

Oral English in different school settings

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Abstract

There are a lot of different school settings, and moreover, we can state that each school is different from the others. For this reason, when we talk about the learning of English, we can't generalize a way of doing it, because each school deals with this teaching in a different way. Also, regarding the learning of a language, there are different skills involved in it, and among all of them, I focused this project in the oral ability.

This research is based on the observation of three examples of school settings, and to be more precise, it aims to delve in how they treat English. In this way, the main objective of this project is to compare the oral ability of the pupils of these schools, considering their differences. So, with the development of this research I wanted to discover if there were some pupils with better oral abilities than others, and find out the possible reason of it.

Key words:

Oral ability, English, CLIL, State schools, Rural schools, English schools in Catalonia.

Resum

Hi ha molts tipus d'escoles diferents, i fins i tot, podem constatar que cada escola és diferent de les altres. Per aquesta raó, quan parlem sobre l'aprenentatge de l'anglès, no podem generalitzar una manera de fer-ho, perquè cada una d'elles tracta aquesta llengua de manera diferent. A més, pel que fa a l'aprenentatge d'una llengua, hi ha diferents habilitats involucrades, i entre totes aquestes, he centrat aquest projecte en l'habilitat oral.

Aquesta recerca està basada en l'observació de tres exemples de tipus d'escoles, i per ser més precisos, té l'objectiu d'aprofundir com tracten l'Anglès. D'aquesta manera, el principal objectiu d'aquest projecte és comparar l'habilitat oral dels alumnes d'aquestes escoles, tot considerant les seves diferències. Així doncs, amb el desenvolupament d'aquesta recerca, vaig voler descobrir si hi havien alguns alumnes amb millors habilitats orals que d'altres, i trobar-ne la possible raó.

Paraules clau:

Habilitat oral, Anglès, AICLE, Escoles públiques, Escoles rurals i Escoles Angleses a Catalunya.

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1. Introduction

This project sets out to compare how children learn English in different school settings. As they are different types of schools, they have different characteristics like the mother tongue of the children, the language used at school, the number of children in a classroom, and the methodology used by the teacher. So the purpose of this study is to examine how the different methods of teaching English, the number of pupils per class and the language used in the school, influence on the acquisition of English. For this, I want to compare different school settings and to observe their characteristics and possible differences.

I chose this topic because each school is different from the other, and I wanted to take advantage of this study to discover and to delve the treatment of English in different school settings. During my practice placement I had the opportunity to observe the treatment of English in one school, but this research allows me to observe other schools, that I think are very interesting as a teacher to see as many examples as possible of schools. For this reason, my motivation about the topic of this study is related to delve in different kinds of school, and also to compare their characteristics and methods relating it with the English ability of the pupils.

The main objective of this project is to compare the Oral English ability of children of different school settings. As there are different age levels, I will focus this research on Primary Education, and to be more precise, on Year 2 children, who are between seven and eight years old. As I mentioned before, to carry out this study I have to consider that there are different kinds of school and all of them have different characteristics and they also deal with English learning and learning in a different way..

For this reason, I have set myself to observe three different types of school: the state school, the rural school and the English school in Catalonia. As a matter of fact, I could have chosen other types of schools, but I liked these ones because I consider that they have some specific characteristics that could differentiate them more. Also, I could carry out this study with all the language abilities, but since this would be too wide I decided to focus on the oral ability. I chose the oral one because when I was a child I consider that this ability was missing a lot and I didn't work it so much. This is why I am more curious to observe this ability than the others. However, if this research wasn't so

limited and I could have more time, I would be interested to compare all the other abilities too, because they are equally important.

Therefore, this project is based on checking the differences between the children's learning of oral English at the State school Marta Mata, the rural school of Muntanyola and the International School of Catalunya (ISCAT) in la Garriga that it is an English school. So, I will analyze how is the English teaching in general, and then I will focus more on how it is treated in these three schools, comparing their characteristics and the oral abilities of their Year 2 pupils.

Based on this study I ask myself a general objective, which defines my proposal, but I also have more objectives that will help me to solve them. These objectives are the following ones:

- To compare the oral English learning in three different kinds of schools: the state school, the rural school and the English school in Catalonia.
- To compare the characteristics of these schools that can influence on the teaching – learning process of oral English.
- To compare the treatment of English in these three schools.
- To analyze the oral ability of the children of Year 2 in these three schools

Consequently, I will start this research presenting what a school is, talking about the organization of the schools and then, more specifically, the treatment of English at the school. Then, I will divide this topic in two sections because they are two different ways to learn English and I want to delve into both; learning English and learning in English. After that, I will present each kind of school, talking about their characteristics, their history, and to be more precise, explaining the schools examples that I used to carry out this study. Then, I want to explain the research method that I used to develop the practical part of this research, talking about the sample, the instruments, the procedure, and other aspects. Relating to this last section, I will talk about the obtained results, which they will be represented with the help of some graphics that will help to understand the results better. To end up, I will explain my conclusions after the development of this study, in which we could see if I achieved the objectives proposed at the beginning of this research.

Another aspect related to the bibliography, I want to highlight that I had some limitations about it, because there aren't books or articles that talk about some specific topics that I treated in this research. For this reason, it was a bit difficult to find information, for example, about the history of English schools in Catalonia. However, I searched from the different English schools in Catalonia and I tried to collect information that could help me to develop this theoretical part. Moreover, it was easier to find bibliography that talks about the other topics treated as the state school, the rural school and the CLIL program.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Presentation

A school is an institution that provides education to the pupils. The term «school» comes from the Greek «skholé» and then, from the Latin «schola». The first meaning in Greek was ‘leisure, peace’ that then derived at what is done during free time, and finally, and more concretely, at what is worth to do. For that reason, the school attendance is compulsory between six and sixteen years old; therefore, all the children should be educated.

Focusing on Primary education, it is an obligatory and free education stage that includes six academic courses, and it is organized with three cycles:

- Initial cycle: 6 to 8 years.
- Middle cycle: 9 to 10 years.
- Upper cycle: 11 to 12 years.

The purpose of Primary education is to provide for all the children an education that permits develop personal and social capacities; acquire abilities and competences related at oral expression and comprehension, written expression and reading comprehension, basic mathematics, the use of new technologies, develop the capacity of effort, work and study, express the artistic sense, and know the basic elements of history, geography and the traditions of Catalonia that facilitate to put down roots.

Talking about competences, a basic competence is the capacity that a child has to have to apply his/her knowledge’s, abilities, attitudes learnt in different everyday situations. In the Primary stage the pupils have to achieve eight basic competences that are considered basic to favor the autonomy of the children:

- Linguistic and communicative, and audiovisual competence
- Cultural and artistic competence
- Data processing and digital competence
- Mathematic competence

- Learning to learn competence
- Autonomy and personal initiative competence
- Knowledge of and interaction with the physical world competence
- Social and civic competence

To achieve these eight basic competences, the Primary Education, in general, is organized around some knowledge areas, that are the following ones:

- Catalan language and literature, Spanish language and literature and Aranese in the Vall d'Aran
- Foreign language
- Knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment
- Artistic education
- Physical education
- Mathematics
- Education for citizenships and human rights

The centers can offer a second foreign language, optionally, for the upper cycle pupils. They also have to offer optionally for the families that want the religion area.

The number of pupils per class is relative, because in the state schools they can have 25 pupils per class, while the private and the rural, for example, have less students. Also, every center organizes its own schedule, but it has to follow the guidelines of the Department. The classes have to be in the mornings and afternoons, and in total the pupils have to attend 25 hours a week, including leisure time. The centers can also distribute the hours a week of each area as they want, but at the end of each cycle, the pupils must have attended the following total hours:

| Areas | Initial cycle | Middle cycle | Upper cycle |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Catalan language and literature | 140 | 140 | 140 |
| Spanish language and literature | 140 | 140 | 140 |
| Common linguistic structures | 105 | 70 | 70 |
| Foreign language | 70 | 105 | 140 |
| Knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment | 140 | 175 | 140 |
| Artistic education | 70 | 105 | 70 |
| Physical education | 105 | 70 | 70 |
| Education for citizenships and human rights | - | - | 35 |
| Mathematics | 175 | 175 | 175 |
| Religion (optional) | 105 | 105 | 105 |
| Leisure time | 175 | 175 | 175 |

In each cycle of Primary Education, the pupils have to do an interdisciplinary project, which is a task that is done through different areas. This project is planned from a theme of daily living, and they have to do activities that are necessary to apply knowledge's of different areas. The objective of this project is that the pupils learn to relate the knowledge's and the basic competence acquired, to apply them in a specific theme of daily living.

In our country, as others, there are different kinds of schools, like the rural, the state, the private, the state-funded, the international and the English schools. However, there are only a few international and English schools in Catalonia. All these schools have different characteristics and they also use different methodologies in their classes, so they use different ways to achieve the proposed results.

My thesis sets out to compare how children learn English in different kinds of schools, to be more precise, in three of them: the state, the rural and the English schools in Catalonia. All of them, as I said, have different characteristics and principles that I think can influence the learning of English, as well as subjects.

2.2. English at school

2.2.1. Learning English

It is important to take into consideration how the pupils learn English in Catalonia. We have to know that depending on the school, this language is treated in different ways. The teaching of English is not required before Year 3, but there are schools that start to work through this language before that, even some schools start at P-3. During the years of Primary Education, the centers have the objective that the pupils learn to read and write in English, while they are doing the same in other languages that are Catalan and Spanish. Some schools decided to do other activities or areas through English because the pupils can achieve a better domain of it.

The process of learning a foreign language is long and complex, and there are many factors involved in that, not only linguistic ones. One example is the development of oral ability that is influenced by factors as the learner, the effects of the age, the exposure to the target language, the aptitude, the attitude, the motivation, and others.

Lightbown P. and Spada N. (2006) wrote a book called "*How languages are learned*", in which we can find some popular ideas about the language learning. The majority of ideas that we can find in this section talk about the mistakes of the second language learners, the resources that teachers should use, the correction of the learner's errors, etc. But also we can find that there are two ideas about the learning of the language: "languages are learned mainly through imitation" and "the best way to learn new vocabulary is through reading".

Regarding the first idea, the authors said that there aren't many supporters about the idea that languages are learned mainly through imitation because the learners produce many sentences that they could not have heard before. But they defend this idea because they affirm that learners don't imitate everything they hear, but they imitate

some words or structures that they are in the process of learning when they are creating their sentences. Lightbown P. and Spada N. (2006) said that we can label this as an individual learning strategy, but not all the language learners use it. Also, for the authors it is very important to consider that the imitation is very important to develop pronunciation and intonation, because it is the best way to develop these two skills.

For this reason, the teachers who teach this language are responsible to speak with the pupils in English, because to learn a language it is important to receive a lot of input. For that reason, the teacher has to provide an adequate exposure to the target language, because when the pupils are learning a language it is very useful to use it as many hours as possible.

Concerning the second idea, Lightbown P. and Spada N. (2006) affirmed that children expand their vocabulary dramatically, but they also increase their vocabulary knowledge through reading. They consider that it is important that second language learners have opportunities to read material that is interesting and important to them, and they also have some strategies for learning and remembering words.

Another important factor that the teachers have to consider is the motivation of the pupils. Lightbown P. and Spada N. (2006) agreed that learners who want to learn tend to do better than those who don't, but they also consider that there are other factors that may affect this statement. These authors show the example about the learners who begin learning a second language as adults, because they rarely achieve the same results that children do, and it doesn't mean that these adults aren't motivated to learn. We have to consider the age of the learners or other differences as the aptitude or the learning strategies.

However, it is true that motivation can influence the grade of the achievements, because as more motivated are the learners, the gains can be better. An individual learns a second language to attain a certain goal; therefore, according to the researcher Lukmani (1972), the intensity of motivation is often as important as the type of motivation at play. On one hand, there is the extrinsic motivation, which is outside the class and it is divided in two kinds of motivation: the integrative one, which is when someone wants to come a member of the community of the target language that he/she is learning, and the instrumental one, which is when someone feels that learning that language will be a instrument to achieve one goal, like to get a better job.

So, according to Celce – Murcia, M., Brinton, D. And Goodwin, J. (1996), someone with extraordinarily high instrumental motivation may well achieve, for example, a better pronunciation than someone with integrative motivation.

On the other hand, there is the intrinsic motivation, which is inside the class and it depends of many characteristics: Physical conditions, method of teaching, the teacher and the success. According to Lightbown, P. and Spada, N. (2006), teachers haven't influence over learners' intrinsic motivation for learning a second language, because the students come from different backgrounds and life experiences, and it contributed to their motivation to learn.

2.2.2. Learning in English

As we have seen in the previous section, there is the idea of “learning English”, that it means to learn this language as a subject. Also, it is important to take into account that there is another idea related with the learning of this language, and we can define it as “learning in English”. This second idea, which is most popular known as CLIL programmes, means to learn this language by using it in other subjects.

To be more precise, CLIL is the acronym of Content Learning Integrated Language, and as Marsh (1994) said, ‘it refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focussed aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language’. That it means as teaching a subject such as history, science or mathematics through a second or a foreign language. For this reason, the learning of both contents and language has the same importance, and also they are both planned and assessed.

When we talk about CLIL, we can also talk about the four Cs curricula. A well planned CLIL lesson should combine content, communication, cognition and culture in the same procedure. To be more precise, content refers to the subject or theme of the lesson, so this programme allows increasing knowledge, skills and the comprehension of the theme. Also, communication refers to the use of the target language by children to communicate their thoughts, opinions and discoveries. Both speaking and writing are important. So CLIL allows using the language to learn, while the pupils are learning to use the language. As well, cognition helps to develop the critical thinking skills that

students use to connect knowledge's and use them to solve problems. To finish, culture refers to the learning community of a class, schools and environment. This programme also allows to expose their perspective and to accept the opinions of the others as citizens of the world. So the children can understand both their own culture and other cultures.

However, a 4Cs teaching framework requires a re-conceptualisation of language learning towards an integrated model which actively involves the learner in using and developing : Language **of** Learning, Language **for** Learning and Language **through** Learning. We can observe this procedure in the following pyramid, which represents that these aspects that I mentioned before are necessary for reconceptualising the language learning, and they are all equal important for the foreign language learning in a CLIL programme.



However, a school needs some conditions to start a CLIL programme: appropriate material, good planning and a good amount of time for immersion. Also, it demands teachers prepared for teach, monitor and evaluate the aspects mentioned before: Language **of** Learning, Language **for** Learning and Language **through** Learning. So, to start this programme it isn't an easy task, but there are some schools that are motivated and they have implemented it.

Regarding the story of this programme, around the beginning of the 90s there were some European institutions, concerned with the construction of Europe, who thought that languages are an asset to be preserved and promoted. They promoted a change in the domain of education in general and languages in particular. Then, the specific European approach represented by CLIL began to take shape, because they defended a bilingual education. From that moment, under the auspices of the Council of Europe

and the Comission-funded projects, the CLIL concept began to take shape and to emerge in different countries.

According to Oller C. (2012), "CLIL is a broad project where a context is not isolated but shares language with all the others, giving the students more immersion time and more possibilities to be in different communication situations". In other words, it is true that this programme takes the advantage of other area's time, but the children will learn the contents in the same way, while they also will be learning the language. As Oller C. (2012) said, this way of working has many advantages because the children will use the language in different contexts, they will use specific vocabulary of the subject and they also will be aware of the importance of the language. For this reason, in her article she defends that "CLIL is a very interesting and valuable method for teaching a foreign language. It provides a way for students to get more immersion time and also learn the language of different subject areas".

A first requisite for language acquisition, as stated by Krashen (1985), and confirmed by subsequent studies, is exposure to input in the target language in considerable amounts. In addition, it is quite important the quantity as the quality factor. Then, a second requisite, defended forward by Swain and Lapkin (1995) was the output hypothesis. It is because the production contributes several benefits and the learners need to do it in the target language.

Oller C. (2012) is only an example of an English teacher opinion, but there are more teachers who implemented this programme in their schools and they are satisfied about the achieved results. For example, Arnau and Artigal (1997) pointed out the need for bilingual programmes, which Arnau et al. (1994) and Sierra (1994) subsequently proved were successful. I also want to make reference that some teachers who would like to carry out this programme but haven't got enough resources to do it.

To conclude, the benefits of CLIL can be grouped in three categories: linguistic, educational-pedagogical and social. About the first ones, we can affirm that the main objective of this programme is to improve the language skills. Then, we can't omit the fact that this programme doesn't lose out the content teaching. Pedagogically, CLIL has positive effects on teaching and learning because teachers do more efforts to be clearer and students do more efforts to follow lessons taught through the target

language. To finish, there is a social slant to CLIL which makes it ideal for enhancing a broad view of the world, promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, etc.

2.3. State schools in Catalonia

2.3.1. Definition and characteristics

Public education includes the education provided by centers maintained by public funds; therefore, the government controls the curriculum and provides the teachers to the centers. These kinds of schools are free for the pupils, and started to generalize since the 18th Century.

All the countries have a public education system to ensure the access to obligation education for all the children, at least in the primary education levels, however sometimes the offer is not enough to ensure that all the children could go to school. The public education can be differenced according to gender depending on the country, but never can prevent the schooling of the children for ethnic, economic or social reasons.

According to José Antonio López (1986: 88) there are some characteristics that define the state school in Catalonia. The first one is that the state school has a strong control administrative that difficult the real operating. This feature is manifested through the management form and the supply teachers system.

Another aspect of this kind of school is that the management of the material, didactic and economic resources is centralized with the same criteria for all the state; therefore, it limits the possibilities to administer with autonomy and to acquire the resources in function of the priorities or the concrete projects of the schools.

Also, all the state schools have to follow the same stiff and homogeneous normative regarding the organization form; therefore, there is an absence of flexibility to set specific organization forms.

To finish, we have to consider that the average of pupils per class changes over the years, and at the moment in the state schools this ratio is around the 25. Whereas, when José Antonio López wrote the book *El funcionament de l'escola pública a*

Catalunya, this ratio of the pupils per class was around the 30; therefore, during these years there was an improvement of the school terms.

2.3.2. History

To talk about the history of the state schools in Catalonia, we have to take in account their reliance with the administrative structure. Since 1900, when the system was centralized there weren't differences between the schools of Catalonia and the other schools of the state. At the moment, the state transferred its competences to the *Generalitat*, and maybe in a future the results could be different between the schools of Catalonia and the other schools of the country.

In Spain there wasn't a specialized central organ in educative administration until 1990, when the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts was created. Before that, there were attempts to solve the educative problems through the directorate of education, created in 1812 by Quintana. Then, in 1931 with the instauration of the Republic, it was intended to provide agility and functionality to the educative administration; therefore, to promote the peripheral organs of the administrative with the main objective of neutralize the centralism.

In 1936 there was the civil war and it was a halt for the innovative impulse of the educative administration that the republic government tried. Then, in 1939 there was a law that assigned the management of the educative policy of the new state to the Ministry of Education, and there was an increase of the centralism attitude and of the administrative stiffness. Until 1968 there was a centralized and stiff administration, but after that, there was an important development that required a different administrative structure, but it wasn't possible.

Afterwards, until 1970 the structure of educative administration worked according the criteria of the division in departments by levels. This criterion originated the directorate of primary education, directorate of universities, and others. So, the education law incorporated innovations in this area.

As I said before, at the moment, the *Generalitat* has the competences of the educative administration; therefore, the administration is decentralized.

2.3.3.I.E. Marta Mata in Torelló

We can find a lot of state schools in Catalonia, but more specifically we'll look at the example of IE Marta Mata, in Torelló. This center is a school of new creation since the 2007-08 academic year. The pupils that were assigned in 2007 in P-3, are the children that every year are opening new courses; therefore, in the school there are only from P-3 to Year 3, in total, 277 pupils.



As far as the study of English, they start English in the second term of P3, doing half an hour a week. After that, in P- 4 and P-5 they do one session of an hour of English and two hours more a week; one of Psychomotor skills and one of ICT. The school chose to do these subjects in English for two reasons; on one hand they considered that they work an instructional language that facilitates their comprehension and acquisition of the contents of these subjects, and on the other hand, for the availability of the teachers. Then, from Initial cycle they continue doing one session of ICT a week, but they also start doing two hours of Physical Education in English instead of doing Psychomotricity. However, they also do the specific area of English language, than in Initial cycle takes two sessions of an hour, whereas in Middle cycle takes one more session. In this area, they work through projects, and in one course they are able to do three or more projects about different topics.

The English teachers of the school use resources as songs, storybooks, videos, sheets, and other materials to develop all the skills of the language: writing, reading, speaking and listening. Since Year 3, they start to work with the resource of a book, but

they don't have the objective to finish this. They may use the book during the following courses, because it is only a resource of support.

The English teachers promote the active participation of the pupils in every session, because it is important that they have the opportunities to express what they want to say, even in Catalan. For this reason, if the pupils answer in English, the teachers translate their Catalan answers in English, and then they have to repeat after her. It is a way to learn what they want to say, because the teacher is giving them new vocabulary to interiorize through the same answers of the pupils. The teacher always speaks in English with the pupils, even at leisure time because it is a way to reinforce the development of comprehension skill. To achieve that pupils always speak in English to them, the teachers have a second name during the English lessons, and even one of them wears a headband when she wants to change her character. So, the pupils know that one of them always speak English, and the other one speaks English when she is wearing a headband.

2.4. Rural schools in Catalonia

2.4.1. Definition and characteristics

The rural school in Catalan is defined as "petita, de poble i pública" that means that it is small, closer to the village and public. It is a school rooted at the territory that gives life to the town, because a town without school it's a lonely town that mostly entails the abandonment of the town.

The rural schools, as they are small and located in small villages, they can form groups of schools located in a nearby region. Consequently, these groups called ZER's, that it means "Zones Escolars Rurals" and in English it means rural school areas, can share teachers, expenses, materials, etc.

As the other kinds of schools, it has its own particular characteristics that influence the educative action of this. These features that characterize these kinds of schools are the following ones:

Regarding the role of the school in the village, a rural school is more than a center as it is more open than others. It may be school, cultural center, library, point of meeting, etc. This kind of school allows to meet the other people of the educative community, and as the school is small, there are less people to know and more possibilities to know them better.

About the interaction with the environment, the rural school is always open with this aspect. These schools are closer to work through the interaction with the environment, because they usually work with the experiences of the pupils or their nearby environment. Therefore, as these pupils work through this interaction, it facilitates significant learning because they may use these knowledge's in their daily life.

Concerning the pupils and their interaction, it promotes a better interaction between pupils of different ages and courses, and between the teacher and the pupils. There are flexible groups and it can be so enriching, for example, by ages, by cycles, by activities, by interest centers, by affinities, and others. Also, they can work with pupils of others schools of the ZER too, and the combination of the groups would be greater. The pupils of the rural schools are used to work with different kind of groups and it favors that the children adapt well to the changes. It is considered that the difference of age in the same class is a wealth that it is important to take. The pupils of the rural school are not different than the others, they are equal. Their learning process is the same than the others, but the diversity of ages in the class allows different opportunities. Also, it facilitates the individual attention; therefore the teacher can respect better the work, the maturing and the learning rhythms of each pupil.

About the methodology, in general, it uses a method that promotes the autonomy, the responsibility, the work habits and the globalization of the curriculum contents and its adequacy for the immediate environment and reality. It works considering the basic abilities and capacities through its own day to day of the rural school with its methodology. The pupils of the rural schools obtained good results in the exams of basic capacities that the Learning department carried on the course 2009-2010. In addition, this kind of school has a general organization planned, but it has freedom to plan how they could work during the lessons. For this reason, it has a flexible schedule, curriculum, materials, resources, groups, tasks, activities, spaces, and others. The pupils of different ages, interests and needs can live and learn in a space organized so

heterogeneous and flexible, that it allows the pupils to interact and to learn with each other.

Every rural school is different than the others for the location, the environment, the geography, the town, the types of families that attend, for the size, and others. But all of them have the same essence that is that they think that they have to deal the diversity at all the levels. Now, the rural school isn't the school with less resources and isolated, it's a dynamic, flexible, complex heterogeneous and of quality school.

The rural school is a model that it's necessary to maintain, care, promote and pamper, with recognition for all that it represents and supposes for the demographic maintenance of those zones of our country, and for all that it represents as a pedagogic model. It would be a model to export for the advantages for a learning quality.

2.4.2. History

According to Marina Subirats (1983: 23), the history of the education and the school in a rural environment is a history of abandonment. But also it is a history of a movement that fights and works for the survival and the improvement of this school model. This history is divided into five stages:

The first stage started with the General Law of Education of 1970 that accelerated the concentration school process started in the 60's. The requirement of equal opportunities and the implementation of EGB were a strong impact on small schools. Since that moment, more children went to bigger schools; so many schools had to close. In total, disappeared a 28,8% of the state centers. This period finished in 1970 with the first rural school conference, with objectives as to group different teacher's experiences, to group the effort of teachers that want to promote the rural school, encourage the work to do a second rural school conference.

The next stage started in 1980 with the second rural school conference and begins a participatory, critical and creative process, in which participated teachers of rural schools and other institutions. The key referents of this process were the third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth rural school conferences, that promote the elaboration of the project of the school zones for the rural school. It was proposed that the schools

and the teachers agree to work together in a voluntary association: ZER. In this way, appeared the Zone of Rural Schools with the main objective of sharing projects, excursions or resources as the teachers, the costs, materials, etc.

The third period started in 1988 with the decree of the constitution of the rural schools zones. This stage is characterized for the administrative slowness to deploy the regulation of creation and recognition of the first ZER's, most concretely, 15 ZER. In 1990 there was the resolution of the constitution of the first 15 ZER in Catalonia, and also the 7th rural conference that mark the end of this period.

The fourth stage begins in 1990 with important transformations in the rural world; the traditional rural world so homogeneous leads to be more modern and completely heterogeneous, fragmented and diverse. In this period the secretariat followed the implementation process of the ZER, and there were four rural conferences more. This period finished in 1989 with the last rural conference; the 10th conference in La Molina.

In the last period, the secretariat of rural school was constant and persistent and promoted the pedagogic work and the requirement of the improvement at the administration. In this century there were more rural conferences that showed the force of the movement of the rural school teachers and the new needs and realities that are rising.

2.4.3.. Muntanyola

We can find many rural schools in Catalonia that they're grouped as ZER'S. To deepen with this kind of schools we'll observe the example of a rural school in Muntanyola, in the region of Osona, that is called "E. Muntanyola". This center is a small rural school of new creation since the 2007-08 academic year.

As the building has not been constructed, it is located in three prefabricated modules of the Education Department, on a tennis court of the sport zone.



At the moment, this school has 58 pupils, from P-3 to the second course of Upper cycle of Primary. There are 7 pupils in P-3, 7 in P-4, 9 in P-5, 7 in Y1, 8 in Y2, 5 in Y3, 6 in Y4, 5 in Y5 and 4 in Y6. It is a little, rural and nearby school, where all community members are constantly learning. The fact that there are few children allows them to work constantly in small groups, and know better each child. Interdisciplinarity, globalization, environment, and heterogeneous groups are part of the daily lives of their children. They believe that the main characters in any learning are the pupils.

Regarding the study of English, the school did a Strategic Plan of Foreign Languages (PELE) that was granted to the center for three years with the purpose to delve the study of English language in the different courses, especially its introduction in P-4.

About the amount of English hours, the children from P3 to P4 do one hour a week. Then, from P5 to Year 1 they do 1,15 hours a week, and from Year 2 to Year 3 they do 1,40 hours a week. To finish, the pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 do 2.15 hours a week. As they are fewer children per course, they are mixed with pupils of other ages. For example, Year 2 and Year 3 are in the same class and they always work together. Also, they usually work with other group ages to interact and to share knowledge's.

The classes are done in English and in them, the teachers want the pupils to have the need to express and communicate in English, through varieties of activities and dynamics in a session, like dances, games, songs, rhythms, videos, and others. However, the English teacher doesn't ask to the pupils to write anything until Year 4, because if she asks to the pupils to write before, then they pronounce wrong the words and it isn't good for her. As well, it is interesting that two days a week the pupils do the breakfast time in English, so they explain what are they eating, etc. Then, the other days of the week they do it in Catalan and Spanish, so they can practice the three languages that they are learning.

At the moment, they have a language assistant in their English lessons, which speaks always in English and enables to hear a native pronunciation. Also, the English teacher, as she usually teaches other lessons a part from English, when she is doing the English subject, she is wearing a wig. In this way, the children know that if she is wearing the wig, they have to speak with her in English.

They have created a blog with the finality that the pupils of the school can see different English activities from home, and give it to know to the families. As they finished the Strategic Plan, this course 2012-13, the school will continue with the line started with the project; therefore, they will continue using the English blog.

2.5. English schools in Catalonia

2.5.1. Definition and characteristics

In Catalonia there are English schools that follow the National Curriculum of England and Wales, but there are others that follow the Curriculum of Spain.

This kind of school has its own characteristics that influence the educative action of it. These characteristics are related with the language used to teach, the values of the school, the pupils....

First of all, this kind of school gives a lot of importance to the English language, which is used to teach all the other areas. They also use Catalan and Spanish, but they especially emphasize the use of English to work.

As far as the values are concerned, they want to provide a learning environment free from discrimination; therefore, all the pupils have the same possibilities to learn. They also promote integrity, respect and responsibility in a way to help their students to become enlightened world citizens and independent thinkers.

Regarding the pupils, these schools have the objective that every child feels that has an important place in the classroom. For this reason, these schools fight because the pupils enter happily everyday and confident that his or her own personality is respected and valued. They want to ensure that the children are fully prepared to take this place in a global environment helping them to develop the abilities of learning to think and learning to learn.

The class levels and age groups in the English schools are different than the other schools of Catalonia, because they use the UK equivalents.

| Age of Child | ISCAT and UK Class | UK Key Stage | Spanish Class |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 3-4 | Nursery | | P3 |
| 4-5 | Reception | | P4 |
| 5-6 | Year 1 | Key Stage 1 | P5 |
| 6-7 | Year 2 | | 1° Primaria |
| 7-8 | Year 3 | Key Stage 2 | 2° Primaria |
| 8-9 | Year 4 | | 3° Primaria |
| 9-10 | Year 5 | | 4° Primaria |
| 10-11 | Year 6 | | 5° Primaria |
| 11-12 | Year 7 | Key Stage 3 | 6° Primaria |

Finally, concerning the relationship with the parents, there are constant lines of communication, because their firm belief is that if the “triangular” relationship between student, parents and teacher is easy and trusting, the progress of the student is assured. The regular information that the pupils give to the parents, allows non-Anglophone students an opportunity to share at home what has been studied at school, and helps consolidate learning.

2.5.2. History

It's difficult to talk about the history of the English schools in Catalonia, because there aren't books or articles that talk about this aspect. So, the only way to find information about it, is through the websites of the different English schools that exist in Catalonia, and where we can find information about the creation of each school.

The English School of Barcelona was the first English school in Catalonia, and it was founded in 1957 by Miss Tower. From that moment, as the Educative System had many reforms, the English School has been adapted to them. So, this school has updated its methodologies and new technologies, but it always has maintained the principles that represent the school:

- Personalized education: Working with groups with 18 pupils maximum per class, that allows to achieve better results.
- Early language learning: It stimulates the intelligence and the motivation of the children to work three languages almost simultaneously
- Education in an affective environment: It allows to the teacher to be closer to the children. When the pupils have difficulties, they have their teacher's hand to overcome them.
- Sensitivity to culture: Favoured by the coexistence of different cultures and ethnicities.

Then, more English schools were created around Catalonia with some similar characteristics than the first one. The British School of Barcelona was the second one to be created, and it was in 1958 by Pedro de Verda for a contract with U.S. navy. This school was created with the main objective to cover the necessities of the officer's sons. However the U.S. navy went off, the school continued offering an international education to the children of different nationalities.

After that, the American School of Barcelona was founded in 1962 by Dr. Josep Poal, a visionary medical doctor, and one year later, St Peter's School was also founded with similar objectives. They both wanted to provide a free-thinking, open, progressive and innovative high-quality education to local and international children. Then, some years later, Princess Margaret was founded in 1967 by Mrs. Gaos because she thought that an English school was necessary. In that moment, the majority of schools taught French, and she opted to create a school who gave importance to the English

language. As other schools, as SEK Catalunya or John Talabot, it promoted a trilingual education.

Afterwards, St. Paul's School was created in 1968, in the same way that Oak House School was founded in the same year with the main objective to cover the growing demand of a trilingual education. Then, in 1978 was published the first real decree that recognised the foreign schools in Spain, and the Spanish students started to validate their studies. Then, in the same year, the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS) was created, and it continues representing the English school's interests. The British School of Barcelona helped with the creation of this Association and it continues collaborating.

After that, some years later and continuing the increasing foundation of the English schools in Catalonia, Benjamin Franklin International School and Saint George School were created in 1985 and 1988 respectively. The first one was created by a group of parents who wanted to give to their sons the kind of education that they thought that didn't exist. The other one, was founded with similar objectives than the older English Schools because they wanted to provide a high-quality and bilingual education too.

At the moment, there are more than fifteen English Schools in Catalonia and they have good prestige. A clear example is that one new English school was opened this last year, that it is The British School of Catalunya. With the example of this new English school we can see that this kind of education has a growing demand and some families opt to bring their children to schools that offer bilingual or trilingual education.

To finish, we have to highlight that all the English Schools of Catalonia are private and the majority of them were founded by a group of people who thought that was necessary to offer a bilingual or trilingual education to the children. For this reason, the majority of the English schools share the same characteristics and also have the same objectives to achieve.

2.5.3. International School of Catalunya (ISCAT)

There are few English schools in Catalonia, comparing with the other kinds of schools. To know more about this kind of schools, we focus on the International School of Catalunya (ISCAT), that is located in la Garriga, a town near Barcelona. It is registered as a British school, so its educational program follows the National Curriculum of England and Wales, with Catalan and Spanish integrated in that. Also, it offers French as a foreign language, and is compatible with the *Pla de la Generalitat*.



Their students go from Nursery (aged 3) to Year 7 (aged 11). It has a reduced number of pupils per class; it has a maximum of 18 students in each one. They think that it guarantees more personalized instruction for each pupil, because people know more each other, develop relationships and cross-age activities can be a regular feature.

Depending on the different stages of the Primary Education, the school teaches different skills of English through different activities and subjects, all adequate to their age. Therefore, they teach the 80% in English and the other 20% in Catalan and Spanish. They promote the English learning, but they don't forget the learning of the other two languages of the country.

In nursery, the pupils learn mainly through English (80%) with play-based activities that help them to develop creativity and independence in learning, as well as to take turns and develop language. Then, in Year, 1 the pupils practice writing daily and do many word games and activities. They begin taking home little reading books to share, and are very proud of their growing vocabulary and increasing fluency in English.

In Year 2 and Year 3 the pupils write every day because they are excited about writing and its purposes and different types of audience. They read with increasing

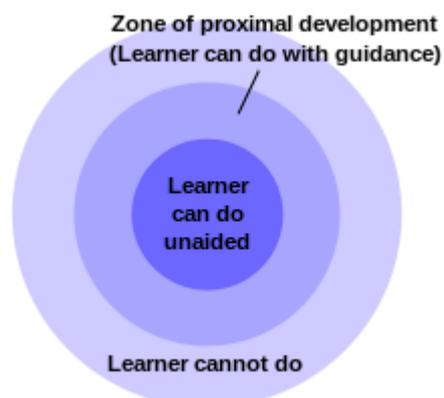
independence and love to take books home to share. Those pupils who are non-native speakers of English speak it fluently and with ease, using a broad vocabulary.

In Year 4 the pupil's knowledge of the conventions of writing is growing steadily and they read for pleasure as well as to acquire information. After that, in Year 5 the pupils are able to debate, present a spoken argument and defend their views with evidence using persuasive language. Their knowledge of grammatical structures and features of grammar deepens and they can compare different types of narrative and information texts.

Finally, in Year 6 the pupils are able to set their own challenges to extend their achievement and experience in writing; therefore they can present text effectively and communicate information and ideas.

The ISCAT director, Noreen Loughman (2012), said in the school page, "My values as an educator are centered around a social constructivist model in which students are continually building their own understanding based on their previous experiences and prior knowledge". This appointment shows that the director of the school promotes Vygotsky's scaffolding method that it is based on building a metaphorical "scaffold" which helps to acquire the knowledge orderly to have sense and to relate the new knowledge's with the previous ones.

To be more precise, "scaffolding" is a term more commonly known as Zone of Proximal Development that was created by Vygotsky. These terms are used to describe a method of teaching that involves providing resources and support to students as they learn new concepts. Then, as the students develop skills, the supports are gradually removed, so the student can accomplish a task with no assistance. For this reason, we can affirm that the Zone of Proximal Development is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. To clarify this concept, we can observe the representation of this term in the following picture:



3. Research method

Concerning the research method used to carry out this study, we can talk about many aspects related to it. First of all, the paradigm of this research is positivist because it is based on the discovery of a general law, which it is to check the learning of English, more specifically, the oral ability, in three kinds of schools. For this reason, my purpose is related to observe if there is some difference about the oral ability of the children, taking into account the type of the school, or more concretely, the treatment of English in their schools.

Related to the paradigm, I can establish that the main objective of this study is to explain a phenomenon to discover a general law. In addition, to achieve this purpose it is necessary that the nature of reality is objective and static, in other words, this study can't be influenced by my opinion and it has to be in a given time. To finish, it should be noted that the researcher has to be someone external to the study because she/he only has to observe the subject, in other words, the pupils as an investigation object. Therefore, the sample of subjects has to be significant because it has to allow me to generalize the obtained results.

Another aspect related to the research method of this study is the methodological orientation, which will be an empirical analysis because its objective is to check if there are some differences between the learning of English in different types of schools and to establish a general law. To be more precise, this proposal is related with the "ex-post-facto" methodology, that means that the things that I want to observe have already gone, and I only want to observe it. For this reason, I won't carry out any activity in the classroom before my observation, because I want to observe the abilities of the children based on their English knowledge. In this way, I won't introduce anything new with my intervention; it will be based on the observation and the recording of the facts, because the effects have already been produced.

To end up, there is one more aspect related the research method that I want to highlight, which is the dimension or the concrete aspects of the study. The topic of this proposal could be very wide, but I delimited it relating this study with the English oral ability of the children, and as this aspect is also wide, I delimited the aspects that I wanted to compare. First of all, I observed the use of the language, in other words, if the children answered in English, if they mixed languages or if the answer was clear.

As well, I observed the behavior of the children when they spoke English; therefore I focused on their security and motivation. Also, it is important that I observed their English knowledge; the variety of vocabulary, the knowledge of different verbs, the use of adjectives and adverbs to describe, the creation of complete sentences and the knowledge of the correct order of the words. To finish, I observed their practice using the English language, in other words, I focused on the fluency and the pronunciation

3.1. Sample

To carry out this research I chose a sample of subjects which could allow me to solve the objective planned at the beginning. There are a lot of schools and also there are many age levels, so I had to take a decision about what schools I would like to observe and which age level. I delimited this proposal with three types of schools: the state school, the rural school and the English school in Catalonia, because I thought that they have very different characteristics and they could be interesting when I will compare the results. As a state school I chose the I.E. Marta Mata in Torelló because it is the school in which I was doing my placement practice. Then, as a rural school I chose the E. Muntanyola because I visited it last year with the University, and I liked it. To finish, I chose the International School of Catalunya in la Garriga because it is an example of English school in Catalonia that follows the British curriculum and I thought that it could be interesting to observe.

Regarding the age level, I chose to carry out this research in Year 2, so the samples of subjects were between 7 and 8 years old. More concretely, I chose this Primary stage with the main objective to obtain as much information as possible, because I take into account that in the rural school there are some courses with very few students and it wouldn't be the appropriate sample for this research. Therefore, the sample of this study is "non probabilistic", and more concretely, intentional because I have chosen three schools and one specific age level in which I could observe and compare the characteristics and the oral abilities properly.

3.2. Instruments

Concerning the data collection techniques, in the practical part, I used the observation because it is a technique that allows to observe and to collect the information in person, and it also allows ensuring that the activity is carried out properly.

This observation was direct and individual because I was with the children when they were carrying out the activity. However, it was recorded with a voice recorder in order to facilitate the subsequent more detailed observation of some aspects like the knowledge of the language or the practice of it, because they are aspects that need more time to be observed and it would be more difficult to extract information during the activity.

In addition, this observation was systematic because from the beginning, it was integrated in the theoretical design research, with some specific objectives formulated, in other words, to observe the different aspects that I have said in the previous section through a previously proposed activity. My role was as a participant observer, because the children were the ones who had to express their ideas, but when I saw that some of them were nervous and didn't know what to say, I helped them through opened questions that helped them to explain the picture.

As I explained in the previous section, this observation activity was recorded with a voice recorder because this method had advantages like the permanence and the recording speed, in other words, it allowed me to listen more accurately their English knowledge and their practice. Also, all of these recordings are attached in Annex 8. However, there were some aspects that I had to observe during the activity, because it is difficult to know their security and motivation through a recording. So I assessed these aspects during the activity, where I could see the direct image of the children, their gestures and their facial expressions that provided information to observe these aspects.

The instrument that I used to collect the data was the table that I attach in Annex 1, in which we can observe that I mentioned all the dimensions that I commented that I wanted to analyze. Therefore, from this table I classified and analyzed the concrete dimensions which my project is based in, and then I could compare the possible differences.

3.3. Procedure

After studying the theoretical framework and to find three schools that fit in the purpose of this study, I had to plan how I can compare the oral ability of the pupils. So I decided that the best way could be through an activity in which the pupils have to explain the details of some picture. For this reason, the activity that I planned is based in observing a picture, which I attached in Annex 2, where there are different vocabulary and actions about a classroom. The pupils had to explain everything that they saw, in as much detail as possible. It is important that they did it in detail because if they explained a lot, then I could extract more information. The timing of this activity was opened, in other words, I let the children explain everything that they saw without pressure. Also, in the state and the rural schools I gave the instructions in Catalan to ensure that they understood what they had to do. As in the English school the teachers speak all the time in English, I gave the instructions in English because I thought that they could understand me too.

After this, I had to plan what concrete aspects I wanted to compare through this activity, so I had to decide which dimensions I wanted to observe. To facilitate this task, I created a table in which I classified the observed aspects; the use of the language, the behavior of the pupils, the knowledge of the language and their practice. As it was an individual activity, I had to assess all these aspects through this observation instrument, classifying their abilities, in other words, sorting the information.

When I had planned the observation activity and its subsequent assessment, I was ready to carry out this individual activity with the pupils. So I had to plan the visits of each school, because I had the intention to carry out this activity in one single moment and I didn't want to disturb some important lesson. For this reason, I asked to the English teachers of each school which was the best moment to take the children one by one and carry out the activity. Also, I had some troubles to plan the visits, because I was doing my teaching practice, and then came some festivities as Saint Jorge and the Labor Day. I didn't have an established order to carry out the activity with the pupils because I think that it doesn't influence the results. For this reason, I called the pupils one by one without a concrete order.

First of all, as I was doing my teaching practice placement in I.E. Marta Mata, the pupils of this school were the first ones to carry out this activity. They were 46 pupils in Year

2, so I decided to carry it out with all of them in order to have as many samples as possible. The activity was developed correctly, but with its subsequent assessment I saw that I missed to write one aspect that I had to value with this activity, that was if the children created complete sentences. So I decided to improve it and to take into account this mistake when I had to go to the next school. However, I used this new table to extract the information of this school too, and I attached all the samples in Annex 3.

Secondly, I went to the International School of Catalunya, where I carried out this activity with 13 pupils. As in the other school, the development of it was correct and I had into account from the beginning if the children created complete sentences or not, so it was good to apply the improvement in this second school. I also attached the samples of this school in Annex 4.

To finish, I carried out the activity in E. Muntanyola where there were 6 pupils in the Year 2 level. As in the other schools, the development of the activity was correct, although it lasted less time because they were fewer children. As well, I attached the samples of this school in Annex 5.

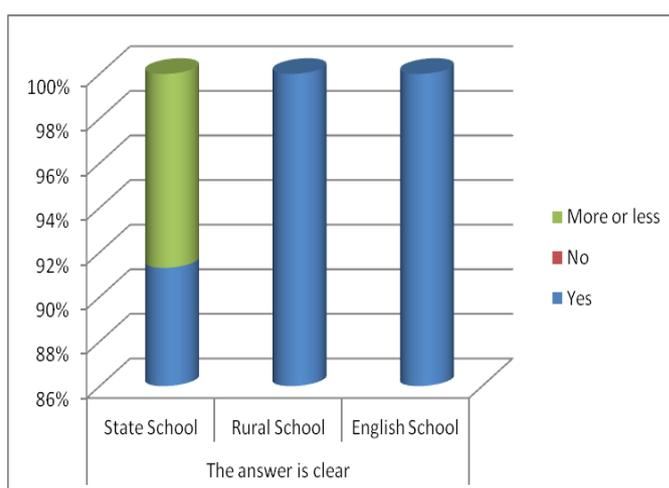
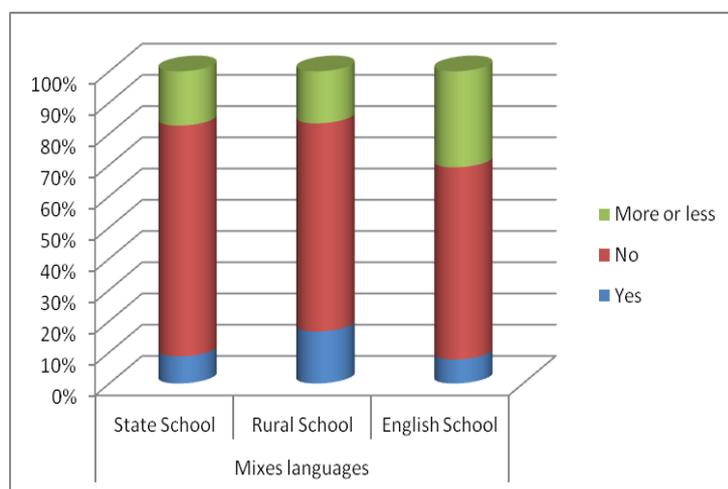
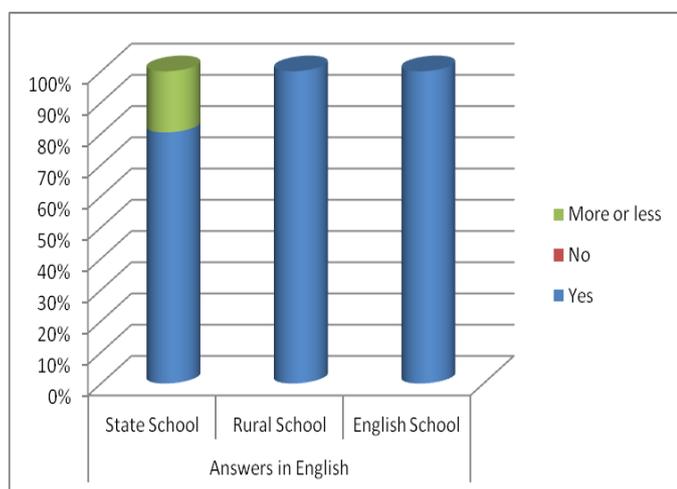
When I developed the activity in these three schools, I had to upload all the recordings to the computer in order to hear them and to assess one by one the abilities of each child. From the classification of the obtained dates, I undertook a quantitative analysis, more concretely, descriptive, in order to extract conclusions. However, these conclusions don't affect all the schools, as each school is a world, they only involve the samples.

So I used the observation tables to compare the abilities of the pupils of these three different schools, considering the differences that also were in the same one. It was useful the realization of a data matrix in which there are all the dimensions and indicators, with their corresponding dates to facilitate making the graphics that represent, in a visual perspective, the oral abilities of the pupils. I want to highlight that it was very important to establish the benchmarks of this activity, which are attached in Annex 6, because I had to listen to the recording of each child and to extract the information following these benchmarks. For this reason, I can consider that I was objective to extract the information, because I used the same benchmarks all the time.

4. Results

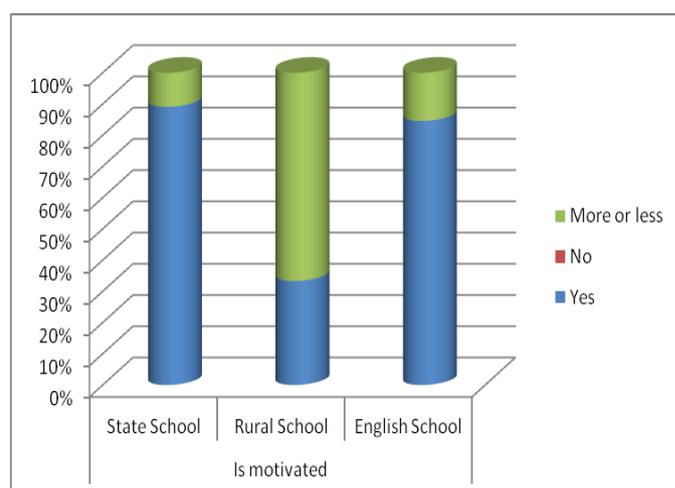
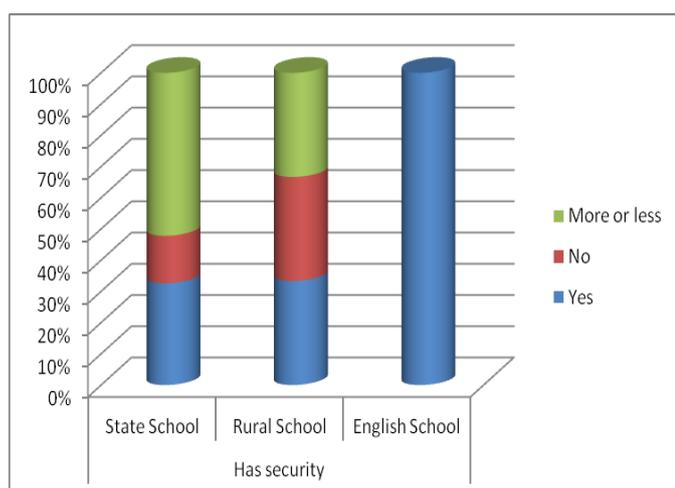
Concerning the results, after doing the data matrix of the oral activity of the pupils of each school, which is attached in Annex 7, I decided to do a graphic of each dimension to compare the differences between the schools. So in this section I want to comment one by one the concrete aspects that I have observed through this activity, to compare the results. As in each school I carried out the activity with a different number of pupils, I did a graphic that helps to understand better the results, because it does the equivalences with the proportion.

First of all, about the use of the language, I observed three concrete aspects; if they *answer in English*, *mix languages* and if *the answer is clear*.



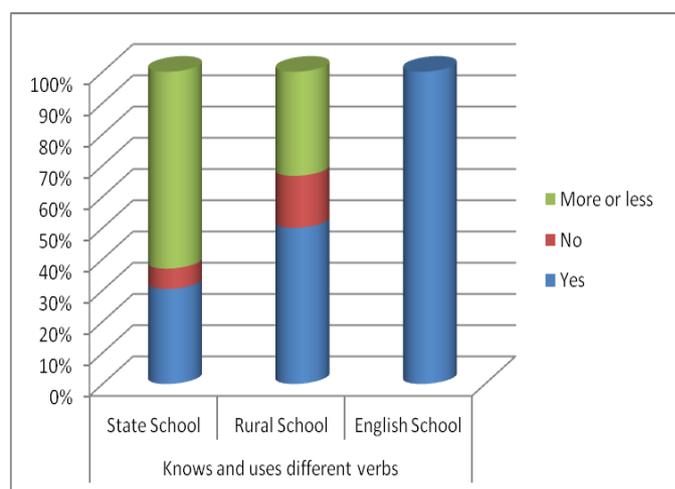
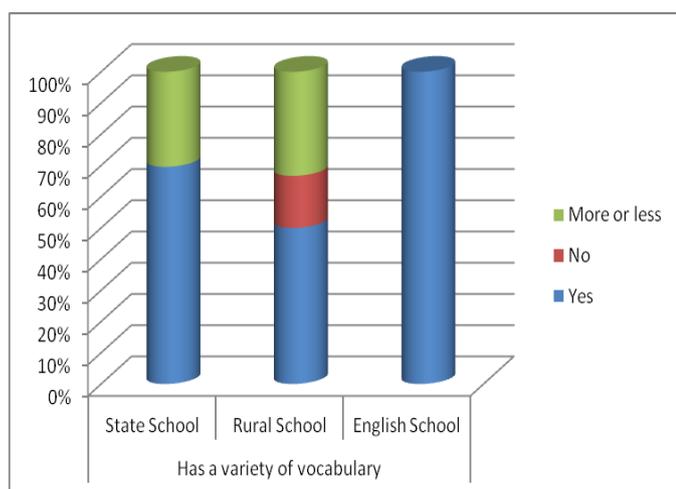
The pupils of the three schools, in general, spoke in English during the activity, unless a few children of the State school that in some moments spoke Catalan because when they didn't know a word, they said it in their mother tongue. Also, in the second graphic we can observe that the majority of pupils didn't mix languages, but there were pupils in the three schools who did. It was because some children, when they didn't know how to say something, for example, they asked me questions in Catalan. So I considered that they mixed languages because they could do this in English. Then, in the third graphic we can see that the majority of the pupil's answers were clear, because they expressed themselves properly and I understood what they wanted to say. However, there were some children in the State School that I considered that I could understand them better.

Next, regarding the behavior I observed their security and their motivation. In this first graphic we can observe that there is a big difference between the security of the children of the English school and the other two. Then, we can see that in general the pupils of the State School have more security than the Rural School ones, because as I saw, these last ones were very nervous and a bit scared with the development of the activity. In addition, in the second graphic there is the motivation percentage of the pupils, and we can observe that the pupils of the State School were very motivated during the activity, followed by the pupils of the English School. I can highlight that there weren't any child who didn't be motivated carrying out the activity, but there were some children that didn't have the same motivation than the others.

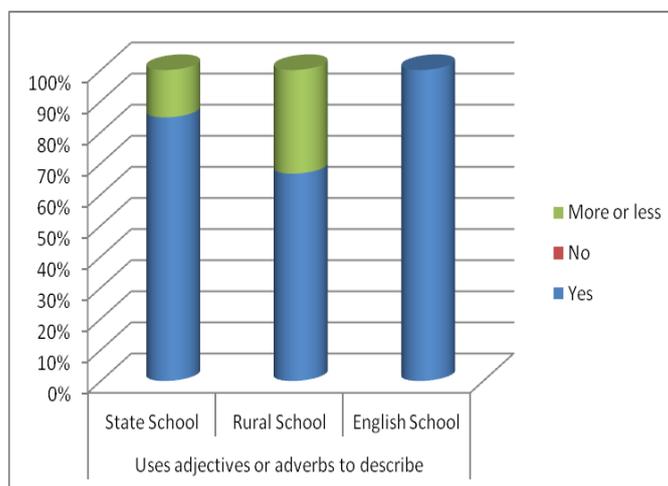


Thirdly, concerning the knowledge of the language I observed different aspects as *The variety of vocabulary, the knowledge and the use of different verbs, the use of adjectives or adverbs to describe, the creation of complete sentences and the knowledge of the correct order of the words.* About the first graphic we can observe that all the pupils of the English school had a variety of vocabulary and they were able to say a lot of objects of the picture, however, I can consider that the majority of the pupils of the other schools had a good variety of vocabulary too. Also, we can observe that in the Rural School there was some child who didn't have it and it was very difficult for him/her to express himself/herself. I want to highlight that some children needed more help than others, not only with the vocabulary, also with the verbs and the adjectives. So in some cases I gave them a help support asking them a question with two possible answers, and they had to choose the correct one. I did this because I saw that if I didn't give them this help to these children, they would have been in silence.

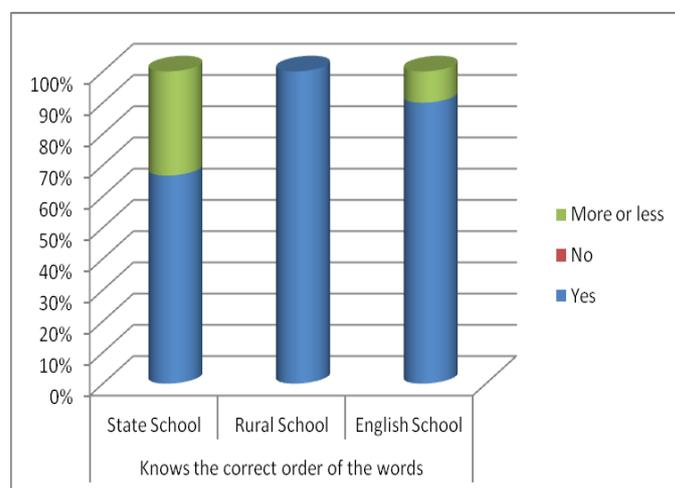
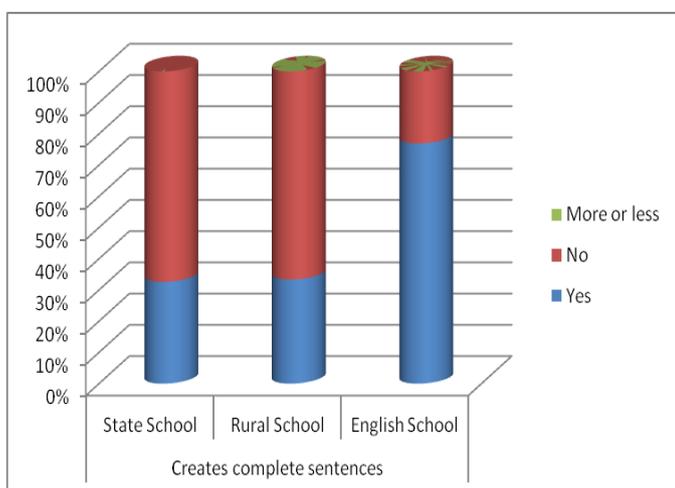
Then, regarding the second graphic we can observe that the pupils of the English school also knew and used different verbs, whereas the children of the other schools didn't know and use them so many. Also, we can observe that related with the verbs, the pupils of both State and Rural schools have less knowledge than the vocabulary one. It was surprising that the majority of children of the State School knew the verb "run", so I thought that they are used to listen to "don't run". Also, concerning the verbs, the most known and used were "run", "read" and "play", but there were some children who also said "paint", "draw" and "speak".



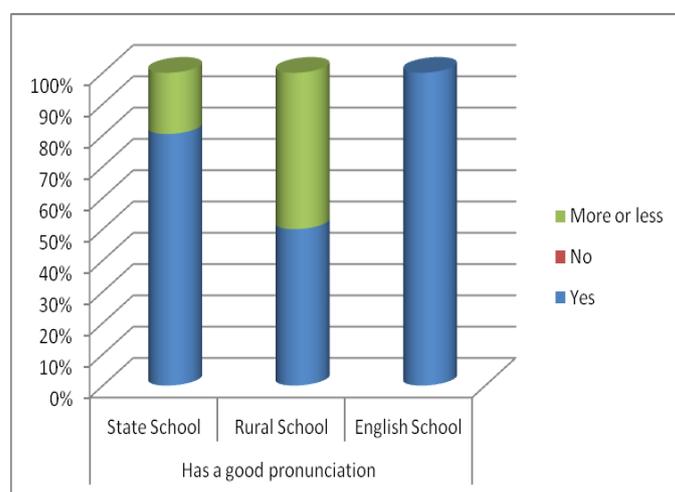
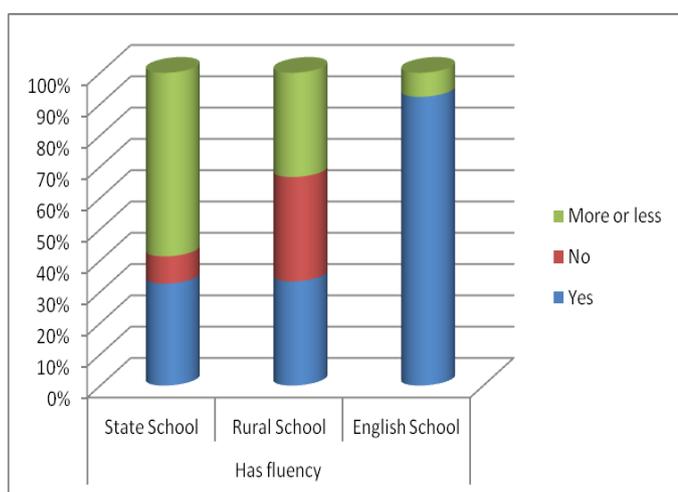
About the graphic of the use of adjectives and adverbs, we can observe that in general all the pupils used them, because they were able to say the numbers, the colors, some feelings, etc. However, it is clearly that the children of the English school were the ones who used them more.



To finish the section about the knowledge of the language, we can observe the creation of complete sentences and the correct order of the words. I didn't force the children to create complete sentences, so who did it was because it was natural for them. In the first graphic we can observe that the pupils of the English school were the ones who created more complete sentences, whereas both State and Rural school there were more children who didn't create any. However, it is also important to consider that there were some children who did, although they were fewer. Then, if we look this second graphic about the correct order of the words, we can observe that the majority of the pupils knew it, so they created good sentences to explain what they could see in the picture.



Regarding to the practice of the language I observed *the fluency and the pronunciation*. About this first aspect, we can observe in the graphic that the majority of the children of the English school had fluency when they spoke English, and both State and Rural Schools not too much. In these two schools the majority of the children needed a lot of time to express what they wanted and also some of them needed help. Then, as far as the pronunciation we can observe in the second graphic that, in general, the pupils had a good pronunciation. In the English school all of them had a good pronunciation, followed by the pupils of the State School, and then by the children of the Rural one.



5. Conclusions

To conclude this research I want to talk about the conclusions that I reached after doing the entire research procedure. At the beginning of this study I planned some objectives that I tried to achieve after studying the theoretical framework of this, the subsequent observation of the children's English abilities and after the comparison of the activities results. Below, I want to explain my conclusions after doing the procedure that I have explained before, but it is important to consider that if I had chosen three different schools, maybe the results would be different. So, these conclusions don't make reference about all the schools, as I only studied three examples and I can't generalize the obtained results.

First of all, during this project we have seen that the three schools that I have chosen have different characteristics, for example the number of pupils per class. On one hand, the state school Marta Mata has two lines, so in the stage that I have observed it has 46 pupils. On the other hand, the rural school of Muntanyola, as it is located in a little and rural town, it only has 6 pupils in Year 2. Then, in the International School of Catalunya, as they opt to have groups with a few children, they have 13 pupils in the course that I have observed.

I thought that the number of pupils per class would be a variable that could help to learn English better or not, because I thought that a teacher could help more and be closer with a classroom with fewer children. However, I didn't have in mind that in the rural school, even there are less children in the class, they are mixed with pupils of another course, and it could hinder the teacher's task to help them better. However, it doesn't mean that the number of pupils per class doesn't influence the learning of English, but it doesn't have as much importance as I thought.

As well, after doing this research I have seen the importance of a variable that I didn't consider at the beginning, and it is the hours of English per week. After comparing the number of hours per week of each school, I can see that there is a big difference between them, and it could help me to explain the obtained results in the oral activities. Regarding the pupils of Year 2, in the State School they do 4,30 hours a week because they carry out a CLIL program, and they also do the ICT and Physical Education subjects in English apart from the English subject. The Rural School of Muntanyola has 1,40 hours a week of English and they also do the breakfast time in this language twice

a week. Finally, the International School of Catalunya opts to teach 80% of the lessons in English, that it is more than half of the hours of the week.

As we can see, each school treats English in a different way, because some of them can spend more hours than others and this can be seen in the obtained results. If we look at all the graphics that I attached in the previous section, we can see that the school that spends more time teaching in English, that it is the International one, is the school where the children feel more secure speaking English, know and use more vocabulary, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. They also create more complete sentences, have more fluency and have a better pronunciation than the others. So in general, we can see as more hours of English, the children feel more comfortable and they are more able to speak in a foreign language.

Also, the second school with better results of the oral activity coincides with the second school that does more hours in English, that it is the State one. For this reason, I still think that the hours of English class per week are very important, because for the children it is a foreign language, and if they have more time to practice it, they could feel more comfortable using it. However, there are some aspects in which the Rural School obtained better results than the State school, as if the pupils answer in English, if the answer is clear and if they know the correct order of the words. Thinking about it, it would be interesting to have more children in the Rural School to observe more samples that could help me to extract conclusions for these facts, because as I said, there only were 6 pupils. However, the aspects if they answer in English and if the answer is clear, I think that they don't have much relation with the English ability as other aspects as the vocabulary, verbs, security, etc. I think that these two aspects have more relation with the personal character of the children and if they have doubts or are shy.

After this, I want to highlight that it isn't important if it is a State or a Rural school, which it still is a state school too. After comparing the oral activities, I have seen that there is a relation between the schools that teach more hours per week in English and the children that have a better oral ability. For this reason, I want to consider this variable as an important one to learn English better.

Also, another aspect that can favour the better learning of English is the teaching of a subject using this language. I think that it can influence the better English knowledge

because the pupils can learn more vocabulary related with other areas and they also have more immersion opportunities. The pupils can hear more input, they are exposed at more hours of comprehension and it is required that they try to communicate themselves more hours in a foreign language. However, it only is one of my conclusions after carrying out this research and it should be studied to verify if it is true, so I'm not confirming it.

To end up, I want to summarize my conclusions to understand better the thoughts that I have after doing this study. So, the first one is that the pupils of the International School of Catalunya are the ones who have the best oral ability, and it could be the result as the amount of English hours per week that they do. Then, the children of the State School also have a good oral ability, and it also may be the result of the CLIL program that the school carries out. Therefore, I can't generalize this result with all the State schools in general, because I chose a State one that spends many hours with the treatment of this language. Also, the pupils of the Rural school, in general, obtained good results in the oral activity and it means that they have a good oral ability too. However, I think that they would have had better results if they had spent more hours per week dealing with English. This school has the advantages that they are fewer children in class and they have a language assistant, so they could use it more because they do fewer hours of English as the others.

For this reason, on one hand I can establish that, in theory, the pupils of the English schools usually will have better oral abilities because they practice it a lot and spend a big amount of hours with the treatment of this language. But in the other hand, I can't establish that all the State schools have better oral abilities than the Rural ones, for example, because maybe there are Rural schools that spend more hours than other State schools with the treatment of English. In this way, I can say that this research is based on the concrete example of these three schools and if I carry it out in other schools, the results might be different.

I liked to develop this project because it allowed me to know three different schools and to delve the treatment of English in each of them. I think that it is very important for a teacher to know many school realities because it enriches our knowledge. So I think that the conclusions that I have after the development of this project could help me in a future as a teacher because I can consider things that I didn't do it before. Also, through this study I learnt how a research process is, different school realities and I

have observed the oral ability of children of different school settings. For me it was very interesting to delve in the oral ability because when I was young it was forgotten in my English lessons and I saw that now the English teachers give more importance to it than before, at least in the schools that I have observed.

Finally, I want to consider that this research could be extended for two big reasons. On one hand, during this study I only observed the oral ability, but it would be interesting to compare all the other abilities too. Doing this, we could have more information and maybe we could extract more conclusions about the English learning of the pupils. On the other hand, as I said, this project is based about three concrete examples of schools, but it would be interesting to carry it out with more examples of each kind of school, and also include other types like the Private one. Also, this study could be carried out relying on different aspects, not only the type of center, because it also could be carried out based on the size of the school, the number of lines of the center, and other linguistic aspects. For this reason, I can state that this research could be wider if I had more time, because it would be interesting to delve in all the language abilities and to base this project on more school settings.

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