden parlar de què és una magrana perquè saben què és.

Participant 3.- Fan l'acomodació.

Participant 5.- Exacte, l'incorporen.

Participant 3.- Sí, quan realment l'incorporen és quan té realment significat per a ells.

5. Durant el dia a dia, utilitzeu alguna de les estratègies que fonamenten la metodologia TPRS? Si és així, quins efectes en el desenvolupament del llenguatge creieu que produeix en els infants?

Eli.- És el que parlàvem abans… Fer incisos a l'hora d'explicar el conte, fer preguntes de Sí o no, d'enredar-los, etc. Creieu que utilitzeu alguna d'aquestes estratègies pròpies de la metodologia TPRS?

Totes.- Sí, és el que hem anat dient. Ja ha anat sortint.

Participant 3.- Les cançons repetitives també funcionen molt.

Participant 2.- Ara em fixava en aquesta gràfica i m'he adonat que despunta especialment el vocabulari i el llegir, no?

Participant 5.- I el *Listening* en canvi no, oi?

Eli.- Sí que és veritat que la metodologia està focalitzada en el vocabulari i en la lectura perquè la metodologia va ser creada per treballar amb alumnes de secundària i no Educació Infantil. És per això que jo ara estic mirant si podria funcionar a Educació Infantil. M'interessa especialment descobrir la part de la metodologia que treballa l'adquisició del llenguatge i no tant la part que treballa la lectura perquè a Infantil ja se sap que està en desenvolupament. És per això que us he presentat aquesta gràfica. Aquí no hi podem veure el mètode tradicional, però sí que podem veure-hi els avantatges i desavantatges en comparació.

Eli: (Repeteixo la pregunta) O sigui, jo entenc que totes són importants, però especialment durant aquesta etapa quins són els aspectes que potencieu més a les vostres classes?

Totes: Tot el que sigui oral primer, i després ja venen les altres coses.

Participant 3.- L'actitud i la motivació són la base, i després vindria el vocabulari, l'expressió oral i el saber escoltar. El llegir i escriure més endavant.

Eli.- Clar, sense escoltar no sabrien parlar.

Participant 3.- Escoltar és molt important.

Participant 2.- Aquesta actitud d'escolta i atenció hi ha de ser sempre, però no només a Infantil, en qualsevol aprenentatge, i és un actitud de base, que s'ha de treballar sempre. I després, ja més concretament, en una àrea d'aprenentatge, ja penso que sí que comences per l'expressió oral i després ja va sortint la resta.

Participant 3.- I escolta activa!

Totes: Sí, sí! Atenció i escolta!

Eli.- Com ho feu per potenciar l'escolta activa si hi ha nens que es despengen?

Participant 5.- Canviant tons de veu, és important no ser monòton. Com que als contes surten diferents personatges vas fent diferents veus inclós. És per cridar una mica l'atenció dels nens, perquè si és monòton inclós ens passa als grans, que al final vas perdent el fil. Però quan canvies el to de veu i parles com una gallina o com una vaca, dius ostres, això va variant i funciona.

Eli.- Sí que és veritat! Fins i tot les gesticulacions que hi poses.

Participant 2.- Les entonacions.

Participant 5.- Jo penso que la base es tracta d'escoltar, tenir el model. També el fet d'expressar-se davant dels altres i que se'ls escolti bé, i sobretot que els altres els escoltin. Que la seva veu es projecti i tinguin una seguretat davant dels altres. És una cosa que avui

dia és molt important i s'ha de treballar de ben petits. S'ha de perdre la por a parlar davant dels altres, encara que ens equivoquem, és igual, t'escoltem i si t'equivoques no passa res.

Participant 2.- Sí, perdre la por i agafar seguretat és molt important.

Participant 3.- Saber el que estan dient també és important, sense la necessitat de llegir.

Participant 5.- Entendre i saber el que estàs dient.

Eli.- Ho relacionarieu amb l'autoestima de cada infant i amb la seva identitat?

Participant 5.- Sí, i tant. A través de l'expressió oral estàs treballant la seva seguretat i el llenguatge de manera intrínseca. L'actitud també és important.

Eli.- Penso que està molt bé que doneu la oportunitat de treballar-ho des de l'escola perquè hi ha infants que suposo que no la tenen a casa.

Participant 5.- També passa que a vegades a casa s'expressen d'una manera perquè hi ha confiança i a l'escola no ho fan. És bàsic que també la puguin agafar a l'escola.

Eli.- Val, doncs ja està! Gràcies a totes!

Karen Lichtman interview

1. When and why did you start researching on TPRS?

   I attended my first TPRS workshop when I was 19 years old and teaching in a before-school program during college. I taught middle school Spanish for three years, and then decided to go back to grad school in 2006 to study linguistics. My research in grad school was on implicit vs. explicit learning, so I decided to use TPRS classes as the implicit instruction group. In 2009 I went to a TPRS conference hoping to recruit research participants, and I saw a research study on TPRS presented by a teacher. It

was a good study, but people were critical and she (a master's student) didn't really know how to address their questions, so I wanted to do a better job of presenting the existing research on TPRS.

1. What main advantages and disadvantages of TPRS method would you highlight?

    a. The advantages are that it's a framework for providing comprehensible input, it's very interactive and engaging for students, and it creates students who can speak fluently. I would say the disadvantages are that it doesn't teach culture (the characters tend to be from the children's culture and themes are suggested by the children, so they can only suggest things they already know about) and that it can play into stereotypes (assuming that the characters are heterosexual, girls like to go shopping, boys like to play sports, etc.)

2. Have you ever applied the methodology with Very Young Learners or visit any center that use it to teach a second language?

    a. The youngest age I have taught with TPRS is 3ʳᵈ grade (8-year-olds) and I have not observed it with very young learners.

3. During many years TPRS has been used with high school students or primary students. Do you think that a new methodology could emerge in order to use it with Very   Young   Learners? I think TPRS can be used with very young learners. The difficulties would be that you would need even more repetition, you'd need students to pay attention, and you couldn't use reading and writing. I think people who teach very young learners tend to use more TPR and less TPRS.

4. In the case of applying the methodology with preschoolers, which would be the best way to organize the groups (very small groups, small groups, whole groups) of children in order to provide more comprehensible input?

a. Comprehensible input can definitely be provided with big groups. The only difficulty would be making sure that the children stay engaged, and that they are actually understanding the input (doing comprehension checks). For that reason, probably smaller groups of around 8 students would be easier to monitor. But, that's just a guess on my part.

5. Considering that *Reading* step can not be developed with 3-5 year-old children, what alternatives would you recommend as teachers or researchers can use for further applications?

   a. I guess the teacher could read to the students. I've heard of something called a "Gouin series" where students repeatedly act out a series of short sentences, which seemed like a version of reading for very young learners.

6. In your last book published in 2018 you mention some complementary skills for TPRS that can be used by teachers. The skill focused on the assessment describes different techniques and activities related with the comprehension. Which ones would you choose or add in order to assess Very Young Learners after work with TPRS?

7. I think to assess very young learners, you would want to assess them one-on-one and see if they can comprehend words and sentences. They could act out the words/sentences or possibly translate them into their first language.

8. The following results are from Kara & Eveyik-Aydin (2019):

Table 1. Means of the receptive and productive tests conducted throughout the study

Weeks	Pretest		Immediate posttest		Delayed posttest	
	Receptive mean	Productive mean	Receptive mean	Productive mean	Receptive mean	Productive mean
Week 1*	0.05	0	1.95	1.84	2.00	1.52
Week 2*	0.21	0	1.95	1.63	2.00	1.58
Week 3**	0.26	0	2.95	2.53	2.95	2.68
Week 4**	0.31	0	3.00	2.63	2.95	2.63
Week 5*	0.16	0	2.00	1.53	2.00	1.31

*Maximum score equals 2, **Maximum score equals 3

9. "The answer for the second research question of the study, *Which type of lexical knowledge, receptive or productive, benefits from TPRS instruction more in the context of very young learners' L2 vocabulary acquisition?* is also revealed by the mean scores presented in Table 1. The Table shows that the means of the receptive tests are higher than the means of the productive tests on both immediate and delayed administrations of each week. It is clear that receptive learning is more successful than productive learning in all weeks of treatment" (p. 140). Do you think that TPRS methodology should be used by the teacher during the full-year course in order to achieve better productive results with very beginners?

   a. Absolutely—we know that comprehension always precedes production in the learning process. So, the longer you teach the kids, the more they will be able to produce language.

10. To conclude the research interview, I would like to ask about your experience and overall vision regarding the TPRS. What would be the best and the worst that this methodology has brought to you?

   a. I think TPRS is a great way to understand second language acquisition. The principles of the method are based on second language acquisition. As far as the worst TPRS has brought to me, there are sometimes fights and politics in the TPRS community, and Blaine Ray is now doing a little bit of explicit grammar teaching (which I think is really weird).

b. As far as my vision, it is for the United States, but I would like to see every classroom teacher teaching Spanish (or another language) to young students. I imagine that the teachers themselves would learn/refresh their language knowledge using TPRS, and then use TPRS to teach the young students. This is the only way I see the United States getting earlier foreign language instruction!