



**Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres**

# **Inquiry on EFL Teaching**

## **Methods:**

**A Comparative Focus on the Receptive Skills in Child and Adult Learners**

Auteure : Camélia Bellazrak

Promotrice : Julie Van De Vyver

Lecteur(s) : Leonardo Zilio

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## Abstract

The question of whether children and adults should be taught foreign languages through fundamentally different methods remains debated within second language acquisition research. Based on classroom observations and teacher interviews conducted in Brussels, this master's thesis offers a qualitative account of how primary-school and adult EFL teachers approach the two receptive skills, reading and listening. Conducted as one half of a two-part comparative project, whose co-researcher thesis addresses the corresponding productive skills, speaking and writing, using the same fieldwork, this study compares teachers working with young beginners in a European School to teachers working with adult learners in a *Promotion Sociale* establishment. The observations showed that intensive and extensive methods did not divide as cleanly along age lines as expected: several methods commonly associated with one population turned out to be present, in some form, in the other as well, while age appeared to influence how much support a method required more than whether it could be used at all. The teachers were subsequently interviewed to gather their own account of these choices. One recurring finding was that age and other structural factors, such as a shared first language, were often difficult to disentangle within this corpus, complicating any straightforward attribution of a teacher's methodological choices to age alone.

## Keywords

English as a Foreign Language; receptive skills; listening; reading; children; adults; methods; age factor; English as a Lingua Franca; intensive and extensive instruction

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## Declaration of honour

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Last name, First name: Bellazrak, Camélia

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## List of abbreviations

|       |                                                                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CEFR  | <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</i>                         |
| CLL   | Community Language Learning                                                         |
| CLT   | Communicative Language Teaching                                                     |
| CP    | Critical Period                                                                     |
| CPH   | Critical Period Hypothesis                                                          |
| EFL   | English as a Foreign Language                                                       |
| EL    | Extensive Listening                                                                 |
| ELF   | English as a Lingua Franca                                                          |
| ELT   | English Language Teaching                                                           |
| ESP   | English for Specific Purposes                                                       |
| FonFs | Focus on Forms                                                                      |
| GTM   | Grammar-Translation Method                                                          |
| IL    | Intensive Listening                                                                 |
| IR    | Intensive Reading                                                                   |
| L1    | First Language (a person's native tongue)                                           |
| L2    | Second Language (any language in addition to the L1 that a person learns or speaks) |
| PPP   | Presentation-Practice-Production                                                    |
| SLA   | Second Language Acquisition                                                         |
| SLT   | Situational Language Teaching                                                       |
| TBI   | Text-Based Instruction                                                              |
| TBLT  | Task-Based Language Teaching                                                        |
| TPR   | Total Physical Response                                                             |

# 1. Introduction

“For the new generation of teachers;  
You will have a greater impact  
on the life of this nation  
than you can imagine”

Fletcher and Portalupi (2001, p. v)

Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) opened their book *The Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*, 25 years ago with the epigraph above. The authors framed the teachers’ impact around a single nation, which undersells what is at stake for the discipline this thesis is concerned with.

English has spread around the globe and its growth has led to an increasingly large population of language learners. In the modern linguistic landscape, for every English native speaker, there are now three non-native speakers using the language to navigate their daily lives (Crystal, 2003). As a contact language often used between speakers who do not share a native tongue (L1)—what Mauranen (2018) terms *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF)—English has recently reached some 1.5 billion speakers worldwide (Eberhard *et al.*, 2026). Teaching English within this global landscape, therefore, takes a specific form depending on where it occurs: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to English taught in a context where it is not the learners’ dominant language (Brown, 2007b)—the case throughout Belgium, the setting of this study’s fieldwork. This scale has produced an unusually diverse population of learners, whose relationship to the language itself varies with age: Kormos and Csizér (2008) found that adult learners are driven significantly more than younger learners by an “Ideal L2 Self” (p. 327)—an internalised vision of a successful future self, capable of navigating a globalised world.

This master’s thesis is the result of an extensive dual-research project conducted in close collaboration with a research partner. Given the multifaceted nature of English Language Teaching (ELT), our shared objective was to construct a comprehensive comparative analysis of pedagogical methods across two polar ends of the educational spectrum: primary school learners and adult students. To ensure that this investigation remains academically rigorous and avoids a superficial overview, the research was

structured around a collaborative division of the four macro-skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The parallel study focuses on speaking and writing (the productive branch); conversely, this thesis centres on reading and listening (the receptive branch), examining specifically how students decode, process and extract meaning from spoken and written discourse. Far from being a mere division of labour, this structural choice allowed each researcher to treat their respective sub-categories with the precision required for a large-scale collective work.

The diversity of learners raises a question this thesis takes seriously from the outset. In her *Output Hypothesis*, Swain (1985) proposes that producing language plays an active, distinct role in second language acquisition (SLA) by forcing learners to process language deeply and refine their performance. In contrast, Krashen (1985) positions comprehension as the primary driver of language development in his *Input Hypothesis*, arguing that acquisition occurs through the processing of input. Section 2 of this thesis examines both perspectives in full; how instructors teach receptive skills to different learner populations thus emerges as a key question, precisely because SLA theories assign such a pivotal role to receptive processing.

Yet, observing how instructors adapt receptive methods for such distinctly contrasting demographics reveals a noticeable void in current literature. Existing research comparing children and adults in SLA—including, as this thesis will show, the biological, cognitive, and motivational differences reviewed in the State of The Art—has largely addressed acquisition in general terms, leaving the practical translation of these developmental disparities into reading and listening pedagogies largely unexplored. This gap is the starting point of the present study.

Accordingly, this study aims to conduct an *Inquiry on EFL Teaching Methods in a Multilingual Context: A Comparative Focus on Receptive Skills in Child and Adult Learners*. To complete this task, fieldwork was conducted across two contrasting Brussels-based institutions: a European School, representing primary-level child instruction, and a *Promotion Sociale* evening programme, representing adult education. Across both settings, classroom observations and semi-structured teacher interviews were used to compare how receptive methods are selected, adapted, and delivered to each learner population.

This thesis is organised into five additional sections. Section 2 reviews the theoretical foundations this study builds on; most of this review—particularly the sections addressing age and language teaching in general terms—is shared with the parallel thesis, while a substantial part specific to each half addresses the productive and receptive branches respectively. Section 3 formulates the research question, its delimitations, and the hypotheses this study tests; one hypothesis is shared between both theses, while the second is specific to this study’s receptive focus. Section 4 details the methodology, including the data collection instruments and the coding process used to analyse the resulting corpus, and is entirely shared between both halves of this dual-research project. Section 5 presents the empirical findings: as with the *State of the Art*, several sections—covering general aspects of language teaching, multilingualism, and classroom structure—are shared, before each half turns to its respective skills; the section’s closing reflection on this study’s methodological limitations is, once again, shared between both. The thesis closes with an individually authored conclusion and because both halves of the project draw on the same corpus, several findings reported here bear directly on the productive skills examined in the parallel study and are signalled as such where they arise.

## 2. State of the Art

This section reviews the theoretical foundations this study builds on. Because this thesis is concerned with how receptive skills are taught to two structurally different populations, children and adults, this review is not a general survey of SLA<sup>1</sup>; it is built specifically around what a comparison of this kind requires. It proceeds in three broad movements. The first establishes why receptive comprehension itself warrants independent theoretical treatment, while the second identifies the learner-related variables, here age, that justify treating children and adults as distinct groups in the first place. Finally, the third part turns from learners to teachers, surveying the teaching methods through which these variables translate into observable practice, and which the empirical chapter of this thesis will later trace across the settings studied.

### 2.1. Language Skills and Methodological Terminology

In the field of language teaching, the definition and classification of language proficiency have undergone a significant structural evolution (Harmer, 2006). To establish a clear taxonomy, modern language pedagogy recognises two primary dimensions of language processing: receptive and productive skills (Broughton *et al.*, 1980). These two overarching dimensions serve as the foundation for language acquisition, determining how a learner internalises or generates meaning.

This foundational distinction is clearly attested by Broughton *et al.* (1980), who state that language proficiency is governed by these two main types of skills, which are systematically subdivided into four distinct macro-skills<sup>2</sup> to operationalise them within educational contexts:

- Within the receptive framework, proficiency is split into listening (oral comprehension) and reading (written comprehension).

---

<sup>1</sup> While the scientific literature's analysis in this study focuses on both SLA and EFL, the empirical data focuses on the latter only. Therefore, while the concluding data will focus on EFL, they might apply in other SLA classroom, but with no certainty.

<sup>2</sup> Macro-skills is used here to distinguish reading, writing, listening and speaking from the globalising categories *receptive* and *productive skills*. However, those four 'macro-skills' are also and mainly, referred to as skills in the scientific literature and in this work.

- Within the productive framework, proficiency is split into speaking (oral production) and writing (written production).

To clarify the interdependence of those skills, they are organised into a hierarchical structure (see Figure 1).

It is important to note that the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, known as CEFR (Council of Europe, 2021), identifies five distinct competencies, explicitly separating the speaking skill into two: speaking with or without interaction. However, most of the scientific literature, including the works of Brown (2007b) and Harmer (2006) among many others, continues to categorize language proficiency into four main macro-skills. For the sake of theoretical consistency and clarity, this study adopts the traditional four-skills model. This choice is motivated by the inherent complementarity of these skills; indeed, oral interaction cannot be isolated as a purely productive act, as it fundamentally relies on the ability to listen to and understand the interlocutor. This loop between receptive and productive skills highlights that interaction is, in essence, a continuous cycle of decoding and encoding meaning, further justifying the integrated and collaborative approach of this dual-thesis.

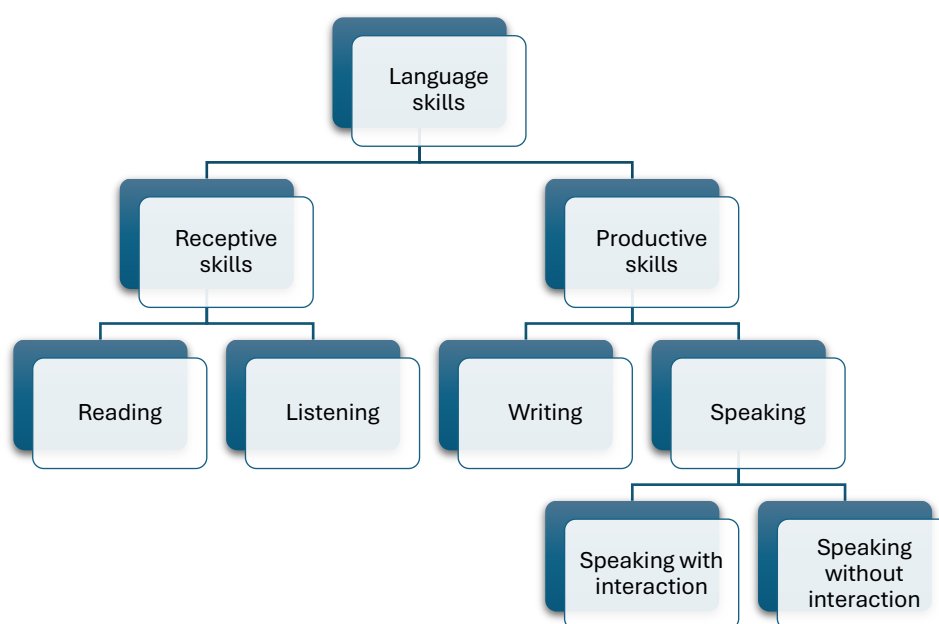


Figure 1: Hierarchical classification of language skills and their sub-dimensions.

Note. Own elaboration based on Brown (2007b), Harmer (2006) and CEFR (2021).

The necessity of this division is heavily supported in language teaching by current empirical research, which underlines both the individual importance of these skills and their deep interrelation. As Burns and Siegel (2017) assert,

“the four language skills are at the heart of current practice in English language teaching. It is now usual in course books to find sections dedicated to listening, speaking, reading and writing alongside the more traditional activities of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.” (p. xiii)

This focus confirms that while reception and production constitute the overarching cognitive pillars, classroom practice inevitably revolves around these four explicit macro-skills as interconnected components.

These different skills shape the way teachers design their lessons, enabling them to select the most appropriate method for each target competency. When preparing to teach a language, an educator must make a deliberate choice regarding the instructional framework they will implement in the classroom; to that end, they face a wide range of methods.

Throughout the scientific literature, we encountered three words often used interchangeably: *approach*, *method* and *technique*. Therefore, it is essential to clarify and define this terminology to avoid conceptual ambiguity. Harmer (2006, p. 78) distinguishes among *approaches*, *methods*, and *techniques*: according to him, an *approach* is “a broad theory about how language is learned and taught”; a *method* is “the practical implementation of an *approach*”, and a *technique* is “a single specific teaching action”. These definitions align with Anthony’s (1963), cited in Richards and Rodgers (2014).

However, many authors use *methods* and *approaches* interchangeably, which can be confusing. For instance, while Richards and Rodgers (2014) classify Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) treat it as a method operating within a broader communicative approach. For this reason, this study adopts Anthony’s (1963) three-tier model as its guiding framework, rather than proposing an entirely independent terminology; an initial attempt to construct our own definitions from scratch proved to generate more conceptual confusion than clarity, precisely because it detached the terms from the theoretical continuum already established in the literature. What we propose instead is a clarification of Anthony’s

(1963), cited in Richards and Rodgers (2014) original distinction, adapted to the specific needs of this study:

- an *approach* denotes the teacher's overarching, distanced perspective on the general articulation of the course (e.g., the PPP approach—Presentation-Practice-Production—in which a language item is first presented, then practised under control, and finally used in freer production (Criado, 2013));
- a *method* designates the concrete procedural pathway through which the teacher leads learners toward a given objective—whether acquiring vocabulary, developing oral production or engaging with a written text, among others—considering their learners, the context, the mobilized skills and the intended learning outcomes;
- and a *technique* refers to a specific, discrete classroom activity that operationalises a given method.

A single *approach* may thus encompass several distinct *methods*, and a single *method* may, in turn, be implemented through multiple distinct *techniques*. Given this three-tier hierarchy, the present study focuses specifically on the level of *method*, *techniques* being mobilised throughout solely as illustrative examples of how a given *method* is concretely implemented in the classroom.

## 2.2. Focus on Receptive Skills

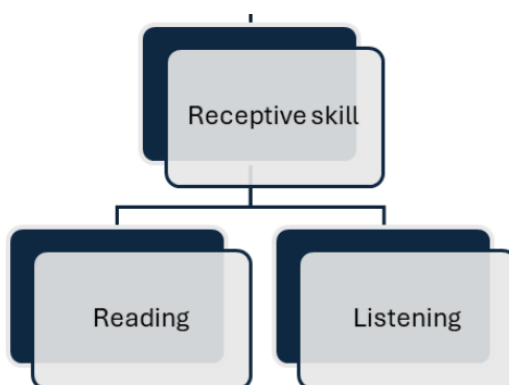


Figure 2: Hierarchical classification of receptive skills

Receptive skills play a role in second language learning, as they allow learners to encounter and process linguistic input through listening and reading. Although these two skills share a common receptive function, they differ in the nature of the input and the demands involved in processing it. This section, therefore, examines both their common characteristics and their distinct roles in language acquisition.

### 2.2.1. The Nature of Receptive Skills: Listening and Reading

Schroeders *et al.* (2010) explain that receptive foreign language ability is assessed through learners' understanding of both written and spoken language. In this respect, the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (2012) defines reception as "receiving and processing a spoken or written input; understanding what is heard or read". VanPatten and Benati (2015) define input as the "language that learners are exposed to, that is, language couched in communicative contexts that learners either hear or read" (p.38). As stated earlier, the receptive skills are divided into two subcategories: listening and reading. Both skills, therefore, involve a similar fundamental process of understanding incoming language, although the nature of the input differs: spoken discourse for listening and written discourse for reading.

### 2.2.2. Listening and Reading: Distinct Processing Demands

Chen (2025), drawing on Bril *et al.* (2022) and Goh and Vandergrift (2012), argues that listening may place greater cognitive demands on learners because spoken information disappears as it unfolds, whereas readers have greater control over the pace of processing and can return to previously encountered information. Consequently, although listening and reading fulfil the same broad receptive function, the different conditions under which spoken and written input are processed mean that the two skills impose distinct demands on learners.

### 2.2.3. Process Involved in Receptive Comprehension

Receptive comprehension involves two complementary directions of processing. Yeldham (2018) explains that Bottom-Up processing involves constructing meaning

from the linguistic information contained in the input, whereas Top-Down processing relies on learners' "existing knowledge" (p.1) to support their interpretation of the message. This distinction can be illustrated through a learner processing a weather report: Bottom-Up processing operates incrementally from the smallest linguistic details, such as decoding individual words (e.g., "rain", "cold") and parsing grammatical structures to piece together the message, whereas Top-Down processing draws on pre-existing world knowledge and contextual expectation—such as knowing what a weather forecast typically includes or recognising seasonal patterns—to predict the topic and grasp the meaning without needing to decode every single word. Taking this into account, it means that rather than functioning as isolated mechanisms, these two processing work together. As Richards (2008) points out, understanding natural language relies on the simultaneous integration of these two perceptual levels; the relative importance of one or the other of the processing varies depending on contextual factors—such as the learners' prior background knowledge, the complexity and structure of the discourse, and their specific communicative goals.

#### 2.2.4. The Role of Receptive Skills in SLA

The decision to focus specifically on receptive skills in this thesis is grounded in their central role in language learning and acquisition. Nunan (2002) observes that listening has traditionally received considerably less attention than speaking in second language education, despite its importance for learners' overall language development. The author argues that language ability has often been associated primarily with the capacity to produce language, through speaking and writing, which has consequently led to listening and reading being viewed as supporting skills rather than as valuable learning outcomes in their own right.

However, comprehension has also been recognised as a fundamental condition for acquisition, rather than only being regarded merely as a supporting stage of language learning. This perspective is particularly associated with Krashen (1985), whose work places the understanding of meaningful language input at the centre of the acquisition process. From Krashen's (1985) perspective, learners cannot develop their linguistic system without first being exposed to and understanding language that is accessible to them. According to him, productive skills, therefore, do not develop independently of

comprehension; rather, they emerge from a process in which learners progressively build their linguistic knowledge through “comprehensible input”<sup>3</sup> (p. vii). This theoretical position is particularly relevant to the present thesis because it challenges the assumption that receptive skills are simply preparatory activities preceding the more important productive skills. Instead, listening and reading can be understood as essential components of the acquisition process itself, providing the linguistic input through which learners develop the knowledge and resources necessary for subsequent language use.

### 2.2.5. Krashen’s Five Hypotheses

The central role Krashen (1985) attributes to comprehension does not stand as an isolated claim. It is part of a broader theory of SLA built from five interrelated hypotheses (see Figure 3 below), which together clarify why *comprehensible input* occupies such a central place in his account.

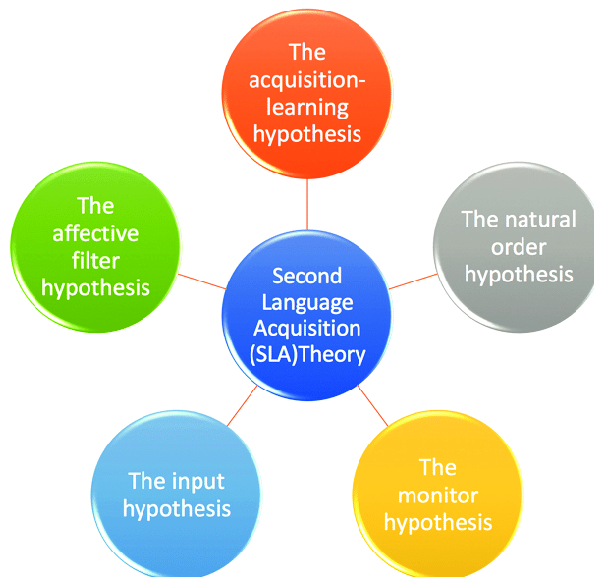


Figure 3: The Five Hypotheses of Krashen's model

Note. Taken from Karim (2022) based on Krashen's Five Hypotheses.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of *comprehensible input* has been criticised as ill-defined: neither what qualifies as *comprehensible input*, nor how a teacher might purposefully adjust it a learner's level, is ever made explicit (Liu, 2015).

*The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* distinguishes between two distinct pathways leading to second-language proficiency (Krashen, 1985). On the one hand, acquisition represents an unconscious process that mirrors the way children develop their native language; on the other hand, learning involves the conscious study of linguistic rules. According to him, only the first pathway leads to acquisition of true proficiency. This distinction echoes the memory-based and rule-based processing systems which are discussed in Subsection 2.3.4 (Skehan, 1998; Paradis, 2004), thereby reinforcing the age-related distinction upon which this thesis is based.

*The Natural Order Hypothesis* holds that grammatical structures are acquired in a broadly anticipated sequence, independent of the order in which a syllabus or teacher presents them (Krashen, 1985).

According to Krashen (1985), the *Monitor Hypothesis* assigns consciously learned knowledge a narrow, secondary function: it can edit or correct output after the fact but does not itself generate spontaneous language. Output is defined as “language that learners produce for the purpose of communication” (p. 38), whether spoken or written (VanPatten & Benati, 2015).

The *Input Hypothesis* itself, the specific mechanism through which acquisition proceeds, comprehension of input slightly above the learner’s current level, is developed in full in the following section.

Finally, the *Affective Filter Hypothesis* proposes that *comprehensible input*, while necessary, is not “sufficient” on its own: learners must also be psychologically “open” to it (p.3). A learner who is anxious, unmotivated, or afraid of failure raises an internal filter that can block otherwise *comprehensible input* from reaching the acquisition process, even once comprehension itself has occurred.

Taken together, these five hypotheses converge on a single claim: acquisition depends on *comprehensible input* reaching a learner whose affective filter is low enough to let it in.

### 2.2.6. From Input to Output: The Complementary Role of Receptive and Productive Skills

In most educational environments, learners are typically exposed to an input before they are expected to produce an output. As stated by Krashen (1985), in his *Input Hypothesis*, the process of internalising a second language occurs through the comprehension of meaningful messages. He maintains that while various pedagogical methods have focused on the formal study of grammar, the memorisation of words, or the use of technological tools, the core requirement for progress remains *comprehensible input*. In addition, Krashen (1985) points out that an individual must first understand the language before being able to produce it. In this sense, reception acts as the necessary foundation for any future expression. He explains that communication skills, such as speaking, cannot be exclusively acquired through teaching. Rather, these communicative abilities develop naturally as language is internalised through *comprehensible input*. In this view, the quality of language production is directly determined by the richness of the input the learner has previously absorbed.

Swain (1995), however, argues that language production plays an active role in SLA, challenging the view that output merely reflects an acquisition already accomplished. Citing Ellis (1988) and Schmidt (1992), Swain points out that producing the target language can contribute to the development of proficiency through repetition, although increased fluency does not necessarily lead to greater accuracy, as these represent distinct dimensions of linguistic competence. From this perspective, input and output can be understood as complementary processes in language learning, a relationship that is mirrored in the distinction between receptive and productive skills: listening and reading allow learners to process language through input, while speaking and writing provide opportunities to practise and use that language through output.

### 2.2.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this section has established receptive skills—listening and reading—as a fundamental cognitive and theoretical pillar of SLA. While both skills share the core objective of receiving and decoding incoming messages, listening imposes continuous real-time auditory processing demands on working memory, whereas reading permits

flexible, self-paced textual analysis. Richards (2008) claims that to achieve receptive comprehension, learners must simultaneously combine Bottom-Up decoding and linguistic details with Top-Down use of background knowledge and context. Grounded in Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis*, comprehension is recognised not merely as a preparatory stage, but as the essential requirement for internalising target-language structures. However, Swain's (1985) *Output Hypothesis* confirms that language production performs complementary functions, such as triggering the awareness of linguistic gaps. Having clarified the nature of receptive skills and their importance within SLA, the subsequent sections of this literature review examine how these cognitive mechanisms interact with learner-internal variables, most notably the age factor, and translate into specific pedagogical methods within the foreign language classroom.

### 2.3. The Age Factor in Second Language Acquisition

A central question in SLA research is whether structural and processing differences exist between how children and adults learn a new language, as highlighted by Hird *et al.* (2000). Historically, the field has been split into two opposing stances regarding age-related success. This opposition can, for instance, be observed through the works of Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) and Macovei and Duhlicher (2010), among many others. On the one hand, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) argue that both children and adults are fundamentally capable of acquiring a foreign language. On the other hand, authors like Macovei and Duhlicher (2010) state that SLA is inherently easier for children due to a highly receptive brain, whereas the mature brain finds the same process far more challenging. This aspect is the starting point of this section: does age genuinely influence the process and success of language learning, and if so, in what way?

#### 2.3.1. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), which Siahaan (2022) claims was first developed by Penfield and Roberts (1959), and later refined by Lenneberg (1967), holds that there is an optimal biological window for language acquisition, extending from roughly two years of age until puberty, during which the brain remains particularly

plastic and receptive to linguistic input (Siahaan, 2022). According to the authors that support the CPH, within this window, a language can be picked up naturally through immersion; once the window closes, learning tends to become a more deliberate, effortful process that rarely leads to native-like fluency (Siahaan, 2022).

The CPH still finds support today: Siahaan (2022) confirms that

“second-language learners who begin early in life and stay exposed to information and so learn across several years or decades —*unquestionably* outperform later learners in the long run and in immersion environments.” (p. 40)

However, the hypothesis is not unanimously accepted. Some studies report that adult learners who begin acquiring a second language after puberty can still reach a level of proficiency close to that of a native speaker (Stromswold, 2000; Birdsong, 2006). This weakens the stronger claim that native-like mastery becomes impossible after puberty. In a similar vein, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) argue that children and adults are, in principle, equally capable of acquiring a foreign language. Macovei and Duhlicher (2010) take a middle position: they consider acquisition easier for children because their brains remain highly receptive to new input, while adult brains find this more difficult; at the same time they note that adults benefit from a longer attention span and a stronger grasp of abstract concepts, which can offset this disadvantage.

### 2.3.2. Biological Differences

The primary mechanism driving the Critical Period (CP) is neuroplasticity. Siahaan (2022) notes that during early childhood, brain connections and synapses are exceptionally receptive to environmental stimuli. Biologically, however, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006), citing Paradis (2004), demonstrate that the plasticity of the human brain's procedural memory system declines sharply after early childhood. Furthermore, adults experience specific age-related neuromuscular changes; as highlighted by Siahaan (2022), because the human neuromuscular system experiences diminished flexibility following maturation, adult learners are highly unlikely to develop unaccented, native-like pronunciation unless they undergo specific phonetic training.

### 2.3.3. Cognitive Differences

From a cognitive perspective, age alters how a learner interacts with linguistic stimuli. Macovei and Duhlicher (2010) show that adults possess a significantly longer attention span and a stronger grasp of abstract, analytical concepts than children. According to Siregar *et al.* (2024), mature learners leverage metacognitive mechanisms to intentionally plan, monitor, and regulate their foreign language learning. The authors underline that mature learners consciously rely on advanced critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to systematically parse, process, and internalise complex linguistic data. Moreover, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006), citing Paradis (2004), explain that around the age of seven, human learners undergo a cognitive transition, naturally shifting away from automated processing and relying more heavily on conscious learning operations. To overcome the biological loss of procedural flexibility, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006), citing Paradis (2004), underline that adults draw extensively on metalinguistic knowledge, analytical reasoning, and pragmatics to consciously parse language data.

### 2.3.4. Processing Systems: Memory-based vs. Rule-Based Learning

The neurocognitive divide between age groups is best explained by the distinction between two parallel memory systems, as outlined by Skehan (1998) and Paradis (2004), cited by Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006):

- **Memory-Based Processing (Procedural):** Paradis (2004) argues that young children rely primarily on procedural memory, which Lechevalier and Habas (2021) define as an automatic system that enables individuals to learn skills through repetition without conscious awareness. Therefore, this memory facilitates unconscious, implicit language acquisition. In this context, the mind grasps the information to which the learner relates, resulting in “abstract rules and representations” (Schmidt, 1995, p. 172 cited in Skehan, 1998, p. 54). This concept was developed by Skehan (1998), who named it *memory-based system*. He explains that in this system the brain, rather than relying primarily on explicit rules, depends on internalised contextual knowledge that has been

acquired through previous experiences. This knowledge is stored in memory and is automatically activated when processing information.

- Rule-Based Learning (Declarative): Conversely, Paradis (2004) cited by Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006), shows that older learners depend increasingly on declarative memory and conscious learning processes. This manifests as what Skehan (1998) calls *rule-based system*, which Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) define, citing Skehan (1998) as a concept in which “storage and powerful generative rules operate together to compute well-formed sentences” (p. 234). Fitri and Alawiyah (2023) note that while adults can use their established first language as a structural reference, this declarative reliance frequently causes what they call a *negative interference*: “when differences between L1 and L2 cause difficulties in the learning process” (p. 12). In this context, the brain counts on declarative memory which is comprised of episodic memory (events) and semantic memory (general knowledge and language) (Tulving, 1972 cited in Greenberg and Verfaellie, 2011).

### 2.3.5. Motivation Variables

Motivation operates as a highly differentiating variable across age groups. While Harmer (2006) emphasises that young learners are commonly guided by external factors, such as curriculum requirements or parental expectations, Purwati *et al.* (2022) underline that adult learners exhibit a highly developed *self-concept*; it characterises them as autonomous and self-directed individuals who take responsibility for their own educational choices. They argue that while mature students are fundamentally driven by intrinsic motivators like job satisfaction and personal growth, their learning trajectory can be simultaneously shaped by pragmatic, external factors such as professional regulation, career advancement, and occupational demands.

As emphasised by Purwati *et al.* (2022), the distinct nature of motivation across different age groups requires a fundamental reorientation of instructional design. While young learners are heavily influenced by situational and external classroom attitudes (Nikolov, 1999; Dörnyei, 2005), adult motivation is deeply pragmatic and goal-oriented (Dörnyei, 2005). Consequently, Purwati *et al.* (2022) underline that an adult learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) will inherently prioritise lexicogrammatical

accuracy, specialised professional vocabulary, and immediate conversational fluency over generic, curriculum-based content. This developmental variance in motivational learners dictates that teaching approaches and task selection (or *techniques*) must be tailored differently to align with the learners' objectives and needs.

### 2.3.6. Conclusion

Taken together, this section shows that age shapes SLA not through a single mechanism, but through several interacting biological, cognitive, and motivational differences. The CPH captures part of this picture but not all of it: an early start offers real advantages in neuroplasticity, without this study assuming it guarantees faster or more complete mastery on every dimension. The procedural/declarative distinction (Skehan, 1998; Paradis, 2004) offers the clearest throughline across the biological, cognitive, and processing differences discussed above: children rely on implicit, memory-based learning, while adults increasingly draw on explicit, rule-based, metalinguistic reasoning to compensate for declining procedural flexibility.

This same asymmetry extends to motivation, though along a different axis. Where children's engagement is shaped largely by external factors beyond their control (e.g., curriculum design, parental expectations), adult learners bring a more self-directed, pragmatically oriented motivation, shaped by both intrinsic goals and external professional demands (Purwati *et al.*, 2022). Age, in other words, does not only alter how language is processed: it also alters why a learner is in the classroom to begin with, and what kind of engagement can be expected as a result.

## 2.4. Methodological Guidelines and Core Instructional Orientations

The differences discussed above are not purely descriptive facts about learners; SLA and second language teaching (SLT) are two sides of the same coin, and neither can be fully understood without the other as they are closely interdependent, with pedagogical practice properly understood through, and shaped by, acquisition research (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Having established how age shapes the way a learner acquires a language, this section turns to what that implies for how language should be taught. Richards and Rodgers (2014) argue that teaching choices directly

depend on who the learners are, requiring educators to establish distinct instructional orientations based on the age of the student cohort. Rather than applying identical techniques, Hird *et al.* (2000) confirm, on the basis of classroom observations of EFL teachers, that while children's and adults' classrooms share some common practices, the overarching teaching rationale must also adapt to the neurocognitive realities of the specific audience.

#### 2.4.1. Core Guidelines for Younger Learners' Teachers

For young learners, Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014) highlight the particular usefulness of visual aids, songs, and poems. They identify some teaching methods and techniques for this age group, such as role play and communicative focused methods combined with differentiation according to gender, skill level, and personality. As Harmer (2006) suggests, children respond to immediate environmental meaning rather than grammatical display. Therefore, the curriculum should focus on oral interaction, treating language as a holistic communication tool rather than a formal system to be dissected. The goal is to lower affective barriers and feed the child's highly receptive procedural memory through interactive, stress-free group encounters.

#### 2.4.2. Core Guidelines for Adult Learners' Teachers

Conversely, adult instruction cannot rely on raw environmental exposure; as demonstrated by Skehan (1998), teaching adults requires structured, deliberate intervention to transform declarative knowledge into procedural fluency. The primary guideline outlined by Hird *et al.* (2000) is to prioritise highly structured, goal-oriented tasks, logical grammatical analysis, and metacognitive reflection and, while doing so, there should be an equal focus on all four macro-skills.

### 2.5. The Four Strands Model

When it comes to foreign language teaching, the instructor has to take into account various aspects of the language. Nation (2007) identified four equally important aspects that he refers to as "strands" which Newton and Nation (2021) argue are necessary for the language course to be "well-balanced" (p. vii). The authors explain

that “these *four strands* are called meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development” (p. 1) (see Figure 4).

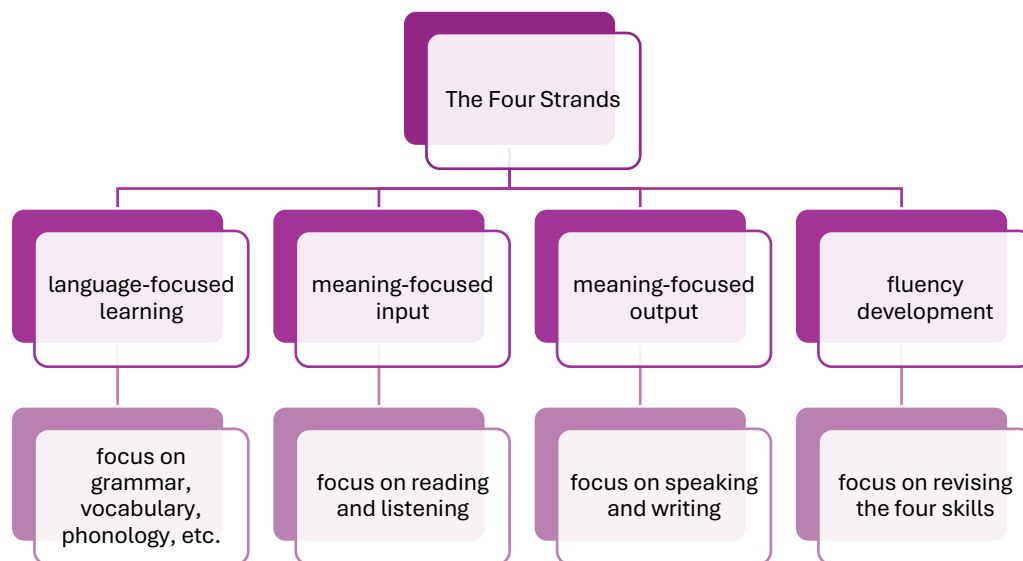


Figure 4: The Four Strands model

Note. Own elaboration based on Nation (2007) and Newton and Nation (2021).

The first strand is *language-focused learning*: this dimension involves a deliberate focus on the linguistic aspects of the language; that is teaching grammar, vocabulary (form, use and meaning), pronunciation, etc. It also aims to develop the learners’ “language learning strategies and language use strategies” (Newton & Nation, 2021, p. 1).

The second strand is *meaning-focused input*: this strand focuses on reading and listening. Within this strand, the learners’ objective is to be able to process the language receptively and to decode the message.

The third strand is *meaning-focused output*: this aspect comprises speaking and writing skills. Here, the learners are expected to actively produce the language to convey a message.

The last strand is *fluency development*: this strand focuses on revising the four skills. It allows the learners to be more familiar with the processing and the production of the language. It aims to automatise the language through the regular practice of the four skills.

Although this model appears practical in theory, its implementation can be more complex in practice, as the instructor must account for several individual factors when designing lessons. Harmer (2006) highlights age and motivation, explaining that learners' interests and needs vary significantly based on these variables. Indeed, Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014) emphasise that with a younger audience, the primary focus must be placed on oral skills. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2005) points out that children, especially the younger they are, frequently present reading and/or writing difficulties in their L1 that can transfer to their L2—called *negative interferences* (see Subsection 2.3.4). Consequently, an equal division among Nation's (2007) four strands cannot always be implemented, particularly when teaching younger learners. Additionally, it is worth noting that some language courses are designed to focus exclusively on one or other specific skills, mainly oral communication. In such context-specific cases, regardless of the learners' age, the traditional balance of the model is altered, as the written components of *meaning-focused input* (reading) and *meaning-focused output* (writing) lose their relevance.

## 2.6. Teaching Methods in the SLA Classroom

Having established the linguistic content and competences that have to be targeted in the classroom, which constitutes the subject matter, it is now essential to examine the pedagogical frameworks and methods that govern their classroom implementation. Building on Nation's (2007) Four Strands model presented above, the analysis of teaching methods used within the foreign language classroom will be organised around three of these four strands: *language-focused learning* methods, *meaning-focused input* methods and *meaning-focused output* methods; these two last strands being examined separately by each author of this dual-thesis, in line with the productive/receptive division outlined earlier. In addition, given that several methods span multiple strands simultaneously rather than fitting into a single one, a fourth category will be dedicated to inter-skill methods applying to various competences at once. The fourth strand identified by Nation (2007), fluency development, will not be treated as a separate category as this strand consists of revising and automatising the four macro-skills rather than introducing new linguistic content; it naturally draws on the very same methods already presented in the sections above, which in this strand are deployed for practice and consolidation rather than acquisition.

The review that follows is deliberately broad. Its purpose is not only descriptive: by establishing the full range of methods the literature documents, it provides the baseline against which the classroom data can later be read. The relationship between the two is itself treated here as an object of analysis, since the breadth of the theoretical inventory and the range of methods teachers actually enact need not coincide. The tables below therefore serve a double function—a reference framework for the reader, and a comparison point for Section 5. Practically, the four following Subsections open with a table listing the most cited and discussed methods within the scientific literature. During our review of the literature, we realised that relying strictly on continuous text to describe and contrast numerous teaching methods often creates a dense, overwhelming narrative where key operational details are easily lost, as observed in comprehensive overviews such as Richards and Rodgers' (2014). Adopting a tabular format directly resolves this difficulty by allowing key operational parameters—age group, method definitions, targeted skills mediums, practical classroom examples, key theorists—to be scanned and compared easily. Reflecting the collaborative design of this study, the first two tables, which cover *language-focused learning* methods and *inter-skill methods*, are common to both researchers as they establish shared instructional foundations. The subsequent tables are presented individually, each tailored specifically to the receptive or productive focus of the respective author's investigation. Each table is followed by a comparative analysis of these methods, highlighting both their common ground and their divergences.

### 2.6.1. Language-Focused Learning Methods

**Table 1**

*Language-Focused Learning Methods*

| Age group | Name + abbreviation              | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Skills medium                                                         | Example                                                                                                                                                                                    | Theorist(s)                                                                        | Sources                                   |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Adults    | Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) | The target language is taught and learned through the study of vocabulary, the exercise of analysing grammatical rules and the translation of texts. It relies heavily on the student's L1 for instruction and comparison, prioritising accuracy and memorisation. | Writing and reading (with minimal or no use of oral and aural skills) | Students study a list of past-tense rules, memorise a set of translated verbs, and then translate a series of disconnected sentences from their L1 to the L2 to demonstrate understanding. | Karl Plötz & Johann Seidenstücker (mid-19th century)                               | Richards and Rodgers (2014); Chang (2011) |
|           | Text-Based Instruction (TBI)     | TBI focuses on teaching language through spoken and written texts, to highlight their genre through their grammatical aspects, purposes, and the context in which they occur. It                                                                                   | Reading then writing                                                  | Reading an authentic email and trying to write a similar one that is adapted to the learner's purpose.                                                                                     | Influenced by the works of Halliday (1989); Derewianka (1990) and Christies (2002) | Richards and Rodgers (2014)               |

|  |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                         |                         |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  |                                     | guides learners in analysing and communicating through structured practice aimed at developing effective communication skills.                                                                                                     |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                         |                         |
|  | Situational Language Teaching (SLT) | This method is based on the principle that grammatical structures should be taught through meaningful situations in which they naturally occur. It allows students to understand and practise in context rather than in isolation. | The four skills | The teacher introduces new language structures by pointing to objects in the classroom and asking students to identify them, allowing learners to practise questions and imperative forms. Through repeated interaction with real objects and guided questioning, students gradually understand and use the target structures in context. | Advocates of this method: Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby | Smith and Loewen (2018) |

Table 1 highlights a clear division amongst the various methods used within the *language-focused learning*; while some concentrate on grammar rules, others stress the importance of linguistic aspects other than grammar (genres, pronunciation, lexis, etc.). Traditional methods like the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) isolate grammatical components to teach them in a decontextualised deductive manner-defined as the presentation of “explicit grammar rules, principles, or language structures before moving on to specific examples or exercises” (Harmer, 2007 cited in Varsat, 2023, p. 1) to build a foundation of formal linguistic knowledge. Conversely, as Smith and Loewen (2018) explain, the Situational Language Teaching (SLT) works as an inductive counterpart to this deductive logic: rather than presenting grammatical rules explicitly before practice, it embeds target structures within meaningful, concrete situations, allowing learners to understand the underlying rule through exposure to authentic material. Consequently, while both methods remain fundamentally grammar-driven and thus fall under the *language-focused learning* strand, they approach the teaching of grammar in opposed manners, as GTM moves from rule to example, whereas SLT goes from example to rule.

Beyond this conceptual divide, age plays a crucial factor in this study. All the *language-focused learning* methods, listed in Table 1, target adult learners. This statement seems logical when examined through the lens of Skehan’s (1998) cognitive system framework. Seeing as adult learners operate predominantly through a *rule-based system*, they tend to rely on their analytical capacities which, for example, allow them to analyse complex grammatical rules (GTM): each of these methods adapts directly to the adults’ structural and cognitive abilities. Consequently, all these methods align with the reality of age-related cognitive development.

Although each language teaching method has contributed to the evolution of language pedagogy, none is without limitations. According to Ismoilov (2025), GTM, despite strengthening learners’ knowledge of grammatical rules, does little to develop oral communication, particularly speaking and listening skills. For its part, SLT has been criticised for its time-consuming nature, and the difficulty teachers face in creating appropriate scenarios (Zhi, 2023).

### 2.6.2. Inter-Skill Meaning-Focused

**Table 2**

*Inter-skill meaning-focused methods*

| Age group | Name + abbreviation            | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Skill      | Example                                                                                                                                                   | Theorist(s)     | Sources                                                                                                              |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adults    | (De)suggestopedia <sup>4</sup> | Desuggestopedia is a method designed to accelerate language learning acquisition by eliminating “psychological barriers” (Arulselvi, 2017, p. 25) and the fear of failure in students. It is based on the concept of <i>desuggestion</i> , which involves unlocking learners’ unexploited mental abilities by deconstructing their limiting beliefs about their own | All skills | While students do an exercise, such as reading a text, the teacher puts on some classical or jazz music, to create a relaxed and stress-free environment. | Lozanov (1970s) | Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011)<br><br>Richards and Rodgers (2014)<br><br>Arulselvi (2017)<br><br>Rashtchi (2018) |

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<sup>4</sup> Originally developed as *Suggestopedia*, the method was later rebranded as *Desuggestopedia* by Lozanov himself (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), to emphasise the primary process of “desuggestion”. This phase aims to unlearn social inhibitions and “psychological barriers” to learning before tapping into the learner’s reserve capacities through artistic and suggestive techniques (Rashtchi, 2018).

|                 |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                   |                                                              |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 |               | capabilities. To create a positive and stress-free environment, the method incorporates arts, such as music and painting, into the core of the educational process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                   |                                                              |
| Not age related | Direct Method | This method is grounded on the principle that SLA should follow the same principles as first language acquisition. The Direct Method focuses on oral interaction, instinctual language use, and avoids translation and explicit grammatical explanations. Classroom teaching is carried entirely in the target language, and the method emphasises listening comprehension, speaking skills, correct pronunciation, etc. | Listening and speaking | Students learn a lesson about daily routines. The instructor conducts the entire lesson in English and introduces new vocabulary by using gestures, pictures, and real objects rather than translating words into French. | Popularised by Maximilian Berlitz | Richards and Rodgers (2014); Brown (2007b); Ismoilov (2025); |

|                 |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |               |                             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Not age related | Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) | Task-Based Language Teaching is pedagogical method in which tasks form the primary basis upon which language instruction is planned and implemented. It encourages learners to use the target language to complete meaningful, real-world tasks, with the primary focus on communicating meaning rather than practicing specific language forms. This method is based on the principle that authentic communication and meaningful language use support the language learning process. | All skills | Students are asked to plan a trip to London. Working in pairs, they compare transport options, choose accommodation, and decide on activities using English. Their objective is to complete the task successfully by communicating with their partner, rather than focusing on specific grammar rules. | Prabhu (1982) | Richards and Rodgers (2014) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|

Primarily, one of the common characteristics of these *meaning-focused* methods is their inter-skill nature, bridging receptive and productive dimensions through a holistic language use rather than isolating skills in a fragmented, structural manner (see Table 2). However, these three methods vary in their specific skill coverage, the Direct Method and Desuggestopedia share a structurally similar profile: both are mainly oral-centred, moving from a receptive phase to a productive one centred on spontaneous speaking, with reading and writing remaining secondary or absent altogether (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), by contrast, does not predetermine which skills are mobilised; its skills coverage depends entirely on the nature of the task itself, such as listening to a partner or speaking to negotiate a decision (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Beyond the question of skill coverage, this study also aims to analyse the influence of age in the choice of method. Regarding age compatibility, the literature reveals a particularly clear case with Desuggestopedia. Unlike the Direct Method and TBLT, which are not inherently age-restricted, Desuggestopedia is explicitly positioned as an adult-oriented method (Brown, 2007a). This orientation is not primarily cognitive, but affective: Lozanov's concept of *desuggestion* specifically targets the psychological barriers and rigid *language ego* (Guiora *et al.*, 1972) that accumulate with age, namely, the belief that language learning is difficult or that errors are humiliating (Brown, 2007a). These self-limiting inhibitions are far more pronounced in adult learners than in children, who typically approach language acquisition with fewer barriers (Brown, 2007a).

Upon analysing these three methods and their operational design, it can be observed that they are not merely divided by their skill coverage, but by the underlying pedagogical logic through which each achieves meaningful language use and understanding. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the Direct Method relies on a naturalistic logic, seeking to replicate first-language acquisition through exclusive target-language exposure. Regarding TBLT, it operates on a functional, task-driven logic, where meaning and use emerge as a by-product of accomplishing a concrete communicative task rather than being targeted directly (Ellis *et al.*, 2020). Desuggestopedia, meanwhile, follows a humanistic and psychotherapeutic logic (Byrnes, 2023), in which language acquisition is facilitated indirectly by first dismantling the learner's psychological resistance to learning itself (Scovel, 1979). These distinct

logics illustrate that these inter-skill meaning-focused methods might share a similar outcome, however through fundamentally different mechanisms.

Despite their benefits, these methods also present important limitations. For instance, Ismoilov (2025) points out that the strong emphasis on speaking in the Direct Method frequently leads to underdeveloped reading and writing skills. A similar criticism applies to TBLT, which tends to neglect structural accuracy, as the emphasis on communicative goals is often at the expense of the systematic acquisition of vocabulary and grammar (Ismoilov, 2025). For its part, Desuggestopedia faced harsher criticism coming from many researchers, including Scovel (1979). He questioned the scientific validity of Lozanov's method for its lack of empirical backing as he argues that it suffers from methodological flaws and "arithmetic errors" (p. 262). Finally, Scovel (1979) cautions that while certain affective elements (e.g., relaxation) can be useful in an EFL classroom, Desuggestopedia fails as a scientifically validated teaching method.

### 2.6.3. Meaning-Focused Input

#### 2.6.3.1. Reading Skill

**Table 3**

*Reading Skill Methods*

| Age group       | Name + abbreviation    | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Example                                                                                                                                                              | Theorist      | Sources                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Not age related | Extensive Reading (ER) | Extensive Reading (ER) refers to the independent reading of large quantities of accessible material, undertaken primarily for pleasure and general understanding rather than detailed linguistic analysis. Day and Bamford (1998) argue that there are 10 characteristics that make ER useful, including a comfortable comprehension level and the learners' personal choice of reading material. However, while Day and Bamford (1998) argue that a comprehension check is not necessary, they underline that teachers may still implement them. | Once a week, students go to the library with their teacher, and they have to choose a book that matches their reading level, which they then read at their own pace. | Palmer (1921) | Bamford and Day (1997)<br><br>Day and Bamford (1998) |

|                 |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |               |                |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Not age related | Intensive Reading (IR) | <p>Intensive Reading (IR) is the method strictly opposed to Extensive Reading (ER).</p> <p>Indeed, this method refers to the reading of short texts, often higher in proficiency than the learners' or grammatically and lexically challenging, imposed by the teacher and studied word by word in order to achieve complete and accurate understanding. This method aims to develop precise reading accuracy and detailed textual analysis.</p> | <p>Students are given a short, dense newspaper editorial slightly above their proficiency level. They have to translate difficult passages, look up unfamiliar vocabulary in the dictionary; and answer detailed comprehension questions about the author's argument and specific grammatical structures used in the text.</p> | Palmer (1921) | Muchtar (2019) |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|

As summarised in Table 3 above, Intensive Reading (IR) and Extensive Reading (ER) represent two contrasting yet complementary methods to reading instruction. On the one hand, Muchtar (2019) emphasises that IR aims to develop precision and exactitude in text comprehension. Within this method, learners engage with teacher-selected texts that are often slightly above their current proficiency level. The reading process involves close linguistic details, translation, dictionary use, and answering detailed comprehension questions to verify the learners' understanding of the text. Because of this dense focus, reading volume remains low. Conversely, Muchtar (2019) notes that ER encourages reading fluency and learner autonomy. In ER, students read large quantities of accessible materials, either slightly below their language level or at their level, which they select based on personal interest (Sangers *et al.*, 2025). The primary objective shifts from decoding every individual word to deriving overall thematic meaning, rendering continuous dictionary consultation unnecessary (Muchtar, 2019). Ultimately, far from being mutually exclusive, IR and ER pursue different immediate objectives that, when combined, strengthen overall reading proficiency.

Such duality in reading instruction highlights the pivotal role teachers may play in shaping learners' attitudes toward reading. As Mikulecky (2008) explains, "reading is essential for success in acquiring a second language" (p.1). According to the author, reading serves as a foundation for second language instruction. Consequently, the way instructors perceive and present reading in the classroom may directly impact how their students engage with it. In this context, a distinction may be drawn between reading for information (IR) and reading for pleasure (ER).

This opposition between ER and IR directly mirrors a fundamental distinction within the receptive skills' theoretical framework: the interplay between Top-Down and Bottom-Up processing. As established earlier in this thesis, Top-Down processing enables readers to draw on their prior knowledge and expectations to grasp the general meaning of a text (Harmer, 2006). On the contrary, Harmer (2006) defines Bottom-Up as a detail-driven mechanism where understanding is constructed step-by-step by focusing on "individual words and phrases" (p.201). Crucially, both processing remain integrated within IR, as both process the text in its entirety; they differ simply in their analytical direction. In terms of reading, these two cognitive mechanisms are complementary, as overall contextual understanding and detailed analysis constantly

inform each other. When constructing the initial comparative framework presented in the table above, Top-Down and Bottom-Up processing were initially considered for inclusion as teaching methods. However, upon further analysis, they do not strictly align with the definition of a method provided in Section 2 of the thesis. A review of the academic literature reveals a noticeable lack of consensus regarding their classification. Harmer (2006) categorises them as “processing” mechanisms, without, however, offering an explicit definition of the term. Conversely, other researchers propose different classifications, such as Siegel (2018), who conceptualises them as “strategies”, or Osborne (2004), who considers them “approaches”. Initially, these processing were also evaluated as “techniques” in this thesis, following the definition established in Section 2, namely as specific, discrete classroom activities that operationalise a given method. Yet, because Top-Down and Bottom-Up processing describe internal cognitive operations rather than tangible classroom activities, they do not entirely fit this definition either. Consequently, to maintain theoretical rigor, they were excluded from the comparative table itself. Instead, they are addressed in this study under the term “processing”, as this designation remains the most widely cited in general literature despite the ongoing uncertainty regarding their precise classification (Fatemi *et al.*, 2014; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Batova, 2010).

Regarding the target audience of IR and ER, the literature reviewed for the comparative table does not explicitly restrict either method to a specific age group. Both methods can therefore be applied to adult and young learners. However, IR may be more challenging for younger learners because it requires constant attention to the text, close analysis of linguistic features, the use of dictionaries to identify unknown words, and the completion of comprehension activities to demonstrate understanding (Muchtar, 2019). These activities require learners to process several aspects of the text simultaneously, which may require considerable cognitive effort. From a cognitive perspective, adult learners may therefore be better equipped to handle the analytical demands of IR. As discussed in Subsection 2.3.3, adult learners can draw on more developed metacognitive mechanisms to plan, monitor, and regulate their foreign language learning, as well as on critical-thinking and problem-solving strategies when processing complex linguistic information (Siregar *et al.*, 2024). These abilities may facilitate the sustained attention and conscious monitoring required by IR. This does not mean that IR is inappropriate for children; rather, its cognitive demands suggest

that younger learners may require adapted tasks. Learners' existing reading abilities in their first language may also influence their ability to read in an L2. Lee and Schallert (1997) show that L1 reading ability contributes to L2 reading performance, although this relationship is influenced by learners' level of L2 proficiency. This suggests that younger learners, who may have less developed reading experience and strategies in their first language, could face additional difficulties when engaging in cognitively demanding IR tasks. Consequently, while both IR and ER can be applied to children and adults, IR may require greater adaptation when implemented with younger learners.

Despite their pedagogical values, both IR and ER face notable theoretical and practical criticisms. On the one hand, according to Yang *et al.* (2012), limiting IR to traditional teacher-led instruction hinders learner autonomy, unless teachers actively provide progressive support and strategic reading tools to their students. Furthermore, Nation and Macalister (2020) point out that relying solely on specific texts can bias linguistic priorities, by assigning equal importance to vocabulary and grammatical rules, whether they occur frequently or not, without taking into account their overall usefulness. On the other hand, ER presents its own limitations. Nation and Macalister (2020) point out that because ER relies primarily on incidental learning, where the focus is on narrative progression rather than on explicit linguistic features, language acquisition may become unstable; without rigorous "planning and monitoring" (p. 56), and extensive exposure to ensure repetition, learners may fail to consolidate their essential structural and lexical knowledge.

### 2.6.3.2. *Listening Skill*

**Table 4**

#### *Listening Skill Methods*

| Age group       | Name + abbreviation      | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Example                                                                                                                             | Theorist(s)   | Sources                                                                                     |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Not age related | Extensive Listening (EL) | This method consists of regularly exposing students to a large range of listening material over long time periods to develop their listening comprehension. Similar to Extensive Reading, this method allows students to naturally improve their skills, vocabulary, and familiarity with accents, without necessarily needing a teacher's help. | Each week, students must listen to two podcasts or watch videos of their choice in the target language.                             | Palmer (1921) | Prasongngern and Soontornwipast (2023);<br><br>Bamford and Day (1997);<br><br>Palmer (1921) |
| Not age related | Intensive Listening (IL) | Intensive Listening involves listening to a short text with close attention in order to analyse the language in detail or identify specific information. This method is generally carried out in the classroom and aims to develop listening skills.                                                                                             | Students listen to a train station announcement to extract specific information, such as the departure time or the platform number. | Palmer (1921) | Prasongngern and Soontornwipast (2023);                                                     |

|          |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |             |                                                         |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |             | Bamford and Day (1997);<br><br>Palmer (1921)            |
| Children | Total Physical Response (TPR) | TPR is a method that directly links language with physical movement. Its core mechanism is straightforward: the teacher issues commands in the target language, and the students demonstrate their understanding by immediately performing the corresponding actions, without relying on native language translation or explicit grammar rules. | Students listen to their teacher call out imperative commands in the target language like “Stand up”, “Pick up your pencil”, or “Touch your nose”, and immediately perform the corresponding actions without saying a word (e.g., Simon Says). | James Asher | Asher (1969),<br><br>Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) |

Just as with reading methods, Extensive Listening (EL) and Intensive Listening (IL) share distinct immediate objectives while ultimately aiming toward the goal of enhancing learners' overall listening comprehension (see Table 4). Paralleling the mechanics of ER, EL involves exposing students to a large volume of audio material over an extended period of time to foster listening skills and build global comprehension (Prasongngern & Soontornwipast, 2023). On the contrary, IL mirrors IR by using shorter, more focused audio passages to direct learners' attention toward specific linguistic and detailed elements (Prasongngern & Soontornwipast, 2023). However, a major distinction between the ER/IR and EL/IL lies in the role of the readers or listeners' motivation. While Muchtar (2019) stresses that personal enjoyment is a defining characteristic of ER, where self-selected texts foster a love for reading, contrasting with teacher-chosen IR texts that risk undermining reading pleasure, this dimension of affect is not treated identically in the listening literature. Notably, scholars such as Prasongngern and Soontornwipast (2023) or Bamford and Day (1997) make no explicit mention of "pleasure" when defining IL and EL, suggesting that while reading methods often integrate affective engagement as a primary goal, listening methods tend to focus more directly on skill development and listening comprehension.

Turning to target audiences, the academic literature does not explicitly restrict Extensive nor Intensive Listening to specific age groups, suggesting that both methods may be implemented with young and adult learners alike. Nonetheless, much like IR, IL may prove to be particularly challenging for young learners due to its high cognitive demands. In listening activities, this difficulty can be increased by factors specific to spoken language. As Lyberg-Åhlander *et al.* (2015) point out, background noise in the classroom makes young learners "allocate cognitive capacity" just to block out the distractions and focus on the audio (p. 1). In addition, variations in the rate of speech among speakers may add extra pressure on children's listening comprehension, a challenge that could be even greater for students who already struggle with language learning or disabilities (Lyberg-Åhlander *et al.*, 2015). As a result, these acoustic and environmental challenges can easily overwhelm young learners, making IL tasks hard to sustain without proper teacher support.

Another key difference from reading instruction is the presence of an additional method specifically centred on listening, namely Total Physical Response (TPR), which is widely highlighted in the scientific literature. Unlike the other receptive methods

presented in the comparative framework, TPR stands out for its primary design and widespread application among young learners. This method draws an explicit parallel with first language acquisition. As Asher (1969) notes, young learners develop a strong listening ability prior to producing spoken language, a skill that is clearly reflected in their ability to respond to physical instructions. Building on this logic, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) explain that TPR allows students to build a cognitive “map” of the target language through listening, leading to spontaneous speech emergence only when the learner feels ready, much like the natural process of first-language acquisition in an infant (p.137). Nevertheless, while TPR is predominantly tailored to children’s developmental needs, it is worth noting that it can also be successfully adapted for adult learners (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Despite its benefits, TPR faces several significant theoretical and practical criticisms. As Bui (2018) points out, the scope of language that can be instructed through physical movement is limited, restricting instruction primarily to basic nouns and action verbs while making abstract concepts or complex tenses difficult to convey. Consequently, although theoretically applicable to adults, TPR is rarely sustained beyond introductory levels for young learners, and its physical requirements can cause discomfort or embarrassment for adult students (Bui, 2018). Furthermore, Bui (2018) notes that TPR relies on a teacher-centric dynamic that assigns learners a passive role, which offers them limited opportunities for creative self-expression. Finally, from a psycholinguistic standpoint, the method’s core assumption, that L2 learning should mirror infant L1 acquisition, is criticised for being overly simplistic, as it overlooks the natural cognitive differences between mature learners and babies (Bui, 2018).

### 2.6.3.3. The Natural Approach

**Table 5**

*The Natural Approach*

| Age group | Name + abbreviation | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Skill                 | Example                                                                                                                                                                     | Theorists                  | Sources                                                        |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Children  | Natural Approach    | The Natural Approach assists beginners in reaching an intermediate level by prioritising language reception over immediate practice. One of its core principles states that production must follow comprehension, meaning learners must first understand written or spoken messages to build the foundation for future expression. As a result, instruction emphasises rich linguistic input and an extended listening or reading period before requiring learners to produce language. Another principle states that the correction of errors that do not hinder genuine language acquisition is unnecessary. | Listening and reading | The teacher describes a student in the class using simple sentences. The learners have to identify the student, without speaking, by pointing at them or saying their name. | Krashen and Terrell (1983) | Richards and Rodgers (2014),<br><br>Krashen and Terrell (1983) |

To conclude the overview of receptive methods, it is necessary to examine a final method that bridges both listening and reading instruction: the Natural Approach. This method, as explained in Table 5, is based on the principle that “comprehension precedes production” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 20), meaning learners absorb language through reading or listening before being expected to speak or write. The Natural Approach shares striking similarities with TPR. First, according to these two methods, language acquisition is an unconscious and natural process similar to the way infants naturally acquire their native language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Second as He (2026) highlights, both TPR and the Natural Approach are rooted in the Affective-Humanistic system, sharing a unified theoretical foundation focused on “psychological security” (p. 1). Unlike traditional methods that rely on drill exercises and constant correction of errors, both methods aim to reduce learner anxiety by creating a supportive, stress-free environment where “physical movement” (He, 2026, p.2) and a gradual introduction of information alleviate the pressure associated with learning.

As previously discussed, the Natural Approach offers several notable benefits. However, Cubukcu and Harputlu (2015) raise three concerns. First, they note that the method disproportionately favours receptive skills, while leaving speaking and writing comparatively underdeveloped, a structural imbalance that contrasts with the equal weighting typically expected across the four macro-skills. Second, they observe that the method was conceived primarily with beginner learners in mind, and its pedagogical value becomes considerably less certain once learners reach more advanced proficiency levels, where its emphasis on unforced, low-pressure exposure may no longer suffice. Finally, they point to an unresolved theoretical gap at the very heart of the method, as explained earlier: it remains unclear exactly what qualifies as *comprehensible input*, or how a teacher might deliberately calibrate it to a given learner’s level, leaving one of the method’s central operational concepts largely undefined (Liu, 2015).

#### 2.6.3.4. Conclusion of Meaning-Focused Input

In conclusion, the analysis of receptive skill pedagogy reveals that reading and listening instruction are approached in a parallel manner. Both domains share a

structural duality between intensive methods (IR/IL), which prioritise linguistic precision, close analysis, and teacher guidance; and extensive methods (ER/EL), which emphasise global comprehension, exposure volume, and learner autonomy. The primary distinction in this comparative landscape lies in listening instruction, which includes two additional methods: Total Physical Response and the Natural Approach, the latter serving as a bridge by encompassing both auditory and written input.

Across these receptive methods, the role of the teacher undergoes significant shifts according to the degree of learner autonomy required. In intensive instruction the teacher adopts a directive stance, controlling input and evaluating precision. On the contrary, extensive methods, TPR and the Natural Approach reposition the instructor as a facilitator whose main goal is to select rich input and create a stress-free environment.

Regarding target audiences, the reviewed literature does not explicitly restrict intensive or extensive methods to any specific age group, suggesting they are universally applicable; however, this analysis hypothesises that intensive instruction may align more naturally with adults. Indeed, while IR and IL can be used with children if properly adapted, their high cognitive and metacognitive demands suggest that adult learners may be better equipped to manage them. Conversely, TPR and the Natural Approach are fundamentally tailored to young learners' developmental dynamics, though their low-stress principles can also be adapted for adults, provided physical commands do not cause social discomfort.

## 2.7. Conclusion

This literature review establishes the theoretical architecture governing SLA with a specific focus on receptive skill pedagogy across child and adult cohorts. Rather than presenting an isolated inventory of instructional models, the academic consensus reveals a continuous structural thread: pedagogical methods seem to be directly conditioned by the neurocognitive, cognitive and motivational profiles of the target audience.

At the core of this theoretical framework, receptive skills—listening and reading—serve as the primary foundation for language internalisation. While real-time listening

imposes higher auditory working-memory demands compared to reading, both modalities rely on the dynamic interaction of Top-Down schematic expectations and Bottom-Up linguistic decoding.

Crucially, the comparison between children and adults highlights a fundamental neurocognitive divide. As neuroplasticity and procedural memory capacity decline after early childhood, language acquisition transitions around age seven from an implicit, automated, memory-based system to an explicit, analytical, rule-based declarative system. Young learners naturally absorb language through implicit environmental exposure, guided by situational and external motivation. On the contrary, adult learners compensate for reduced procedural flexibility by leveraging metacognition, critical thinking, and L1 structural references, driven by autonomous, pragmatic, and professional objectives.

These learner-internal variables directly dictate the design of classroom methods. Receptive pedagogy operates under a structural duality between intensive instruction, which prioritises linguistic precision, detailed decoding, and directive teacher intervention, and extensive instruction, which fosters fluency, exposure volume, and autonomy. Because intensive tasks require sustained analytical focus, they seem to align naturally with adult cognitive processing. In contrast, child-oriented instruction relies heavily on low-anxiety, physically or contextually anchored methods—such as TPR or the Natural Approach—designed to bypass explicit grammar and lower affective filter.

Ultimately, this theoretical synthesis demonstrates that the shift from young to mature learners fundamentally alters how language input is processed, why learners engage with it, and what instructional scaffolding<sup>5</sup> they require. Having established these theoretical foundations, this study transitions to observe how these models manifest in real-world primary and adult education classrooms within a multilingual context.

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<sup>5</sup> A temporary and adapted support provided by the teacher to help learners accomplish tasks they cannot yet do independently, with the support gradually withdrawn as they become more autonomous (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001)

### 3. Research Question and Hypotheses

To establish a clear bridge between the State of the Art and the forthcoming empirical data investigation, it is necessary to define the key concepts constituting our research question:

“Inquiry on EFL Teaching Methods in a Multilingual Context: A Comparative Focus on Receptive Skills in Child and Adult Learners”

This research question can be understood as:

“To what extent does learners’ age shape the selection and the classroom enactment of receptive-skill teaching methods in multilingual EFL settings?”

Three of its items require delimitation before the hypotheses can be formulated: the learner populations compared, the language modalities examined, and the multilingual context in which the fieldwork took place.

#### 3.1. Target Learner Populations: Child vs. Adult Learners

In the context of this study, the distinction between child and adult learners is strictly demarcated by age group and educational setting. Adolescent learners (approximately 12 to 18 years old) are deliberately excluded from this comparative scope. The present study deliberately steps outside of it, focusing instead on the two extremities of the learner spectrum which allows for a sharper contrast, if there is one, thereby maximising the visibility of age-related methodological differences:

- **Child Learners:** this category specifically designates young learners in primary education, generally aged under 12 years old. At this stage, language learning takes place in a foundational schooling environment where cognitive development, attention spans, and social dynamics differ significantly from older student populations.
- **Adult Learners:** conversely, this category is defined here as individuals enrolled in adult training or continuing education contexts, outside the compulsory schooling track. In practice, the adult cohort observed for this study belongs specifically to the Belgian *Promotion Sociale* system: learners attending evening classes on a voluntary basis, whose participation is neither imposed by a

curriculum nor, supposedly, mediated by parental expectation. This is a narrower population than the category “adult learner” covers in the literature, and conclusions drawn here are correspondingly bounded.

### 3.2. Language Modalities: Receptive Skill

This comparative inquiry focuses on how language proficiency is built across receptive and productive skills, which have been defined earlier. This thesis focuses specifically on receptive skills.

The choice to focus on this specific area is grounded in Krashen’s (1985) *Input Hypothesis*, which asserts that the process of internalising a second language occurs through the comprehension of meaningful messages. In addition, Krashen (1985) underlines that individuals must first understand the language before they can produce it. Building on this theoretical framework, this research explores two fundamental macro-skills:

- Reading Comprehension: This skill exposes students to diverse literary genres and the specific structural conventions of written discourse (Harmer, 2006). Furthermore, Harmer (2006) highlights that reading actively enables learners to expand their vocabulary while simultaneously improving their spelling and punctuation.
- Listening Comprehension: This skill provides learners with essential linguistic exposure. According to Harmer (2006), listening practice allows students to acquire new vocabulary, identify authentic grammatical patterns, and become familiar with a variety of voices beyond that of their teacher. By absorbing this rich linguistic input, learners build the necessary foundation to subsequently improve their spoken output. (Harmer, 2006)

Consequently, this study concentrates on receptive skills, as receiving and understanding linguistic input forms the indispensable groundwork of English as a Foreign Language pedagogy.

### 3.3. The Multilingual Context: English as a Lingua Franca and Theoretical Scope

Finally, a crucial contextual parameter of this study concerns the environment in which instruction occurs. While the pedagogical framework and curricular objectives of the observed classrooms remain firmly rooted in English as a Foreign Language instruction, the actual communicative dynamic within these classrooms reflects an ELF reality: given the absence of a shared L1 among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, English functions as the primary vehicle of interaction between learners, independently of any native-speaker norm. This distinction is not merely terminological; it carries direct pedagogical consequences, most notably regarding the practical feasibility of certain teaching methods.

It should be noted that the overarching State of the Art presented in this chapter deliberately adopted a broad theoretical scope, reviewing a comprehensive range of language teaching methods in order to map the historical and pedagogical landscape of EFL teaching.

However, this multilingual, ELF-driven reality introduces a fundamental practical restriction: in monolingual settings, traditional methods such as GTM might be employed because explicit language instruction relies on a shared L1. In contrast, within the observed ELF classrooms, the absence of a common L1 renders GTM practically impossible to implement.

This contextual parameter carries a methodological consequence that must be acknowledged from the outset. In the Brussels landscape, the availability of a shared first language is not distributed evenly across age groups: primary-level EFL instruction is concentrated in international establishments, which are multilingual by design, while adult *Promotion Sociale* provision tends to recruit locally and which leads to a possible predominantly French-speaking population of EFL learners. Age and classroom linguistic composition therefore covary in this setting before any observation begins. Where the analysis in Section 5 identifies effects attributable to one, the possibility that the other is operating cannot be excluded and is signalled wherever it arises.

Consequently, while all methods were examined theoretically to maintain academic completeness, the empirical phase of this study will naturally observe how instructors

choose and implement their methods, including the practical limits associated with this ELF context.

### 3.4. Hypotheses

#### 3.4.1. Hypothesis 1: Adults vs. Children

A common belief is that the sooner a person starts learning a language, the faster and the better they will master the language; this belief is deeply rooted within the CPH, first developed by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and later refined by Lenneberg (1967) (Siahaan, 2022). However, as seen earlier, this hypothesis was also at the end of a lot of criticism and was proven wrong by studies demonstrating the contrary (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006; Stromswold, 2000; Birdsong, 2006). Research shows that various language teaching methods can be used and it appears that some methods might be more adequate for younger or older learners. The hypothesis that my co-researcher and I will examine is that there might be a difference between the methods chosen depending on the learners' age. In fact, we suggest that it is not the age, only, that plays a factor in choosing the "right" method, but rather the lessons' (and teachers') objectives, which, in this case, may vary on the learners' age. For this reason, we hypothesise that age does not act directly on method selection, but indirectly, through a set of intermediate conditions that happen to covary with it in ordinary teaching settings: the linguistic composition of the class, the duration and scheduling of sessions, the institutional routines available to the teacher, and the teacher's own representation of what each population needs in order to understand. If this holds, then any method whose feasibility depends on one of these conditions should follow the condition rather than the age group —and should appear in the other population wherever the condition is met. Should method distribution instead track age even where these conditions are held, the hypothesis would not hold.

#### 3.4.2. Hypothesis 2: Extensive VS Intensive

Moreover, based on the theoretical framework, I hypothesise that the choice between extensive and intensive instruction in receptive skills may be primarily driven by the age-related motivational profiles and specific learning objectives of the students. On

the one hand, I suppose that teachers instructing young learners rely predominantly on extensive methods- namely Extensive Reading and Extensive Listening- to tap into children's intrinsic motivation, maintaining an atmosphere centred on pleasure and continuous engagement to acquire the language (Mughtar, 2019). Within this scope, methods like TPR and the Natural Approach are likely to be exclusively targeted at children. As highlighted by He (2026), both frameworks prioritise “psychological security” and aim to reduce learner anxiety through physical movement and a gradual, pressure-free introduction to the language (p. 1). On the other hand, teachers working with adult learners are likely to favour intensive methods- namely Intensive Reading and Intensive Listening —as they focus on precise vocabulary analysis, specific grammatical rules, and detailed textual analysis. I suggest that these methods may align particularly well with mature students as they generally study towards a specific goal, whether for academic purposes or to advance their careers, as in the case of English for Specific Purposes (Purwati *et al.*, 2022).

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Theoretical Framework

With the aim of establishing a rigorous framework to investigate the variety of teaching methods used by teachers in the EFL classroom between different age groups, this study employs a naturalistic inquiry<sup>6</sup> approach. More precisely, this research adopts a multi-method qualitative data collection, framed within the naturalistic inquiry approach and is structured as a comparative case study in order to map out pedagogical methods of ELT across different age groups. According to Coe *et al.* (2025), the naturalistic inquiry, which was originally conceptualised by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is grounded on the use of participant interviews and field observations. Coffey (2009) characterises this approach as a way to deepen one's insight through the collection and assessment of "largely qualitative data" (p. 104). Additionally, the author notes that this process entails gathering extensive information to be interpreted so as to formulate conclusions. By adopting the naturalistic inquiry approach, the study provides a comprehensive vision of the diverse pedagogical methods utilised within different classrooms across the targeted age groups.

In order to have a clear understanding of the methodology used in this research, it is necessary to identify its specific design and distinguish it from other existing methodologies. Indeed, while the use of multiple data sources in this study might be conflated with a *mixed methods* design, it is essential to clarify that this research is strictly qualitative. As Almalki (2016) states, mixed methods research necessitates the integration of both quantitative numerical data and qualitative inductive analysis. In contrast, this study relies exclusively on qualitative data collection, namely, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the lack of numerical data and the sole presence of inductive practices confine this research within a multi-method qualitative data collection rather than a mixed-methods design. Indeed, this approach employs an inductive analysis that aims to identify recurring and/or different patterns of ELT methods across age groups. With regard to the analysis of the data in this study, triangulation is employed. According to Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021), data triangulation makes use of several data sources in a study, whereas "investigator triangulation" (p. 2) uses different researchers; in this thesis, my collaborator and I fulfil

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<sup>6</sup> Also spelt *Enquiry* in the scientific literature

these roles. Incidentally, in this research, triangulation is not used as a tool to validate or refute a pre-established hypothesis, but to *cross-check* the entirety of the data collected throughout the research process. Thus, as observed by Nor *et al.* (2011), the use of qualitative triangulation, and more precisely the use of cross-checking, “contributes to a greater reliability and validity of results” (p. 62).

This collaborative qualitative data collection provided a significant advantage during the empirical phase of the research. By pooling our resources, we were able to conduct a broader range of observations and interviews, benefiting from a ‘cross-perspective’ analysis. The constant sharing of literature reviews and field data meant that the development of one thesis continuously informed the other. The discussion with my co-researcher helped me better understand how receptive skills can shape the development of language skills. Although our theses approached language learning from different perspectives, the productive aspect she explored offered a useful contrast to my focus on comprehension and processing. Bringing these two perspectives together allowed us to highlight the progression between understanding language and being able to use it effectively.

Our research design was guided by the three-phase methodological framework designed in *Naturalistic Enquiry* by Coffey (2009): gathering existing data, obtaining evidence, and analysing the findings. Reflecting on this framework, our initial phase consisted of an in-depth literature review aimed at establishing a theoretical overview of ELT, the influence of age and of the multilingual context, and the development of each language skill. The second phase focused on conducting empirical observations of groups of children and adults in Brussels, respectively at a European School and an adult education centre. To ensure the consistency in data collection, we designed and implemented our own observation grids. At the end of this phase, we conducted guided interviews with each teacher, based on our pre-prepared questionnaires. To ensure a fair distribution of the workload, the observation sessions and interviews were divided equally among us, taking into account our respective availability. Finally, on the last phase, in accordance with the principle of triangulation mentioned earlier, we pooled our data to carry out a cross-analysis. This three-phase model enabled us to interpret the results from the perspective of the specific skills addressed in our respective thesis.

## 4.2. Data Collection Method, Instrument, and Participants

### 4.2.1. Field Observations

This section details the context in which observations were conducted, specifically the environments and populations involved. As previously indicated, observations were conducted in two distinct educational settings, both in Brussels, Belgium: a European primary school and an adult education centre (a *Promotion Sociale* establishment). To ensure confidentiality, each teacher, from each school, is associated with an anonymisation tag. At the primary school, four teachers (referred to as Teacher A1, A2, A3, and A4) were observed twice across two separate levels: a fourth-year group (P4) and a fifth-year group (P5), and one teacher (Teacher A5) was only observed once in a fifth-year group. These two groups comprised beginners aged from 9 to 11. In this school, each observation session (nine in total) lasted for a period of 45 minutes. At the adult education centre, two teachers (referred to as Teacher B1 and B2) were observed on two separate occasions each, the lessons lasting three hours. The learners ranged from age 23 to 65. In this establishment, each session lasted three hours (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Summary of Classroom Observations and Teacher Interviews:*

| Age-group | Teacher tag | Number of classes | Lesson length | Number of visits | Interview                           |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary   | A1          | 2 (P5 & P4)       | 45'           | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|           | A2          | 2 (P5 & P4)       | 45'           | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|           | A3          | 2 (P5 & P4)       | 45'           | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|           | A4          | 2 (P5 & P4)       | 45'           | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|           | A5          | 1                 | 45'           | 1                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults    | B1          | 1                 | 3h            | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|           | B2          | 1                 | 3h            | 2                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

*Note.* Own elaboration based on observations and interviews.

Key: ☒ = Interview conducted; ☐ = Interview not conducted. Teacher A5 could not be interviewed (see Subsection 4.2.2).

One asymmetry within the sample should be noted at this stage. Although every class observed was situated at a beginner level, the two cohorts were not beginners in the same sense: the child classes included *false beginners*<sup>7</sup>, with prior exposure to English, including through their schooling, whereas the adult learners were absolute beginners who had started two months before the observations period. Both groups were therefore at an early stage of instruction, but not from an identical starting point. This distinction is returned to wherever proficiency is invoked as a possible explanation in Section 5.

To ensure the academic integrity of the data and minimise the natural bias inherent in qualitative field research, the observation phase was structured into two distinct stages: first, the design of an observation grid, synthesised from the scientific literature previously discussed, and second, the implementation of the field observations themselves.

The primary tool for the empirical phase of this research was a structured observation grid (see Appendix 1), designed to act as a descriptive repository for qualitative field data. A key objective in the design of this instrument was to ensure that the data collection remained unaffected by the specific expertise of either researcher. By focusing on observable indicators rather than immediate expert interpretation, the grid allowed each co-researcher to document all four macro-skills with equal precision. Consequently, while each researcher specialised in either receptive or productive skills for our respective analyses, the descriptive nature of the grid allowed both to provide detailed accounts of all classroom activities. For example, a researcher focusing on receptive skills could objectively examine productive elements, such as learners' responses or tasks requiring language output, without immediately categorising them according to a specific method. This approach ensured that the grid functioned as a neutral vehicle for global data collection, providing a comprehensive evidence base for later interpretation through the lens of the established scientific literature.

The grid was organised into four main descriptive categories:

1. Classroom Context and General Atmosphere: this section records the fundamental logistics of the lesson, such as duration, student count, and the

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<sup>7</sup> A person who has a basic knowledge of a language but has started to study it again from the beginning (Oxford Learner's dictionary, 2026)

topic addressed. It focuses on documenting observable indicators of the classroom environment, including interaction types, the teacher's visible role, and the linguistic balance between English and the language of schooling.

2. Teaching of Productive Skills (Speaking and Writing): this dimension provides dedicated space to describe how language generation is handled in the classroom. It captures the specific types of activities performed, the nature of the tasks (e.g., creative writing or drills), and the visible feedback or correction techniques employed by the teacher.
3. Teaching of Receptive Skills (Reading and Listening): this section documents the use of input in the classroom. It records the types of texts or audio used, the purpose of the listening/reading tasks, and the observable pre- and post-activity phases, as well as the methods used for comprehension checks.
4. Materials and Resources: this final category focuses on the physical and digital tools used during the session. It records the specific textbooks or teacher-made materials present and provides space for field notes on how these resources appeared to be adapted to the specific age group being observed.

By prioritising a descriptive recording over immediate categorisation, we ensured a solid data set that remained independent of the specific pedagogical specialisations of each researcher. These descriptive results provided a neutral foundation that was later interpreted and categorised according to the specific approaches and methods discovered in the previously discussed scientific literature.

#### 4.2.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

To gather comprehensive primary evidence, we elaborated semi-structured interviews to elicit detailed professional insights while maintaining a standardised framework across all participants. The interview question sheet was developed simultaneously with the observation grid. Our objective was to create broad questions that would capture each teacher's overall pedagogical methods and uncover contextual aspects that could not be fully collected through direct observation alone. Furthermore, the questions were designed to obtain specific clarifications on observed classroom practices, exploring the reasoning behind the chosen methods, including the influence

of learners' age, the institutional context, the personal teaching preferences, and the specific guidelines of the establishment. The interviews were conducted via *Microsoft Teams* and lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on the depth and level of detail of the teacher's responses. It is important to note that, due to a lack of responsiveness, only four out of the five primary teachers have been interviewed.

As mentioned previously, we designed a semi-structured question sheet (see Appendix 2) to ensure that all participants were asked the same set of questions, thereby minimising potential bias and guaranteeing consistency in data collection. In this regard, Pin (2023) explained that semi-structured interviews are commonly employed in qualitative research for data collection purposes. The author further elaborates that this type of interview is based on a predefined grid of questions while still allowing participants to respond in a flexible and open-ended manner. Consequently, this interview format aims to gather detailed information and to provide insights into individuals' experiences.

This question sheet was carefully developed to cover several key dimensions of our research and was organised into three main sections:

1. General Background Information: this first section aimed to gain a clearer understanding of each teacher's professional profile. It included questions about their teaching experience, the type of institutions in which they work, and the characteristics of their current learners. In addition, it explored how teachers continue their professional development, for instance through seminars, academic reading, or other forms of ongoing training.
2. Teaching Methods and Pedagogical Approaches: in this section teachers were asked about the methods they use to develop the four main language skills. Additional questions explored their familiarity with major EFL approaches, the reasons behind their methodological choices, and their use of teaching materials, including textbooks and self-created resources.
3. Experiences and Adaptation: this last section aimed to investigate how teachers adjust their practices according to different age groups or proficiency levels. Questions addressed their previous teaching experiences with other audiences, their perceptions of the differences between teaching children and adults, and

the ways in which they would adapt their methods when working with a different target group.

During the interviews, we also used follow-up questions whenever responses were too brief, prompting participants to elaborate further. This allowed us to obtain richer, more nuanced data and to gain deeper insights into their teaching practices and professional reasoning. This entire process provided concrete examples of different methods used for children versus adults in cases where the teacher had experience with both groups, but more precisely, these interviews enabled us to gather a precise insight into the teachers' perspectives and the reasoning behind the decisions made during the observations.

This process allowed the co-researchers to cross-check the field data against theoretical frameworks, bridging the gap between practical classroom realities and established pedagogy to ensure a rigorous qualitative foundation for the following analysis.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis

Having gathered the empirical data needed for this study and having reviewed the scientific literature underpinning its state of the art, this thesis now turns to the process through which empirical data was analysed. Data analysis proceeded through a manual, colour-coded process comprising seven distinct stages, in the following order:

- 1) All observation grids and interview material relating to a single teacher were gathered into one discrete document; this yielded seven individual teacher documents in total; each subsequently printed in full.
- 2) An anonymisation tag was written by hand on each printed document, allowing individual teachers to be tracked and cross-referenced throughout the remainder of the analysis without risk of confusion between participants.
- 3) A colour code was developed by hand, associating each teaching method identified in the theoretical framework with a distinct highlighter colour; colours were deliberately chosen to contrast as strongly as possible with one another,

and a reference key recording each highlighter's corresponding method was maintained throughout (see Appendix 3).

- 4) Every exercise or technique identified within each teacher's printed observation and interview document was associated, where possible, with a specific method using this colour code, supplemented by handwritten comments wherever a technique required further clarification or did not map cleanly onto a single method (see Appendix 4); because several productive and receptive skills' exercises are closely related (i.e., reading and writing, listening and speaking), both researchers conducted this coding stage simultaneously, cross-referencing overlapping material as it arose. This colour-coded layer functioned as a first-pass indexing tool rather than as the analysis itself: each coded instance was subsequently re-examined qualitatively, drawing on the surrounding transcript or field note, the teacher's own framing of the activity, and the corresponding method definition established in Section 2, before being incorporated into the written analysis presented in Section 5.
- 5) Each teacher's fully coded document was analysed individually, and a preliminary conclusion was drawn, meaning that methods were associated with each teacher's activities in turn.
- 6) These individual conclusions were cross-checked against one another within each learner group, comparing patterns identified across the child-classroom teachers on one hand and the adult-classroom teachers on the other.
- 7) The patterns established within each group were compared against each other, allowing this study to identify where children's and adults' classroom practices converged and where they diverged.

This staged design carries two concrete advantages. First, it builds a check directly into the coding process itself: because both researchers coded simultaneously, discrepancies in how a given exercise was categorised would be caught and resolved during coding, rather than only surfacing once conclusions had already been drawn. Second, moving from individual teacher documents (stage 5), to within-group

comparison (stage 6), and only then to between-group comparison (stage 7), meant that no cross-group claim about children and adults was made until a pattern had first been shown to hold across multiple teachers within the same group; however, the inequality in size between the two groups limits how far this safeguard can operate on the adult side.

## 5. Results and Discussion

Before presenting the empirical findings, a methodological clarification is needed regarding the data collection instruments; both the observation grids and the interview question sheets contain theoretical inaccuracies, which is one of the limitations of the methodology (see Subsection 5.6.1). Indeed, both were designed and conducted prior to the full theoretical refinement, such as the distinction between a *method* and an *approach* which was developed in Section 2 of this thesis. As a result, several parts within these instruments—interview questions and aspects to be observed—use “method” and “approach” interchangeably, occasionally listing genuine approaches alongside methods as though they belonged to the same category. For instance, the observation grid includes a field titled “Overall approach observed”, which should have been called “*Methods* observed”, given our research question. Moreover, within this field, “CLT/ Grammar-Translation/ Task-Based Language Teaching /CLIL /Audiolingual Method/TPR /other” was listed without any differentiation (As shown in Figure 5); indeed, CLT (see Subsection 5.1.4) and CLIL have both been established as *approaches* while the others are considered to be *methods* (See Subsection 2.1).

|                                  |                                                                                                             |  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Overall <u>approach</u> observed | CLT / Grammar-Translation /<br>Task-Based Language Teaching/<br>CLIL / Audiolingual Method / TPR<br>/ other |  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Figure 5: Excerpt from the observation grid: section “Overall Approach and Classroom Atmosphere”

The same conflation occurs in the field titled “*Method* used” under the speaking section, where “CLT (interaction-based)” is again listed as a co-equal option alongside TBLT, ALM, and TPR (See Figure 6). And once again, this conflation appears within the Interview question sheet, in question 14, “methods” and “approaches” are listed without any distinction, putting CLT, GTM, TBLT, TPR and ALM in a single, homogenous list (See Figure 7).

|                    |                                                                                                                    |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Method <u>used</u> | CLT (interaction-based), TBLT<br>(task completion), Audiolingual<br>(repetition drills), TPR<br>(commands/actions) |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Figure 6: Excerpt from the observation grid: section “Speaking”

14. Have you ever heard of the following EFL methods and approaches :

☐ CLT (Communicative Language Teaching): Focuses on using language for real communication. Students learn by interacting, speaking, and expressing meaning rather than memorizing grammar rules.

☐ GTM (Grammar-Translation Method): method focusing on grammar rules and translating between the first language and English, with little emphasis on speaking or listening.

☐ TBLT (Task-based Language Teaching): Learning happens through completing meaningful tasks like solving a problem or planning an activity. Here, language is used as a tool to achieve a goal, not as the main focus.

☐ TPR (Total Physical Response): Students learn language through physical movement. The teacher gives commands, and learners respond with actions, helping comprehension before speaking. (i.e. Simon says)

☐ ALM (Audio-Lingual Method): This method is based on repetition and habit formation and is used mainly for pronunciation and drills.

Figure 7: Excerpt from the question sheet: Question 14

Admittedly, CLT was categorised as a method due to its omnipresence across foundational reference works, although it does not fit the definition of a method established in this thesis (see Harmer, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This recurrent presence in the literature, combined with the fact that a strict definition had not yet been fully established, nor understood, at the beginning of our data collection, led to CLT being miscategorised.

Having clarified the confusion present in the data collection instruments, the remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: Subsection 5.1. examines the place of language-focused instruction in the observed classrooms, systematically contrasting its presence and its treatment between child and adult learners. Subsection 5.2. tackles the imperfect nature of English as a Lingua Franca in these multilingual classrooms, focusing on the first language (or another L2 than English) used by students and teachers alike. Subsection 5.3. considers the institutional constraints, including textbooks used and a comparative overview of the overall structure of child and adult lessons. Subsections 5.4 and 5.5 broach the receptive skills—listening and reading—central to this study. Subsection 5.6 addresses a reflection on the methodology, such as its limitations and value. Finally, this results section closes with a conclusion (5.7) drawing these findings together against the hypotheses formulated in Section 3.

## 5.1. Language-Focused Methods

As stated in Subsection 2.5, the foreign language classroom is divided into four strands, one being “language-focused learning” (Nation, 2007). This strand focuses on deliberate pedagogical interventions aimed at mastering specific linguistic features, including grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics among many others. In the empirical data gathered for this study, it was verified that this strand has, in fact, a place within the foreign language classroom. It is important to note that the theoretical study conducted in Subsection 2.6.1 underlines that language-focused oriented methods (GTM, SLT and TBI), tend to be adult-oriented. The following analysis of empirical data gathered for this thesis enables the verification of these theoretical affirmations in real-life settings, comparing how language-focused features are taught between child and adult learners.

### 5.1.1. Grammar-Translation Method

The data gathered did not make it possible to determine whether GTM’s presence or absence was driven by learners’ age as such or by a very concrete structural factor: whether teachers and learners share a common language. Teacher A4 stated that GTM is “not used at all as the class is multilingual”; Teacher A2 for her part offered a more nuanced account, stating that some GTM related practice did occur (“GTM also uses speaking and listening”) but that translation is minimal again “as the class is multilingual”. Teacher A3 confirmed the same pattern, reporting that she “does not do it”. Moreover, while Teacher A1 did not address GTM directly in her interview, no trace of translation-based instruction was recorded in either of her observations. Finally, even though an interview with Teacher A5 was not conducted, an informal discussion with her revealed that she only speaks English, therefore, the use of any other language was practically impossible.

By contrast, GTM was explicitly recognised and endorsed by both adult classroom teachers, and its concrete application was directly observable in practice. In Teacher B2’s classroom one activity consisted of an introduction to new vocabulary by means of isolated translation, a typical exercise encountered in GTM according to Richards and Rodgers (2014). This observed practice aligns with the teacher’s own account of the method in her interview, where she offered an endorsement directly tied to the

presence of a shared first language: “it can be used when they have the same first language, it can be helpful [...]”. Teacher B1 was more categorical, checking GTM as a method he recognised but he also restricted its usefulness by age: “GTM is useful for teenagers and adults, when they compare with their L1, they understand better”. He added elsewhere in his interview: “for children, grammar is different and you cannot go deep in details, adults need to know more into details”.

Taken together, these accounts point to an overlap in this corpus that complicates a clean interpretation: age and shared L1 availability happen to align perfectly (the multilingual classrooms are all child classrooms); and the French-shared classrooms are all adult classrooms. This makes it difficult to fully disentangle which factor is truly driving GTM’s presence or absence. Teacher B1’s own framing, however, explicitly invokes age-related cognitive readiness alongside the L1 argument, suggesting that both factors may be operating simultaneously.

### 5.1.2. Situational Language Teaching

SLT was never named directly by teachers during the interviews, nor did it appear as a labelled option in the interview checklist. This omission does not reflect SLT’s pedagogical relevance, which remains well established in the literature (see Subsection 2.6.1). Rather, it stems directly from a limitation of the data collection instruments themselves, discussed earlier: only the ‘methods’ most frequently cited in the reference literature (CLT, GTM, TBLT, TPR, ALM) were included at the design stage, and SLT fell outside this narrower selection (see subsection 5.6.1). Its presence in this corpus must therefore be inferred from classroom practice rather than self-report.

One clear example of SLT use comes from Teacher B1’s adult class: during the lesson, which focused on ‘the hour’, students received a flashcard showing an activity (“wash my hands”) and had to ask a classmate: “at what time do you wash your hands”. The structure was practised through a concrete situation, with no explicit rule preceding it. A second example, retrieved from the same teacher’s classroom, illustrates a practice closer to SLT than to GTM within his teaching practice. Students first had to “guess when and why they use the present simple”. Only after letting his students guess did the teacher give them the use and spelling rules. This progression is inductive rather

than deductive, matching SLT's logic more closely than GTM's. However, this does not contradict Teacher B1's endorsement of GTM elsewhere in his interview; rather, it illustrates that a teacher may draw on more than one method within the same lesson, consistent with the methodological diversity found in the scientific literature and listed in this thesis.

This method could not be observed in the child classrooms. Flashcards were commonly used across several observations (Teacher A4's card game, for instance) but their objective and use differed drastically from the SLT example above. Rather than isolating a single target structure within one concrete situation, these activities served other pedagogical purposes, examined in their own right in later Subsections of this analysis.

This scarcity may itself reflect a broader historical trajectory instead of a genuine absence from classroom practice. Richards (2006) notes that "Situational Language Teaching fell out of fashion" (p. 9) as attention shifted from grammatical competence alone toward the knowledge and skills needed to use language appropriately for different communicative purposes. This would account for its absence from the data collection instruments (see Subsection 5.1.) and its rarity in this work, without implying that the method itself lacks classroom relevance—as seen in Teacher B1's activity—. The corpus gathered here is, in any case, too limited to draw conclusions regarding age-related patterns in SLT use specifically, given that only a single teacher demonstrated it clearly and that it was not tackled during the interviews.

### 5.1.3. Text-Based Instruction

As with SLT, TBI was absent from the interview checklist and from every classroom observation conducted for this study, in both age groups. Teacher B1's own account of his writing practice: "I start with a sample text, analyse the grammar, [...] analyse the structure (how to organise a text)" —initially appeared to offer a rare instance of this method, given its focus on analysing a source text's grammar and organisation ahead of production. However, the collaborative rewriting stage based on the model, followed by independent writing, maps more precisely onto the Product-Based Approach, a written-oriented method developed more precisely in the parallel study which focuses on productive skills (Saadaoui, 2026). TBI's presence in this corpus is therefore be

considered unconfirmed, consistent with its absence from both the interview checklist and observation for every other teacher in the study.

#### 5.1.4. Focus on Forms and Communicative Language Teaching:

##### Approaches, not Methods

Beyond GTM, SLT, and TBI, several isolated grammar and vocabulary exercises emerged in the data that fit none of the three methods. In Teacher B2's classroom, students completed a variety of grammar-related exercises: present simple/continuous choice exercise, a word-reordering task and a fill-in-the-blank conjugation exercise. These fragments were not recorded as a distinct method in this study, for a specific reason: their theoretical home does not lie in a *method* as this thesis defines the term, but in Focus on Forms (FonFs), a traditional approach in which the curriculum is structured around a pre-determined syllabus of isolated grammatical, lexical, or phonological features, taught in a linear sequence and practised as linguistic objects to be mastered, rather than used in contextualised communication (Doughty, 1999; Ellis, 2016). Unlike GTM, SLT, and TBI, FonFs prescribes no classroom procedure of its own; it typically surfaces as brief, punctual fragments inserted within a broader lesson. This may explain why such instances, though seemingly frequent in this corpus, escaped classification within this study's method-based framework: their theoretical status is that of general orientation, not a procedure comparable to the three methods examined above. As with these methods, no equivalent instance of FonFs was recorded in any child classroom.

Read together this means that none of the four *language-focused learning* methods/approaches examined appeared in a single one of the child classrooms observed. The four primary teachers interviewed provided indirect support for this pattern, by checking Communicative Language Teaching<sup>8</sup> (CLT) among the "methods"

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<sup>8</sup> According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT aims to enable students to use the target language in real-life communication situations. To achieve this, simply knowing the rules of the language is not enough; learners must understand how words and sentences can have different meanings depending on the context and the person they are speaking with. In the classroom, nearly all activities have a communicative purpose and are based on practical tasks such as games, role-plays, and problem-solving exercises. The teacher's role is to lead the class, in addition to acting as a facilitator or participant: they create communicative situations, guide learners, and note errors so they can be corrected later through exercises focused on accuracy.

they recognised and used, which is consistent with, though does not by itself confirm, the absence of the four *language-focused learning* categories examined above. This might mean that this absence was not incidental; indeed, all five child classroom teachers showed clear evidence of a broadly communicative approach overall. The fifth teacher, A5, could not be interviewed, yet her observed lesson demonstrated the same orientation as it was built around exchange and interaction in the target language. Communication itself appeared to function as the principal vehicle through which language, including grammar, was learned. The adult classrooms present a noticeably different picture. Teacher B1 did not check CLT among the methods he recognises, nor did he mention it spontaneously at any point. Teacher B2 did check it but attached a condition none of the other teachers expressed: “starting with it is a bit complicated, it is only used with questions [...] We start using it around A2- level”. This statement is particularly notable given that every class observed was situated at a beginner level—though not in precisely the same sense, since the child classes included false beginners while the adults had begun learning EFL two months earlier (see Subsection 4.2.1).

That difference may partly account for the withholding itself; it, alone, does not account for the reason the teachers give for it. Teacher B2 does not only describe CLT as premature for learners who know too little, but also for learners who have not yet been given a reason; she explains that adults need everything explained and that they want a reason. The threshold invoked is one of proficiency and explicitness.

Therefore, a tentative hypothesis can be suggested: the child-classroom teachers appear to have moved decisively away from traditional, form-focused methods towards a communicative orientation, regardless of proficiency level, while the adult-classroom teachers have not made the same shift, or have made it only conditionally. Their own words suggest why: Teacher B2, though teaching only adults, notes that older learners in particular need “everything explained; they want a reason” behind tasks, which follows an explicit approach, opposed to the CLT’s more implicit logic. Teacher B1’s emphasis on adults needing to “know more into details” points the same way. For these two teachers, communicative teaching may be perceived less as an entry point than as something requiring prior comprehension, one that explicit instruction is expected to supply first.

This asymmetry echoes the age-related cognitive processing already developed in Subsection 2.3.4, where child learners are associated with procedural, implicit processing, and adult learners with a declarative, explicit processing (Paradis, 2004, cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006; Skehan, 1998). Therefore, communicative teaching, grounded in implicit, use-based learning, sits naturally with the procedural system associated with children, which may explain why it could be implemented from the beginning, without threshold. Conversely, as seen with teachers B1 and B2, adults are expected to build explicit, declarative knowledge first (through the methods cited above), consistent with the more conscious, rule-based system the earlier Subsection 2.3 attributes to adult language learning.

## 5.2. English as a Lingua Franca

When designing the interview and observation instruments for this study, the presence of French in the classroom was anticipated as a relevant criterion to track, given the Brussels context in which this research was conducted. However, once the search for participating schools began, it became apparent that few primary institutions in the area offered English as a Foreign Language lessons. This constraint led to the selection of a European School for the child-classroom part of this study. The assumption at that stage was that, even within a European School, students would share a common L1, streamed into linguistically homogeneous sections. This assumption proved incorrect once observations began: students within the same EFL class were, in fact, linguistically mixed, not sharing a single common L1.

A comparable, though inverted, oversight emerged on the adult side. It had not been anticipated that some adult learners would not speak French at all, prioritising learning English rather than one of the languages of their country of residence (in this case, French or Dutch).

Among child learners, a further distinction emerged across classrooms. In some classes, students never resorted to a language other than English (such as in teachers A1 and A2's classrooms); in others, they could not help doing so, prompting teachers to intervene directly. This raises a question this study cannot fully answer: why might students choose to speak their mother tongue amongst themselves—out of boredom, or to help one another? Several factors plausibly contribute to this variation, among

them classroom dynamics, the teacher's own role and presence, and whether a given activity leaves room for informal chatter or instead demands sustained engagement.

Some of these teachers frame this expectation explicitly as a rule rather than a mere default. Both teachers A1 and A4 described relying on an "English only rule" as part of their strategy. In practice, this rule appears aspirational rather than fully enforceable: Teacher A4's own account of correcting students who "use another language when speaking together" suggests it sets an expectation students do not always meet, rather than a boundary they never cross.

Nonetheless, a further nuance emerged in both classes among adult learners; some students were observed explaining the lesson content to one another in Arabic. Because both researchers have experienced this and both share this language, it was possible to confirm that these exchanges constituted genuine mutual assistance rather than mere off-task conversation, an interpretive advantage not available for the other languages overheard in this study (Ukrainian and Portuguese among others).

However, whether a shared language could be used at all depended entirely on classroom composition. For teachers A4 and A2, the answer was structurally negative: both teachers underlined the multilingual composition of their classrooms which led to the total absence of any kind of translation. In both classrooms, and more broadly across every child classroom observed, no single L1 was shared widely enough to make its use viable—A structural constraint on the student side, independent of either teacher's own linguistic repertoire (A2, for instance, does speak French herself). Nevertheless, Teacher B2's account complicates this picture: she argues that it is not simply a yes-or-no matter as even within her adult class, "some do not have a common language", yet French remained usable as a "transversal language" because most students shared it. This partial feasibility narrowed over time by design, rather than by necessity, according to Teacher B2: "until the end of 1<sup>st</sup> level, other languages can be used", after which reliance on another language was expected to fade. Teacher B1's classroom represents the clearest case: French was shared widely enough to be used as a matter of course throughout his lessons, with no structural barrier comparable to that faced in the primary school (as in this classroom, a majority of students and the teacher share a common language, here French).

### 5.2.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of L1 Use

Neither teacher group was asked directly to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of L1 use, and none volunteered a structured reflection on the matter. What can be inferred from their practice, however, points to two related advantages. The first is comprehension support: both teachers B1 and B2 turn to French specifically as a repair strategy, deployed when understanding breaks down rather than as a default mode of instruction, though this repair function occurs considerably more often in B1's classroom, given how widely French is already shared there (see Subsection 5.2), than a purely occasional repair strategy would imply. The second aspect that can be considered an advantage, more particular to B1, is a decoupling of content mastery from linguistic form: by accepting a correct answer in French without requiring its reformulation in English, he appears to prioritise verifying comprehension over enforcing target-language production at all times, an implicit hierarchy of pedagogical goals never made explicit elsewhere in the findings.

A plausible disadvantage, though not one explicitly named by any teacher in this corpus, follows from the concept of language transfer: Odlin (2003) defines this as “the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (p. 436). Fitri and Alawiyah (2023) describe its negative form as arising “when differences between L1 and L2 cause difficulties in the learning process” (p. 12). Frequent recourse to L1, particularly when used as a structural crutch instead of a targeted repair strategy, might reinforce such interference at the expense of target-language processing.

### 5.2.2. Translanguaging

This overall pattern, deliberately managed L1 recourse among adults, and a stricter, more sparingly used equivalent among children, calls for a theoretical lens not otherwise present in this thesis: *translanguaging*. García and Wei (2014) define *translanguaging* as the way bilinguals or multilingual speakers do not keep their languages in separate boxes; instead, they draw on all the languages they know as a single, combined, resource, moving between them as needed rather than switching from one “closed system” (p. 31) to another. They argue that bilinguals' language

practice “do not emerge in a linear way or function separately since there is only one linguistic system” (García & Wei, 2014, p. 14).

This concept maps directly onto what was found in this study. Among adults, the teacher deliberately organises this movement between languages, using French as a planned support (Teacher B2) or a temporary bridge before returning to English (Teacher B1): a top-down, teacher-led form of *translanguaging*. Among children, the same movement between languages appears, but informally, among students themselves, and only at the margins of an official “English only” rule the teacher has set: a bottom-up form, tolerated (not always) rather than planned.

Beyond its effect on comprehension support, the classrooms’ differing linguistic composition also structures production itself. Children were expected to respond in English regardless of confidence, with no viable linguistic fallback available to them, since no single L1 was shared widely enough to permit an alternative. Adults, by contrast, could retreat to French when uncertain, treating it as a safety net rather than persisting through English production under difficulty. Although it is the focal point of the parallel study, it is important to note that this asymmetry matters specifically for productive skills: Swain’s (1995) *Output Hypothesis* (first developed in 1985) holds that producing language, rather than only receiving it, plays a distinct role in acquisition by pushing learners to notice gaps between what they want to say and what they are actually able to say (see Subsection 2.2.7). Structurally, children in this study were pushed into this gap-noticing process more consistently than adults, who retained an escape route unavailable to their younger counterparts. Multilingualism, though not anticipated as a variable when this thesis was first designed, therefore appears to condition productive-skill outcomes directly, by shaping how much genuine target-language production learners were required to sustain.

### 5.3. Lesson Design

Many factors are taken into account while designing a lesson. As stated earlier, the age group seems to be a central one, however the observations and the interviews revealed that other factors might have an impact on the method choice —namely the material used and the lesson’s structure (pace, group size, length, etc.).

### 5.3.1. Material Constraints: Textbook Standardisation vs. Teacher Autonomy

A contrast emerged regarding course materials and textbook reliance, though a more layered one than a simple presence or absence of teacher choice. At the European School, every teacher was recorded using *Kid's Box 5* (see Appendix 5) (for fifth-year learners, and *Kid's Box 4* for fourth-year learners) during observed lessons. Teacher A1 explains that this reflects a genuine, if bounded, act of teacher choice: “publishers came to present and we choose”, indeed, the teaching staff themselves have selected the book from among competing options put forward to them. What follows the initial choice, however, is a period of relative fixity, driven less by an absence of teacher agency than by cost and parental investment, as explained by Teacher A1 who underlined that the books are expensive and that parents wanted them to be used, discouraging frequent change once a choice is made. Within this fixed frame, teachers still supplement freely: Teacher A4 situated the textbook at only two-thirds of her practice, reserving a third for her own material. Teacher A2 does it as well, as her worksheets use attest, including the recurring book review assignment discussed in Subsection 5.4.1 (see Appendix 6). This choice of textbook is not merely a logistical detail: a book's own internal structure orients which methods it makes available to a teacher in the first place, plausibly contributing to the method patterns established in Subsections 5.1, 5.4, and 5.5—a constraint operating upstream of the methods themselves, not merely alongside them.

At the adult school, material selection follows a comparable logic from the opposite direction. Teacher B2 described the “use of a textbook made by the school's teacher; own material created and put together as a syllabus”, explicitly framing this as “a base but sometimes there are complementary exercises added”—a workbook authored by the teaching staff themselves, used as a scaffold rather than a script. Teacher B1 made the administrative expectation explicit in his own words stating that the institution's director wanted them to use a syllabus, while simultaneously reporting that he freely supplements it by adding additional material that can bring something different. Both adult teachers, in other words, operate under an institutional expectation of a shared, internally authored syllabus, while retaining considerably more day-to-day autonomy over how it is supplemented.

### 5.3.2. Structural Schedule, Attention Management, and Pacing

Beyond activity count alone, the physical and temporal conditions surrounding each session differ sharply between the two groups

**Table 7**

*Average lesson structural design*

| Structural Variable                    | Children         | Adults           |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Average class size                     | 19 students      | 13 students      |
| Session Timetable                      | Morning schedule | Evening schedule |
| Session Duration                       | 45 minutes       | 3 hours          |
| Number of exercises (per session)      | 6.2 exercises    | 10 exercises     |
| Average number of exercises (per hour) | 8.2 exercises    | 3.3 exercises    |
| Break                                  | No               | Yes              |

*Note.* Own elaboration based on observations.

A note on sample composition: two of the five child-classroom teachers (A2 and A5), were excluded from the calculation above. Both teachers indicated, in informal discussion during the observed sessions, that the lesson being observed was atypical of their usual practice: Teacher A2's session took place during the class's fortnightly library visit, while Teacher A5's was built around a single paired long-term project. Both teachers reported that their regular lessons typically featured a greater number and diversity of exercises than what was observed on these particular occasions. Including these two sessions in the calculation would therefore have understated, rather than overstated, the pacing density typical of child classrooms—making their exclusion a conservative methodological choice.

Read together, these structural parameters explain the pacing contrast established in the field data: children experience more activity shifts per hour (8.2) than adults (3.3), despite completing fewer exercises in absolute terms per session (see table 7).

Where adult sessions are long enough to require a scheduled mid-lesson break, primary teachers manage sustained attention through activity variety and rapid task rotation. This is consistent with the methodological recommendations of Shin (2006) regarding young learners' cognitive limitations: he argues that children aged 8 to 10 possess limited attention spans, making it essential to keep individual tasks within a 10-to-15 minutes window. The observation data illustrates this rotation concretely: in Teacher A1's P4 session, the class moved from an oral warm-up ("how was your weekend?") to a topic-guessing activity, to two short videos, to a listening exercise, to a brainstorming task - five distinct activity types inside a single 45-minute block. Similarly, Teacher A4's P4 lesson cycled through a video episode, a group role-play, a spelling task, and a phonics song within the same window.

Furthermore, the high density of exercises per hour observed at the children school aligns with Scott and Ytreberg's (1990, cited in Shin, 2006) framework for young learner engagement, which advocated maintaining a dynamic balance across multiple instructional axes: energy levels (quiet focus alternating with active, noisy interaction), skills and modalities (listening, speaking, reading and writing shifting within a single block), and interactional patterns (individual work, pair work, small-group tasks, and whole-class guidance rotating throughout). Teacher A4's card game —where forming correct sentence about a job allows a student to keep the card —exemplifies this convergence of a language-focused task with a game-based, individually-paced format designed to sustain engagement.

In contrast, adult evening sessions operate under an extended three-hour format. This contrast may be partly explained by a broader developmental pattern in learning itself. Comparing children's and adults' capacity for executive control of learning, Kuhn and Pease (2006) found that this capacity increases between middle childhood and adulthood, allowing older learners to more easily hold and coordinate two things at once: their prior expectations, and new information that may contradict them. The authors are careful to note, however, that this developmental trend coexists with substantial individual variation as some children in their study performed at the same pace as typical adults. Their sample (11- to 12-year-olds and young adults in their twenties) does not map exactly onto this study's own age ranges, so the findings are applied here with caution. Read this way, Kuhn and Pease's (2006) study suggests that sustained, single-focus engagement may be comparatively less effortful for adult

learners than for children —consistent with the extended, single-target sequences observed among adult teachers. For instance, Teacher B1’s sequence built around a single “present simple + spelling rule” focus, developed across revision, flashcard practice, two parallel time-telling exercises, a listening task, and a grammar-conjugation exercise —a longer, more analytically layered progression around one grammatical target rather than a fast rotation between unrelated skills. This does not mean, however, that attention management disappears entirely from the adult classroom: Teacher B2 explicitly described adapting the timing of the built-in break itself when needed— “[I] adapt everything, change the break moment, as you cannot focus too long on an exercise. I need to switch fast from one point to another” — suggesting that even within a longer, break-structured format, some of the same fatigue-management logic observed among child-classroom teachers is present, only exercised at a more general level (by adjusting a single scheduled break) rather than through a continuous rotation of tasks at the micro level.

## 5.4. Analysis of the Reading Skill

This section examines how reading, the first of the two receptive skills central to this thesis, is taught and adapted across the two learner populations under study, drawing jointly on the interview data and the observation grids collected for each teacher. The analysis proceeds in three stages: it first considers the reading methods documented, through both interviews and observations, in the child classrooms, then those documented in the adult classrooms, before a closing Subsection cross-checks the two sets of findings against one another and against the age-related hypotheses formulated in Subsection 3.4.2.

### 5.4.1. Reading in the Child Classroom

ER emerges as the single most consistently reported reading practice among the child-classroom teachers. Teachers A1, A2, A3 and A4 all describe, independently, a fortnightly library routine in which learners select a book, read it over a two-week period, and produce a written book review (see Appendix 6). Moreover, during an informal discussion with Teachers A2 and A3, both claimed that every EFL teacher had

to do it, which means that even though Teacher A5 was not observed doing so nor interviewed, it can be confirmed that she follows the same routine. This convergence is analytically significant in itself: five teachers working across different class levels arrived at a structurally identical instructional format without any indication of coordination, which might suggest that the practice is less a matter of individual pedagogical preference than of an institutional convention embedded within the European School itself.

In practice, Teacher A2's interview clarifies that book selection operates on two combined criteria: current level and interest, with learners moving to the next level only once it becomes too easy for them (see Appendix 7). This progression logic mirrors Sangers *et al.*, (2025) by using the level system as an informal mechanism to continually provide learners with *comprehensible input* slightly below their evolving proficiency or at the same level. Additionally, the second criterion aligns with Day and Bamford's (1998) model, which argues that interest is the main criterion within ER. Moreover, in their model, the authors underline that comprehension checking were not mandatory, but up to the teacher's preference. In the case of the primary school teachers, students had to document their reading, by completing a structured book review requiring them to state the title of the book, the author's name, to write a summary, express their likes and dislikes, and to include a drawing, providing a concrete basis for Teacher A2's comprehension verification. Furthermore, this review is not only formally graded, marked out of five with written and oral feedback, but also serves as a genuine comprehension check: Teacher A2 reports verifying or reading unfamiliar books herself specifically to confirm that a student's summary corresponds to what was actually read.

This entire process, going from the book choosing to the feedback-discussion, however, is corroborated, though only partially, by direct observation. Of the five, only Teacher A2's session was actually observed performing the routine in full, during which children returned a previously borrowed book and selected a new one from a fixed level, and received individualised, in-the-moment feedback on their review from the teacher, who circulated through the library. For teachers A1, A3, and A4, the practice rests entirely on interview self-report; this asymmetry between reported and observed frequency constitutes a genuine limitation of the sample regarding how the book review

is specifically treated by each teacher, and is consistent with the broader instrument-related constraints developed in Subsection 5.6.1.

Although IR was not anticipated among children under Hypothesis 2, direct classroom observations, rather than interview self-reports, clearly confirm its implementation in two primary classes. In Teacher A3's lesson on Saint Nicolas, the instructional sequence follows IR's structure closely. The activity began with a teacher-selected text and pre-reading preparation, followed by an initial read-aloud for global comprehension, and then by an individual reading phase focused on extracting specific information. This staged sequence, rather than leaving learners to regulate their own reading, effectively performs the planning and monitoring functions that Siregar *et al.* (2024) attribute to adult metacognition, as explained in Subsection 2.3.3: the teacher supplies, through scaffolding, externally what younger learners have not yet developed that means to supply themselves. This structure operationalises the dual-processing model detailed in Subsection 2.2.3. In fact, the first reading draws on schematic expectations and prior knowledge to grasp the general idea (Top-Down processing), while the second reading requires systematic decoding of distinct linguistic features (Bottom-Up processing). A comparable pattern emerges in Teacher A5's classroom, where learners conducted guided research on climate change using teacher-provided sources, the same scaffolding substituting for the self-directed research strategies Siregar *et al.* (2024) associate with more cognitively mature learners.

TBLT was referenced in interviews by three out of four teachers, yet its observable link specifically to reading was confirmed in only two classrooms, where it functioned as an overarching framework embedding IR. In Teacher A4's class, students watched an episode of *Lock and Key*<sup>9</sup>, read and re-read its script, and re-enacted the play in groups. This activity operates simultaneously as IR and TBLT because it requires the close, repeated textual decoding characteristics of IR to ensure accurate script comprehension, while using this reading input as a functional tool to complete a meaningful communicative goal—performing the scene—that aligns directly with TBLT. Similarly, in Teacher A5's class, young learners conducted research on climate change using books brought by the teacher herself (see Appendix 8) to prepare a group oral presentation, extracting information to build their final presentation, through which the

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<sup>9</sup> Lock and Key is a child-friendly educational animated series used in all the primary classrooms to introduce thematic vocabulary and language structures.

reading comprehension was ultimately checked. Far from replacing traditional classifications of reading, these composite examples demonstrate that TBLT method—which does not define any internal reading procedures of its own (see Table 2)—can naturally incorporate IR as a functional tool for achieving broader objectives related to communicative tasks.

Desuggestopedia, however, is completely absent from the empirical corpus, as no trace of this method was identified during either the classroom observations or the semi-structured interviews. Naturally, the Direct Method is absent from this reading-oriented analysis given that the method is orally-oriented (listening and/or speaking).

#### 5.4.2. Reading in the Adult Classroom

The empirical picture regarding instruction in the adult corpus is considerably thinner. While Teacher B2 mentioned in her interview that her beginner students read in class and that she actively encourages them to read newspapers and books at home when they reach a higher level, no reading activities were recorded during either of her observed sessions, which might be explained by the complete beginner level of her learners. Similarly, Teacher B1 reported relying solely on IR, describing a process where students read texts for a general idea before predicting the overall topic—a sequence corresponding to a Top-Down entry point. Because these accounts rely exclusively on interview self-reports without direct observational corroboration, they provide only weak empirical support for Hypothesis 2, which predicted a strong alignment between IR and adult instruction.

Finally, neither TBLT-driven reading tasks nor Desuggestopedia were observed or mentioned across the adult cohort, the latter-method absence can be explained by the gap consistent with the data collection instrument limitations that will be explained in Subsection 5.6.1.

#### 5.4.3. Cross-Checking

Read together, the child and adult data only partially support Hypothesis 2's expectation that ER would align with children and IR with adults. The child side confirms the first half cleanly: ER is reported for all five primary teachers and its indirect

use by Teacher B2, and it was directly observed in one child classroom, consistent with the motivational, autonomy-driven profile Section 2.3.5 attributes to younger learners. Additionally, contrary to what the purely pleasure-oriented definition in Table 3 would suggest on its own, ER in the child classrooms proved to be tightly regulated, through grading, comprehension verification, and a level-based progression.

The second half of the hypothesis, however, is effectively inverted by the evidence. IR is not confirmed as an adult-specific practice; it is instead directly observed in two child classrooms (A3, A5), with a fidelity to IR's structure, that neither B1's nor B2's account can match, since both rest on interview alone and are corroborated by no observation whatsoever. The strongest observational evidence for IR in this entire corpus therefore comes from the population Hypothesis 2 predicted would rely on it least (see Table 8).

This asymmetry does not disconfirm the theoretical framework in Subsection 2.6.3.1, which already anticipated that IR is not inherently age-restricted but requires greater pedagogical adaptation with young learners: the scaffolding observed in A3's and A5's classes in practice, aligns with the metacognitive limitations Section 2.3.3 attributes to children. What it does disconfirm is the sharper claim in Hypothesis 2, that IR belongs to adults and ER to children as a fixed pairing: since children here are shown using IR, only with more teacher support, age evidently does not restrict which method a population may use, only how much mediation that method requires from the teacher to work.

A further point of comparison concerns TBLT and Desuggestopedia, the two inter-skill methods from Subsection 2.6.2. TBLT was confirmed exclusively on the child side, functioning as an overarching framework around IR in A4's and A5's classrooms, whereas no equivalent task-based reading was observed for either adult teacher and was only confirmed through their interviews (see Table 8). This absence leaves its age-neutral status untested among adults in this specific corpus. Meanwhile, Desuggestopedia is completely absent from both observation and interviews across both populations (see Table 8). Rather than disproving its theorised adult orientation (Brown, 2007a), this total absence stems directly from the interview checklist design, that will be explained in more detail in Subsection 5.6.1, rendering the result inconclusive.

Finally, the thinness of the adult observational data points to an inherent methodological blind spot. Teacher B2's reported encouragement of home reading gestures toward an autonomous, ER-adjacent practice that the fieldwork was simply unable to record. This reflects less an absence of ER among adults than a structural constraint of the research design: independent, out-of-class reading falls systematically outside the scope of an instrument built strictly to record in-classroom activity. Direct Method, as stated earlier, naturally does not appear in this section regarding the reading skills because it focuses on oral interaction, meaning spoken comprehension and production.

**Table 8:**

*Summary of the methods used for the reading skill by children and adults' teachers*

| Method            | A1                                  | A2                                  | A3                                  | A4                                  | A5                                  | B1                                  | B2                                  |             |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Desuggestopedia   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Extensive Reading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Interview   |
|                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Intensive Reading | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | /                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| TBLT              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Interview   |
|                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |

*Note.* Own elaboration based on observations and interviews.

Key: ☐ = no evidence ☒ = method confirmed / = not applicable

## 5.5. Analysis of the Listening Skill

This section turns to listening, the second of the two receptive skills at the heart of this thesis. As with reading, the analysis draws on both interviews and observation grids and follows the same three-part logic: the child classrooms first, the adult classroom next, and a final cross-check against the age-related hypotheses set out in Subsection 3.4.2.

### 5.5.1. Listening in the Child Classroom

A striking feature of the primary corpus is the near-total absence of EL as a structured pedagogical framework. Teacher A1 mentions encouraging students to watch films and

listen to songs while Teacher A2's interview refers instead to sourcing songs tied to school events such as the "*spectacle de fin d'année*", a practice oriented toward performance preparation rather than sustained personal exposure. In neither case does the account describe the kind of regular, tracked engagement that defines EL in Table 4; without institutionalised oversight, both practices remain casual encouragement rather than formal extensive programme.

In practice, IL serves as the primary framework governing oral comprehension in the child classroom. Teacher A1's lesson clearly illustrates how this practice is structured: after an initial warm-up using job illustrations, her class watches an episode of *Diggory Bones*<sup>10</sup>—and on another occasion, *Lock and Key*—to launch a new unit. These video tasks follow a two-stage cycle that mirrors the Top-Down/Bottom-Up distinction set out in Subsection 2.2.3: learners first listen globally, drawing on context and prior expectations to catch the general idea (Top-Down), before completing a coursebook task during a second, more detail-focused listening (Bottom-Up), and concluding with an oral group summary that consolidates both passes. Teachers A2, A3 and A4 corroborate this reliance on structured audio input, such as Teacher A2's regular coursebook listening activities and gap-fill exercises, and Teacher A4's own observed implementation of the *Lock and Key* series.

Additionally, IL frequently functions as the foundational input for compound TBLT activities. In Teacher A4's class, students repeatedly listened to and watched an episode of *Lock and Key* to extract dialogue details, using this auditory decoding as a tool to complete a meaningful communicative goal—re-enacting the play in groups. This activity operates directly as TBLT because the listening comprehension is not an end in itself, but a necessary step to achieve an output task (the performance) where authentic communication drives language use. Similarly, as per Teacher A5's own account during an informal interview during the observation, her learners conducted research on climate change using online videos, extracting targeted factual information to build their final oral presentation.

TPR, for its part, is claimed far more often than it is seen: all four interviewed teachers, A1, A2, A3 and A4, endorse it as a tool for young learners, yet not a single observed

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<sup>10</sup> Diggory Bones is an animated series centred on the adventures of an archaeologist. This series is designed to contextualise target vocabulary and grammatical structures through a narrative format.

session shows it being used. Teacher A2 offers the most concrete account, describing taking her class outside to execute spatial instruction in the playground, such as “go under the slide” or “go behind the bench”, anchoring vocabulary through movement. Teacher A4 draws an explicit age boundary of her own, stating that while she uses TPR “a lot” with children, she avoids it entirely with adults; she does not state her reasoning explicitly, but this choice plausibly echoes a caveat already raised in Subsection 2.6.3.2, where Bui (2018) notes that TPR’s physical demands can cause discomfort or embarrassment specifically among adult learners, restricting the method’s practical reach even where it might in principle be adapted for them. Whether this concern is in fact what drives A4’s own practice cannot be confirmed from the data available, and, like the rest of TPR evidence in this corpus, her account rests on interview alone rather than on anything directly observed.

Separately, Teacher A4 also draws on the Direct Method, pairing music with gestures so that students commit song lyrics to memory without recourse to translation. Finally, neither Desuggestopedia nor the Natural Approach was recorded anywhere in the primary dataset, in interviews nor in observations.

### 5.5.2. Listening in the Adult Classroom

In the adult cohort listening instruction centres almost exclusively on IL. Teacher B1’s session shows this directly: students watched a video on telling the time, matched spoken phrases to clock images, and completed a song-based gap-fill exercise that required multiple replays, students having missed certain words due to unfamiliar vocabulary or the singer’s accent. In his interview; Teacher B1 frames this as a deliberate procedure, listening must be guided, moving from a simple opening question establishing the general topic, through discussion, and only then into exercises, a staged logic his observed sessions bear out. This explicit, teacher-structured sequencing aligns closely with the adult-oriented guidelines set out in Subsection 2.4.2, where Hird *et al.* (2000) recommend highly structured, goal-oriented tasks paired with metacognitive reflection for adult learners, and echoes the broader claim in Subsection 2.3.4 that adults rely more heavily on conscious, rule-based processing (Skehan, 1998) than on the implicit, unguided exposure more readily associated with children.

Turning to Teacher B2, her account rests on observation alone. Her listening-oriented exercises diverged into two categories: on the one hand, her close listening exercise through pronunciation-repetition drills, in which students hear individual words and repeat them back with correct pronunciation seems to be driven by a *language-focused learning* goal. On the other hand, the paired information-gap task in which one student reads route directions aloud while the other listens and traces the corresponding path on a map, a design that depends entirely on sustained attention to specific spoken detail rather than general comprehension alone seems to correspond to a mix of IL and TBLT. The latter, for its part, surfaces in both teacher's interviews, though unevenly: B2's mention lines up directly with her own observed route-description activity, a clear IL-TBLT compound in which successful task completion is only possible through accurate listening. B1's reference, by contrast, explicitly ties this to his separate experience teaching children; which renders it an non-existent as evidence for his adult TBLT use than B2's directly observed example.

EL remains unfulfilled as a formal method among adults, echoing the child data: any encouragement of outside listening is undocumented here and lacks the monitoring the method requires. TPR, Desuggestopedia and the Natural Approach are entirely absent from the adult sessions, while the Direct Method appears only once, through observation, B1 using mimes to convey vocabulary.

### 5.5.3. Cross-checking

An empirical evaluation of the listening corpus provides a compelling counternarrative to the predictions laid out in Hypothesis 2. Rather than revealing a clear age-sorted division between EL for children and IL for adults, the field data suggests that auditory instruction follows a different logic.

The most striking point of convergence across both demographics is the near-total absence of EL since no teacher in either cohort implemented anything resembling a structured, monitored EL scheme (see Table 9). The informal recommendations offered by Teacher A1 and A2, watching films or listening to songs at home, lack the systematic tracking and periodic assessment that would qualify as a formal EL. Because this reliance on casual, out-of-class exposure is mirrored among the adult teachers, EL

seems to stand out as a shared methodological void rather than an age-differentiated strategy.

IL, conversely, functions as the common backbone of oral reception across the entire dataset. Declared by all four interviewed child teachers alongside B1, and directly observed in four separate classrooms, data demonstrates that detailed auditory decoding is by no means restricted to adult instruction (see Table 9). The real divergence between the two groups lies not in whether IL occurs, but in how it is delivered. Among children, IL is embedded within multimodal, action-oriented formats, animated episodes, songs, and theatrical re-enactment through TBLT, anchoring attention through variety and consistent with the implicit, procedural Subsection 2.3.4 attributes to younger learners. Among adults, IL instead centres on discrete, analytical tasks, drawing more directly on the explicit, rule-based processing the same section attributes to mature learners.

This same contrast structures the distribution of the remaining inter-skills and specialised methods, though TBLT complicates it somewhat. Declared, in interview, by five teachers across both groups, its observable implementation is not confined to the child classrooms alone: alongside A4 and A5, Teacher B2's route-tracing task is itself directly observed functioning as a compound IL-TBLT instance, successful task completion depending entirely on accurate listening. TBLT's age-neutral status seems to be confirmed through observation on both sides of the corpus.

TPR, for its part, shows a much more pronounced and consistent trend in favour of children, though in teachers' account alone: claimed by all four interviewed child teachers, against a single and considerably weaker adult mention from B1, and never observed on either side, consistent with its theorised child-orientation (2.6.3.2) though not strictly exclusive to it. The Direct Method, meanwhile, shows genuine symmetry, recorded among children through A4, in both interview and observation, and among adults through B1's use of mimes, observed but not declared.

Finally, neither Desuggestopedia nor the Natural Approach leaves any empirical trace, in interviews nor observations, for either population (see Table 9). Rather than disconfirming Desuggestopedia's theorised adult orientation (Brown, 2007a) or the Natural Approach's theorised child orientation (Table 5), this total omission can be read as a structural element inherent in the very design of the interview checklist. The latter

absence might also be explained by the central role of communicative approaches and near-constant spoken-output inherent to all the observed classrooms as developed in the parallel study (Saadaoui, 2026).

**Table 9:**

*Summary of the methods used for the listening skill by children and adults' teachers*

| Method              | A1                                  | A2                                  | A3                                  | A4                                  | A5                                  | B1                                  | B2                                  |             |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Desuggestopedia     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Direct Method       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Extensive Listening | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Intensive Listening | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Observation |
| TBLT                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| TPR                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | /                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |
| Natural Approach    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | /                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Interview   |
|                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Observation |

*Note.* Own elaboration based on observations and interviews.

Key: ☐ = no evidence ☒ = method confirmed / = not applicable

## 5.6. Reflections on the Methodology

### 5.6.1. Limitations of the Study

Before these findings are drawn together in the conclusion that follows, it is necessary to situate them within the limitations, and the methodological trade-offs, of the research design that produces them.

This study's conclusion rests on a limited empirical base: 13 observed lessons across seven teachers, drawn from a single primary school and a single adult education centre, both located in Brussels. This narrowness carries concrete, traceable costs, several of which surfaced directly during the analysis of this study's own data rather than remaining abstract concerns.

First, the sample's structure led us to a partial conclusion regarding GTM's use. In Subsection 5.1.1, age and shared-L1 availability were found to covary perfectly across the corpus: every multilingual classroom observed was a child classroom, and every French-sharing classroom was an adult one. This made it impossible to determine, from this data alone, whether the presence or absence of GTM is driven by learners' age, by classroom linguistic composition, or by some interaction of the two. A sample spanning multiple schools, ideally including at least one linguistically homogeneous child classroom, or one linguistically mixed adult classroom, would be needed to disentangle these two variables from each other.

Second, the geographic concentration of this study in Brussels limits how far its findings can generalise. Brussels' unusually high linguistic diversity, itself central to the findings of Section 5.2, is not necessarily representative of foreign-language classrooms elsewhere, including elsewhere in Belgium. The absence of translation-based instruction observed among child learners here may be less a function of age than of this specific, multilingual urban context; a comparable study conducted in a linguistically homogeneous region might well find GTM used with children too.

Third, the data collection instruments themselves imposed real constraints on what could be captured, beyond the method/approach conflation already discussed at the opening of this chapter. Several interview questions required a binary yes/no or checkbox response, which risked flattening more qualified positions into a simple presence/absence marker. Teacher A3's case illustrates the risk concretely: an initial note-taking slip recorded her stance on GTM as its opposite, a reversal only caught and corrected during the writing of this chapter, through cross-referencing against her full interview transcript. Had this cross-referencing not taken place, this single flattened answer could have altered the conclusion drawn in Section 5.1.1. Similarly, the observation grid's own structure proved unable to capture certain dynamics this study would have benefited from tracking systematically: pacing and activity order were logged as a list of activities per session, but the grids provided no mechanism for a single, time-stamped or per-activity measure of student engagement, meaning any shift in participation over the course of a session could not be verified against the coded data itself, only against the researchers' own memory.

Finally, one planned interview could not be completed, leaving that teacher's classroom practice documented through observation alone, and her single observed lesson had to be treated throughout this study as an atypical, non-generalisable data point.

#### 5.6.2. Improving the Data Collection Design in Hindsight

With the theoretical grounding this study has since developed, several aspects of the original data collection design would be approached differently.

The most immediate change concerns timing. The method/approach distinction developed in Section 2 of this thesis was only fully articulated after the observation grids and interview sheets had already been designed, and, in several cases, already administered. Finalising this theoretical distinction first would have prevented the terminological conflation acknowledged at the opening of this chapter, and would likely have produced cleaner, more directly usable data on method-level classification from the outset, rather than requiring the retrospective disentangling this chapter had to perform.

A second related change would be to conduct the observations before drafting the interviews' questions sheet: conducting first the classroom observations prior to finalising the interview questions would have allowed the interview instrument itself to be shaped by what actually occurs in these classrooms, rather than by a predetermined list of methods drawn primarily from the reference literature. Several methods identified inductively in this study—SLT, TBI, Direct Method—were absent from the interview checklist entirely and had to be inferred after the fact from classroom practice; an observation-first design might have surfaced these categories early enough to probe them directly in interview, rather than relying on single, self-reported, or unprompted occurrences.

Third, and most concretely, this study's structured grids proved too rigid a format for real-time classroom dynamics. A format combining the existing structured grid with free-form running notes—recording, at minimum the order and approximate duration of each activity, and any visible shift in participation or language use as the session progressed—would have allowed dynamics noted informally by the researchers but never logged in a form that could later be verified, to be treated as data rather than as memory. Audio recording via Dictaphone was, in principle, another option that would

have allowed near-verbatim researcher notes to be placed with fully verbatim transcripts; this was not pursued, both because of the length of several sessions, particularly the three-hour adult classes, which would have made transcription substantially more burdensome, and because of the high level of background interference typical of an active classroom (overlapping student voices, ambient noise), which would have made much of the recording difficult to use reliably. Given more time and a quieter recording setup, this would be worth reconsidering.

### 5.6.3. The Value and Cost of a Complementary Research Design

This thesis was conducted as one half of a two-part, complementary project: this half examines receptive skills, listening and reading, while a parallel thesis, conducted by the second researcher using the same fieldwork, examines productive skills, speaking and writing. This structure was a deliberate choice, intended to mirror the relationship between input and output central to SLA itself, rather than arbitrary division of labour.

This complementarity brought genuine advantages. It allowed each half of the project to reach a depth of analysis, across all four Nation's (2021) strands, and across both age groups, that a single researcher covering all four language skills alone could plausibly not have matched within the same timeframe. It also meant every classroom was observed, and every teacher interviewed, through two distinct analytical lenses simultaneously, generating a single, richer shared corpus rather than two smaller, disconnected ones.

This benefit came at a cost, however, one this study should acknowledge rather than pass over. The data collection instruments, namely the observation grids and interview sheets, discussed above, had to serve both research agendas at once, productive and receptive alike. This almost certainly constrained how deeply either could be probed on its own terms: a data collection instrument designed solely around this thesis's own research question might have dedicated considerably more space to fine-grained aspects of listening and reading comprehension specifically—learners' response accuracy on detailed comprehension checks, the strategies they use to infer meaning from unfamiliar input, or their ease with extended versus short listening and reading passages—rather than the broader, shared checklist this project in fact used. What this study gained in scope and shared fieldwork, then, it plausibly lost in receptive-skill

related specificity; a solo-authored thesis, with an instrument built around receptive skills alone, might have yielded a thinner overall classroom picture, but a sharper one on the specific questions this thesis set out to answer.

#### 5.6.4. Directions for Future Research

Beyond the scope of this study's initial framework, both researchers observed signs of situational motivation shaping engagement in ways this thesis was not designed to measure systematically—such as children's heightened enthusiasm during a culturally significant lesson, or adult learners' own account of choosing, and in some cases paying, to attend class. Future research could examine more directly how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation interact with the receptive methods examined here, and whether this interaction itself varies by age.

#### 5.7. Beyond the Divide: What the Classroom Data Actually Shows

Across every classroom observed for this study, one pattern resurfaces more consistently than any other, and it bears on both hypotheses formulated in Section 3: intensive and extensive methods are rarely each other's opposite, and just as often coexist, or even combine, within a single lesson. It seems that what differs between children and adults is not principally which methods a population has access to, but how much external structure a given method requires to function.

Among children, it appears that ER confirms Hypothesis 2 on its own terms: the fortnightly library routine gives it a stable institutional anchor, functioning as an informal means of regulating input, in line with Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis*, and it seems to fit comfortably within the fast-rotating, activity-dense lesson design documented in Subsection 5.3, itself geared to sustain young learners' shorter attention spans (Shin, 2006). Yet IR was also found among these same children, not as a contradiction of ER's dominance but running alongside it, provided the teachers supplied the scaffolding they had already anticipated younger learners would need. Crucially, IR appeared specifically where the lesson's objective called for it, extracting precise information from a text or building a presentation. The two methods do not, in other words, compete for the same territory; they coexist, each answering a different pedagogical need within the same broader lesson rhythm. The presence of ER here,

anchored in autonomous, interest-driven book choice, is consistent with Hypothesis 2's expectation that motivation would play a distinct role in shaping receptive method choice among young learners.

Among adults, the picture initially looks closer to what Hypothesis 2 predicted: IR was reported, and IL was directly and repeatedly observed, delivered through the discrete, analytical tasks, time-telling, and route-tracing that suit the longer, single-target lesson format built around one grammatical focus developed in depth rather than rotated quickly. Yet listening as a whole complicates the hypothesis rather than confirming it cleanly: EL proved nearly as absent among adults as among children, while IL emerged as the one method genuinely common to both observed populations, differing not in whether it appears but in how it is delivered: multimodal and task-embedded for children, narrowly analytical for adults. The extensive/intensive divide, then, does not map onto age so much as onto skill and institutional opportunity: children had an anchor for ER that adults never had, and both populations converge, for listening, on intensive treatment almost by default. This convergence favours Hypothesis 1: if age alone dictated the choice between intensive and extensive treatment, listening would not so consistently default to IL regardless of which population is being taught.

Perhaps the clearest evidence that intensive and extensive methods are not truly opposed comes from TBLT itself. Rather than constituting a separate, third category, TBLT repeatedly absorbed IR or IL as a functional tool, in Teacher A4's re-enactment of a watched-and-reread episode, in Teacher A5's research task combining reading and listening toward a single presentation, and in Teacher B2's route-description exercise. The same lesson, aimed at the same communicative outcome, could draw on either, or both, at once. This flexibility speaks more directly to Hypothesis 1 than the age comparison alone does: what determined the combination of methods used in a given lesson was less the learner's age as such than the teacher's and the lesson's own objective, exactly what Hypothesis 1 proposed from the outset. Age still mattered, but mainly by shaping the institutional and temporal frame, such as library routines and rapid rotation for children and extended single-focus sessions for adults, within which teachers then combined intensive and extensive methods as the task at hand required.

GTM, however, stands apart from this pattern: it tracked a shared L1 rather than age directly, appearing only in the French-speaking adult classrooms. TPR, for its part was

claimed almost exclusively for children, though never directly observed, while the Direct Method appeared, in symmetrical fashion, once on each side. Desuggestopedia and the Natural Approach, finally, left no empirical trace anywhere in the corpus, an absence traced not to classroom reality but to the interview checklist's own limitations and, for the latter, plausibly the communicative approach broadly applied by every teacher observed. Across the chapter as a whole, then, age structures less which methods are chosen than the lesson conditions, and the intensive/extensive balance, under which they are combined.

What remains, once method choice has been traced across lesson design, learner population, and the intensive/extensive balance, is a broader question: what can be said once these two receptive skills are set alongside the productive ones examined in the parallel half of this thesis?

## 6. Conclusion

This master's thesis investigated how EFL teachers select, adapt, and enact pedagogical methods targeting receptive skills—reading and listening—across two distinct demographic groups: primary school children and adult learners. Grounded in SLA theory, the central objective was to examine whether age-related cognitive differences directly determine methodological choices, or whether instruction is mediated by contextual conditions, lesson pacing, and communicative goals.

To explore this empirical question, the study adopted a naturalistic qualitative inquiry framed within a collaborative, dual-research project conducted jointly with my co-researcher. Sharing the same fieldwork across a European primary school and an adult *Promotion Sociale* establishment in Brussels, the project established a deliberate division of labour: while the parallel thesis addressed the productive branch (speaking and writing), this work focused on the receptive mechanisms of decoding, comprehension, and input processing. Data gathered through structured classroom observations and semi-structured teacher interviews were coded via a synchronised colour-coding system, enabling qualitative triangulation across both datasets.

The empirical findings on receptive skills reveal that the traditional theoretical divide between extensive and intensive instruction does not cleanly separate child from adult learners. While ER was anchored in a structured library routine for children, IR also appeared regularly in primary classrooms, made accessible through deliberate teacher scaffolding. In listening, both cohorts converged almost entirely on IL, which was embedded into multimodal, task-based activities for young learners and delivered through discrete, analytical exercises for adults. Rather than restricting which methods are accessible, age primarily dictated the degree of instructional mediation, task variety and pacing required to sustain learner engagement. This partially supports Hypothesis 2's expectation that motivation would shape extensive/intensive choice among children specifically, visible in the autonomous, interest-driven design of the library routine, though no comparable motivational evidence emerged on the adult side.

A critical finding of this inquiry concerns the empirical absence of several methods, which this study traces to two distinct causes. On the one hand; the omission of methods such as SLT, TBI, Desuggestopedia, and the Natural Approach was largely an artefact of the research instruments, which initially prioritised the most prominent

models in the interview checklists. On the other hand, the absence of translation-based methods—such as GTM—in primary classes stemmed from an ecological constraint: the multilingual composition of the European School created an ELF reality that made methods reliant on a shared L1 structurally impossible, whereas adult classes could leverage French as a planned instructional bridge.

When juxtaposed with my co-researcher's parallel findings on productive skills, a compelling cross-modal symmetry emerges across our two theses. Her investigation into speaking and writing demonstrated that age did not seem to dictate method selection but rather governed the rigidity of execution of the *techniques* within a common method (Saadaoui, 2026). Together, our shared fieldwork establishes that across both receptive decoding and productive output, age operates not by creating mutually exclusive methodological division, but by modulating the procedural tightness and structural scaffolding surrounding classroom tasks.

While Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis* argues that language acquisition is driven primarily by comprehensible input alone, the findings of this thesis present a more nuanced pedagogical reality. Receptive skills undoubtedly hold a foundational place in the EFL classroom—as demonstrated throughout this work, learners seem to acquire language structures and vocabulary through rich, well-calibrated input. However, acquisition cannot be reduced exclusively to receptive exposure: in practice, input serves as an essential catalyst that operates in tandem with output.

Ultimately, this dual investigation demonstrates that EFL methodology is not rigidly bounded by learner age but is dynamically shaped by lesson's communicative objectives interacting with institutional schedules and linguistic diversity. By establishing how teachers flexibly negotiate these parameters across the receptive-productive continuum, this thesis highlights that effective language pedagogy plausibly lies not in applying prescriptive, age-sorted methods, but in calibrating instructional scaffolding to the immediate environmental and cognitive realities of the classroom.

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## 8. Appendices

### 8.1. Observation Grid

#### OBSERVATION GRID

**Date :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Institution :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Class level :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Lesson duration :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Number of students :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Teacher's surname :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

**Topic of the lesson :** Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

#### OVERALL APPROACH AND CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

| Aspect Observed                | Indicators                                                                                                                                         | Field notes |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Lesson organization            | Structure                                                                                                                                          |             |
| Interaction types              | Teacher-fronted/ pair work/ group work                                                                                                             |             |
| Teacher's roles                | Facilitator/ authority/ guide/ instructor                                                                                                          |             |
| Use of English by the teacher  | English only/ occasional translation/ frequent L1 use                                                                                              |             |
| Use of English by the learners | English only/ occasional translation/ frequent L1 use                                                                                              |             |
| Overall approach observed      | Communicative Language Teaching / Grammar-Translation / Task-Based Language Teaching/ CLIL / Audiolingual Method / Total Physical Response / other |             |

Skills taught :

☐ Speaking

☐ Writing

☐ Listening

☐ Reading

#### TEACHING OF PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

##### SPEAKING

| Aspect Observed    | Indicators                                                                                                | Results |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Method used        | CLT (interaction-based), TBLT (task completion), Audiolingual (repetition drills), TPR (commands/actions) |         |
| Type of activities | Role plays / pair discussions / dialogues / presentations / drills                                        |         |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Focus of instruction | Fluency/ accuracy/ complexity both                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| Correction technique | Immediate correction/ delayed feedback/ peer correction/ none/selective vs comprehensive                                                                                                                        |  |
| Student engagement   | Many students speak/ few students speak/ reluctant participation/ teacher chooses/students ask questions to support their speaking/students do not do the speaking task (speak French, talk about holidays,...) |  |

#### WRITING

| Aspect Observed  | Indicators                                                                                           | Results |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Method used      | Process Writing, Project-Based, CLIL, Grammar-Translation                                            |         |
| Process followed | Product-based / Process-based (drafting & revision) / Genre-based / teaching strategies              |         |
| Type of tasks    | Sentence building / creative writing / authentic tasks/ guided composition (guided/semi-guided/free) |         |
| Feedback style   | Teacher-led / peer feedback / group correction / use of technology / selective vs comprehensive      |         |

#### TEACHING OF RECEPTIVE SKILLS

##### READING

| Aspect Observed              | Indicators                                                                                                                            | Results |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Method used                  | CLIL, Communicative Reading, Grammar-Translation (focus on structure)                                                                 |         |
| Approach                     | Top-down / Bottom-up / Interactive                                                                                                    |         |
| Type of text used            | Story, textbook passage, article, authentic material                                                                                  |         |
| Pre-/post-reading activities | Vocabulary pre-teaching, prediction, discussion                                                                                       |         |
| Comprehension check          | Questions, summary, group discussion, using language or not, Pictures, actions (following directions, responding to instructions,...) |         |

#### LISTENING

| Aspect Observed                | Indicators                                                               | Results |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Method used                    | Audiolingual (drills), CLT (interaction), TBLT (task-oriented)           |         |
| Type of input                  | Audio recording, teacher talk, video, dialogue (authentic? AI? Teacher?) |         |
| Listening purpose              | Global comprehension / specific information / inference                  |         |
| Pre-/post-listening activities | Vocabulary pre-teaching, prediction, discussion                          |         |
| Comprehension check            | Questions, summary, group discussion, using language or not              |         |

#### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

| Aspect Observed            | Indicators                                                                       | Results |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Type of materials          | Textbook, teacher-made materials, technology                                     |         |
| Adaptation for learner age | Visuals, games, simplified texts for children / analytical tasks for adults, ... |         |

## 8.2. Interview Question Sheet

### QUESTION SHEET

#### TEACHER INFORMATION

Surname : Teacher x Institution : Primary school

1. How long have you been teaching EFL?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

2. When did you obtain your teaching diploma?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

3. Who are your current learners (age group, background, ...)?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

4. The classes we have observed have a beginner/intermediate level, have you ever taught learners with an advanced level? If yes, is there a difference in the teaching method?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

5. Have you ever taught adult learners? If yes, have you noticed a major difference?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

6. What type of institution do you teach in (primary school, adult education, private institute)?

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7. Do you also teach in other types of institutions? If yes, which kind?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

8. Do you teach any other foreign languages?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

#### TEACHING METHODS AND APPROACHES

9. What methods do you use/What do you do in order to encourage your students to speak in English?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

10. What methods do you use in order to encourage your students to write in English?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

11. What methods do you use in order to encourage your students to read in English?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

12. What methods do you use in order to encourage your students to listen in English?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

13. Have you ever used a method or activity that did not work as expected? What did you learn from that experience?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

14. Have you ever heard of the following EFL methods and approaches :

☐ CLT (Communicative Language Teaching): Focuses on using language for real communication. Students learn by interacting, speaking, and expressing meaning rather than memorizing grammar rules.

☐ GTM (Grammar-Translation Method): method focusing on grammar rules and translating between the first language and English, with little emphasis on speaking or listening.

☐ TBLT (Task-based Language Teaching): Learning happens through completing meaningful tasks like solving a problem or planning an activity. Here, language is used as a tool to achieve a goal, not as the main focus.

☐ TPR (Total Physical Response): Students learn language through physical movement. The teacher gives commands, and learners respond with actions, helping comprehension before speaking. (i.e. Simon says)

☐ ALM (Audio-Lingual Method): This method is based on repetition and habit formation and is used mainly for pronunciation and drills.

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

15. I will now briefly explain each method. And now, does one or more sound more familiar to you ?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

16. How did you choose your current method(s)? (personal choice, institutional policy, training background, professional experience or theoretical framework)

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

17. Do you mainly use a textbook/manual, or do you create your own materials? Why?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

#### EXPERIENCE AND ADAPTATION

18. From your experience, is there something specific in teaching languages to children or adults and what are the main differences between both levels?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

19. If you were to teach a different age group (children ↔ adults), would you adapt or change your method? If so, how?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

20. Additional comment ?

Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte.

### 8.3. Methods' Colour-Code

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Desuggestopedia        | 125 |
| Direct method          | 31  |
| TBLT                   | 163 |
| 5. Intensive reading   | 59  |
| Extensive reading      | 58  |
| Extensive listening    | 111 |
| Intensive listening    | 144 |
| TPR                    | 175 |
| Natural Approach       | 133 |
| ACH                    | 55  |
| CLL                    | 24  |
| Silent Way             | 31  |
| Product-based Approach | 158 |
| 1 Genre-based Approach | 116 |
| Writing Workshop       | 40  |
| Aura                   | 165 |
| GTM                    | 193 |
| SLT                    | 33  |
| TBI                    | 56  |

## 8.4. Excerpt From a Completed Observation Grid

| TEACHING OF PRODUCTIVE SKILLS |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SPEAKING                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Aspect Observed               | Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Method used                   | CLT (interaction-based), TBLT (task completion), Audiolingual (repetition drills), TPR (commands/actions)                                                                                                       | When speaking, it is interaction-based, especially within the scope of explication or justification of their choices (the answers given, the drawing drawn, the book chosen, ...)                              |
| Type of activities            | Role plays / pair discussions / dialogues / presentations / drills                                                                                                                                              | dialogues                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Focus of instruction          | Fluency/ accuracy/ complexity both                                                                                                                                                                              | Accuracy, good use of general English                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Correction technique          | Immediate correction/ delayed feedback/ peer correction/ none/selective vs comprehensive                                                                                                                        | Immediate correction by use of repetition (Student: she have-, Teacher: she has ..., Student: she has ...)                                                                                                     |
| Student engagement            | Many students speak/ few students speak/ reluctant participation/ teacher chooses/students ask questions to support their speaking/students do not do the speaking task (speak French, talk about holidays,...) | When needed, they all speak                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| WRITING                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Aspect Observed               | Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Method used                   | Process Writing, Project-Based, CLIL, Grammar-Translation                                                                                                                                                       | A book review based on a book personally chosen (as a homework)<br><br>They also have a reinforcement exercise at the back of the sheet related to the tense that has to be used in their summary              |
| Process followed              | Product-based / Process-based (drafting & revision) / Genre-based / teaching strategies                                                                                                                         | They have to read a book, and answer to different kind of questions (title, author, summary, likes and dislikes, ...)<br><br>They have to do the reinforcement at the back which depends on the week and topic |
| Type of tasks                 | Sentence building / creative writing / authentic tasks/ guided composition (guided/semi-guided/free)                                                                                                            | Semi-guided task, sentence building on a specific topic with a specific tense                                                                                                                                  |

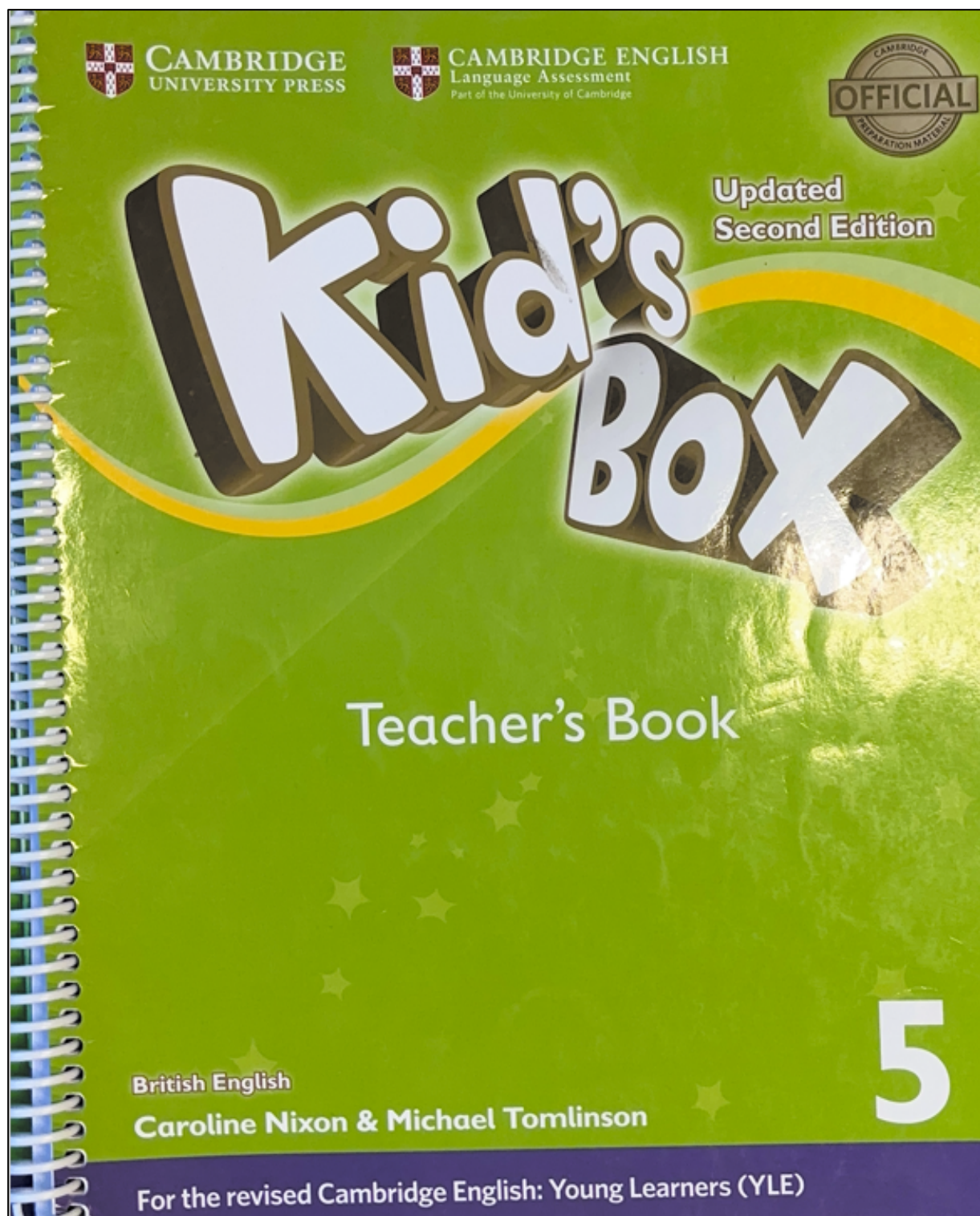
CLT Approach

no cards

Semi-guided Writing

Product-based

8.5. Kid's Box 5 —Children Textbook



## 8.6. Book Review

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------|------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|---------|--|-------------|------------|--|--|----------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--|------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Author: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Summary:<br/><u>Storyline:</u> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>L2 P5 <span style="float: right;">P5</span></p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Book Review</h3> <p>What I liked best: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>What I didn't like: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>Name of reviewer: _____<br/>(= your name)</p> <p>Date started: _____</p> <p>Date finished: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Favourite character/passage</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Picture of favourite character/passage</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Word difficulty ✓ box</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Too easy</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Just right</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Too hard</td> </tr> </table> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | Too easy | Just right | Too hard | <p style="text-align: center;">Illustrations ✓ box</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> <td rowspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Too few</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Interesting</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Just right</td> <td rowspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Too many</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Boring</td> </tr> </table> <p>Comment: _____</p> |  |  | Too few |  | Interesting | Just right |  |  | Too many | Boring | <p style="text-align: center;">Recommendation ✓ box</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Highly recommended</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30%; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reasonable</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not recommended</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> </table> | Highly recommended |  | Reasonable |  | Not recommended |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Too easy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Just right                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Too hard                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Too few                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Interesting                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Just right                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Too many                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Boring                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Highly recommended                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Reasonable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |
| Not recommended                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |          |            |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |         |  |             |            |  |  |          |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |  |            |  |                 |  |

## 8.7. Book Levels







### Welcome to the library! Can you see what's happening in the children's corner?

**DK READERS**

Stunning photographs combine with lively illustrations and engaging, age-appropriate stories in DK READERS, a multilevel reading programme guaranteed to capture children's interest while developing their reading skills and general knowledge.



|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <p><b>Learning to read</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High frequency words</li> <li>● Picture word strips</li> <li>● Labels to introduce and reinforce vocabulary</li> </ul>                                     |
|  | <p><b>Beginning to read</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Word repetition, limited vocabulary, and simple sentences</li> <li>● Picture dictionary boxes</li> </ul>                                                  |
|  | <p><b>Beginning to read alone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Longer sentences and increased vocabulary</li> <li>● Information boxes full of extra fun facts</li> <li>● Simple index</li> </ul>                   |
|  | <p><b>Reading alone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More complex sentence structure</li> <li>● Information boxes and alphabetical glossary</li> <li>● Comprehensive index</li> </ul>                              |
|  | <p><b>Proficient readers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rich vocabulary and challenging sentence structure</li> <li>● Additional information and alphabetical glossary</li> <li>● Comprehensive index</li> </ul> |

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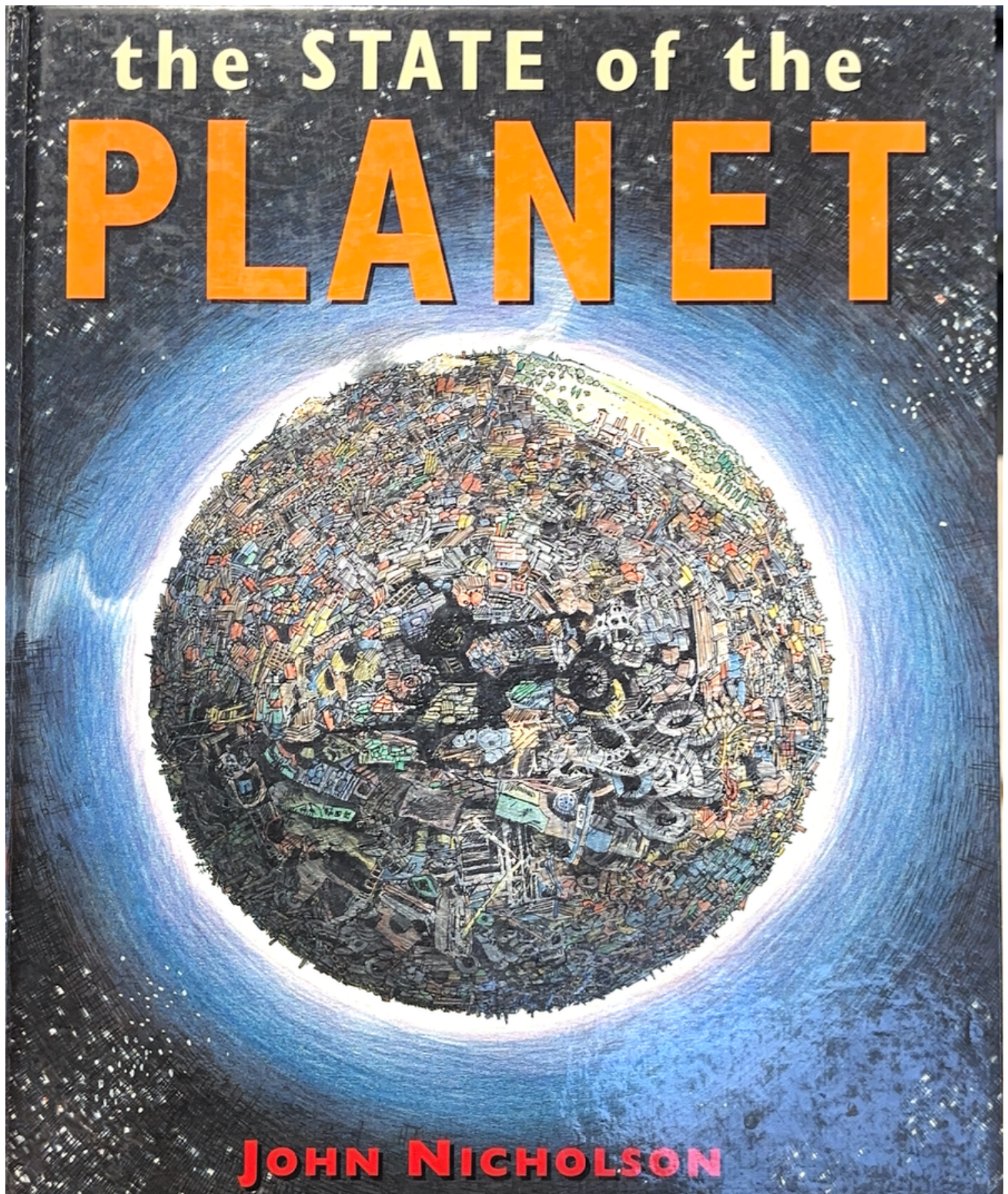
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