



**Songs allied to videos as a means for Young Learners to learn vocabulary
in the English as a foreign language classroom**

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To my husband and my daughters.

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: songs, videos, gestures, vocabulary, interest, Young Learners, English as a Foreign Language.

This study focuses on the use of songs, videos, and gestures to enhance Young Learners' vocabulary learning and interest in English classes. It aims to understand the effectiveness of the use of songs, videos, and gestures in engaging students, their impact on vocabulary acquisition, and the importance of creating a motivating learning environment. The study aims to investigate the role of videos allied to songs and gestures in comparison to songs and gestures alone in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and increasing students' interest in learning. For such, action research was conducted with a 3rd grade class of 22 students in a Portuguese public school over the course of three and a half months. Pre-tests were applied to the students before the vocabulary in question was taught with the purpose of understanding if they were already familiar with it; post-tests after the vocabulary had been taught using songs, videos, and gestures, and a questionnaire at the end of the research with the aim of finding out their opinion on the role of the videos used in the lessons in the learning process, as well as in their interest in the vocabulary learning. Findings indicate positive students feedback on the use of videos in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, showing that students enjoyed the videos and found them engaging, underscoring the significance of incorporating videos to create a joyful and motivating learning environment. However, their direct impact on vocabulary acquisition was not conclusively proven.

RESUMO

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Canções, vídeos, gestos, vocabulário, interesse, jovens alunos, Inglês como língua estrangeira.

Este estudo centra-se na utilização de canções, vídeos e gestos para melhorar a aprendizagem de vocabulário e o interesse dos jovens alunos nas aulas de inglês. O objetivo é compreender a eficácia da utilização de canções, vídeos e gestos no envolvimento dos alunos, o seu impacto na aquisição de vocabulário e a importância de criar um ambiente de aprendizagem motivador. O estudo tem em vista investigar o papel dos vídeos aliados a canções e gestos, em comparação com canções e gestos isolados, na facilitação da aquisição de vocabulário e no aumento do interesse dos alunos pela aprendizagem. Para tal, foi realizada uma pesquisa-ação com uma turma do 3º ano de escolaridade, composta por 22 alunos, numa escola pública portuguesa, ao longo de três meses e meio. Aos alunos foram aplicados pré-testes antes da lecionação do vocabulário em questão, com o objetivo de perceber se já o conheciam; pós-testes após a lecionação do vocabulário e um questionário no final da investigação, com o objetivo de saber a sua opinião sobre o papel dos vídeos utilizados nas aulas no processo de aprendizagem, bem como sobre o seu interesse na aprendizagem de vocabulário. Os resultados indicam um feedback positivo dos alunos sobre a utilização de vídeos na sala de aula de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira, mostrando que os alunos gostaram dos vídeos e os consideraram cativantes, sublinhando a importância de incorporar vídeos para criar um ambiente de aprendizagem alegre e motivador. No entanto, o seu impacto direto na aquisição de vocabulário não foi provado de forma conclusiva.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

YLS – Young Learners

TPR – Total Physical Response

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

AR – Action Research

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Introduction

Music is something I have always adored and that I make a point of having in my day-to-day life. For that reason, I truly believe that music is extremely important in people's lives in general, even if they are not aware of it. Music is used in several different occasions in our lives with distinct aims: it can be used to entertain people at events such as music festivals, weddings or birthdays; it can be used to keep those who live or work alone company; it can be used for therapeutic purposes; or it can be used to teach. Focusing on children specifically, music has been widely proven to be effective in treating disorders such as autism, to aid in dealing with anxiety, to help children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or to aid in learning since it reinforces children cognitively and linguistically, and has impact in their concentration, attention, and memory, which can have a significant influence in the classroom context (Leal, 2021).

Based on my teaching experience I truly believe that songs are an excellent tool to use in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom with regard to both teaching vocabulary and student engagement, and if we ally videos to songs their engagement is even greater. According to authors like Nguyen (2020), Kurnia (2017), Millington (2011) or Forster (2006), songs are something highly recommended to use with young learners in EFL classes (due to their ludic nature, which allows children to engage more easily). Thus, I began to use them right away in my lessons (particularly to start and finish) and as much as possible. Since then, I have searched for songs on the internet (particularly the ones by Super Simple Songs) for every topic I have to teach, as I already know from experience that children in general get extremely enthusiastic about songs and are always willing to learn new ones, especially when accompanied by videos, which proves that they are an important resource to get children engaged and to keep the students' motivation high. However, can we argue that videos plus songs are also effective when it comes to vocabulary learning?

That was the main reason why I chose the topic of songs allied to videos for my Action Research (AR), since I have been intrigued by the possible positive correlation between the role of videos allied to songs in vocabulary learning by primary English learners or if, on the contrary, the videos will be a distracting factor that interfere with

the learning process. It was possible to realise that not many studies have been done so far on the relationship between songs and videos and their role in vocabulary learning in primary school English classes. In this final report I aim to answer my research questions: To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate the vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos? and To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures contribute to greater students' interest in vocabulary learning when compared to those with gestures but without videos?

I – Literature review

1.1 Introduction

This literature review is organised into sections related to the most important concepts of my research. The first section is related to vocabulary, the second to songs, the importance of choosing the right songs and their role in Young Learners' (YLS) interest, and the remaining sections cover gestures and videos. In the end there is a summary where I relate my literature review to my research questions: To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos? and To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures contribute to greater students' interest in vocabulary learning when compared to those with gestures but without videos?

1.2. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is essential to communicate effectively in any language, as it is necessary for anyone to be able to speak, read, write, and listen. Without having a minimum command and knowledge of vocabulary it becomes very difficult if not impossible to communicate with anyone regardless of the language. In *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (DGE, 2018) it is stated that students should be able to identify words and expressions in rhymes, nursery rhymes, and songs and say rhymes, nursery rhymes, and songs, showing that songs are a resource that should be used by teachers in their classes as a way to teach and get the students to practise vocabulary. Dakhi et al. (2019)

conducted a study on the teaching of English vocabulary which highlights the multifaceted role of vocabulary in language skills, emphasizing its contribution to reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which is in line with what is advocated by Garton et al. (2019), who state that vocabulary is fundamental for all the skills comprised by any language, namely those worked on with YLs (speaking, listening, reading and writing), i.e., vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in primary English education, as it supports the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Also according to Cameron (2001) vocabulary is closely linked to effective comprehension, expression, and language proficiency, but also to cultural understanding and critical thinking. In essence, vocabulary is a cornerstone of language proficiency, enabling individuals to communicate effectively, understand and express ideas, and engage meaningfully in various aspects of life. When it comes to YLs, Cameron emphasises the need for continuous exposure, recycling, and expansion of vocabulary to support YLs in developing a robust language repertoire. Ellis et al. (1989) once more claim that vocabulary forms the foundation for communication. A rich vocabulary enables learners to express themselves effectively, comprehend written and spoken language, and engage in meaningful interactions. By acquiring a diverse range of words and phrases, learners can enhance their language skills, improve their fluency, and convey their thoughts and ideas accurately. Vocabulary also contributes to language comprehension, allowing learners to understand texts, conversations, and instructions more easily. Overall, a good command of vocabulary is essential for successful language acquisition and proficiency.

In the EFL classroom vocabulary can be taught using different methods such as songs, videos, flash cards, games, realia or picture books. However, the practices used by teachers to teach vocabulary to YLs are crucial with regard to their effectiveness, which means that the approaches chosen by teachers to teach vocabulary are as important as the materials.

1.3. Songs

Brewster et al. (2002) support the use of songs for their countless benefits, namely in the language learning process as a linguistic resource, since songs “allow new

language to be introduced and structures and vocabulary to be reinforced and recycled” (p. 162). Ellis et al. (1989) believe that songs can be a valuable tool in language learning as they offer a fun and engaging way to practice listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. By listening to songs in the target language, learners can improve their listening skills, develop an ear for natural pronunciation, and familiarize themselves with colloquial expressions and idiomatic phrases. Singing along to songs can help improve pronunciation and intonation, as well as boost confidence in speaking the language. Moreover, songs often contain repetitive patterns and catchy melodies that aid in memorization, making it easier for learners to remember vocabulary and grammar structures. Incorporating songs into language learning activities can make the process more enjoyable and motivating for learners, encouraging active participation and creativity. Overall, songs can be a powerful tool for reinforcing language skills and fostering a deeper connection to the target language and its cultural context. Cameron (2001) also upholds the significant role played by songs in language learning, especially for YLs, as they are paramount when it comes to aspects such as:

- i. Engagement and motivation – songs are engaging and enjoyable for learners, making the language learning process more fun and motivating; the rhythmic and melodic elements of songs capture learners' attention and create a positive learning environment.
- ii. Repetition and memorisation – the repetitive nature of songs helps reinforce vocabulary, grammar structures, and pronunciation; learners can easily memorise lyrics and phrases through repeated exposure, aiding in long-term retention.
- iii. Listening skills – songs improve listening skills as learners focus on understanding the lyrics, melodies, and intonation patterns; this practice enhances auditory discrimination and comprehension abilities.
- iv. Pronunciation practice – singing along to songs provides opportunities for learners to practice pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm in a natural and enjoyable way; it helps develop oral fluency and accent reduction.
- v. Vocabulary expansion – songs introduce learners to new vocabulary in context, making it easier to grasp meanings and usage; the thematic content of songs exposes learners to a variety of words and expressions.

vi. Creativity and expression – singing allows learners to express themselves creatively and emotionally; it encourages self-expression, boosts confidence, and fosters a sense of achievement.

vii. Integration of skills – songs integrate multiple language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing; they provide a holistic language learning experience that enhances overall proficiency (Cameron, 2001).

A study carried out by Tse (2015) showed that Malaysian ESL primary school teachers believe songs are enjoyable and beneficial and can expedite the memorisation of vocabulary. The results demonstrated that songs are engaging and actuating for students; they were found to be a valuable tool in engaging YLs in the English language learning process for creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom, making learning more intuitive. Overall, songs were recognised as valuable tools for language learning and acquisition when utilised effectively by teachers. Kusnierek's study (2016), which aimed to investigate whether teaching English vocabulary with the use of songs contributes to developing students' better memorisation of vocabulary and to explore the impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition and memorisation, showed that using songs to teach English vocabulary had a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition and memorisation. The post-tests showed that the experimental group, which was taught using songs, had better results in vocabulary acquisition compared to the control group, which was taught without songs. The methodology applied in this research seems to be very adequate. However, the research was carried out in just two lessons with each group, which is clearly insufficient to reach trustworthy conclusions. Even though the results of the study suggest that teachers should use songs in their lessons to teach vocabulary, no one can guarantee that if the study had taken longer and different songs had been used, the results would have been the same. For this reason, it can be stated that the research findings cannot be generalised.

1.3.1 The importance of choosing the right songs

Nguyen (2020, p. 1) states that "Research into vocabulary instruction through songs has indicated its positive effects on YLs' vocabulary gains and language learning". Nevertheless, it is not enough to simply use songs in the EFL classroom, there must be

an intention and an aim behind it, otherwise it will be devoid of meaning. Songs must be addressed to the age group (YLS) and level in question, they must be repetitive and appealing and “(...) teachers of young learners must be able to choose the right songs to teach related material” (Kurnia, 2017, p. 44). Thus, teachers must carefully consider how to choose the right songs, or they may run the risk of making mistakes and not achieving their goals. Several authors argue that repetition helps with memorisation, which applies to children’s songs. A good song for YLS must be repetitive, so that they can memorise it easier and quicker. This is advocated by authors like Kurnia (2017), for whom songs can improve YLS’ vocabulary making it easier to memorise. “Repetition indirectly helps them to memorize the word or expression.” (p. 44), or Millington (2011), who states that the repetition that is typical of YLS’ songs is something that can help to improve vocabulary acquisition, or even Forster (2006), when she claims that the systematic use of songs in the EFL classroom facilitates the memorisation of longer word chunks. Davis et al. (2016) emphasise that choosing the right songs for language teaching is crucial for maximizing the benefits of music in vocabulary acquisition. Research suggests that the effectiveness of songs in language learning can vary based on factors such as familiarity, simplicity, and repetition of melodies. Moreover, when selecting songs for language teaching, educators should consider the cultural relevance and age-appropriateness of the music to engage YLS effectively. Songs that resonate with students' interests and experiences are more likely to capture their attention and aid in vocabulary acquisition. By aligning the choice of songs with the students' cultural background and preferences, teachers can create a more engaging and immersive learning environment. Davis (2017) also stresses that the careful selection of age-appropriate songs, consideration of vocabulary complexity, and integration of visual aids (e.g. illustrations or gestures) are essential factors in maximizing the pedagogical value of songs in the YLS’ classroom. By choosing the right songs and supporting materials, educators can create a rich, engaging learning environment that promotes language acquisition and motivates YLS to actively participate in language learning activities.

1.3.2 The role of songs in fostering the interest of YLs

It is also believed and has been increasingly proven that songs are a means of engaging students in the classroom, i.e. to involve them in the learning process, catching their interest and attention, thus facilitating the acquisition of the contents taught. Those who deal with YLs every day and use songs in their lessons know that they love songs and are willing to listen to and sing them. Hence, teachers can and should take advantage of it. In accordance with Kurnia (2017, p. 44), "If the song is interesting, young learners will repeat the song so many times". Şevik (2012) also states that songs can be one of the most enjoyable ways to practise and develop listening skills, as children respond enthusiastically to songs and welcome them. Aziza (2023) also wrote about the subject advocating the use of songs in the EFL classroom to teach vocabulary, as "songs with simple lyrics and catchy melodies can help students learn new words (...) in a fun and memorable way." (p. 191). Moreover, "Songs have been a common feature of young learner classrooms for decades in order to improve motivation and facilitate the acquisition of various aspects of language, including vocabulary" (Davis, 2017, p. 1). In addition, Aziza (2023) argues that "(...) By using music in creative and engaging ways, teachers can help students to (...) learn new concepts and vocabulary (...)" (p. 189). From Hillyard's (2013) point of view, songs play a crucial role in capturing YLs' interest and enhancing their language learning experience. Incorporating songs into lessons can make learning more engaging, enjoyable, and effective for children. Songs serve as powerful tools in capturing YLs' interest by providing a fun, interactive, and memorable way to learn language. By incorporating songs with variety, meaningful repetition, emotional engagement, and clear aims, teachers can create a dynamic learning environment that sparks children's enthusiasm and enhances their language acquisition. Nevertheless, and once more, the songs to be used must be carefully selected, taking into account their characteristics (simple and repetitive), the students' age and level and the content to be taught. Davis (2017) claims that songs play a significant role in capturing and maintaining YLs' interest and motivation in the language learning process. Studies have shown that YLs often exhibit higher levels of excitement and confidence when engaging with songs compared to traditional instructional methods. Additionally, surveys conducted with students themselves have indicated that songs are perceived

positively, with students expressing a preference for songs due to their motivational impact. Davis et al. (2016) advocate that songs sustain YLs' interest in language learning by creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment, once songs have the potential to increase students' enthusiasm for learning by providing a fun, interactive way to engage with language materials. The rhythmic and melodic elements of songs can make vocabulary acquisition more memorable and enjoyable for YLs, leading to increased motivation and sustained interest in language learning.

1.4. Gestures

Gestures are something that can be very helpful when teaching YLs, especially when allied to songs, since they make songs more meaningful, interesting, and easier to memorise by associating mime to words or expressions (Leal, 2021) (an approach known as Total Physical Response). Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching language or vocabulary by using physical movement to react to verbal input. The process mimics the way that babies learn their first language, and it reduces student inhibitions and lowers stress. The purpose of TPR is to create a brain link between speech and action to boost language and vocabulary learning. TPR activates the right hemisphere of the brain during learning, enhancing learning as the physical movement helps learners relax and enjoy acquiring languages (Magnussen et al., 2021). TPR is a technique used all over the world by language teachers, specially of YLs, as it requires little or no preparation and has been proved to be an effective teaching method. Moreover, TPR has several advantages, such as aiding with long-term retention of what is learnt like no other technique for YLs; incorporating kinaesthetic learning, providing the correct learning stimulus to maximize learning for those children who learn best when they are moving rather than by watching, listening, or writing; TPR also works with mixed-ability classes – even if some students do not understand the words, they will have fun with the actions. Herail (2022) researched the topic of introducing English vocabulary with songs and gestures, where a 3rd grade class with a total of 22 students was involved. For such Herail used graded tests to assess vocabulary retention and questionnaires to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the teaching approach. That way it was concluded that using songs along with gestures in the EFL classroom is effective as far as vocabulary

learning is concerned, which was proved, not only by her observation grids (students scored higher when songs were accompanied with gestures) but also by the higher students' test grades. In the study carried out by Magnussen et al. (2021) with preschoolers in a Thai EFL context where songs and the TPR approach were used to teach vocabulary pre- and post-tests and video recordings with hidden cameras to capture the participants' interaction were used to gather data. As per that study TPR has a longstanding impact on vocabulary teaching and learning in EFL contexts. Furthermore, blending TPR movements with songs is also an effective approach to teaching the target words receptively. Indeed, the participants' productive vocabulary knowledge benefitted from physical movement, but much less than the receptive vocabulary knowledge. Er (2014) researched the most appropriate strategy for very young language learners, involving 34 female foreign language teachers who taught at private kindergartens in Ankara (Turkey). The study aimed to identify the strategies that language teachers used in very young learner classes and determine the most appropriate activities, methods, or techniques that helped young learners acquire foreign languages more effectively. The methods utilised were a questionnaire and an interview through which it was possible to conclude that mime and gestures were perceived by EFL teachers as the most effective teaching technique to be used with YLs, followed by videos and visuals, and the TPR technique.

1.5. Videos

According to Karami (2019) "Videos make vocabulary more comprehensible for language learners by providing additional information about different aspects of the words" (p. 67). Moreover, Aziza (2023, p. 189) claims that "(...) incorporating music into the classroom with the help of videos can have a positive impact on students' learning and language development (...)". However, further investigation on this subject must be conducted to study the effects of videos on young learner's vocabulary acquisition. In accordance with Paskalisa et al.'s research (2022) most young students showed enthusiasm in listening to songs because the videos were interesting and the influence of the songs was shown by the students who were active and enthusiastic in watching song videos, imitating song lyrics, and following songs. Hadjer (2019) carried out a study

on the influence of video-based songs on students' learning with the purposes of extending the pupils' lexicon and enriching their background about language, elevating the learners' ability to grasp and learn new vocabulary, examining the influence of songs to elevate learning by pupils and creating a comfortable and enjoyable environment while teaching new lexical vocabulary. The study involved teachers and pupils from Biskra (Algeria) middle school. The pupils were chosen by random sampling, and only 10 pupils took part in the study because it was classroom research. The research methodology adopted for the study included data gathered from observation, a pre-test and post-test, as well as questionnaires for both teachers and pupils. The results showed that the use of video-based songs in teaching improved pupils' vocabulary command. However, pupils generally still faced problems in retaining new words, and understanding words that had different meanings as indicated in a context. The study concluded that the use of video-based songs in teaching English vocabulary is an effective method that can be used to enhance pupils' understanding of vocabulary and motivation. The weakest point in this study is the fact that it could have been longer. In the report it is stated that the pre- and post-tests were applied within the period of a month, which is in fact a really short period of time if a researcher wants to obtain minimally solid, reliable results.

1.6. Summary

Vocabulary is one of the components of any language, essential for communicating both orally and in writing, as without knowing words and their meaning it is impossible for anyone to express themselves.

Songs have been proven to be an effective method to teach vocabulary to YLs, as well as to boost children's engagement in the classroom. Nevertheless, they must be well selected, i.e., taking into consideration aspects such as repetitiveness and simplicity, but also the content to be taught and the students' age group and level of knowledge. Additionally to songs, and according to several studies already conducted on the topic gestures and videos all combined can also be powerful ways to foster an improvement in the children's vocabulary acquisition process, once on one hand, gestures when associated to words or chunks make songs easier to memorise, and

videos on the other, by providing additional information about different aspects of the words are a visual aid that can make up for some gaps that songs plus gestures *per se* can create.

Thus, through the literature reviewed it can be argued that songs and gestures allied to videos are relevant tools to be used with YLs in the EFL classroom with the aim of teaching vocabulary, which relates to my two research questions: To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate the vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos? and To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures contribute to greater students' interest in vocabulary learning when compared to those with gestures but without videos?

II – Action Research

1. Context

This action research project was carried out from the end of September 2023 to mid-January 2024 in a 1st Cycle state school in Amadora, Portugal, located in a quite poor area of the city, both from a social and an economic point of view. The class I taught was a 3rd grade class, initially comprised of 24 students, 2 of whom were transferred to other schools shortly after the beginning of the school year. Afterwards, a new student, who had lived in the UK for 2 years, joined the class, totalling 23 students. The latter did not take part in my study, as the research was already ongoing when she started attending the school. The students were all Portuguese except for one, who was Brazilian, and another one, who was French, but had never had English classes before. Most of them had had English lessons once a week in the 1st and 2nd grades, their level of English knowledge being Pre A1.

The class was heterogeneous from the point of view of the level of knowledge, but was interested/motivated, and behaved well. It was composed of 14 boys (61%) and 9 girls (39%), 14 of them being 8 years old, 7 being 9 and 1 being 10. One of the students was still in the process of acquiring reading and writing skills in Portuguese, another had been transferred from another school due to behavioural problems, but was now being medicated. There were 2 twin brothers (one of them had learning difficulties, but was

not yet referenced), and 1 student who had lived two years in England, but had attended school there for only one year.

In Portugal, the 3rd grade is the first year where Portuguese students have mandatory English classes. The *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (DGE, 2018) require students to be able to relate their knowledge to develop their creativity in several contexts such as singing, rhyming, participating in dramatic activities, and using language with proficiency in music. The English coursebook adopted by the school cluster for the 3rd grade was *Easy-Peasy English 3* (Abreu & Esteves, 2022). The class had English lessons twice a week (one-hour class on 2 different days of the week) in the morning. The pedagogical approach used in classes by my cooperating teacher was communicative language teaching, also referred to as the communicative approach, which entails teaching language through communication. This approach to teaching language frames communication as both a goal and a method for English language learners, whose mother tongue is not English, and was applied in classes by specially using games and role-plays, always related to the contents of the syllabus, making those activities meaningful.

2. Methodology

2.1 Action Research

For the purpose of finding answers to my research questions, I outlined an action research project. This approach has been increasingly used by language teachers to investigate language teaching contexts, with the intention of bringing about change of practice, while creating knowledge at the same time. These combined characteristics make it useful for exploratory research to achieve improvement of practice, or to propose new solutions to practical problems. According to Burns (2010), every teacher in a classroom can be both an “investigator” and an “explorer” while being a participant in what he or she is trying to solve or find out with the learners. Action research “involves taking a self-reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts” (p. 2).

My research is in line with that concept since a detailed research proposal was first outlined and later carried out with a group of students throughout a semester resorting to the use of songs, videos, and gestures to teach specific vocabulary with the purpose of answering two research questions by applying two tests and a questionnaire that allowed me to obtain results and reach some conclusions, based on which it is expected to do some reflection and make the necessary improvements and adjustments in the future.

2.2 Consent

Before the start of the action research, letters of consent were prepared in Portuguese for the parents (Appendix A) and the school cluster director (Appendix B) to be read and signed. This was a mandatory procedure, since the students were underage, which means that they are not allowed to make any decision or take any responsibility in anything without their parents'/guardians' permission. The title of the project was already decided and included, and each process and step of the action research project was described so that full consent could be given. Another, more informal, consent letter was written for the students (Appendix C) resorting to colours, emojis, and language adapted to their age, so that they were aware of what would be done in class and how they would be involved in the whole process. I made a point of emphasising that they were free to accept or decline to participate in the study. Likewise, they were informed that they were free to withdraw from taking part in the project at any time, and if that was the case, their answers would not be included in the study. This was another mandatory, important procedure, as even though the participants were still children, they had their say in the process, and their will had to be respected.

2.3 Procedures

The action research was conducted dedicating two lessons to each of the study topics presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Topics taught using songs, videos and gestures.

Topic	Song name	Video	Gestures
i. Shapes (<i>triangle, circle, square, heart, star</i>)	“Shapes are all around” Pinkfong Songs (2017)	Yes	Yes
ii. The days of the week	“Days of the week song” (adapted) Super Simple Songs (2016)	No	No
iii. The alphabet	“Alphabet song” Bounce Patrol (2017)	Yes	No
iv. The months of the year	“Months of the year song” The Singing Walrus (2017)	No	No
v. The numbers 20-50	“Count 10-100” (adapted) The Singing Walrus (2014)	No	Yes
vi. Prepositions of place (<i>on, in, under, by</i>)	“On, in, under, by” Maple Leaf Learning (2013)	Yes	Yes

The vocabulary to be tested for the action research was chosen taking into account the contents that had to be taught throughout the first semester of the school year, i.e., based on the contents of the syllabus that was defined in line with the knowledge outlined by the *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (2018). In the first lesson the vocabulary was always introduced using a song, and, in some cases (as shown in the table above) also playing the video of the song and/or using gestures, and practised mostly by using listening and speaking skills. In the second lesson the vocabulary was consolidated mostly by using reading and writing skills. The videos were shown resorting to the classroom’s computer, the school’s internet connection, and the classroom’s projector.

In Table 2 below are presented the procedures performed in each lesson.

Table 2 – Procedures carried out in the lessons.

Item	Lesson	Procedure	Obs.
1. Shapes (triangle, circle, square, heart, star)	1	Vocabulary instructed using the song “Shapes are all around” by Pinkfong Songs, the video and gestures 3 times. Video showed the shapes <i>triangle, circle, square, heart, star, rectangle, diamond</i> and <i>oval</i> , in different colours, and examples of objects with those shapes. Video also showed the lyrics of the song. Afterwards a poster was projected on the board for the students to identify and name the shapes “hidden” in pictures. They did a listening exercise to identify the 4 shapes, colour them and write their names, and played a guessing game in pairs.	-
	2	The students did a set of worksheets where the reading and writing skills were practised, one of them for the students to identify the 4 shapes through their pictures and write their names and colours in a sentence as the one in the example “The rectangle is green.”	Revision class leading up to a written test.
2. The days of the week	1	Vocabulary introduced singing the song “Days of the week” adapted from Super Simple Songs 3 times with the students. Afterwards, they had to recognise the days of the week in writing through flash cards, name them and put them in the correct order. They also played a memory game in pairs.	-
	2	The students did a worksheet where they had to read and write the days of the week covering them and then check if they were correctly written and, if necessary, correct them. Then they did an exercise in which they were given the letters of each day of the week to put in order and write them correctly. Finally, they role-played the dialogue <i>What’s your favourite day of the week? It’s...</i> in pairs.	-
3. The alphabet	1	Vocabulary introduced using the “Alphabet Song” by Bounce Patrol and the video 3 times. The first time the students had to sing along, the second time raise a flash card with an alphabet letter and name it whenever they heard it and the third time sing it as in the song, i.e., first just the boys, then just the girls, then in a low tone of voice, and finally in a loud tone of voice. Video showed alphabet letters in capital letters and different colours. Then the students played a guessing game in 2 teams, where they had to spell the name of a classmate correctly and guess it, and a second game, in pairs, where they had to roll a dice and write words started with the letters from the dice within the given time.	-
	2	-	This item did not have a second lesson dedicated to it, since I was ill and was not able to give the class.

4. The months of the year	1	Vocabulary instructed using the song “Months of the year” by The Singing Walrus 3 times. A calendar with the names of the months of the year was projected on the board while the song was being sung, pointing to the months at the same time. Then the students had to recognise the months of the year in writing through flash cards and name them, played a memory game in pairs, where they had to find 2 cards with the same month and name it, and role-played the dialogue “When’s your birthday? It’s in...” with their partners.	-
	2	The students made a birthday party invitation based on an example shown in class and choose a classmate to give it to.	-
5. The numbers 20-50	1	Vocabulary instructed using the song “Count 10-100” adapted from The Singing Walrus, and gestures 3 times. Afterwards a student had to take a flash card, say the number on it and the whole class had to go on counting to 50 (the task was repeated 4 times more). They also played a bingo game with cards with 12 numbers each from 1-50.	-
	2	The class practised the numbers integrated into the questions-answers “How old are you? – I’m ... years old. / How old is he/she? – He’s/She’s ... years old.”, which were trained in pairs, either orally or in writing.	-
6. Prepositions of place (<i>On, in, under, by</i>)	1	Prepositions were instructed using the song “On, in, under, by” by Maple Leaf Learning, the video and gestures 3 times. The video showed the names of the 4 prepositions and the question “Where is the spider?”, that was answered by showing a spider <i>on, in, under</i> or <i>by</i> a box to illustrate the meaning of each preposition. Afterwards the class did a listening exercise for them to identify school supplies and prepositions and colour the school objects, and played “Simon Says” game.	Before the item was taught the vocabulary on the school supplies was revised, as it was going to be necessary to link with the prepositions.
	2	-	It was not possible to give a second lesson on this item, once it was taught on the last day of my traineeship.

2.4 Data collection tools and data analysis

The main goal of this AR project was to find out whether videos allied to songs and gestures enhanced the vocabulary learning process of YLs in the EFL classroom when compared to songs and gestures without videos. For such, as data collection tools I opted for oral pre-tests (Appendix D) before I started teaching the vocabulary I planned, which allowed me to understand what vocabulary the students already knew (if any).

The oral pre-tests applied before the 6 topics were taught were answered by all students (22) over part of 2 mornings (i.e. in part of a morning half of the group was tested and in part of another morning the remaining group did the same), by asking them the names in English of what was on the flash cards I showed them. The oral post-tests (Appendix E) were applied after each set of vocabulary was taught, i.e., after the 2nd lesson dedicated to each topic, a post-test was administered (6 times in total, as there were 6 topics), with the purpose of finding out what was learnt/acquired by the students. The method used was the same as for the pre-tests (the students were shown a set of flash cards and asked to say the names in English of what was on them). The post-tests were not all applied immediately after the contents were consolidated for several reasons: Item 1 was tested twelve days after for professional reasons that prevented me from staying at the school after my internship hours, Item 2 five days after, once on the day the vocabulary was consolidated a significant number of students was absent, what made me decide to postpone the post-test, and meanwhile there was a school break, Items 3 and 4 two days after due to school activities where the class took part, and Items 5 and 6 were tested on the same day they were consolidated. Just like in the first tests, all the students (22) took part in the post-tests. To collect data through the oral pre- and post-tests the students were taken one by one to a separate room after the English classes, where they were shown flash cards related to each topic of the vocabulary taught and asked to name the word or letter (in the case of the alphabet) represented in the flash cards. All the students' answers were recorded in writing, which was done 8 times in total (2 times to collect the data in the oral pre-tests phase and 6 times to collect the data in the oral post-tests phase). The data collected from both tests was analysed quantitatively and is presented in the Results section in distinct tables. After the action research was finished a written questionnaire (Appendix F) comprised of six closed questions, with 3 answer options each (1. *Muito* 2. *Pouco* 3. *Nada* or 1. *Sim* 2. *Não* 3. *Não sei*), was applied to the whole class at the same time and answered by 21 students about their opinion of the videos used in the lessons, as well as their role in the vocabulary learning. The students were shown the questionnaire, were explained how to answer it, and their doubts were clarified before it was handed out to them. The corresponding results are presented in a table in the Results section. The above mentioned tools were chosen based on the objectives I set myself to attain.

The collected data were all analysed from a quantitative perspective, i.e., all the answers obtained through the research tools used were counted, added up, and then converted into percentages. Concerning the oral pre- and post-tests every answer was counted and grouped into two types: correct and incorrect.. As for the answers to the questionnaire, the same procedure was carried out.

III – Results

Bearing in mind my research questions “To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos?” and “To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures contribute to greater students’ interest in vocabulary learning when compared to those with gestures but without videos?” I conducted action research over a period of 14 weeks while I was doing my supervised teaching practice during which I resorted to oral pre- and post-tests and a questionnaire. In this section I will present the results I was able to obtain through my study.

3.1 Oral pre- and post-tests

An oral pre-test on the vocabulary that would be taught throughout the semester was applied to 22 students in order to be aware of the vocabulary they already knew (if applicable), to compare the results from this test with those from the post-test applied at the end of the study and hopefully reach some conclusions.

The results from the oral pre- and post-tests are set forth in Table 2 and are expressed both in figures and percentages.

Table 3 – Oral pre- and post-tests results on the topics Shapes, Days of the week, Alphabet, Months of the year, Numbers 20-50 and Prepositions of place.

With video	Without video	Pre-tests correct answers	Post-tests correct answers
Item 1: Shapes			
<i>Triangle</i>		3 (14%)	16 (73%)
<i>Circle</i>		11 (50%)	20 (91%)
<i>Square</i>		0 (0%)	11 (50%)
<i>Heart</i>		2 (9%)	13 (59%)
<i>Star</i>		4 (18%)	14 (64%)
Average		18%	67%
Item 3: Alphabet letters			
<i>A</i>		14 (64%)	20 (91%)
<i>E</i>		11 (50%)	13 (59%)
<i>F</i>		9 (41%)	11 (50%)
<i>H</i>		1 (5%)	5 (23%)
<i>I</i>		2 (9%)	4 (18%)
<i>L</i>		10 (45%)	11 (50%)
<i>P</i>		15 (68%)	18 (82%)
<i>R</i>		4 (18%)	6 (27%)
<i>V</i>		13 (59%)	16 (73%)
<i>X</i>		1 (5%)	5 (23%)
Average		36%	50%
Item 6: Prepositions			
<i>On</i>		1 (5%)	15 (68%)
<i>In</i>		0 (0%)	15 (68%)
<i>Under</i>		1 (5%)	10 (45%)
<i>By</i>		0 (0%)	16 (73%)
Average		3%	64%
Item 2: Days of the week			
	<i>Sunday</i>	0 (0%)	13 (59%)
	<i>Monday</i>	2 (9%)	16 (73%)
	<i>Tuesday</i>	4 (18%)	13 (59%)
	<i>Wednesday</i>	2 (9%)	15 (68%)
	<i>Thursday</i>	1 (5%)	9 (41%)
	<i>Friday</i>	0 (0%)	11 (50%)
	<i>Saturday</i>	1 (5%)	14 (64%)
	Average	7%	59%
Item 4: Months of the year			
	<i>January</i>	1 (5%)	15 (68%)
	<i>February</i>	1 (5%)	11 (50%)
	<i>March</i>	0 (0%)	17 (77%)
	<i>April</i>	0 (0%)	21 (95%)
	<i>May</i>	2 (9%)	19 (86%)
	<i>June</i>	0 (0%)	15 (68%)
	<i>July</i>	0 (0%)	15 (68%)
	<i>August</i>	3 (14%)	19 (86%)

	<i>September</i>	14 (64%)	20 (91%)
	<i>October</i>	12 (55%)	20 (91%)
	<i>November</i>	12 (55%)	19 (86%)
	<i>December</i>	11 (50%)	20 (91%)
	Average	21%	80%
	Item 5: Numbers 20-50		
	20	4 (18%)	14 (64%)
	30	0 (0%)	8 (36%)
	40	0 (0%)	12 (55%)
	50	0 (0%)	9 (41%)
	22	9 (41%)	16 (73%)
	25	8 (36%)	14 (64%)
	34	1 (5%)	10 (45%)
	37	1 (5%)	10 (45%)
	46	1 (5%)	12 (55%)
	49	1 (5%)	14 (64%)
	Average	12%	54%

Looking at Table 2 it is possible to notice that the percentages of correct answers in the pre-tests were always under 40%, varying between 3% (Item 6 - Prepositions) and 36% (Item 3 - Alphabet), which shows that the vast majority of the students did not know the vocabulary under consideration.

Analysing the results item by item for Item 1 (Shapes) the average percentage of correct answers obtained in the pre-test was 18%. As for Item 2 (Days of the week) the average percentage of correct answers was only 7%. Concerning Item 3 (Alphabet letters) the correct answers achieved a percentage of 36%. With regard to Item 4 (Months of the year) the average percentage of correct answers was 21%. With respect to Item 5 (Numbers 20-50) 12% was the percentage obtained of correct answers. Lastly, as to Item 6 (Prepositions) the average percentage of correct answers obtained was the lowest one – 3%.

The results presented show that a large amount of the students (from 64% to 97%, depending on the topic) were not familiar with most of the vocabulary taught. Subsequently, it was not a surprise, considering that, despite the vast majority of the students in question started learning English in the 1st grade, this was new vocabulary, i.e., vocabulary that they had learnt for the first time. The only exception was the alphabet (taught in the 2nd grade), which explains why 36% of the students (the highest percentage obtained in this test) were able to respond correctly when they were asked about the alphabet letters in the pre-test.

If we analyse the students' responses thoroughly, we can perceive that in the case of Item 1 (Shapes) *circle* was the shape with the highest number of correct answers probably due to its likeness to its equivalent in Portuguese (*círculo*) as opposed to *square*, the only shape unknown to all students. As for Item 2 (Days of the week) the results show that the one with the highest number of correct answers was *Tuesday*, which might be related to the fact that we had classes on Tuesdays (at the beginning of every lesson the students were asked a set of questions, one of them being about the day of the week) in contrast to *Sunday* and *Friday*, that had no correct answers, as they are days when we had no class. Concerning Item 3 (Alphabet letters) – the only one already familiar to most of the students – letters *A*, *E*, *P*, and *V* were the ones that the students got most right (all of them were known by over 10 students) in opposition to letters *H*, *I*, *R* and *X*, which only a scarce number of students already knew. Regarding Item 4 (Months of the year) it is clearly perceptible that the months from September to December were known by many students as opposed to the remaining ones, which had almost no correct answers. Here again there is a correlation with the fact that these are very similar months to their equivalents in Portuguese and ending the same way (-ber), as well as, in the case of September and October they were months worked on at the beginning of every lesson by the time the pre-test was applied (similar to the days of the week). With regard to Item 5 (Numbers 20-50) numbers 20, 22, and 25 were the ones with the highest number of correct answers, once some of them already knew to count from 1 to 29, while none of them knew numbers 30, 40 and 50. With respect to Item 6 (Prepositions) this was the most unfamiliar to students, with a residual number of correct answers. The oral post-tests were answered by 22 students after each vocabulary topic had been taught as if it had only been carried out at the end of the action research, there could be a risk that the results obtained would probably lead to scarce/poor conclusions, given that the likelihood of them forgetting in the meantime at least part of the contents taught would be high.

Looking at Table 2 one can notice that the percentages of correct answers increased significantly when compared to those obtained in the pre-tests, always being higher than 50%, varying from 54% (Item 5 – Numbers 20-50) to 80% (Item 4 – Months of the year), which shows that a great number of students learnt the vocabulary taught through videos/songs/gestures. The only exception to this scenario was Item 3

(Alphabet letters), which scored 50% of correct answers, which was not a bad result, but was still slightly different from the remaining ones. An explanation for this can be found in the fact that that Item was worked on in only one lesson, which seems not to have been enough for the students to acquire the content effectively.

Analysing the results individually for Item 1 (Shapes) the average percentage of correct answers obtained in the post-test was 67% (vs. 18% in the pre-test), for Item 2 (Days of the week) 59% (vs. 7% in the pre-test), for Item 3 (Alphabet letters) 50% (vs. 50% in the pre-test), for Item 4 (Months of the year) 80% (vs. 21% in the pre-test), for Item 5 (Numbers 20-50) 54% (vs. 12% in the pre-test) and for Item 6 (Prepositions) 64% (vs. 3% in the pre-test).

When it comes to comparing the results of the songs used with and without videos the results show that the percentages of correct answers regarding the topics taught without resorting to videos were always greater than 50% (from 54% to 80%, depending on the topic), which did not happen with those concerning the topics taught with the use of videos (from 50% to 67%). Despite there being a difference between the results reached for the topics taught with and without video (the results of the topics taught without the use of the video are slightly higher than those obtained for the topics taught resorting to videos) it is not remarkable, which unfortunately makes it unviable to draw any conclusions that might answer the first research question "To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate the vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos?". When looking at the results topic by topic it is possible to perceive that Item 4 (Months of the year) was the one that the students learnt best (with 80% of correct answers in the post-test against only 21% in the pre-test), while Item 3 (Alphabet letters) was the one where the students showed greater difficulties in acquiring, with only 50% of correct answers. This is quite an intriguing fact, as this was the only topic that the students were not learning for the first time. Hence *a priori* it should have been the one where the students should have demonstrated less difficulty in acquiring. It could be the case that the students forgot that content in the meantime, because it was covered quickly or superficially. However, the most plausible explanation for what happened is the fact that the alphabet had been worked out in only one lesson.

As regards the comparison between songs with and without gestures the findings presented in Table 2 show us that the ones with which gestures were combined always reached percentages of correct answers higher than 50% (varying from 54% to 67%, depending on the topic), but those which were not associated with gestures also achieved similar percentages (from 50% to 80%), which once again does not allow us to draw conclusions and, moreover, does not coincide with what research (Herail, 2022; Magnussen et al., 2021; Er (2014)) has proved on the role of gestures allied to songs so far. The scarce time available to deepen the work done with the students, namely to have more opportunities to practise the gestures and apply them to different situations can explain the results obtained, since it is known that repetition aids memorisation. On the other hand, and underlining that this is just an assumption, therefore not based on any facts, it might be the case that the gestures chosen to be used with the songs were not the most adequate. Curiously, out of the 3 songs used with gestures the one that had the lowest percentage in the post-tests – “Count 10-100” – was the one that was not allied to a video, which comes to reinforce the value of the videos combined with songs.

As for the discrepancies in time between teaching the vocabulary and the application of the post-tests it seems they had no interference in the results, i.e., one cannot establish a relationship between both factors, since the topic tested 12 days after it had been taught (“Shapes”) was not the one with the lowest percentage of correct answers. In the same way, the one that obtained the highest percentage was not any of those tested on the same day they had been taught (“Numbers 20-50” and “Prepositions”). Thus, we can claim that the results obtained were not negatively influenced by the fact that not all the vocabulary was tested on the same day it was taught.

3.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered at the end of the action research with the intention of finding out the opinion of the 22 students on the use of the videos in the English lessons. Each of the 6 questions had 3 possible answers (1. *Muito/A lot* 2. *Pouco/A little* 3. *Nada/Not at all* or 1. *Sim/Yes* 2. *Não/No* 3. *Não sei/I don't know*). This

questionnaire was answered at the same time by 21 of the students who participated in the study (1 of them did not answer the questionnaire since he was absent on the day it was applied). The corresponding results are set forth in Table 3 in the form of figures and percentages.

Table 4 – Questionnaire results on the students’ opinion on the use of the videos in the lessons.

	<i>Muito / A lot</i>	<i>Pouco / A little</i>	<i>Nada / Not at all</i>	<i>Sim / Yes</i>	<i>Não / No</i>	<i>Não sei / I don't know</i>
Question 1: <i>Achaste que os vídeos foram úteis para aprenderes vocabulário? / Did you find the videos useful for learning vocabulary?</i>	20 (95%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	-	-	-
Question 2: <i>Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a memorizar o vocabulário mais facilmente do que só com canções? / Do you think the videos helped you memorise vocabulary more easily than songs alone?</i>	14 (67%)	7 (33%)	0 (0%)	-	-	-
Question 3: <i>Sentiste mais interesse em aprender vocabulário devido aos vídeos? / Did you feel more interested in learning vocabulary due to the videos?</i>	15 (71%)	6 (29%)	0 (0%)	-	-	-
Question 4: <i>Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a compreender mais facilmente o significado do vocabulário do que só com canções? / Do you feel that the videos helped you understand more easily the meaning of the vocabulary than songs alone?</i>	15 (71%)	6 (29%)	0 (0%)	-	-	-

Question 5: <i>Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a estar mais atento/concentrado para aprender o vocabulário?</i> / Do you feel that the videos helped you be more attentive/focused to learn vocabulary?	-	-	-	19 (90%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
Question 6: <i>Gostavas que nas aulas de Inglês fossem usados mais vídeos associados a canções para ensinar vocabulário?</i> / Would you like to see more videos associated with songs used in English lessons to teach vocabulary?	-	-	-	21 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Looking at Table 3 it is possible to observe frankly positive results, i.e., very favourable opinions from the students on the use of the videos in the English lessons, showing that the videos were much appreciated by them. Analysing the answers to each question of the questionnaire individually for question number 1 “Did you find the videos useful for learning vocabulary?” the overwhelming majority (95%) of the students responded “A lot” as opposed to only 5% who responded “A little” while no student answered “Not at all”. The answers to this question do not agree with the findings obtained on the percentages of correct answers in the oral post-tests for the songs associated with videos, which presumably happened, because the students had a positive feeling/opinion on the usefulness of the videos in the vocabulary learning without, however, being aware of the tests results. Overall, the answers to the questionnaire are important to understand the significance students attached to the videos used in our lessons, allowing us to grasp that there is general conformity (67% to 95%) about their opinion on the important role played by the videos in the vocabulary learning, as well as on their unequivocal interest in the use of videos in the English lessons (100%), with nobody choosing the options “Not at all” or “No” as an answer to any of the questions. It is also curious to note that the overwhelming majority of the students (90%) found that the videos helped them to be more attentive/focused on learning vocabulary, which does not meet my initial expectations regarding the role of

videos on the student's concentration (my belief leaned more towards the possibility of the videos serving as a distracting factor for them). Despite this, and based on the results of the post-tests, it does not seem that videos helped the students in vocabulary acquisition. In the case of the video of the song "Shapes are all around" the results may be explained by the fact that the song does not only teach the 5 shapes that were tested and worked in the lessons, which may have been an obstacle for some students. Concerning the video of the "Alphabet Song", taking into account that it was about a topic the students were not learning for the first time, I am convinced that if it had been worked in one more lesson, the results would have been different (i.e., better). With regard to the video of the song "On, in, under, by" it is the only one that leaves no doubt about its effectiveness/impact on vocabulary learning. Despite the impossibility of proving the relevance of the videos on vocabulary acquisition, it is extremely rewarding for me to find out that videos were not only much appreciated by the students, but also recognised as being important for their concentration and engagement, proving that videos are an excellent resource to be used in the English lessons and therefore a motivation to keep using them in the future.

IV – Discussion and conclusion

This action research aimed to find out if videos associated with songs and gestures have a positive impact on the learning process of YLs, namely in vocabulary acquisition, as well as in their interest in vocabulary learning, and answer the questions:

- To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures facilitate the vocabulary learning by the students in comparison to those with gestures but without videos?

- To what extent can videos of songs plus gestures contribute to greater students' interest in vocabulary learning when compared to those with gestures but without videos?

To answer the first question, although this action research project was only performed with a small sample of one class over a semester, it was clear there was a considerable increase in the percentages of correct answers given by the students while responding to the oral post-tests in comparison to those given in the oral pre-tests,

which is closely related to the songs, gestures, and videos used in the lessons to teach vocabulary.

As far as the second question is concerned the questionnaire results showed it is undeniable that the videos used throughout the semester were to the students' liking (100% of the students would like to see more videos associated with songs used in English lessons to teach vocabulary) and met their interest (71% of the students felt more interested in learning vocabulary due to the videos). Also 90% of the students felt the videos helped them be more attentive/focused to learn vocabulary, which is rather curious and could lead to another question or even another research project with the aim of finding out why the students were of that opinion. It was also funny to witness their enthusiasm whenever they were told they were going to watch the video of a song, as well as while they were watching it, trying to sing along and making gestures, when applied. Authors like Cameron (2001) and Ellis et al. (1989) advocate that creating a joyful and motivating learning environment is essential for YLs to develop language skills effectively, setting the stage for continued language development and proficiency and promoting a lifelong love for languages. Thus, videos are undoubtedly a very useful resource to be used in teaching, that can increase the students' engagement in the learning process. The whole process of the research was quite gratifying to carry out, and the results obtained reflect that the students also enjoyed themselves and learnt throughout the process. Hadjer's (2019) study also concluded that the use of video-based songs in teaching English vocabulary is an effective method that can be used to enhance pupils' vocabulary comprehension and motivation, just like Herail's (2022) action research project which showed that using songs and gestures in the classroom led to increased motivation among students to participate in speaking activities related to learning English. Students valued songs and gestures more than reading for learning in class, and they found the lessons with songs and gestures to be less boring, fun, motivating, and joyful. Davis et al.'s (2016) research also indicates that using songs in the classroom can lead to increased learner involvement, enhanced motivation, and improved retention of vocabulary. Davis's (2017) studies also emphasise the positive impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and overall engagement in YLs classrooms.

4.1 Discussion

Based on the results obtained through the tests applied and shown in the previous chapter it can be concluded that the videos allied to songs and gestures in fact helped the students to acquire vocabulary. Yet, the results do not allow us to conclude that they were more effective than songs alone or songs with gestures with regard to vocabulary learning. Hence, it is not possible to clearly and unequivocally state that the videos used in this action research fostered an improvement in vocabulary learning by the students, even though the answers given in the questionnaire were unequivocal as to the YLs' willingness to see more videos associated with songs used in English lessons to teach vocabulary. Moreover, most of them also found the videos useful for learning vocabulary and felt that the videos helped them be more attentive to learning vocabulary. Thus, it cannot be claimed that the results of this study are conclusive.

However, one can wonder, if different videos had been used and different topics had been taught, would the results be the same? Or if the same topics had been taught but using different videos and distinct ways to practise them would the results have been the same? Of course, these are just suppositions, and the fact that this action research project was performed with a small sample of one class over a semester, i.e., with a very small group of students, in a very short period of time should not be overlooked, which is undoubtedly a major obstacle to achieving more reliable results. Nevertheless, as a teacher trainee I can state that these findings allowed me to be surprised, since I was truly convinced before the action research began that they would show that videos allied to songs and gestures were with no doubt a way of improving vocabulary acquisition, even though the "distraction" factor may have some influence on students' attention. Although the results were not the ones expected, I go on believing that videos are a very good, useful resource to be employed in the EFL classroom with YLs to teach vocabulary as long as they are carefully chosen and well used by the teachers. Therefore, I will not give up using them in the future. Thus, based on the results of this study I suggest that EFL teachers who have not yet tried to resort to videos as a means of teaching vocabulary do not, to see the results by themselves and draw their own inferences.

By way of conclusion I can state that while the results of the questionnaire are unmistakable as far as the role played by the videos in the students' interest is concerned the same cannot be claimed about the influence of the videos on vocabulary learning, as the results reached through the tests applied do not show crystal clear evidence of the impact the videos had on the vocabulary acquisition by the students. As already referred to previously, the short period of time to carry out the study was surely a strong conditioning factor, but perhaps a different approach used in the lessons (for example, also playing the videos at the beginning of the second lesson where the topics were taught and not only in the first one) could also have led to distinct results, i.e., clearer ones. Despite all the above, and although the findings as for the impact of the videos on vocabulary acquisition were inconclusive, it must be mentioned that I witnessed the videos contributed to a greater engagement of the students in comparison to their engagement in the lessons where videos were not used or even more when compared to the lessons where the vocabulary was consolidated, in which the reading and writing skills were applied more consistently. That fact by itself is extremely gratifying for me, as the students' engagement in the EFL classroom is something that must be fostered by teachers, is almost an obligation of the teacher, at least of a competent one. Hence, I cannot conclude that videos allied to songs and gestures facilitate vocabulary learning by the students, but I can indeed conclude that videos combined with songs and gestures contribute to greater students' interest in vocabulary learning, as well as to their engagement in the English classroom, which means that this action research has not been done in vain, making me keep believing and wanting to use videos allied to songs and gestures with YLs in my lessons, with the desire to always do better.

4.2 Future research

Since the results shown in this report on the impact of videos on vocabulary learning were inconclusive much more is still yet to be discovered and tested. This is a topic that is far from being fully explored and deserves to be studied in depth, so that more and more teachers and educators can be assisted on this subject and be more and more capable of using videos in their lessons in an effective way. By doing so an

increasingly large number of students may benefit from this resource as a means of learning vocabulary in a fun, engaging way. Hence, in the future I would like to have the opportunity to further my study, applying it to a larger number of students and over a longer period of time with the aim of reaching more reliable, conclusive results, and of course taking advantage of what did not go so well and do better next time. Videos may not have been used much in the past. However, the emergence of the internet and its widespread use in an ever-increasing number of countries has completely changed the existing reality, and there are now no excuses for not using videos in the EFL classroom. This way, I hope the results of my study can encourage other teachers and researchers, not only to undertake further research on the topic, but also to regularly use videos allied to songs and gestures with their students to teach them vocabulary. I would particularly like to see those who have never given it a try due to fear or distrust or have already done the experiment, but for whatever reason it did not go well and were afraid to experiment it again to put their fears aside and try it.

4.3 Final thoughts

Undertaking this action research project was a brand new experience, which required a lot of dedication and time from me, but was also truly enjoyable. It was with great pleasure that I saw the students participating in my study from the very first moment (all of them, with no exception, agreed to take part in it) and collaborating by responding to the tests and the questionnaire with real, visible desire, not out of obligation. I have no doubt in saying that if the project had been longer, they would have participated with exactly the same enthusiasm as they did throughout those 14 weeks (even I would not have minded if it had taken longer).

Despite all this, we can speculate on what findings would be if we narrowed the field of research to songs, videos, and gestures for YLs of English as a foreign language and tried to find out what direct impact it would have on conversation skills or what would be the outcome if the focus was just on the speaking skill? I cannot guess what the results of that study would be, but I am sure it would be very interesting research to conduct.

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Appendix A – Letter of consent to the parents

Pedido de autorização aos Encarregados de Educação

Caro(a) Encarregado(a) de Educação,

O meu nome é Alexandra Sofia Rodrigues Silva, e é com muito gosto que irei estagiar com o(a) seu/sua educando(a) durante o 1º semestre deste ano letivo.

Estou a tirar um Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1.º Ciclo, na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, o qual implica que durante o estágio eu desenvolva um pequeno projeto de investigação, que será incluído no meu relatório final. O meu trabalho intitula-se: *Songs as a means for young learners to learn vocabulary in the EFL classroom* [As canções como uma forma de as crianças aprenderem vocabulário nas aulas de Inglês].

Por conseguinte, venho por este meio solicitar a sua autorização para poder incluir o(a) seu/sua educando(a) neste projeto, que decorrerá entre setembro de 2023 e janeiro de 2024, durante o meu estágio.

Depois de pedida autorização ao(à) seu/sua educando(a) para o(a) incluir no meu estudo, a recolha de dados será efetuada mediante o uso de testes orais (que não terão qualquer reflexo na avaliação do(a) seu/sua educando(a)) e questionários escritos, ambos individuais. O estabelecimento de ensino, todos os seus funcionários e as crianças permanecerão anónimas em qualquer circunstância. Nunca serão tiradas fotografias nem obtidas imagens, quer do estabelecimento de ensino, quer das crianças.

Informo que a qualquer momento o(a) seu/sua educando(a) pode escolher não participar nas atividades, e que as informações obtidas serão referidas no meu relatório final de mestrado e eventualmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

Se tiver questões a colocar, agradeço que me contacte pessoalmente através da professora titular de turma.

Ficarei muito grata se autorizar que o(a) seu/sua educando(a) possa participar no meu estudo. Solicito que esta autorização seja assinada e entregue tão brevemente quanto possível.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,
Alexandra Sofia Rodrigues Silva

Amadora, 26 de setembro de 2023
Alexandra Sofia Rodrigues Silva

Professora Doutora Carolyn E. Leslie
Orientadora de Estágio
FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa



Eu, _____ Encarregado de Educação de _____ declaro que fui informado(a) dos objetivos do projeto intitulado *Songs as a means for young learners to learn vocabulary in the EFL classroom* [As canções como uma forma de as crianças aprenderem vocabulário nas aulas de Inglês], e autorizo o(a) meu/minha educando(a) a participar no estudo.

Data: ___/___/____

Assinatura: _____

Appendix B – Letter of consent to the school cluster director

Alexandra Silva
Aluna de Mestrado
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Direção do Agrupamento de Escolas Amadora Oeste
R. Elias Garcia, Amadora

Amadora, 26 de setembro de 2023

Exmo. Sr. Diretor,

No âmbito do protocolo estabelecido entre a Universidade Nova de Lisboa e este Agrupamento para a realização do meu estágio em Ensino de Inglês no 1.º Ciclo, solicito a V/ autorização para a realização do projeto de investigação que constitui parte do relatório final do mestrado. O meu trabalho intitula-se “As canções como uma forma de as crianças aprenderem vocabulário nas aulas de Inglês” e decorrerá entre setembro de 2023 e janeiro de 2024, durante o meu estágio com a turma 3B da EB1/JI Manuel Heleno.

O estudo tem como objetivos perceber se, por um lado, a visualização de vídeos, quando associados às canções acompanhadas dos respetivos gestos, é benéfica para a aquisição de vocabulário por parte das crianças e, por outro, se os vídeos contribuem para que as crianças adquiram vocabulário de forma mais rápida, mais fácil e se sintam mais envolvidas no processo de aprendizagem.

A recolha de dados será efetuada mediante o uso de testes orais e questionários escritos, ambos individuais. A informação obtida será analisada e utilizada no meu relatório final de mestrado e, eventualmente, em artigos académicos e conferências. Serão igualmente solicitadas autorizações aos alunos e encarregados de educação. A qualquer momento do decurso da investigação os envolvidos poderão escolher não participar. O estabelecimento de ensino, todos os seus professores, funcionários e as crianças permanecerão anónimas em qualquer circunstância. Nunca serão tiradas fotografias nem obtidas imagens do estabelecimento de ensino ou das crianças.

Agradeço desde já a V/ colaboração para proceder à implementação do estudo em causa e manifesto a minha inteira disponibilidade para prestar qualquer esclarecimento através do e-mail asrds1979@gmail.com. Solicito, igualmente, que a autorização seja concedida até ao próximo dia 6 de outubro.

Alexandra Silva
Aluna de Mestrado
FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

Professora Doutora Carolyn E. Leslie
Orientadora de Estágio
FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

.....

Eu, _____ Diretor do Agrupamento de Escolas Amadora Oeste, declaro que fui informado dos objetivos do projeto “As canções como uma forma de as crianças aprenderem vocabulário nas aulas de Inglês” e autorizo os alunos da turma 3B da EB1/JI Manuel Heleno a participarem no estudo.



Data: ___/___/____

Assinatura: _____


Appendix C – Letter of consent to the students

Convite aos alun@s do 3ºB para participarem no meu estudo

Querid@ alun@,  Hello! 

O meu nome é Alexandra Silva e vou estar contigo nas aulas de Inglês durante o 1º Semestre deste ano. Além de professora, também sou aluna como tu! Estou a tirar um curso na Universidade Nova de Lisboa e preciso muito da tua colaboração,  porque estou a fazer um trabalho chamado “As canções como uma forma de as crianças aprenderem vocabulário nas aulas de Inglês”. Durante as nossas aulas vou usar canções e vídeos para perceber se os vídeos ajudam os alunos a aprender palavras e expressões em Inglês de forma mais fácil e rápida e também se os vídeos ajudam os alunos a estar mais interessados e para poder tirar conclusões vou precisar que respondas a pequenos testes orais e a questionários escritos. 

Se aceites participar no meu estudo, as tuas respostas vão permitir-me chegar a conclusões que poderão vir a ser úteis para outros alunos e professores no futuro. As informações que vou recolher vão ser incluídas no relatório final do meu curso e talvez também em artigos e apresentações em conferências. Não te preocupes que não usarei, nem o teu nome, nem fotografias tuas e o(a) teu/tua Encarregado(a) de Educação tem conhecimento do que estamos a fazer na sala de aula.

Se, durante o estudo, decidires que não queres continuar a participar, és livre de o fazer e não haverá qualquer problema, basta dizeres-me.  Caso tenhas alguma dúvida, podes sempre vir falar comigo.

Agradeço que preenchas e me entregues a tua resposta na parte de baixo desta folha.

Muito obrigada!  / 

Amadora, 26 de setembro de 2023
Alexandra Silva



Eu, _____ aluno(a) do 3ºB da EB1/JI Manuel Heleno

Quero participar no estudo da Profª Alexandra Silva 

Não quero participar no estudo da Profª Alexandra Silva 

Data: ___/___/2023

Assinatura: _____



Appendix D – Pre-tests

Action Research Pre-tests

Student: _____ Dates: _____

1. Shapes

Triangle _____

Circle _____

Square _____

Heart _____

Star _____

2. Days of the week

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____

3. Alphabet

A _____

E _____

F _____

H _____

I _____

L _____

P _____

R _____

V _____

X _____

4. Months of the year

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

5. Numbers

20 _____

30 _____

40 _____

50 _____

22 _____

25 _____

34 _____

37 _____

46 _____

49 _____

6. Prepositions

On _____

In _____

Under _____

By _____

Appendix E – Post-tests

Action Research Post-tests

Student: _____ Dates: _____

1. Shapes

Triangle _____

Circle _____

Square _____

Heart _____

Star _____

2. Days of the week

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____

3. Alphabet

A _____

E _____

F _____

H _____

I _____

L _____

P _____

R _____

V _____

X _____

4. Months of the year

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

5. Numbers

20 _____

30 _____

40 _____

50 _____

22 _____

25 _____

34 _____

37 _____

46 _____

49 _____

6. Prepositions

On _____

In _____

Under _____

By _____

Appendix F – Questionnaire

Questionário aos alun@s do 3ºB da EB1 Manuel Heleno sobre os vídeos usados nas nossas aulas Questionnaire to the 3ºB students from EB1 Manuel Heleno on the videos used in our lessons

Querid@ alun@,

Depois dos testes em que participaste ao longo do semestre para o meu estudo, venho agora pedir-te que respondas a este pequeno questionário, que servirá para eu saber a tua opinião sobre os vídeos das músicas* que foram usados nas nossas aulas, rodeando 1 das 3 opções.

* As formas, o alfabeto e as preposições.

Dear student,

After the pre- and post-tests you took part in throughout the semester for my study I now ask you to answer this short questionnaire, which will let me know your opinion on the videos of the songs* used in our lessons, circling 1 out of the 3 options.

* Shapes, the alphabet and prepositions of place.

Pergunta nº 1 / Question no. 1

Achaste que os vídeos foram úteis para aprenderes vocabulário?

Did you find the videos useful for learning vocabulary?

1. Muito / A lot 😊
2. Pouco / A little 😐
3. Nada / Not at all ☹️

Pergunta nº 2 / Question no. 2

Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a memorizar o vocabulário mais facilmente do que só com canções?

Do you think the videos helped you memorising vocabulary more easily than songs alone?

1. Muito / A lot 😊
2. Pouco / A little 😐
3. Nada / Not at all ☹️

Pergunta nº 3 / Question no. 3

Sentiste mais interesse em aprender vocabulário devido aos vídeos?

Did you feel more interested in learning vocabulary due to the videos?

1. Muito / A lot 😊
2. Pouco / A little 😐
3. Nada / Not at all ☹️

Pergunta nº 4 / Question no. 4

Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a compreender mais facilmente o significado do vocabulário do que só com canções?

Do you feel that the videos helped you understanding more easily the meaning of the vocabulary than songs alone?

1. Muito / A lot 😊

2. Pouco / A little 😐

3. Nada / Not at all 😞

Pergunta nº 5 / Question no. 5

Achas que os vídeos te ajudaram a estar mais atento/concentrado para aprender o vocabulário?

Do you feel that the videos helped you being more attentive/focused to learn vocabulary?

1. Sim / Yes 😊

2. Não / No 😞

3. Não sei / I don't know 😐

Pergunta nº 6 / Question no. 6

Gostavas que nas aulas de Inglês fossem usados mais vídeos associados a canções para ensinar vocabulário?

Would you like to see more videos associated with songs used in English lessons to teach vocabulary?

1. Sim / Yes 😊

2. Não / No 😞

3. Não sei / I don't know 😐

Muito obrigada pela tua colaboração!!!