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Italian adolescent students' perception of the English language

Case study within a secondary school in Italy

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Introduction

Language learning is becoming more and more fundamental in a world where technology, work and tourism ask and allow people to communicate for any purpose in many different languages. English has, over the last decades, gained its place as *lingua franca*, i.e. the language everyone uses in case they did not share the same first language, and European governments have inserted it as foreign language in schools. But how do students react to it? How do they feel about learning English? Do they like it or consider it as an obligation?

This research has involved about 700 Italian students attending a secondary technical school which has international relations and tourism among its principal subjects. In addition, the institute also prepares its students in economics and information systems. Is English relevant to them? This work will try to give answers to these many questions through a case study carried out in the institute, where observations during the English lessons have been conducted and a final questionnaire has collected students' opinions and ideas on the matter.

The first chapter will present the theoretical framework of language-learning-and-teaching theories, in order to give the reader all necessary information of studies led by experts to best understand the following parts about the case study and the results. It will be divided in two subchapters each analysing how a foreign language is learnt, what this process involves and what the consequent implications in foreign-language teaching are.

In the second chapter the reader will find a clear-cut presentation of the institute. In addition, the methodologies and materials used during the case study will be presented, from the observation sheets to the very questionnaire, which the students have filled in on their phones and whose results will be analysed in the third chapter.

The third chapter will outline, through charts and graphs to make it as clear as possible, all the data gathered and ordered in sections. It will at first present a general overview of students' opinions on the English language, what they find easier and where they have more difficulties. Secondly, their fears and preferences in English learning and their own experiences with lesson modalities. This will bring the reader to the second part, which will involve their ideas on the classroom, their classmates and, finally, their teachers. No criticism of the work carried out by English teachers is intended, rather the analysis of a useful set of data with the aim of better understanding students and what lies behind their learning.

The last part of this research, the conclusions, will try to sum up all the results come to light both through the questionnaire and the direct observations in the classes. General learning and teaching features will be highlighted, with possible adjustments and ideal solutions regarding both the teachers and the students.

In the appendix all data and further results from the questionnaire and the observations sheets – which will not be presented in the work because of questions of time and space – will be attached, so that the reader might look into them and draw their own assumptions.

To conclude, the motivations which have driven the whole research are quite inferable: the interest in giving students a chance of expressing their opinions on a matter which is particularly relevant and often ignored – language learning and teaching; the possibility of improving teaching methodologies, which can only be done through the observation of the teaching-and-learning environment itself – consisting of a universe of people all different from one another – and, furthermore, self-analysis; last, professional motivation, as a possible future job will certainly benefit from the results of this study, which has been a sort of field exploration to get an idea of what the school world is made up of, in order to be a little more prepared once the baton is passed.

1. Theoretical fundamentals

The first part of this work presents an essential overview of what learning and teaching a foreign language means and requires, stretching through a clear-cut analysis of the most recent psychological and pedagogical studies on foreign language acquisition and didactics, integrated with personal experiences of observation and study cases from an internship in several Italian high-school classes.

The aim is to provide the reader with what could be relevant to best understand the results of my case study in an Italian technical high school (see Chapter 2), the answers to the object questions and my consequent conclusions (see Chapter 3 and 4).

1.1. Learning a foreign language

It seems almost banal to say: “learning a foreign language is difficult, for sure more than learning one’s own mother tongue.” And I am not to deny this, neither do former studies on the topic. But it is usually less spontaneous to carefully think about the underlying reasons, probably because this appears as a fact and would be unnecessary to discuss. The question is, although, far from being easy.

What is a language? As standardly defined by *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (2003: 699), it is “a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings”. This seems quite simplistic, but what really lies behind? Is language learning something homogeneous among children or, if not, what could possibly affect it? What does it depend on and how could it be enhanced or stalled? With this chapter, I will try to answer these questions.

As Balboni, one of the major experts in language learning and teaching in the Italian frame of the last decades, notes in his *Imparare le lingue straniere* “Learning foreign languages” (2008), it is important to consider that language learning is linked to four main research areas:

- language sciences, which define what a language is and how it may vary – to make a consistent example, English and its British, American, Indian or even International variations –, how it can be used according to the different communicative situations and, last but not least, how it is naturally acquired;
- sociology and cultural sciences, i.e. the use of a language depending on the participants’ origin, life development and lifestyle, which influence their attitude towards everyday relationships, settings and problems;
- neuropsychology, that is the ways the human brain works and, linguistically talking, what the precise language learning proceedings are;

- education sciences, which involve all the methodological aspects of concretely studying and learning a language.

Trying to learn a language without being aware of how it works requires a huge effort, because it is like wanting to drive a car without knowing how to do it (thus facing voluntarily possible misfortunes). Students do not usually know anything about this, but teachers should and should therefore help them consider some main factors, which are to be analysed in this work: *motivation, interlanguage and the theory of multiple intelligences*. Some other contents which are to be found in this chapter are the brain processes involved in language acquisition, the role of our memory and some more inputs about learning strategies and personality traits influencing the latter.

From a didactic point of view and linguistically speaking, one important thing to remember is:

- *learning* means memorizing something temporarily, in a rational way, but not reliably;
- *acquisition* is an unconscious process, automatizing a structure and storing it in long-term memory.

Learning can be useful for monitoring the production/reception processes, as it can influence rationally reflection on the use or on mistakes during language acquisition. To sum up, acquisition is the true main objective for every language student.

1.1.1. The human brain and language acquisition

Broca and Wernicke are the names of the two brain areas in the left hemispheres linked to speech reception and production, whose names come from the neurologists who first found and studied them. As it is widely known, human brain is divided into two hemispheres, less known is that the left one represents the rational, analytical one, while the right one is holistic and emotion-related. Although the mental language representation is located in the left hemisphere, the right hemisphere is most important for the comprehension and acquisition processes. This is to be known if one wants to learn a language, since the input must be understood and, to do so, it can be presented to the subject in an easy way for the brain to acquire.

When a baby first begins to learn words and structures such as, in particular, functional words (i.e. prepositions, articles and conjunctions), these are stored into the cerebellum, which is the eldest part of the brain and usually works without the cortex being involved, therefore faster and more instinctively. Linguistically speaking, it only works for the first three years of the baby. When this phase is over, words are then memorized into the brain cortex, that is

slower, easily tired and most sensitive to stress. This is why a student needs more time and energy to learn and make new words or structures automatic.

Since this work involves young students from 14 to 19 years, I am not to investigate or analyse any theories of language acquisition during childhood. But what is important for us to know is how our brain works, in order to understand how to optimistically deal with language classes.

In fact, Danesi (1998, 2003 and 2017) studies the so-called brain bimodality, observing that everything is always processed before in the right hemisphere and then in the left, never the other way around. It is, consequently, necessary to activate both areas while learning and teaching a language. When organizing one's study, for example, it is useful to first observe the topic globally (right hemisphere) and later focus on the single units and analyse them singularly (left hemisphere). The ideal pattern for a deep comprehension is, in fact *globality, analysis and synthesis* – a simple concept with a successful result. I will propose in 1.2.2.1. a list of activities which follow this structure and aim at improving both language competence and memorization.

1.1.1.1. LAD and LASS

Another important factor to be considered is the presence of the so-called Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in our mind, as Chomsky called it. All the hypotheses we have on this subject seem to be quite precise and reliable, therefore I am to present what the main features are and how it works.

- 1) it is innate, which means every human being owns their LAD and can actually learn a language with the same ease or difficulties as another individual;
- 2) it follows an acquisition process that goes from input overview, passes through an analysis to create possible rules, which are then to be confirmed and memorized.

At a first glance, one can immediately notice that the LAD apparently respects the previous observations on brain bimodality and directionality. Let us now dive into the single phases.

The *input observation* and comprehension seem to be the easiest part for a student, since the receptive skills (listening and reading) are the most practiced at school. *Hypotheses creation* can possibly be more difficult to achieve for a foreign language learner: only with a great motivation and constant exercise the student might automatize this step. For instance, even though it may be (made) evident that just the third single person always gets an -s at the end of its finite verb in the simple present tense, Italian students usually forget it, despite it being unquestionably easier than the whole Italian verb conjugation.

Going on to the *verification* of their hypothesis or the rule of a structure, the student can get what is right or wrong thanks to either a positive or a negative reinforcement of their output, which means that other participants, or more banally the teacher (in this case called by Bruner *Language Acquisition Support System*), should support/correct them either in a positive way (e.g. with a compliment or a reward) or in a negative way (e.g. scolding or even punishing them). Another way the student can understand whether the rule is true, is by observing as many possible natural contexts as they can, i.e. making a personal research on the subject and simply look it up in a dictionary. Bruner affirmed that social interaction plays a fundamental role in language acquisition. He did not completely agree with the nativist theory proposed by Chomsky and underlined the communicative role of the language. He emphasized that meaningful language is acquired with meaningful parent-child content exchanges, by learning the language supported by their Language Acquisition Support System (LASS). Balboni, anyway, confirms that students are able to manage the input verification by themselves, by focusing on its importance for the learner's autonomy.

At the end of the acquisition process we find the *rule fixation*, which must guarantee that what has been learnt becomes the norm, automatized. To do so, the student has to repeat several times the exercise and do the so-called "pattern drills", activities created for this very purpose and based on re-elaboration and repetition of contents. Studies on skills have led to the creation of exercises and activities specific for the improvement of every aspect of languages (see 1.2.2.).

1.1.1.2. *The role of memory*

It is well known that memory is said to be divided into short-term, intermediate-term or long-term memory, as proposed by the studies of Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968). When receiving an input, the pieces of information it provides get to the working memory (i.e. the short-term memory), where they are supposed to stay for a limited period with a content capacity of just seven units (e.g. numbers, words). It goes without saying that while learning it is necessary to focus on a few goals rather than too many, just to give our memory the chance to follow the reasoning and store as much as it can. Another relevant factor is that upon this depends the attention ratio: usually 15 minutes are the time for the brain to get tired while being attentive. As a consequence, one must make pauses, e.g. take some notes, verify some new material, drink a glass of water, in order to relax and recover one's attention.

A notion which gets to reach the intermediate-term memory can be recalled for about 90 days. It should reach the deepest mnemonic structures, the long-term memory, in order to stay permanently. In this area is located both the so-called "global encyclopaedia", i.e. an individual's knowledge of the world, and the semantic memory, which deals with the

interpretation and memorization of a language. How are then some input elements able to reach the long-term memory?

Aristoteles first talked about knowledge association and what is called “associationism”, that is recalling something through its relations with what is similar or different. Balboni comments by saying that associations can undoubtedly be useful, but they have to be created and used by the student themselves, because remembering requires an active role: one has to be interested and to set the content in their own life project. This means that only if the students want to learn something, they will actually learn it. Nevertheless, what is studied at school can get anyway to a good level of proficiency.

Reflection is another important way of memorizing something: the more you reflect autonomously on a topic, the better you learn it. This requires a great deal of time, thus leading to be often regardless ignored by many students and teachers. One last important consideration is on the relationship between the meaning of words and its context: it is quite useless and, for sure, tiring to learn lists of words, as lexicon is stored in the semantic memory only with a context.

Synapses creation, i.e. the connections between neurons made to fix new pieces of information, has its greatest productivity from three to six years after the birth, with a consistent decline after the puberty. It is, consequently, extremely important to start learning a language early, rather than later (which is not impossible, but more wearing and slower).

1.1.2. A universal language

Particularly related to the innatist theory seen in 1.1.1.1., Werner (1949) assumed that language is universally acquired following the same structure. He later inspired other scholars as Greenberg (1966) and White (2003), and in the next decades data on languages such as German, Japanese, Turkish, Polish, Spanish and French were gathered.

Maratsos (1988) enlisted some of the universal linguistic categories which emerged thanks to the previous research, and these were as follows:

- Verbs and verb classes
- Predication
- Negation
- Question formation
- Word order
- Morphological marking tone
- Agreement
- Reduced reference nouns and noun classes

These are an example of the so-called *principles* of the *Universal Grammar* which, with the studies going on, were outlined in the UG together with several related *parameters*. The first are invariable features apparently applicable to all human languages, the second vary across the languages. An interesting instance Cook (1997: 250-251) proposed is that of driving: one rule is that the driver must keep to one side of the road, and this is a principle. The parameter is that in some countries you must keep to the left and in other to the right.

Some examples of parameters are the null subject (i.e. the ellipsis of subjects), the pro-drop (i.e. the ellipsis of pronouns) and the head directionality (i.e. the rightward or leftward position of a complement head such as verbs, adjectives and nouns).

Focusing on first language acquisition, it is argued that children learn languages systematically, which means that observing the utterances they produce, children seem to be able to infer the phonological, semantic, structural and lexical systems of a language. However, there is an equal amount of variability in this process. Even in the English language, scholars find it hard to identify defined “stages” of language acquisition. Looking at children facing the past tense forms of verbs like “make” or “break” in English, it is possible to suppose that they create and learn separate items e.g. “made”, “broke” and also “played”, without paying attention to or knowing the difference between regular and irregular forms. At the age of 4 or 5, they begin to connect the morpheme *-ed* to the past simple tense and regularize/overgeneralize producing “maked”, “brokeed” and “goed”. Only after early school age, children finally perceive that there are two classes – regular and irregular verbs – whose process continues for many years, even persisting occasionally in young adulthood.

To conclude, in both first and second language acquisition, the problem of variability is being investigated carefully by researchers. In particular, one of the major studies is trying to conclude whether what is nowadays variable could possibly become systematic in future, e.g. the regularization of the do-support use for the verb *to have* with possession meaning, or the disappearance of the third person singular *-(e)s* in the present simple tense. (For more precise observations, see Gass & Selinker, 2001).

1.1.3. Motivation: have to, need to or want to?

One thing to always keep in mind is that humans are emotive beings. A great amount of research has been conducted on the subject, producing many theories. In the last decades many Italian scholars (Caon 2004 Serragiotto 2006 and Balboni 2012a) have been researching this topic, agreeing on a three-vertex model to represent motivation: at one angle stands *pleasure*, at another *need* and at the third one *duty*. Let us now look into the three variables:

- a) duty: this is usually the main motivation a student in our classes has. “I must get a good mark”, “I must study”, “I have only to pass this test/year”. Unfortunately, the duty-motivation does not lead to acquisition because the so-called *affective filter* (see 1.1.3.) interposes between the intermediate-term and the long-term memory, thus resulting in the impossibility to fix the desired contents which are learnt and not acquired, so most will probably be forgotten over the aforementioned 90 days;
- b) need: this motivation is linked to the left hemisphere, being related to rationality and consciousness. The need-motivation presents two major limits: 1) usefulness is at its basis – if something is not perceived as important for oneself, it will then be useless and, therefore, unnecessary to learn, only imposed by the system (e.g. the English language vs any other language); 2) once the student feels they have achieved their goal, the need-motivation vanishes – the question lies on the fact that student’s goals are usually lower than the teachers’ or parents’, coinciding with sufficiency and effortlessness;
- c) pleasure: this motivation is connected with the right hemisphere, as it strongly depends on positive emotions. It can actually involve the left hemisphere as well, thus making it the most powerful kind of motivation. Pleasure-motivation and need-motivation are subtly linked to one another and it should be relevant for teachers to explain carefully and make their students understand how learning something is satisfying. Even the duty-motivation can approach the pleasure-motivation, as the student could develop a sense of duty, which is deeply related to positive emotions too, e.g. reliability, ambition, confidence. Not fulfilling someone’s expectations is usually depressing and demotivating, only if this someone is an important, respected and trustworthy individual.

This is related to another theory proposed by other scholars (among others, Deci 1975, Brown 1999, Dörnyei 2001) which regards motivation by observing *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* features. The first are those which do not lead to an apparent reward except the activity itself. It concerns feelings of competence and self-determination. The latter is connected to true external rewards, like prizes, money or simply positive feedbacks, or even to avoid punishments. So, is it possible to define which kind of motivation is the most powerful? All the study made in the last decades have led to the idea that challenges are the strongest motivators: looking for a solution, completeness or an equilibrium make human beings want for more. Krashen’s theory (1985) called “i+1” presents this concept – from a comprehensible input *i*, the learner will search the consequent *+1*.

Egocentrism is a deep-rooted feature of humans – everyone tends to think about themselves and their survival. Guiora et al. (1972) proposed what he called *language ego*, related to the personal identity one builds up in reference to the language they speak. This personality is modified with the language itself and the attitude towards it. Titone framed a model he defined

as *egodynamic*, i.e. everyone has future plans and project for themselves and will try to find strategies to fulfil them. This is kind of linked mostly to the aforementioned need-motivation, but is particularly interesting from an autonomy point of view: if one has a project involving a foreign language, they will also keep it monitored and find a way to improve it and realize it.

1.1.4. Emotive acquisition: a path through the affective filter towards self-esteem

By this latter point on pleasure-motivation one could argue that it is only an over-sympathetic and indulgent attitude a teacher could have towards their students. Biochemistry intervenes to confirm how the aforementioned affective filter, term proposed by Krashen – one of the greatest linguists and educational experts of the last century –, intervenes while learning a precise subject (not only foreign languages) or taking part in any communicative act.

The starting point is the need for *self-esteem* every human being has. A satisfactory and acceptable definition was provided by Coopersmith (1967):

By self-esteem, we refer to the evaluation which individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviour. (Coopersmith, 1967: 4-5)

This is sufficient to conclude that an imposed subject or a “threatening” attitude or methodology used towards the students could never lead to a full acquisition. Balboni uses an electrotechnical metaphor to explain this: if there is an electrical circuit and a switch within, when the switch is on (i.e. the circuit is not hindered), the electrical current flows, but when it is off, the electrical current will be blocked by the switch. Let us now imagine a cable connecting the comprehension centres to the acquisition centres: the affective filter is the switch in this information circuit, leading to a short-circuit of information and as a consequence of self-esteem in the subject.

Biochemically speaking, Osborne et al. (2015) present a clear definition of the liaison between stress and memory, hence acquisition. A sense of serenity in the participants provokes the transformation of adrenaline into *noradrenaline*, which is a strong neurotransmitter capable of making our memorization easier. On the contrary, in a state of lasting stress or tension, the production of a steroid called *cortisol* blocks the noradrenaline and causes conflicts between the *amygdala* and the *hippocampus*: the first is a gland which controls emotions to prevent the mind from facing unpleasant feelings, while the second is another gland in charge for activating the frontal lobes and leading to memorization of events. The

stress has to be lasting to create an obstacle in memorization: in fact, some brief stress affects positively learning and acquisition, as the hippocampus is stimulated, and emotions, the more positive the better, will play a great role in memorization. The affective filter is, therefore, a specific defence mechanism triggered by: 1) anxiousness, 2) (self-)esteem-threatening activities and 3) seeing mistakes as an embarrassing event, as a personal fault or a sin which must be extirpated.

Some adjustments that could be made are: 1) instead of creating fears for exercise correction or oral tests, a teacher could propose self-correction and self-evaluation (which is also pedagogically useful) or try to make the students converse in pairs; 2) giving the student the necessary time to feel self-accomplished and self-confident, 3) making them feel prepared, 4) letting them know what they are able to do and what they are not yet able to do and 5) helping them understand their mistakes by guiding them through self-analysis.

1.1.5. Languages and mistakes

In 1972 Selinker claimed for the first time that second-language learners do not simply copy the language native speakers use, but create their own system based on all the languages they already know: this is the concept of *interlanguage*, which was a new interesting way of, in particular, analysing errors made by language learners. Selinker suggested that three are the principles on the base of interlanguage: a) *over-generalization* from patterns detected in the language being learned and b) *transferred* from the learner's native language. The last principle regards c) *fossilization*, when a learner's language stops developing.

This is to be investigated together with error analysis, as a foreign language teacher (and, possibly, students as well) should be able to identify the single situations of mistaking and getting something wrong. I will here report the definitions proposed by Brown (2007) (also see James 1998: 83), who says that *mistakes* represent a performance error, a random guess or “slip”, in other words a failure to use a known rule or pattern. This can happen both in the first and foreign language and native speakers are usually able to recognize and correct immediately the mishap. An *error* is, on the other side, a noticeable deviation from an adult grammar – it reflects the competence of a speaker.

According to a contrastive analysis proposal, *interlanguage* is a temporary system which builds up over the language acquisition process (be it mother tongue or foreign). Many studies have tried to investigate the natural proceeding our brain follows while learning and acquiring a language, and Krashen suggested that there is a sequence to be observed: like in a chain, if a link is missing, the remnant will be isolated, and the chain will not work properly. In the last decades, the learning sequences of foreign languages like English, Spanish, French and German have become more solid and stable, demonstrating an optimization in the order of the

linguistic content acquisition, which is probably related to the fact that it follows the aforesaid natural order. This is important to be considered when examining errors, because there is a great difference between those linked to students' hypotheses or work on the language, thus to interlanguage, and those affected by lack of study, attention or – why not – tiredness.

On the other side of the coin we might follow a comparative analysis of languages, observing all similarities and differences among language families. There has been huge research on this topic, starting even before the 17th century (see Indo-European language family theory), and from a didactic point of view, this must be considered – being it related to the idea of interlanguage. The so-called *false friends* represent an interesting example: words which are apparently identical, whose meaning are though different. This often leads to mistakes and misunderstandings, which have to be explained and understood. Some verbs like *pretend*, *attend* and *realize* are tricky for many Romance language native speakers, as their origins are the same, but the development in meaning has changed.

When, on the other side, structures are different, mistakes can be predicted, investigated and even avoided. Differences can create two kinds of mistakes:

- 1) A structure with a single unit in the native language requires more units in the foreign language. The following are some examples from different linguistic aspects:
 - a) *Pragmatics*: in Italian, *ciao* can be translated in English with *hello* and *bye*, which have opposite pragmatic uses, just like *scusa/i* that has to be distinguished into *sorry*, *excuse me* and *(I beg your) pardon* – each with different contexts to be used in.
 - b) *Morphosyntax*: verb tenses are here emblematic – the Italian present tense can be expressed in English both with the present simple and the present continuous/progressive e.g. *gioco a calcio* might be translated as *I'm playing football* and *I play football*; even worse is the situation with past tenses, which are extremely problematic to Italian students.
 - c) *Lexicon*: *glass* is an example – *vetro* and *bicchiere*, or verbs like *dire* and *portare* which can have two exits – *say* and *tell*, *bring* and *take*.
- 2) Structures that do not actually exist in the foreign language or vice versa. Some examples in the English language compared to Italian could be the do-support, the aforementioned different perspective of verb tense, the grapheme-phoneme relationship, phrasal verbs and many others.

Thanks to comparative linguistics, many of these similarities and differences have been detected and are well highlighted in school materials, consequently these become real errors when they have been observed and not studied or acquired properly. It might happen that the skill has been learnt or practiced improperly and, therefore, errors are being produced: the

teacher has to intervene and explain where the error lies, in order to correct the aim and help the student with self-analysis and evaluation.

Mistaking must not be stigmatized but explained and valued towards improvement.

1.1.6. A variety of learners

When a person wants to learn a new language, they usually think about studying, speaking and observing native speakers – and this is absolutely fine. But there is a further dichotomy which is extremely important by foreign language acquisition i.e. aptitude vs attitude.

To give a clear-cut definition of these two seemingly similar terms, the Cambridge Online Dictionary explains that aptitude is “a natural ability or skill” and attitude relates to “a feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this”. Neither brings to our minds anything new, above all if the reader has come to this point of the paper. We understand that aptitude is probably linked to the LAD mentioned in 1.1.1.1, but projected towards foreign language learning. Many scholars have tried to define what this foreign language aptitude might be. Research on this subject began in the 20th century, when Carroll (1958) proposed a Modern Language Aptitude Test, which asked future foreign language learners to discriminate sounds, detect grammar patterns or memorize words. Together with many other tests proposed in the following decades, aptitude tests have seen their popularity decrease because they apparently only measured or reflected the general intelligence or academic ability of students in any context-reduced task. Furthermore, the main question was how to interpret those tests and the concept of attitude. With the new millennium, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) commented on the previous studies and detected weaknesses in constructs. They thought of a model based on processes, where the acquisition of a foreign language can be divided in different stages with related aptitude constructs. For instance, that linked to short-term memory and attention helps process inputs; phonemic coding ability could support the noticing of phonological patterns, and retrieval abilities contribute to identify grammar patterns. In conclusion, they claimed that aptitude is important for implicit learning, i.e. in natural contexts, and not only in conventional, rule-focused teaching environments. Later, Robinson (2005) proposed a solution where aptitude includes a complex mix of abilities, such as processing speed, memory, planning time, interactional intelligence and self-efficacy.

As we have just seen, questions involving aptitude lead to the use of words like intelligence. In this regard, Howard Gardner presented in 1983 his *theory of multiple intelligences*, which claimed that every individual owns from seven to nine (according to other studies) kinds of intelligences in different proportions – and the verbal-linguistic one is among the others. It is suggested that these combinations depend on the personality itself, the family

environment – hence how a child has been raised, the cultural belongings and surroundings – and the education inside the school, of course.

Gardner's intelligences list according to his most recent work (2004) is as follows:

- Linguistic;
- Logical-mathematical;
- Musical;
- Spatial;
- Bodily-kinaesthetic;
- Naturalist;
- Interpersonal;
- Intrapersonal;

By looking at the first two categories only, one could possibly rule out a relevant amount of human mental abilities with these, but it would mean considering just a portion of them all. He also demonstrated how the definitions of intelligence are strictly culture-bound – he presented the examples of a hunter in New Guinea, who requires a great natural-orienting ability, or a sailor from Micronesia, who would need a mix for navigational purpose.

It is, by the way, easily inferable how Gardner's theory – together with other theories on intelligences (see in particular Goleman's emotional intelligence and Sternberg's work) – is associated to language acquisition. For instance, musical intelligence could relate to the ease people have acquiring the intonation and even pronunciation of a language; apparently divergent, kinaesthetic intelligence can help learn phonology, and interpersonal modes are clearly connected with communicative processes.

1.1.7. Personal strategies

This being related to the previous chapter, I will here give an overlook on what it is meant by learning *styles* and *strategies*. Let us beforehand distinguish these two terms, whose difference lies mostly on the process duration and generalness.

Style refers to an individual's enduring and steady tendency or preference. These vary across human beings and are general characteristics of intellectual functioning and personality type which differentiate individuals from one another. A *strategy* is a specific method to approach tasks, solve problems and achieve results. It varies within an individual.

Keefe (1979: 4) defines learning styles as “cognitive, affective and physiological traits which are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment. Skehan (1991: 288) says they are a predisposition generally directed to process pieces of information in a particular way, voluntarily or not. In fact, they are a

meeting point between emotion and cognition – each opposite pair involves all the aspects I am to mention in a couple of lines, considering that in the research history an extremely dense list of learning styles has been written, which psychologists and educators have identified based on several sensory, cognitive, communicative, affective, cultural and intellectual factors. Ehrman and Leaver (2003) have proposed the following:

- Field independence vs dependence
- Random (non-linear) vs sequential (linear)
- Global vs. particular
- Inductive vs. deductive
- Synthetic vs. analytic
- Analogue vs. digital
- Concrete vs. abstract
- Levelling vs. sharpening
- Impulsive vs. reflective

If these are general features distinguishing an individual from another, strategies are specific reactions towards problems. They vary sensitively within everyone. Upon this topic and, in particular, on both learning and communicative strategies application, a huge research has been conducted as well, and the results have come to the production of a *Strategies-based Instruction* (SBI) according to Cohen (1998) and McDonough (1999). The first likes to refer to them as *Styles and Strategies-based Instruction* as to underline the link between these two domains. Anyway, they have been divided into *direct* and *indirect* strategies, in order to define which involve directly the learning and communicative processes and which are more dependent on other aspects like the language itself or the context.

Direct strategies are linked to a) *memory*, e.g. creating mental linkage, involving (physical) images and sounds or even actions; b) *cognition*, e.g. repeating, recognizing patterns, analysing expressions (also contrastively) and taking notes/highlighting; and c) *compensation*, e.g. using clues, adjusting and approximating the message, using mime and gesture, using circumlocutions and synonyms.

On the other side, indirect strategies regard a) *metacognition*, e.g. finding related knowledge, self-monitoring and self-evaluation; b) *affection*, e.g. relaxation processes, rewarding oneself and using music or humour; and c) *sociality*, e.g. cooperation, clarification questions and self- and other-awareness;

The real implementation of SBI involves mostly the teacher's ability to identify styles and strategies in the class and help their students get benefits from it.

1.2. Teaching a foreign language

What I have been observing in the previous part of this chapter was focused on the subject learning a foreign language, encompassing various aspects related to neurology, psychology and language sciences – those I introduced in the very beginning. One recurrent topic is that related to sociality. In fact, the class context – considering its tiniest details, from the structure itself to the animate components – is what influences language acquisition the most. Could this possibly be true? I will hereby try to give an answer to this question and motivate this theory.

1.2.1. From learning to teaching

After analysing briefly the entity of a language learner, I am to go deeper and look at the language teacher figure. As Brown states, a search in modern dictionaries for the term *learning* would result in definitions such as “acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction”. It is then impossible not to notice the implication of teaching in this and it cannot be defined apart from learning. In fact, in the first part of this chapter many references and useful applications for teaching have already emerged.

But who are *teachers*? Balboni, with references to Freddi’s and Curran’s works, gives an interesting presentation:

- They are *directors*, because they are those who know what the class is all about, external to the learning program, which they are in charge of, lead and correct when necessary. The analogy with a theatre or film director is absolutely representative;
- *Tutors* – from Latin adjective *tutus* meaning “safe, protected” –, who take care of their students, especially when they are not paying attention, get in trouble or just in situations where they might need advice or some indication;
- *Models*, those who know the language. Teachers provide inputs that must be reliable at their utmost. Related to this, in our linguistical domain there is the debate on native speakers vs foreign language speakers as foreign language teachers: the first might be more reliable but also sophisticated and too difficult to understand, conversely to the latter;
- *Source* and *resource*, i.e. they can give their students all information on materials they might not know or be able to use. Similarly, they must evaluate these materials and distinguish whether they are suitable and useful;
- *Experts* – in association with *c*). Teachers are specialized in teaching – they have the competence to propose activities which are to be followed by the students, even when not fully understood. Thus, the teacher can provide them with an explanation. In any case, teachers must be confident and able to adapt their lessons even in progress;

- *Judges*, as they have to evaluate justly their students and decide whether one is prepared. Moreover, they are those who know what is right and what is wrong and must convey this knowledge successfully to their students.

The reasons behind this list is to encourage the participants to notice all the shades the teaching profession has. It is mostly important to understand that teachers also are humans, never perfect, with emotions themselves. Neither are students, anyway. As a consequence, both characters have to learn to live together and help each other. May this not happen, the student must remember the aforementioned roles the teacher has to follow: this is a conscious student's right and duty.

During language classes especially, teachers should pay attention to their students' reactions and attitude. Teaching a foreign language requires it to be the channel and the goal, providing students with what is necessary to make up to the gap between their mother tongue and foreign language proficiency. There are some aspects which teachers should always keep in mind: language, as we have already seen, is composed by several components – among which the so-called *basic skills*, i.e. productive (writing and speaking) and receptive (reading and listening) skills. Teachers must remember to work on all the competences, and not only to those which are easier to acquire, such as reading and writing. I will now propose a clear-cut definition of the fundamentals and how to work on them.

1.2.2. *Can you speak English?*

The notion proposed by this subchapter's title has been changing with the decades passing by. Until the 70s they believed that grammar and vocabulary were all you had to be proficient with, probably because the only task a language expert had to carry out was reading, translating and rewriting texts. When people began to move around the planet – with the development of means of transport – it has become necessary to communicate directly and knowing a language required being able to deal with communication in a foreign language.

What is *communicative competence*? Many studies have been conducted: in 1972 Hymes reviewed Chomsky's work on "rule-governed creativity" – which defined grammar learning as spontaneously mushroomed in a 3-year-old child – claiming it did not satisfy the social and functional aspects of language. He proposed the communicative competence to be what enables us to convey and interpret a message and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts. Cummins (1970) drew a line between Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – related to the language used in learning environment – and Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), i.e. the daily interpersonal communicative capacity a student should manage outside classroom. He later added the context question,

redenominating the first *context-reduced communication* and the latter *context- embedded communication*.

From this, Canale and Swain (1980), who still are the reference point when talking about Communicative competence, proposed their theory based on four main aspects – the first two related to linguistics and the latter to function:

- 1) Linguistic competence, i.e. knowing the language fundamentals – phonetics and phonology, orthography, lexicon, morpho-syntax and textuality;
- 2) Skills-related competence, i.e. knowing how to work with the language, productively and receptively – both basic and integrated. Integrated skills are those which involve two or more basic skills, for instance dialoguing (speaking and listening), taking notes (listening, writing and reading), translating, summarizing, etc;
- 3) Sociolinguistic competence, i.e. the knowledge of how social contexts in which the language is used work – the roles of the participants, the shared information, the function of the interaction;
- 4) Strategic competence, which is according to Canale & Swain the most complex. They described it as “the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence”. In a nutshell, what one does or says when they are in difficulty (see 1.1.7.).

There is no hierarchy, everyone should be able to control all of these – they are complementary, even interdependent: if one should miss, the whole performance could collapse.

It is quite evident that all research finds its basis on the basic and integrated abilities, and pragmatics: how can a student learn to rule them? How can a teacher help their pupils deal successfully with this difficult topic? It goes without saying that the first who have to master the language is the teacher themselves. And this concerns not only foreign language subjects, but also all the others. Teaching is, therefore, something which requires a particular mixture of competences, i.e. the expertise in both the subject itself and didactics, that is, as we have already seen, a science linked to many others – especially psychology, sociology, pedagogy and neurology.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) has among its main aims to offer learning, teaching and assessing methods applicable to all languages.

CEFR divides learners into three levels which contain two sublevels each. This validation system is now widely used and accepted in Europe as a standard to grade language proficiency.

Its theoretical background provides a division of general competences and its dimensions are 1) language activities, 2) domains in which these occur and 3) competences necessary to deal with them. The afore-mentioned levels are:

- *A – basic user*: A1 “beginner” and A2 “elementary user”;
- *B – independent user*: B1 “threshold” and B2 “upper intermediate”;
- *C – proficient user*: C1 “advanced” and C2 “proficiency”.

Schools in Italy – and supposedly in the UE – usually use these to assess their students and provide them with certificates which will be recognized once they enter the world of work. What actual level students should reach at the end of the fifth year is not widely known. National measures appoint B2 level as finish line for the secondary school and starting point for university.

1.2.2.1. Lights, camera, action! Activities for language acquisition

Balboni underlines that the abilities aimed at enhancing language learning are not effective without a real knowledge of why they are carried out or how they work. This is a step I have been analysing in my whole work, this is why I am to discuss it now. Consequently, this chapter attempts to focus on rather concreteness than theory. I will look at the aforementioned basic and integrated skills, to pragmatics, and what one can possibly do to improve them.

1.2.2.2. Receptive skills: listening and reading in a foreign language

Comprehension is at the basis of language learning and acquisition. It is founded upon a quite defined process:

- 1) The global encyclopaedia – everything one already knows – provides the individual with some material to begin understanding the subject. Logical and cognitive processes are run to define it: “*if..., then...*” is the main conceptual structure – just like *cause and effect relations* or consequentiality (before, during, after).
- 2) The *expectancy grammar* is what allows us to anticipate what a text is about. Thanks to the context, to one’s global encyclopaedia, to the language knowledge, every individual tries to assume what might come next. Especially when the language competence is low, comprehension will depend on the correctness of the hypotheses one has made on the overall meaning;
- 3) The level of communicative competence in the language will enhance or reduce the influence and support it has in the whole process; the overall comprehension being then subject to the two aforementioned aspects, teachers should provide their students with inputs they can comprehend even though their proficiency might not be adequate to.

Activities to take the greatest benefits from one's global encyclopaedia are those which involve predictable behavioural scripts, that is situations the subject knows and in which they might be able to immediately get some information, even if they do not master the language. Similarly, predictable vocabulary helps students comprehend better, e.g. when in a bar, one might order a hot drink, therefore a coffee, a tea, or a cold drink, for example water or a fruit juice. Learning lexicon deriving from similar contexts and semantic fields also helps memorize it.

To improve comprehension strategies linked to expectancy grammar, two great activities groups are particularly helpful: 1) blank space filling and cloze exercises, and 2) sequences/texts reordering. It goes without saying that blank space filling presents a text in which some words are missing – usually belonging to the same grammatical category or semantic field. Cloze exercises differ from this because they aim at omitting one word every 7 words, so that the missing words might be from different grammatical category and semantic field. This kind of activity looks at the general comprehension and students can complete the text with different words, but they have to convey the same final meaning. It is particularly interesting when the word missing comes from a close class – functional words – and this will also prove whether the student knows the rule or not.

Text reordering activities require students to try to understand the meaning of a fragmented dialogue or a text and find the correct sequence of the different parts. There are many possibilities, according to the text type and the single puzzle part length – it might be a line in a dialogue, a paragraph of a text or words in a sentence. The latter is even more useful if made in pairs: one student mixes the words in a sentence and then passes it to their classmate who has to reorder it. The teacher could also provide them with expressions and questions in order to communicate in the foreign language.

All these techniques take advantage from the brain mechanisms I described in 1.1.1. and follow the pattern *globality, analysis and synthesis*. If a student perceives that they have problems in comprehending a text, they might well try to do these kinds of exercises in their mother tongue, in order to understand whether it is a linguistic problem or a real reading/listening question.

1.2.2.3. Productive skills: speaking and writing in a foreign language

Both a monologue and a text production develop according to a more linear structure: 1) conceptualization, 2) planning, 3) execution and 4) revision. This is the process followed in all languages, let us see it more deeply.

In the first phase ideas are gathered, conceptualized. This can be done individually or collectively, with techniques such as the *spider diagram* or the best-known *brainstorming*. The first involves one or more keywords which are to be linked to other words according to a specific domain – for example, semantically related or other variables. The words come to light can in turn become keyword and so on. The name “spider diagram” is due to the fact that there will be a head and many legs attached to it. Likewise, a brainstorm has a keyword or a definition at the centre, but what is written around is a very storm of ideas, without reflecting too much – a free stream of consciousness, the first thing which comes to one’s mind. Both activities, which have the same purpose but different modalities, are fundamental for the second part, i.e. planning.

A flowchart is ideal when planning a text, in order to give to the final result a sensible coherence. This second phase should find and give an order to all the associations popped up during the conceptualization process. If the first step is a global observation to the topic, the second one is a liaison between *globality* and *analysis*. A sort of *synthesis* comes to life when going through writing/speaking itself.

In fact, execution – both oral and written – can be either provisory or definitive, depending on the individual themselves and on external factors like time. It is in this very part where grammatical and lexical deficiencies arise, as well as problems with the textual and syntactic structure. During a monologue, this can be avoided by using short sentences and easy expressions – paraphrases and words similar to one’s mother tongue. In addition to this, writing can be made simpler by trying to keep on writing down the discourse with no interruption, such as looking words up in a dictionary. It is more constructive to leave blank spaces or resort to one’s mother tongue. During the revision, they will be fixed with the proper piece of language. A mistake which students usually run into is translating directly their thoughts and the correspondent sentence into the foreign language: teachers have to prevent this happening and help their students find their personal method, both mentally and in written form.

The last phase is revision, which should be a critical rereading. This is obviously impossible to be carried out when dialoguing in a foreign language, but there are some useful tips one could keep in mind (see 1.2.2.4.). Coming back to writing, a second reading to what has been produced is a natural step – with some risks to take into account. When one has spent a great deal of time on the writing process, they will probably have memorized their text, and this could possibly make them not see errors or textual incoherence. If possible, it is suggested to take a little break before revising the product and to try to select at first one kind of error and then another – to begin with syntax and structure, after that grammar, morphology and orthography.

Writing in groups is an excellent practice – even more on the computer and each component will have their task. For instance, one will be in charge for typing, everyone certainly for monitoring. Working on the computer is more practical and less tedious, but it must be constantly under control and guided by the teacher.

1.2.2.4. Integrated skills: dialoguing, note taking and translation

The communicative approach of language education finds its basis on speaking, dialoguing and letting the others know what one's objectives are. In the contemporary world it is the most important skill – together with reading. It is the most difficult to master, too – it requires a great deal of energies in connecting in real time comprehension and oral skills, and the strategic ones (see 1.1.7.), in order to pursue one's goals.

Dialoguing in a foreign language

What is necessary to keep in mind during a dialogue is 1) knowing the behavioural scripts in a specific situation – they are usually shared by many cultures with similar geographical or historical contexts, such as European and North American ones (without generalizing too much). Teachers should know and provide their students with what is possibly different from the students' experiences in their countries, so that they are able to avoid misunderstanding or awkwardness. Similarly, it is important 2) to understand what one's role is in the communication, by paying attention to the register and getting all information to respect the hierarchical notions in other cultures. Fundamental is 3) being clear on the communicative goals and transmitting the keywords at one's best. Last but not least 4) interpreting interlocutors' intentions and respecting them.

We can here notice how cultural aspects are not to be forgotten – while, in fact, they usually are. Due to the different aim of my work, I will not go deeper into this topic but see Caon (2015) *La comunicazione interculturale* “Intercultural communication” for any further information.

Another interesting aspect is that many features listed above are quite independent of whether one is talking in their mother tongue or in a foreign language – so exercises can be made in one's mother tongue too. Anyway, to develop the communicative and oral skills in a foreign language there are many activities which involve simulation and acting – whose nature could lead students to focus on not to make a bad impression rather than learning to speak. One solution to inhibit this understandable human fear is to create a relaxed atmosphere and a (error) welcoming environment, because it is necessary to practice these skills in a protected and planned context.

These simulated situations can feature an increasing autonomy demand, depending on the language proficiency. Let us see them in detail:

- *Playing a given, already written dialogue* – be it proposed either by the teacher from real life, films and theatre or by the curricular book. It might be played by heart or just read; the aim is to fix and automatize expressions founding communicative acts, i.e. the single components of a dialogue such as, for example, greeting someone, asking for or ordering something and so on;
- *Open dialogue*, that is answering to someone’s lines according to a given script with one speaker’s lines missing. It can be difficult without a preparation, it is then suggested to present at least the situation and some vocabulary, in case;
- *Role-taking*, where a situation and its setting and roles are defined, and the students have to follow the suggestions for each communicative act – “greet”, “answer to the greeting”, “ask for...”, “say that...” etc;
- *Role-making*, which is a little freer than the preceding activity and the students can develop their own answers according to what is asked more generally – for example “agree with a friend to meet”, “say that you are busy and try to find a compromise”;
- *Roleplay*, where only the setting and the participants are given. The students can create whatever they want and say whatever they think might be appropriate, by following the definitions provided;
- *Phone call*, which can have the same coordinates as the previous exercises, but should be carried out without looking at the other speaker, so that the situation is as realistic as possible.

Studying a language and wanting to communicate proficiently in that language requires some sacrifice, like crashing the affective filter and not being afraid of making errors. To improve in dialoguing, video recordings are a useful system to analyse one’s performance and correct weaknesses or learn how to avoid difficulties – thus making a spontaneous acquisition and rational learning work together.

Summaries, paraphrases and note taking

This couple of fundamental study activities are not usually taught or developed in a foreign language, but are extremely constructive both from a communicative point of view and for future employment.

Taking notes requires them to be as effective as possible and, when based on an oral source, written quickly and precisely. This is why I have considered this technique together with the summarizing activity: they are two sides of the same coin. If you have to take notes from a written text, you actually summarize it and keep all information you need, leaving any

ancillary and useless sentences apart. Getting used to it also helps during monologue or speaking in general, as I have already described in 1.2.2.3.

Learning to take notes in a foreign language will support the student when studying and avoid exhausting translations from and into the mother tongue. Related to this comes the *paraphrasing* method, i.e. changing the original text by using different – sometimes easier – words and syntactical structures. By this method students learn to circumnavigate their lacks and use their knowledges at their utmost. The secret for a good paraphrase is not being afraid of improvising and being possibly wrong. In fact, this method requires a good understanding and just a basic vocabulary, both of which students usually possess.

Written translation

Given a text in a foreign language, the translator must rewrite it in their mother tongue with the help of dictionaries and what might be useful in order to reproduce the original text and its contents. The product must be equivalent, that is the translated text should transmit the same effects as the original, not just be a copy converted word by word or sentence by sentence. Here lies the importance and usefulness for language learning – reflection on the language and on the original cultures.

Working in pairs or in groups is even better, as each participant shares their skills, knowledge, but also their sensitivity. As opposed to oral translation, where the communication consists of meanings and goals, in written translation what becomes difficult is to find expressions and structures which convey as consistently as possible the author's thoughts and values.

In all the proposed activities for skill development and improvement it has been steadily underlined how working with colleagues – outside the school context as well – can be extremely useful for language acquisition. The teachers' role is to help their students reflect on their work together and on the language and its process. If possible, a native speaker's presence might be the key, always guided by the teacher – who has to be the mediator between the mother tongue and the foreign language.

1.2.2.5. Knowing rules and words

Serragiotto (2016) underlines how the so-called rules are not *norms* which must be respected just because they exist, but they represent a *regular* pattern defining not only grammar and morphology – as many think – but also pronunciation, syntax, lexicon, textuality and socio-pragmatics. In other words, language itself.

Once again, the key is in the way rules are learnt or acquired – Chomsky used the terms *know* and *cognize*, which are related respectively to the already-mentioned language

acquisition and *learning*. The explicit learning connected with “simple” learning – which we have already seen to be conscious, though temporary – has to lead to the implicit learning – the acquisition, use-related. Explicit learning monitors language production and reception and one must know how to interiorize new inputs.

Recent research has found out that underlining new elements within a bigger input – for example grammatical units – helps students acquire them. As already observed, the acquisition process follows a note pattern: 1) observation and identification of a rule, 2) hypotheses creation, 3) hypotheses verification, 4) rule fixation and 5) explicit reflection – guided by the teacher.

Some activities to produce autonomous reflection on patterns involve

- reordering sets and lists of mixed items;
- finding the intruder (a noun among adjectives, an irregular verb or plural etc);
- ordering words in a series according to a parameter (for example frequency, intensity, quantity etc).

There are, then, activities called *pattern drills*, that are very useful, but also quite boring and demotivating – they are based on repetition. Converting from present simple to past simple, from singular to plural, can be a great practice to automatize structures, provided that they are understood by students.

Pronunciation and intonation

Related to this is the pronunciation and intonation question, as it is usually ignored in Italian school because considered less important. Phonetics and phonology are not easy to understand, but teachers should transmit their students how relevant it is, especially in a language like English.

One way to make this happen is through minimal pairs of words, where only one phoneme varies together with the meaning. For example, words like *sin/sing*, *pin/ping*, *been/being* help reflect on the fact that the opposition between [n] and [ŋ], whose presence will change the word meaning, conversely to Italian (/n/ in “anno” vs in “tango”). Vowels in Italian can only be short, in opposition to English (bin vs been, grin vs green). The same thing can be done regarding intonation, which has only to be understood and practiced.

Vocabulary

Balboni (2008) uses this nice example to highlight the importance of lexicon: “when you travel” he writes “you don’t take with you any grammar books, but you do take a dictionary.”

In psycholinguistics, one's lexicon is made up of words and items – i.e. a more-than-one-word expression conveying a united meaning – which have been stored in their semantic memory (see 1.1.1.2.) and are used when necessary. In order to take the greatest advantage of our memory potentialities, one must remember that we memorize things at our best according to:

- semantic fields, that is words which belong to the same world category (food, colours, sport etc.);
- complete systems, requiring as many words as possible of a whole; for instance, an adjective and its opposite, a verb with its preposition etc.;

It is, then, useful to connect words to images. A good exercise is to point at things, for example while sitting in a room, and say what these are called in the target language. This practice would respect the just-said feature of semantic fields. The same happens with the pictures proposed by exercise books, just like self-made spider diagrams (see 1.2.2.3.) – these represent, in particular, mental relations and associations, which an individual will develop with time.

One last focus is on word formation – the creation of new words by means of the addition of new morphemes like prefixes or suffixes, or with word combination. These can be practiced through the activities suggested in this subchapter, but the ability of periphrases is an excellent trick to avoid any mistake, error or memory lapse.

1.2.3. The setting

We have seen that knowing a foreign language is related to communicative performances. Just like in theatres and filmmaking, also linguistic performances have to be prepared and perfected. What is a linguistic stage made up by, then? Let us think about our own personal school experience: what was it like? A quick answer would probably be “there was a classroom, a teacher and other students” – and this is the very correct answer. Nevertheless, it is often partially considered. What I mean is that the concrete environment, i.e. the school building, the classroom, teaching and learning materials etc., but also the relationships with classmates and teachers, all of this is usually forgotten by those who participate in teaching and learning – and not only in language learning domain. In this part I will look into the dynamics present in a foreign language class, by including the three aspects I introduced in the first lines of this paragraph. Teachers role already being defined, classroom and classmates are to be outlined.

1.2.3.1. *The classroom*

According to Boscolo (1997) didactic environments play a huge role in knowledge transmission, thanks to their construction and the socialization they produce. In there every physical and spatial interaction generates knowledge, where there are common meanings and sharing represents the method to create reality and possibility. Novak (2001) uses the term *reality creation* to refer to the development of a metacommunicative and a meta-emotive competence in the students, while Laurillard (2012) describes the production of new ideas with the expression *possibility creation*. From this point of view, the place founds the basis for each component to have a role and share their actions and experiences with the other learners (Carletti, Varani 2007). Such as Fedeli et al. (2014) highlighted, the central role of students must be converged in a classroom aimed at satisfying their needs and where knowledge concurs to the improvement of the whole class. In this way a coherent functioning of methods and didactic process – between communication and goals – is guaranteed.

A common language is required and the physical/spatial environment is to be taken advantage of, in order to make dialogue and learning meet – by considering an emotive, affective and cognitive dimension (Limone 2012). For these reasons the classroom has to be in harmony with every student's strategies and motivations, so that they can learn the foreign language by discovering new world views (Santipolo 2002).

With this vision of didactic spaces, learning becomes a bridge towards the other classmates and the society (Severino 2011). The spatial and multisensorial elements guide each student to be a resource in their society and their teachers must organize and run the environment to enhance activities, achieve goals and help their students.

The new paradigm proposed by Maugeri (2017) the student is the centre of the didactic space and experience, unique piece of a bigger learning puzzle. Two particular implications are 1) knowledge must be conveyed by all the didactic environments and this influences their structures and organization – in a nutshell, they are shaped by the kind of knowledge to transmit. 2) The matrix of these didactic environment is the student and the didactic area is adapted and personalized to let the individual live a comfortable, enjoyable and motivating language learning experience.

To achieve results like these a steady research has to be carried out, in order to promote students' personal growth through structural elements. Individual linguistic improvement and experiences are fundamental to support qualitative changes in the whole learning context.

1.2.3.2. *The classmates*

Already said previously, language learning is made successful through sociality – in group. Balboni presents three keywords that students can keep in mind to better regulate their attitude towards the language and their classmates. Learning a language is indeed *social, constructive and cooperative*.

What is the purpose of learning a language if not to communicate? Wanting to learn a language by yourself, with no contact with anybody, is unproductive and demotivating. A couple of problems might rise for this reason: 1) managing one's own personality and understanding others' – this being related to the multiple intelligences theory seen in 1.1.6; the secret would be enhancing one's strengths and taking benefit from others' while working together on one's weaknesses. Another question could be 2) seeing the language learning group as separated from the real world, not paying attention to one's attitude or look; this would later cause the fear of not being able to cope with "outsiders" – i.e. not only enterprises and business/academic environments, but also in the most common settings, like going shopping or dealing with everyday life problems.

In 1.1.1.2. I presented the idea of a global encyclopaedia which we all possess in our minds. This is the basis of the *constructivist* psycho-pedagogical theory: it is not the teacher the only one who knows things – each can give their own contribute and help other learn something new. Opposed to a transmissive method – where the teacher unilaterally gives, and their students get – the constructive method sees the teacher as a guide in the transmission of knowledge within the whole class. Thanks to the different intelligences everyone has, a *cooperative* learning would be extremely constructive. The students will work together to solve common problems, e.g. ordering a meal in a restaurant, buying a ticket at the cinema or asking for directions. As Dewey (1916 among others) affirms: "I believe that the school must represent present life – life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighbourhood, or on the playground."

What will students be required to do? Or, more precisely, how will they have to behave in order to optimize this method? Some features would be a) *readiness* to participate and contribute freely, conscious that they could not always be right; therefore b) *humble* in case of failure, to admit that something went wrong and it could also be their fault, willing to correct the aim and find solutions; c) *empathic* when it is someone else to fail – this is the ability to understand others' feelings and putting oneself in their shoes. Last but not least, d) *responsibility*, being prepared to answer directly to every necessity – e.g. knowledge, actions, efforts and time.

In conclusion, apart from the attention the teacher has to pay to each student, some special methodological procedures should be followed in order to guarantee a total stimulation in the whole class. Three aspects are to be considered fundamental:

- 1) goals and expectations must be presented properly;
- 2) cooperation should be promoted, competition reduced;
- 3) pupils should comprehend how they are in charge for their own learning, by being made interested in this internal process.

1.2.4. From settings to methods

It is possible to go through the single didactic approaches of the last decades by looking at the spatial organization of the classroom. The aim is to demonstrate how action projects are extremely dependent on that and how a particular teaching methodology can define the desk arrangement. In order to propose a new spatial distribution, it is necessary to consider two different conceptions of language learning – structuralist/formalistic and humanistic approaches.

1.2.4.1. Teaching traditions: the structuralist and formalistic approach

In a traditional vision, the didactic environment is founded on a linear organization – i.e. the teacher is at the centre of the knowledge space and the students are ordered according to a specific sequence; there are no variations and the information stream is monodirectional. In a structure where language learning effects on students are not considered, the spatial resources are kind of restricted. The didactic environment will, therefore, be static.

The structural/descriptive school (see Bloomfield 1933 and Fries 1945) based its approach on a scientific observation of language, in order to outline its structural characteristics. There also was the notion that language could be deconstructed in little units to be analysed scientifically, discussed and then again built up. Grammar had, consequently, the greatest role in this theory and was the main focus during the lesson, which orbited around the written language.

In a context like the one I have just described, the spatial and linguistic relations are quantitative and the physical component must be standardized, together with the lesson structure – i.e. no changes or thematizations.

The teacher

The relation between individuals and learning spaces seems to change with the didactic activities and their goals. Balboni (2014a) writes that they usually set their basis on a barren and simple form of communication. The grammar/translation approach gives the teacher a

central role, ruling the didactic scene. According to Stubbs (1990) the 70% of the talking time during a lesson is occupied by the teacher – they justify their authority and ask direct questions.

Together with these considerations, the didactic dominance features the teacher assumes are as follows:

- on the objectives and goals upon which the lesson is founded;
- on the themes and the topics from which the discussion rises;
- on the spaces, since the teacher is the only one who can choose their location and movements;
- on the social interactions, as the participants are selected by the teacher and the latter decides the speech turns.

Thus, students are simply parts of a machine, which must answer systematically and executively to the given inputs. In a similar didactic scene, the environment plays a fundamental role for the class control and management. Language teaching and learning will lose its phenomenon-related view and the student's frontal ordered position will deprive them of an analytical, spatial interpretation and of the possibility to observe and explore the real settings where language occurs. In this perspective, the classroom environment will get no benefit to the student, who will learn in a compulsory passive and marginal way – compared to a more communicative teaching and learning method.

1.2.4.2. Teaching with a humanistic approach

The individual finds their importance in the humanistic approach, where the student becomes the main character – conscious of and interested in their own learning. The emotional dimension, on neurological basis, is given a great value, by considering that every student owns their intelligence and perception of reality (Serragiotto 2016).

A series of spatial hints could promote the observation and improvement of language functioning and learning:

- a) the room thematization can define language learning experiences where the linguistic products experimented during classes can contribute to enhance the quality and positiveness of the didactic environment – thus becoming coherent with the lesson topics;
- b) spaces are organized according to the students' needs, in order to create situations where the individuals can take care of each other and the others' personal formation;
- c) light and colours should be harmonic, so that the psychological incidence on the learning space is positive. The environment must be relaxing and comfortable – by avoiding stressful contexts and anxiety-inducing situations.

It is all about a social approach, aimed at a circular dimension of the language – parallel to the dimension of knowledge.

The teacher

Opposed to the formalistic approach – where the teacher represents the only truth and students are “empty” and must be filled up with knowledge – in a humanistic approach the teacher embodies all the characteristics and roles I presented in 1.2.1. Teachers will set their starting point on their students’ personalities, requests, needs and errors. Teachers will consider the classroom as an environment to modify in order to promote and improve knowledge – whose director (see 1.2.1.) is the teacher themselves.

In the humanistic approach students are human beings with their passions, interests and experiences. The complexity of all these factors – together with those mentioned in the previous paragraph – requires the teacher to create activities as variable and eclectic as they can. They have to favour both the global, holistic, emotive views and the analytical, precise and systematic learning strategies. This multidimensional teaching project has not as objective the mere mechanical repetition, but the development of the communicative competence and linguistic skills. It also aims at making students autonomous – by using the language as an instrument for self-promotion (Balboni 2017).

2. The case study

In the second part of my work I will report the experience I lived during the three-month internship in an Italian technical high school – the former I.T.C.G., now I.T.E.T., “Arturo Martini” in Castelfranco Veneto (TV). The first acronym stands for “Istituto Tecnico Commerciale e per Geometri”, i.e. “Technical Institute of Business and Surveyors”; the second stands for “Istituto Tecnico Economico e Tecnologico”, i.e. “Technical Institute of Economics and Technology”. I have chosen this very school for my internship as it is the one I attended as a scholar and, principally, because of its mix of characters present in it – not only from a linguistic point of view, but also by considering other personal variables such as the gender, possible future professions and overall interests.

The observations I made, all the both quantitative and qualitative material I gathered and the later survey about English learning and teaching I submitted to the students of the classes I worked with, this let me outline how the students of this Italian institute – spanning the age range from 14 to 19 – react to the English language and what their perception of its teaching and learning is. My object questions were, indeed:

- How do Italian young students perceive the English language?
- How do Italian young students see its teaching and learning?

I also paid great attention to the teaching methodologies, as one interest I had was to understand how English is taught in a secondary school. Although, trying to answer a question about this topic with the data I collected would be too generalizing.

The results of the questionnaire and all my observations will be presented in Chapter 3.

2.1 The school

2.1.1 Presentation

The technical institute “A. Martini” offers a variety of study curricula which encompass every aspect of the commercial and service sectors might require. Following the last-decade school reforms – both Italian and European – these can be divided into three main categories, where the first two belong to the economic sector and the last one to the technical sector:

- *Amministrazione, Finanza e Marketing* (‘Administration, Finance and Marketing’), which includes – together with the pure course – the triennial course for *international relations* (‘Relazioni Internazionali e Marketing’) and another for information systems (‘Sistemi Informativi Aziendali’);
- *Turismo* (‘Tourism’);

- *Costruzioni, Ambiente e Territorio* ('Constructions, Environment and Territory');

There is a common two-year study period – provided by all the institutes in Italy – during which students follow overall the same subjects, so that one can eventually change their school curriculum without suffering a too heavy lack of competences. This is the reason why in the first two-year school period there are no RIM or SIA classes – only one among the three main sectors can be selected. The CAT curriculum presents some major features in the whole common period, by requiring no second-language class and focusing instead on applied sciences.

Before the third academic year, students choose among the five aforementioned curricula and in the final year they will be provided with a more concrete formation for their careers.

2.1.2 *Classes and students*

In school year 2017/2018 the institute consisted of 51 classes, with 1153 students summed up. There were 10 English teachers, each with 3 lesson hours pro week. Other languages students had chosen to study – both as a second foreign language or third, together with the first foreign language, i.e. English – were French (151 students), German (599) and Spanish (536).

During my three-month internship I have had the chance to work with 8 English teachers, in 31 classes with a total of about 700 students. The class choice went following the single teacher's requests and readiness to collaborate. In fact, the final result is actually not balanced, i.e. I did not attend the same number of lessons in all the classes according to ages or curricula, but this is not – in my opinion – biasing the answers in a too influent way, as an overall analysis can anyway be conducted satisfyingly. As a matter of fact, I have ultimately worked with 5 first classes (14-year-old students), 7 second classes (15-year-old students), 8 third classes (16-year-old students), 7 fourth classes (17-year-old students) and 4 fifth classes (18-year-old students). As far as curricula are concerned, I visited 8 AFM classes, 5 CAT classes, 4 RIM classes, 4 SIA classes and 10 TUR classes.

2.2 **Observation time**

The procedure I respected was as follows:

- I asked the teacher for permission – or was asked if I would like to – to go and observe a couple of lesson hours, with no interventions. The teacher could beforehand notify their students that an external observer would come, but apparently this did not change their attitude or behaviour too deeply by comparing classes where students were aware I would be present and those where they were not;

- I introduced myself just by saying I was a university student collecting data for his thesis, by requiring them not to pay attention to me and do as if I was not there;
- I sat in one back corner, wrote down on the observation sheet I had previously set down and did not do anything to distract them;
- I only spoke English with them, so that I could create a sort of immediate detachment as a “foreign” observer;
- After the two-hour lesson observation, I began helping the teacher or intervening when required or permitted;
- As a conclusion, I ran a lesson prepared following the data I had collected and paying attention to both the students’ age and perceived competences;
- At the end, I asked a couple of them for a feedback both of my lesson and of their typical lesson.

During my observation time in a class, I frequently talked with the teacher about their students, the students’ attitude and results. When I had the chance, I asked the very students about their English lessons, their feelings toward it, their thoughts and ideas about this subject.

The observation sheet I followed presented a series of features I had selected out of the conclusions about foreign-language teaching and learning made in the previous chapter; its aim was to collect useful data for the later comparison with what would emerge from the questionnaire, so that I could answer as scientifically as possible my object questions.

2.2.1 The observation sheet

The scheme I used while observing the classes was divided into two main sections – apart from an initial part dedicated to the single class identification, i.e. class identification, student number and desk arrangement.

- 1) *Class atmosphere*, i.e. how the classroom, the students and the teacher appeared to me on a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 corresponded to “negative” and 3 to “excellent”;
- 2) *Use of the language*, i.e. a live recording of what happened during the lesson – selected by proposed activity – and in what proportions the English language was spoken by both the teacher and the students.

I will now present the single charts, which focused each on a particular aspect of the lesson environment and on their possible effects on the whole class. All the answers were given from my point of view and were, certainly, influenced by my whole-life experiences and, in addition, by my studies on language learning and teaching. The class being composed by many entities, my observation results will be kind of a standardization, nonetheless useful for a compared analysis with the questionnaire data.

The first component I observed was the setting:

1) Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				
Is the room bright?				
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)				

In order to answer these questions, I looked at the number of students and how the desks were arranged. I then set a temporary tick on the answer I felt was the most objective and I confirmed or changed it at the end of the two-lesson observation.

The following questions were about the materials – both possessed and used by the students and those used by the teacher:

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?				
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?				
Are the materials various and entertaining?				
Is the employed technology useful? (Engaging and facilitating)				

All of them gave me a first hint about the students' emotiveness and how the material could affect it.

Then there was the part focused on the very students, their attention to and participation in the lesson:

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?				
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				
Do students look happy with the environment?				
Do students help maintain a positive environment?				
Do students help each other?				
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				
Do students intervene in the topic choice?				

Together with the last part of the first section, which is about sociality, I was hereby provided with a general overview of the student group in each class.

The succeeding part focused on the teacher:

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?				
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? *				
Is the teacher's presence positive? **				
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?				
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				
Does the teacher encourage participation?				
Does the teacher vary activities?				
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?				
Does the teacher help solve the activities?				
*e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc. **e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiling etc.				

The two sections dedicated to the animate component of the class were the most demanding, as I tried not to be too subjective, but to look at the situations in a “professional/scientific” way. The same as with the other questions, I put a provisory tick and then confirmed or changed it, by encompassing all the possible variables.

The last group of question concerned the sociality aspect during the lessons. The parameters referred to the frequency of activities carried out in pairs or in group – they changed into 0 being *never* and 3 standing for *more than twice*.

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice				
SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner				
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner				
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice				
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice				

The second section – as already said – concerned the use of the language and simply consisted of a list of the activities, how the teacher proposed them and how the students – in general or also individually – reacted. I inserted a cell for field notes, which I used to write down unexpected events or particular comments on what was going on. The parameters for the use of both the first language and the foreign language went from 0 as *absent* to 3 *highly frequent*.

2) Use of the language

0 = absent 1 = rare 2 = average 3 = highly frequent

ACTIVITY	TEACHER	STUDENTS
	L1 FL	L1 FL
Field notes:		

I have here reduced the dimensions of the chart, but in this work appendix you will be able to find the very sheet I made use of. This part was a module I repeated every time a new activity was started.

2.2.2 *The student diary*

Another instrument I prepared to collect authentic data by the students themselves is a paper with some questions they could answer about the lesson – both with their teacher or with me. I did not warn them about this possibility, but asked at the end of a particular class for someone who was willing to fill them in. In the very beginning I tried to hand out some student diaries in English: they would be completed with interest, but I then changed to Italian as I wanted them to be free and able to say everything they wanted.

I decided to ask for their name and class, as though it was a presentation to me and, maybe, they would hence feel more involved. I then presented the intention I had with those questions and required their complete honesty. The diary was as follows (see in the Appendix for an English copy):

Diario dello studente

Nome: _____
Classe: _____

Ciao, questo è un diario dove potrai scrivere *ogni* tua opinione riguardo alla tua ultima lezione di inglese! Eccoti alcuni spunti e ricorda: sii sincero!

Di che cosa trattava?
.....

Ho scoperto che.....

Mi è piaciuto.....

Perché.....

Inoltre, mi piacerebbe sapere di più riguardo a.....
perché.....
Ma ho trovato difficile.....
perché.....
ed è stato noioso.....
perché.....
Penso che il/la mio/a insegnante sia stato/a molto bravo/a a.....,
perché.....
Ma penso che non sia stato/a altrettanto bravo/a a.....,
perché.....
Riguardo a.....,
io suggerirei.....

With these questions I tried to cover all the aspects which could possibly influence the achievement of the lesson aims. I also wanted to compare what their reactions to the usual class with their teacher were and how it was with the lesson proposed by me – because of me being someone new, young and due to the attention that I paid to making my lessons as didactically successful as possible. I will not look into the lessons I carried out since they are not relevant for my thesis, but I will attach them in the appendix.

2.2.3 The final questionnaire

The structure of the survey I submitted to the students mirrored all the features I had observed during my internship – i.e. everything I have presented in my work up to this point. After the conclusion of my internship, the language to communicate with the students swapped to Italian, in order to guarantee a 100% comprehension – the questionnaire is indeed in Italian. I paid great attention to the language, by using a simple and direct vocabulary and some light-hearted expressions or wordplays, so that the students would feel less tested and more involved. The very title was “ImpariAmo l’inglese”, which blended together the Italian verbs “learn” and “love”. Each section had its own clear-cut subtitle and the graphics were also modern and colourful.

I proposed my questionnaire two months later, on Google forms[©] and I made the students fill it in through their mobile phones. Beforehand I did an introduction, where I explained my intent yet again, I described the formal characteristics of the questionnaire and the completion modalities. When all the students had accessed the online page, we read the presentation together. I was present the whole time in which they were filling in the questionnaire, ready to

answer to their questions. I, though, had been recommending them to be honest and not to copy or be influenced by their classmates.

I divided the questionnaire into 7 sections:

- 1) Student's presentation;
- 2) Linguistic experiences;
- 3) The English language;
- 4) The English class;
- 5) The English teacher;
- 6) Activities and materials;
- 7) Opinions on English teaching and learning;

I will now look into every part and motivate the question choice or any particular aspect. The pictures I am about to present correspond directly to the visuals of the questionnaire the students have filled in.

Questionnaire introduction and student's presentation

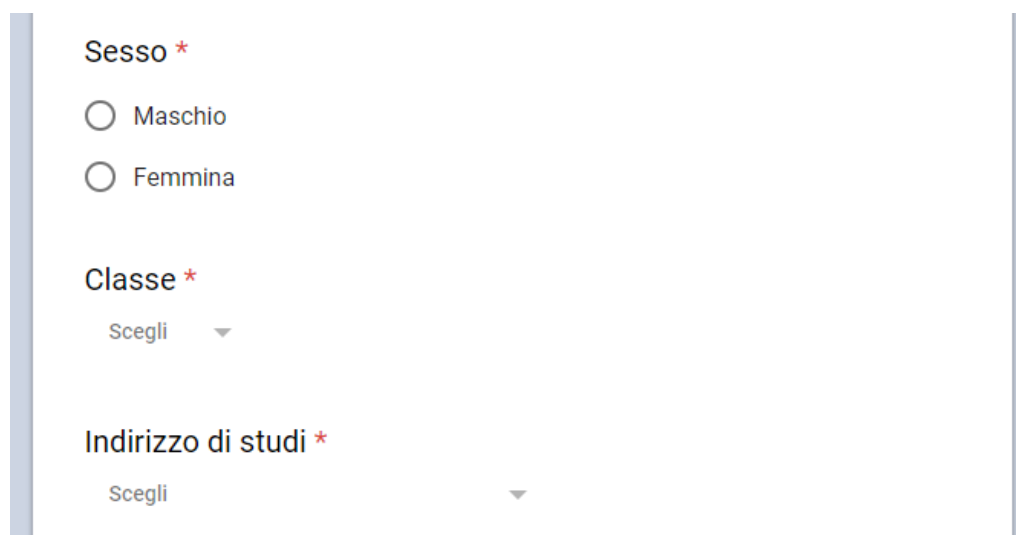
When the students clicked on the link I had sent them, the form appeared as in the picture. As soon as everyone was ready, I read the presentation aloud. It says: "Hi! In this questionnaire



you will be asked some questions about your personal experiences with the English language, about how it is taught to you and how you feel you are learning it. I ask you to be absolutely honest and not to worry about what your classmates do: it is just you and the English language! Are you ready? Let's start."

The subsequent questions were about the student's personal information – for privacy reasons, but also to inhibit the affective filter (see 1.1.4.) and guarantee honesty and reliability, name and surname were of course omitted.

Together with the gender, I asked for the class and the study curriculum.



Sesso *

Maschio

Femmina

Classe *

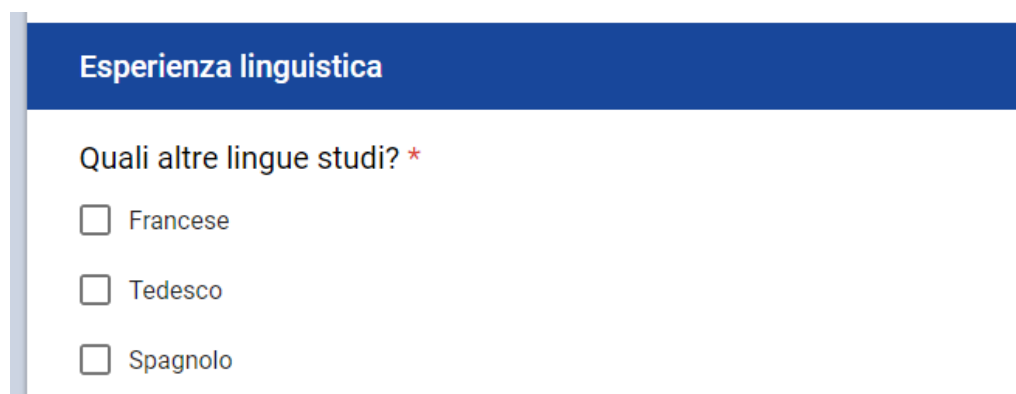
Scegli ▼

Indirizzo di studi *

Scegli ▼

Linguistic experience

The second section is dedicated to the linguistic experience. As the whole CAT curriculum and the last two SIA school years do not include in their programmes any languages except for English, this section was discarded in case the students selected those study curriculums and classes.



Esperienza linguistica

Quali altre lingue studi? *

Francese

Tedesco

Spagnolo

The first question asked for the languages studied apart from English – choice provided by the institute itself. The second question investigated the reasons why the student initially decided to study more than one language. I required them to select just one answer, in order to make them choose the strongest motivation they had. These varied from “because I like languages”, “so that I will find a job more easily” and “the study curriculum includes them” to “I was convinced by my parents/friends”. They could also select “other” and write something else.

Perché hai scelto di studiare altre lingue oltre all'inglese? *

- Perché mi piacciono
- Perché così troverò lavoro più facilmente
- Perché è previsto dal mio indirizzo di studi
- Perché mi hanno obbligato i miei genitori
- Perché mi hanno convinto i miei amici
- Altro: _____

The next questions were about how competent they felt at the languages they were studying. They could comment their answers in case these were “weak” or “sufficient”. The other options were “decent”, “good” and “excellent”. I did not require them to answer obligatorily to the question motivating their proficiency because I believe that the reasons why they could feel unprepared are more various and personal than those which influence their good competences.

Come valuti la tua preparazione nelle altre lingue che studi? *

	Non studio	Scarsa	Sufficiente	Discreto	Buona	Ottima
Francese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tedesco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spagnolo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Se hai segnato Scarsa o Sufficiente, a cosa è dovuta?
(facoltativa)

In caso di più lingue, definisci la lingua e scrivi le ragioni per cui la tua preparazione in quella lingua è come descritta sopra.

La tua risposta

This second section found its conclusion in one of the questions I find the most interesting, i.e. “does learning more than one language help you learn languages in general?”. This is related to *interlanguage* and *comparative grammar* (see 1.1.5.).

Imparare più di una lingua ti aiuta nell'apprendimento linguistico in generale? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Per niente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Assolutamente sì

The English language

The third section begins with two fundamental questions: “how much do you like the English language?” and “how useful do you think English is?”. The options were from 0 ‘not at all’ to 4 ‘absolutely’, so that they could decide to be neutral to this topic and let me be able draw some more defined conclusions.

L'inglese e io

Quanto ti piace l'inglese? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Lo odio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lo amo

Quanto credi ti sia utile l'inglese? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Per niente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Indispensabile

All the following questions in this section then focused on the student’s own experience of learning English, hence the difficulties they found and their reasons.

With the first one I asked them how prepared they felt – I added a subtitle which read “imagine you had to talk at this very moment with an English native speaker”. They had to select for each basic skill (see 1.2.2.) – listening, reading, speaking and writing – their proficiency, from “weak” to “excellent”.

Quanto ti senti preparato in inglese? *

Pensa se avessi davanti a te un inglese...

	Scarso	Sufficiente	Discreto	Buono	Ottimo
Ascolto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lettura	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parlato	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scrittura	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I then asked for the difficult aspects and, in the very succeeding question, for the aspects they felt they were improving during their school studies. The aspects I proposed were more precise than in the preceding questions, so that they could themselves be more precise. I added – together with the aforementioned basic skills – “vocabulary”, “grammar” and “pronunciation”. There were also the options “all of them” and “none of them”.

In quali aspetti della lingua inglese hai difficoltà? *

- Ascolto
- Lettura
- Dialogo
- Scrittura
- Lessico
- Grammatica
- Pronuncia
- Tutti
- Nessuno

Quali aspetti della lingua inglese senti di star migliorando durante il tuo percorso? *

The next question was also not compulsory and asked what the reasons behind the non-improvement were.

A cosa è dovuto lo scarso miglioramento? (facoltativa)

La tua risposta

The last compulsory question of this section was the most precise and asked the students to rate how difficult some specific aspects of the English grammar are, i.e. pronunciation and intonation, prepositions, adverbs and adjectives, verb tenses, conjunctions, orthography and vocabulary. The answer range was of four alternatives from “easy” to “difficult”.

Valuta i seguenti aspetti della grammatica inglese: *

	Facile	Più facile che difficile	Più difficile che facile	Difficile
Pronuncia e intonazione	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preposizioni (es. of, to, for, by etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aggettivi e avverbi (es. well, hard, late etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tempi verbali (present, past, simple, perfect etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Then I inserted a control question, which I could use to see whether they were filling out the questionnaire carefully. The question just asked for the student number in the class.

Quanti studenti ci sono nella tua classe? *

- Meno di 15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- Più di 30

The next two questions asked about the classmates' behaviour and their influence on the respondent's concentration and learning.

The answers here spanned the qualitative range from positive behaviours – “my classmates are calm, they pay attention, collaborate and help the teacher keep a positive environment – to negative, i.e. distracted, noisy, negative. Again, the question about the influence on the respondent's learning processes.

Come sono di solito i tuoi compagni di classe durante l'ora di inglese? *

- Tranquilli
- Rumorosi
- Attenti
- Distratti
- Stimolanti
- Attivi (in interventi, risposte, soluzione problemi ecc.)
- Collaborativi
- Divisi in gruppetti differenti ma con andamento/clima positivo
- Divisi in gruppetti differenti con andamento/clima negativo

A question similar to the one about the classmates' behaviour asked the respondent what their own personal attitude during the English class was. The options were the same as the preceding question.

Tu di solito come sei durante l'ora di inglese? *

- Tranquillo
- Rumoroso
- Attento/interessato
- Distratto
- Attivo positivamente
- Attivo negativamente
- Disponibile verso i compagni
- Disponibile verso l'insegnante
- Altro: _____

The next two questions were dedicated to the student's reaction in case of not understanding something, and to their fear of doing linguistic mistakes. The first asked about the person whom the student address to require explanations, the second asked directly whether the respondent is afraid of making mistakes. The options for the first question were the different class characters – i.e. the teacher, the deskmate or the most reliable classmate, solving the problem by themselves or even not doing anything about it.

Di solito cosa fai quando c'è qualcosa che non capisci dal punto di vista linguistico? *

- Alzo la mano, aspetto il permesso e chiedo spiegazioni
- Chiamo l'insegnante e chiedo spiegazioni (anche senza aspettare il permesso)
- Chiedo individualmente all'insegnante
- Chiedo al mio vicino di banco
- Chiedo ad un compagno che so saprà aiutarmi
- Cerco da solo una risposta
- Non faccio nulla
- Altro: _____

Together with the question about their fear of making mistakes – which allowed an answer range from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very much) – there was also a non-compulsory question about the reasons. It read “in case you did fear making mistakes, why?”.

Hai paura di sbagliare? *

0 1 2 3 4

Per niente Moltissimo

In caso di risposta affermativa, perché? (facoltativa)

La tua risposta _____

The last two questions for the fourth section were about the student’s sociality and participation in decision taking on the class topic. The first asked “do you feel you learn better when learning...” and the answers were “alone”, “in pair with a friend”, “in pair with anybody”, “in group with friends”, “in group with anybody”.

Senti di imparare di più lavorando... *

Da solo

In coppia, ma solo con un amico

In coppia, non importa con chi

In gruppo, solo con amici

In gruppo, non importa con chi

The English teacher

I think this section is the most delicate, as it is all about the perception. Although, this perception is affected by many aspects, first of all the student’s personality and how the latter influences their vision of the world. What I mean is that the answers could here be biased by how the student sees their teacher, the teacher’s attitude and teaching. I required them to be the most objective and honest, not to pay too much attention to what they feel toward the teacher, but how the teacher’s teaching methodology affects their learning – not the teacher as a person, but as a teacher. The student’s feelings will probably affect the results at last, but I consider it to be part of the teacher’s work, anyway.

The first question is merely about whether the teacher speaks English during the lesson, the second about how clear the teacher and the third focuses on whether the teacher appears happy with their role. With these three questions I wanted to make the respondent immediately understand what the section is about.

Il mio insegnante di inglese

L'insegnante parla inglese durante la lezione? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Mai	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Sempre

Come spiega l'insegnante, secondo te? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Male, non si capisce niente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Molto bene, è quasi sempre tutto chiaro

L'insegnante ti sembra felice nel suo ruolo? *

	0	1	2	3	4	
Per niente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Assolutamente sì

Then, I went deeper and asked for the single teacher's attitude which could affect the learning process. The aspects I have considered are: "The teacher 1) is ready to listen to their students, 2) is patient, 3) shouts, 4) addresses their students by name, 5) is funny, 6) is sympathetic, 7) smiles, 8) stays sitting, 9) walks around the room, 10) varies activities, 11) uses technology and 12) asks for topics to be talked about.

L'insegnante... *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
È disponibile all'ascolto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
È paziente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Urla	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiama gli studenti per nome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
È divertente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

È comprensivo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sta seduto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Va in giro per l'aula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Varia attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Usa la tecnologia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiede di cosa volete parlare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I dedicated two single questions to the aspects that I, as well, observed individually, which are the student involvement ability and the helpfulness to solve problems. The answer scale was from 0 (not at all) to 4 (absolutely).

Incoraggia la partecipazione di tutti? *

0 1 2 3 4

Per niente Assolutamente sì

Aiuta a risolvere problemi linguistici? *

0 1 2 3 4

Per niente Assolutamente sì

The following question concerned how the teacher created sociality and asked for the frequency of pair/group activities. I also investigated who would decide the components of group projects. The answer scale spanned the frequency range from “never” to “always”.

Vi fa svolgere attività... *

Mai Raramente Spesso Sempre

Individualmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In coppia scelta da noi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In coppia scelta dall'insegnante	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In gruppi scelti da noi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In gruppi scelti dall'insegnante	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The final question was the most delicate, as it regarded the teacher themselves. I wrote a comment which reminded them to be as honest and objective as they could. The personal aspects I looked into were the competence, the class modalities, punctuality, evaluation promptness, capacity for motivating students and teaching quality in general. The answer spanned the evaluative range from “weak”, “sufficient”, “discrete”, “good” to “excellent”.

Del tuo insegnante di inglese come valuti... *
 Mi raccomando: siate onesti! Cercate di essere il più oggettivi possibile.

	Scarso	Sufficiente	Discreto	Buono	Ottimo
Competenza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modalità di lavoro in aula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Puntualità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rapidità nelle correzioni e nel dare le valutazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacità di motivare all'apprendimento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualità dell'insegnamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

And, finally, I asked how influent all these aspects were to the respondent. I here decided to give just 4 answers possibility, so that the student would have to choose whether to be positive or negative. The answers were, indeed, “not at all”, “a little”, “sufficiently”, “a lot”.

Quanto influisce sul tuo apprendimento... *

	Per niente	Un po'	Abbastanza	Molto
Competenza dell'insegnante	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modalità di lavoro in aula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Puntualità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rapidità nelle correzioni e nel dare le valutazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacità di motivare all'apprendimento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualità dell'insegnamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Activities and materials

This second last part was more of a control section, as I will then see how the answers to this quite objective topic varies among the results. Anyway, it is a question of perception. Its title in the questionnaire was “how is English taught to me?”.

Each question observes the activities made to develop the linguistic skills (see 1.2.2.). The first question is more general and asks about the usual lesson modalities – i.e. frontal lesson, grammar explanation, grammar exercises or games. The answers spanned from “never” to “always”.

Come mi viene insegnato l'inglese?

Attività generali *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
L'insegnante spiega e gli studenti ascoltano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiegazione di grammatica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esercizi di grammatica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giochi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The next question was about the reading skill. The options were “the texts are proposed by the English book”, “the texts are chosen by the teacher”, “the texts are chosen by the students”, “the texts are authentic, i.e. for native speaker of English. The parameters were the same as the preceding question.

Sviluppo dell'abilità di lettura *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
Testi proposti dal libro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Testi scelti dall'insegnante	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Testi scelti con gli studenti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Testi autentici (materiale in lingua)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following question focuses on the activities to improve listening skills. I proposed these options: 1) “listening of dialogues from the textbook”, 2) “song listening”, 3) “film watching”, 4) “video watching”, 5) “with original subtitles or text during the listening”. The answer parameters were the same as the previous questions.

Sviluppo dell'abilità di ascolto *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
Ascolto di dialoghi del libro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ascolto di canzoni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visione di film interi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visione di video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Con sottotitoli/testo durante l'ascolto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Then I asked about the writing activities, in particular “text writing with a prefixed draft”, “initial question requiring a long answer”, “questions requiring short answers”, “orthography/vocabulary exercises” and “translations”.

Sviluppo dell'abilità di scrittura *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
Con traccia prefissata a disposizione dello studente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Con spunto/domanda a risposta lunga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domande a risposta breve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esercizi di ortografia/lessicali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traduzioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following question focused on the speaking-skill-improving activities. I gave very precise options in order to better understand the modalities each teacher observed. The first answer is “individual exposition of a self-prepared topic”, then “group exposition”, “dialogue following a draft”, “improvised dialogue given a setting”, “question about studied topics” and last “personal questions (without self-preparation)”.

Sviluppo dell'abilità di lingua parlata *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
Esposizione individuale di un argomento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esposizione in gruppi (2 o più persone)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dialoghi fatti seguendo una scaletta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dialoghi improvvisati con traccia generale (es. in negozio, in aeroporto ecc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domande su argomenti fatti in classe (con preparazione)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domande personali (senza preparazione)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I subsequently asked whether they had participated in interesting class activities or whether they remembered something particular. The question was not compulsory.

Altre attività particolarmente interessanti svolte in classe (facoltativa):

Your answer

The last three questions focused on the kind of material used during class and, especially, the use of authentic sources, i.e. products originally addressing native speakers. Therefore, I asked them first about the material in general, providing them with answers spanning from “material set up by the teacher”, “textbook”, “photocopies”, “PowerPoint presentations” and “online material”. The parameters were about frequency, from “never” to “always”.

Che materiali utilizzate? *

	Mai	Raramente	A volte	Spesso	Sempre
Originali (preparati dall'insegnante)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Libro di classe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fotocopie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PowerPoint/Presentazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The second last question asked about how useful they found authentic material used guided by their teacher. The answer options I proposed regarded “songs (with original lyrics)”, “whole film with original subtitles”, “max-20-minute-long videos with original subtitles”, “cartoons with original subtitles”, “comics”, “books”, “magazines” and “newspapers”. The parameters were “absolutely useless”, “rather useless”, “rather useful” and “absolutely useful”.

Sotto la guida dell'insegnante, quanto trovi utile l'uso di materiale autentico (destinato a madrelingua inglese)? *

	Assolutamente inutile	Più inutile che utile	Più utile che inutile	Assolutamente utile
Canzoni (con testo originale)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Film interi (con sottotitoli in lingua)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video max 20 minuti (con sottotitoli in lingua)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cartoni animati (con sottotitoli in lingua)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fumetti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Libri	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Riviste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giornali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The last question asked how useful these would be without any guide (either their teacher's or written-based). The answer parameters were the same as the previous question.

Secondo te, quanto sarebbe utile... *

	Assolutamente inutile	Più inutile che utile	Più utile che inutile	Assolutamente utile
Senza aiuto dell'insegnante?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senza supporto testo/sottotitoli?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Opinions on English teaching and learning:

The last section of my questionnaire was dedicated to all those questions I personally find the most important and would always have wanted to ask students and had not had the chance to.

The first question was about the priorities they would give each linguistic aspect during the lesson, i.e. “pronunciation and intonation”, “grammar”, “vocabulary”, “writing”, “English language for job purposes”, “culture”, “speaking”, “listening”, “reading and literature” and “other”.

Varie ed eventuali

Su cosa vorresti ci si concentrasse di più a lezione? *

- Pronuncia e intonazione
- Grammatica
- Lessico
- Scrittura
- Inglese per il lavoro
- Cultura
- Inglese parlato
- Ascolto
- Lettura e letteratura
- Other: _____

The very last question asked for an opinion about some particular teaching methods. These statements have come to light during my observation-period, after assisting in the English

lessons, talking with students and teachers. These are: “during the English class everyone should speak English (made exception for grammar explanations)”, “it should be insisted that students spoke English”, “grammar rules should be understood by the students themselves”, “word meanings should be understood by students themselves” and last “oral language should be given more importance than written language”.

Quanto sei d'accordo con queste affermazioni? *

	Per niente d'accordo	D'accordo	Pienamente d'accordo
Si dovrebbe parlare sempre inglese (tranne nella spiegazione della grammatica)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Si dovrebbe pretendere che parliamo inglese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Si dovrebbe lasciare che capiamo da soli le regole grammaticali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Si dovrebbe lasciare che capiamo da soli il significato di una parola	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Si dovrebbe puntare di più sull'orale che sullo scritto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. The results

The last chapter of my work will present the responses the students gave to my final questionnaire and what has emerged from the observations I made in each class.

The analysis will be carried out in two steps. In the first place I will outline a general overview of the answers resulting from the questionnaire – suitably divided by age and school curriculum – in particular those given to the questions regarding the learning processes rather than the teaching. Secondly, I will present what the students have answered about those aspects which belong directly to their own English-class experience, e.g. their classroom, their classmates and their teachers. In this way, I expect to be able to answer the object questions – which are:

- How do Italian young students perceive the English language?
- How do Italian young students see English teaching and learning?

3.1 General overview

The first question I asked the students I worked with was: “Do you like English? From 1 – ‘I hate it’ – to 5 – ‘I love it’?” and they raised their hands accordingly. The questionnaire finally provided me with a written answer, by school curriculum, age and gender.

Out of 661 students who have filled it in – 246 boys and 415 girls – the most frequent answer to the question “How much do you like English?” with options from 0 – “I hate it” – to 4 – “I love it” –, was “3” (118 boys and 195 girls). Just 9 boys and 5 girls answered “0”, 23 and 19 “1” – negative-answer totality 56. It is, then, clear that English is not disliked at all, rather neutral or liked. Those who find it a subject like another are 146 (60 boys and 86 girls – 25% of the boys and less than 20% of the girls), and the same number of students (but only 36 boys and 110 girls – 1 out of 6 boys and 1 out of 4 girls) love it and have answered “4”.

	<i>I hate it</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>I love it</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Boys</i>	9	23	60	118	36	246
	3,7%	9,3%	24,4%	48,0%	14,6%	
<i>Girls</i>	5	19	86	195	110	415
	1,2%	4,6%	20,7%	47,0%	26,5%	
<i>Total</i>	14	42	146	313	146	661
	2,1%	6,4%	22,1%	47,4%	22,1%	

By looking at the total number of male and female students who filled the questionnaire in, although, we can observe how the same proportions are almost respected as far as the positive

answers are concerned. It is, on the other hand, remarkable that the most negative answers were given by the double of male interviewees opposed to the female.

Let us now see the answers divided by school curriculum and age.

<i>Curriculum</i>		<i>I hate it</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>I love it</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AFM</i>	Boys	2	5	20	45	17	89
		2,2%	5,6%	22,5%	50,6%	19,1%	
	Girls	3	10	34	35	23	105
		1,2%	4,6%	20,7%	47,0%	26,5%	
<i>CAT</i>	Boys	5	12	21	17	5	60
		8,3%	20,0%	35,0%	28,3%	8,3%	
	Girls	1	1	7	7	3	19
		5,3%	5,3%	36,8%	36,8%	15,8%	
<i>TUR</i>	Boys	0	2	4	22	4	32
		0,0%	6,3%	12,5%	68,8%	12,5%	
	Girls	1	7	29	97	57	191
		0,5%	3,7%	15,2%	50,8%	29,8%	
<i>RIM</i>	Boys	0	1	2	12	0	15
		0,0%	6,7%	13,3%	80,0%	0,0%	
	Girls	0	0	8	44	22	74
		0,0%	0,0%	10,8%	59,5%	29,7%	
<i>SIA</i>	Boys	2	3	13	22	10	50
		4,0%	6,0%	26,0%	44,0%	20,0%	
	Girls	0	1	8	12	5	26
		0,0%	3,8%	30,8%	46,2%	19,2%	

Not only does this chart confirm what the one before showed, but it also demonstrates that the fact that a student may choose a curriculum in which English might appear not to be relevant (such as the CAT curriculum), it does not mean that they might dislike it. The same consideration is to be made with AFM and SIA, where English is more liked than ignored. One interesting fact is that these data seem to provide us with some well-known results regarding the relation between gender and school curricula: the tourism and international relationship courses are attended the most by girls, while the informative-system and surveyor classes by boys. Remarkable is the AFM component, a blend of personalities which must be valorised and not feared. TUR boys represent something unpredicted, as only 12% love English. The reason is perhaps that studying more than one language draws their attention and interest to all of them. Or, maybe, English has become a subject which they give for granted.

<i>Year</i>		<i>I hate it</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>I love it</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1st</i> <i>14 y/o.</i>	Boys	2	5	8	29	7	51
		3,9%	9,8%	15,7%	56,9%	13,7%	
	Girls	0	4	15	27	23	69
		0,0%	5,8%	21,7%	39,1%	33,3%	
<i>2nd</i> <i>15 y/o</i>	Boys	4	4	10	27	9	54
		7,4%	7,4%	18,5%	50,0%	16,7%	
	Girls	3	6	25	40	25	99
		3,0%	6,1%	25,3%	40,4%	25,3%	
<i>3rd</i> <i>16 y/o</i>	Boys	2	4	20	36	14	76
		2,6%	5,3%	26,3%	47,4%	18,4%	
	Girls	0	1	26	47	23	97
		0,0%	1,0%	26,8%	48,5%	23,7%	
<i>4th</i> <i>17 y/o</i>	Boys	0	6	16	19	6	47
		0,0%	12,8%	34,0%	40,4%	12,8%	
	Girls	1	6	10	43	25	85
		1,2%	7,1%	11,8%	50,6%	29,4%	
<i>5th</i> <i>18 y/o</i>	Boys	1	4	6	7	0	18
		5,6%	22,2%	33,3%	38,9%	0,0%	
	Girls	1	2	10	38	14	65
		1,5%	3,1%	15,4%	58,5%	21,5%	

Given that the data in this chart come from different school-curricula students, it must be read together with the two above. The conclusions are not dissimilar to the already-mentioned. One fact which comes unexpected is that no fifth-year boys love English, even if two TUR classes and one RIM are involved.

Usefulness of the English language was another matter I investigated. The question followed the one I have just presented and had a parallel answering pattern. To “How useful do you think English is?” the participants could always answer from 0 ‘useless’ to 4 ‘essential’.

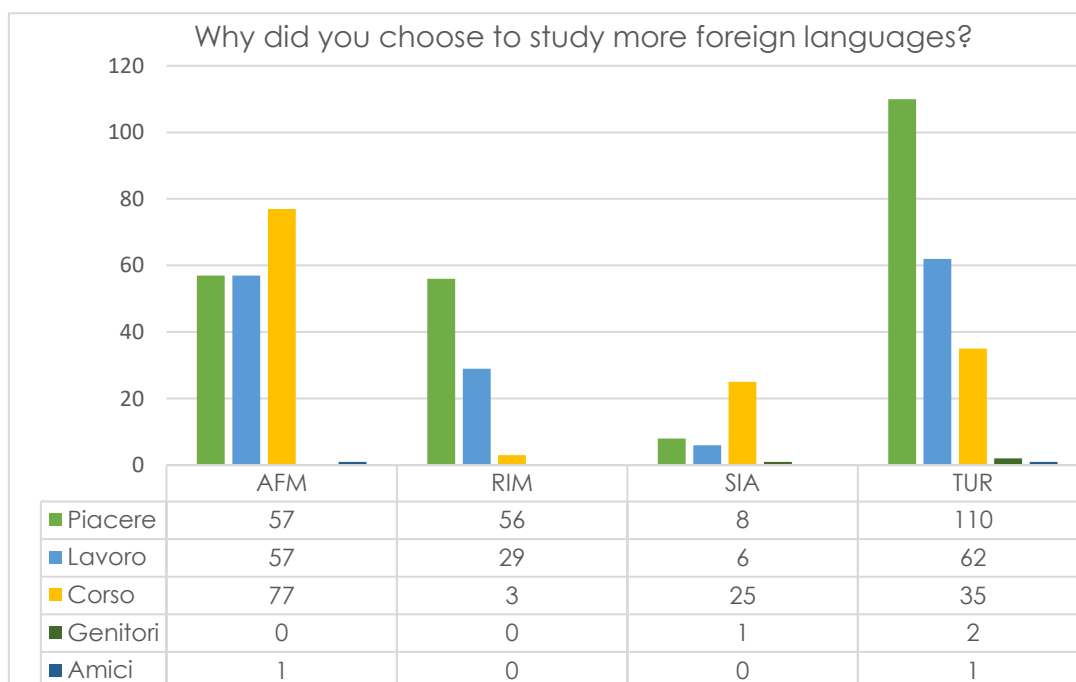
	<i>Useless</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Boys</i>	2	1	11	66	166	246
	0,8%	0,4%	4,5%	26,8%	67,5%	
<i>Girls</i>	1	0	9	80	325	415
	0,2%	0,0%	2,2%	19,3%	78,3%	
<i>Total</i>	3	1	20	146	491	661
	0,5%	0,2%	3,0%	22,1%	74,3%	

The results are more significant than it could be predicted. Everyone claims that English is important, but Italian students do not usually seem to be so convinced. Despite of this, the answer “essential” has gained about 75% of agreement, followed directly by the answer 3 with 22%, which means that almost 97% of the students find English useful. The remnant 3% are neutral to it and less than 1% do not agree with its usefulness. These few answers (4 summed) could be due to antipathies towards the teachers or even to mistakes during the compilation.

As it can be inferred by this only chart, it would be irrelevant to analyse the data collected by age or school curricula: the conclusions would be basically the same. The only thing worthy to be noted is that the attitude towards the subject usefulness does not seem to change over the school years. Indeed, the answer percentage to each option is almost unvaried: just 5-10% for every school year has answered negatively.

Other languages;

Before going on with the analysis of the students’ perception of the English language, I would like to present the results provided by those who study one or two more foreign languages. Already outlined the total number of French learners being 151, German learners 599 and Spanish learners 536, I have had the chance to work respectively with 9 French students, 434 German students and 314 Spanish students. CAT is not involved as only English is taught in that curriculum, while two foreign languages are taught in the SIA curriculum only during the third year – therefore SIA data are fewer.



In Chapter 1.1.3. we talked about different types of motivation, among which I presented the pleasure, need and duty motivation. The options we find in this question reflect, from a certain point of view, the analyses outlined before. In fact, as it can be seen in the chart, the

two curricula involving foreign languages are attended by students whose motivation is mostly linked to interest and passion. The second most frequent answer was “it will be useful for job search”, which can be considered as need motivation. What leads AFM and SIA third-year students to study one more language besides English is rather an obligation foreseen by the school curricula. Interestingly, neither parents nor friends play a role in the choice.

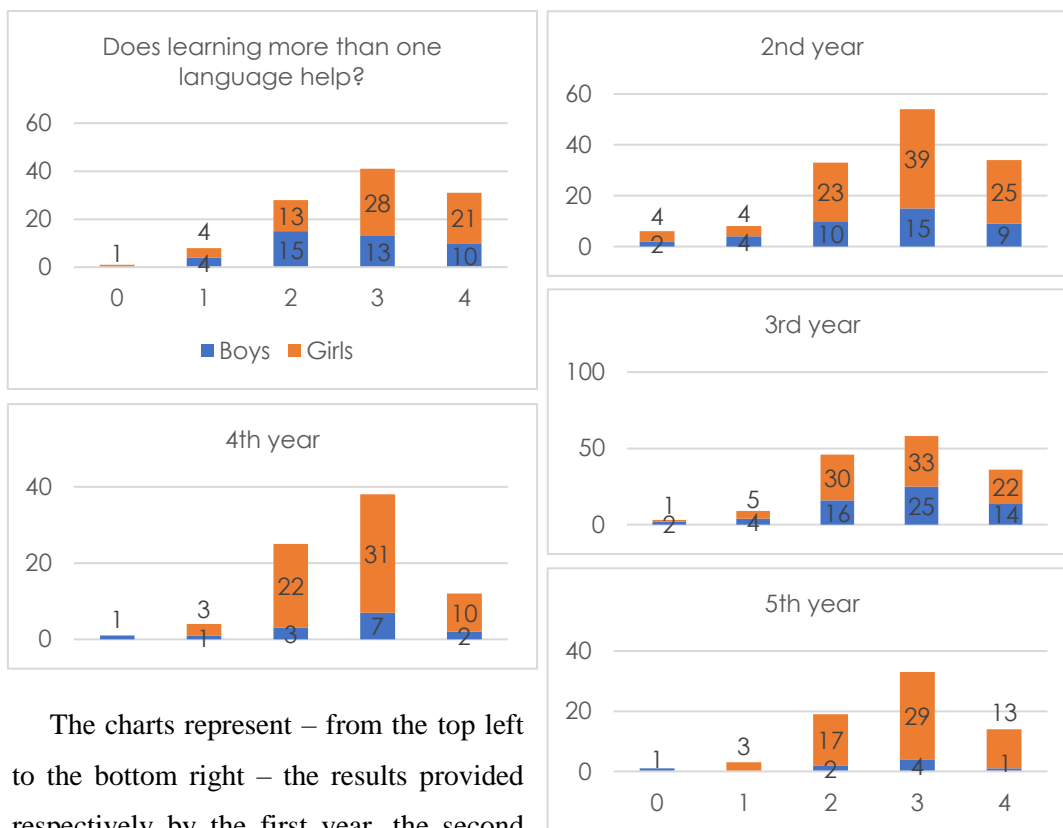
In the following chart I have swapped the three answer options with the corresponding motivation type. By looking at the results divided by gender and school curricula, we can notice boys’ feeling in a certain way obliged, rather than interested. The opposite can be observed with the girls’ answers. It must be considered, anyway, that the question required just one answer, the motivations can definitely be various.

<i>Curriculum</i>		<i>Pleasure</i>	<i>Need</i>	<i>Duty</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AFM</i>	Boys	18	25	44	87
		20,7%	28,7%	50,6%	
	Girls	39	32	33	104
		37,5%	30,8%	31,7%	
<i>RIM</i>	Boys	5	8	2	15
		33,3%	53,3%	13,3%	
	Girls	51	21	1	73
		69,9%	28,8%	1,4%	
<i>SIA</i>	Boys	6	3	20	29
		20,7%	10,3%	69,0%	
	Girls	2	3	5	10
		20,0%	30,0%	50,0%	
<i>TUR</i>	Boys	17	7	7	31
		54,8%	22,6%	22,6%	
	Girls	93	55	28	176
		52,8%	31,3%	15,9%	

The very next question asked about the feeling towards their competences in the second or third foreign language. I will here present the results and the reasons behind any weaknesses provided by the students themselves. In fact, SIA students in general admit not being interested in a second foreign language especially because their last two-year school period does not involve its study. Out of 9 French learners, 7 do not consider themselves sufficiently prepared. In the same class, the Spanish learners were 8 and 5 felt the same. In the other SIA class, among 23 students, 17 felt they were not able to use the language. They claim teachers are to be blamed, in particular German ones. I will attach the results for AFM, TUR and RIM

curricula in the appendix, since they are not relevant for my research aim. The classes will be divided according languages and years, there will be no distinctions for gender. A little premise to be considered regards the teaching, as the results do not come from students having the same foreign language teacher and we know that teachers have a great influence on the final competences.

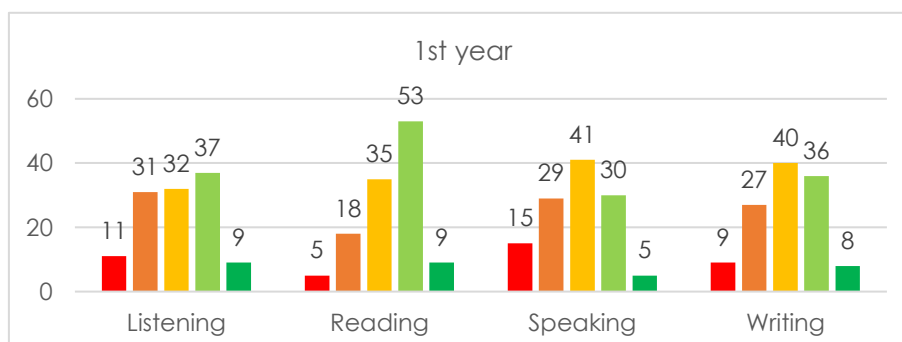
Data provided by the question “does learning more than one language help you learn languages in general?” are more interesting as far as the language-learning process is concerned. The answers were from 0 “Not at all” to 4 “Absolutely”.



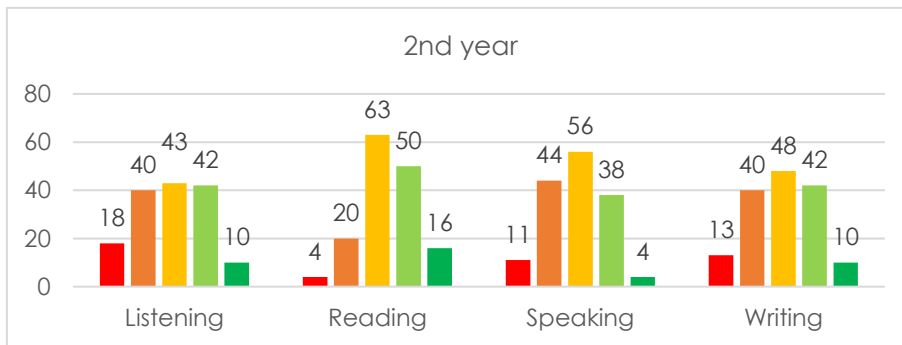
The charts represent – from the top left to the bottom right – the results provided respectively by the first year, the second year and so on.

The answers are overall positive: out of 165 boys, 100 (almost the 60%) have ticked “3” or “4”; among 381 girls, more than 250 (more than the 65%) gave the same answers.

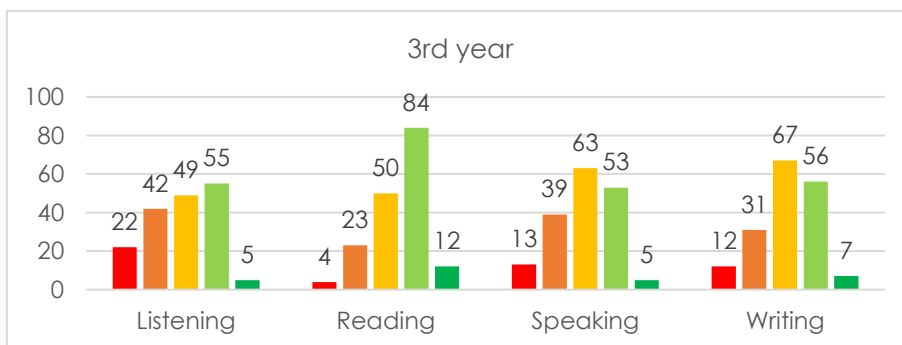
Basic skills difficulties in the English language;



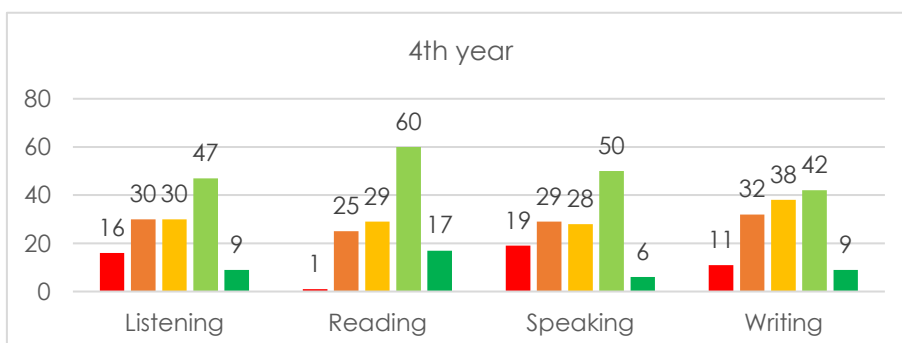
The chart is quite descriptive: as we will see in the next years as well, reading is the skill students are more confident with. This is probably because it is the most exercised and, maybe, the easiest to acquire – considering the pronunciation/spelling dilemma is not involved. One interesting thing is that the AFM students are those who have answered at 80% “weak” in all of them, but also more than 50 % “excellent” are by AFM students. To be more precise, respectively, “listening: 9 ‘weak’ out of 11 and 6 ‘excellent’ out of 9”; “reading: 3/5 and 5/9”, “speaking 12/15 and 4/5” and last “writing 6 ‘weak’ out of 9, 3 ‘excellent’ out of 8.



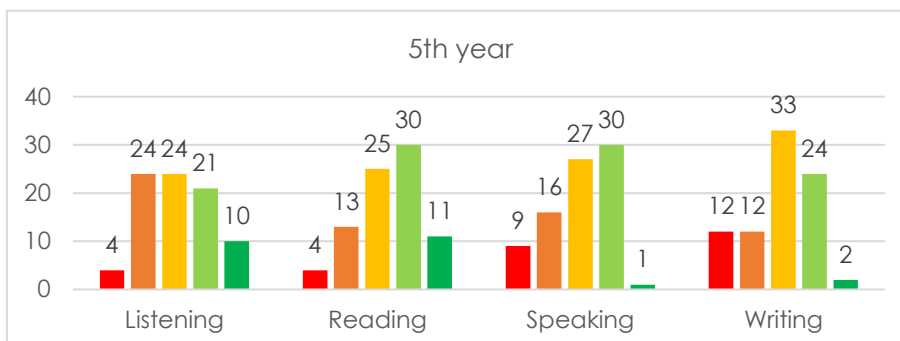
The second-year students seem less self-confident. Again, reading wins among the others, but the majority answered “decent” in all 4 skills. What is interesting here and different from the first year is that overall the TUR students have not answered very positively. The AFM students have given more or less the same answers. All the results can, indeed, be divided almost fifty/fifty between the two curricula. The difference is provided by the CAT students whose most common answer was “sufficient”.



The chart presents a situation very similar to the first-year one. The only exception is the great majority of “good” answers about the reading skill. The single curricula have once more answered approximately likewise.



The fourth-year chart presents the most positive situation. “Reading” is always in pole position, but in the second place we find “listening” and immediately after “speaking”. TUR and RIM students are the most confident, their most frequent answer being “good”. The others present a balanced prospect.



The fifth year concludes consistently with all the classes before. CAT students have given some “good”, but what is more interesting is that TUR students answered more negatively than it could be expected. RIM students have been the most confident, made exception in the “listening” and “writing” parts.

Looking at last at the total results, we can confirm what we have been observing in this year-pro-year analysis. I will not distinguish boys from girls as the percentages are very alike.

	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Listening</i>	71 10,7%	167 25,3%	178 26,9%	202 30,6%	43 6,5%
<i>Reading</i>	18 2,7%	99 15,0%	202 30,6%	277 41,9%	65 9,8%
<i>Speaking</i>	67 10,1%	157 23,8%	215 32,5%	201 30,4%	21 3,2%
<i>Writing</i>	57 8,6%	142 21,5%	226 34,2%	200 30,3%	36 5,4%

To sum up, the students only feel confident with their reading skill. Listening and writing skills are almost homogenously evaluated, the speaking skill is judged the most negatively. The aforementioned hypothesis trying to motivate these results could actually prove why just the reading skill is so positively looked at. To be considered is also the fact that – as far as the English language is concerned – this could possibly be for real the easiest skill to acquire. By examining the next questions about the difficulties regarding the aspects of the language and the grammar, I will try to give a more reliable answer to this last point.

Difficult aspects of the English language

The very next question in the questionnaire asked about the aspects in which they felt they had more difficulties and, in particular, where they were improving. For layout reasons, I have left just the first letter of each aspect, which were: Listening, Reading, Speech, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation and All/None of them. The first row for each school year presents how many have ticked that very aspect as difficult and the second row whether it is being improved.

	<i>L</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>1st year</i>	26	6	48	18	23	32	33	3	9
	30	35	52	30	41	35	42	15	3
<i>2nd year</i>	60	5	60	37	34	50	44	2	6
	37	44	60	48	46	58	61	13	4
<i>3rd year</i>	74	8	81	36	55	52	48	3	9
	57	45	79	59	62	65	62	26	0
<i>4th year</i>	51	4	52	24	40	48	45	4	8
	49	37	66	62	60	30	51	10	2
<i>5th year</i>	28	4	29	30	21	47	22	1	3
	22	26	33	21	33	10	28	5	5

This chart provides us with a very quick and interesting comparison as to the feeling the students have about their own language-learning process. On the whole, the situation is quite positive, as many of them have selected they are improving “all of them” and very few have checked “none of them”. Surprisingly, just the fifth-year students have answered more “improving none of them” than “difficulties in none of them”.

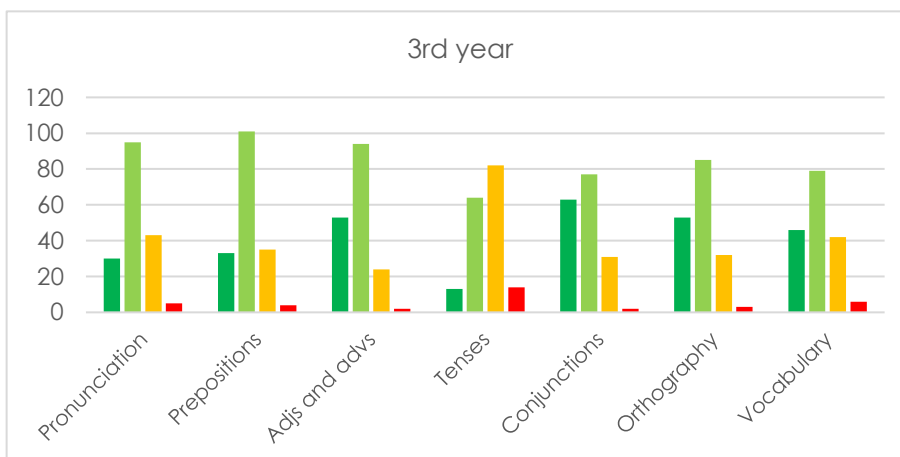
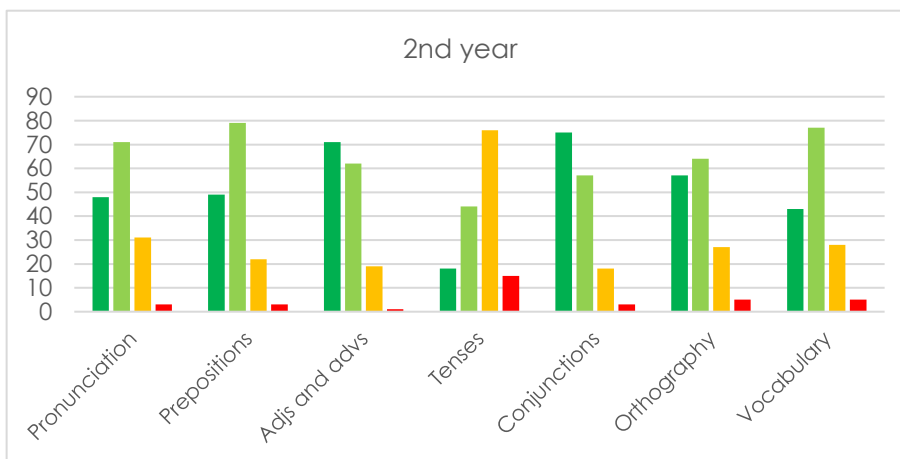
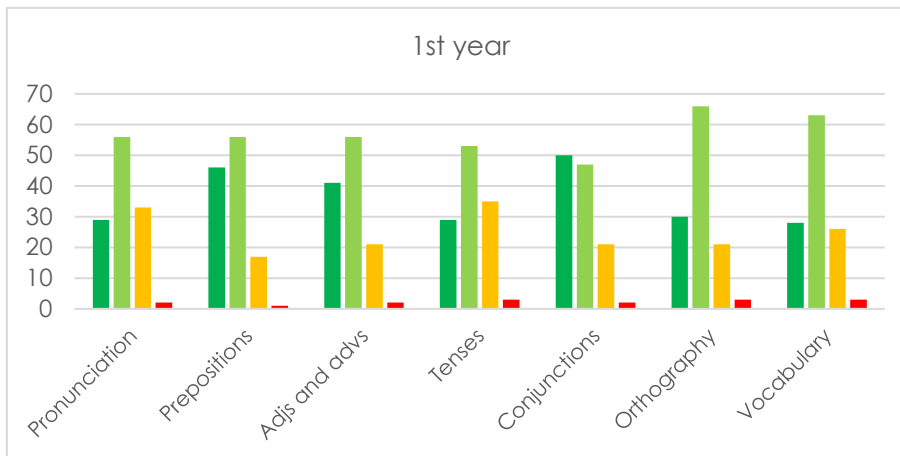
Again, one aspect they found difficult and they were not even improving enough is the listening, the grammar competence follows directly. Positive are vocabulary and pronunciation.

Looking at the answers summed up, we can get an incisive confirmation.

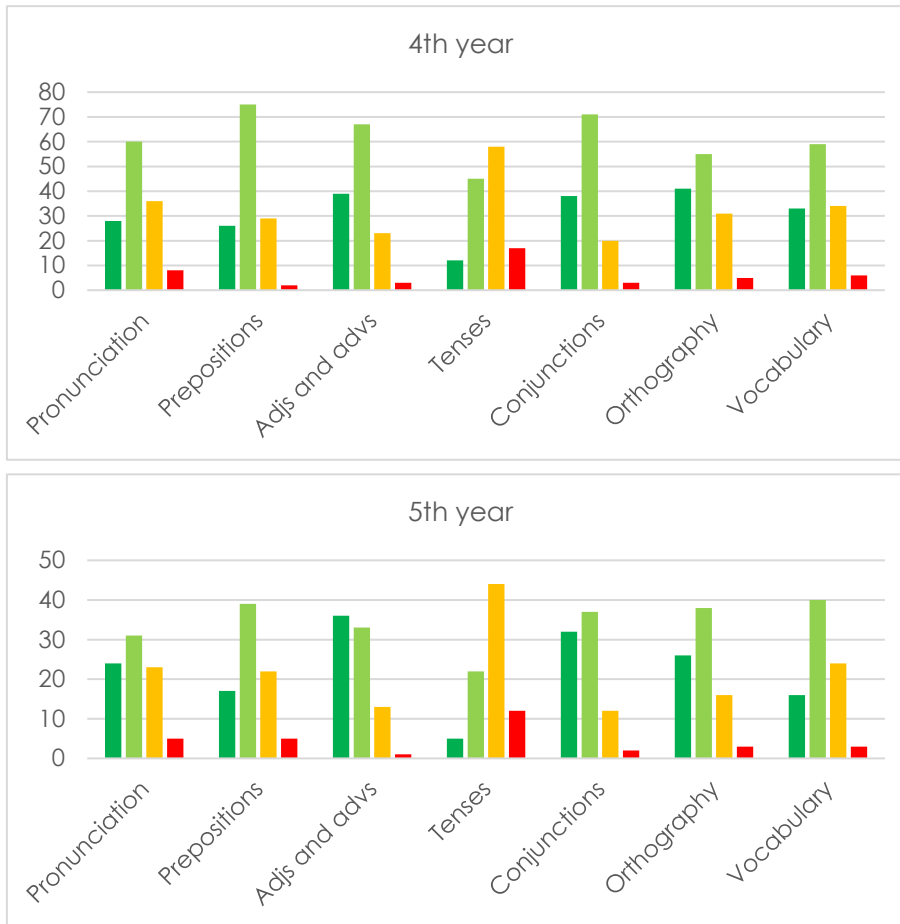
	<i>L</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Totals</i>	239	27	270	145	173	229	192	13	35
	195	187	290	220	242	198	244	69	14

The following question has provided us with a more precise insight into the English grammar difficulties according to Italian students. The question asked to define whether the

proposed aspects were “easy” rather than “difficult”. For each, I gave some examples to help them identify the domain.



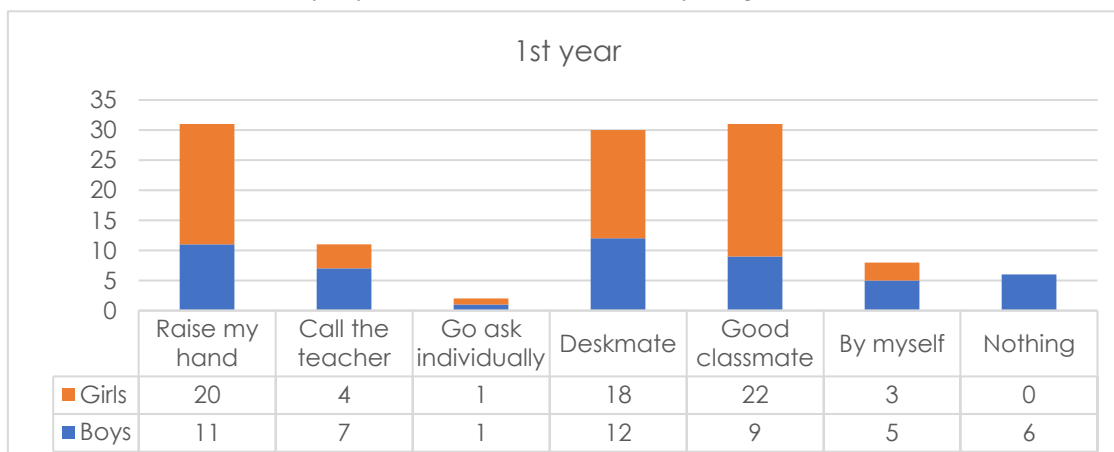
These charts show how the students overall feel all the same about the different aspects of the English grammar. The only element to be considered “rather difficult” is the verbal tenses, which are renowned for being different from the Italian verbal-tense system and, therefore, quite complex to understand.

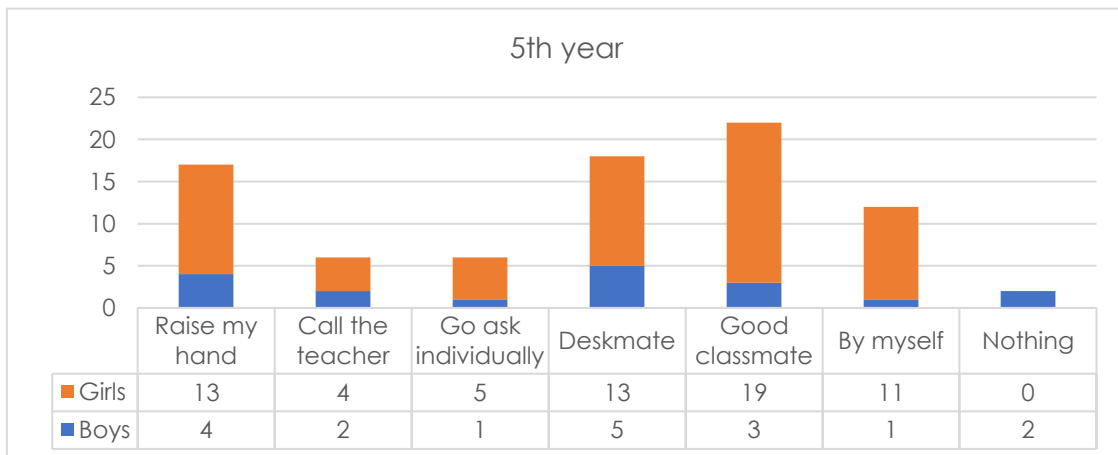
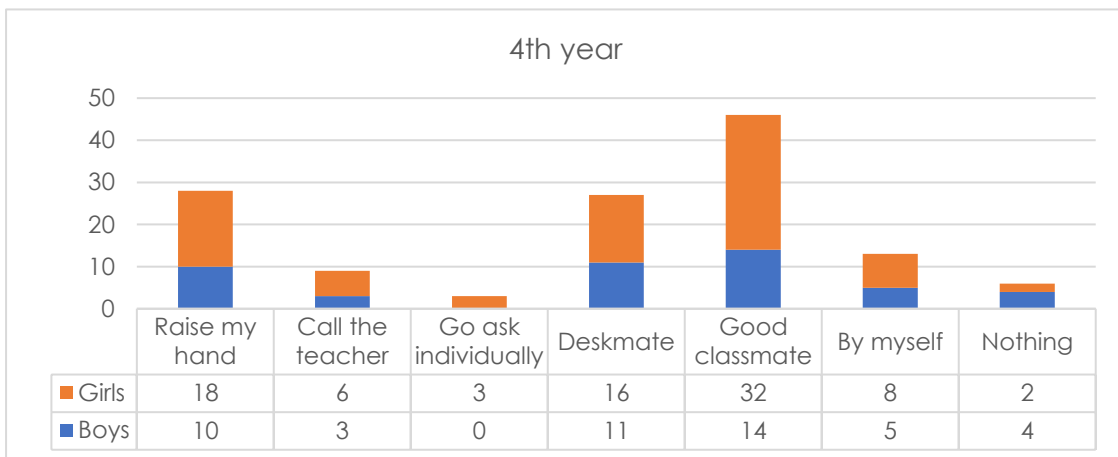
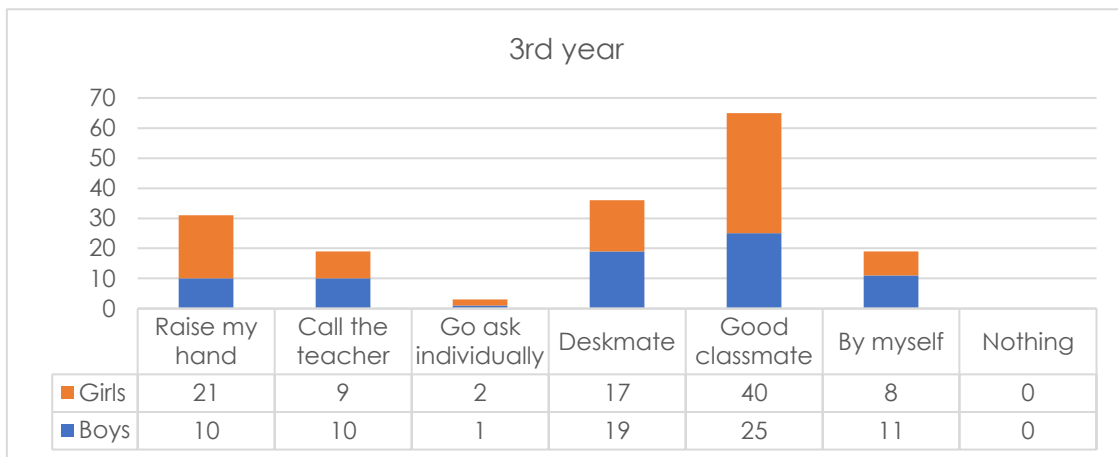
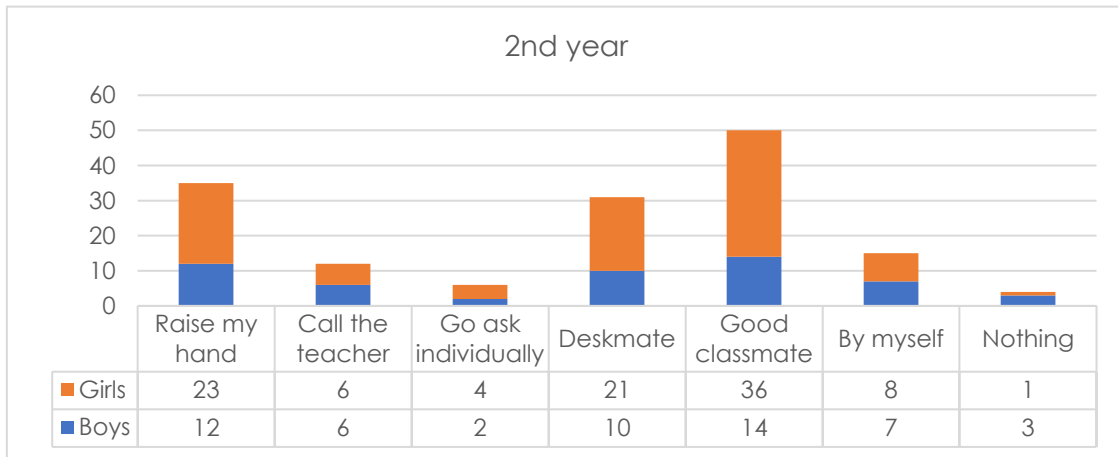


One interesting assumption that could be made is that the difficulty perception rises proportionally with the school years. This is probably because of the fact that the English language looks easy, but actually is not that simple – and students discover it with the years going by.

Mistakes and fear

The question asked: “what do you usually do in case you did not understand something from the linguistic point of view?” The answers were: 1) I raise my hand and wait for permission to ask a question, 2) I call the teacher and ask the question, 3) I go ask to the teacher individually, 4) I ask to my deskmate, 5) I ask to a classmate who I know will help me, 6) I will look for an answer by myself and 7) I will not do anything.





It seems that the proportions are steady. Students prefer addressing one classmate instead

of the teacher. This depends certainly on the atmosphere during the lessons and the teachers are themselves responsible for this – the variables are many and there is not, indeed, one unique answer.

For layout reasons, here is the legend for each answer:

- 1) I raise my hand and wait for permission to ask a question;
- 2) I call the teacher and ask the question;
- 3) I go ask to the teacher individually;
- 4) I ask to my deskmate;
- 5) I ask to a classmate who I know will help me;
- 6) I will look for an answer by myself;
- 7) I will not do anything.

	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)
<i>Boys</i>	47	28	5	57	65	29	15
	19,1%	11,4%	2,0%	23,2%	26,4%	11,8%	6,1%
<i>Girls</i>	95	29	15	85	149	38	3
	22,9%	7,0%	3,6%	20,5%	36,0%	9,2%	0,7%
<i>Total</i>	142	57	20	142	214	67	18
	21,5%	8,6%	3,0%	21,5%	32,4%	10,2%	2,7%

The following question can help us better figure out these results.

It asked: “are you afraid of making mistakes?” and students could answer from 0 “not at all” to 4 “very much”. I will not make any difference regarding the school curricula because apparently the answers are not dependent on this.

<i>Year</i>		<i>Not at all</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Very much</i>
<i>1st</i> <i>14 y/o.</i>	<i>Boys</i>	7	11	17	9	7
		13,7%	21,6%	33,3%	17,6%	13,7%
	<i>Girls</i>	3	5	23	28	10
		4,3%	7,2%	33,3%	40,6%	14,5%
<i>2nd</i> <i>15 y/o.</i>	<i>Boys</i>	15	16	10	10	3
		27,8%	29,6%	18,5%	18,5%	5,6%
	<i>Girls</i>	4	13	36	24	22
		4,0%	13,1%	36,4%	24,2%	22,2%
<i>3rd</i> <i>16 y/o.</i>	<i>Boys</i>	13	20	21	15	7
		17,1%	26,3%	27,6%	19,7%	9,2%
	<i>Girls</i>	6	24	28	31	8
		6,2%	24,7%	28,9%	32,0%	8,2%

<i>4th</i> <i>17 y/o</i>	Boys	7	7	18	10	5
		14,9%	14,9%	38,3%	21,3%	10,6%
	Girls	9	26	23	13	14
		10,6%	30,6%	27,1%	15,3%	16,5%
<i>5th</i> <i>18 y/o</i>	Boys	3	4	6	2	3
		16,7%	22,2%	33,3%	11,1%	16,7%
	Girls	6	11	16	21	11
		9,2%	16,9%	24,6%	32,3%	16,9%

We can clearly see that girls are more afraid – or maybe emotional – than boys, who tend not to pay too much attention to making mistakes.

Together with this question, many students wrote their reasons in the following optional question. The most common have been:

- I am afraid of my classmates judging me/making fun of me;
- I don't know that well the language and I don't want to make mistakes;
- I am shy/insecure;
- I could make mistakes which my classmates wouldn't make;
- I don't want the teacher to judge me badly;
- The teacher could scold me for making mistakes I shouldn't make;
- In the past I was often scolded for making mistakes;
- I don't want to appear stupid/unprepared/inferior.

To recall what has been claimed many times in this work, the class atmosphere is fundamental during the language lessons, as being scared of intervening and speaking or practising is counterproductive. Teachers should care about their students' self-esteem and not hinder their interventions. Marks are not weapons, but indicators for making better and fixing one's problems.

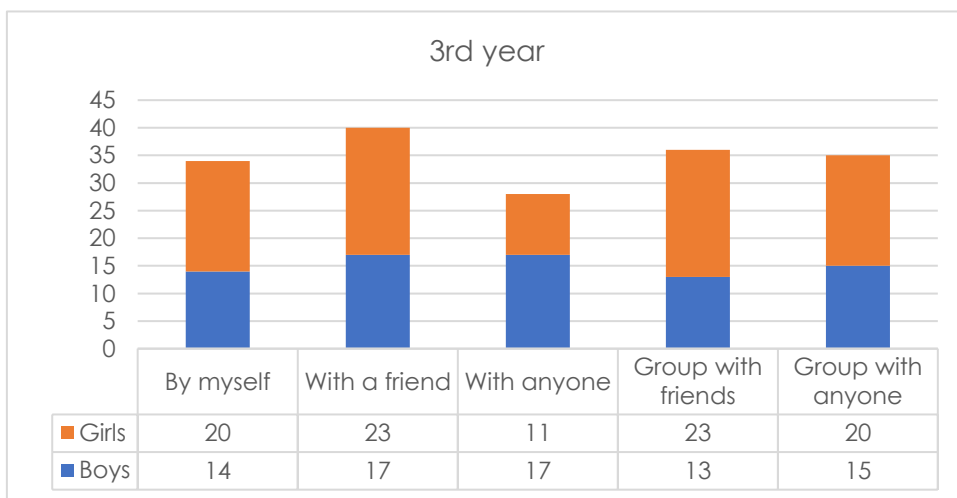
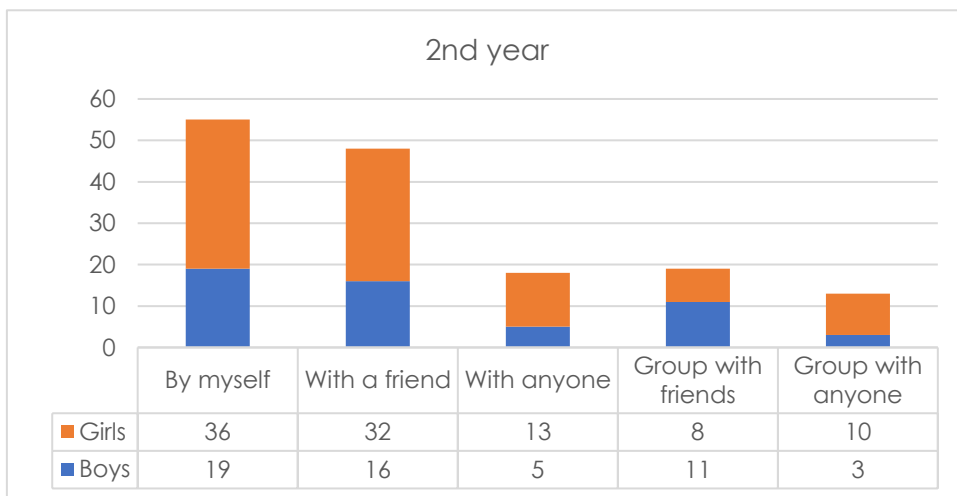
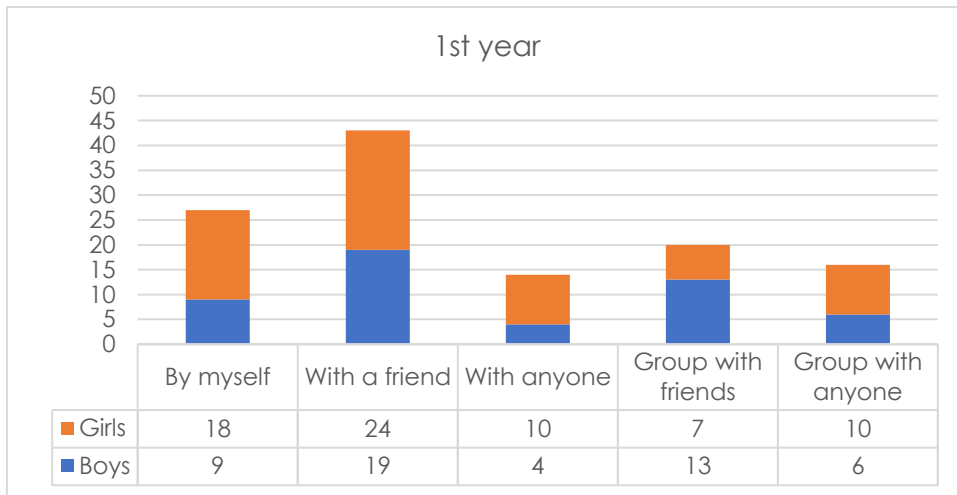
But let us see how the students feel they work better.

In pairs, in groups or individually?

The question asked: “do you feel you learn better when learning...” and the answers were “alone”, “in pair with a friend”, “in pair with anybody”, “in group with friends”, “in group with anybody”.

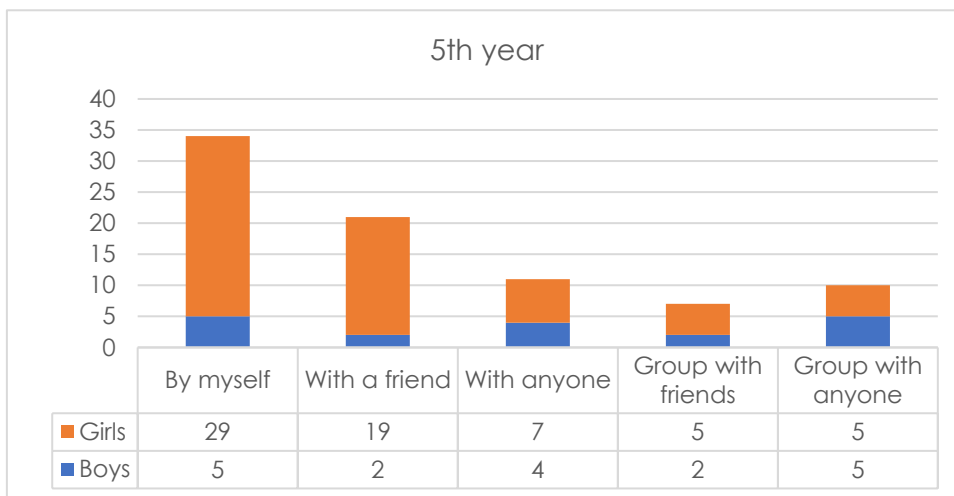
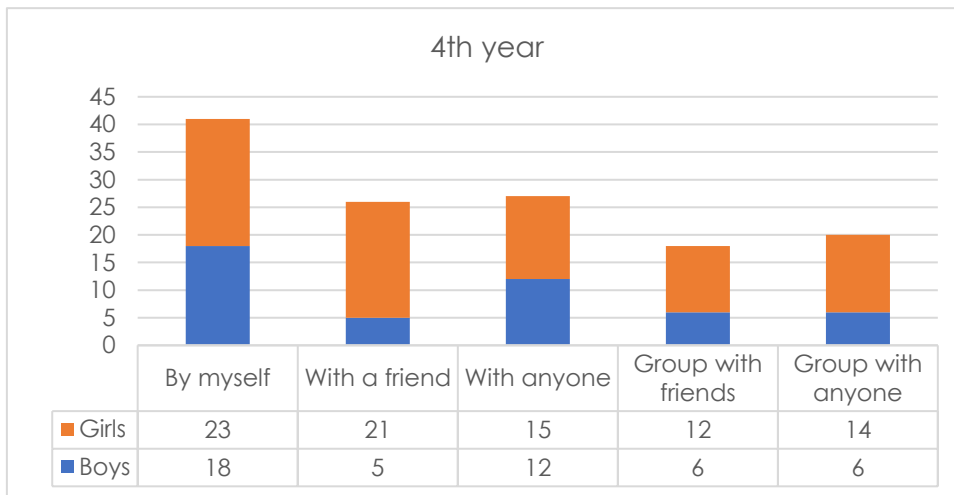
Looking at the various school curricula, there does not appear to be great differences depending on this.

Here are the results:



Boys seem to prefer working with friends, while girls would rather work by themselves or indifferently with whom. Just in the third year it appears not to be relevant for boys whether they are with someone they know well.

This sort of stabilization we can observe in the last chart could be due to the growing age. My hypothesis comes with the results obtained in the fourth and fifth years, which I will attach below.



Boys in the oldest years do not present any particular preferences, in the fourth year they even prefer working alone. Girls have confirmed their appreciation in working by themselves, but seem eventually more open to any collaboration.

Pair and group working is, anyway, appreciated and is fundamental in language learning. Languages are related to communication, which must involve more than one person. Therefore, it must be practiced with someone else, otherwise the speaking and listening skills might not develop properly.

Let us see, now, how students are made work in their classes. I start by saying that the following results are divided by class and not curriculum or by teacher, because it would not be relevant, as teachers do change social activities in their own classes and it is, therefore, more practical to present them all together. They will show the tendency by year, always taking in consideration that teachers do work differently, and some might prefer group works rather than individual work.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Individual</i>	3	41	58	18	120
	2,5%	34,2%	48,3%	15,0%	
<i>In pair with friend</i>	31	56	32	1	
	25,8%	46,7%	26,7%	0,8%	
<i>In pair with anyone</i>	16	54	45	5	
	13,3%	45,0%	37,5%	4,2%	
<i>In group with friends</i>	31	46	37	6	
	25,8%	38,3%	30,8%	5,0%	
<i>In group with anyone</i>	25	49	40	6	
	20,8%	40,8%	33,3%	5,0%	
<i>Individual</i>	4	48	90	11	153
	2,6%	31,4%	58,8%	7,2%	
<i>In pair with friend</i>	63	55	31	4	
	41,2%	35,9%	20,3%	2,6%	
<i>In pair with anyone</i>	30	42	62	19	
	19,6%	27,5%	40,5%	12,4%	
<i>In group with friends</i>	78	44	28	3	
	51,0%	28,8%	18,3%	2,0%	
<i>In group with anyone</i>	52	58	34	9	
	34,0%	37,9%	22,2%	5,9%	
<i>Individual</i>	1	75	87	10	173
	0,6%	43,4%	50,3%	5,8%	
<i>In pair with friend</i>	53	66	49	5	
	30,6%	38,2%	28,3%	2,9%	
<i>In pair with anyone</i>	27	55	71	20	
	15,6%	31,8%	41,0%	11,6%	
<i>In group with friends</i>	54	60	54	5	
	31,2%	34,7%	31,2%	2,9%	
<i>In group with anyone</i>	35	58	67	13	
	20,2%	33,5%	38,7%	7,5%	

The first two years show how individual work greatly practiced, compared to the others. Group works are more rare than common.

From the third year, works together with someone else seem to be establishing. We will have to look into the results provided by the last two older classes to confirm whether this trend to group works is present.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Individual</i>	3	47	75	7	132
	2,3%	35,6%	56,8%	5,3%	
<i>In pair with friend</i>	20	48	59	5	
	15,2%	36,4%	44,7%	3,8%	
<i>In pair with anyone</i>	35	40	45	12	
	26,5%	30,3%	34,1%	9,1%	
<i>In group with friends</i>	32	46	50	4	
	24,2%	34,8%	37,9%	3,0%	
<i>In group with anyone</i>	40	37	42	13	
	30,3%	28,0%	31,8%	9,8%	
<i>Individual</i>	2	22	51	8	83
	2,4%	26,5%	61,4%	9,6%	
<i>In pair with friend</i>	8	22	44	9	
	9,6%	26,5%	53,0%	10,8%	
<i>In pair with anyone</i>	22	30	27	4	
	26,5%	36,1%	32,5%	4,8%	
<i>In group with friends</i>	14	23	34	12	
	16,9%	27,7%	41,0%	14,5%	
<i>In group with anyone</i>	29	35	18	1	
	34,9%	42,2%	21,7%	1,2%	

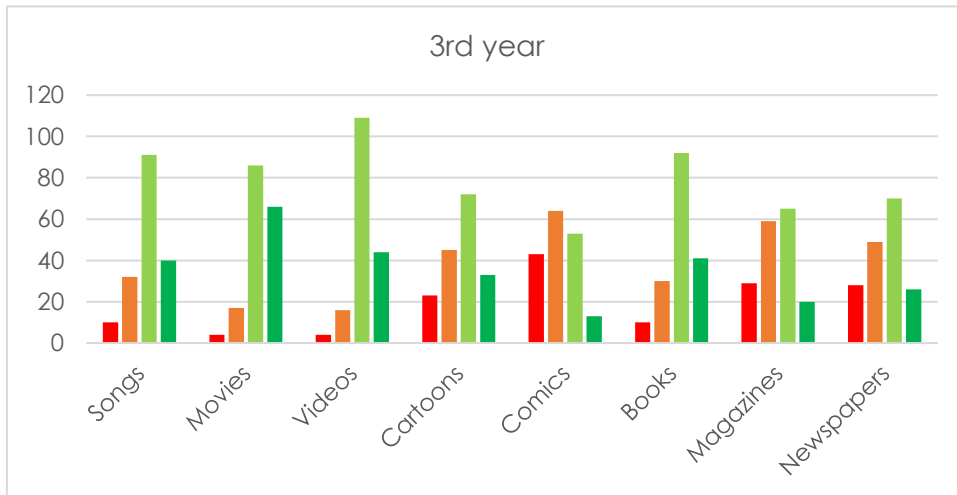
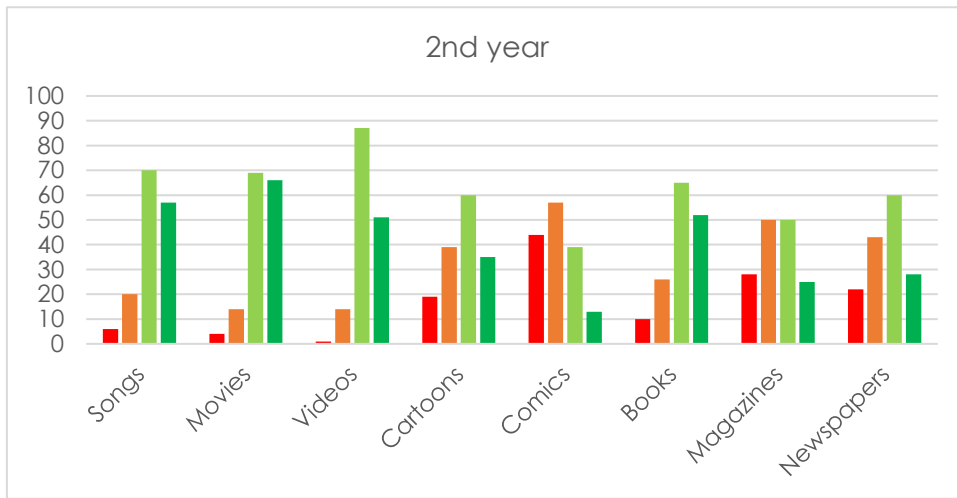
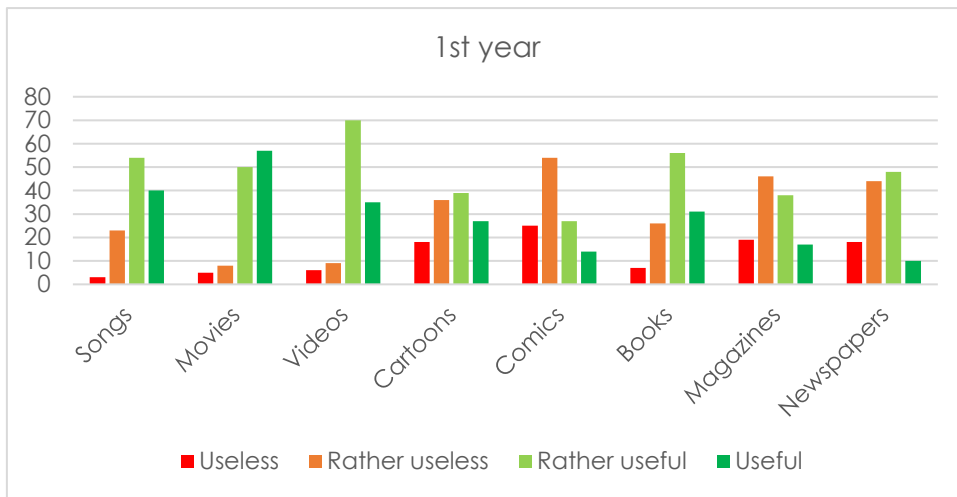
There is actually an increase in group works, but individual works seem to keep their steady frequency. In fact, “never” is a rare answer to this option.

Toward the last year, there seems to be a preference for making them do group projects with friends, rather than chosen randomly or by their teachers. In all categories for “in pairs” and “in groups” many still have answered “never”, which means that a notable number of teachers would rather make them work individually than together with someone else. Out of 661 students, about 200 have claimed “never” in one of the social-work categories.

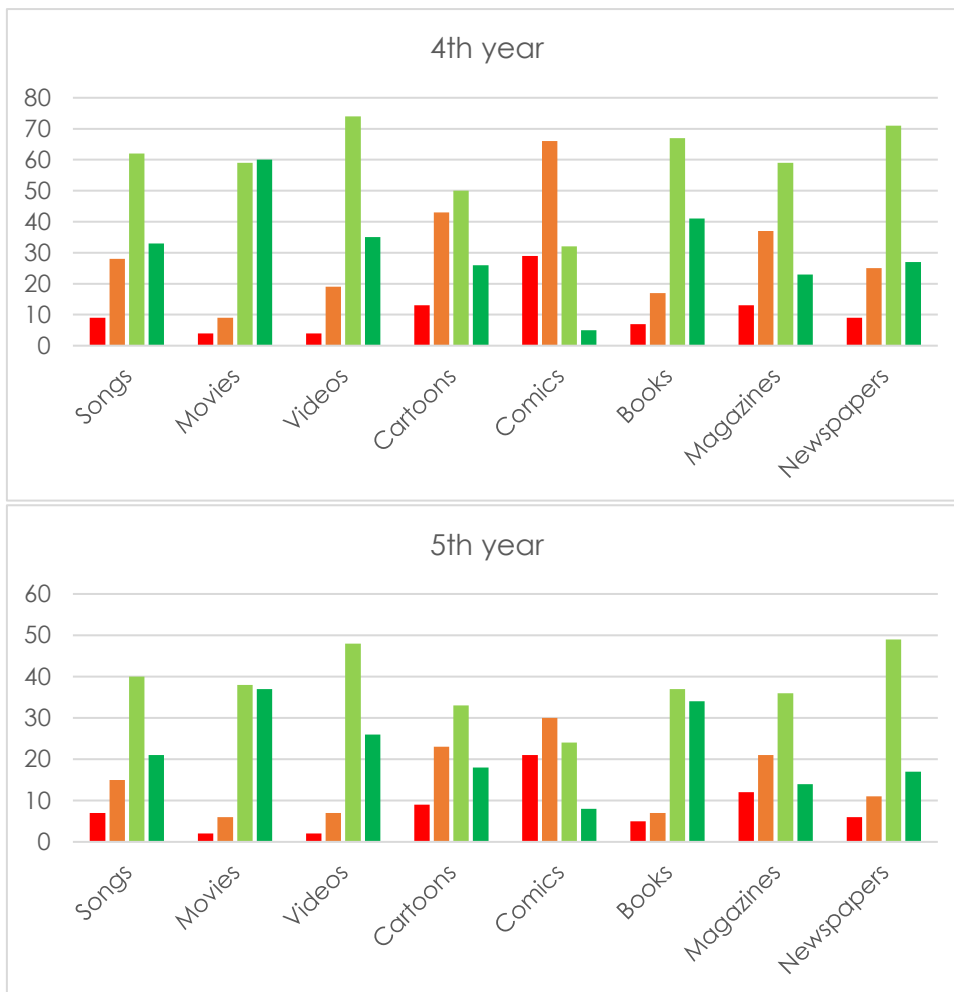
Authentic materials

In this part we will observe students’ reaction to authentic material, i.e. every written or audio-visual material that native speakers meet and use every day.

The question asked how useful they think authentic materials are at school. Let us see the results:

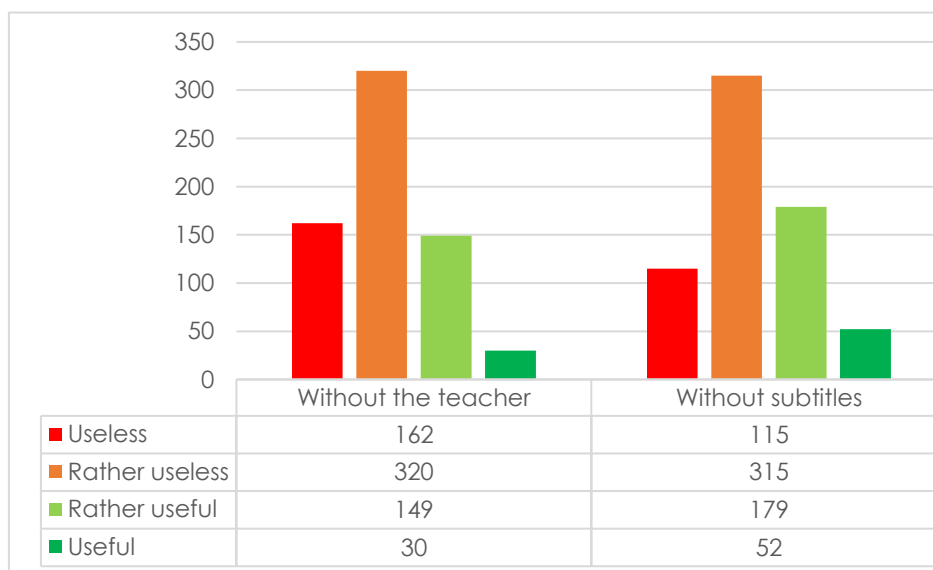


The first three years show similar opinions about the topic. They would rather watch and listen to something than reading. The only product they all refuse are comics – maybe considered too childish. Movies seem to be the most useful – or attractive –, even more than songs and 20-minute videos. Cartoons suffer a better sort than comics.



Older students appreciate more every material – except for comics. They also seem to reconsider books.

Would they find them all the same useful if they had no support of the teacher or of subtitles?

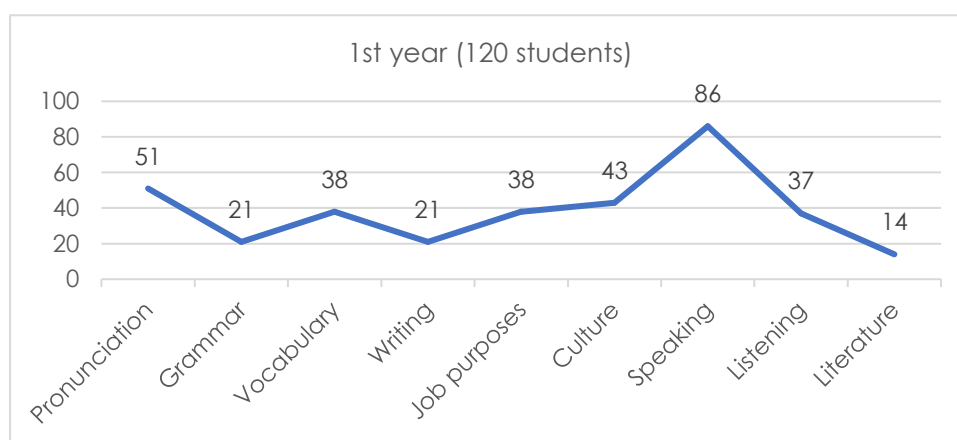


In both cases, students admit preferring to be followed by their teachers and having a support text. Still, some think that it would not be a tragedy without subtitles (about 230 – 1 out of 3).

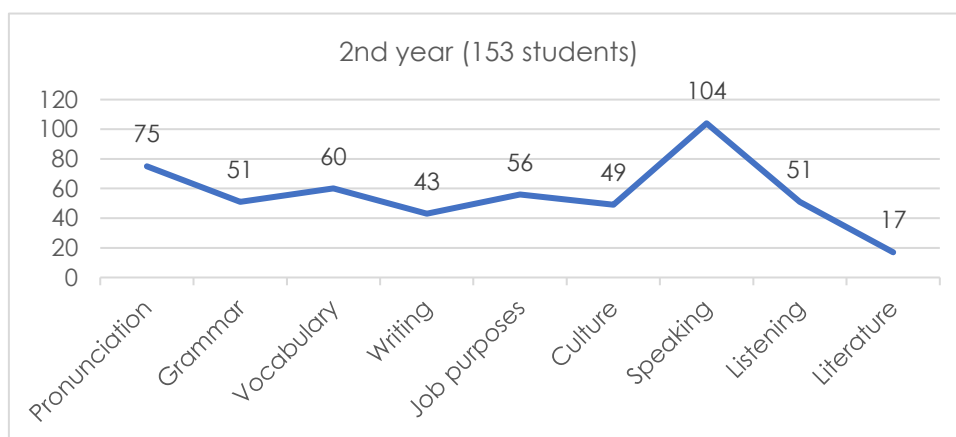
Last considerations

The last two questions in the questionnaire regarded the participants’ ideas about the lesson and how the teachers should deal with some specific problems. The answers to these two questions will be the last of this first section of Chapter 3, which will then continue with the compared analysis of the questions concerning classes, students and teachers.

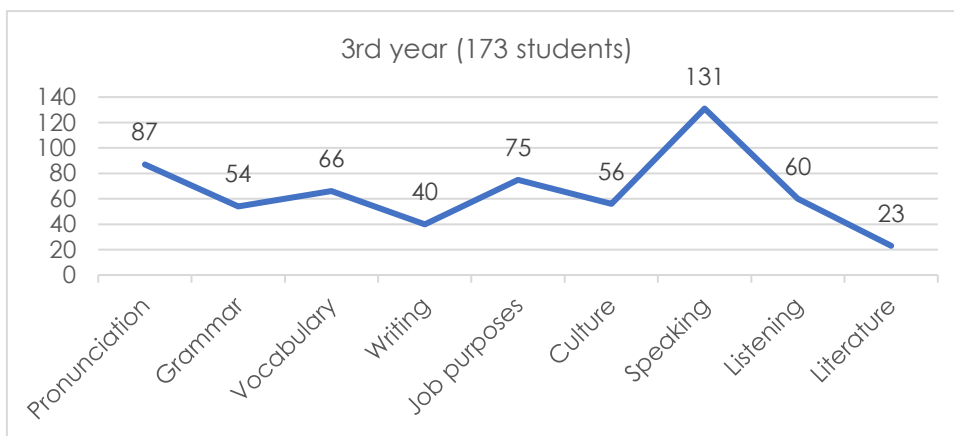
“What would you like you focussed on more during the lesson?”



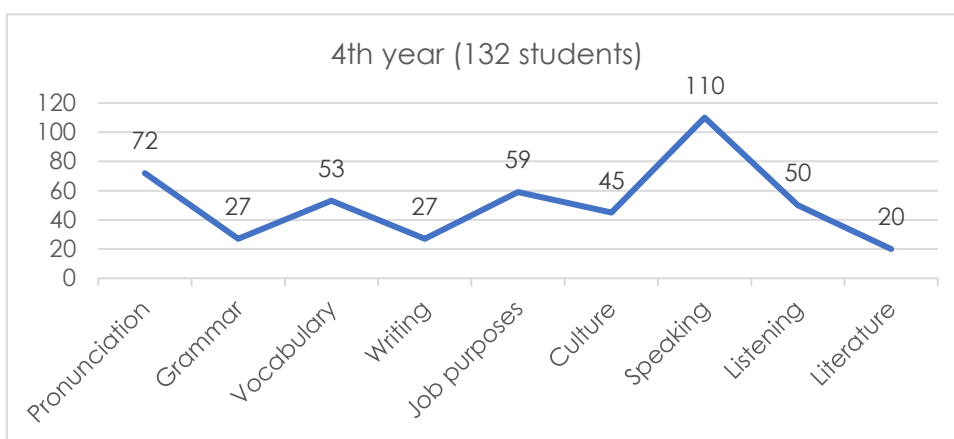
First-year students of all curricula have answered almost unanimously. The total number is 120, which means that more than the 70% ask to speak more frequently. Pronunciation is another interesting request, as it is often seen as boring and useless.



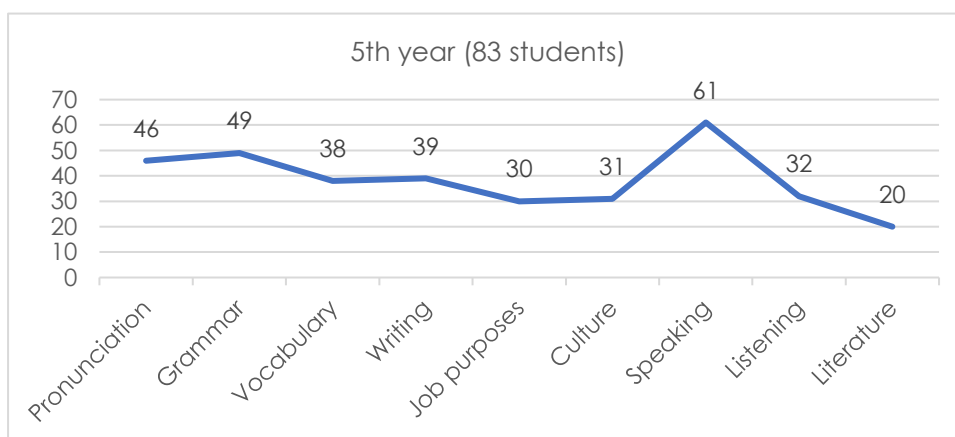
Second-year students’ requests are very similar. Out of 153 students, 104 would like to focus on the speaking skill. Almost 50% ask for more pronunciation practice and immediately after they require more vocabulary.



Again, the proportions are respected. One only mutation is that third-year students seem to be more interested in English for job purposes. Not too much, but more than the first two years. On a total of 173, 131 (76%) want to focus on the speaking.



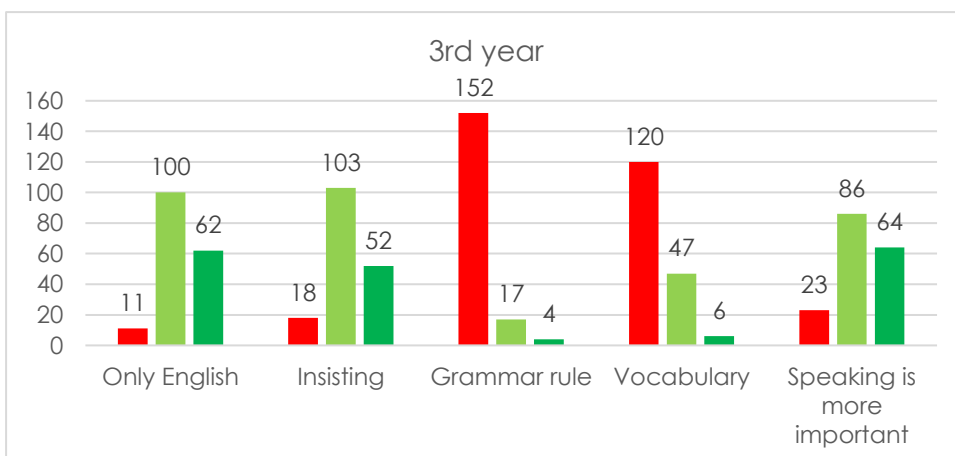
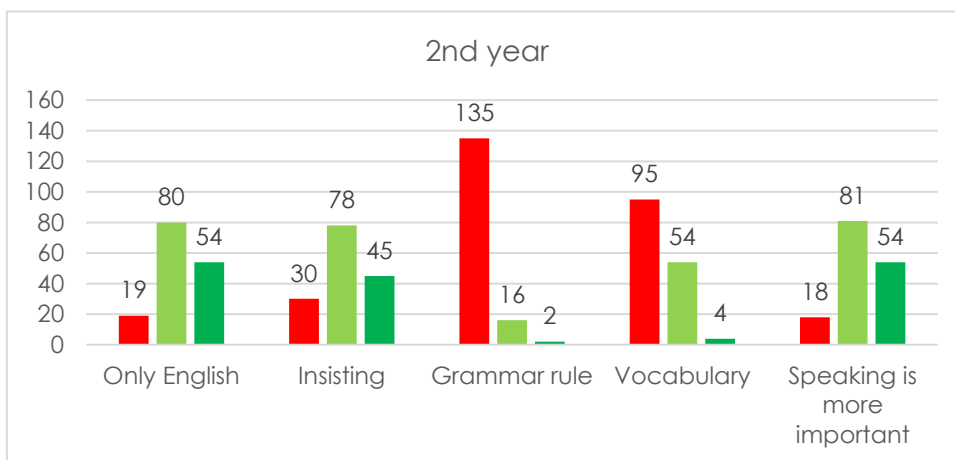
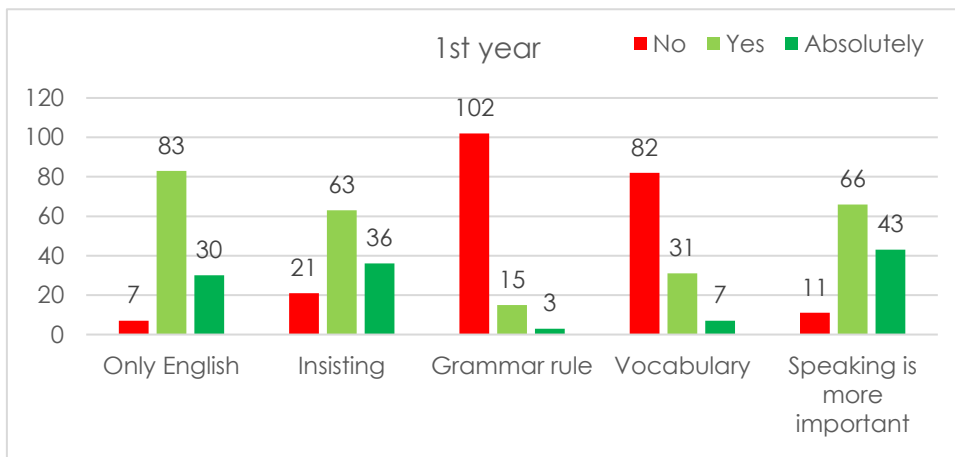
Results respect the curves seen so far, the only ones to have dropped are grammar and writing. One assumption is that fourth-year students are tired of practicing them. Their request is once again speaking and pronunciation exercises.

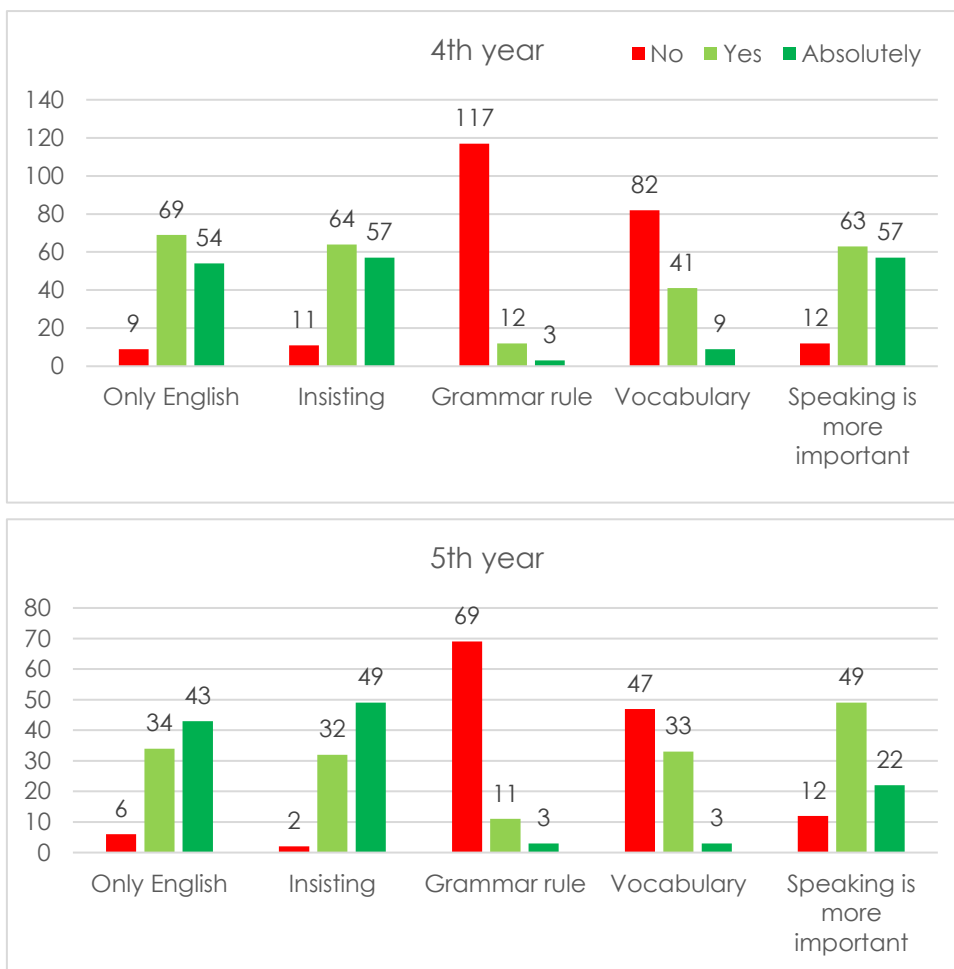


Fifth-year students seem to regret many aspects they do not feel very familiar with. What they wish they would have practiced more is always the speaking skill, but all the others are approximately balanced.

The following question – the last one – followed the same logics and required the to express agreement or disagreement with five assertions. These were:

- 1) during the English class everyone should speak English (made exception for grammar explanations);
- 2) it should be insisted that students spoke English;
- 3) grammar rules should be understood by the students themselves;
- 4) word meanings should be understood by students themselves;
- 5) oral language should be given more importance than written language;





These graphics present some very interesting data – and their evolution over the classes is remarkable as well.

Firstly, the options I gave in this question might seem useless – why asking whether just “yes” or “absolutely”? Because behind these answers lie the convincement, the motivation and interest in what they were answering to.

With the years going by, the answers to the first two questions change from simply “yes” to “absolutely”. Fifth-year students seem to wish they had spoken only English and that their teachers would have insisted on it. Another aspect that has changed slightly is “word meanings should be understood by students themselves”. The one about the speaking skill being more important than the writing could show that students miss the practice, but are also convinced that it is not really more important.

As far as the two questions about students understanding unknown items by themselves are concerned, the reasoning behind is quite obscure. Considering that the inductive method is one of the most admired teaching methods, as it lets the students reflect on language and get to their conclusions, the aversion students have shown to both the third and fourth assertions is remarkable. These questions could possibly not have been clear enough and students might have thought about having to understand everything by themselves without the teacher’s

support. Or, maybe, they really think that grammar rules must be presented beforehand and then practiced. This is one point on which my research will keep focusing on.

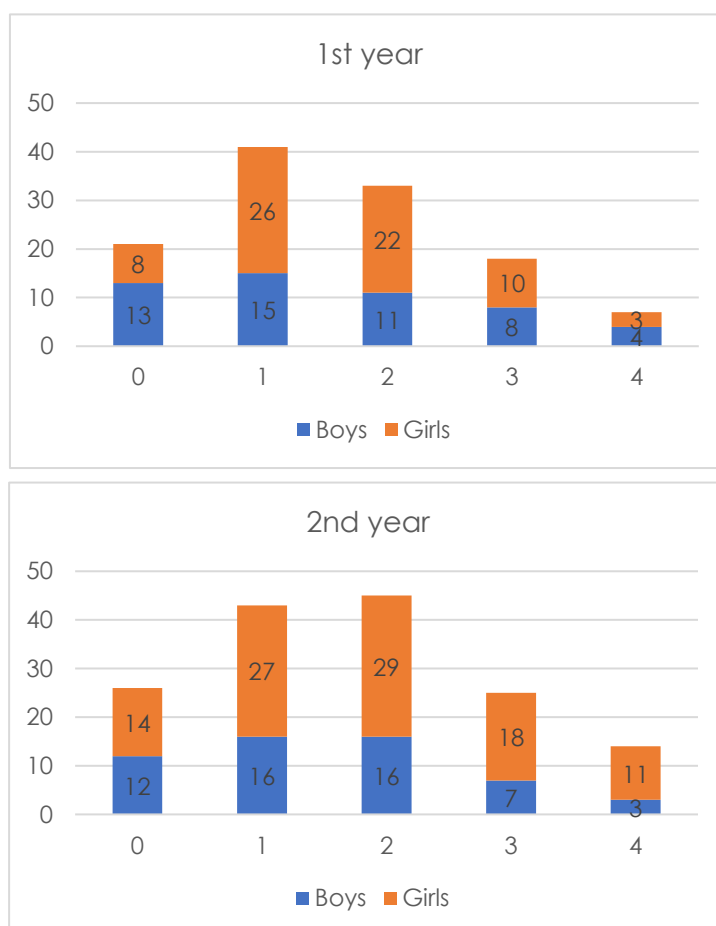
3.2 Classes, students and teachers

As introduced at the beginning of Chapter 3, this second part will present what has been answered by the students relatively to the English class environment.

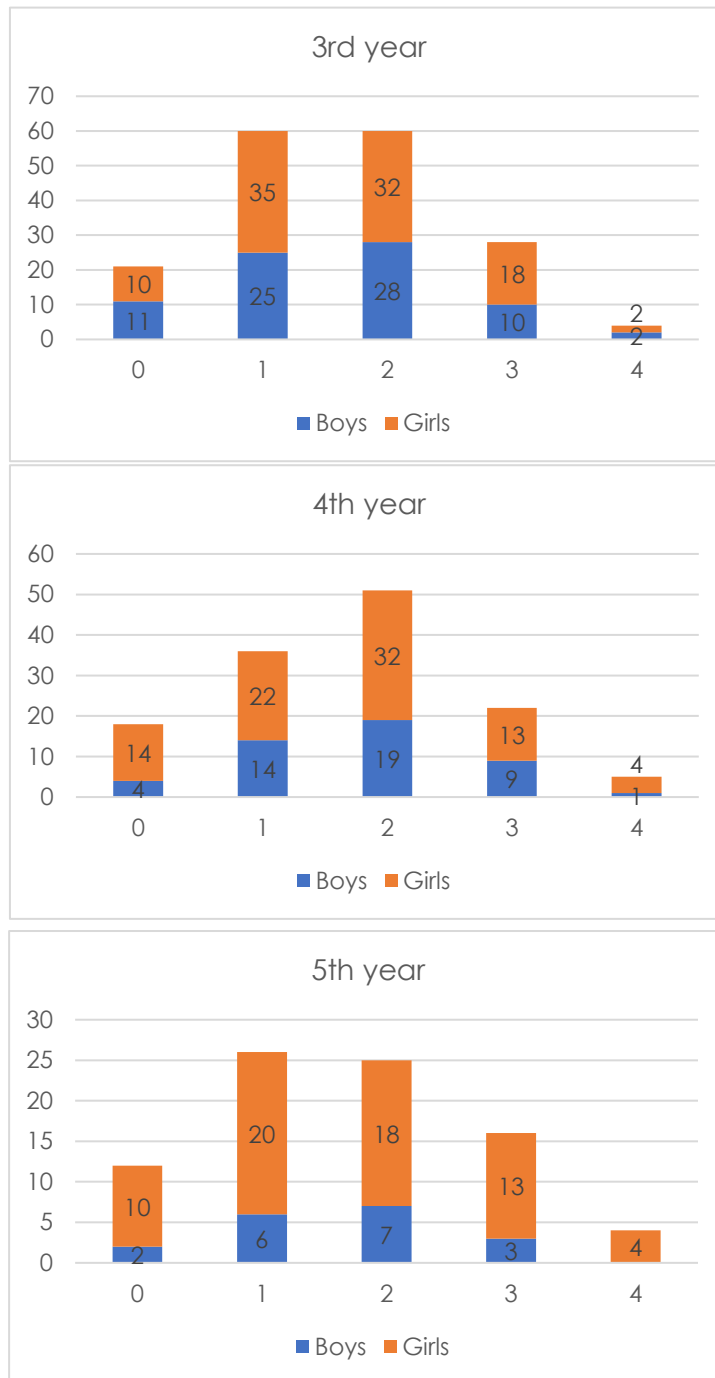
Classes and teachers are to be named after numbers and will be randomly ordered, so that the privacy is respected. In case the school curriculum were risky from this point of view, i.e. it revealed any unnecessary information but violated privacy, it will be omitted as well.

Classes

In the questionnaire there were three questions about the classroom, its dimensions, luminosity and comfort. The answers to these are not directly useful to support the object questions, but the one which followed and asked about the influence of these aspects on their language learning is.



In both the first two school years students do not feel there are too many effects due to the environment on their learning. Despite one second-year class having a classroom objectively minuscule, their answer on the topic were not concerned.



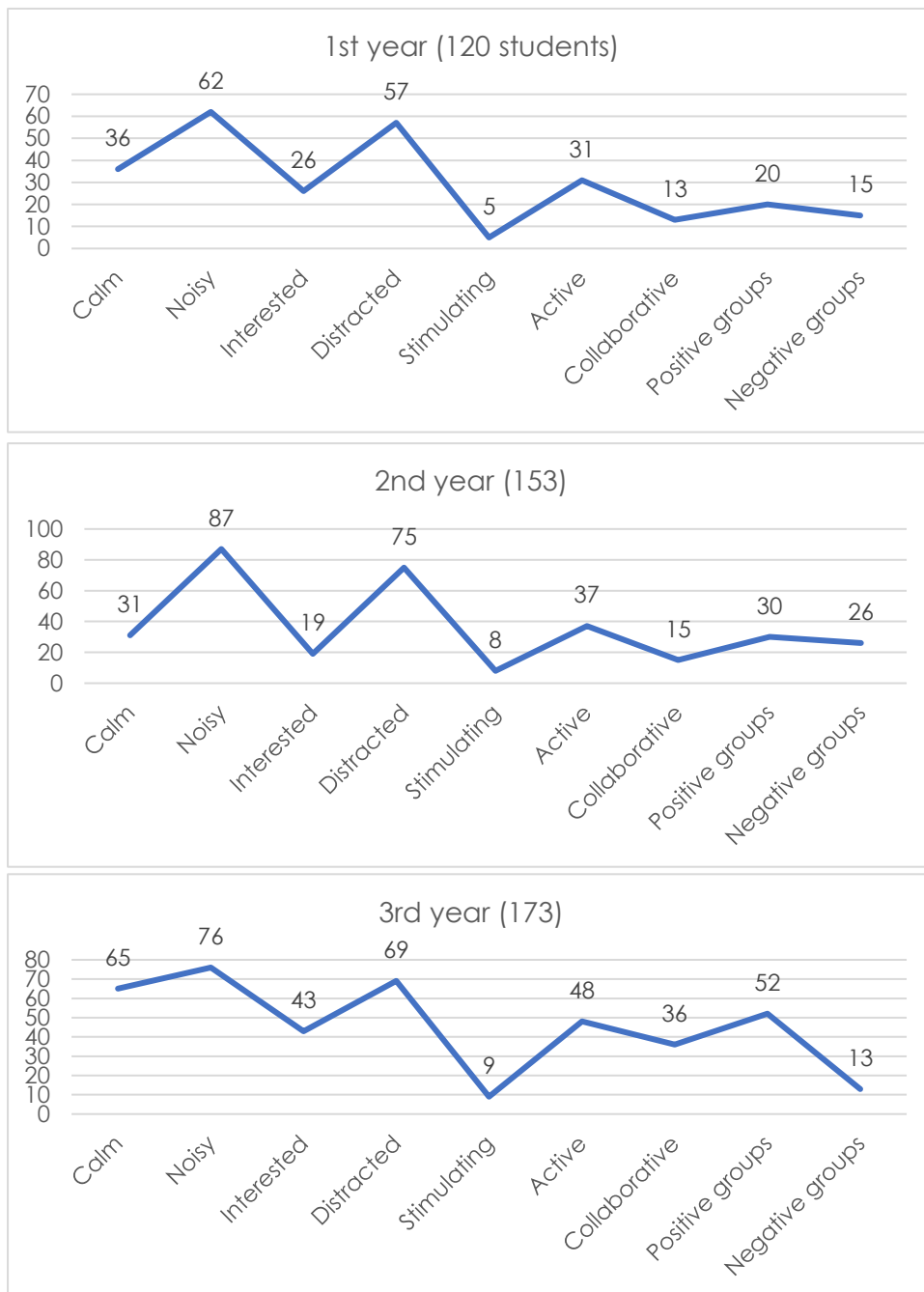
The results are overall similar, they show how students seem not to give too much importance to their classrooms. During my internship I have visited many rooms which were not fit for learning or teaching, but the answers the students who live these rooms have given were not worrying. The vast majority do not bother being in a class too small or too big, nonetheless the learning and teaching processes are most probably affected, as we have seen in 1.2.3.1..

Students

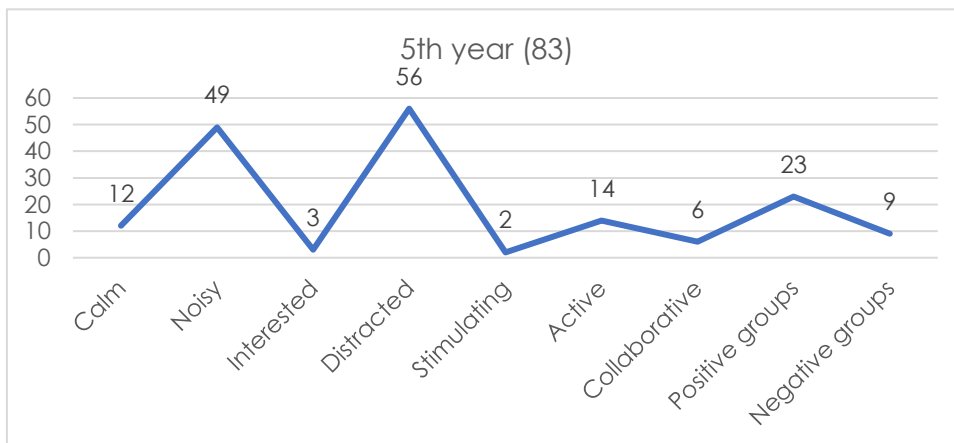
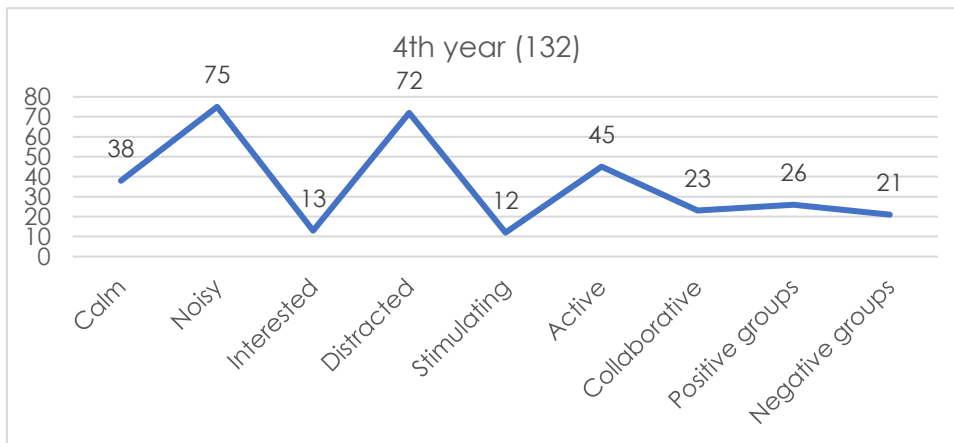
How do students behave during the English lesson according to themselves? This question was quite a risk, as their answers might be biased. In fact, as we will see, something is wrong with their answers to the questions “how do your classmates behave during the English

lesson?" and "how do you behave during the English lesson?". The results are extraordinarily various, if not opposite.

The first question asked about the other animate components of the class.

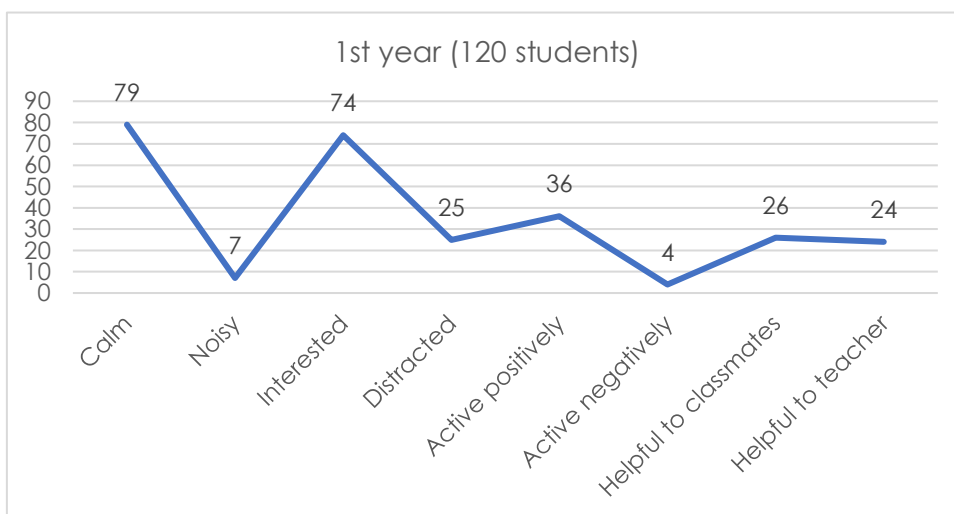


Only third-year students, who were not particularly calmer than the other, have claimed that their classmates are quiet during the lesson. According to these graphics, the tendency is to disturb and be distracted. With the two older years, as we will see, the situation seems not to change.

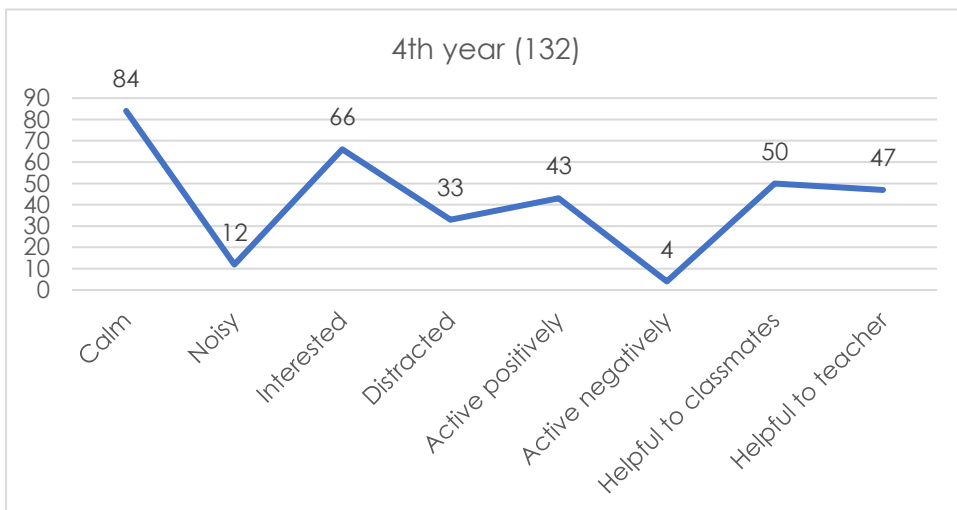
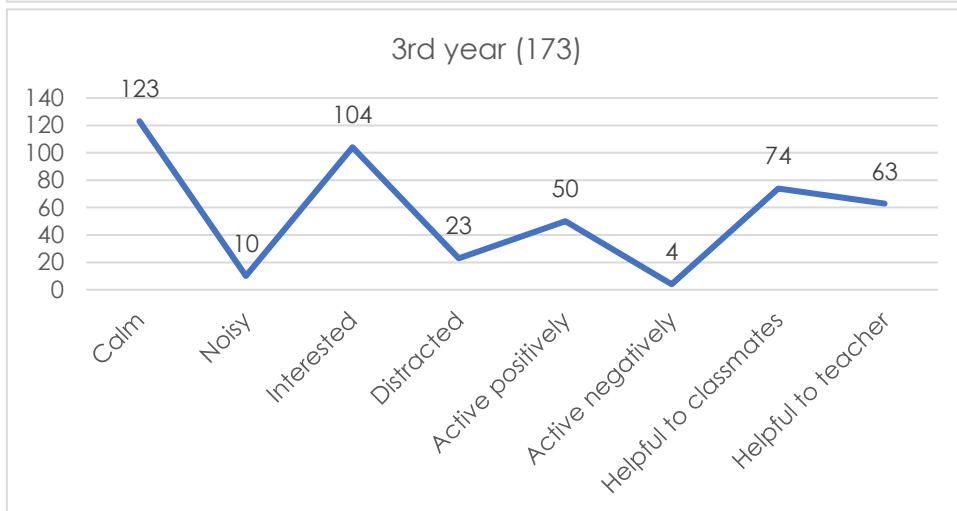
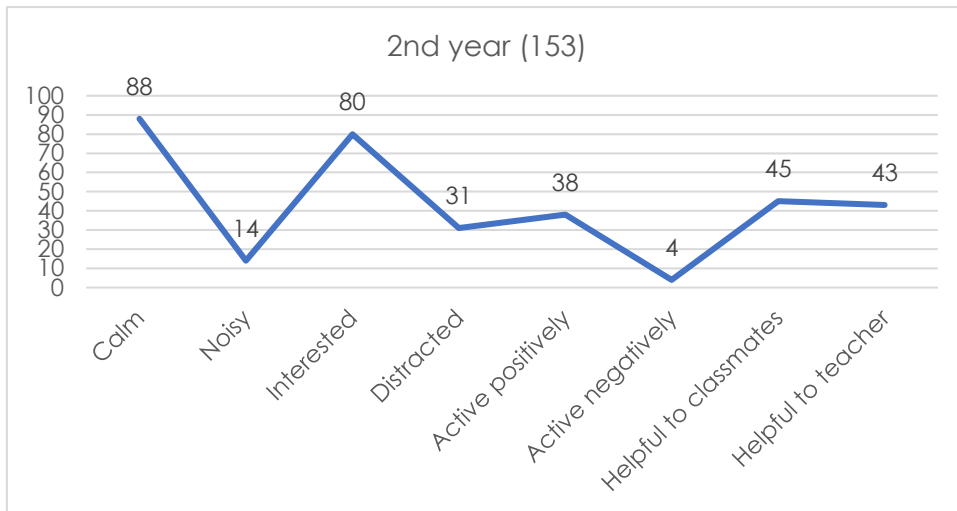


If the lessons were as described, it would be kind of difficult for teachers to run them. The judgements provided by the students about the class atmosphere are really negative.

Let us now observe the answers they have given to the question about themselves. The parameters were more or less the same. In this way, we will see if there is a consistency with their perception of their own behaviour related to the class behaviour.



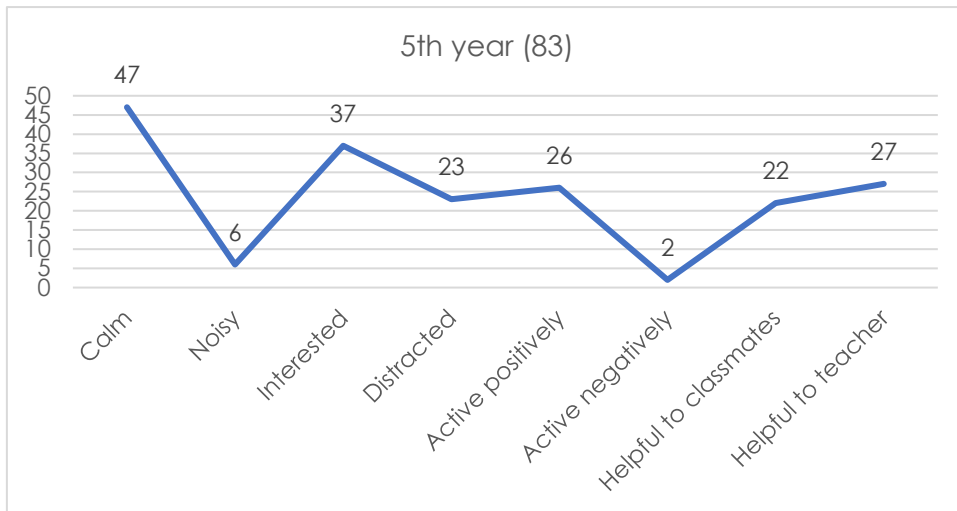
At first glance it is remarkable that the results are the opposite than those before. If this tendency stays the same in the next years as well, some considerations about students' perception of themselves and their classmates during the lesson.



The results in this section are extremely positive, conversely to those presented above.

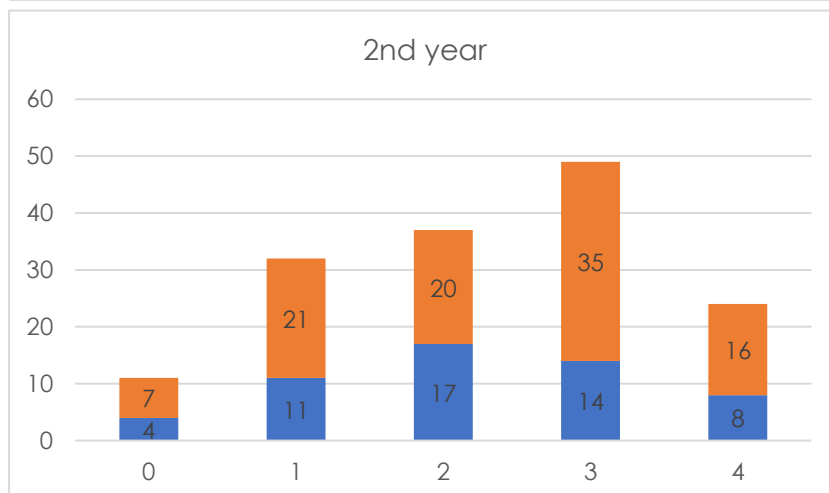
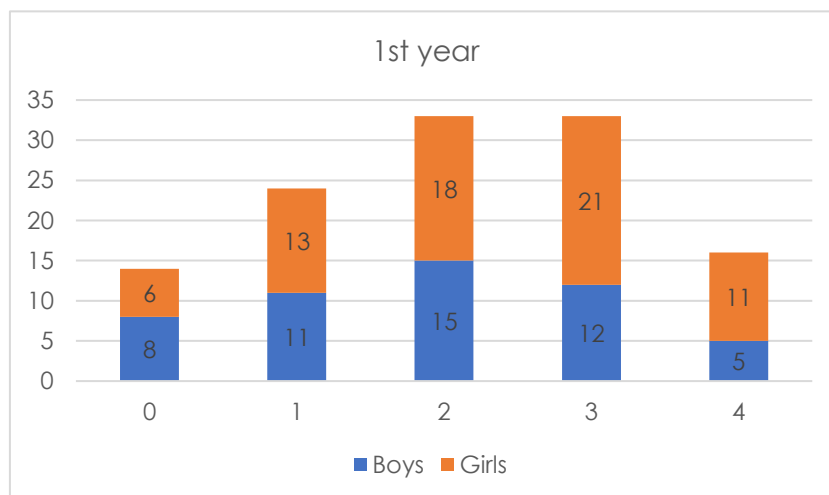
The two questions about the class atmosphere were one next to the other, so it is quite surprising that one student could check their answers so falsely. What might be the reasons behind these graphics, opposite to those before? Either the participants' fear to say the truth or their convincement of not behaving that bad.

Neither the fifth-year students are consistent with their claim.

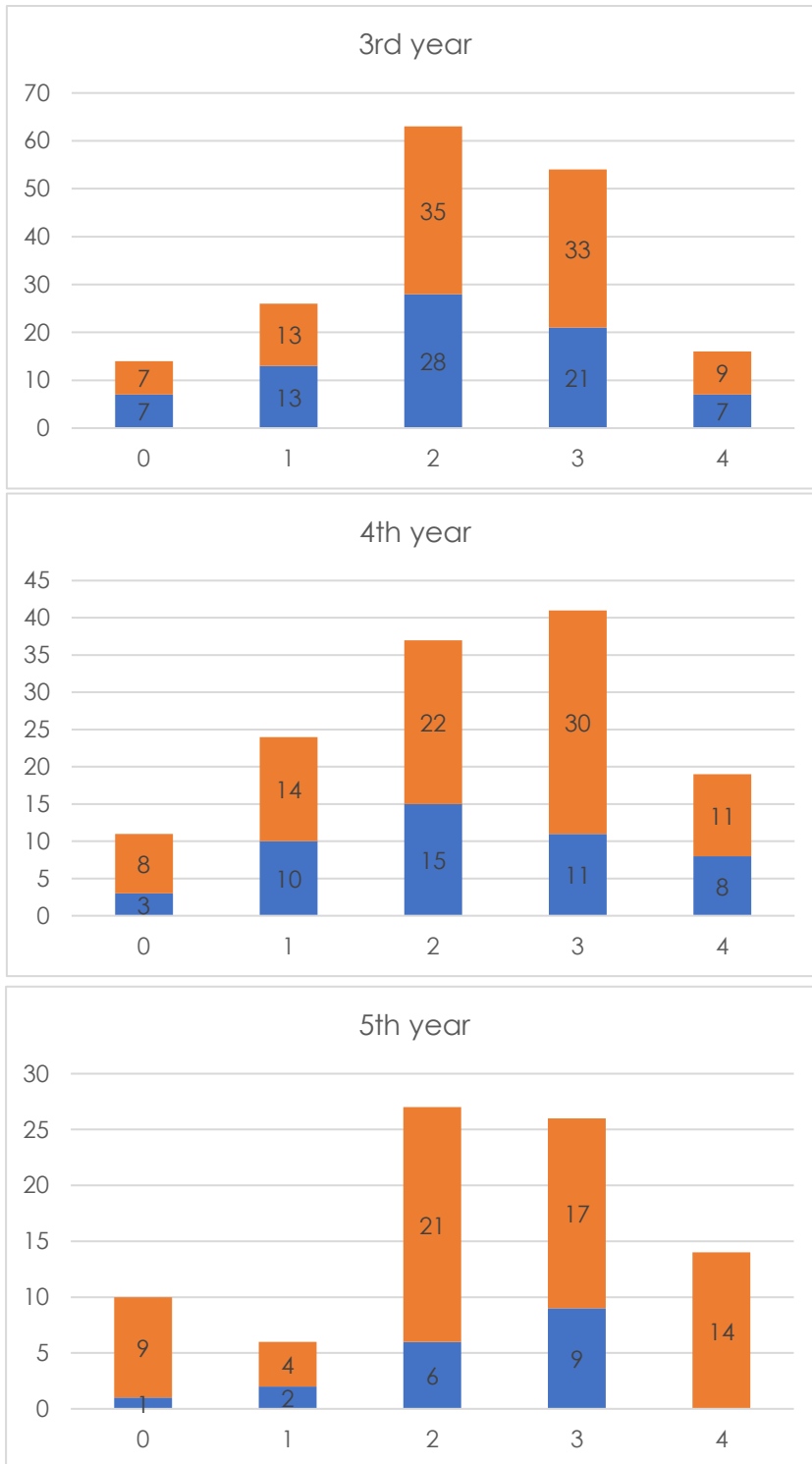


The only one aspect concurring is “distracted”, but in smaller percentages.

Thanks to the very next question, which asked how influent the behaviour of their classmates is, we might be able to understand a little more. The options always spanned from 0 to 4.



These first two graphs are already emblematic: students are not too involved by their class environment; but what is important is that they are. Moreover, boys and girls are not affected the same way, girls here are slightly more sensitive to their classmates’ behaviour.



The only year where many have proportionally answered “4” is the last one, which is also the one where boys have shown more involvement.

The reactions to their classmates’ behaviour are, anyway, not too striking. Considering the respondents’ age, they are rather neutral to it. If they really feel that their class environment is not that influent and their learning is not affected by it, this could in a certain way justify their answers to the questions above. Their classmates are noisy, distract, but they themselves feel

as if they were calm, interested and helpful. Something strange, but data have presented this picture.

Teachers

In this second last part I will provide the results of the questions related to the English teachers and their methodologies. To do so, I will gather the answers of the classes which have the same teacher, in order to be as consistent and objective as possible. Teachers and classes will be numbered. In order not to violate privacy, the graphics will not present year and curriculum, but just the latter.

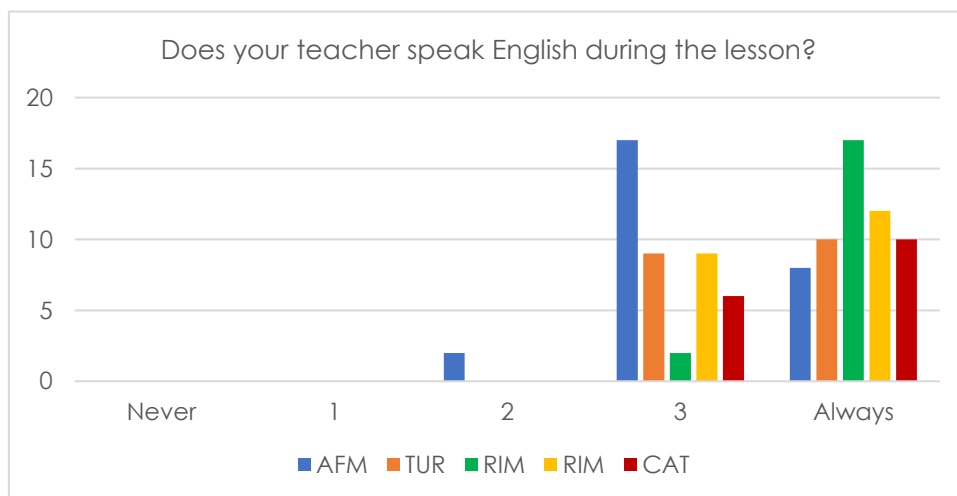
Already said in Chapter 2, I have had the chance to assist 7 teachers. They were all women, the ages of five of them very close to each other – supposedly 50 to 55 years old; two were younger and one older. In this section I will only report their students’ answers with no judgement or critique.

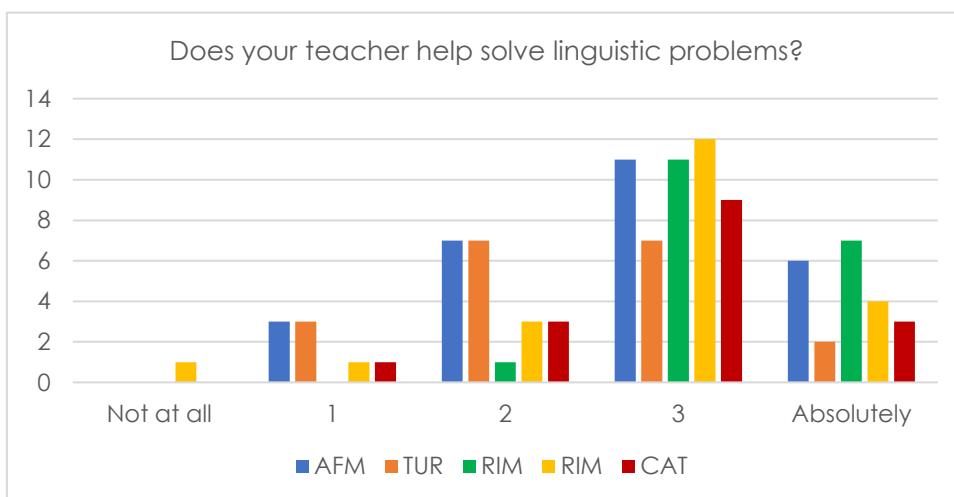
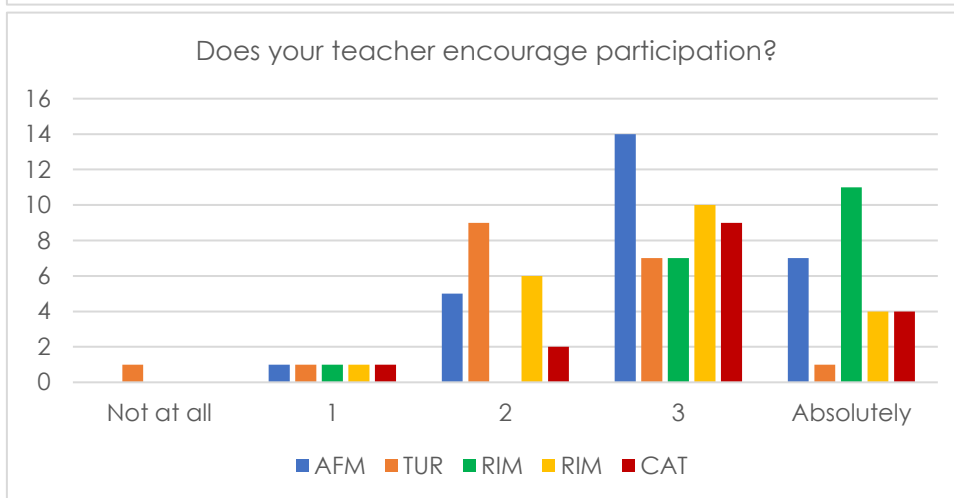
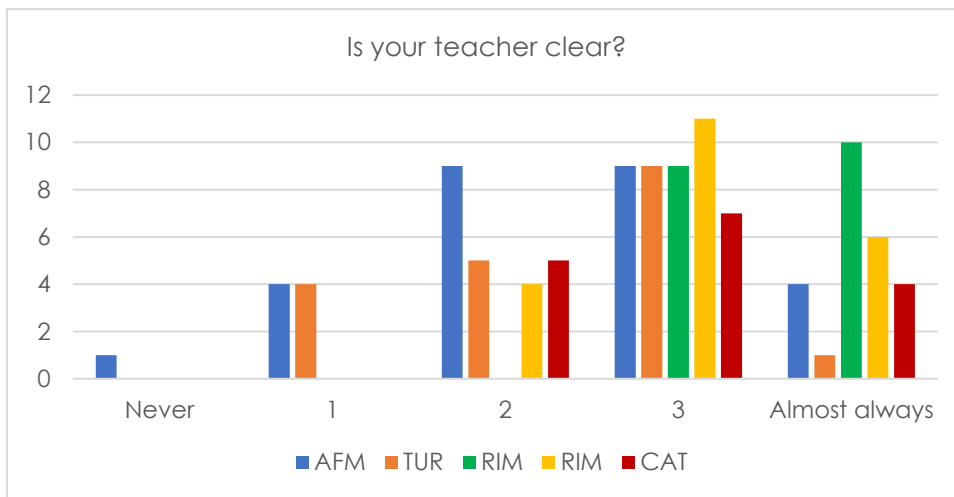
Teacher 1

The first questions in the Teacher section whose answers will be shown in the following chart are:

- 1) Does your teacher speak English during the lesson? (0 “never”/4 “always”)
- 2) Is your teacher clear? (0 “not at all”/4 “almost always clear”)
- 3) Does your teacher encourage participation? (0 “not at all”/4 “absolutely”)
- 4) Does your teacher help solve linguistic problems? (0 “not at all”/4 “absolutely”)

I have gathered the answers of all this teacher’s classes, which were from the second to the fourth year of AFM, CAT, TUR and RIM curricula.





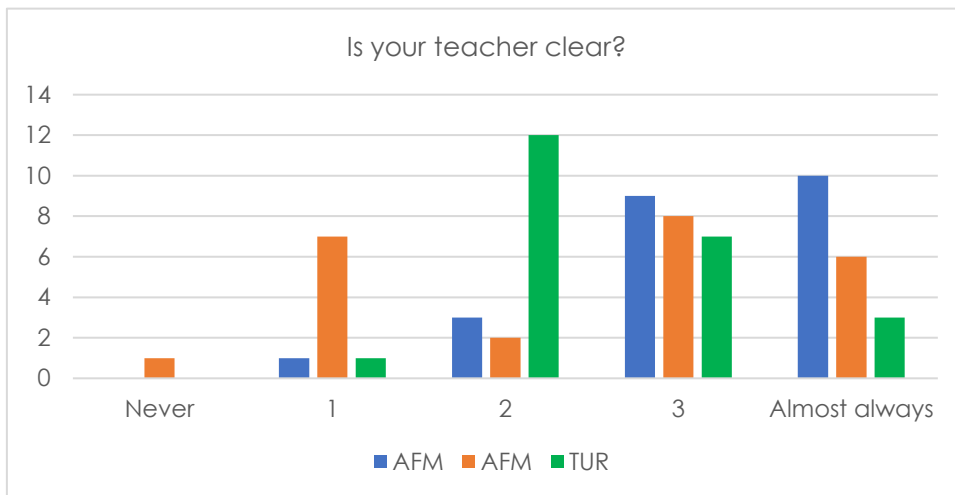
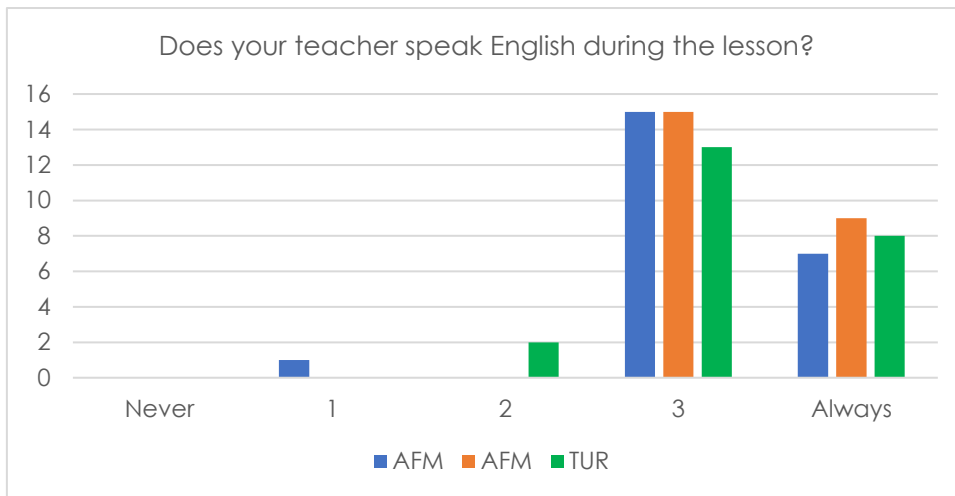
These graphics present a quite homogeneous and positive situation. The great majority of the students are satisfied with their teacher and all evaluations span principally between 3 and 4. In some categories the answers were a little more various, in some classes, in particular. This could mean that students are happier with one aspect rather than another.

The last chart outlines what students think about their teacher's competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

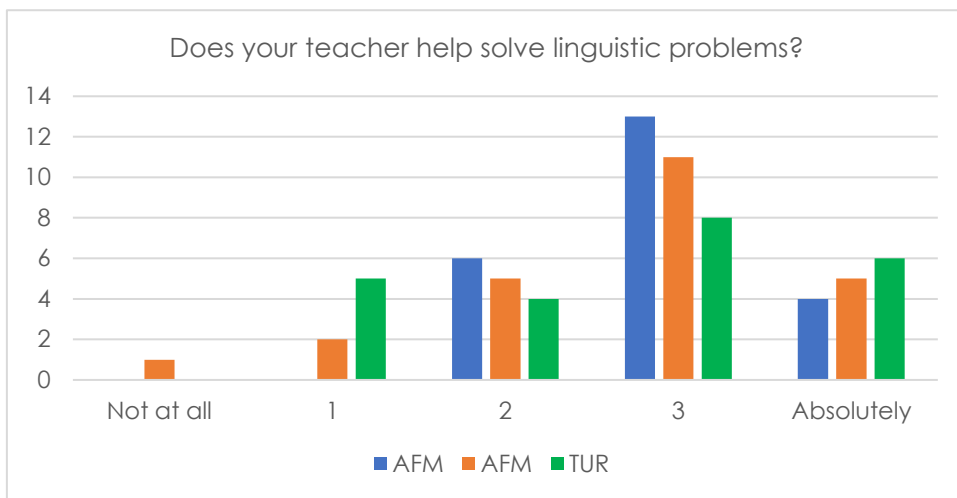
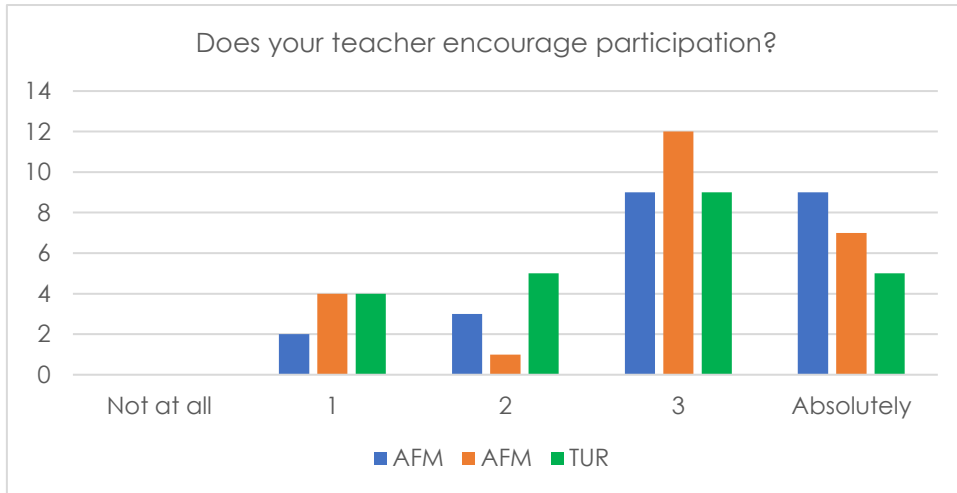
	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	1	1	5	50	45
<i>Modality</i>	1	4	31	54	12
<i>Punctuality</i>	12	13	35	31	11
<i>Rapidity</i>	2	12	28	42	18
<i>Motivation</i>	10	13	25	41	13
<i>Quality</i>	1	5	20	54	22

Teacher 2

The answers of all this teacher's classes were from the first and second years of AFM, and TUR



The results here provided are slightly more various. The TUR class and the orange AFM seem a little less satisfied. The other AFM is more content. Apart from a question of perception, it could be because of the teacher changing their attitude according to the class they are in. Another motivation might be the same attitude in classes too different from one another. curricula.

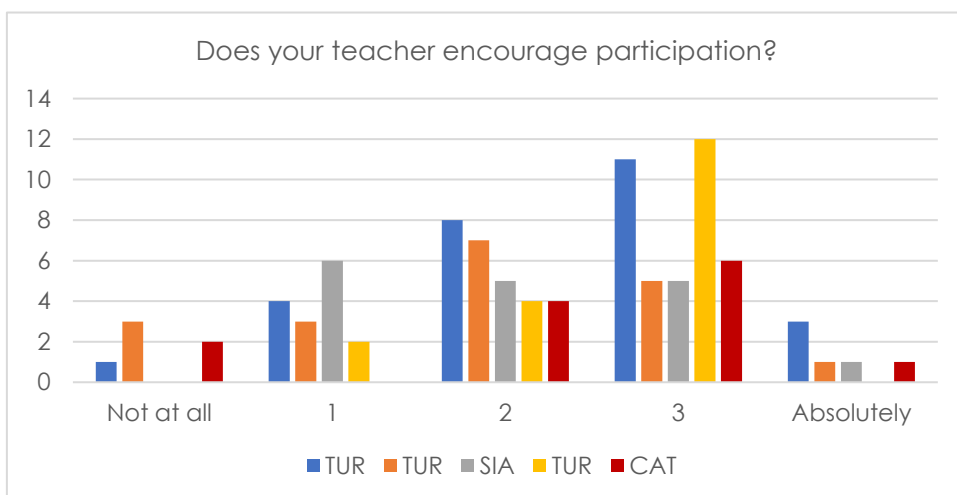
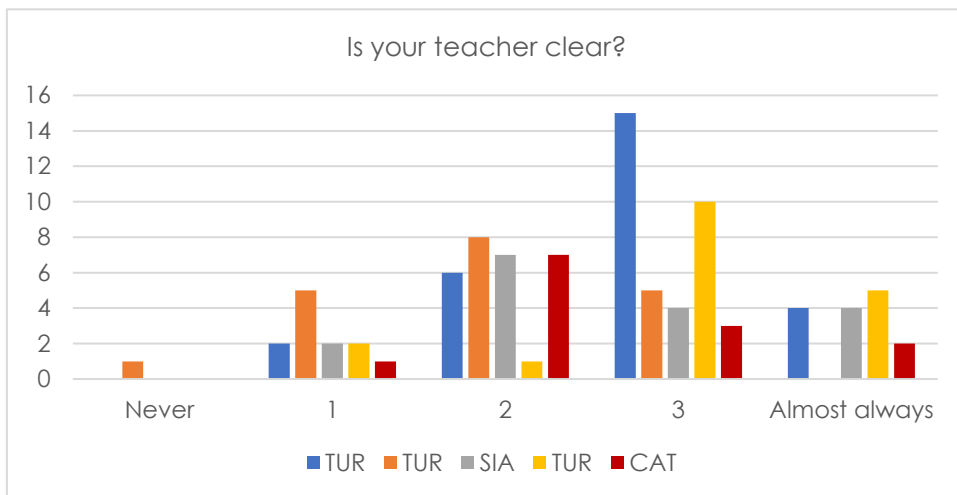
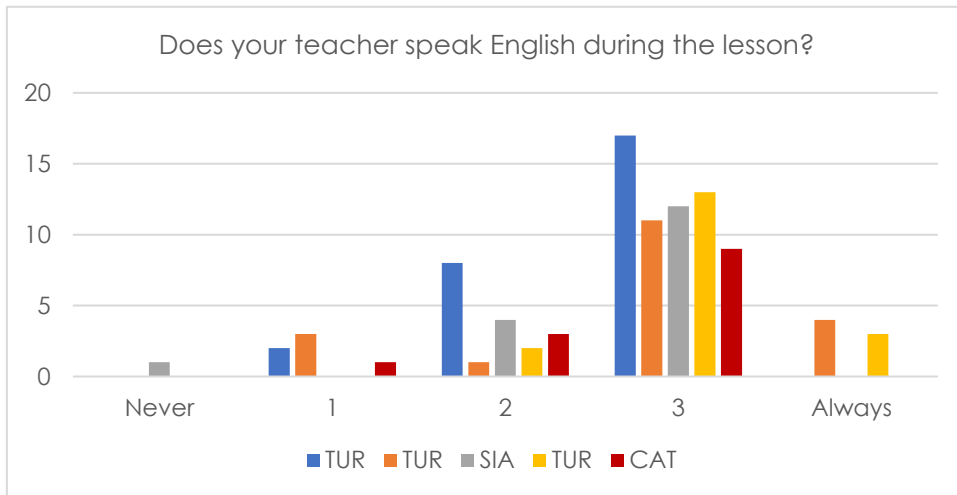


The last chart outlines what students think about their teacher’s competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

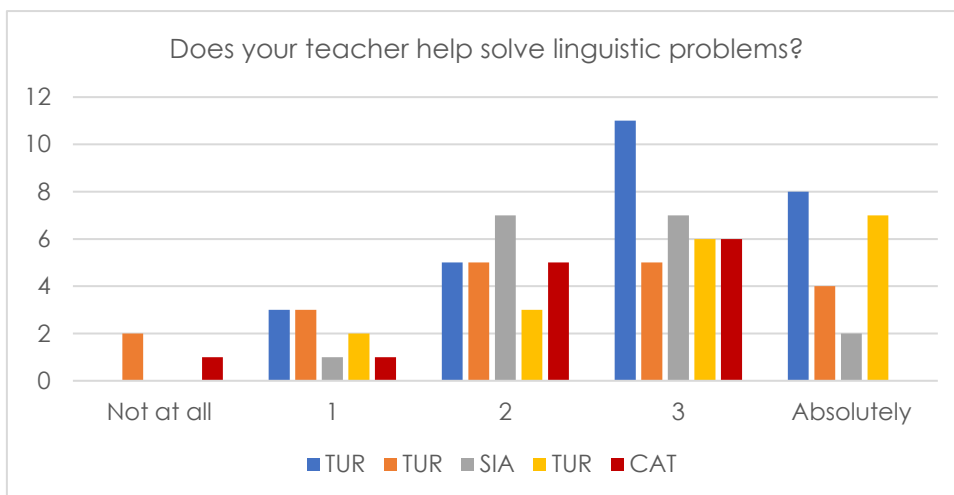
	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	1	0	7	39	23
<i>Modality</i>	2	6	20	29	13
<i>Punctuality</i>	0	1	6	39	24
<i>Rapidity</i>	1	1	13	43	12
<i>Motivation</i>	4	11	12	28	15
<i>Quality</i>	4	7	16	34	9

Teacher 3

This teacher's classes were from the first to the fifth year, CAT, SIA and TUR.



Again, the results here are various: overall positive, many students have answered differently. From these data, it seems that the teacher does not involve their students too much.

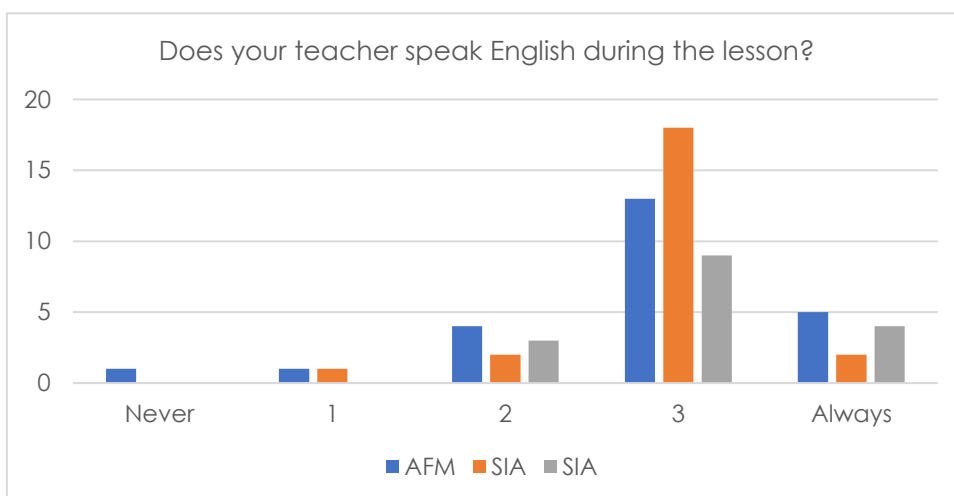


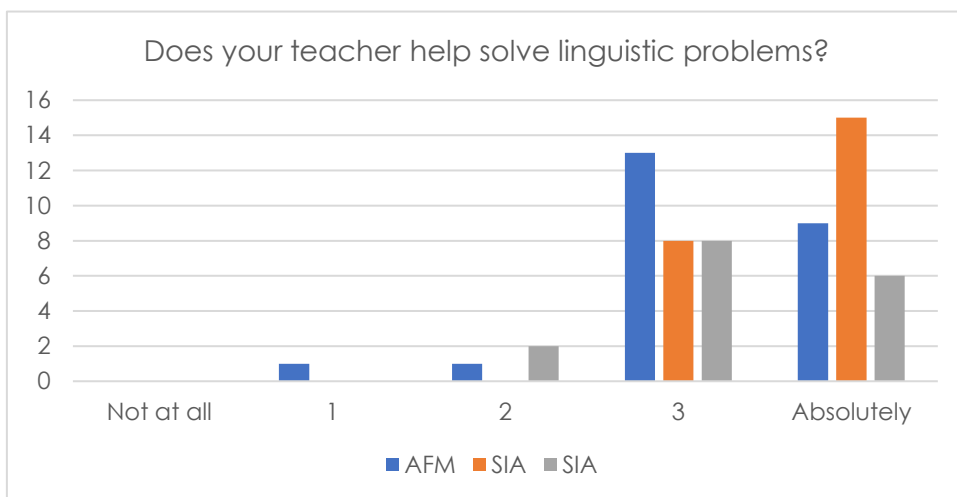
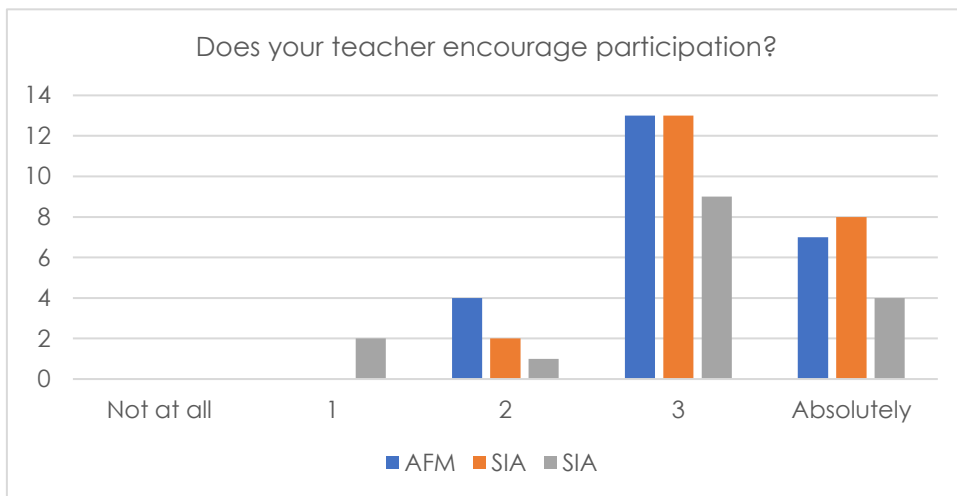
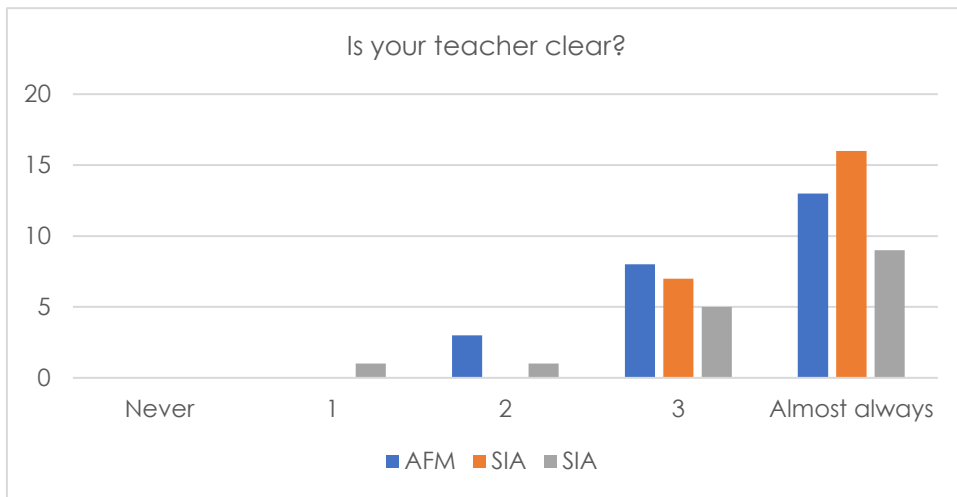
The last chart outlines what students think about their teacher’s competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	1	5	13	55	20
<i>Modality</i>	1	13	27	46	7
<i>Punctuality</i>	21	13	30	22	8
<i>Rapidity</i>	20	25	28	17	4
<i>Motivation</i>	11	20	28	33	2
<i>Quality</i>	3	9	21	41	20

Teacher 4

The classes which gave these results were one first year, one third year and one fourth year – AFM and SIA.





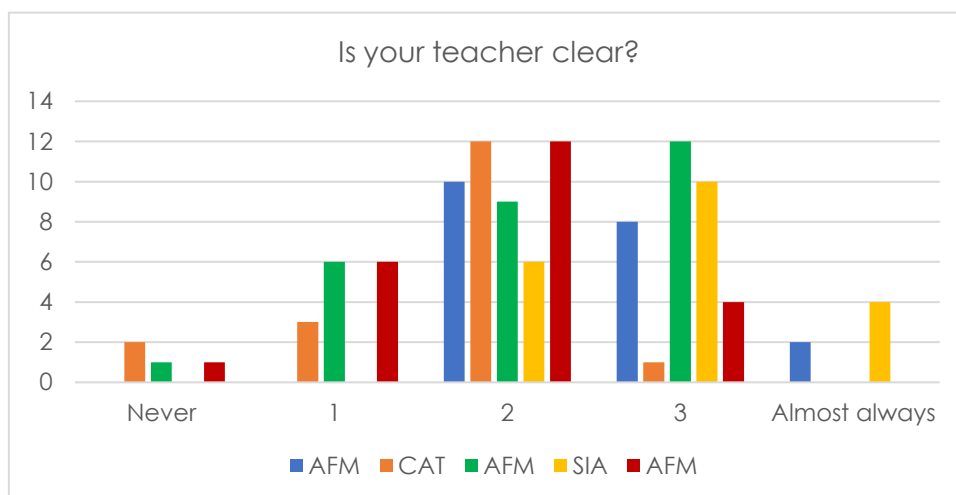
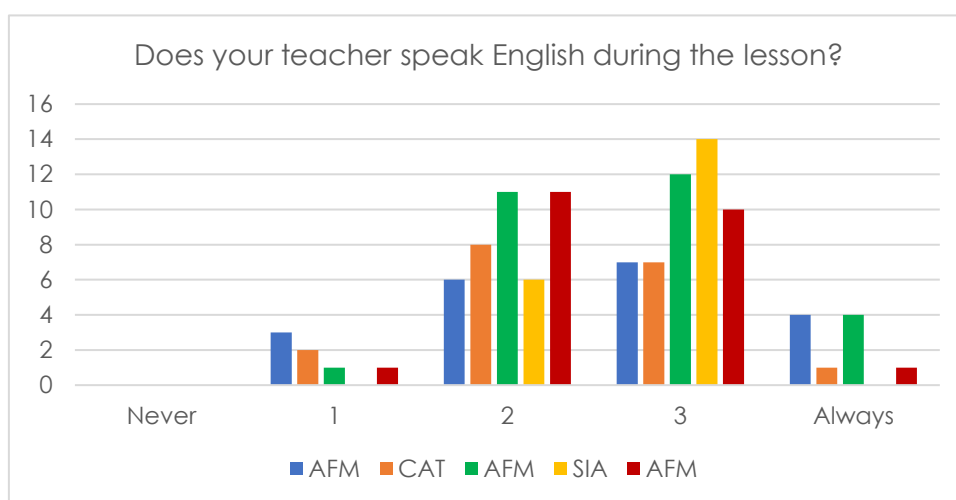
The results are homogeneous and positive. There are very few negative data which could be due to antipathies or even mistakes.

The last chart outlines what students think about their teacher's competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

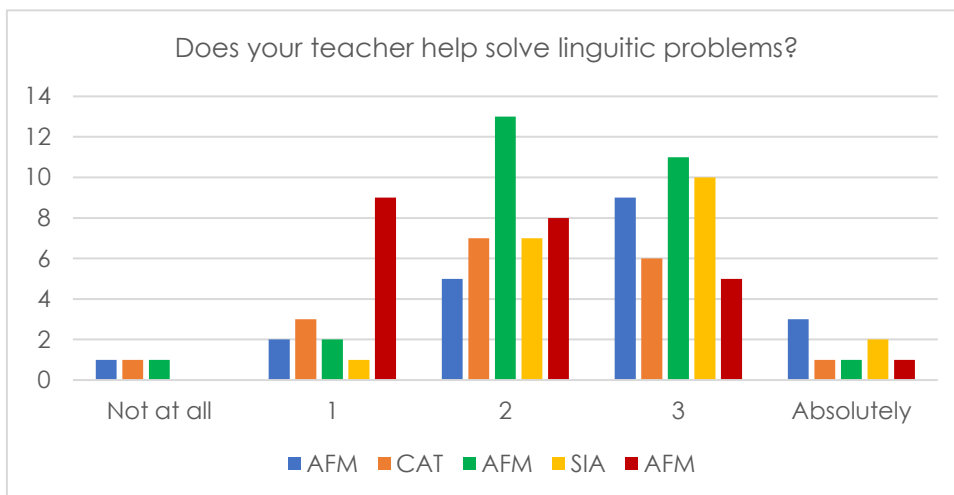
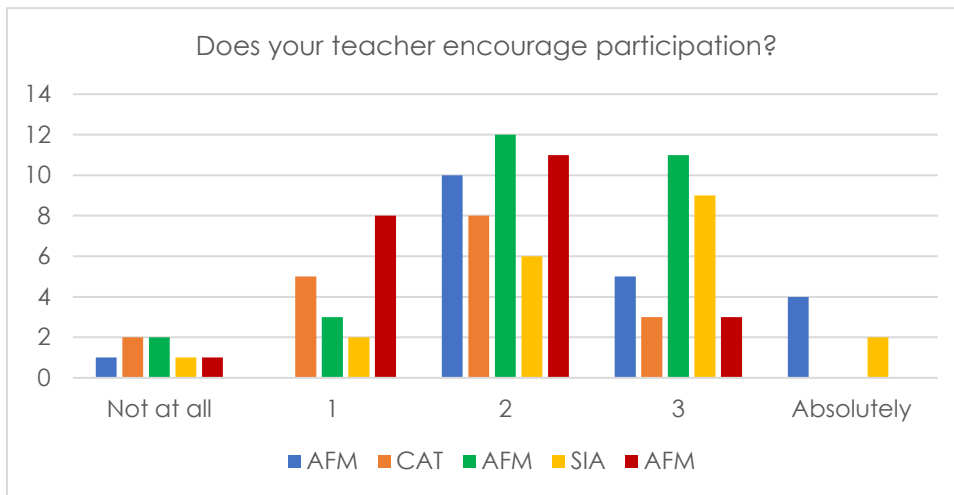
	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	2	0	2	17	42
<i>Modality</i>	0	3	3	36	21
<i>Punctuality</i>	0	3	8	32	20
<i>Rapidity</i>	0	5	10	29	19
<i>Motivation</i>	0	2	7	29	25
<i>Quality</i>	0	1	1	21	40

Teacher 5

The presented results come from the second to the fourth year, AFM, CAT and SIA curricula.



These graphics show a situation in which students do not seem satisfied with some aspects of their teacher. The results are mixed and not always positive. By comparing them with those before, it is possible to immediately notice a substantial difference, which will have its effects on the lesson itself.



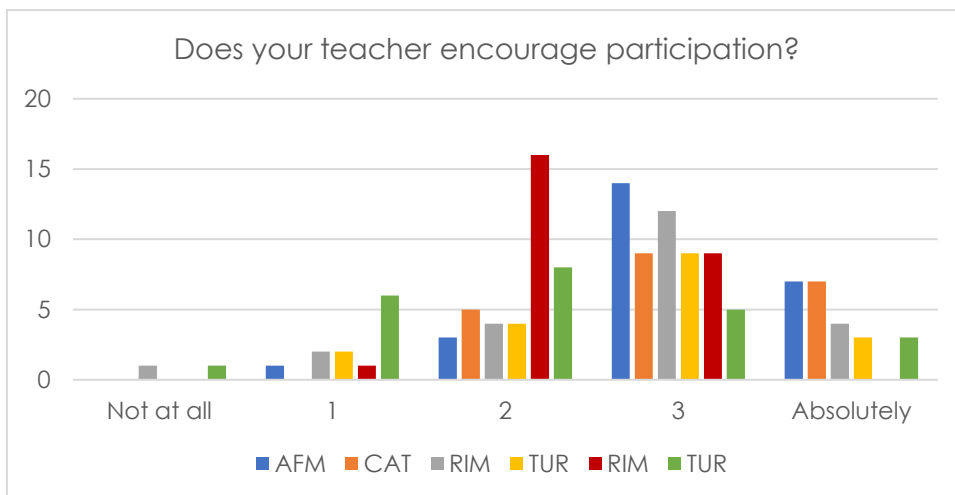
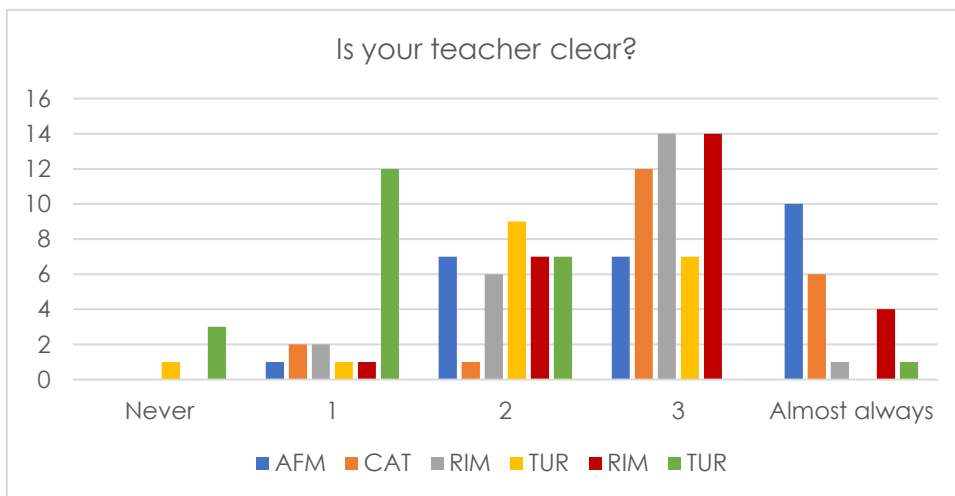
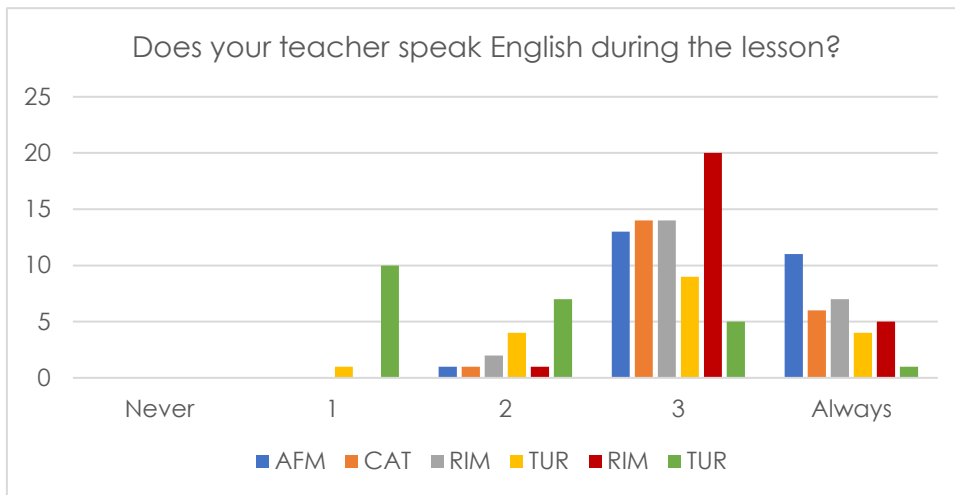
This last graph confirms the prospect presented above: this teacher's students say that their teacher is mediocre.

Let us see the last chart outlining what students think about their teacher's competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	0	8	27	53	24
<i>Modality</i>	8	25	36	34	9
<i>Punctuality</i>	7	12	26	42	25
<i>Rapidity</i>	3	13	18	45	33
<i>Motivation</i>	14	23	41	26	8
<i>Quality</i>	3	17	37	43	12

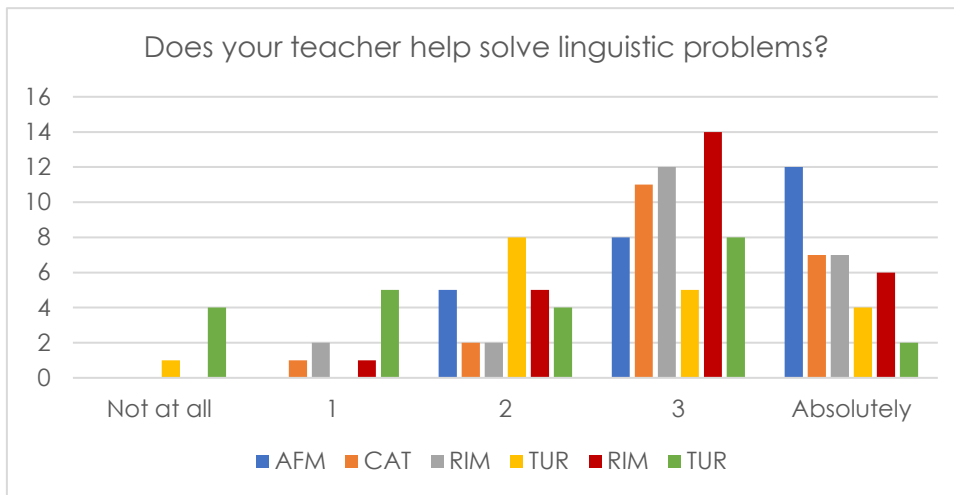
Teacher 6

The results are from first-to-fifth-year classes, AFM, CAT, TUR and RIM curricula.



These first two graphics present varied situations, where classes have answered quite positively, and others the other way around. The green TUR class the most negatively.

Again, not too negative, but neither positive. The last graph is where students seem the most satisfied, the majority has answered “3”. The only class with rather average answers was the yellow TUR. Green TUR the most negative.

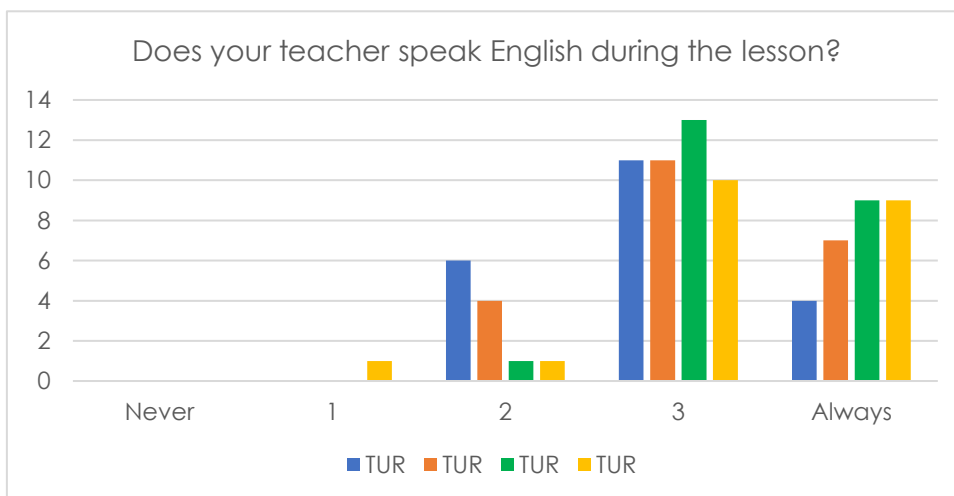


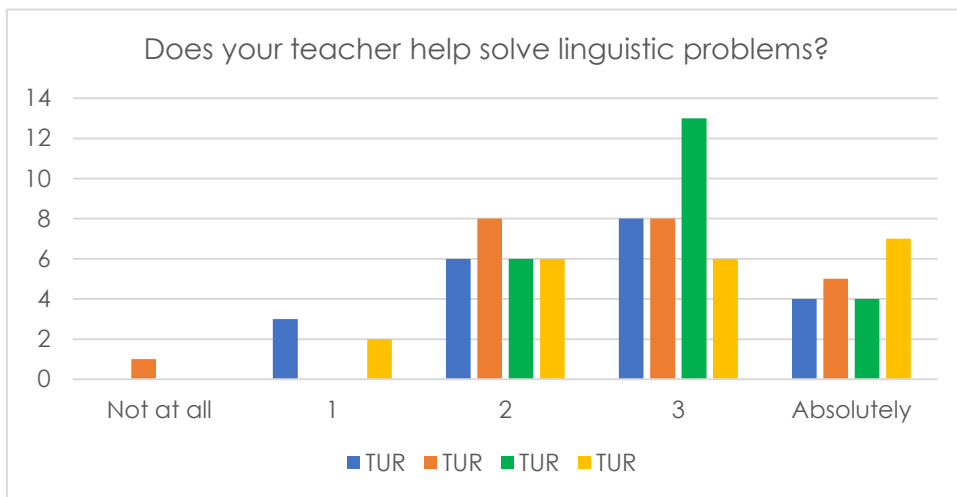
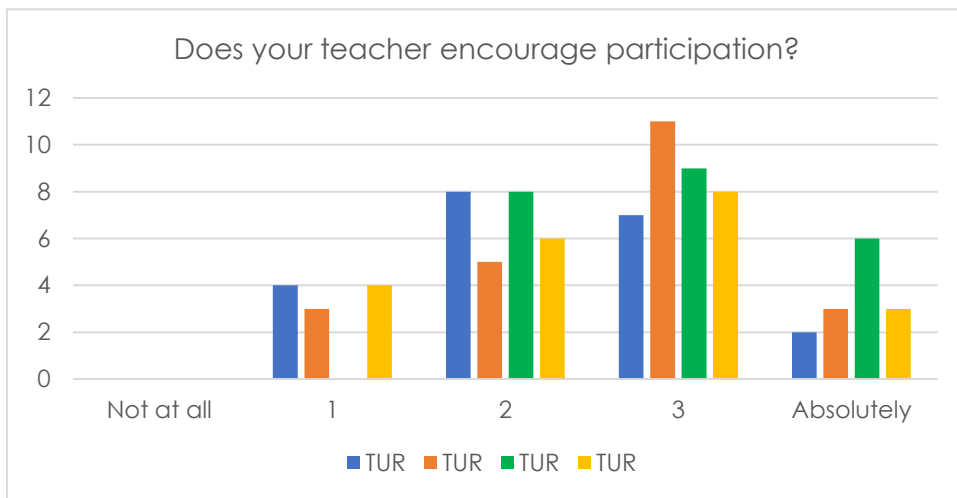
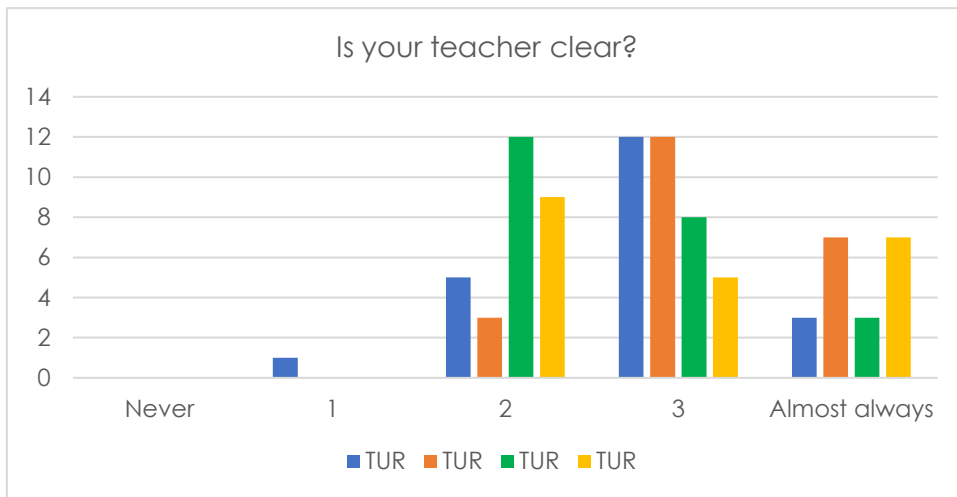
Let us look into the last chart outlining what students think about their teacher’s competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	1	11	16	60	48
<i>Modality</i>	8	16	37	59	16
<i>Punctuality</i>	22	19	38	43	14
<i>Rapidity</i>	10	21	36	51	18
<i>Motivation</i>	14	23	40	47	12
<i>Quality</i>	5	20	27	60	24

Teacher 7

The last teacher’s classes spanned from the first to the fifth, with no fourth-year classes. One class was CAT, the others TUR.





These last charts are various but rather positive. The classes seem to have answered in a balanced way, which could mean that their teacher's attitude does not change according to the class – maybe because of them being all the same curriculum.

Let us see the last chart outlining what students think about their teacher's competence in their subject, their methodologies in class, their punctuality and evaluation rapidity, how they motivate learning and the quality of their teaching.

	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Competence</i>	0	0	10	41	36
<i>Modality</i>	0	5	30	42	10
<i>Punctuality</i>	0	3	10	33	41
<i>Rapidity</i>	0	3	18	33	33
<i>Motivation</i>	5	24	28	21	9
<i>Quality</i>	0	6	26	36	19

How influent these aspects are on students' language learning?

		<i>Not at all</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Sufficiently</i>	<i>Very much</i>
<i>Competence</i>	Boys	9	43	103	91
		3,7%	17,5%	41,9%	37,0%
	Girls	2	40	160	213
		0,5%	9,6%	38,6%	51,3%
<i>Modality</i>	Boys	13	63	103	67
		5,3%	25,6%	41,9%	27,2%
	Girls	10	69	193	143
		2,4%	16,6%	46,5%	34,5%
<i>Punctuality</i>	Boys	97	79	52	18
		39,4%	32,1%	21,1%	7,3%
	Girls	151	152	79	33
		36,4%	36,6%	19,0%	8,0%
<i>Assessment rapidity</i>	Boys	72	89	56	29
		29,3%	36,2%	22,8%	11,8%
	Girls	104	155	109	47
		25,1%	37,3%	26,3%	11,3%
<i>Motivation</i>	Boys	17	42	105	82
		6,9%	17,1%	42,7%	33,3%
	Girls	14	44	173	184
		3,4%	10,6%	41,7%	44,3%
<i>Quality</i>	Boys	5	20	95	126
		2,0%	8,1%	38,6%	51,2%
	Girls	3	25	106	281
		0,7%	6,0%	25,5%	67,7%

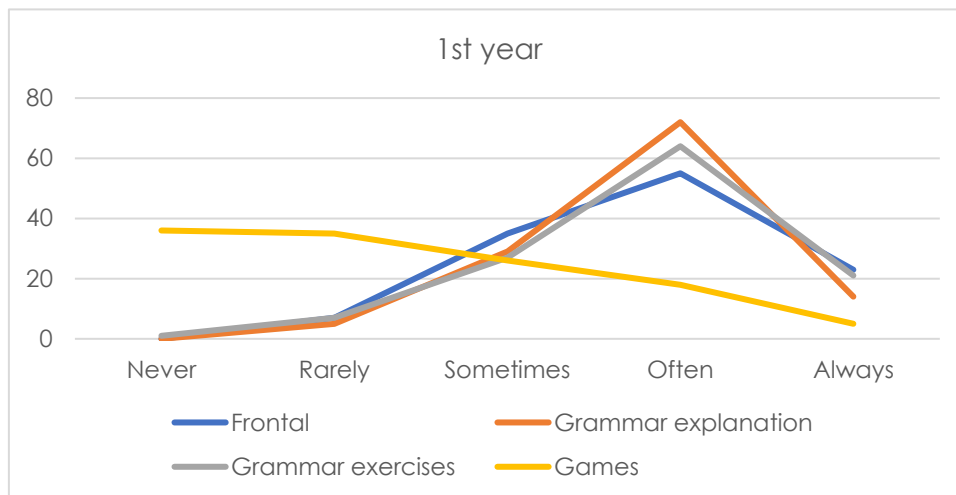
I chose to present these results rather than others because they represent the English lesson the most, in which the teacher may or not speak English, help solve linguistic problems or involve their students. The more positive these results according to the students, the more positive will probably be the lesson itself. The final chart for each teacher briefly outlines the students' perception about some feature which usually represent the teaching job. How influential these are is shown in the last chart above.

In the appendix I will attach all the other data about the teachers, which were more about the attitude. They will show how positive the environment in the classroom is, which is, of course, relevant, but not meaningful for this section about English teaching and the students' perception of it.

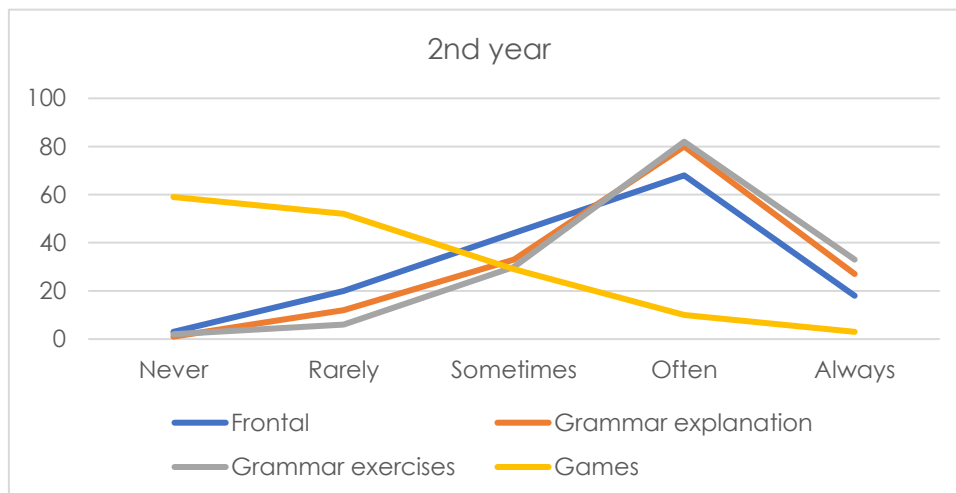
Activities

Related to the part above and following the same criteria, I am now to present the results of the questions about how the lesson is usually held and the strategies for developing the basic skills.

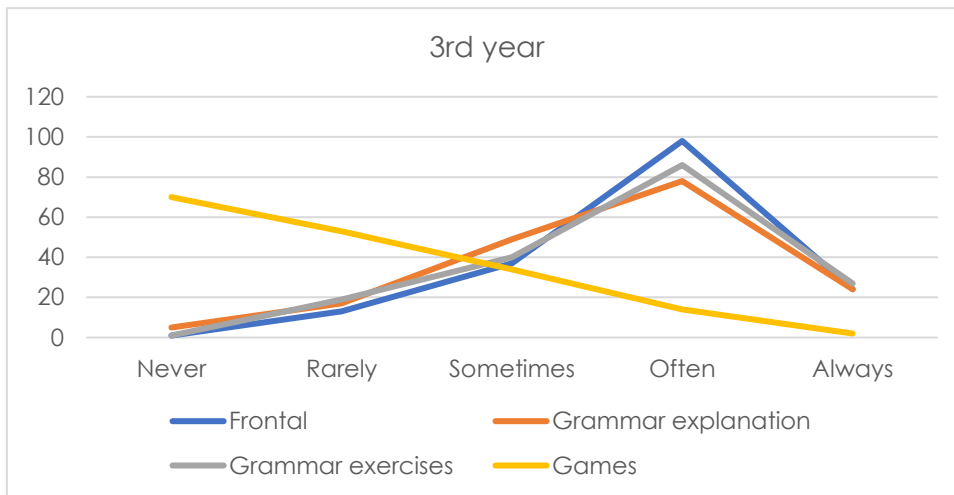
The first question was about how often general activities, i.e. teacher talking and students listening, grammar explanation and exercises, are ran.



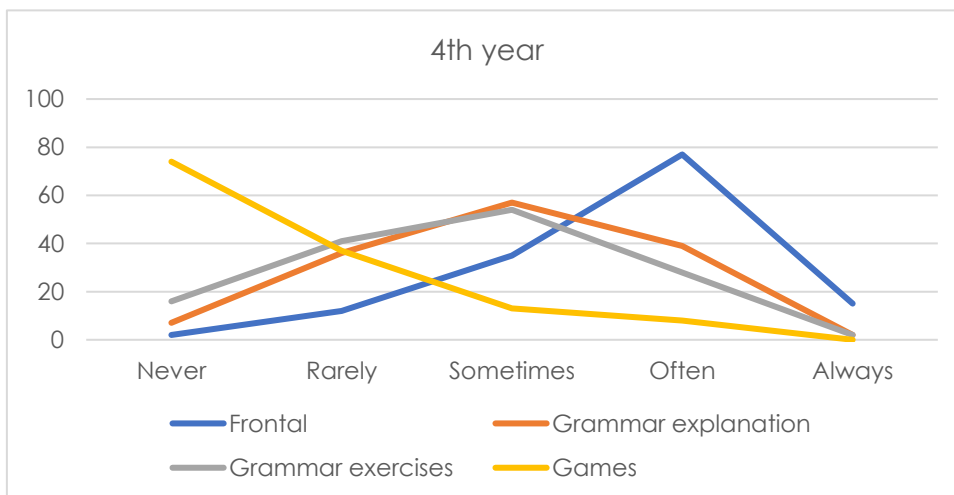
It is evident that games are hardly ever taken into consideration, while the other standard activities are more often practiced.



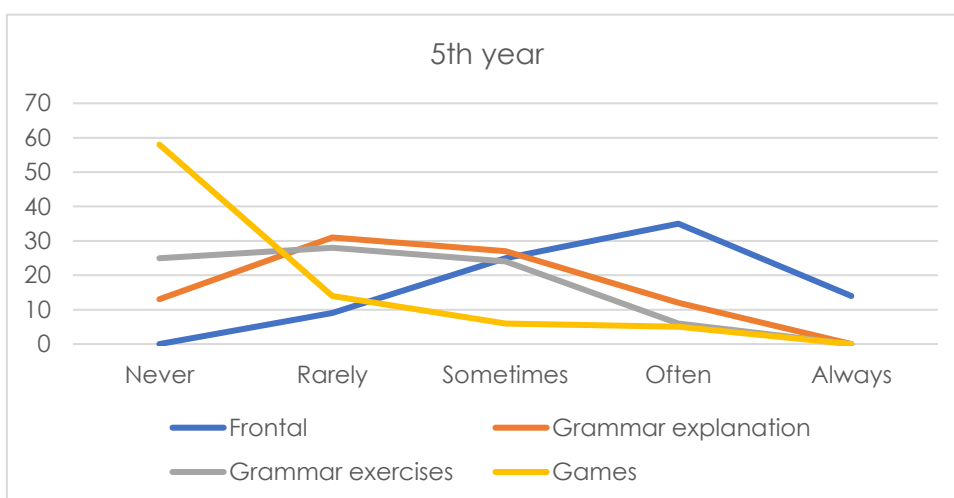
The prospect is very similar. According to these results, grammar explanation and consequent exercises are frequent, while games are rarely practiced. It seems that frontal teaching is slightly less common, maybe students are more involved in different activities, rather than being obliged to listen to their teacher.



Frontal lessons come back to be the strongest in the graph. There seems to be a little less grammar explanation, but the same amount of exercises. Games are even less considered.



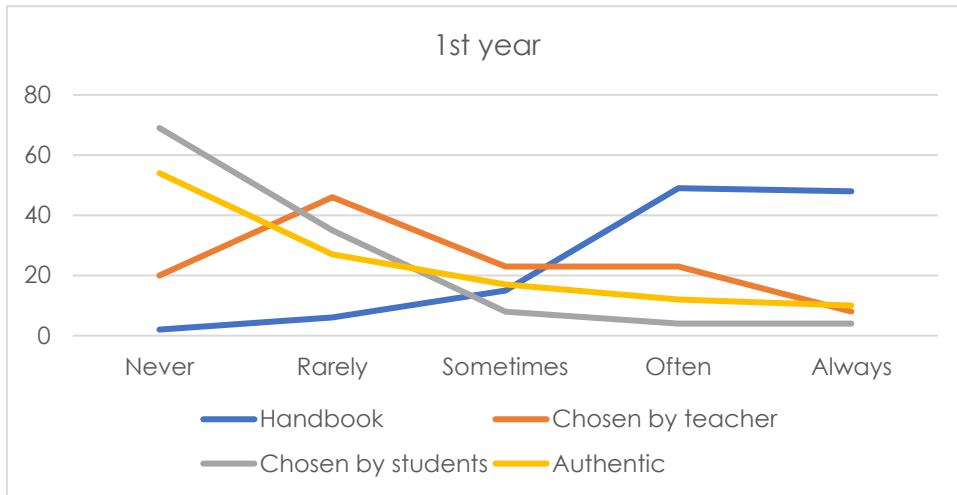
The tendency seems to be changing. Grammar is less considered than in the previous years. Frontal teaching stays into power, while games are not taken into account yet (and probably never will).



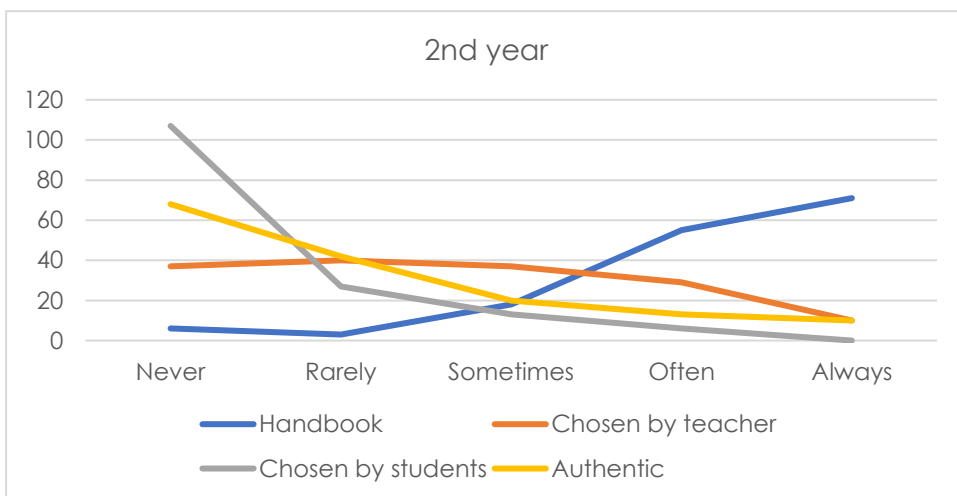
Fifth-year students confirm the trend. Grammar explanation and exercises have notably decreased. One reason could be that older students should have a strong grammar expertise.

Reading skill

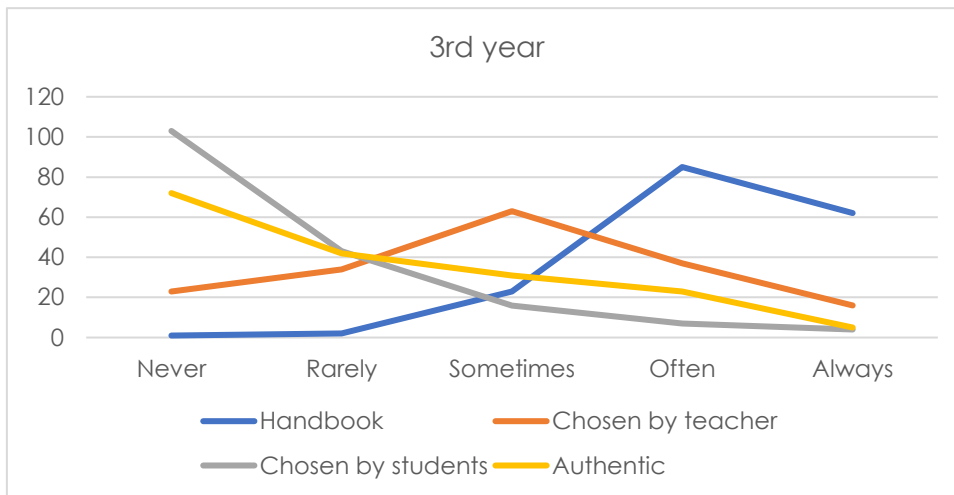
The next section regards the reading skill and which activities students carry out during their lessons to develop it. The options were “texts from the handbook”, “chosen by the teacher”, “chosen by the students” and “authentic”.



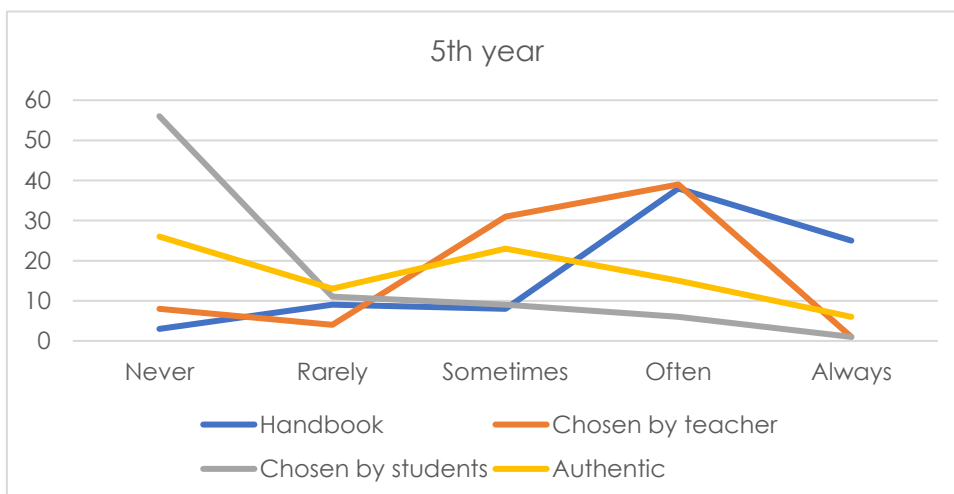
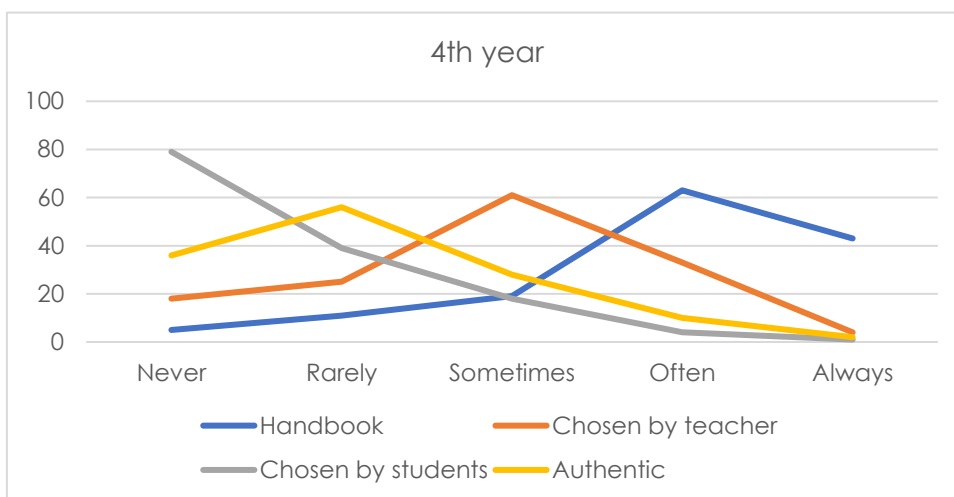
Apparently, first-year students often work with their handbook and some teachers sometimes propose them selected texts. Students never participate in their reading choices and authentic material is not usual – just some teachers might prepare some activities with it.



A very similar situation is presented in the second-year classes. The handbook is mostly used, while some teachers propose texts chosen by them, but rarely by the students or authentic material.



Third-year students often use their handbook and sometimes their teachers provide them with some texts. Again, rare are texts chosen by the students or authentic material.



In the last two school years teachers seem to prepare more texts than using the handbook – which is, anyway, the most used.

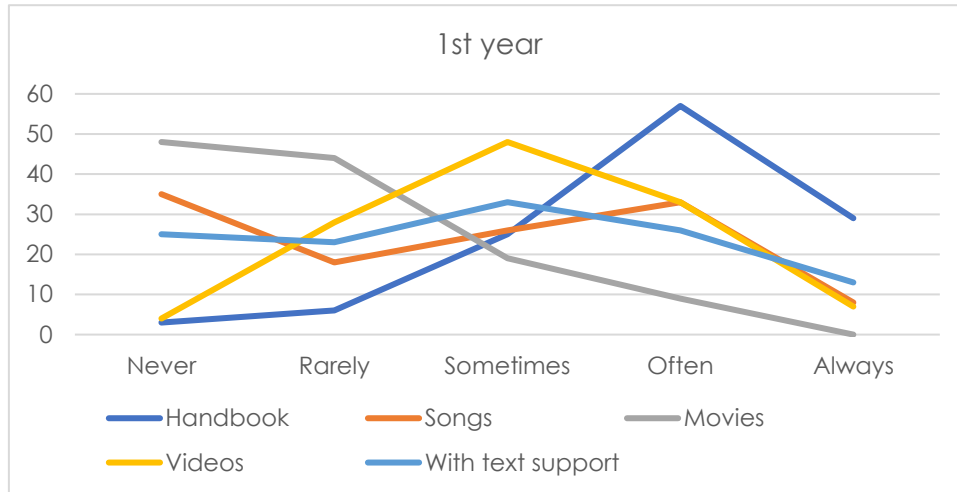
Students do not appear to take part to the material choice and, therefore, the topic as well.

Authentic material is taken more advantage of, but not that often.

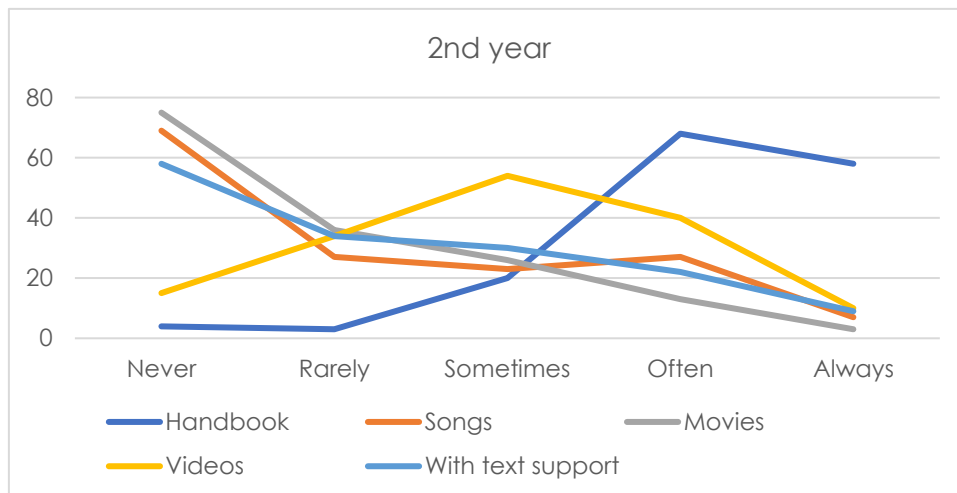
Listening skill

In the options of the question which enquired of the activities for the listening-skill improvement there were: 1) handbook, 2) songs, 3) movies, 4) 20-minutes videos, 5) with text support.

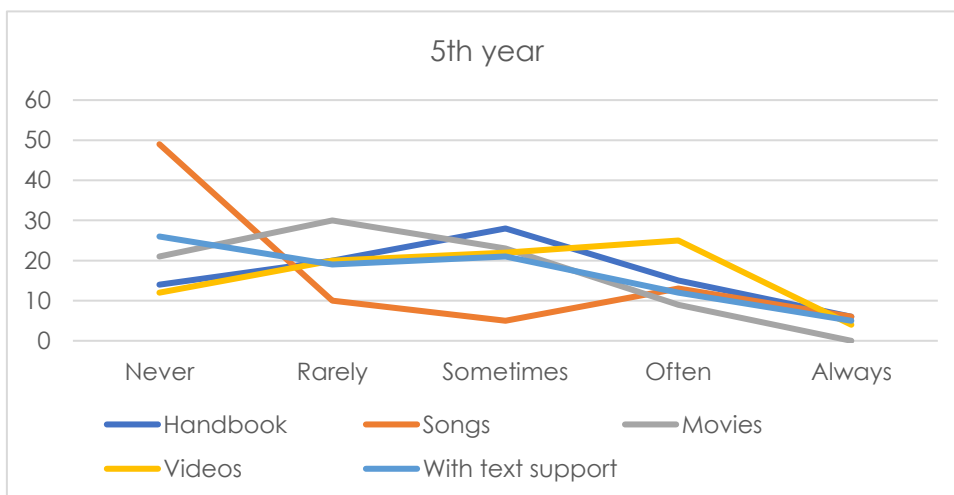
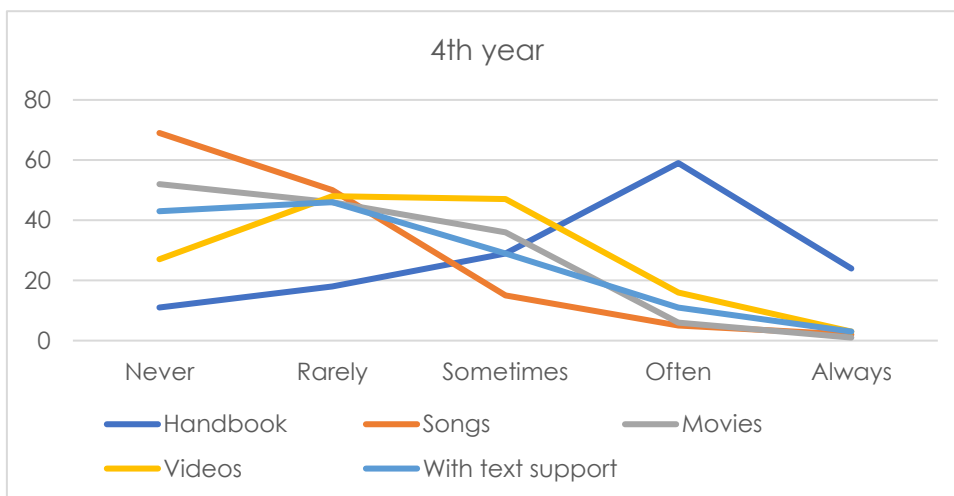
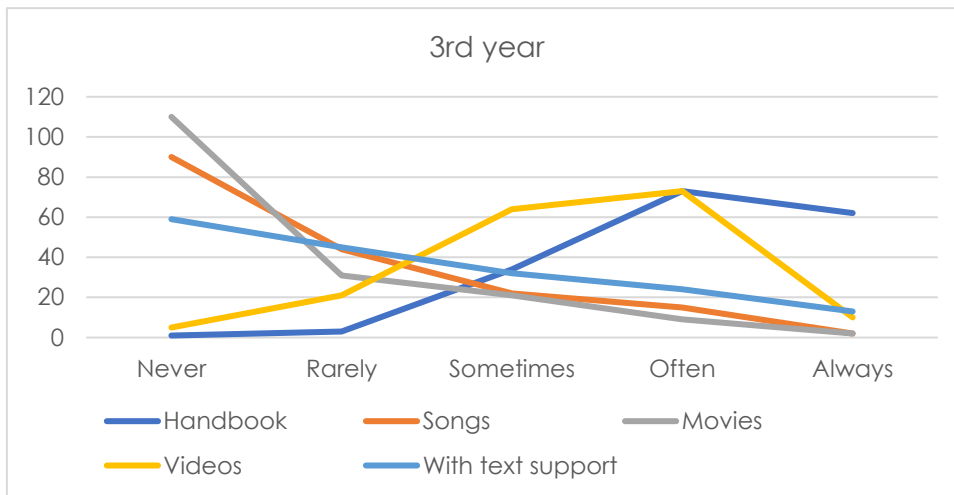
Students could answer from “never” to “always”.



The graphic shows that the handbook is the most used, but many teachers also propose songs and videos. Movies are less frequent, probably because of the lasting time. It is quite strange how the answers “with text support” are so different. The option was clear, it is probably because those students’ reasoning has been “we never do listening practice activities, so the answer is consequent”.



The proportions are approximately the same as the chart before. One difference lies with songs and movies, which occupy a greater part in the “never” and “rarely” options. Again “with text support” has got rather negative answers.



It seems that, with the year passing by, listening activities are less and less practiced. The handbook remains the most used, also videos are a greatly chosen option. But the frequency is what strikes. To try to give a motivation to this decrease, we will have to observe the other activities made in class. It is to be recalled that students have lamented an absence of listening practicing, so these two aspects might be related.

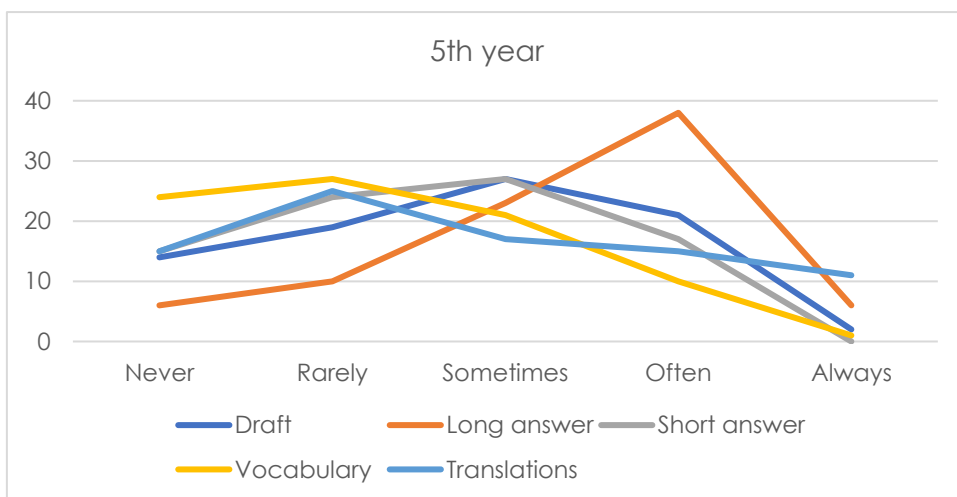
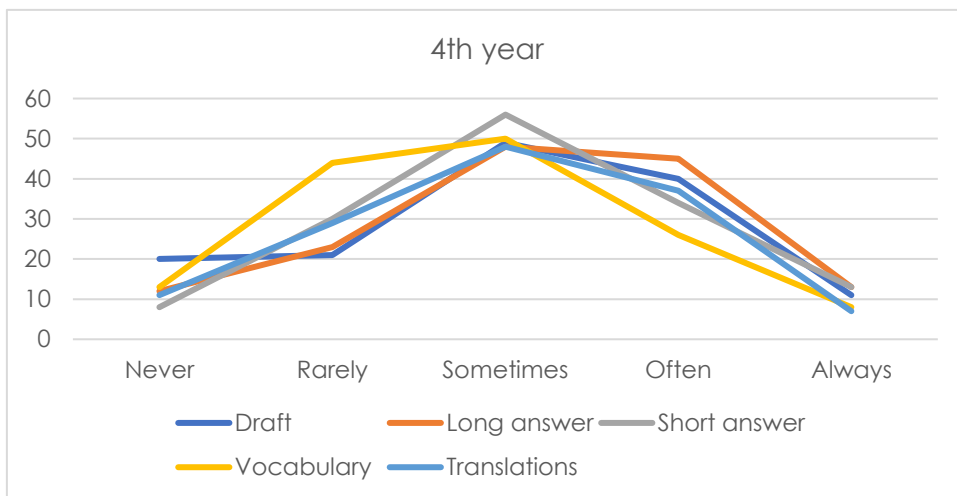
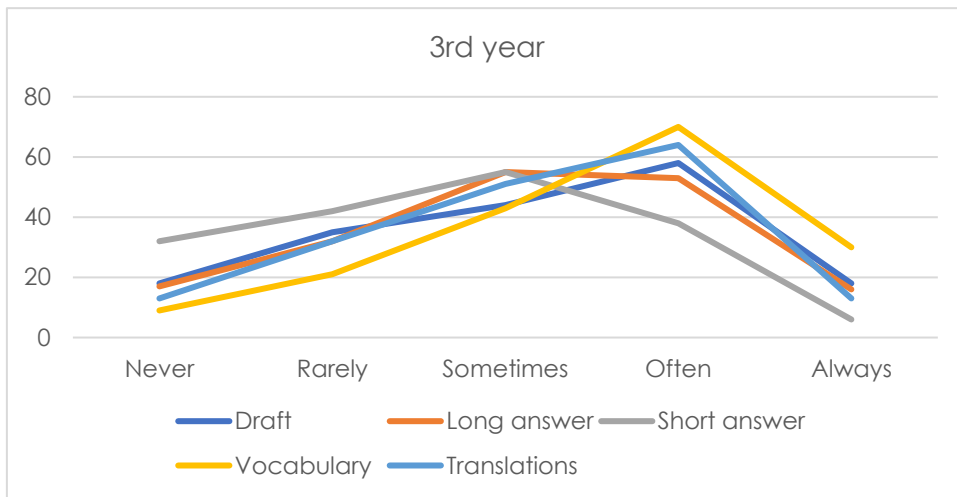
Writing skill

The question proposed among its options “text writing with a prefixed draft”, “answer to one question requiring a long answer”, “questions requiring short answers”, “orthography/vocabulary exercises” and “translations”.

Answer parameters were as above from “never” to “always”.



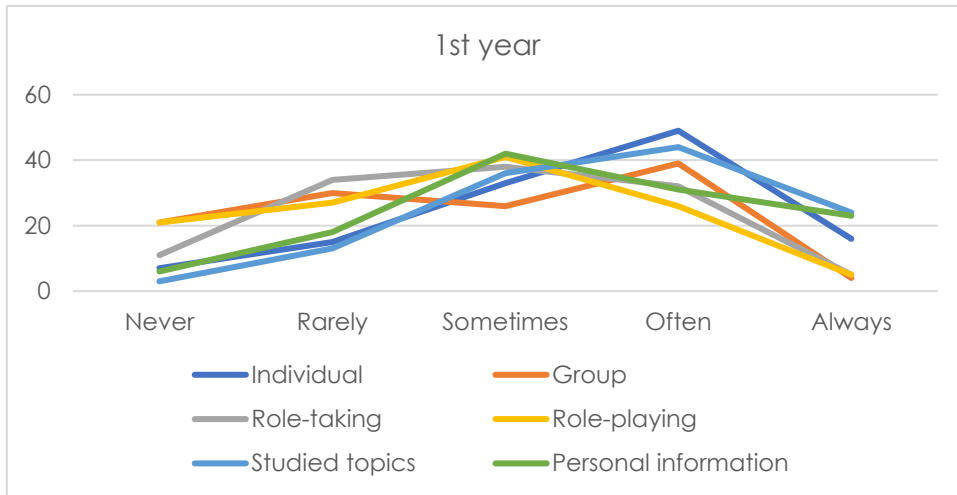
These first results tell us that the writing skill is practiced much by a vast majority of students. The methodologies their teachers use are quite various and some are preferred against others. The most used are, anyway, vocabulary exercises and long answers. With the years going by, translations and texts with a draft gain some users.



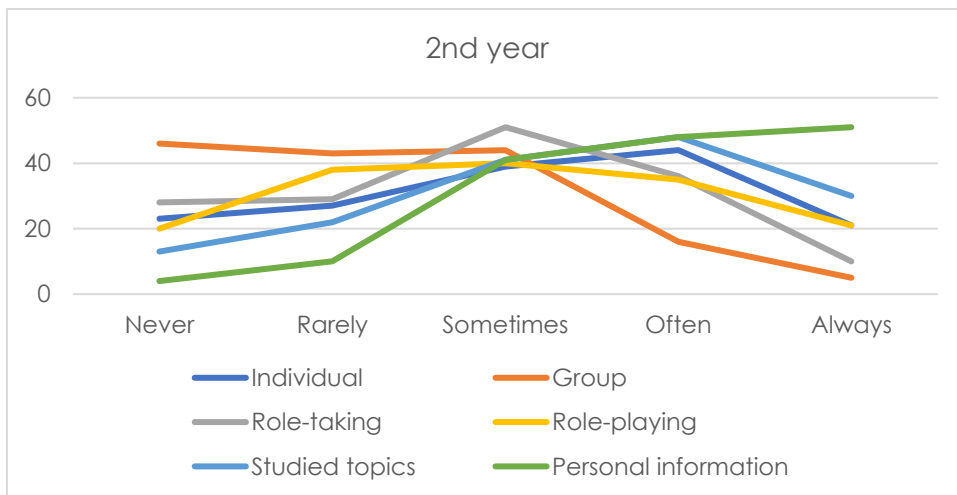
Last-year students present a decrease in writing practicing. The most favourite remain long-answer questions, while all the other are reduced to “sometimes” rather than “often”.

Speaking skill

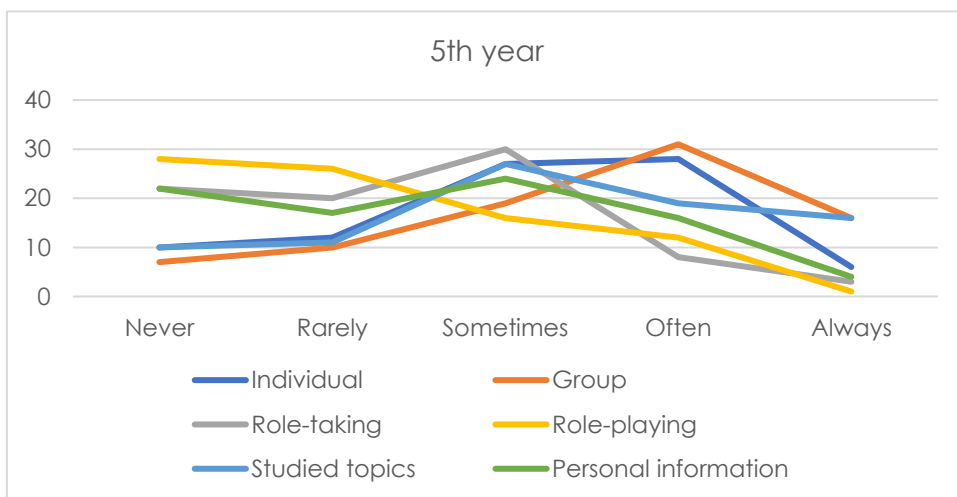
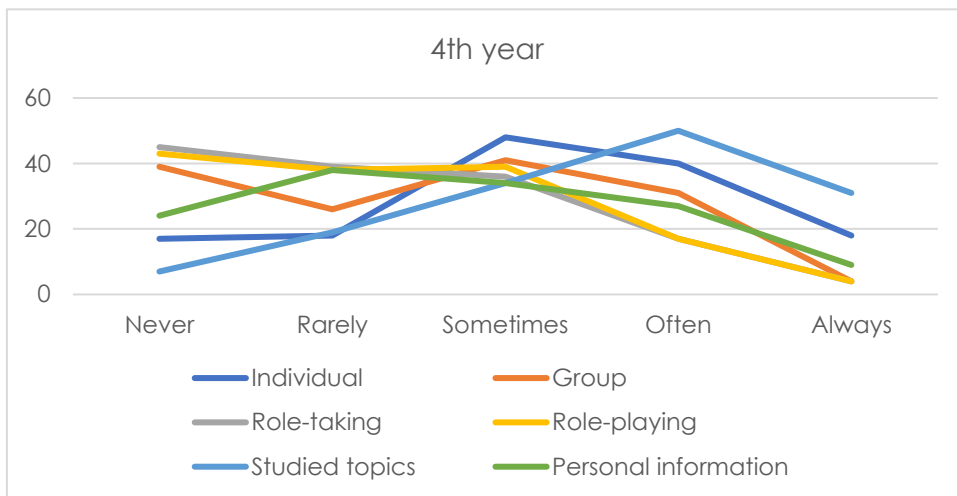
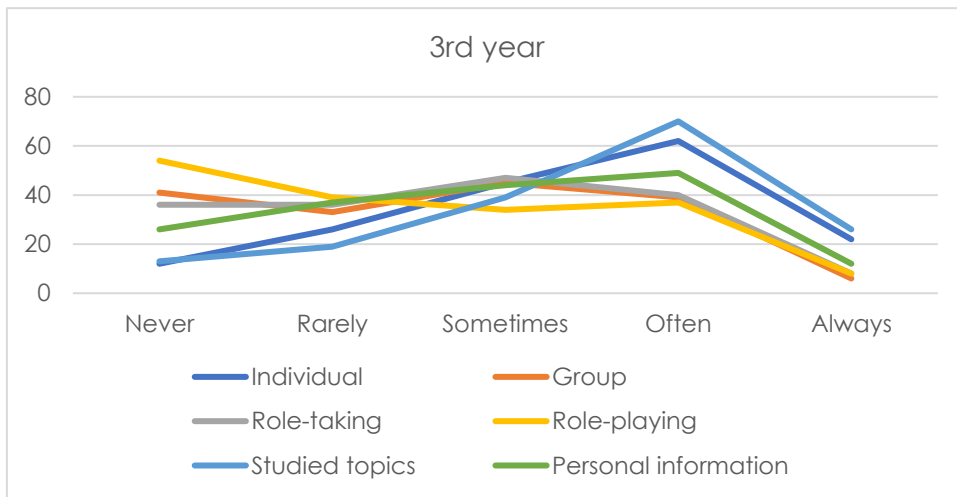
The answers to the question about speaking-skill-improving activities were: “individual exposition of a self-prepared topic”, then “group exposition”, “dialogue following a draft”, “improvised dialogue given a setting”, “question about studied topics” and last “personal questions (without self-preparation)”.



The most frequent activities are “individual expositions of a self-prepared topic” and “questions about something studied”. Personal questions are overall asked, but the other activities seem to be rather occasional.



In second-year classes personal questions are very frequent, also questions about a studied topic. Individual expositions are made in some classes more than others, other activities are not that common, but anyway done.



The only speaking activities which are frequently done in the last three-year school period are the individual expositions and the questions about a studied topic. Toward the older classes group works rise and the other methodologies go decreasing.

Conclusions

Our intense journey through these Italian secondary-school students' perception of the English language, its learning and teaching, has come to an end. We have got to know more precisely how English is seen, what students' main difficulties, fears and preferences are and how English teachers usually lead their lessons.

Before outlining the key points of this research and drawing conclusions, I am to summarize what has come to light through the direct class observations. The completed observation sheets can be found attached in the appendix.

Direct observation

Students of all curricula react, of course, personally to the English language and its lessons, although demotivation can be overall perceived. In fact, most of them feel they know little of its use, they feel they cannot speak English and do not want to. Speaking of which, the only students who have some self-esteem are those whose teachers engage in making them feel prepared and are actually well prepared from a grammatical point of view. What generally lacks is the oral part – students speak very little spontaneous English during their English lessons. However, most feel like taking the challenge.

AFM ('Administration, finance and marketing') students have the biggest classes, where boys usually pay scarce attention and girls are more interested. Teachers in these cases must be able to find what their students' interests are and often make them work in groups properly divided. As we have seen, AFM students have answered variously to the questions about how much they like English, but their goals are approximately the same as the others'.

CAT ('Constructions, Environment and Territory') classes are the smallest, and therefore the luckiest. Principally made up of boys and few girls, their interest in the English language is higher than one could think, but their attitude leads them not pay much attention to their teachers. Considerations similar to those for AFM students can be done: CAT students' English competences might actually be lower, because of their engagement on the subject, but their openness and will to get involved must be taken advantage of. Teachers have to be very patient and ironical.

TUR ('Tourism') students are those who should be the most interested in learning English and being proficient in it. There are mainly girls in TUR classes, they usually are scared of speaking a foreign language in front of each other. TUR students' competences are actually high, but they must be got used to practicing it without being afraid of being wrong or making a poor showing. Teachers in TUR classes should make them feel more confident, speak more and focus on works in pairs with a friend or the deskmate.

SIA ('Enterprise Information Systems') classes are very similar to AFM classes, as there are usually more boys who get distracted and noisy. Overall, they are interested in the lesson, but teachers must be very patient and try to involve them at their best. As we have seen, they do not like English much, but know it is useful. This is a point to focus on.

RIM ('International Relations and Marketing') students are interested in languages and know they are a central point for their future job. Teachers should encourage them to practice constantly and try to find links between the foreign languages they study and the other subjects. RIM classes have demonstrated themselves to be ready to work in teams and take the challenge.

Questionnaire results

661 students took part to the questionnaire, 246 boys (27%) and 415 girls (73%). More than the 69% of the respondents have admitted they like English, the 22% is indifferent to it and just the 9% dislike it.

As far as usefulness is concerned, 96% have answered that English is almost essential to them. 3% is neutral and the remnant 1% find it useless. Many students studying more than one foreign language (CAT excluded) have made this choice because they like foreign languages (44%), the 29% because of their future job search and the 27% because foreign languages were present in their curriculum programme. Almost 65% say that learning more languages helps them in their language-learning process, to the 28% this is irrelevant and just the 7% find it of any support.

The skill which students feel they are better at is reading. The others – listening, speaking and writing – are more or less on the same level, which they have defined as “more than sufficient”. In fact, more than the 50% has admitted being good or excellent at reading, but less than the 30% has answered the same regarding the other skills. Consequently 7 out of 10 students say they are not particularly good at listening, speaking or writing. Grammar and pronunciation are other two aspects which they said they find particularly difficult. A vast majority has claimed they are improving in their speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, they feel their grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary are also improving. But many have also admitted they do not feel they are becoming particularly better. The only grammatical aspect they find rather difficult is verb tenses, while the others are considered relatively easy. When they do not know something, students might well ask their teachers or one good classmate. The older they get, the less they seem to address their teachers in case of doubts.

The aspect they would like to focus on is speaking, many also have asked more pronunciation and, in general, vocabulary. Moreover, students find it should be insisted that

they spoke English during the lesson and the lesson should be led in English. This last matter is quite dependent on the teacher, their readiness and actual preparation.

Students usually fear speaking a foreign language in front of their classmates and teachers, their main reasons are: being afraid of making mistakes, being mocked and getting a bad mark. Teachers should, as a consequence, try to make them comfortable and at their ease, by creating a welcoming and respectful atmosphere.

Teachers still prefer frontal lessons, where they lead the speaking and their students listen and carry out assigned tasks. They rarely use original or authentic materials – novelty is rather a rarity, while the handbook is very often the only choice. Students have expressed their interest in authentic materials like not only videos, songs and films, but also books and magazines.

Future objectives are trying to keep a steady analysis going and having open dialogue with students. They should participate more both in the lesson and in the choice of topics and materials. As teachers, we should pay more attention to the individual, their needs and interests, by trying to offer students a lesson where they can get involved and which they can feel theirs. Fear, anxiety and useless criticism should be reduced to the utmost, while respect and cooperation encouraged.

Language is communication and sharing, hence: let's communicate!

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<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/attitude> (Last accessed 16 October 2018)

Appendix

English version of the student diary (whose answers will not be presented due to their personal value and irrelevance for the purposes of this work)

Date: _____

My name: _____

My class: _____

Hi, this is a journal where you can write every opinion of yours on your last English class! Here are some inputs to help you:

What was it about?

.....

I have discovered that.....

I liked.....

because.....

Also, I would like to know more about.....

because.....

But I found difficult.....

because.....

and I found boring.....

because.....

During the class, I think that my teacher was really good at.....,

because.....

but I think that my teacher was not so good at.....,

because.....

About.....,

I personally would suggest.....

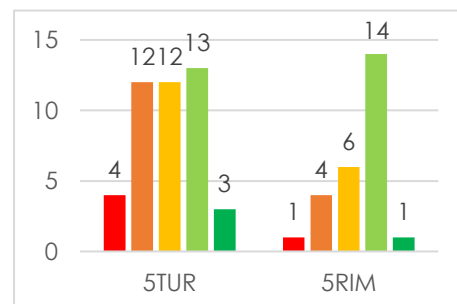
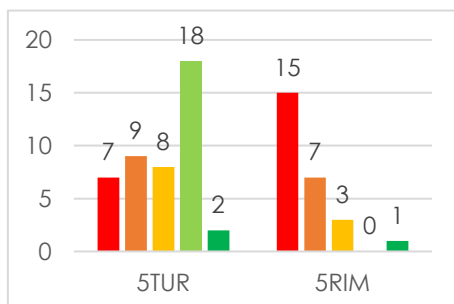
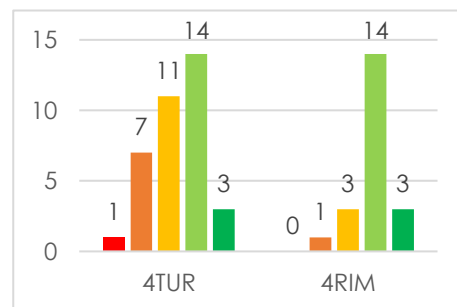
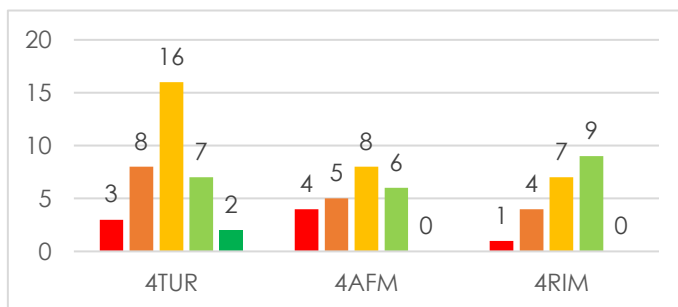
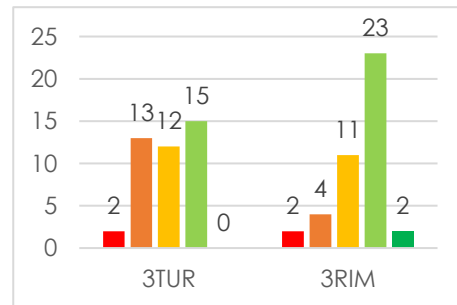
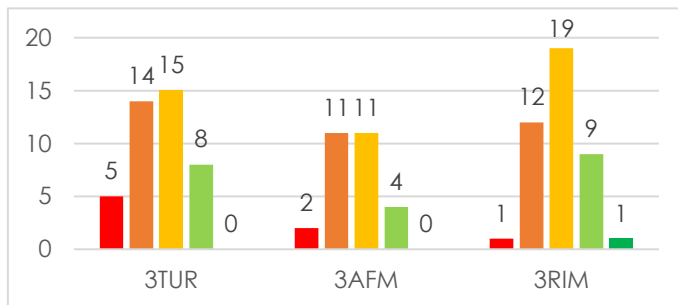
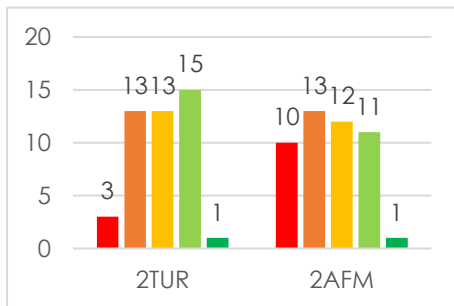
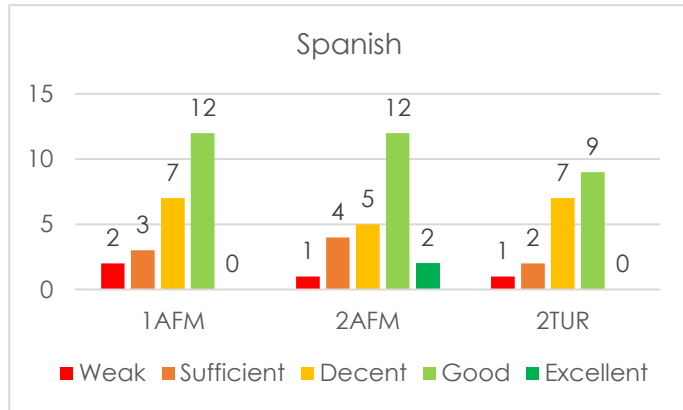
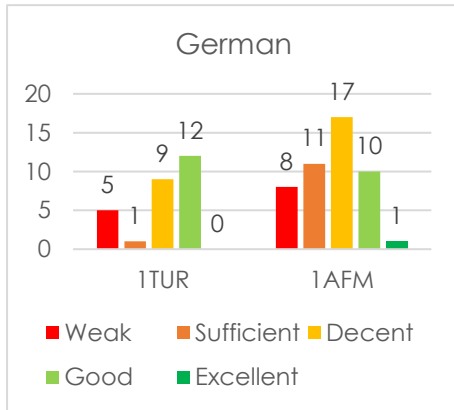
.....

.....

.....

Graphics presenting the results of the question “how do you feel your preparation in the other languages you study?”

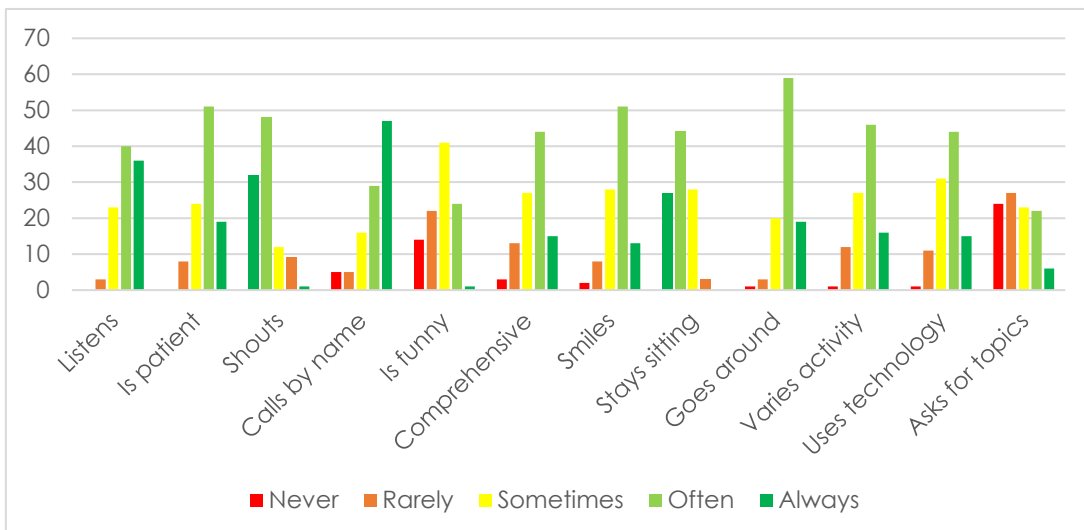
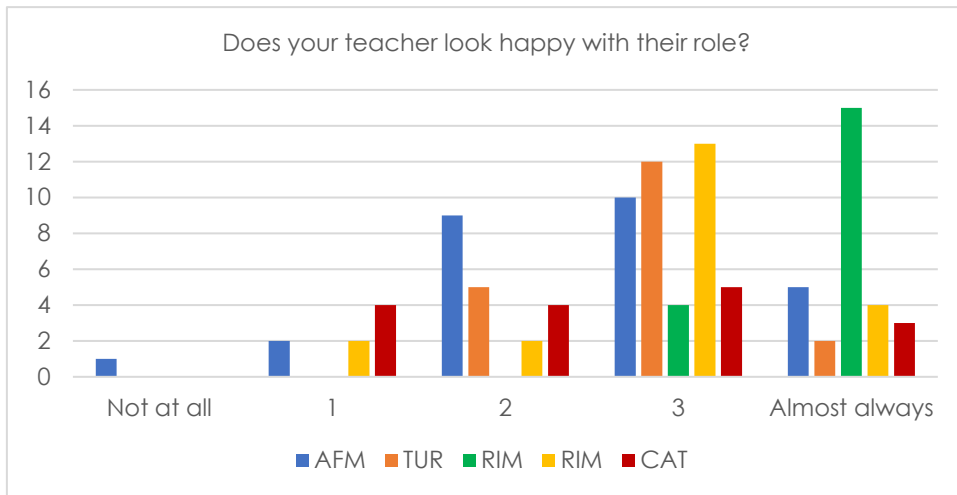
On the left there are the graphs of the answer for German, on the right for Spanish.



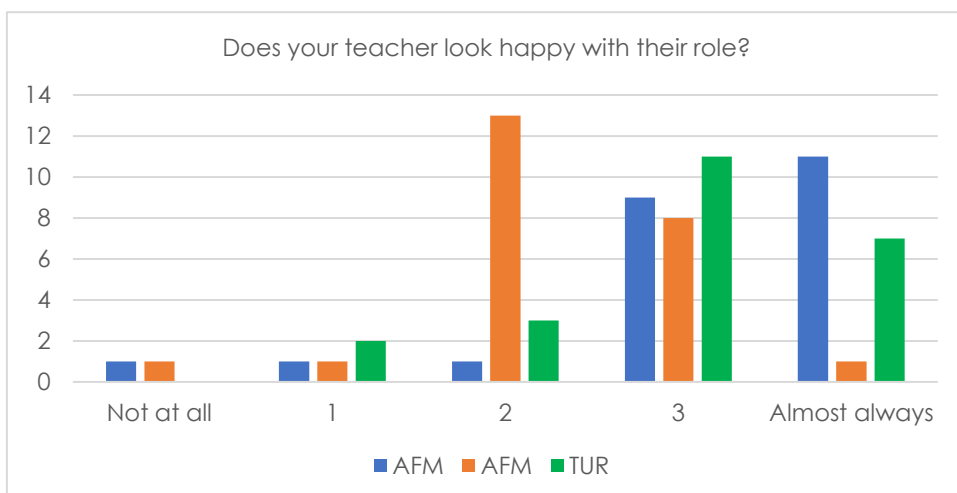
Graphics presenting the answers to the questions about teachers.

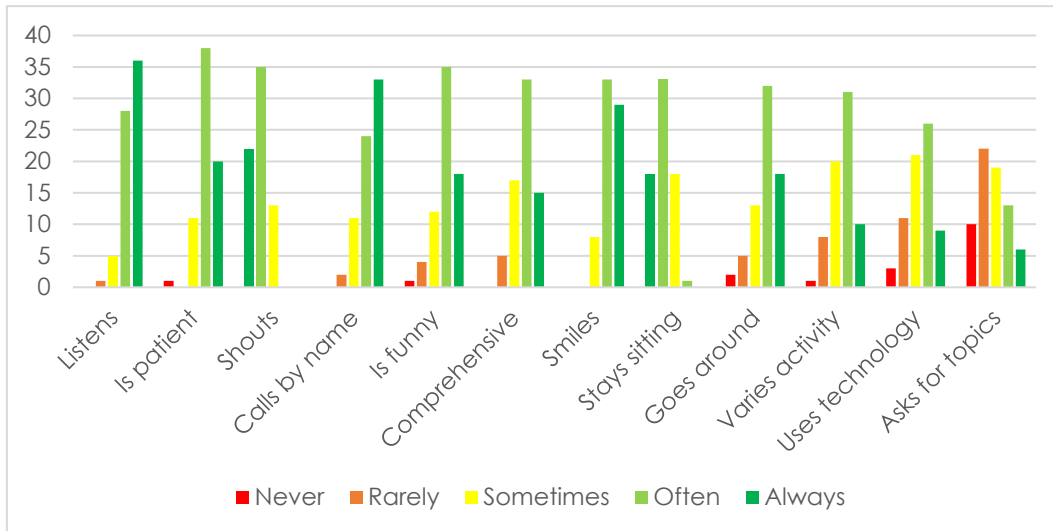
In the second charts for each teacher, colours indicate positivity (red “negative” to green “positive”), therefore on “shouts” and “stays sitting” options, “never” is green and “always” red.

Teacher 1

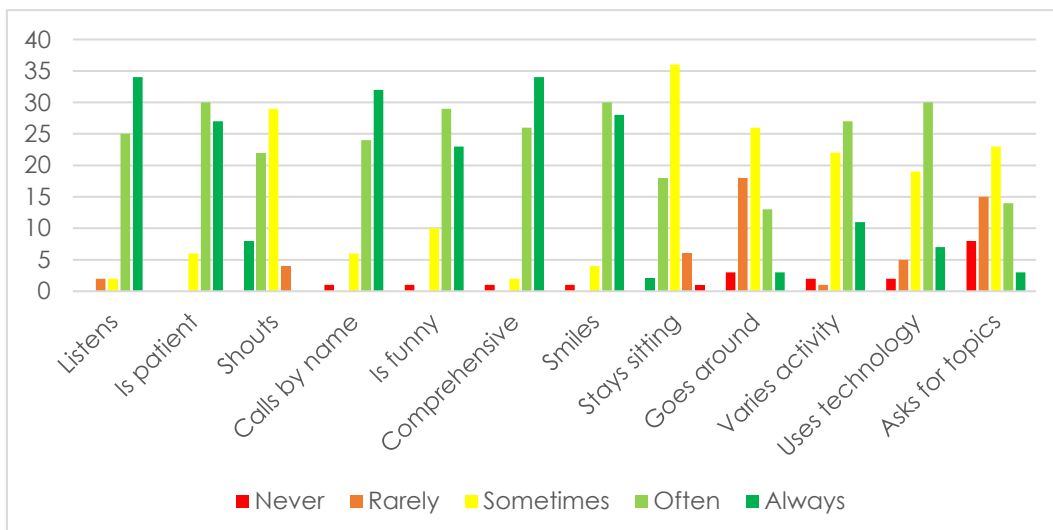
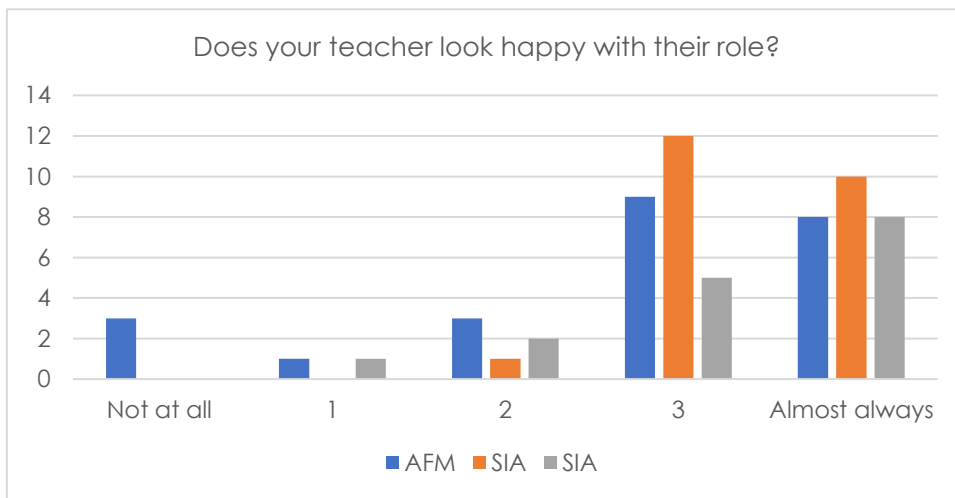


Teacher 2

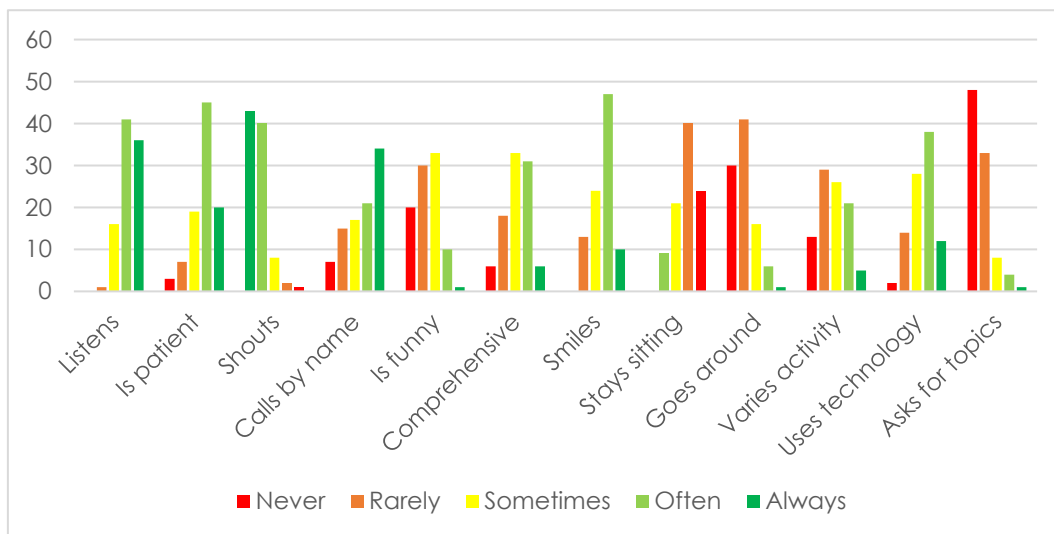
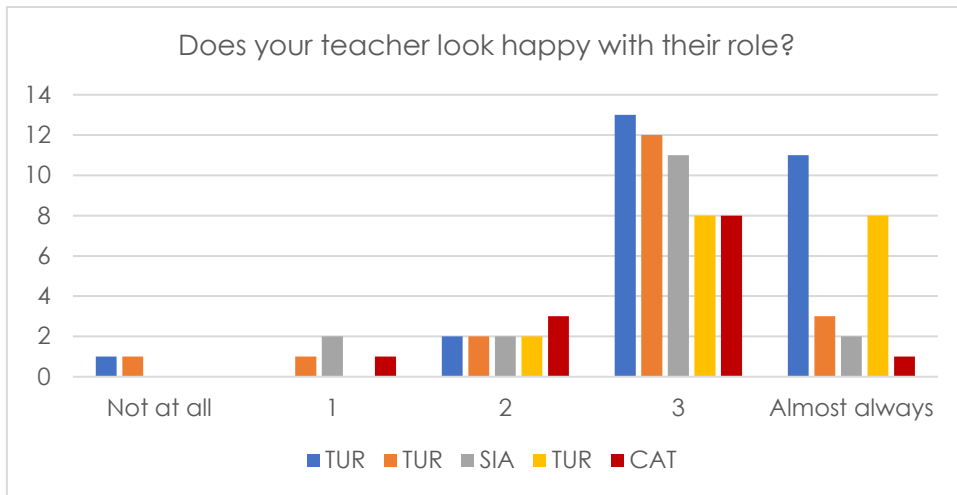




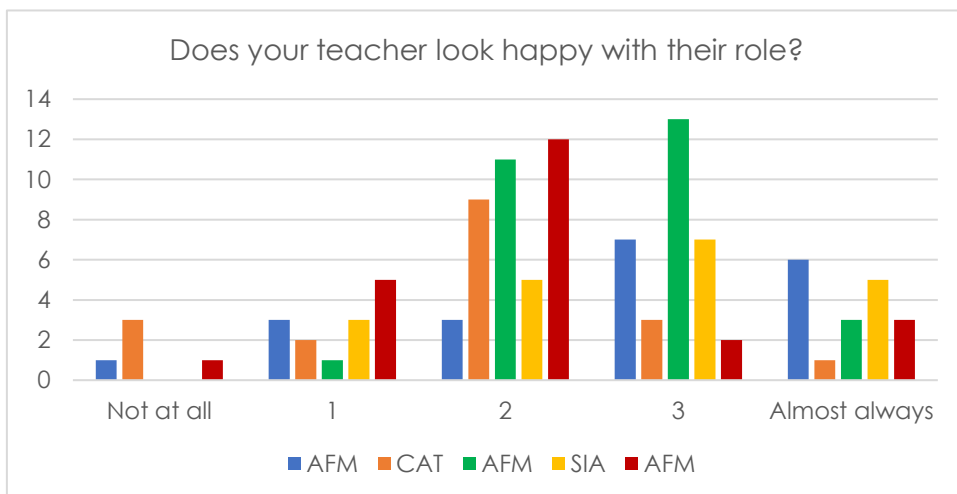
Teacher 3

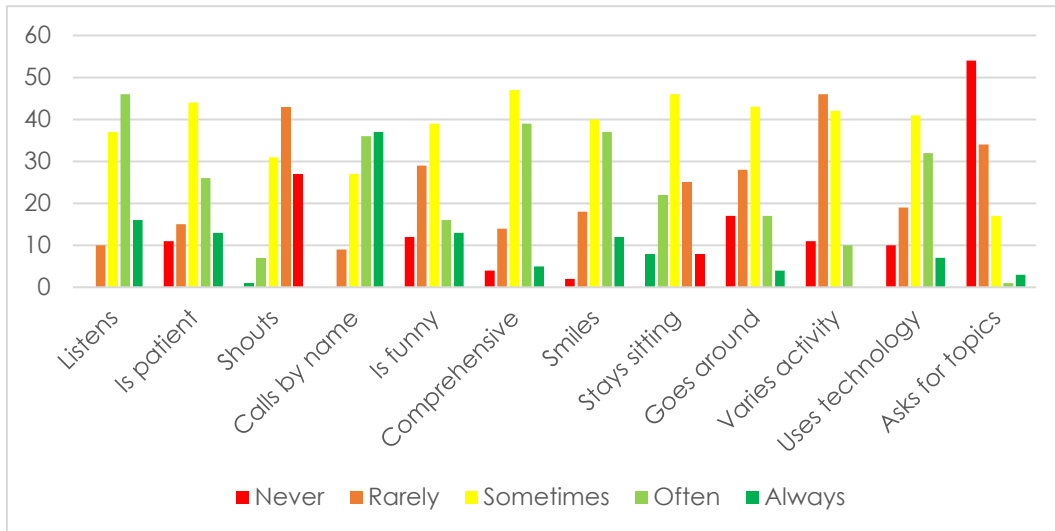


Teacher 4

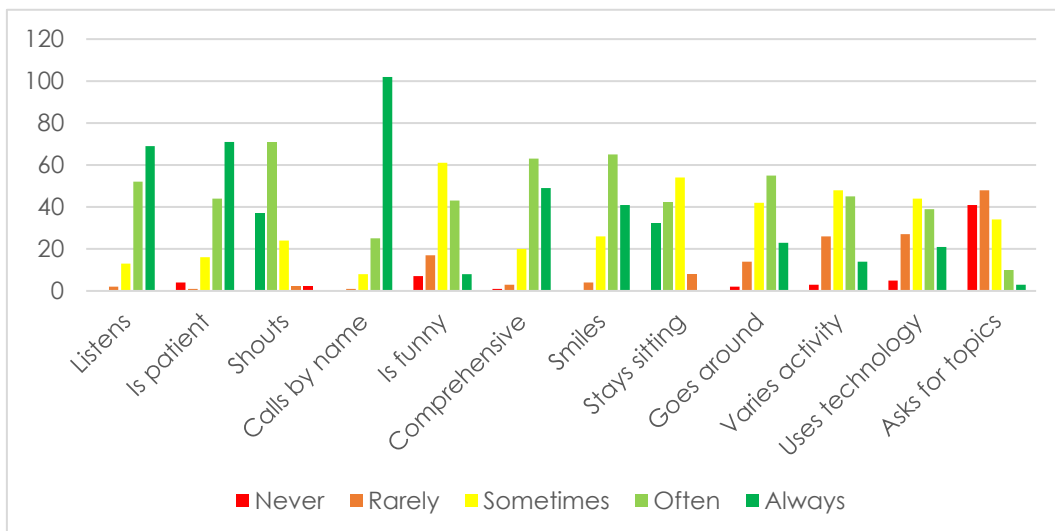
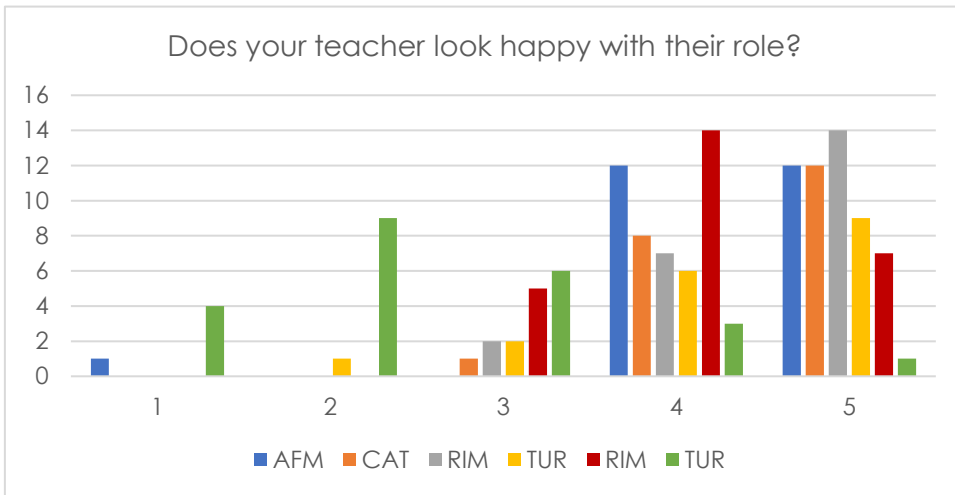


Teacher 5

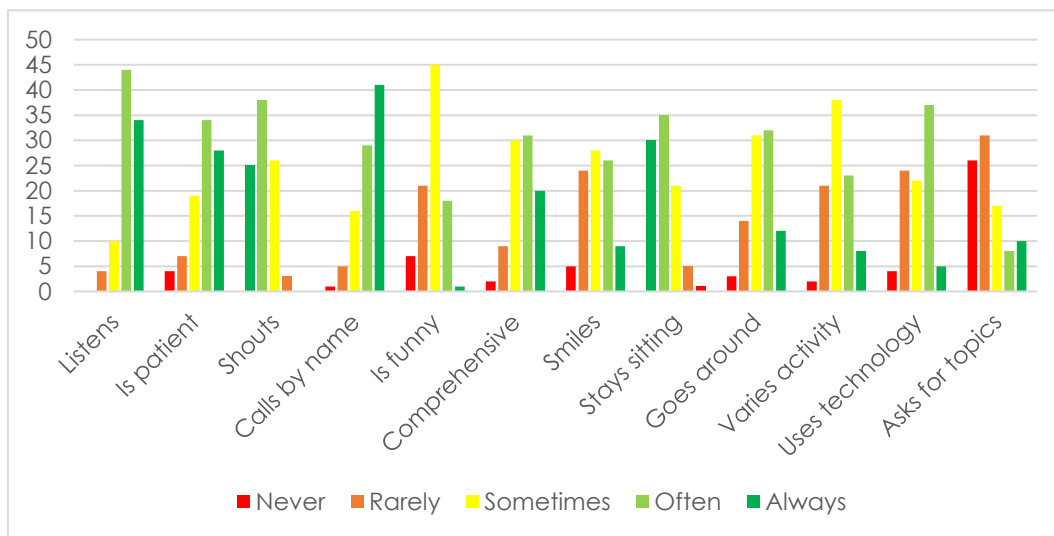
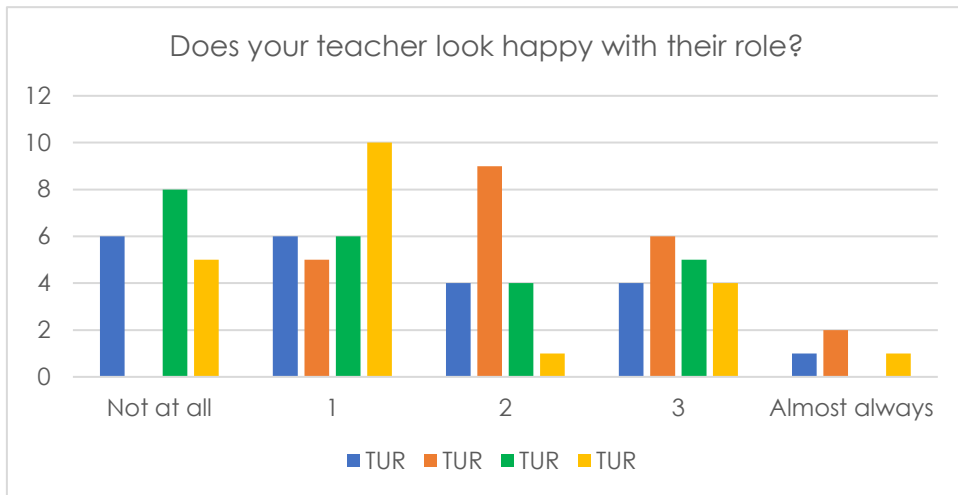




Teacher 6



Teacher 7



Class observation sheets – observation time per class: 2 or 3 hours

(the second part about the single activities will be omitted due to lack of relevance)

Class: 1AFM

Number of students: 71% boys 29% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)		X		

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	

Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice		X		

Class: 1AFM

Number of students: 39% boys, 61% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?				X
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?			X	

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.				X
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice		X		

Class: 1AFM

Number of students: 36% boys, 64% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner			X	
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 1TUR

Number of students: 26% boys, 74% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	

Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	x			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?				X
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?				X
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 1TUR

Number of students: 43% boys, 57% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1= acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?		x		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?	X			
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?				X

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2AFM

Number of students: 46% boys, 54% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?			x	

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?				X

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2 AFM

Number of students: 45% boys, 55% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?		X		
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2AFM

Number of students: 44% boy, 56% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)		X		

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2CAT

Number of students: 78% boys, 22% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)				X
Is the room suitable for cooperation?				X

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?	X			
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?		X		
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2TUR

Number of students: 13% boys, 87% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?			X	

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?				x

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.				X
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice		X		

Class: 2TUR

Number of students: 18% boys, 82% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?			X	

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice		X		
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 2TUR

Number of students: 5% boys, 95% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs/three

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?	X			
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)				X
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?				X
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?		X		

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?		X		
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3AFM

Number of students: 46% boys 54% girls

Class organization: three-desk arrangement

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)	X			
Is the room suitable for cooperation? *too big, too many students			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?		X		
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3CAT

Number of students: 71% boys, 29% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?				X
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?		X		
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?		X		
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?		x		

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?		X		
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3RIM

Number of students: 17% boys, 83% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?		X		
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?				X

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3RIM

Number of students: 26% boys, 74% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?		X		
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)		X		

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		
Do students look happy with the environment?		X		
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?		X		
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice		X		
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3SIA

Number of students: 88% boys, 12% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?	X			
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?				X
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?				X
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?		X		
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3SIA

Number of students: 61% boys, 39% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?				X
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?				X
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?				x

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice		X		
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3TUR

Number of students: 26% boys, 74% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?	X			
Is the room bright?		X		
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)	X			
Is the room suitable for cooperation?	X			

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?	X			
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 3TUR

Number of students: 21% boys, 79% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?		X		
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)		X		

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice		X		

Class: 4AFM

Number of students: 39% boys, 61% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1= acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?		X		
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?	X			
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?	X			
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?		X		
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?		X		
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.	X			
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.	X			
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?		X		
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?	X			
Does the teacher vary activities?	X			
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?	X			
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4CAT

Number of students: 75% boys, 25% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?		X		
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			x	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?		x		

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4RIM

Number of students: 10% boys, 90% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?		X		
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?		X		
Are the materials various and entertaining?	X			
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?		X		
Do students intervene in the topic choice?		X		

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?		X		
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually				X
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner				X
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4SIA

Number of students: 56% boys, 44% girls

Class organization: three-desk arrangement

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?	X			
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?		X		
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?		X		

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner			X	
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice		X		
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4SIA

Number of students: 60% boys, 40% girls

Class organization: random

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1= acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?	X			
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?	X			
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?	X			
Do students help each other?	X			
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?	X			
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?	X			
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?		X		
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4TUR

Number of students: 15% boys, 85% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)				X
Is the room suitable for cooperation?				X

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)		X		

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?			x	

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 4TUR

Number of students: 5% boys, 95% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?				X

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?		X		
Are the materials various and entertaining?	X			
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?	X			
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?	X			
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?				X
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				X
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?		X		
Does the teacher vary activities?	X			
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 5CAT

Number of students: 77% boys, 33% girls

Class organization: both in pairs and three-desk arrangement

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?				X
Is the room bright?				X
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?		X		
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?		X		
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?				X
Do students look happy with the environment?				X
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?				X
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually			X	
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 5RIM

Number of students: 15% boys, 85% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)		X		
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?	X			
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?		X		
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)	X			

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?		X		
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?		X		
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.		X		
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?		X		
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?		X		
Does the teacher help solve the activities?		X		

0 = never 1 = once 2 = a couple of times 3 = more than twice

SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 5TUR

Number of students: 10% boys, 90% girls

Class organization: both in pairs and three-desk arrangement

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?		X		
Is the room bright?		X		
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?		X		

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
Is the technology employed useful? (Engaging and facilitating)			X	

THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?			X	
Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?			X	
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?	X			

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?			X	
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?			X	
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude?			x	

e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.				
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.		X		
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?				X
Does the teacher encourage participation?				X
Does the teacher vary activities?			X	
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

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SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner		X		
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Class: 5TUR

Number of students: 10% boys, 90% girls

Class organization: desks in pairs

Class atmosphere

0 = no 1 = acceptable 2 = yes 3 = excellent

CLASSROOM SETTING	0	1	2	3
Is the room spacious?			X	
Is the room bright?			X	
Does the room help concentration? (Colourful, clean, temperature)			X	
Is the room suitable for cooperation?			X	

MATERIALS	0	1	2	3
Do all students have the required material?			X	
Are the materials used appropriate to the learning goals?			X	
Are the materials various and entertaining?			X	
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THE STUDENTS	0	1	2	3
Do students appear interested in the lesson?			X	
Do students participate spontaneously in the lesson?		X		

Do students look happy with the environment?			X	
Do students help maintain a positive environment?		X		
Do students help each other?			X	
Do students intervene in case of (linguistic) problems?			X	
Do students intervene in the topic choice?		X		

THE TEACHER	0	1	2	3
Does the teacher look happy with their role?		X		
Is the teacher relaxed and welcoming?		X		
Does the teacher help with a positive attitude? e.g. humour, patient listening, calling students by name etc.			X	
Is the teacher's presence positive? e.g. eye contact, walking around, smiles etc.			X	
Is the teacher's talk appropriate for the students' level?			X	
Does the teacher welcome interventions?			X	
Does the teacher encourage participation?			X	
Does the teacher vary activities?				X
Does the teacher explain the activities successfully?			X	
Does the teacher help solve the activities?			X	

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SOCIALITY	0	1	2	3
Tasks carried out individually		X		
Tasks carried out in couple with known partner	X			
Tasks carried out with unknown/little known partner	X			
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of students' choice		X		
Tasks carried out in a group (3 or more) of teacher's choice	X			

Writing practice

Lesson proposed to students from the first to the third year.



Task: write a story taking inspiration from one of these pictures. (70 words)

During the writing, these tips were projected:

Writing tips

ALWAYS check:

- Word order (Subject-Verb-Object, adjectives, adverbs);
- Subject-verb agreement;
- Verb tenses agreement (*consecutio temporum*);
- Capitalization, spelling and punctuation.
- Sentence linkers and logic.

Final suggestion: translating may help with basic error detection!

Speaking practice

Lesson proposed to classes of fourth and fifth year

ENGLISH CONVERSATION HOUR

Hi! Here are some inputs to discuss. You'll have **15 minutes** to a) answer the questions and b) take notes about what your partner says about these topics.

You should then be able to summarize his/her answers in a maximum of 7 lines which **you** will tell (NOT read) to the class.

REMEMBER TO SPEAK ENGLISH 😊 Have fun!

THE FUTURE A

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student B.)

1. How often do you think about the future?
 2. What do you hope for your own future?
 3. What fears do you have for the future?
 4. Where do you see yourself in ten years from now?
 5. What will the world's biggest problem be in the future?
 6. What does the past teach us about the future?
-

THE FUTURE B

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student A.)

1. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Why?
 2. What comes to mind when you think about your future?
 3. What are your plans for the upcoming years?
 4. When you were younger, what did you think about your future?
 5. What are some major changes the world will see in the future?
 6. Would you like to live 100 years in the future or the past? Why?
-

BEAUTY A

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student B.)

1. Who decides who or what is beautiful?
 2. How often do you think about beauty?
 3. Do you think you have the same concept of beauty as your friends?
 4. How would the world be different if we never considered beauty?
 5. Do you think advertising influences on what is beautiful and what is not?
 7. What do you think of beauty contests?
-

BEAUTY B

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student A.)

1. Do you think the idea of beauty changes?
2. Do you think different cultures have different perceptions of what beauty is?
3. Is beauty important to you?
4. Is there beauty in everything we see and do?
5. Do beautiful people have better lives?
6. What beauty can you see around you now?

FREEDOM A

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student B.)

1. How important is freedom for you?
 2. Do you have as much freedom as you want in your life?
 3. Does your country take away your freedom? In what ways?
 4. Was there a time in your life when you had a lack of freedom?
 5. Do men or women have more freedom in your country?
 6. Can freedom damage a country?
-

FREEDOM B

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student A.)

1. What is freedom?
 2. Would you fight for your freedom?
 3. Do you think many people misunderstand the concept of freedom?
 4. Is everyone in your country equally free?
 5. What would it be like to live where there is little freedom of choice?
 6. Where in the world do you think is the greatest freedom?
-

LOVE A

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student B.)

1. How important is love?
 2. Do you think it is possible to love everyone?
 3. How do people fall in love?
 4. What is your favourite love song and why?
 5. Can love last forever?
 6. Has love changed over the past 10,000 years?
-

LOVE B

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to Student A.)

1. What images spring to mind when you hear the word 'love'?
2. Do you love to live or live to love?
3. How and why do people fall out of love?
4. Do you love yourself? Should you do so?
5. What is the difference between love and being in love?
6. What kind of love is the best love?