

**Master's Dissertation/**

**Treball Fi de Màster**

Màster Universitari en Formació del

Professorat de Secundària: Anglès

**The role of the English conversation assistant in the  
secondary school as an element to improve the  
students' English level regarding oral fluency, socio-  
cultural aspects and lexicon.**

**Is it well defined?**

**How can the said effectiveness be assessed?**

Student: Gemma Arribas Miguel

Tutor: Dr. Maria González-Davies

**June, 2019**

## **Resum**

Aquest estudi té per objectiu avaluar les percepcions dels estudiants, professors i auxiliars de conversa envers la funció que desenvolupen els auxiliars de conversa en l'aprenentatge de les llengües estrangeres, i confirmar la hipòtesi que aquest és positiu. En concret, es pretenen avaluar els aspectes relacionats amb les competències orals, sòcio-culturals i lèxiques. També es pretén detectar si falla algun mecanisme en el canal de comunicació entre el professor de llengua estrangera i l'auxiliar de conversa que dugui a una interpretació incorrecta de les funcions que ha de desenvolupar l'auxiliar de conversa dins del context escolar. S'ha emprat una metodologia basada en la distribució de qüestionaris dissenyats per garantir una triangulació dels participants, i l'aplicació d'una graella d'observació. Els resultats conclouen que les classes amb l'auxiliar de conversa són beneficioses per a l'aprenentatge de la llengua estrangera (anglès). Així mateix, confirmen que, efectivament, s'ha de millorar el canal de comunicació entre el professor de llengua estrangera i l'auxiliar de conversa per tal d'aprofitar millor la presència d'aquest auxiliar en el context escolar.

**Paraules clau:** auxiliar de conversa, aprenentatge de llengües, percepció, beneficis, cultura, competències, funcions, comunicació.

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to inquire into the students', additional language teachers' and conversation assistants' opinions of the role of the conversation assistant in the improvement of the additional language learning. In particular, the aim is to evaluate aspects related to oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexical competences. It is also intended to detect any failure in the communication channel between the additional language teacher and the conversation assistant that may lead to an incorrect performance in the functions that the conversation assistant has to develop. The methodology used is based on the distribution of questionnaires designed for the triangulation of samples, as well as the implementation of an observation grid. The results conclude that the lessons with the conversation assistant are beneficial to the learning of an additional language (English). They also confirm that the communication channel between the foreign language teacher and the conversation assistant should be improved in order to better exploit the presence of the conversation assistant in the school context.

**Key words:** conversation assistant, additional language learning, perceptions, benefits, culture, functions, competences, communication.

## INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Justification .....	2
1.2 Objectives and research questions.....	2
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	3
2.1 The conversation assistant figure. Role and main functions.....	3
2.2 Spanish and Catalan regulations on the CA figure and relevant statistics .....	5
2.2.1 <i>Some relevant statistics</i> .....	6
2.3 Benefits of the CA figure for the schools, the teachers and the students .....	7
2.3.1 <i>Benefits for the teachers and the whole school community</i> .....	7
2.3.2 <i>Benefits for the students</i> .....	7
2.4 The reality in schools regarding the role of the CA .....	9
3. METHODOLOGY .....	12
3.1 Participants and context .....	12
3.2 Instruments and data collection process.....	13
3.2.1 <i>Questionnaires</i> .....	14
3.2.2 <i>Observation grid</i> .....	17
3.2.3 <i>FCA oral exam</i> .....	18
3.3 Instrument administration .....	19
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....	20
4.1 Students' perceptions.....	20
4.2 AL teachers' perceptions .....	25
4.3 CAs' perceptions .....	28
4.4 Observation grid results .....	30
5. FINAL CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	32
5.1 Conclusions .....	32
5.2 Limitations and lines for future research.....	33
6. REFERENCES .....	34
7. ANNEXURE .....	37

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Justification**

The Spanish Education System is giving more and more importance to the additional languages' (AL) reinforcement in the school. One of the most widespread resources, that is gaining relevance year after year, is the English conversation assistant (CA) in both the state and the semi-private schools, and not only in secondary levels but also in primary school and even in pre-school levels. These native speakers can provide not only the students but also the rest of AL teachers in the school with the extra dose needed to boost the linguistic competences in the English language. Hence, more and more schools are calling upon those programs, such as "Home to home", which is one of the most popular recruiting agencies for native English speakers from all over the world interested in teaching in Spain, in order to count with conversation assistants all over the year at the school. At this point, after a few years counting with this component at the schools, it has become a need by some of them to try to measure the effectiveness of the native assistants' lessons. For this reason, the present dissertation will try to shed some light in this regard.

## **1.2 Objectives and research questions**

The goal of this research study is to explore the perceptions of all those groups involved in the heading-learning environment characterised by the presence of the conversation assistant and to analyze the effectiveness of his or her methods concerning some aspects of the students' learning process. In concrete, there are 6 main objectives:

1. To observe and record whether the conversation assistant is teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon effectively.
2. To inquire into the students' opinions of the conversation lessons received as to oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.
3. To explore the English teachers' degree of satisfaction with regard to the conversation assistant's effectiveness as to oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.
4. To analyse the conversation assistant's own perspective on the effectiveness of the lessons taught as to oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.
5. To suggest guidelines for good practices regarding the conversation assistants'

role in teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

6. To effectively measure the fluency improvement of the students linked to the conversation assistant's lessons received by testing them at the beginning of the academic year and after 9 months.

The above objectives lead to the below research questions:

- Is the role of the English conversation assistant in the secondary school an element to improve the students' English level regarding oral fluency?
- Is the role of the English conversation assistant in the secondary school an element to improve the students' English level regarding socio-cultural aspects?
- Is the role of the English conversation assistant in the secondary school an element to improve the students' English level regarding lexicon?
- Is the role of the English conversation assistant well defined and well understood by the conversation assistant and also by the additional language teachers?
- How can the said effectiveness of the CA be assessed?

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 The conversation assistant figure. Role and main functions**

Conversation assistants are teaching assistants who help qualified teachers. Their presence in class seeks to add value to teachers, never to replace them. According to Sharples, Webster, Blatchford (2015), “the expectation should be that the needs of all pupils are addressed, first and foremost, through high quality classroom teaching”. (p. 4). The Language Assistants guide from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture for the year 2018-2019 provides the following definition of the language assistant's duties:

Language assistants are recent college graduates or college students in their last year of school. They do not have the responsibilities of a teacher and cannot teach alone. Thus, a language assistant is only to help the classroom teacher, and his or her efforts are aimed to strengthen the oral skills of the students. Those language assistants assigned to Official Language Schools can work on tasks with small groups of students, under the coordination of the corresponding department. Once

the language assistants are comfortable with the school and the way classes are run, they may, if agreed upon by the teacher, teach a part of the class without help...The language assistant may perform the following tasks under the supervision and with the coordination of the classroom teacher:

- Conversation practice by topic.
- Presentation of the culture and civilization of your country.
- Creation of materials to support students learning as directed by the teachers.
- Make recordings in your own language which the language teachers may use as an example of a native speaker's speech in the target language.
- Collaboration with marking sections of exams, quizzes, evaluations, compositions, or similar exercises.
- If you have time available in your schedule, you may also aid in the training of teachers at the school. (p. 26-27).

The *Guia dels centres acollidors d'auxiliars de conversa 2018-2019* in Catalonia, further includes the following tasks: “reinforce the students' oral skills and serve as a phonetical and grammatical correction model” (p.6). It is relevant to highlight the last two functions mentioned, as they are crucial for the present dissertation.

As to all the above, Caparrós (2010) further distinguishes two different main roles: tasks related to the students and tasks related to the teachers. She summarizes the CAs tasks as follows: a) for those related to the teachers, the CA will help in the language and culture lessons to stimulate the interest of the students, as well as the specialist teacher; b) for those related to the students, the CA will work with reduced groups of students with the aim to develop their communication written and oral skills and to promote the cultural understanding of its country by means of specific conversation practices and culture, customs and traditions teaching.

In short, they must contribute to the improvement of the students' oral abilities as well as to offer a proper approach to the customs and traditions of its country; and at the same time making sure that the motivation of the students is high. To this end, it is highly recommended that the CA undergoes an observation period of 1-2 weeks, with the aim to get

familiar with the level of communication skills the students hold, as well as with the teachers' expectations on the students goals.

In Scobling's (2011) research study, the conversation assistant is also described as a motivational agent for foreign language teaching in the Spanish high schools. The CA presence in the centres is also aimed at improving the students' motivation towards the AL. Similarly, and, according to Caparrós Cabezas, C. (2010):

Gracias a ellos, en la mayoría de las ocasiones, los alumnos y alumnas encuentran el grado de motivación que les falta a la hora de aprender un segundo idioma ya que tienen la posibilidad de tener contacto y una exposición directa con la lengua extranjera a través de ellos y transmiten al resto de la comunidad, la necesidad de aprender lenguas, ofreciendo contextos reales en los que la situación comunicativa no es una mera simulación, obligando al otro interlocutor, ya sean los propios alumnos o alumnas o incluso el profesor o profesora, a realizar un esfuerzo por expresarse y comprender. (p. 40).

## 2.2 Spanish and Catalan regulations on the CA figure and relevant statistics

There are a few official documents that regulate the language assistants' program:

Through the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD), which provides a *Language Assistant's Guide* (<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mecd/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/catalogo/general/educacion/998188/ficha/998188-2018/AACC-18-19-Guia-EN0.pdf>) updated on a yearly basis before each academic course.

The MEC further provides a manual defining the role of the conversation assistant: *Funciones del auxiliary de Conversación para el curso 2018-2019*. (<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/.../02-funciones-auxiliar-2018.pdf>).

Through the Catalan local Government, by means of its Education Department, publishes a Guide for the Hosting Schools, also updated before the starting of each academic year. *Guia dels centres acollidors d'auxiliars de conversa curs 2018-2019*. ([http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/projectes/plurilinguisme/pluri/auxiliars\\_conversa/docum](http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/projectes/plurilinguisme/pluri/auxiliars_conversa/docum)

There is also a collaboration agreement between the MECD and the British Council, signed in 1996 and renewed in 2013. Its purpose is to develop a bilingual program by providing the integrated Hispano-British curriculum throughout schooling. Its objective is to provide a rich model of bilingual education through the curricular integration of two languages and two cultures. It is also expected that the students trained in this program will be able to develop in different cultures and be better prepared to face the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in an increasingly competitive and multilingual Europe.

### 2.2.1 Some relevant statistics

If we review some statistics from the Spanish MECD we find the below data on figure 1, which reveal the dramatic increase of the demand of native conversation assistants in the Spanish education system in the reference period (2008-2018), with an increase of approximately 250%:

CURSO ACADÉMICO		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
AUXILIARES DE CONVER-SACIÓN	Número de países	12	13	16	16	16	16	17	19	19	22	24
	Nº de auxiliares españoles en el extranjero	1.153	1.193	1.054	1.054	1.091	926	937	899	885	826	820
	Nº de auxiliares extranjeros en España	2.412	2.585	4.282	4.282	3.669	3.663	3.930	3.992	5.114	4.672	5.029

Figure 1

Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2018.

In the last ten years, also the number of countries participating in the program has doubled. According to the data, it is noted that the greatest increase in foreign conversation assistants has occurred in the last three years, being a clear exponent of the linguistic policies adopted by all the different regional governments of Spain, in which the main preference for bilingual and multilingual programs in the English language.



## **2.3 Benefits of the CA figure for the schools, the teachers and the students**

### *2.3.1 Benefits for the teachers and the whole school community*

The effective benefits for the AL teachers when enjoying the presence of a CA are numerous: on the one hand, they will have more reduced groups and, thus, will be able to offer a more personalized teaching. On the other hand, they will be able to organize the lessons in a way that what has been taught in the main AL class can be reinforced through the CA lessons. Finally, they will enjoy the opportunity to improve their AL level, mainly the oral fluency and the lexicon, thanks to the daily relationship with the CA. Gisbert (2009) further defined the conversation assistants as: “native speakers that realize a crucial function by backing the teachers, as they create culture and language activities jointly that represent an important support for our specialists” (p. 35).

From the school community stand point, thanks to CAs, schools will experience an enrichment in numerous fields: cultural, communicative and personal, as they will be promoting a variety of values such as inclusion, tolerance and adaptation to change.

Buckingham (2018), however, through her personal observations as a conversation assistant in a school, initially, and, later, as a professional researcher, concluded the following in an article published by the *Universidad Pontificia de Comillas*:

It was found that CAs perceived deficiencies in their training despite feelings of enthusiasm and usefulness when taking on responsibilities. CAs reported discrepancies between their training and their duties which resulted in them feeling ill-prepared. Therefore, it is recommended that bilingual programs examine the role of the CA and create a comprehensive training plan that efficiently prepares the diverse body of CAs. (p.225).

### *2.3.2 Benefits for the students*

Unfortunately there is not much research completed on the field of conversation assistants. The study conducted by Ortega (2000) was the first one to focus from a research point of view the numerous advantages of using language assistants in AL teaching and learning. It highlights the positive aspects of an environment in which spoken interaction is maintained

regularly between the student and the language assistant. Ortega (2000) offers a very detailed account of all the different factors implicit in the educational environment created by foreign CAs that could contribute to facilitate the students' development of their oral competences in AL, especially in which concerns their willingness to speak.

The benefits for students that count with a CA at the school are multiple: they offer cultural richness and a linguistic accuracy that can be applied to phonetics, lexicon or oral fluency, among others. In what regards the students' confidence, Ortega (2000)'s research findings revealed that assistants are able to boost it due to the fact that generally their age is close to that of the students, meaning pupils will show more empathy and willingness to share their experiences. The age would also be important in terms of selection of topics to motivate the students, demonstrated at Ortega (2000) through her education research based on open questionnaires. Besides, the split into smaller groups when attending lessons with the CA will be translated into higher learning and, especially, speaking opportunities.

Among the numerous benefits is the fact that the CA is not going to grade the students, what will favour a more relaxed environment and will have a positive impact on pupils' fluency during lessons, fact that opposes to the regular low performance of the students in the AL lessons due to the presence of the AL teacher (Ortega 2000). However, students should be aware of the fact that their progress in the foreign language is controlled during their work in reduced groups (that is why assistants could take notes during sessions or use some measurement tool to value their merits).

Other authors, like Caparrós, 2010, have done research on the benefits of the CA for the students arguing that:

It is thanks to them that, in the majority of cases, students find the motivation degree that is needed to learn a second language, as they (the students) have the chance to be directly exposed to the said foreign language through the conversation assistant's figure. (p. 40).

And so have other entities, as the European Commission, which highlighted in 2001 the following:

It is very important that the students are in contact with the foreign language they are learning, and that they have several opportunities to use it in real life situations. The primary goal of teaching a foreign language is to provide the students with the tools to communicate in a foreign language. (p.19).

After Ortega (2000), Scobling (2011) conducted a further study on the work of language assistants, resulting in the following conclusions: a) language assistants are important and required in many cases, becoming indispensable depending on specific conditions and, b) three specific factors that contribute to an increase in the level of students' motivation were identified: activity typology developed, classroom organisation and structure, and behaviour and attitude of language assistants (ideally, it should be open-minded, motivating and being able to gain respect from students).

Despite the fact that different pieces of research have reflected the benefits of language assistants in students, recent studies have proven that there is a strong need of redefining the ideal role of language assistants in Spanish bilingual schools, due to their lack of training and consistency in their teaching practices. Related to that, Buckingham and Sánchez (2016) insist on the fact that clearer communication should take place among all educative members.

#### **2.4 The reality in schools regarding the role of the CA**

After having defined the role, functions and responsibilities of the conversation assistant, which seems to be pretty accurate, it is crucial to review the studies, articles, dissertations, and any type of academic works conducted in this regard to check whether the theory is adequately applied in the practice and, if so, to verify whether this is done correctly.

And, according to a few of them, in the reality of the classrooms it is perceived that the assistants of conversation cannot always answer these expectations for different reasons, among which it is worth highlighting the following:

A. Pedagogical training along with the personality, attitude, motivation and previous experience of the assistants of conversation are factors that determine their work in the

bilingual teaching. Thus, the qualities that the linguistic collaborators must possess in order to perform their work better and to be successful in the bilingual programs are, among others: social skills and to be an open and communicative person, to be responsible and to feel like To learn and to work as well as to enjoy education and to have pedagogical preparation (Sánchez-Torres, 2014).

B. The lack of training in education is one of the drawbacks of the bilingual programmes expressed by Liu (2008), Scobling (2011) and Sánchez-Torres (2014). Scobling (2011) states: "if the assistant lacks training and support, he will not know very well how to develop his teaching task and be discouraged and lose interest in teaching and motivating students." (p. 35). It should not be forgotten, as included in the MEC (2018) *Language Assistant Guide course 2018-2019*, that in order to access a conversation assistant, no degree is required for the field of teaching.

Hence, there seems to be a misunderstanding of the CA's role. Buckingham, L.R. (2018) concluded that: "despite the fact that the role of the CA seems rather straight-forward in the handbooks described by the MEC, previous studies suggest that it is often misinterpreted by both CA's and AL teachers". Hibler (2010) found that 40% of the CAs surveyed were unsure of their role; 60% were only somewhat sure of their role and no one was completely sure of it. At the same time, 100% of the teachers surveyed responded that they had discussed their expectations with the CA. Hibler also recognized that the CAs seemed to depend highly on the teacher to designate the roles in the classroom and until this was done and they were unsure of what to do. This may seem very obvious, but it is a basic principle: functions have to be well defined to ensure a positive collaboration between CAs and teachers. During my trainee program in the school that is being analyzed, I have experienced several times a certain misunderstanding between the CA and the AL teachers with regards to the content of the CA class: while one of the AL teachers gives total freedom to the CA to prepare the sessions with the students, the other AL teacher expects the CA to strictly follow the book contents and to apply them in the oral sessions. This creates a confusion to the CA which, on the first scenario, gets sometimes lost and frustrated as she gets off resources after a few weeks of inventing dynamics and games, and on the second scenario finds a limitation to her creativity as she has to observe the book while seeing how the students get bored of the same topic seen in class.

Ortega Cebreros (2003) also states that: the MEC is not very specific about the role of the

conversation assistant, or about the degree of implication of the mentor in the CAs lessons content. CAs have often reported being left alone to teach groups of students, whether a small group or the entire class-group (Hibler, 2010; Ortega Cebreros, 2003; Scobling, 2011; Tobin and Abello-Contesse, 2012, cited in Ortega Cebreros). While this was prohibited in the 2014-2015 handbook published by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture (MECD), there were several ambiguities that could lead to confusion regarding the extension of the CA's duties. The current guide includes a specific mention of allowing the CA to teach or supervise small groups of students (max. 6 students) without the presence of a teacher.

Finally, in order to illustrate the extent of the CAs' task misinterpretation, or even the CAs misuse, I have considered it useful to attach the below table from the study carried out by Lova Mellado (2017):

Functions of the conversation assistant:

	Centros públicos		Centros privados		Total	
	Frecuencia	%	Frecuencia	%	Frecuencia	%
Lingüística	61	100	8	100	69	100
Didáctica: repaso	15	25	2	25	17	25
Didáctica: docencia	10	17	4	50	14	20
Cultural	19	31	2	25	21	30
Lúdica	9	15	1	13	10	15
Evaluación	8	13			8	12
Total	61	100	8	100	69	100

Source: Lova Mellado (2017)

Figure 2

From the above we can read that 45% of teachers enunciate the didactic function played by the assistants of conversation in the sessions in which they participate. However, differences are seen between the tasks given to the CAs. 25% of the educators, without differences between types of centres, declare to assign the CAs tasks related to the **review of the academic contents** addressed in previous sessions. The teachers argue to give these activities to the CAs as it can be used as an excuse to establish an oral conversation with the students on the knowledge learned. While 20% of teachers, with a higher percentage (50%) in semi-private centres, it shows to assign the CAs the direct teaching of some academic contents under its supervision. Nearly one-third of educators (30%) assign to the CAs tasks

related to the teaching of the culture and the civilization of his country.

The CAs mainly carry out activities on the festivities celebrated in Spain of British or American origin and discuss with the children the origin of these festivities. To a lesser extent, the CAs work aspects of the civilization of their country 15% of the teachers say that the CAs participate in the sessions carrying out recreational activities with the students, initial and final games in the middle and end of the didactic unit. 13% of teachers in public schools affirm to assign to the CAs **tasks of correction of some activities and the evaluation of the oral skills of the students.**

Some of the abovementioned tasks are strictly prohibited in the handbook provided by the Spanish MEC. The percentage of tasks erroneously allocated to CAs we see increases notably in semi-private schools. Hence the importance of this particular study to try to evaluate the effectiveness of the conversation assistant in the aspects that are mainly of his or her utmost concern: oral fluency, lexicon and socio-economic aspects improvement.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The method used for the present study corresponds to a pragmatic approach, as it combines both qualitative and quantitative data, being a mixed-method, but highlighting that most of the collected data are quantitative.

#### **3.1 Participants and context**

The research has been conducted in a semi-private school in the outskirts of Barcelona that covers all levels of education from 4 years old to 17-18 years old, at Escola Mestral, in Sant Feliu de Llobregat. This is the centre where I have completed my 210h training, as part of the *Màster en Formació del Professorat: Anglès*. The participants are split in three types of subjects: conversation assistants, students, and teachers of AL (English). It is important to specify that the students surveyed have already had past experiences with English conversation assistants throughout their studies for at least 6 years. Besides, the AL teachers count with a wide experience of years working with CA's. To make an analysis as objective as possible, the different actors have been asked to reflect on their different experiences. The selection of the sample that has been handled for data collection has been configured as follows:

-63 students belonging to two classes in which the CA worked: 31 students from 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO (Spanish acronym for compulsory secondary school ) and 32 students from 1<sup>st</sup> of Batxillerat (Spanish Baccalaureate). The number of hours each group works with the language assistant is 30 minutes a week, in small groups of 5 or 6 students at a time.

-3 AL teachers who teach English as a second foreign language, from which two in secondary level and the other two in primary and pre-school levels. All of them have had the opportunity to work with conversation assistants previously throughout their teaching task.

-2 English conversation assistants who work or have worked in the past in different semi-private centres of Catalonia. Among them, 4 will be our main reference, the ones currently working in the school that is been researched (2) and the ones that worked there on the previous year (2). It is important to highlight the role of the CAs in this particular school as they are 100% focused on the oral conversation lessons. This means that they do not participate in the regular lessons with the presence of the AL teacher, but rather take off the class small groups of 5 students on a weekly basis and organize completely separate lessons purely based on the oral practice.

### **3.2 Instruments and data collection process**

For the configuration of this research, three types of instruments have been prepared with the aim of providing an answer to the objectives. The type of data considered is quantitative and qualitative, as they were mainly collected through questionnaires that include closed and open items. Some brief reports have been written after analysing data in a systematic way, trying to find frequencies of answers and drawing similarities and differences between the results given by the CA, the AL teachers and the students. Hence, a very similar questionnaire, based on the descriptors identified in the theoretical framework, was administered to the three types of participants, with the goal of collecting as many information as possible about the teaching and learning process. There were 10 closed items and 1 open item in each questionnaire. The open item was constituted by an open question (nº 11) formulated in order to encourage the participants of this study to add further comments about the CA work. The first 10 items aimed at recruiting the participants' perceptions on the basis of a scale of five points (ordered-category items), that allow respondents to register their response on a graded continuum (Likert scale):

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree

3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

A second instrument has been designed in order to try to give answer to other objectives of this research study, consisting on an observation grid filled by myself during the observation of 12 sessions of CA's lessons. In this case, the scale basis has been of three points:

1. Never
2. Occasionally
3. Often

A third instrument has been prepared, but not implemented, consisting on a validated FCA oral exam.

### *3.2.1 Questionnaires*

The main purpose of the questionnaires administered is to give answer to objectives 2,3 and 4. The questionnaires include clear instructions and combine closed and open-ended questions (mainly the possibility to add a personal comment). The items that appear in the questionnaire have been grouped and placed consecutively (e.g. the items related to the lexicon improvement of the students correspond to questions number 6 and 7 in the questionnaire), and similarly with the rest of items.

In order to guarantee the reliability and validity of the instruments, considering the different research objectives and the age of the students, items were clearly explained and the questionnaires were administered in Spanish, in order to reduce possibilities of misunderstanding. Questionnaires were anonymous and picked up by myself. They were administered at the end of my 4-month period practicum, April 2019, coinciding with the first CA working term in the school.

Three types of questionnaires were designed including similar items: one for the students, one for the teachers, and another one for the CAs, in order to meet an appropriate data triangulation, obtaining information from the three implicated parties. Besides, the statements presented in the questionnaires are very similar as it is important to check the



answers' coincidence. The three questionnaires used in this research appear presented below. Further examples of answered questionnaires can be found in the Annexure.

**CUESTIONARIO DE ALUMNOS**

**CURSO:**

**Instrucciones:**

El siguiente cuestionario es anónimo. Te pedimos que reflexiones sobre las clases de conversación con la asistenta y cómo crees que te ayudan a mejorar tu competencia comunicativa en esta lengua. Marca la puntuación que más se adecue a tus pensamientos con una X.

- 1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
- 2. En desacuerdo
- 3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- 4. De acuerdo
- 5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Cuestionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Percibo una mejora en mi pronunciación gracias al auxiliar.					
2. Experimento una mejora en la fluidez (velocidad) oral al argumentar.					
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar me apetece más hablar en inglés durante sus clases.					
4. Estoy aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.					
5. Estoy aprendiendo peculiaridades de la vida cotidiana de un nativo gracias Al auxiliar.					
6. Noto que mi vocabulario está haciéndose más rico gracias a las clases con el auxiliar.					
7. Me esfuerzo por utilizar el vocabulario nuevo aprendido en las clases de conversación con el auxiliar.					
8. La actividad realizada en las clases con la auxiliar está relacionada con lo visto en clase de inglés.					
9. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar es divertida y a la vez aprendo.					
10. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar me ayuda a mejorar mi competencia Comunicativa.					
11. En general, ¿dirías que contar con un auxiliar de conversación nativo/a te supone un beneficio?					
11. Comentarios personales:					

Figure 3

## CUESTIONARIO A PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

### Instrucciones:

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Cuestionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Noto una mejora en la pronunciación de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.					
2. Los alumnos han experimentado una mejora en la fluidez al argumentar.					
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar los alumnos hablan más en mis clases.					
4. Los alumnos están aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.					
5. Los alumnos muestran interés por la personalidad y peculiaridades de un nativo.					
6. Noto una mejora en el bagaje léxico de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.					
7. Los alumnos se esfuerzan por poner en práctica el nuevo léxico aprendido.					
8. El auxiliar de conversación prepara las actividades de clase sin mi ayuda.					
9. El auxiliar de conversación y yo preparamos las clases juntos.					
10. Yo preparo las clases del auxiliar de conversación.					
11. Me interesa que las clases del auxiliar de conversación sigan la programación de clase.					
12. Prefiero que el auxiliar tenga libertad para diseñar las actividades.					
13. En general, ¿consideras que la figura del auxiliar representa un beneficio para el alumno?					
14. Alguna vez has recibido alguna charla, jornada u orientación sobre como debes tratar al auxiliar de conversación?					
15. Comentarios:					

Figure 4

## CUESTIONARIO A AUXILIARES DE CONVERSACIÓN DE INGLÉS

### Instructions:

1. Totally disagree
2. Disagree
3. Not agree, not disagree
4. Agree
5. Totally agree

Questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can perceive an improvement in the students' pronunciation.					
2. I can perceive an improvement in the students' oral fluency.					
3. The students speak more and more in my lessons.					
4. The students show an interest at my country's customs and traditions.					
5. The students show an interest at my personal life and customs.					
6. The students are increasing their lexicon.					
7. The students try to use the new vocabulary when they have the chance.					
8. I prepare my lessons by myself.					
9. Both the English teacher and I prepare the lessons.					
10. The English teacher prepares my lessons and I only execute them.					
11. My lessons follow and complement the regular English class syllabus.					
12. My lessons differ from the regular English classes and I organize them Freely.					
13. Comments:					

Figure 5

### 3.2.2 Observation grid

With the aim to find answers to objectives 1 and 5, a mixed method observation grid has been implemented. 12 conversation lessons of 5-6 students each have been observed, half of them from 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO and the other half from 1<sup>st</sup> Batxillerat. Out of the 12 observations, 6 took place at the beginning of my trainee program, in January 2019, when the CA had just arrived to the high school, and the remaining 6 at the end of it, end of April 2019, what implies a 4-month difference period. This fact is very relevant as it has been possible to see the evolution of the CA throughout all the period in terms of: intervention during the

sessions (oral corrections, control of students' speaking turns, management of the motivation level of the students) and lessons preparation methodology (topic selection, type of activities chosen, customs and traditions introduction, etc.). Below is a sample of the grid:

OBSERVATION GRID

**DATE:**

**GROUP:**

**No OF STUDENTS:**

<b>Intervention of the Conversation Assistant during the sessions</b>		<b>Often</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>
1	CA corrects the vocabulary mistakes of the students			
2	CA corrects the phonetics of the students			
3	CA explains personal situations to satisfy the students' Curiosity			
4	CA allows students to speak in their mother tongue			
5	CA encourages the shy students to speak			
6	CA keeps a good balance of intervention time among students			
7	CA changes the activity if the motivation of students is low			

<b>Design and preparation of the class/activity (30 min)</b>		<b>Often</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>
8	Activity is designed by the CA alone			
9	Activity is proposed by the AL teacher			
10	Activity is mainly mechanical			
11	Activity is meaningful for the students			
12	Activity has to do with what has been seen in the regular English class			
13	Activity is mainly designed to focus on the oral fluency			
14	Activity includes customs and traditions from the CA's country			
15	Comments:			

Figure 6

### 3.2.3 FCA oral exam

A third instrument had been prepared to give answer to objective number 6 “to effectively measure the fluency improvement of the students linked to the conversation assistant's lessons received”. For that purpose, an official FCA test provided by the school and, so, a validated test, was to be passed to the students at the beginning of the academic course, and at the end of it, to compare the student's fluency improvement during the 9-month presence of the CA. It was finally not possible to implement the abovementioned exam, fact that will be duly explained in the limitations of the study. A copy of the validated FCA test is found in the Annexure.

The relevance of this instrument lays in the fact that it is possible to isolate one of the items, the oral fluency, and measure it in a purely quantitative way, avoiding any perceptions or subjectivisms. Precisely because of this it has a strong value, but timings have to be respected, and I considered that a 4-month period was not enough time to notice a significant improvement (if any), to extract any relevant conclusions.

### **3.3 Instrument administration**

The questionnaires were administered at the end of the second term of the academic year 2018-2019. To be specific, at the end of April, which meant that students had been working with the language assistant for a complete term during that academic year (language assistants start to work in Spain in the month of October, but due to visa problems this particular CA started in January).

The students did not present any questions when they were given the questionnaires due to the fact that instructions were extremely clear. These instructions were not only written in the questionnaire sheets but also orally explained by myself, who administered the questionnaires. Such questionnaires were administered by me in order to see students' reactions and to allow that instructions were given by the same person. This is why the centre chosen to conduct the research was the Escola Mestral, since this is the place where I conducted my practicum and I could personally give instructions to all the groups in which questionnaires were administered.

The questionnaires were answered in class and the time that students took to answer them was approximately five to ten minutes. The questionnaires were anonymous and students knew that the results provided were not going to affect their foreign language marks.

The observation grid was filled in during the sessions by me, with the knowledge of the students and the CA. At the end of each observation, a short interview/discussion was taking place with the CA to comment on the main points observed and its results. It is noticeable the fact that the CA was very much interested in such results and was observing the proposed improvements in the following sessions, achieving, thus, an excellence in the last period.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section aims at presenting and discussing the results of this research in the following order: 1, AL teachers' perceptions; 2, students' perceptions; 3, CA's perceptions; 4, observation grid (my personal perception on the CA lessons). Results are presented according to the objectives of the current research. Each objective is reflected into some item in the given questionnaires, although there are slight differences between the students' questionnaire and those of the CAs and the AL teachers. The observation grid items differ a bit more from the questionnaires', mainly because the whole observation grid is aimed at answering to just objectives 1 and 5: 1, to observe and record whether the conversation assistant is teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon effectively and 2, to suggest guidelines for good practices regarding the conversation assistants' role in teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

Regarding the questionnaires, with the aim of presenting meaningful results, the percentage of vote of each of the values in the Likert scale has been calculated, as well as the mean of the values, followed by a brief report for each group of similar items, as it is presented below. A simple graphic has been presented for each group of items. As for the observation grid, a similar result presentation has been done, with the only difference of the scale. In the Annexure, examples of answered questionnaires can be found.

### 4.1 Students' perceptions

#### a) Research objective 2: Oral fluency competence

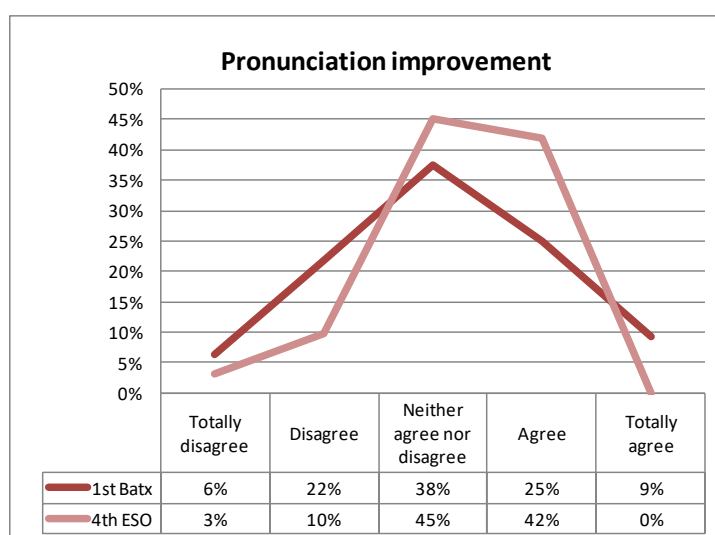


Figure 7

- Item 1: *Percibo una mejora en mi pronunciación gracias al auxiliar*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,09

MEAN 4th ESO: 3,25

- Item 2: *Experimento una mejora en la fluidez oral al argumentar*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,31

MEAN 4th ESO: 3,41

- Item 3: *Siento que gracias al auxiliar me apetece más hablar en inglés durante sus clases*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,53

MEAN 4th ESO: 4,01

There are no relevant comments to make as to the above data, the totality of them presenting a mean above 3, which implies that all the students see the CA as a positive factor for their oral fluency improvement. The results of item 3 in the 4th of ESO group above 4 are, probably, due to the fact that the whole group of students has established an unusual great connection with the CA and so they have used their 30-min weekly session very well. Additionally, the majority of students in 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO are preparing their CFA official exam, so they probably made bigger efforts as they are passing the oral exam shortly.

b) Research objective 2: Socio-cultural aspects

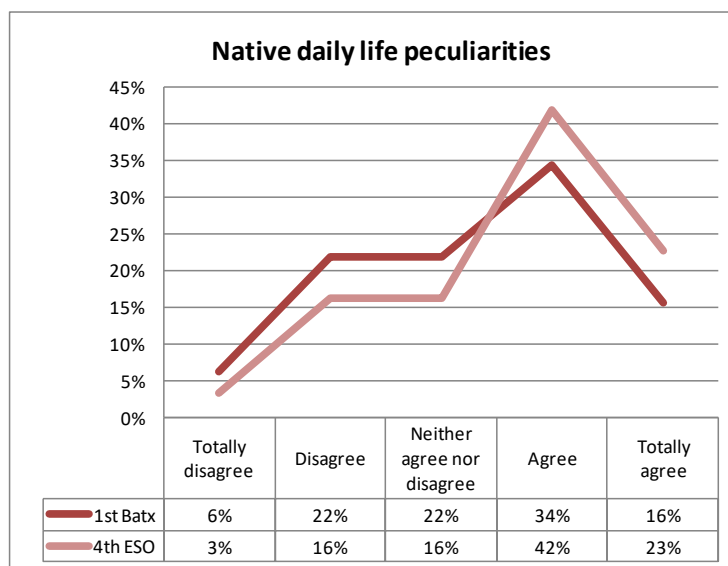


Figure 8

- Item 4: *Estoy aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,46  
 MEAN 4th ESO: 3,71

- Item 5: *Estoy aprendiendo peculiaridades de la vida cotidiana de un nativo gracias al auxiliar.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,31  
 MEAN 4th ESO: 3,64

The above data are, in general terms, same as the values of items 1 and 2. The fact that the CA is American has been determinant in the interest and motivation of the students towards the American customs and traditions. Also the Easter period, in which the CA planned fun activities related to egg hiding/hunting, has raised their motivation.

c) Research objective 2: Lexicon acquisition

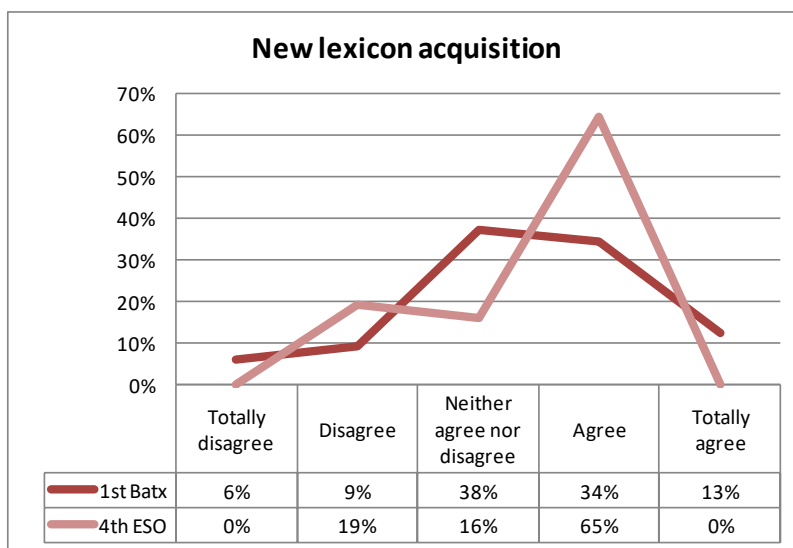


Figure 9

- Item 6: *Noto que mi vocabulario está haciéndose más rico gracias a las clases con el auxiliar.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,37  
 MEAN 4th ESO: 3,45

- Item 7: *Me esfuerzo por utilizar el vocabulario nuevo aprendido en las clases de conversación con el auxiliar.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,03  
 MEAN 4th ESO: 3,45



The results for item 6 are, again, satisfactory, always above 3. The students are aware of their lexicon enrichment, especially those of 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO. Regarding item 7, though, the values are consistent with item 6 results, what implies that the students are making the effort to interiorize what they learnt and, thus, use the new lexicon.

- d) Research objective 5: to suggest guidelines for good practices regarding the conversation assistants' role in teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

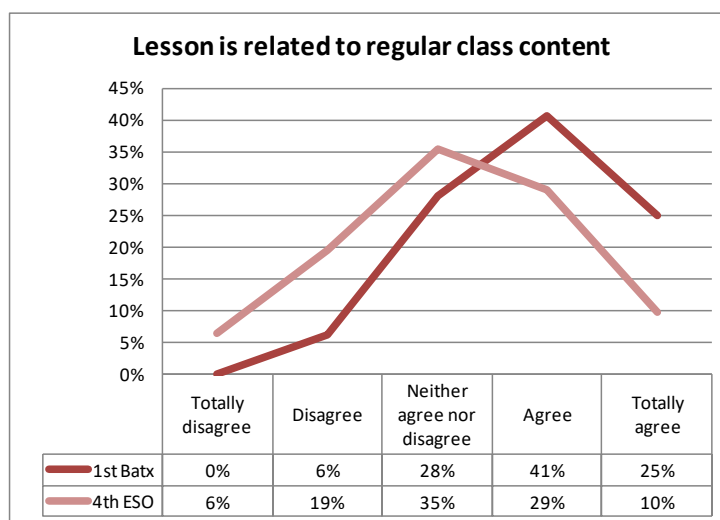


Figure 10

- Item 8: *La actividad realizada en las clases con la auxiliar está relacionada con lo visto en clase de inglés.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,84

MEAN 4th ESO: 3,16

- Item 9: *La actividad realizada con la auxiliar es divertida y a la vez aprendo.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 4,43

MEAN 4th ESO: 4,48

The important difference (almost 1 point out of 5) in the results of item 8 among the different groups may probably be due to the fact that the 1<sup>st</sup> of Batxillerat lessons with the CA were a bit more based on the book and what they had learnt in class, while the lessons with 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO were mostly based on debates and games, not related to the conventional lessons. Regarding item 9, the mean is extremely good. Both groups of students acknowledge to have fun and to learn.

- e) Research objective 2: to inquire into the students' opinions of the conversation lessons received as to oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

-Item 10: *La actividad realizada con la auxiliar me ayuda a mejorar mi competencia comunicativa.*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 3,5  
MEAN 4th ESO: 3,93

-Item 11: *En general, ¿dirías que contar con un auxiliar de conversación nativo/a te supone un beneficio?*

MEAN 1st Batxillerat: 4,25  
MEAN 4th ESO: 4,88

In general terms, the last two items, that were more general, have obtained a good result. It is worth noting the difference of mean between the two groups in item 11, as it is significant. The fact that 1<sup>st</sup> of Batxillerat have left the ESO behind and started the baccalaureate period, and also the fact that the vast majority of them had obtained the FCA certificate the previous year, may lead them to think that the presence of the CA is good, but not absolutely necessary. It is worth mentioning some of the “non-positive” comments made by this group:

- “Creo que en nuestro caso no ha sido así y ayudaría que nos corrigiera pronunciación y gramática, no me ha sido útil”.
- “Estic d'acord amb que posin una persona nadiua, però no m'ajuda molt, potser perquè tinc un bon nivel”.
- “Pienso que tener un auxiliar de conversación es muy beneficioso, pero en mi caso pienso que han sido muy pocas clases y tiempo en general para experimentar este beneficio”.
- “Está bien pero podríamos aprender más”.
- “No veo que sea una cosa necesaria, pero mejor esto que no hacer nada”.
- “Las clases son divertidas pero no aprendo mucho”.

There were many other positive comments from this group, and especially from 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO students, but the negative ones from 1<sup>st</sup> of Batxillerat definitely contributed to reduce the mean.

Here are some relevant comments from the 4<sup>th</sup> of ESO group:

- “Es muy agradable y se aprende con ella”.
- “M’ha agradat molt...m’ha ajudat molt en l’expressió oral...”.
- “She is very cheerful and it is interesting talking with her”.
- “Valoro positivamente la experiencia...aunque mi pronunciación y mi habilidad son ya muy altos. Por eso no he notado tanta mejora en estos dos aspectos”.

I would highlight the fact that several students from both groups made comments stating that their level is so high that they have not noticed any special improvement. These students have passed the FCA exam successfully, and they believe they have reached the ceiling with English. I personally spoke to them, as this topic was recurrent, to let them know that counting with a native speaker is always beneficiary, even for the AL teachers who are proficient in English!

#### **4.2 AL teachers’ perceptions**

The group of teachers who completed the questionnaires (3 teachers, 2 of them from primary education and 1 of them from secondary education) chose a wide variety of options in the Likert scale, what was a surprising fact, as results closer to value 5 were expected.

In order to give a general but clear idea of the results, the mean has not been calculated for this instrument. It has been deemed more appropriate to spreadsheet graphic showing the dispersion of the answers instead:

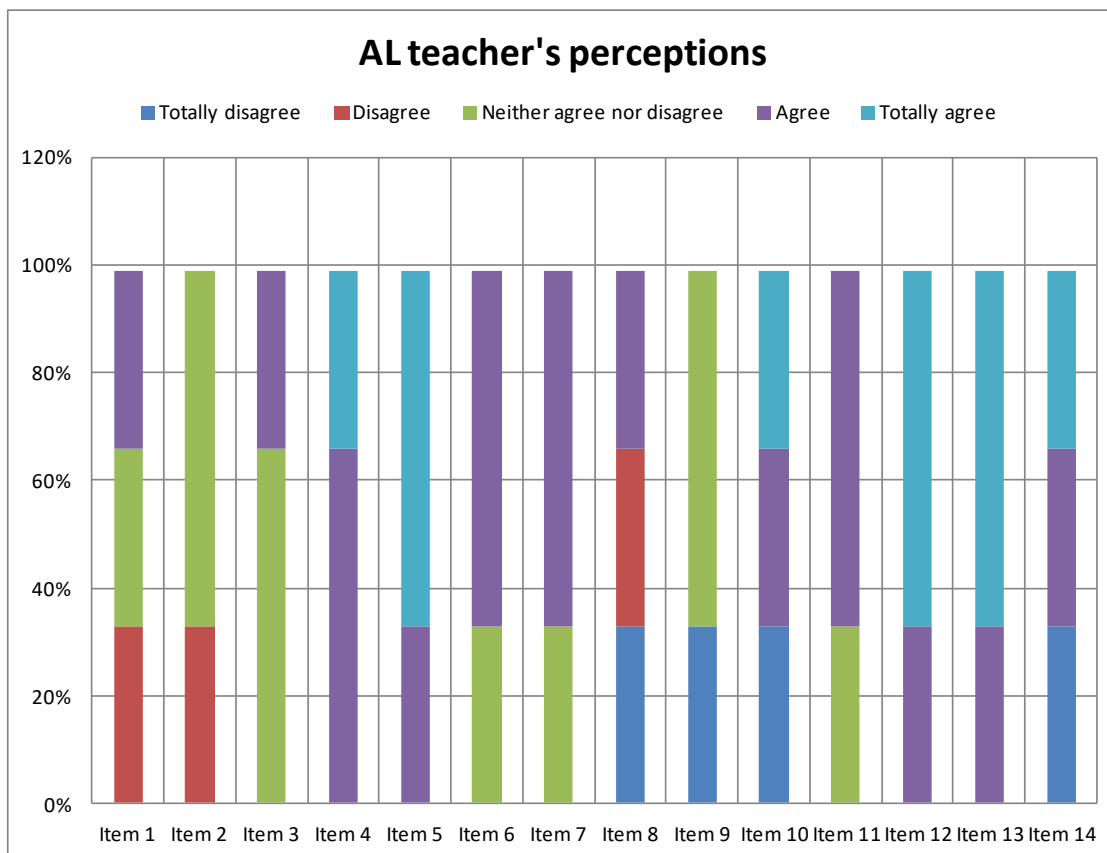


Figure 11

Bearing in mind the total number of participants (only 3), the relevant dispersion of some of the items shown in the graphics implies that the AL teachers have a division of opinion regarding the different items, and it is important to analyze the reason. In fact, none of the 3 AL teachers coincided in their answers in any of the 14 items.

a) Research objective 2: Oral fluency competence

Items 1 to 3, related to the oral fluency, do not present a relevant dispersion, although the answers vary from values 2 to 4, which are just average compared to other studies in which AL teachers tend to answer 5 in the Likert scale systematically. Hence, the AL teachers consider that there is an average improvement in the oral fluency.

b) Research objective 2: Socio-cultural aspects

The same happens with items 4 and 5, related to the student's interest in the customs and traditions of the CA and his or her personal life. In this case, though, the 3 AL's have considered it more relevant, as they have marked 4 and 5 mainly, raising the values mean.

c) Research objective 2: Lexicon acquisition

And similarly with items 6 and 7, related to lexicon. There is a coincidence in the answers of the 3 ALs, though, again, they have placed the mean closer to 3.

d) Research objective 5: to suggest guidelines for good practices regarding the conversation assistants' role in teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

The real dispersion starts from item 8 onwards. Items 8, 9 and 10 are entirely related to the organization of the CA's lessons and the implication of the AL teachers.

- Item 8: *El auxiliar de conversación prepara las actividades de clase sin mi ayuda.*

When they have been asked for item 8, some teachers have marked values 1 and 2, while some other has marked the value 5. The reason for such dispersion is that there are 2 different CAs: one for primary and one for secondary and they have very different ways to work and understand their role. While one of the them is autonomous and self-confident, totally able to design his or her own lessons, the other CA is less experienced and less autonomous, hence the AL teachers have to prepare the lessons for him/her.

- Item 10: *Yo preparo las clases del auxiliar de conversación.*

The results here are exactly the same as in the above item, but on the opposite extreme. And similarly happens with item 9. Regarding items 11 and 12, also related to the research objective 5, the results are more homogeneous:

- Item 11: *Me interesa que las clases del auxiliar de conversación sigan la programación de clase.*

- Item 12: *Prefiero que el auxiliar tenga libertad para diseñar las actividades.*

In both cases, AL teachers prefer that the CA lessons are related with what has been seen in the regular English lessons, and also they prefer the CA to have freedom and autonomy for the design of the lessons.

Regarding the last item,

- Item 13: *En general, ¿consideras que la figura del auxiliar representa un beneficio para el alumno?*

MEAN: 4,66

There is an agreement among the 3 teachers, marking this item with a mean that is close to 5 in the Likert scale, reason why the mean has been shown for this particular item. This implies that, despite the drawbacks and difficulties for dealing with the different CAs, they are satisfied and consider this service very important and useful for the students.

Finally, another difference in opinions can be observed for item 14:

- Item 14: *Alguna vez has recibido alguna charla, jornada u orientación sobre cómo debes tratar al auxiliar de conversación?*

While 2 of the teachers marked 4 and 5, one of them marked 1. From the comments they made at the end of the questionnaire, it is explained that they only receive a “guide”, the official guide about the CAs roles and functions that is published by the MEC. For some of the teachers this is enough, while for the third one this is insufficient, being the reason for having marked the value 1 to this item. Again, a difference of perspective is shown for the same item, what suggests that there may be something to be changed in this regard.

The full comments from the 3 AL teachers can be found in the Annexure.

### **4.3 CAs' perceptions**

The group of the conversation assistants who completed the questionnaires (2) chose a wide variety of options in the Likert scale, a surprising fact as results closer to 5 were, again, expected as in other similar studies carried out on this regard.

#### **a) Research objective 2: Oral fluency competence**

-Item 1: *I can perceive and improvement in the students' pronunciation.*

-Item 2: *I can perceive an improvement in the students' oral fluency.*

-Item 3: *The students speak more and more in my lessons.*

There are no relevant comments to make as to the above data, the totality of them presenting a mean above 3. There is only one result to highlight, related to item 3, where the CA for primary education has marked 5 in the Likert scale. This is probably due to two reasons: 1) this CA has accompanied the class from September, having the students had more time to experience an improvement and, 2) the small kids (aged 4 to 10 years old) absorb the information at a different

pace, normally higher, what makes its improvement even more noticeable.

b) Research objective 2: Socio-cultural aspects

- Item 4: *The students show an interest at my country's customs and traditions.*

The only relevant result about the socio-cultural aspects is the fact that the CA for the primary education has given a low value, whilst the CA for secondary has high value. This is understandable, as the older students are more interested in the socio-cultural aspects than the kids.

c) Research objective 2: Lexicon acquisition

No relevant differences in the 2 items related to lexicon.

d) Research objective 5: to suggest guidelines for good practices regarding the conversation assistants' role in teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon.

- Item 10: *The English teacher prepares my lessons and I only execute them.*
- Item 11: *My lessons follow and complement the regular English class syllabus.*

The perceptions of the 2 CAs are crucial and significant for the above two items, and they perfectly match with the results found for the same questions made to the AL teachers. The CA that was showing less initiative and educational practice, has marked a totally opposite value in the Likert scale than the CA which was showing autonomy and self-confidence.

Finally, the comments made by the CAs at the end of the questionnaire confirm the different research conducted by Lova Mellado (2017), Hibler (2010) and Ortega Cebreros (2003) when they stated that there is a misunderstanding in the role of the CAs and, especially, when they affirm that there is a lack of communication between the CAs and the AL teachers. The below comment was made by the more experienced and autonomous CA:

I do find it difficult to follow and complement the regular English class syllabus when I am not able to be in class with them and know exactly what they are doing and also they tend to become less responsive when the speaking sessions

are too in line with what they are doing in their English classes.

The complete comments from the CAs can be found in the Annexure.

#### 4.4 Observation grid results

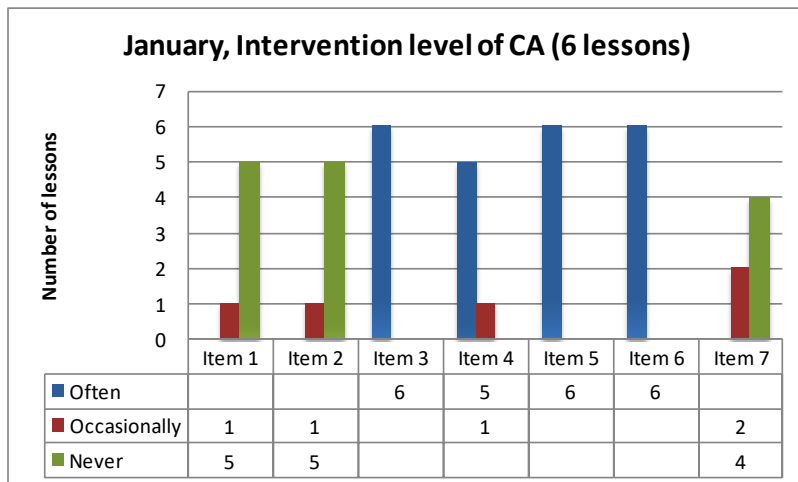


Figure 12

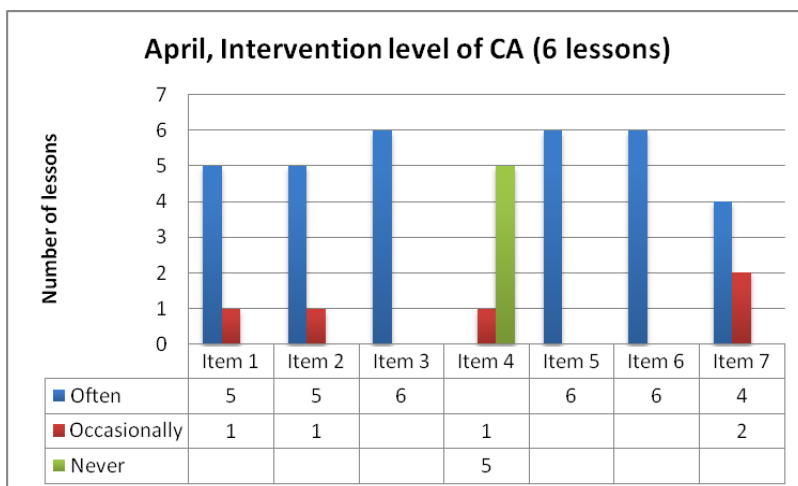


Figure 13

As to the above, the graphics are self-explanatory. There has been a sharp evolution of the CA's class handling from my first period of observation (Jan 2019) to the second one (April 2019). Basically, the CA has been self correcting and self improving her lessons by changing the methodology. The main differences observed between figures 12 and 13 above are related to items 1, 2, 3 and 7. The CA has completely changed her methodology regarding: correcting the students vocabulary and phonetics (items 1 and 2), were results in Likert scale have varied from "mainly never" to "mainly often"; by not allowing the students to speak in their L1 (item 4); and by



changing the activity when the motivation was low (item 7).

These findings are tremendously relevant, as they show that the CA is able to adapt her methodology according to the needs of the students. It is important to highlight that a few students commented in the questionnaire that the CA was not correcting them, and I was personally mentioning this fact to the CA after each session.

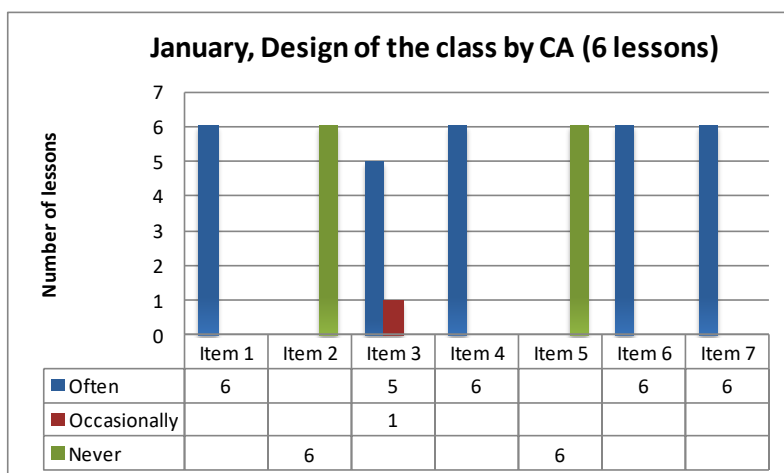


Figure 14

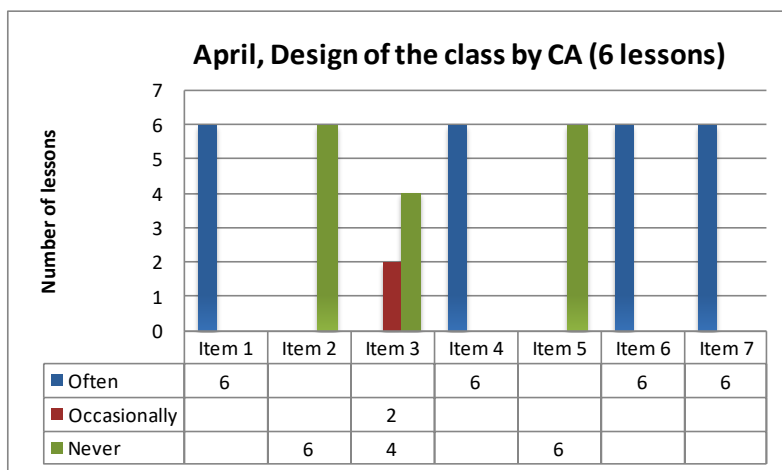


Figure 15

Similarly to the above results for the level of intervention of the CA during the lessons, regarding the design of the activities for the class a very relevant fact occurred: the CA was, again, able to change the dynamics of the class from the first observations made in January to the second ones made in April. The CA was dramatically changing the activity when she perceived a lowering in the attention and/or motivation of the students (item 3). The rest of items remained unchanged for the whole observation period.

## **5. FINAL CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The results have given answer to the different research questions presented. As far as research questions 1, 2 and 3, the findings conclude that the lessons with the conversation assistant are beneficial to the learning of an additional language (English) in the aspects which concern the improvement of the oral fluency, the improvement of the socio-cultural aspects and the improvement of the lexicon of the students. Research question 1, which has been explored through an observation grid filled in by me, has revealed that the CA is able to evolve throughout the lessons and correct or modify the elements of the lesson that are not working efficiently.

However, and this is revealed in research question number 4's findings, the study draws the conclusion that there is a deficit in the communication channel between the CAs and the AL teachers, especially in what concerns the design of the contents of the CAs lessons, as the said lessons do not complement the regular English lessons but work on different topics. The main reason for the latter is the fact that the CA, especially in secondary education, is not present in the regular English lessons, for which reason her or she is not aware of the class syllabus and is forced to design the lessons according to his or her criteria. The CAs, hence, do not feel comfortable as they are not graduated teachers and are not supposed to know how to design a productive lesson. The whole lack of communication ends up in a time loss, as the CA has to "discover", lesson after lesson, what works better for the students. Had the communication between the CA and the AL teacher been fluent from the beginning, the excellence in the lessons would have been reached from the initial period.

As far as research question 5 is concerned, I would strongly recommend the ALs to create some general guidelines for the CAs in order to meet the goals, which in this case refer to teaching oral fluency, socio-cultural aspects and lexicon. During my observation period I had the chance to interview the CA after every lesson and to suggest ideas that she was accepting in a very positive way and implementing in the following lessons. This task should be done by the AL teachers prior the starting of the lessons.

## **5.2 Limitations and lines for future research**

Although this investigation has provided valuable suggestions about CAs effectiveness, the sample is really small, to be generalized. Hence, more in-depth studies are merited, especially in which regards research question number 6: “to effectively measure the fluency improvement of the students linked to the conversation assistant's lessons received by testing them at the beginning of the academic year and after 9 months”. To answer that question, a regulated oral exam was to be administered with the goal to the students' improvement in fluency in a purely quantitative way. It was planned to pass a pre and a post test, at the beginning of the academic year and after 6 to 9 months of continuous weekly sessions with the CA. Due to legal problems, the CA was not able to join the school program at the beginning of the course but in January only, what ended up in an impossibility to explore the said test, as I considered that a 4- month time gap was not enough to get significant results.

I would like to insist in the fact that this instrument would have given a different dimension to the present research study. While the rest of instruments have explored the “perceptions” of the sample population, this test would have “measured” the oral fluency item and provided rich quantitative data by isolating that item.

There is in fact a severe need of further research on language assistants. Studies related to the influence of a language assistant in the improvement of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation have been searched with no success. These and other aspects covered by Ortega (2000) and Scobling (2011) in their research have been approached in this study in order to enrich the perspectives on the work of foreign language assistants. But if further in-depth and focused investigations into student perceptions of effective CAs are carried out in various settings, greater understandings will develop. These understandings will help both AL teachers and CAs in the teaching-learning process.

## 6. REFERENCES

- Bichon, A. (2013). *Los auxiliares de conversación como apoyo en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras en España*. Trabajo fin de Máster. Universidad de Cantabria. Retrieved from: <http://repositorio.unican.es:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10902/4039/BichonAudrey.pdf?sequence=1> (Accessed April 23rd 2019).
- Buckingham, L.R. (2018). Defining the role of language assistants in bilingual classroom. *Revista Tecnología, Ciencia y Educación*, 9, Jan-Apr. 2018, pp. 38-49.
- Buckingham, L.R. (2018). Language assistants' views on the training provided by bilingual programs in Madrid. *Universidad de Comillas. Pulso*, 41, 225-250.
- Caparrós, C. (2010). El auxiliar de conversación: una figura necesaria. Espiral. *Cuadernos del Profesorado*. 3(5), 36-43. Retrieved from: <http://www.cepcuevasolula.es/espiral>.
- Cassany, D., Luna, M. and Sanz, G. (1994). *Enseñar lengua*. Barcelona: Graó.
- Dórnyei, Z., Csizér, K. (1998). Ten Commandments for motivating language learners: results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research*, 2 (3), 203-229.
- Fernández Rivero, M. (2008). El trabajo conjunto con el auxiliar de conversación en la enseñanza bilingüe. *Aula de innovación educativa*, 168, 34-37. Graó. ISBN/ISSN 1131-995X.
- Hibler, (2010). *Effective collaboration between native and non-native speakers in the Spanish CLIL context: the case of language assistants in primary education*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid. In Buckingham, L.R. (2018). Defining the role of language assistants in bilingual classroom. *Revista Tecnología, Ciencia y Educación*, 9, Jan-Apr. 2018, pp. 38-49.
- Liu, L. (2008). Co-teaching between native and non-native English teachers: An exploration of co-teaching models and strategies in the Chinese primary school context. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 103–118.
- Lova Mellado, M (2017). *Proyectos bilingües en los centros educativos de la Región de Murcia: perspectivas de los docentes*. Tesis doctoral. Universidad de Murcia. Retrieved from: <https://digitum.um.es/digitum/bitstream/10201/55374/1/TESIS%20Presentar.pdf> (Accessed June 4<sup>th</sup> 2019).
- Generalitat de Catalunya (2018). *Guia dels centres acollidors d'auxiliars de conversa 2018-2019*. Departament d'educació. Retrieved from:

- [http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/projectes/plurilinguisme/pluri/auxiliars\\_conversa/documents/guia\\_centres\\_acollidors\\_2018\\_2019.pdf](http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/projectes/plurilinguisme/pluri/auxiliars_conversa/documents/guia_centres_acollidors_2018_2019.pdf) (Accessed June 1<sup>st</sup> 2019).
- MECD. (2011). *Programa Integral de Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras*. Conferencia de Educación, 23rd March. Retrieved from: <http://www.mecd.gob.es/dctm/ministerio/horizontales/prensa/documentos/2011/03/programa-integral-aprendizaje-lenguas-ce-23-0311.pdf?documentId=0901e72b80a2a58a> (Accessed May 11<sup>st</sup> 2019).
- MECD. (2018). *Estadística sobre la acción educativa en el exterior curso 2018-2019*. Retrieved from: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/exterior/accion/2018-19/Nota.pdf> (Accessed May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019).
- MECD. (2018). *Language Assistant Guide course 2018-2019*. Retrieved from: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mecd/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/catalogo/general/educacion/998188/ficha/998188-2018/AACC-18-19-Guia-EN0.pdf> (Accessed March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019).
- MECD. (2018). *Role of the conversation assistant 2018-2019*. Retrieved from: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/.../02-funciones-auxiliar-2018.pdf> (Accessed March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019).
- Ortega Cebreros, A.M. (2000). *Factores sociopsicológicos implicados en el contexto de interacción hablada entre el alumno y el auxiliar de conversación en lengua extranjera*. Tesis doctoral. Granada: Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Granada.
- Ortega Cebreros, A. M. (2003). *La Experiencia Pedagógica del Auxiliar de Conversación de Lengua Extranjera*. Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario.
- Sánchez-Torres, J. (2014). La interculturalidad en la asignatura de inglés. *ELIA* 14, 2014, 67-96. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/elia.2014.i14.04> (Accessed June 2019).
- Scobling, C. (2011). *El auxiliar de conversación como herramienta de motivación en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en la educación secundaria y bachillerato de España*. Trabajo fin de Máster. Universidad de la Rioja (UNIR). Retrieved from: <https://www.mecd.gob.es/dctm/sede/catalogotramites/profesores/extranjeros/auxilares-conversacion-espana/2011-proyecinvestiga-candy-scobling-sobre->

auxiliaresconversacion.pdf?documentId=0901e72b810b75ce

Sharples, W. (2015). *The expectation should be that the needs of all pupils are addressed, first and foremost, through high quality classroom teaching*. Blatchford.

Tobin, N, Abello-Contesse, C. (2012). "The use of native assistants as language and cultural resources in Andalusia's bilingual schools". In Ortega Cebreros, A. M. (2003). *La Experiencia Pedagógica del Auxiliar de Conversación de Lengua Extranjera*. Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario.

## 7. ANNEXURE

- Samples of questionnaires answered by the students, the AL teachers and the CAs:

### Students' QUEST

#### CUESTIONARIO DE ALUMNOS

CURSO: 4 ESO

#### Instrucciones:

El siguiente cuestionario es anónimo. Te pedimos que reflexiones sobre las clases de conversación con la asistente y cómo crees que te ayudan a mejorar tu competencia comunicativa en esta lengua. Marca la puntuación que más se adecue a tus pensamientos con una X.

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Questionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Percibo una mejora en mi pronunciación gracias al auxiliar.		X			
2. Experimento una mejora en la fluidez (velocidad) oral al argumentar.		X			
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar me apetece más hablar en inglés durante sus clases.					X
4. Estoy aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.					X
5. Estoy aprendiendo peculiaridades de la vida cotidiana de un nativo gracias Al auxiliar.					X
6. Noto que mi vocabulario está haciéndose más rico gracias a las clases con el auxiliar.				X	
7. Me esfuerzo por utilizar el vocabulario nuevo aprendido en las clases de conversación con el auxiliar.				X	
8. La actividad realizada en las clases con la auxiliar está relacionada con lo visto en clase de inglés.				X	X
9. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar es divertida y a la vez aprendo.					X
10. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar me ayuda a mejorar mi competencia Comunicativa.					X
11. En general, ¿dirías que contar con un auxiliar de conversación nativo/a te supone un beneficio?				X	
Valoro positivamente la experiencia de compartir ratos de conversación pero practicar el oral aunque mi pronunciación y mi habilidad sean ya muy altas. Por eso no he notado tanto beneficio en estos dos aspectos, pero es algo personal					

Students' QUEST

CUESTIONARIO DE ALUMNOS

CURSO: 4º ESO

Instrucciones:

El siguiente cuestionario es anónimo. Te pedimos que reflexiones sobre las clases de conversación con la asistente y cómo crees que te ayudan a mejorar tu competencia comunicativa en esta lengua. Marca la puntuación que más se adecue a tus pensamientos con una X.

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Cuestionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Percibo una mejora en mi pronunciación gracias al auxiliar.				X	
2. Experimento una mejora en la fluidez (velocidad) oral al argumentar.				X	
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar me apetece más hablar en inglés durante sus clases.					X
4. Estoy aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.			X		
5. Estoy aprendiendo peculiaridades de la vida cotidiana de un nativo gracias Al auxiliar.				X	
6. Noto que mi vocabulario está haciéndose más rico gracias a las clases con el auxiliar.				X	
7. Me esfuerzo por utilizar el vocabulario nuevo aprendido en las clases de conversación con el auxiliar.					X
8. La actividad realizada en las clases con la auxiliar está relacionada con lo visto en clase de inglés.				X	
9. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar es divertida y a la vez aprendo.					X
10. La actividad realizada con la auxiliar me ayuda a mejorar mi competencia Comunicativa.				X	
11. En general, ¿dirías que contar con un auxiliar de conversación nativo/a te supone un beneficio?				X	

11. Comentarios personales: Está muy bien, dinero bien gastado pero, tal vez debería haber más sobre la cultura del país del asistente nativo.



AL TEACHERS' QUEST

Primary

QUESTIONARIO A PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

Instrucciones:

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Questionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Noto una mejora en la pronunciación de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.				X	
2. Los alumnos han experimentado una mejora en la fluidez al argumentar.					NA
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar los alumnos hablan más en mis clases.					NA
4. Los alumnos están aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.				X	
5. Los alumnos muestran interés por la personalidad y peculiaridades de un nativo.				X	
6. Noto una mejora en el bagaje léxico de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.				X	
7. Los alumnos se esfuerzan por poner en práctica el nuevo léxico aprendido.				X	
8. El auxiliar de conversación prepara las actividades de clase sin mi ayuda.		X			
9. El auxiliar de conversación y yo preparamos las clases juntos.			X	X	
10. Yo preparo las clases del auxiliar de conversación.				X	
11. Me interesa que las clases del auxiliar de conversación sigan la programación de clase.				X	
12. Prefiero que el auxiliar tenga libertad para diseñar las actividades.				X	
13. En general, ¿consideras que la figura del auxiliar representa un beneficio para el alumno?					X
14. Alguna vez has recibido alguna charla, jornada u orientación sobre como debes tratar al auxiliar de conversación?	X				

15. Comentarios:

A Educació Infantil la figura de l'auxiliar representa un reforç en estones de joc, dissenyades per a que puguin interaccionar alumnes i auxiliar. A través del joc simbòlic, expressió artística i matemàtica bàsicament, l'auxiliar crea moments de conversa amb els alumnes.

A més a més, col·labora en aquelles activitats referents a costums i tradicions pròpies.

AL TEACHERS' QUEST

Primary

QUESTIONARIO A PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

Instrucciones:

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Questionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Noto una mejora en la pronunciación de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.			X		
2. Los alumnos han experimentado una mejora en la fluidez al argumentar.			X		
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar los alumnos hablan más en mis clases.			X		
4. Los alumnos están aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.				X	
5. Los alumnos muestran interés por la personalidad y peculiaridades de un nativo.					X
6. Noto una mejora en el bagaje léxico de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.			X		
7. Los alumnos se esfuerzan por poner en práctica el nuevo léxico aprendido.				X	
8. El auxiliar de conversación prepara las actividades de clase sin mi ayuda.	X				
9. El auxiliar de conversación y yo preparamos las clases juntos.	X				
10. Yo preparo las clases del auxiliar de conversación.					X
11. Me interesa que las clases del auxiliar de conversación sigan la programación de clase.			X		
12. Prefiero que el auxiliar tenga libertad para diseñar las actividades.					X
13. En general, ¿consideras que la figura del auxiliar representa un beneficio para el alumno?					X
14. Alguna vez has recibido alguna charla, jornada u <u>orientación</u> sobre como debes tratar al auxiliar de conversación? <u>guía</u>				X	

15. Comentarios:  
 Creo que el éxito del auxiliar depende mucho de su personalidad y edad. Si la persona es muy joven y sin iniciativa es muy difícil que capte el interés de los alumnos y los anime a hablar en inglés. Hay auxiliares que no muestran ningún interés en que los niños aprendan y lo pasen bien con ellos, no planifican las sesiones y sólo esperan que tu les indiques qué hacer. Los alumnos muestran mucho interés en interactuar con los auxiliares pero si no se

Secondary

AL TEACHERS' QUEST

CUESTIONARIO A PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

Instrucciones:

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Cuestionario	1	2	3	4	5
1. Noto una mejora en la pronunciación de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.		X			
2. Los alumnos han experimentado una mejora en la fluidez al argumentar.		X			
3. Siento que gracias al auxiliar los alumnos hablan más en mis clases.				X	
4. Los alumnos están aprendiendo costumbres y tradiciones del país del auxiliar.		X			
5. Los alumnos muestran interés por la personalidad y peculiaridades de un nativo.				X	
6. Noto una mejora en el bagaje léxico de los alumnos gracias al auxiliar.				X	
7. Los alumnos se esfuerzan por poner en práctica el nuevo léxico aprendido.			X		
8. El auxiliar de conversación prepara las actividades de clase sin mi ayuda.					X
9. El auxiliar de conversación y yo preparamos las clases juntos.			X		
10. Yo preparo las clases del auxiliar de conversación.	X				
11. Me interesa que las clases del auxiliar de conversación sigan la programación de clase.				X	
12. Prefiero que el auxiliar tenga libertad para diseñar las actividades.					X
13. En general, ¿consideras que la figura del auxiliar representa un beneficio para el alumno?				X	
14. Alguna vez has recibido alguna charla, jornada u orientación sobre como debes tratar al auxiliar de conversación?		X		X	

15. Comentarios:

Sería ideal continuar varios años con la misma auxiliar de conversación para poder planear las actividades a largo plazo y que ella pudiera implicarse más en el proyecto de escuela. Por otro lado, el hecho de ir cambiando cada año también nos trae problemas ya que al principio la cuestión se adapta a las familias y/o la escuela y algunos, simplemente, no hacen bien su tarea.

CAs QUEST

Primary

QUESTIONARIO A AUXILIARES DE CONVERSACIÓN DE INGLÉS

Instructions:

1. Totally disagree
2. Disagree
3. Not agree, not disagree
4. Agree
5. Totally agree

Questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can perceive an improvement in the students' pronunciation.			X		
2. I can perceive an improvement in the students' oral fluency.			X		
3. The students speak more and more in my lessons.					X
4. The students show an interest at my country's customs and traditions.		X			
5. The students show an interest at my personal life and customs.			X		
6. The students are increasing their lexicon.			X		
7. The students try to use the new vocabulary when they have the chance.				X	
8. I prepare my lessons by myself.			X		
9. Both the English teacher and I prepare the lessons.			X		
10. The English teacher prepares my lessons and I only execute them.				X	
11. My lessons follow and complement the regular English class syllabus.				X	
12. My lessons differ from the regular English classes and I organize them Freely.	X				
13. Comments: I THINK LESS SPANISH/ CATALAN SHOULD BE SPOKEN BY TEACHERS IN ENGLISH CLASS, AS STUDENTS REALIZE THEY CAN SPEAK IN SPANISH AND NOT IN ENGLISH.					

← Summer



## CUESTIONARIO A AUXILIARES DE CONVERSACIÓN DE INGLÉS

### Instructions:

1. Totally disagree
2. Disagree
3. Not agree, not disagree
4. Agree
5. Totally agree

Questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can perceive an improvement in the students' pronunciation.			✓		
2. I can perceive an improvement in the students' oral fluency.				✓	
3. The students speak more and more in my lessons.			✓		
4. The students show an interest at my country's customs and traditions.					✓
5. The students show an interest at my personal life and customs.					
6. The students are increasing their lexicon.				✓	
7. The students try to use the new vocabulary when they have the chance.				✓	
8. I prepare my lessons by myself.				✓	
9. Both the English teacher and I prepare the lessons.		✓			
10. The English teacher prepares my lessons and I only execute them.	✓				
11. My lessons follow and complement the regular English class syllabus.			✓		
12. My lessons differ from the regular English classes and I organize them Freely.			✓		
<p>13. Comments:            I have noticed that students are self correcting a lot more than they were in the beginning, and have definitely improved A LOT in their comprehension of English. I do find it difficult to follow and complement the regular English class syllabus when I'm not able to be in class with them and know exactly what they're doing, and also they tend to become MUCH LESS responsive when the speaking sessions are too in line with what they're doing in their English classes. I have gravitated more towards organizing the lessons <del>more</del> freely for the sake of finding topics that will motivate them to speak in English.</p>					

- Samples of observation grids filled in.

OBSERVATION GRID

January 2019

GROUP: 4th  
No OF STUDENTS: 5

Intervention of the Conversation Assistant during the sessions	Often	Occasionally	Never
CA corrects the vocabulary mistakes of the students		X	
CA corrects the phonetics of the students		X	
CA explains personal situations to satisfy the students' Curiosity		X	
CA allows students to speak in their mother tongue		X	
CA encourages the shy students to speak	X		
CA keeps a good balance of intervention time among students	X		
CA changes the activity if the motivation of students is low		X	

Design and preparation of the class/activity (30 min)	Often	Occasionally	Never
Activity is designed by the CA alone	X		
Activity is proposed by the AL teacher			X
Activity is mainly mechanical		X	
Activity is meaningful fo the students	X		
Activity has to do with what has been seen in the regular English class			X
Activity is mainly designed to focus on the oral fluency	X		
Activity includes customs and traditions from the CA's country	X		

Comments: lessons has been poor. Mechanical activity and the students repeat the same mistake once and again. But they have fun and seem happy at the lesson. Last year's CA was terrible and they were scared about the new one, but they like her after 3 lessons with her.

Jan 2019

OBSERVATION GRID

GROUP: 1st BATX

No OF STUDENTS: 6

Intervention of the Conversation Assistant during the sessions	Often	Occasionally	Never
CA corrects the vocabulary mistakes of the students			X
CA corrects the phonetics of the students			X
CA explains personal situations to satisfy the students' Curiosity		X	
CA allows students to speak in their mother tongue	X		
CA encourages the shy students to speak	X		
CA keeps a good balance of intervention time among students	X		
CA changes the activity if the motivation of students is low			X

Design and preparation of the class/activity (30 min)	Often	Occasionally	Never
Activity is designed by the CA alone	X		
Activity is proposed by the AL teacher			X
Activity is mainly mechanical		X	
Activity is meaningful fo the students	X		
Activity has to do with what has been seen in the regular English class		X	
Activity is mainly designed to focus on the oral fluency	X		
Activity includes customs and traditions from the CA's country	-		X

Comments:

she is not correcting any grammer mistakes or any pronunciation! +, students use their moth L1 very often. CA is a bit shy and reluctant to explain personal things.



## OBSERVATION GRID

April 2019

GROUP: ~~4th~~ 1st BATX.

No OF STUDENTS: 5

Intervention of the Conversation Assistant during the sessions	Often	Occasionally	Never
CA corrects the vocabulary mistakes of the students	X		
CA corrects the phonetics of the students	X		
CA explains personal situations to satisfy the students' Curiosity	X		
CA allows students to speak in their mother tongue			X
CA encourages the shy students to speak	X		
CA keeps a good balance of intervention time among students	X		
CA changes the activity if the motivation of students is low		X	

Design and preparation of the class/activity (30 min)	Often	Occasionally	Never
Activity is designed by the CA alone	X		
Activity is proposed by the AL teacher			X
Activity is mainly mechanical	X		
Activity is meaningful fo the students	X		
Activity has to do with what has been seen in the regular English class		X	
Activity is mainly designed to focus on the oral fluency	X		
Activity includes customs and traditions from the CA's country			X

## Comments:

I have seen a dramatic change. CA corrects both phonetics & grammar and explains personal stories. She has prepared a nice activity for Easter (egg hunting)



## OBSERVATION GRID

April 2019

GROUP: 4th ESO  
No OF STUDENTS: 6

Intervention of the Conversation Assistant during the sessions	Often	Occasionally	Never
CA corrects the vocabulary mistakes of the students	X		
CA corrects the phonetics of the students	X		
CA explains personal situations to satisfy the students' Curiosity		X	
CA allows students to speak in their mother tongue		X	
CA encourages the shy students to speak	X		
CA keeps a good balance of intervention time among students	X		
CA changes the activity if the motivation of students is low			X

Design and preparation of the class/activity (30 min)	Often	Occasionally	Never
Activity is designed by the CA alone	X		
Activity is proposed by the AL teacher			X
Activity is mainly mechanical		X	
Activity is meaningful for the students	X		
Activity has to do with what has been seen in the regular English class		X	X
Activity is mainly designed to focus on the oral fluency	X		
Activity includes customs and traditions from the CA's country		X	

## Comments:

I can see that the students look for ~~the~~ the CA's eyes approval when speaking. They feel comfortable with the corrections. They also ask for different activities if they don't like the one proposed.

- Sample of the First Certificate Exam oral fluency part, provided by the school.

## Speaking test 1

### Part 1 (2 minutes)

"Good morning. My name is Anne and this is my colleague.  
And your names are?  
Can I have your mark sheets, please? Thank you.  
First of all, we'd like to know something about you."

- Where are you from, Candidate A ?
- And you, Candidate B ?
- What do you like about living here Candidate A/B ?
- And what about you, Candidate A/B ?
  
- Do you like to be busy every day? (Why?)
- What sport do you like playing? (Why?)
- Do you prefer to spend time with your family or with your friends at the weekend? (Why?)
- Are there a lot of interesting things to do in your town at the weekend?

## Part 2 (4 minutes)

"In this part of the test, I'm going to give each of you two photographs, I'd like you to talk about your photographs on your own for about a minute, and also to answer a short question about your partner's photographs."

- Candidate A, it's your turn first. Here are your photographs. They show people cooking in different situations. I'd like you to compare the photographs and say why you think the people are cooking in these situations. All right?

(1 minute) Thank you.

- Candidate B, would you like to cook in either of these situations? (Why/why not?)
- Now, Candidate B, here are your photographs. They show people taking photographs in different situations. I'd like you to compare the photographs and say why you think the people are taking photographs in these situations. All right?

(1 minute) Thank you.

- Candidate A, Do you like taking photographs when you're on holiday? (Why/why not?)

Why do you think the people are cooking in these situations?

2A



2B



Why do you think the people are taking photographs in these situations?

2C



2D



---

### Part 3 (4 minutes)

"Now I'd like you to talk about something together for about two minutes.

Here are some things that many of us try to do in our everyday lives and a question for you to discuss. First you have some time to look at the task (15 seconds).

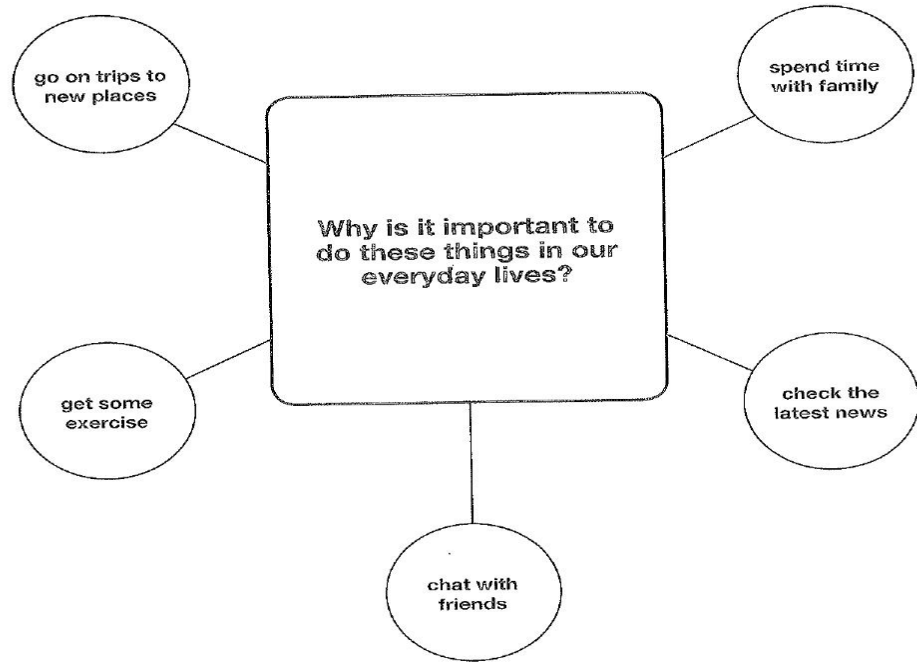
Now talk to each other about why it's important to do these things in our everyday lives."

(2 minutes)

"Thank you. Now you have about a minute to decide which of these things it is most important for everyone to do."

(1 minute)

2E



---

## Part 4 (4 minutes)

- What do you enjoy doing most after school each day? Why?
- Do you think it's important to eat healthily every day? Why?
- Do you think life would be better if weekends were longer and everyone had more free time? Why?
- Some people say that going on the Internet wastes a lot of our time. What do you think?
- Do you think people are happier if they have a very busy life? Why?
- What do you think is most important for a happy life? Why?

Thank you. This is the end of the test.