

**DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO TEACH ENGLISH IN INFANT  
EDUCATION?**

**TREBALL DE FINAL DE GRAU D'EDUCACIÓ INFANTIL  
I PRIMÀRIA AMB MENCIÓ EN LLENGUA ANGLESA**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to compare the advantages and disadvantages of starting to learn English whilst in Infant Education. Through the research studies and the questionnaire designed to compare local results (Catalonia), it is possible to find some features which both agree and disagree with our current teaching methods. Also, comparing the questionnaire results over a local scale gives us an optimistic viewpoint on features we can all implement to improve our children's second language learning.

**Key words:** Critical period, second language acquisition, age range, English proficiency and teaching improvements.

Aquest estudi pren l'objectiu de comparar els avantatges i inconvenients de començar a aprendre anglès a l'Educació Infantil. A través del que diu la recerca i un qüestionari per tal d'obtenir resultats locals (Catalunya), és possible trobar certes característiques per donar suport o no a l'ensenyament que trobem a l'escola avui en dia. A més, comparant els resultats del qüestionari a escala local trobem una visió optimista sobre aspectes que tots podem fer per millorar l'aprenentatge de la segona llengua dels nostres infants.

**Paraules clau:** Període crític, adquisició de la segona llengua, franja d'edat, domini d'anglès i millores d'ensenyament.

## **1. Introduction**

This final degree report aims to find the most important aspects of teaching English to the young children. In Infant Education, the English language is progressively becoming a habitual subject. Despite there obviously being some advantages to this, many disadvantages can also be found. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages will be analysed, as well as features regarding the optimal age to start learning language, comparisons between groups of different ages and some tips that can help to introduce the language in the best possible way.

For this reason, it was my objective to find information about this topic, reflect on it, and also find some local evidence that could help provide me with some results from our nearby schools. Therefore, different aspects regarding English teaching and learning in Infant Education will be analysed to objectively regard the positive and negative aspects of teaching English at this stage. Through different articles which reflect a more positive or negative perspective of teaching English to young learners, evidence can be found regarding the many positive aspects that this age range students are more likely to acquire. Also, the most known disadvantages will be considered, not only to reflect on how often this produces a negative impact on young students' learning, but also to figure out if there is any possibility to improve some of the negative practices within the classroom.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Literature review**

In a globalised world, the need for a common language is almost unavoidable. As English has been used for many years as the lingua franca, the need to learn this language is more evident every day. Taking into account the fact that “More science magazines are published in English in comparison to other languages (Education First, 2018, p. 4)”, it is important to start learning this language as soon as possible to have the ability to achieve the most knowledge.

Taking a look to a global scale: “Nowadays, experts estimate that most of the world population speaks two or more languages (Education First, 2018, p. 4)”. Regarding this statement, it is obvious that educational systems try to include second language acquisition as soon as possible, but also be aware that: “Parents want their children to develop English skills to benefit from new world orders and put pressure on governments to introduce English to younger children (Copland, Garton and Burns, 2014, pp. 738-739)”.

Moreover, taking into account that “Less than a quarter of English speakers are natives (Education First, 2018, p. 4)”, the use of English as the lingua franca become more powerful. Therefore, the use of English is so important because so many people speak it. Even if it is not possible to assure that English produces social improvements, there is a correlation between the use of English and the international exchange as well as the fact that arrives to more individuals (Education First, 2018).

### **2.2 English language teaching in infant education**

Regarding the European context, many differences can be found between all countries. The only country to introduce a first foreign language as a compulsory subject under five is the German community in Belgium (European Commission, 2017). The countries that follow are Poland and Malta, teaching a first foreign language as a compulsory subject at the age of five (Figure 1).

At the age of six, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania, Liechtenstein, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway and Serbia introduce their first foreign language as a compulsory subject, following, Denmark, Croatia, Latvia, Slovenia (which

is phasing in), Sweden (with a variable starting age), England (within the UK) and Turkey, at the age of seven. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal (which is phasing in), Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Switzerland start teaching their first foreign language at the age of eight, while Estonia (with a variable starting age), Hungary, Finland (with a variable starting age), Iceland and Montenegro start at the age of nine.

When children from the French and Flemish community in Belgium, and the Netherlands are 10 years old, they start learning their first foreign language as a compulsory subject while, Wales and Northern Ireland (in the UK) start at the age of 11. Finally, Ireland and Scotland do not have a compulsory subject to learn a foreign language.

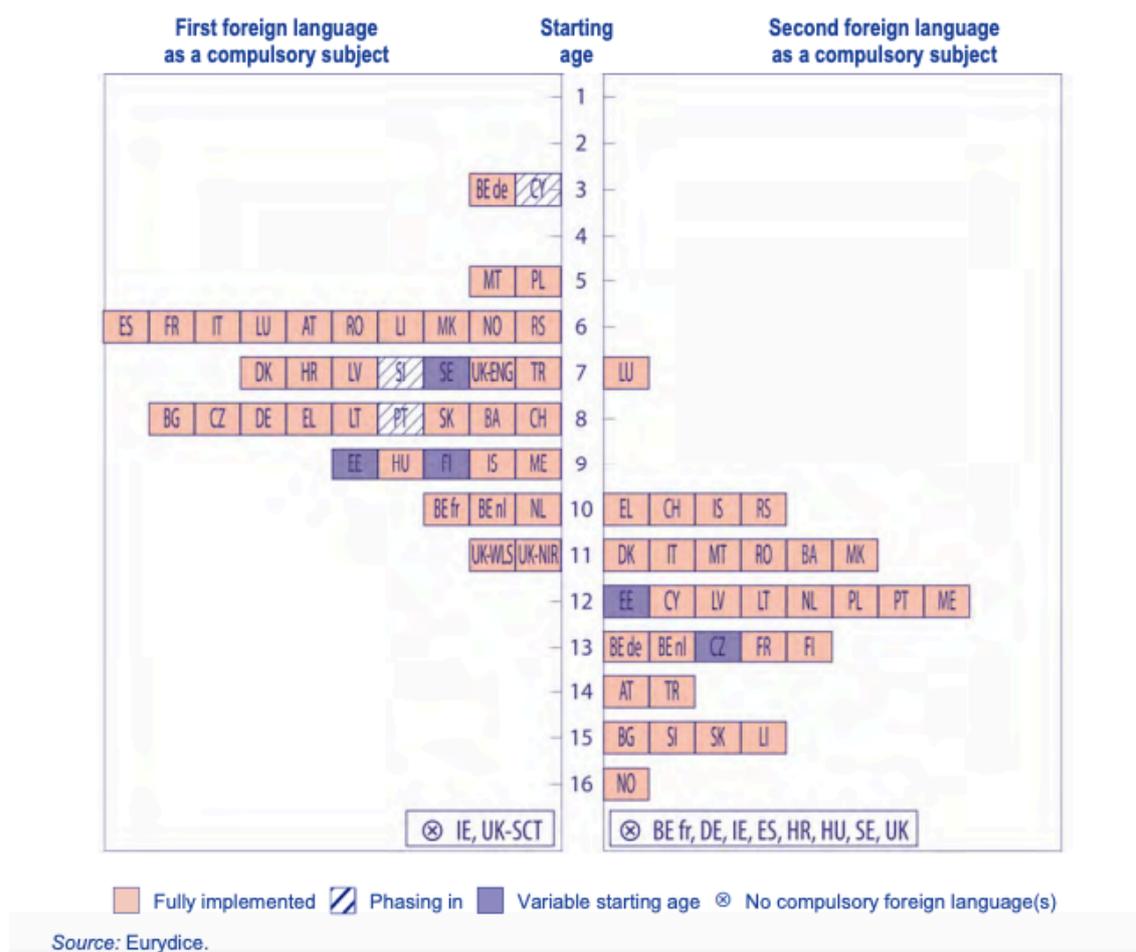


Figure 1. Starting ages in different European countries at which a first and second foreign languages are compulsory subjects for all students in pre-primary, primary, and/or general secondary education, 2015/16 taken from the “Key data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe 2017 edition (European Commission, 2017).

### **2.3 English language teaching in infant education in Catalonia**

Within the Catalan Infant Education curriculum there is no evidence of any English language teaching methodology or guidelines. The Catalan curriculum in Infant Education aims for a general perspective focusing on the child's communication, context discovery, body domain, autonomy, relationships and creativeness as priority (Departament d'Ensenyament, 2016).

However, most of the schools introduce some English routines. Even if it is not daily, schools have "English time" once or twice per week or even some English language "racons" or "ambients". Thus, even if the curriculum does not focus on English teaching, schools find the importance enough to include this foreign language acquisition within their schedule.

### **2.4 Research in second language acquisition in infant education**

When trying to think about teaching English in Infant Education, some two general ideas may come to our heads: It is actually good to start as soon as possible to start learning a foreign language because it will help them to develop their future learning on it or; it is not good to start learning a foreign language at a very young age because it will make their first language acquisition more difficult.

Taking into account this idea that "Since language acquisition in adulthood is almost exclusively second language acquisition, the real issue is not the difference between child and adult acquisition, but between first and second language acquisition" (Scovel, 1969, pp. 246-247), the benefits of learning English as soon as possible seems to be related to the first language. As they are learning their L1, is it a good idea to start teaching a second language? Because "it is indeed possible to acquire a second language after the sensitive period, but it would theoretically not be possible to do so to the extent of attaining native-like proficiency and thus being able to "pass for native" (Patkowski, 1980, p. 449). Therefore, what are the benefits of starting to learn English in Infant Education, while children are developing their first L1 skills?

### **2.4.1 Arguments in favour of early teaching**

Besides thinking about teaching English in Infant Education in terms of acquiring a similar accent to a native speaker, many other advantages can be found to learn English at an early age. As we have probably heard before “children are like sponges”, which means they have the capacity to learn faster than adults, but why does this happen? When talking about learning a language, the difficulty in learning is a consequence of the cortical lateralization, whose elasticity gradually atrophies through time. Lateralization does not occur until nine or ten years old, but in childhood the whole brain acts with regards to the linguistic functions (Penfield and Roberts, 1959).

Moreover, regarding the idea that “almost everyone learns the sound patterns of a language perfectly as a child, and yet, almost no one can learn the sound patterns of a language perfectly as an adult” (Scovel, 1969, p. 245), it also becomes a good reason to start learning the sound patterns properly within the earlier stages of education. Regarding other language skills, Patkowski (1980) discovered that people who arrived in the United States before they were fifteen years old, achieved greater syntax results when compared with older subjects.

Having in mind the idea that “Although adult learners often far surpass their younger counterparts in learning vocabulary items, syntactic rules, and stylistic variations, they never seem able to rid themselves of a foreign accent” (Scovel, 1969, p.245), even if the accent is not the most important aim, it allows children to acquire a better pronunciation rather than merely knowing the language use.

Therefore, it is possible to associate these advantages with a sensitive period to start learning a second language. The idea of a “sensitive period”, related to Lenneberg’s hypothesis (1967) takes into account that there is a critical period to learn a language which stretches from two to fourteen years old. Patkowski (1980) pointed that:

Lenneberg presented three important arguments implicating puberty as the close to the critical period. The first is based upon studies in neurology which indicate that various maturational growth curves plateau during the early teens. The second argument concerns findings in aphasia which seem to show that the chances for recovery of lost language functions are very different for children and adults. The third argument is related to the

language development of Down's Syndrome children which appears to follow normal but slowed-down course until it is "frozen" at puberty (p.459).

#### **2.4.2 Arguments against early teaching of English in infant education**

"For the first time, adults between 26 and 30 years old overcome students between 21 and 25 around the world, despite the relative abilities of the different groups have much variation between the regions" (Education First, 2018, p. 4). Knowing that fact, the possibility to start learning a language after the Infant Education becomes not only possible, but also reasonable. When having a close accent to a native speaker is not the objective, the possibility to learn a second language becomes real.

Even if children have a great capacity for interpersonal communication and a really good accent, the groups of older people quickly achieve a vocabulary and structural knowledge of the language (Aragonés, 1989). Also, Burstall (1975) argues there is not enough evidence to support the idea that starting to learn a language early on provides an advantage rather than merely having more time to dominate the foreign language.

Regarding morphology, syntax and vocabulary, the speed in acquiring them was also related to the age, but in this case, Aragonés (1989) results show that teenagers are the fastest group to acquire these skills, followed by adults, and finally children. Consequently, the benefits of learning a second language earlier depends on the skills aimed for. Moreover, even recognition and retention of new sound patterns are more obvious in teenagers than in children.

However, even targeting native-like proficiency there are some disadvantages starting at an early age, for example, when second language acquisition is started in an early age, children have less opportunities to develop their first language (Lightbown and Spada, 2013).

Taking into account that "When the goal of the educational programme is basic communicative skill for all students, and where there is a strong commitment to maintaining and developing the child's first language, it can be more efficient to begin second language teaching later" (Lightbown and Spada, 2013, p. 186). Therefore, there

would be more time for children to start learning their first language as a solid base, and start learning the second language when the strong first language basis may help them develop the second one.

## **2.5 Teaching implications**

Having seen the differences between children, teenagers and adults when learning a foreign language, there is clear evidence about their abilities, regarding the age. However, it is not only a question of age we must think about in learning a new language. Taking into account the idea of teaching English in Infant education, there are also some areas to establish regarding the teaching, not only the learning.

Regarding the teaching practice, some characteristics may be taken into account when teaching English. The first has to do with using visual materials and motivational methodologies to engage the children in the tasks proposed. This is an important aspect to take into account in Infant Education because children will be more motivated and ready to learn if the strategies and materials are suited to their interests.

The second one is being able to create good communication with the children in the target language in class. Thus, it will be possible to have good models regarding conversations and children will be able to remember the structure and start using it, as well as avoiding the first language to interfere when using the foreign language.

Considering previous research this final degree report attempts to answer the following research questions focusing on Infant Education in Catalonia:

1. Which positives aspects can be found regarding teaching English in Infant Education?
2. Which of them are negative?
3. What is the objective of learning English in Infant Education?
4. Is it possible to improve our current teaching?

### **3. Study**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

##### **3.1.1 Data collecting tool**

The objective of this study is to consider as many points of view as possible from different perspective. Consequently, the best tool I can use is a questionnaire (see Appendix). To create a questionnaire which was easy to answer and easy to send to as many people as possible I chose Google Forms. This tool allows you to create a questionnaire with different multiple-choice options to answer as well as the option to create alternative answers to the ones I proposed. Google forms also provide a database with Drive. This database allows me to filter the answers into categories as well as being able to create features to visualize the answers.

Taking into account the need of different perspectives, how different groups will answer to: Does it has a positive impact to start learning English in Infant Education? Does it affect negatively to their first language? Is it possible to introduce English in Infant Education in a better way? This questionnaire has been thought to use general ideas about the challenges in English classes to observe on how they are seen in our local reality. Reflecting on this idea, it is as much important to start earlier in our children's education? Do teachers, parents and students agree with the idea of start teaching English in Infant Education? To answer these questions, I proposed a questionnaire to have a closer vision about what is happening in our local reality. The main objective of this questionnaire is to compare the results and spot similarities and differences between parents', teachers' and students' points of view.

Within the questionnaire I created different categories. The first ones were based on bibliographic data, asking about their gender, age range, if they were parents, teachers, students, or none of the groups, their school locations (where they based their answers), and level of English. This category allowed me to see different perspectives regarding gender, age, English proficiency and location.

The next category was regarding the strengths and difficulties of teaching English to Young Learners in the educational system asking them about characteristics they think that improve children's English learning in Infant Education as well as characteristics they think that make English learning difficult. This category was based on the article “Challenges in Teaching English to Young Learners: Global Perspectives and Local Realities” (Copland, Garton, and Burns, 2014) and allowed me to compare the perspective of the local reality of the article with the local reality of Catalonia.

Another category is based on the optimal age to start learning English, asking them about their perspective proposing their optimal age to start learning English as well as the objective to learn this language in Infant Education. These answers allow me to compare the results of the study to our local reality as well as the different groups of the questionnaire.

The next category was designed to express different opinions about learning English outside the educational system. It involves questions about participants' perspective on extracurricular classes as well as parents and societal (public places) possible improvements to help children's English learning.

Finally, I created two questions (“What do you think about CLIL methodology?” and “In general, what is your opinion about English teaching in Infant Education?”) to observe the reality of our educational system, including questions about CLIL perspective, and a general perspective of Infant Education experience.

### 3.2.2 Analysis of results

Once I had received the 219 answers, I created different categories in order to analyse them. The first category included closed questions, which was easy to organize. These questions didn't give me much specific information, but they supported strong ideas. The next category involved closed questions with multiple answers. As they had not only the answers I proposed, but also their own answers, they created another perspective which allowed me to reflect on different possibilities. Finally, the questions with open answers gave me no strong arguments, but a lot of specific information about real experiences and local truths.

Once all the data had been collected, I checked the database for all the results and created graphs to clearly visualize the answers. Also, I broke down the answers into parameters to have stronger answers, which were better than many specific ones. Finally, I filtered the results through the different groups: parents of Infant Education children, parents of Primary Education children, Infant Education teachers, Primary Education teachers, teaching students and participants that belonged to none of the groups, in order to compare their different perceptions.

### 3.2.3 Participants

During the period of the questionnaire being completed, 215 answers were collected. These answers came from different profiles of people. Women were more active, providing 77,6% of the answers, while only 47 men answered the questionnaire. Also, the answers came from a few different places around Catalonia (Figure 2), the local focus of this questionnaire. I have asked responders where their children go to school, in the case of them being parents, or where do they work if they are teachers. Here is the result of the places we can take into account from the questionnaire:

Arbúcies	Argentona	Barcelona	Breda	Canovelles
Cardedeu	Cassà	Castell-Platja d'Aro	Castelldefels	Fornells
Girona	Hospitalet de Llobregat	Hostalric	Igualada	L'Estany

La Garriga	Maçanet de la Selva	Màlaga	Malgrat de Mar	Manlleu
Masquefa	Mataró	Mollet	Palafolls	Palafugell
Palamós	Palautordera	Parets del Vallès	Platja d’Aro	Quart
Riells i Viabrea	Sant Andreu de Llavanes	Sant Celoni	Sant Esteve de Palautordera	Sant Julià de Vilatorca
Santa Maria de Palautordera	Sarrià de Ter	Sant Miquel de Balenyà	Taradell	Tiana
Tona	Tordera	Torroella de Montgrí	Vallgorguina	Valls
Viladecans				

Figure 2. Different schools’ locations where people who answered the questionnaire bases their answers.

Thanks to the range of participation, different perspectives can be seen with regards to the main topic. Through the discussion, it is clear to see opposite opinions, although with the specified groups opinions were more likely to be similar. The level of English proficiency which is most common throughout all the participants is B1 or equivalent with a 21% (Figure 3). Also, two native speakers answered this questionnaire.

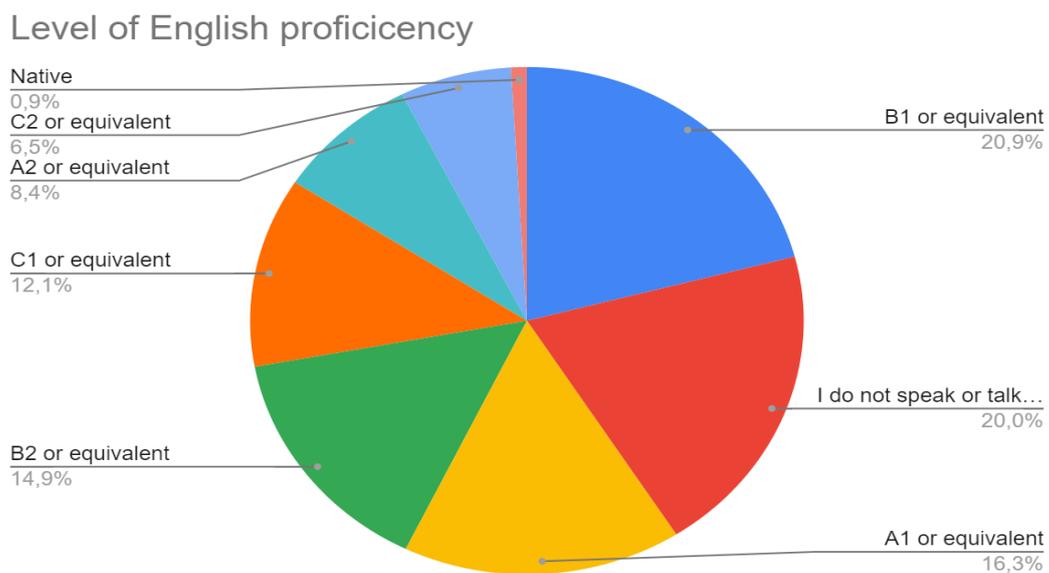


Figure 3. Level of English of participants.

The age of the participants is also an aspect to be taken into account. The most of participants were 41-45 years old (Figure 4).

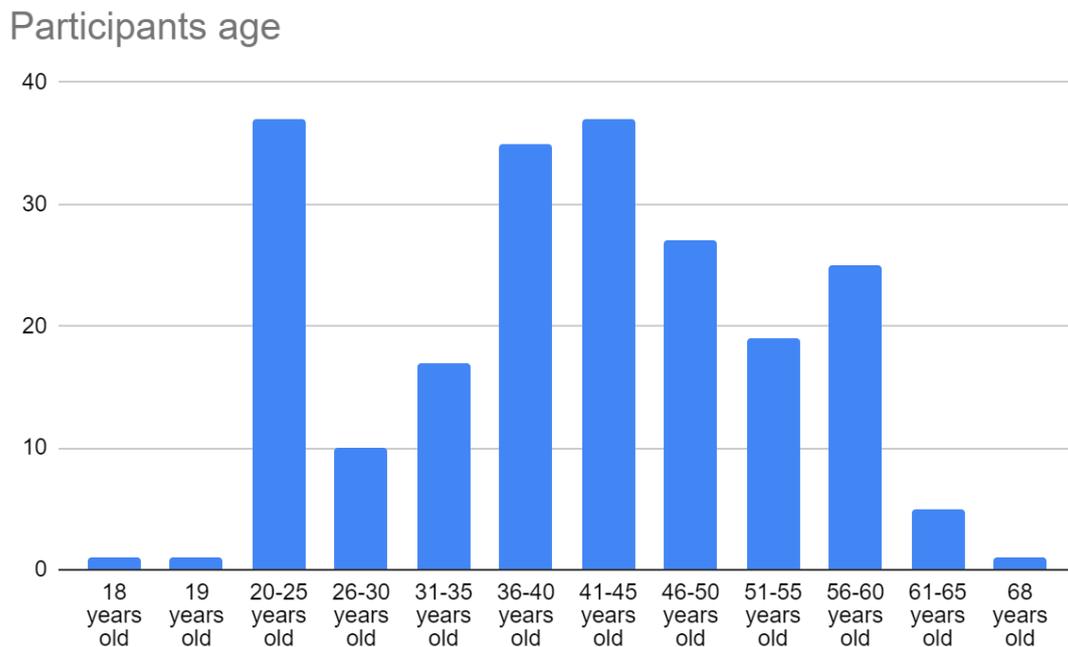


Figure 4. Participants' age.

### 3.3 Results

The results of the questions related to English in Infant Education are explained here, question by question.

When asking about the characteristics that could improve English teaching in Infant education, the parents whose children are in Infant Education and the parents whose children are in Primary Education think “having smaller groups (for example 10 students)” at school is the best option to improve language acquisition (Figure 5). The second method that they think would help to learn English is “30 daily minutes of English”. The methods that are considered to least improve the learning of English are “having better access to new technologies” as well as “having fewer examinations.” Also, for the parents with children in Primary Education another important factor was “creating work groups regarding children’s needs”.

## Which characteristics do you think that can improve the learning of English language in Infant Education?

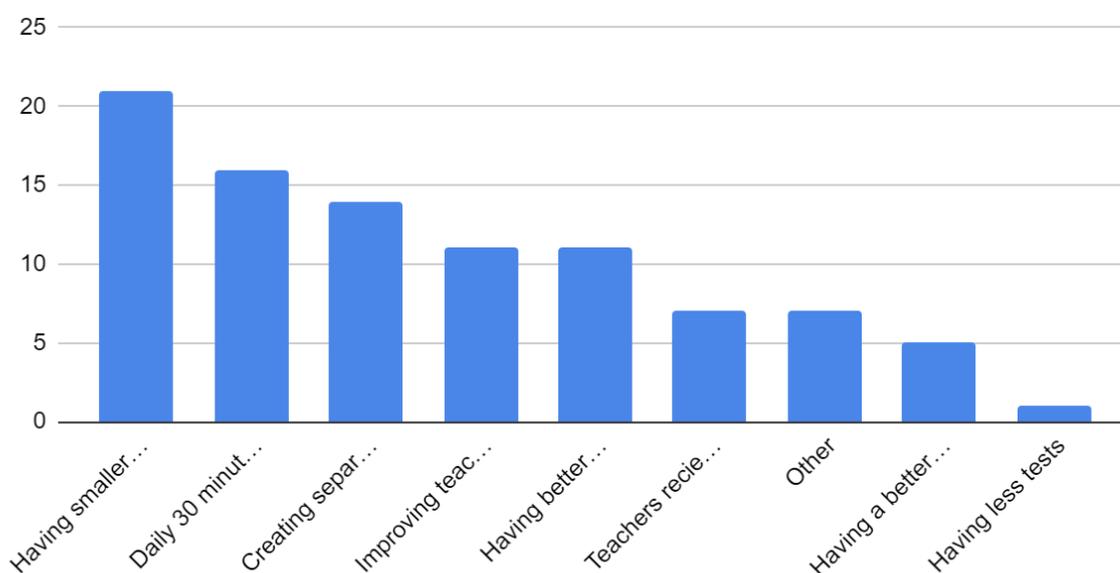


Figure 5. Parents with a child in Primary Education perspective regarding their characteristics proposed to improve English language learning in Infant Education.

Primary and Infant Education teachers have a different point of view. The most common area for improvement for them would be “having smaller groups”. Another three options which are also taken into account as very important were: “Teachers receiving English methodology training in English”, “improving teachers’ English proficiency” and “30 daily minutes of English”. Again, the same factors were seen as less important: “having better access to new technologies” and “having fewer examinations.”

Students' answers gave “having smaller groups” and “improving teachers’ English proficiency” as the most important aspects to improve. The least important aspects to improve were again “having better access to new technologies” and “having fewer examinations”.

People from none of the groups answered that the most important aspect to improve is “having smaller groups”. In this case, “creating separate groups regarding children’s needs and having fewer examinations were the least important aspects to improve.

The answers of the question: “Which characteristics do you think make the learning of English difficult in Infant Education?” are coherent to the previous question. All the groups pointed out that the features that make learning English difficult are the same areas they marked as important in improving the English teaching in Infant Education.

Regarding the question about the optimal age to start learning English, all the groups agree that the best age to start teaching English within the educational system is when children are 3 years old.

When asking about the objective of learning English in Infant Education, parents whose children are in Primary Education answered “improving the ability to understand English” is the most important objective. In their opinion, the least important goal is “having a close accent to native speakers”.

Parents with children in Infant Education pointed out that “improving the ability to understand and speak English” are the most important objectives regarding English in Infant Education. Again, “having a close accent to native speakers” is the least important feature.

Primary Education teachers answered “improving children’s ability to understand English” is the most important objective in Infant Education regarding English. “Children improving their ability to speak in English” and “learning vocabulary” appear to be the next most important features.

Infant Education teachers pointed out that “improving children’s ability to understand and speak English” were the most important objectives to learn in Infant Education. The option they thought least important was “a child’s understanding of the English language structure”.

Regarding the students and people from none of the groups, both groups pointed out that “improving children’s ability to understand and speak English” are the most important objectives to learn in Infant Education. They also answered that the least important feature was “having a close accent to native speakers”.

Parents and teachers have the opinion that extracurricular English classes “should be more connected to the school to give support to children’s learning”. Also, they have many different opinions about these classes related to their price. Only a few of them answered “they make it more difficult for children to learn English at school.”

When asking the groups about what families could do at home to improve children’s English proficiency, all the groups agree that families should “play audio-visual materials in English to them”. Also, some other people propose that “parents should learn English with them too”, “travelling to an English-speaking community” as well as “extracurricular classes with native speaker teachers” as options that families could do to improve their children’s English proficiency.

### Which improvements do you think society could do to help children improve their English learning?

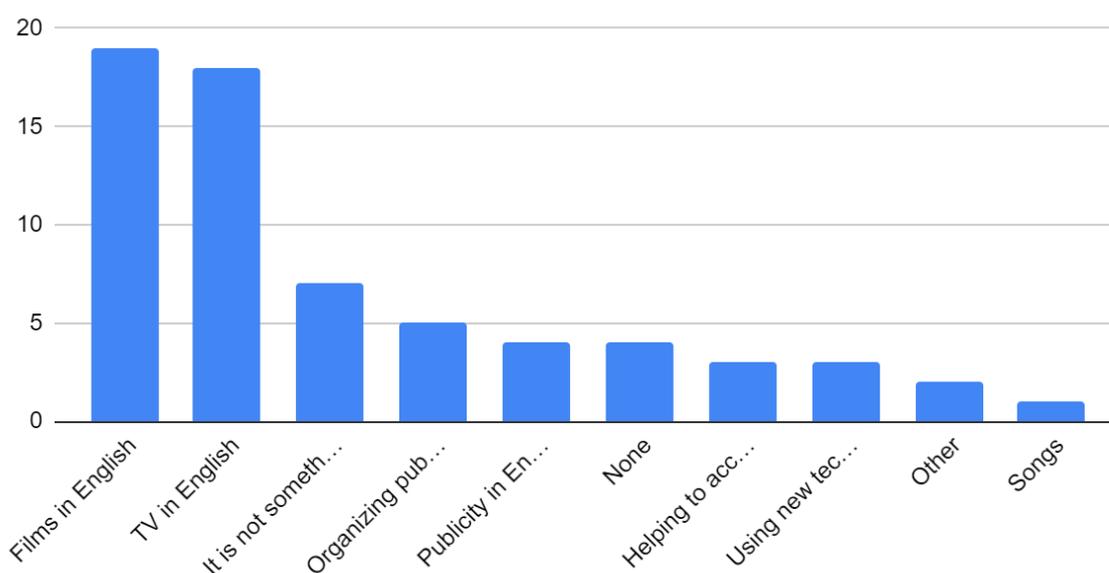


Figure 6. Answers of the answers of the group who are not parents, teachers nor students answers regarding their improvements proposed related to society.

All the groups also agree when giving their opinion about societal improvements that could help children improve their English proficiency. Most of the opinions from all the groups take into account “using original versions” regarding “cinema”, “TV”, “music” and “stories” (Figure 6). Also, other options supported by some people are “organizing public activities using English as the vehicular language”. Moreover, 22 people pointed out that the fact to improve some aspects to help children improving their English acquisition “it is not something that concerns society to improve”.

When asking the groups about actions that schools could take to help children’s learning of English at home, most of the groups answer that “schools could recommend families some audio-visual resources in English to help their children. Although, note that parents

of Primary Education children’s most common answer was that “it is not something that families have to do”. This response was also very popular in all of the other groups’ answers too (Figure 7).

### Which actions do you think schools could do to help children's learning regarding English at home?

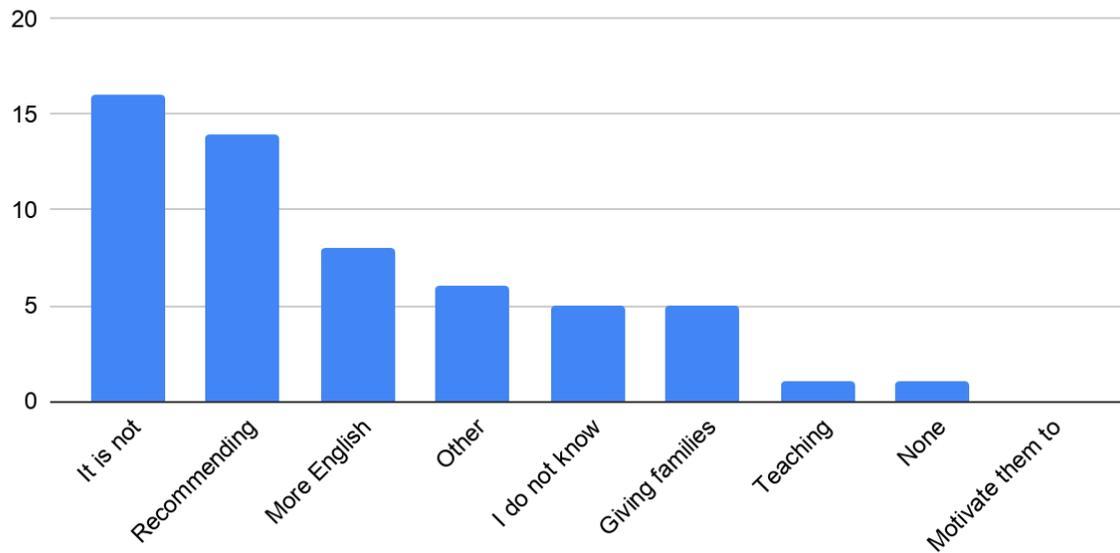


Figure 7. Answers of parents with a child in Infant Education regarding their proposals to the questions: Which actions do you think schools could do to help children's learning regarding English at home?

The question regarding CLIL methodology also provides some disagreements between the groups. While the parents of Primary Education children’s most common answer is that this methodology “requires improvement”, all the other groups have answered they think this method is “very good” or “good”.

When taking a look at the last question: “In general, what is your opinion about English teaching in Infant Education?” the answers vary. For the parents who have a child in Primary Education the most common answer was “basic. The parents who have a child in Infant Education gave as the most common answers: “good”, ”requires improvement” and “it is not good enough”. Infant Education teachers most common answer was “very good”, for Primary teachers the most common answer was “other” (where most of the answers in this category are opinions not related to a general rating), while students

answered “requires improvement” and people from none of the groups answers were divided between “it is not good enough” and “very good”.

### **3.4 Discussion**

Regarding the characteristics that could improve English teaching in Infant education: “30 daily minutes of English” at school is one of the most popular answer from all the groups. This specific example shows that all the groups are aware that this course of action is important for children’s English learning. However, it seems that in many schools this is not possible to do. Therefore, an aspect that could improve on English teaching in Infant Education would be this desirable daily contact, at least 30 minutes.

The idea also supported by most of the groups: “having smaller groups (for example 10 students)”, is related to the ratio on Catalan schools (Departament d’Ensenyament, 2016). Although less students per class, or even smaller groups to teach English to would be desirable, the implementation of this characteristic can only be achieved by dividing the class (splitting the children into two groups).

The methods considered less necessary to improve the learning of English are “having better access to new technologies” as well as “having fewer examinations”. As these improvements may be needed in some other countries or regions where a lack of resources is a big disadvantage, it seems they do not impact hugely in our local reality.

Primary and Infant Education teachers’ points of view showed a significant focus on “teachers receiving English methodology training in English” and “improving teachers’ English proficiency”. As many teachers felt themselves to have less English proficiency than desirable and students also pointed out this feature as an important aspect to improve, which means that this is a difficulty in teaching English in Infant Education.

“Teachers receiving English methodology training in English”, equally appears to concern people, as well as not having a high enough level of English to teach this language, it is a feature related to every teacher experience. Therefore, as many of the curricula focus on teaching communicatively, it is contradictory to the examinations demands (Copland, Garton and Burns, 2014), teachers may tend to teach less significant content, and they

may not be able to establish a good conversation to create a language model for children which, in Infant Education, should be one of the most important objectives to teach.

Regarding the authors who agree with the idea of the critical period, teaching English as soon as possible would have many advantages. This idea is also supported by all the groups in the questionnaire, as the majority of the answers pointed out the optimal age of three years old to start teaching English within the educational system.

“Improving the ability to understand and speak English” are the most important objectives to learn English in Infant Education according to most of the group’s answers. Although this would be the ideal English teaching objective, the reality may be different. In my experience from schools I have done placements at, the focus is mainly on teaching vocabulary mainly (which also appears to be the next most important feature in the questionnaire answers). Thus, as the curriculum (Departament d’Ensenyament, pp. 16-46) does not give any guidelines for English teaching, the objective of learning this language may depend on every school and their individual language learning objectives. The least important feature to them is “having a close accent to native speakers”, which may allow the school to focus on the previous objectives to learn more than a similar native accent.

The question regarding CLIL methodology, as a popular school method nowadays, has also raised some disagreements between the groups. While the parents of children in Primary Education’s most common answer is that this methodology “requires improvement”, all the other groups have answered they think this method is “very good” or “good”. Thus, it is possible to reflect that this methodology may actually work, but some improvements could be made. Some examples, taking into account the questionnaire responses, would be “improving the teachers’ English level” as well as “using English in some other (but not all) subjects.”

Moving on to the questions regarding teaching and learning English outside the school, all the groups agreed that extracurricular English classes “should be more connected to the school to give support to children’s learning”. This question was based in my own experience, when I was doing my placement, children who went to extracurricular English classes, seemed to be bored in class, and they even told me they had fun learning

English in the extracurricular classes, but then found English classes in school “too easy”. Looking at the results of the questionnaire, it became clear that extracurricular English classes, that were more connected to the school teaching and learning process, could give support instead of teaching the same content, but at different times, or even, in some cases, different contents.

When looking at answers to the question: “Which actions do you think families can do to improve the children’s English language learning?”, the results split, arguing that families should “play audio-visual materials in English to children”, “parents should learn English with them too”, “travelling to an English speaking community” as well as “extracurricular classes with native speaker teachers”. All of the actions proposed make sense and are possible to do, but the important point of this question is to realize that there are many options to consider if families are interested in giving support to their children when learning English.

I also want to link this question to the next one, (Which improvements do you think society could take to help children improve their English learning?) most of the opinions from all the groups take into account “using original versions” regarding “cinema”, “TV”, “music” and “stories”. Reflecting on this, it may seem that there are many options available right now, but some actions that could be improved regarding the public spaces. However, this is a positive aspect of learning English, realizing that many changes can be made to support children’s English learning, and not only thinking it has to be “school learning”.

As learning should not only take place at, public schools can also take some actions to help children’s learning of English at home (question 13), most of the groups responded to the questionnaire that “schools could recommend families some audio-visual resources in English to help their children”. However, parents with children in Primary Education gave the most common answer was that “it is not something that families have to do”, which also gives a turning point on different opinions, and reflects the difficulty to agree a significant improvement in the connection between school-families.

Finally, the “general opinion about English teaching in Infant Education?” question, created a range of disagreements. There were answers from “it is not enough” to “very good” which does not give a clear answer at all. There are two possible explanations to

this disagreement. Firstly, the opinion may be different depending on the related school, which makes sense because every school and teacher is different. Secondly, it may be related to each person's individual experience, but the results are not homogenous enough to have even a general "good" or "bad" opinion on this learning at school".

#### **4. Conclusions**

To conclude, clear evidence has been presented on the the advantages and disadvantages of teaching English in Infant Education. Although the capacity to learn a language after the Primary Education has been shown to be possible, many advantages would disappear, which means we need to value the early stages to start helping children develop language skills rather than teaching, in the most traditional way.

As the theoretical framework pointed out, and the questionnaire answers supported, there is still work to do to improve our educational system regarding English language teaching. However, evidence can be found about positive features that are actually helping children and families become aware of the importance of learning new languages, as well as some possible actions that could be taken so that English learning become as positive as possible.

Even though there are some difficulties in both schools and families to make this teaching-learning progress smooth, the most supported idea is to improve rather than quitting, which gives a hopeful perspective to keep working towards this process. Schools have the tools to teach English properly to young learners and with just some improvements regarding to better communication on other societal factors that can give support to language learning, actual advancement will be noticeable.

Regarding some limitations that can be taken into account in future studies, some evidence about similarities and differences between public, semi-private and private schools could be completed. In this way, possible differences could have been taken into account in relation to the school funding. Also, as shown in the questionnaire results, some questions may not have been clear enough to create a general perspective. This could be possibly have been done by having a wider range of answers, taking more into account more schools diversity as well as including a wider people's perspective.

Finally, this research has given me a starting point to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of learning a language not only taking into account the optimal age nor black or white answers, but also to have an open mind to see how little improvements can be implemented to slowly improve the common group. I personally think this information is some of the most important I could have learnt during this study process: it is not a matter of which features school, society or families can improve, it is the matter of all the factors working together to improve the future of children's learning.

Furthermore, I would have valued learning about specific teaching and learning processes and their basis when learning a new language. As every context is different, there will never be enough perspectives and opinions to face all the possible realities I will encounter in my future teaching. It is never too late, future research will be done to have the widest possible perspective.

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## 6. Appendix

### Anglès a l'Educació Infantil (3-5 anys)

Sóc l'Àlex Andradas i estic estudiant el doble grau en Mestre d'Educació Infantil i Mestre d'Educació Primària amb menció en llengua anglesa a la Universitat de Vic. Aquest qüestionari forma part del meu treball de final de grau, enfocat a l'etapa d'Educació Infantil. Agrairia molt la teva col·laboració per tal de poder recollir dades locals per a un estudi sobre l'ensenyament de l'anglès a l'educació infantil. Totes les respostes d'aquest qüestionari seran anònimes i les dades s'utilitzaran exclusivament amb finalitats de recerca.

Per qualsevol dubte o comentari deixo a disposició el meu correu electrònic:

[alex.andradas@uvic.cat](mailto:alex.andradas@uvic.cat)

Agrairia moltíssim que poguessis respondre aquestes preguntes **abans del 30 d'abril**.

Moltes gràcies per la teva col·laboració.

#### Secció 1. Dades biogràfiques

##### 1. Quin és el teu gènere?

- Home
- Dona
- Altres

##### 2. Quina és la teva franja d'edat?

- 20-25 anys
- 26-30 anys
- 31-35 anys
- 36-40 anys
- 41-45 anys
- 46-50 anys
- 51-55 anys
- 56-60 anys
- 61-65 anys

- Altres

**3. A quin grup dels següents pertanys?**

- Sóc mestre/mestra d'Educació Infantil
- Sóc mestre/mestra d'Educació Primària
- Tinc un fill/filla a Educació Infantil
- Tinc un fill/filla a Educació Primària
- Sóc estudiant
- Cap dels grups

**4. A quina població es troba l'escola on treballes o va el teu fill/filla?**

- Resposta curta

**5. Quin nivell de llengua anglesa penses que tens?**

Marca l'opció que pensis més adequada

- Natiu
- C2 o equivalent
- C1 o equivalent
- B2 o equivalent
- B1 o equivalent
- A2 o equivalent
- A1 o equivalent
- No tinc coneixements d'anglès

**6. Quines característiques penses que milloren l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa a l'etapa de l'Educació Infantil?**

Marca les 3 respostes que pensis que són les més importants

- Que el professorat rebi formació de llengua anglesa en anglès
- Tenir grups reduïts a l'aula (per exemple, 10 estudiants)
- Tenir un millor accés a les noves tecnologies
- Tenir millors recursos en llengua anglesa
- Realitzar 30 minuts d'anglès diàriament
- Millorar el nivell d'anglès del professorat

- Realitzar menys proves de nivell
- Crear grups de treball separats segons les necessitats dels infants
- Altre

**7. Quines característiques penses que dificulten l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa a l'etapa de l'Educació Infantil?**

Marca les 3 respostes que pensis que són les més importants

- Que el professorat no rep formació en l'ensenyament de la llengua en anglès
- Hi ha massa estudiants a l'aula
- No hi ha un bon accés a les noves tecnologies i millors recursos en llengua anglesa
- No es realitza suficient temps d'anglès diàriament
- El nivell d'anglès del professorat no és suficient
- Es realitzen massa proves de nivell
- No es creen grups de treball separats segons les necessitats dels infants
- Altre

**8. A quina edat penses que s'hauria de començar a ensenyar l'anglès en el sistema educatiu?**

Resposta llarga

**9. Quin penses que és l'objectiu d'aprendre anglès en l'etapa d'Educació Infantil?**

Marca les tres opcions que consideris més importants

- Que els infants tinguin un accent similar als nadius
- Que els infants aprenguin vocabulari
- Que els infants entenguin l'estructura de la llengua anglesa
- Que els infants millorin la seva capacitat per entendre anglès
- Que els infants millorin la seva capacitat per parlar anglès
- Altre

**10. Quina opinió tens sobre les acadèmies d'anglès com a activitat extraescolar?**

Marca l'opció que pensis més adequada amb la teva opinió

- Són molt útils per als infants sense tenir en compte el que aprenen a l'escola.

- Haurien d'estar més connectades amb l'escola per donar suport a l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa.
- Dificulten l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa que s'ensenya a l'escola.
- Altre

**11. Quines accions penses que poden dur a terme les famílies per tal de millorar l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa dels infants?**

- Resposta llarga

**12. Quines accions penses que pot dur a terme la societat per tal de millorar l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa dels infants? (per exemple, posar les pel·lícules dels cinemes en la llengua original, ...)**

- Resposta llarga

**13. Quines accions penses que poden dur a terme les escoles per tal de millorar l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa dels infants des de casa?**

- Resposta llarga

**14. Avui en dia existeix una metodologia que s'utilitza cada vegada més a les escoles, anomenada "Aprentatge integrat de Continguts i Llengües Estrangeres (CLIL en anglès), en què s'utilitza la llengua anglesa per a ensenyar matèries curriculars (per exemple, plàstica, educació física, coneixement del medi en anglès). D'aquesta manera, es treballen continguts de la matèria concreta i de llengua anglesa al mateix temps. Què penses sobre aquesta nova metodologia?**

- Resposta llarga

**15. En general, quina opinió tens sobre l'ensenyament de l'anglès a l'Educació Infantil?**

- Resposta llarga