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**The role of songs in
the Portuguese EFL primary classroom**



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Report supervised by

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Declaro ser a autora deste trabalho, que é original e inédito. Autores e trabalhos consultados estão devidamente citados no texto e constam da listagem de referências incluída.

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Abstract

This report aims to understand if the Portuguese teachers of English in Primary Education are familiar with the pedagogical value of songs and if they make use of them in their classrooms in order to reap most of their benefits. This research replicated a previously conducted study by Mustafa Sevik, in Turkey, in 2011, entitled “Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners”. The purpose of this replication was to verify if the Turkish and Portuguese realities were as different as I imagined them to be. While analyzing the results obtained in both studies, conclusions were drawn in light of, first attempting to understand what the Portuguese reality was, and second, comparing the results of this study with the previous one. A questionnaire was applied to various Portuguese teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), working either in state or private schools along the country. The original study received 52 answers, this study was able to collect a total of 85 answers. The participants were all teachers of English with experience in Primary Education. Findings showed on the one hand, that for both Turkish and Portuguese participating EFL teachers, songs are pedagogically valuable in the YL contexts, and that they should be an essential part of the EFL curriculum. On the other hand, it demonstrated that in the Portuguese study the majority does not find it difficult to find appropriate songs to use in their classes and is capable of measuring their students’ success when using songs in the classroom, as opposed to what happened in the original study. Portuguese teachers of English had to have proper EFL training, due to a recent government regulation and there is an extensive variety of materials available through course books and websites that teachers can freely access.

Key words: English as a foreign language, young learners, songs, primary education.

Resumo

O mundo está cada vez mais “pequeno”, no sentido em que as distâncias físicas que impediam que se pudesse comunicar com alguém ao longe não existem mais. O fácil acesso a recursos tecnológicos como um telemóvel, um tablet, ou um computador, de preferência com uma ligação wi-fi, permite a comunicação com quem esteja em qualquer parte do mundo. No entanto, para além da avançada tecnologia que permite tornar essa comunicação uma realidade, é fundamental o conhecimento de Línguas Estrangeiras, pois, sem isso, de nada serve poder comunicar com falantes de outras línguas, se não nos vamos fazer compreender.

São muitos os países em que o ensino de uma Língua Estrangeira tem sido cada vez mais antecipado. Em grande parte deles, como é o caso português, a Língua Inglesa é, desde 2015, obrigatória a partir do terceiro ano do Primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico, ou até mesmo no Ensino Pré-Escolar, no caso de instituições de carácter privado. Noutros países em que existe a possibilidade de escolha da Língua Estrangeira, a primeira opção é habitualmente a Língua Inglesa, “enquanto língua de comunicação internacional por excelência e instrumento das novas tecnologias da informação” (Bento *et al.*, 2005). Especialmente na realidade europeia, em que existe uma extensa variedade de línguas, o Inglês funciona como a Língua Franca, seja em ambientes profissionais, académicos, turísticos, desportivos, científicos e tecnológicos (Shin & Crandall, 2014). Isto é, o Inglês é a língua escolhida para que a comunicação ocorra sem obstáculos.

É também um dado adquirido, por parte dos pais, que um correto investimento na aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa na educação das suas crianças trará benefícios para o futuro profissional, sendo, para a maior parte das empresas, um dos principais requisitos à contratação.

O facto de a aprendizagem do Inglês acontecer cada vez mais cedo é algo que traz inúmeras vantagens à criança. Shin & Crandall (2014) destacam quatro razões fundamentais: mais tempo para a aprendizagem, possibilidade de melhor

pronúncia e fluência, a possibilidade de um despertar global e de uma competência intercultural, e uma maior flexibilidade mental.

Apesar das vantagens aqui apresentadas, é importante notar que, para que a aprendizagem seja verdadeiramente eficaz e compensadora, é fundamental que o ensino da língua ocorra de uma forma correta e apropriada. Um ensino incorreto da pronúncia das palavras poderá levar ao resultado inverso e a criança ficar “fossilizada” num erro. Uma seleção inapropriada de materiais poderá levar a criança a perder o interesse e a desmotivar-se.

Aprender uma língua estrangeira é, sem dúvida, algo extremamente importante. Para que seja conseguido com sucesso, é fundamental trabalhar e desenvolver todas as competências linguísticas da oralidade, audição, escrita e leitura. Apesar de considerar que a oralidade se encontra num lugar central, não é possível descuidar das outras competências linguísticas. É de extrema importância também trabalhar os diferentes sistemas da língua como o vocabulário, o léxico, a gramática, a pronúncia e a entoação. A língua deve ser trabalhada de forma holística e é aqui, na minha opinião, que as canções se apresentam como a ferramenta mais completa para utilizar no ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo do ensino básico. Podem servir para introduzir estruturas lexicais ou vocabulário isolado, para dar início a uma aula, ou terminar, para trocar de atividades, relaxar. Ao longo dos anos a trabalhar com jovens aprendentes, as canções têm feito parte dos meus recursos, precisamente para desenvolver todas as competências previamente mencionadas.

Este relatório de investigação insere-se no contexto da Prática de Ensino Supervisionada (PES) do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico e visa verificar quais as perspetivas dos professores de Inglês neste nível de ensino, no que diz respeito à utilização de canções como ferramenta de aprendizagem. Replica um estudo de 2011 de Mustafa Sevik, intitulado “Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners”, e pretende agora verificar que resultados são obtidos no contexto português. Foi aplicado um questionário que contou com a participação de 85 respondentes, 80 do género feminino e 5 do género masculino. A mais variada literatura e alguma

investigação realizada defendem as inúmeras vantagens trazidas pela utilização das canções com jovens aprendentes, cujas características vão precisamente ao encontro das necessidades desta faixa etária.

No momento em que foi necessário escolher um tema para a investigação deste relatório, as canções foram uma escolha quase imediata. De início, fez sentido tentar perceber quais as perceções dos outros professores e analisar se são da mesma opinião que eu. Quando me deparei com o estudo de Mustafa Sevik, imediatamente considerei que seria um bom ponto de partida, pois as suas questões eram muito semelhantes às minhas dúvidas: perceber se os professores acreditam no valor pedagógico das canções no ensino de Inglês; quais as suas atitudes relativamente à utilização de canções nas aulas de Inglês; se consideram que a utilização das canções é eficaz na aprendizagem da língua; e com que frequência e em que contextos utilizam as canções nas suas aulas de Inglês.

Após a análise dos resultados do estudo original, considerei que em Portugal os resultados seriam diferentes. Enquanto que para a realidade turca, os professores sentiram uma grande dificuldade em ter acesso a canções apropriadas para o ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo, em Portugal não foi esse o caso; a maioria considerou que tem acesso ao material necessário. Outra questão levantada pelos professores turcos foi a situação da falta de formação dos professores. Aqui, mais uma vez, o mesmo não se verificou, já que sendo recente a obrigatoriedade do ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo, desde 2015, todos os professores que participaram no questionário tiveram obrigatoriamente de realizar formação específica para esta faixa etária, seja um complemento de formação ou um Mestrado como este, em ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo do ensino básico. Os professores participantes foram muito firmes e convictos nas suas respostas, não deixando margem para dúvida do valor pedagógico e da eficácia das canções no ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico.

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Abbreviations

CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

TPR – Total Physical Response

YL – Young Learners

Introduction

As the world becomes more globalized and multilinguistic, the importance of learning a foreign language continues to grow. Out of the many options of foreign languages in Europe, English is still the most dominant, and the main choice for most parents that want their children to learn a foreign language. This is due to the fact that English is considered the lingua franca, the idiom that provides a bridge between speakers of other languages. For business, science, tourism, sports and technology, English is the chosen language, so communication can happen without major difficulties (Gregório *et al.*, 2013).

Many European governments have decided that children should start learning a foreign language as early as primary school, and in some cases kindergarten. In Portugal, English became compulsory in third grade since the 2015/2016 school year, and in fourth grade since the 2016/2017 school year. Although this is very recent, many schools, mostly private, but some public as well, have decided to start teaching English as early as the age of three.

Research has also shown that there are many benefits that arise from exposing a young child to more than one language, like mental flexibility, the possibility of becoming more fluent with a native-like accent, and a multicultural awareness (Shin & Crandall, 2014). With all these advantages, it's hard and almost impossible to find a reason why a child should not learn a foreign language at a very early age.

The importance of learning to speak a foreign language is undeniable. Speaking is, out of all four linguistic skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), the most challenging one. This happens because we need to think about what we want to say, make sure that we are saying it correctly and say it, all at the same time. It is, for that reason, a complex process. Nevertheless, every linguist skill holds its importance and there isn't an aspect that we can oversee when learning any language. To become proficient, one must learn every linguist skill and every component of that language, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Songs are considered to be one of the most complete teaching tools as they can be used to develop Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills. They can help memorize vocabulary, teach pronunciation and intonation, and can be very productive when teaching grammar or lexical structures. Songs can also be of great use to initiate a class, as an ice breaker, to change the pace, to lower the affective filter, to motivate children to use the foreign language, and to make children move and expend some of their never-ending energy.

During my supervised teaching practice, songs were a great part of my classes. I taught a total of ten songs to my third graders in four months and used those songs to revise or recycle vocabulary many times. Another aspect that I was able to work with songs was pronunciation. Every time a pupil had doubt about how to pronounce a word or an expression, I would recall a song that had that specific vocabulary or language chunk. I would also resort to songs if I felt that I needed to motivate my pupils, or for just a moment of fun and relaxation. Therefore, from my personal experience, songs are a fundamental tool and have a wide array of possibilities to work with in developing young learners holistically.

This study replicated a previously conducted study by Mustafa Sevik, in Turkey, in 2011, entitled “Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners”. This report aims to understand if the Portuguese teachers of English in primary education are familiar with these characteristics and use songs in their classrooms in order to reap most of their benefits, along with a comparison of both realities.

This report is structured in the following way: the first chapter describes what characterizes young learners and how children learn languages; the second chapter revises what previous studies and papers have stated regarding the use of songs with Young Learners in the EFL classroom, as well as their benefits since songs are a very complete tool that can holistically help in the development of the child; the third chapter consists of the study itself. There is one instrument of data collection that consists of replicating the questionnaire applied in the study previously mentioned, as an attempt to understand the role of songs in the Portuguese EFL classrooms in primary education. Conclusions were drawn in light of, first attempting to understand what the

Portuguese reality is, and second, comparing the results of this study with the previous one.

1. Young Learners

It is of extreme importance that teachers are aware of the particular characteristics that define Young Learners (YL), as knowing these will lay the foundation of successful teaching and a much proper understanding of why songs can be such a complete tool to use in the EFL classroom.

1.1 Specific characteristics of Young Learners

When we talk about Young Learners, we are referring to children aged from five to twelve years old. In Portugal, that refers to children starting their 1st grade of primary school up until the 6th grade. One must bear in mind though, that age is not significant of maturity. Children can be less or more mature, according to different factors (gender, parents influence and environment). Teachers need to take that into account, because that will determine the success of the activities chosen for the learning process.

Young Learners are naturally motivated, curious, active and very receptive. They are very eager to learn in a fun and engaging way (Shin & Crandall, 2014). It is up to the teacher to provide children with the proper activities that keep the interest and motivation going.

A number of specific characteristics that define Young Learners are now presented. According to Shin & Crandall (2014), Young Learners are:

a. very energetic.

Children are physically active, energetic and cannot sit still for too long. Teachers need to use this energy towards learning, giving them plenty of opportunities to move around the classroom.

b. eager to participate.

Most children are not inhibited or shy. They are glad to imitate the teacher and reproduce songs or stories. Although as they get older, they get more self-conscious, but they will still, in general, be spontaneous and not afraid to speak.

c. naturally curious and open-minded.

Children are restless to discover the world. They want to get as much information as possible. Teachers should feed that curiosity with a variety of subjects, like different foods, houses, and exotic animals. That way they will also be exposed to different cultures and become more aware of them.

d. very creative.

Children love to use their imagination and creativity. They love playing pretend, so teachers should choose activities that encourage them to release their imaginative skills, like through storytelling.

e. easily distracted.

Children have very short attention spans. They get bored and distracted if the activity lasts for too long, or if it is not interesting enough. It is important that the teacher arranges a number of short and fun activities that keeps children motivated and engaged. As they get older, their ability to concentrate for longer periods of time increases, although they should always take a small brake from high concentration activities that will allow them to rest for a little bit and refocus again.

f. self-centred.

Young learners are very focused on themselves and their enclosing environment. They will not be able to understand different perspectives, as it is very difficult for them to “walk in another person’s shoes”. This will change as they get older, but until then, teachers need to choose activities that children can relate to.

g. social learners.

Children are learning to socialize and to relate to others. Young learners love to talk to each other. As they grow, they continue developing social skills, like cooperation, acceptance, and sharing. Teachers should create opportunities for social engagement, like group or pair work. They need to learn and experience different forms of social interaction, considering that communication shifts according to the audience.

1.2 How children learn

It is also important to understand how children learn, and to know how they process that information. Children are active learners (Pinter, 2017) and construct their knowledge by doing (Cameron, 2001). They need to be given the freedom to explore, to move and to interact with things. Interacting with real-like objects, or even real ones, like food, pets, and any other objects will provide children with a much more successful learning experience, usually an unforgettable one.

Piaget (1970) defined the stages of cognitive development, through them we have the ability to understand what to expect from children according to their age range. Piaget's theory lacked the consideration of other aspects of a child's development that must also be taken into consideration, like their familiar and social backgrounds, as this can as well influence a child's development. According to Vygotsky (1986) and his Social Constructivism theory, children also learn through social interaction (Pinter, 2017). Adults and older children are crucial for the development of young learners.

For Bruner (1983), adults can assist a child through *scaffolding*, that is deconstructing the task into smaller and simpler tasks, allowing the child to understand and to achieve its purpose. Cameron states that teachers need to apply these *scaffolding* techniques with their learners in order to help the child's learning. Examples of scaffolding techniques are: to create interest in the task, to clarify the task, to model the task showing different ways to accomplish it, to praise, encourage, and to control the child's frustration if she/he encounters any obstacles.

1.3 How children learn languages

The learning surroundings must be very similar to the ones for mother tongue acquisition. Children need to find a real purpose to use English. Since in the real world they will not have as many opportunities to use it, it should be the teacher's concern to choose activities that simulate real situations. That will keep the child motivated in the learning process.

In order for the learning to be as productive as possible, children need to be exposed to English as much as possible and need to practice it as much as they can during class. Teachers should speak English for the most part of the class and children should engage in a variety of activities that promote plenty of practice.

As stated by Shin & Crandall (2014), children need to focus on meaning to understand the language and should not initially learn through explicit grammar explanations. Children learn grammar implicitly through practice, repetition and language recycling. As they get older, they will begin to observe the grammatical structure, and can then understand its form more clearly.

Cameron (2001) explains this very clearly, “children see the foreign language ‘from the inside’ and try to find meaning in how the language is used in action, in interaction, and with intention, rather than ‘from the outside’ as a system and form”.

From the theories mentioned previously, one can conclude that a language is now more than just a code, it is something that involves a teacher, an educator, and this opened the premise to develop different methodologies and approaches to language teaching, respecting the child’s development.

1.4 Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Portuguese primary schools

Throughout Europe, teaching a foreign language at a very tender age is not something new. The Council of Europe published, in 1995, the White paper on education and training: teaching and learning towards the learning society, and in 2001, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). These documents gave a common base for the implementation of teaching a foreign language in all cycles of education.

The CEFRL is a guideline that allows learners to be aware of their level of proficiency, and what they need to achieve if they want to evolve to a higher level. It puts the emphasis on oral production, as the true meaning of knowing a foreign language is being able to speak it. By the end of 4th grade the child is expected to achieve the A1 level and should “understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic

phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type (...) introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has (...) interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help” (Council of Europe, 2001).

Up until the beginning of the XXI century, Portugal was far behind most European countries in foreign language teaching. The first step towards introducing a Foreign Language in the 1st cycle of studies was taken in 1989, with the Decree-Law number 286/89 that established that “no 1^o ciclo do ensino básico podem as escolas, de acordo com os recursos disponíveis, proporcionar a iniciação de uma língua estrangeira, na sua realização oral e num contexto lúdico” (Cited in Tavares *et al.*, 1996, p:51).

It was previously mentioned that the English language shows great dominance over the other foreign languages throughout all of Europe, so for the 1st cycle of education, English became the only foreign language to be taught in Portugal.

It was not until 2005 that a proper guideline was released to assist EFL teachers. The CEFRL was the starting point for the publication of *Programa de Generalização do Ensino de Inglês no 1^o Ciclo do Ensino Básico - Orientações Programáticas para o Ensino de Inglês* (Bento *et al.*, 2005). Here the main purpose was to raise pupil’s awareness of the sounds and systems of the English Language. The main focus was orality and the approaches proposed were through games, stories and songs, with Task-based Learning and Total Physical Response as the suggested methodologies.

With English becoming compulsory in the 3rd grade in the school year of 2015/2016, and in 4th grade in the school year of 2016/2017, a new and more complete document was created. The English Curricular Targets show that the main emphasis continued to be on the speaking skill, stating that repetition is very important and so is spoken interaction and production (Cravo *et al.*, 2014).

Teachers and course books follow the Curricular Targets (Cravo *et al.*, 2014), that clearly demonstrate what the learner is expected to achieve in both 3rd and 4th grades.

Divided in the four linguistic skills, all the vocabulary, language chunks and grammar structures that the child should learn are explained in detail.

Unfortunately, I still consider that the Portuguese educational system is outdated and that it still relies mostly on written work as opposed to developing speaking skills. Through the years I have been noticing that children have high grades in formal testing, but when they are required to have a conversation in English, they feel insecure and unsure if they are speaking correctly. I find songs to be a great way to surpass that issue and wanted to understand if other teachers felt the same about the power of songs in the EFL classroom as I do.

In the second chapter, the importance of songs in teaching English to Young Learners will be demonstrated, revising what previous studies and papers have written regarding the use of songs with Young Learners in the EFL classroom, as well as their benefits since songs are a very complete tool that can help in the development of the child holistically.

2. Music and songs in ELT

2.1 Music and songs are everywhere

It is undeniable that music is everywhere. It is rooted in human nature (Sevik, 2012). According to Faria (2001:24) “A música como sempre, esteve presente na vida dos seres humanos”. Music follows us wherever we go, at school, at work, in the car, and in social, sports and cultural events. Every country has a national anthem, every sports team has one too, films have a sound track, and people spend millions purchasing music and paying to attend to live concerts. It is probably safe to say that every person in the world has at least one favourite song.

In Portugal, apart from films and TV series, an extensive part of the contact we have with the English language is through music. Portuguese radio stations play English songs all day long. As a teacher, it is very common to have a student come up to me and ask the meaning of a song or some word or expression he or she heard on the radio while listening to a song. Social media like Facebook or Instagram are also great means of bringing English closer to young learners. As a child, my first contact with the English language was through music, the more I heard songs that I enjoyed, the more I wanted to learn about what they were saying.

Music has a very deep connection with children. Campbell (2010:4) mentions that:

“children think aloud through music. They socialize, vent emotions, and entertain themselves through music. Their bodies stretch, bend, step, hop, and skip in rhythmic ways, while their melodic voices rise and fall, turn fast and then slow, loud and then soft. Their music can be "seen" and heard in their playful behaviours ...”.

Our contact with music starts even before we are born, in our mother’s womb. As babies, lullabies are sung to sooth and relax, or nursery rhymes help entertain and amuse very young children, as they accept them with enthusiasm (Sevik, 2012). In pre-school, songs are sung daily to greet, change activities, to calm children down, to say goodbye, and so on. As children get older it seems that songs stop having a pedagogical value and are used mostly for playtime.

As an English teacher, that teaches children from 3 to 10 years old, I feel that sometimes that is the case, even though songs continue to be a great part of my classes, the amount of songs used and the frequency they are played receive a significant reduction. This happens, on the one hand, because as my students reach 3rd grade and since English became compulsory, targets have to be met, formal assessments have to be done, course books have to be completed and time just seems to be short to fit every bit of this in the two hours per week that I have with my students. On the other hand, as Phillips (2016:100) mentions, “older learners find working with current or well-known pop songs highly motivating”, these, however, are frequently not the best choice to practice vocabulary, like the songs found in course books, and can be less pedagogical and more entertaining, but they will, no matter what, be a great choice to develop listening skills.

2.2 The role of songs in the EFL classroom

A variety of literature has been written over the last few decades stating the importance of teaching a foreign language through the use of songs. In 1992, three important pieces of literature were written: Tim Murphey’s book *Music & Song*, Dale Griffiee’s book *Songs in Action*, and Miragaya’s paper “On the use of rock ‘n’roll songs in the EFL classroom”.

Murphey (1992) hoped to help teachers reap most of the benefits of using songs in the EFL classroom. Besides the aspect mentioned above, that music is everywhere, Murphey mentions “The song stuck in my head” phenomenon (1992:7), something I think everyone can relate to, that song or tune that just follows us all day and sometimes all night. Abdellah (2002) mentions that “songs once learned are very hard to forget”. This can clearly sustain the idea that songs have a strong influence in our short and long-term memory. When it comes to speaking a foreign language, learners need to memorize as much vocabulary and language chunks of that language as possible, in order to become proficient speakers.

Miragaya (1992) refers to how songs' rhythm and melody are bound to help memorize more information, like vocabulary and lexical structures. Vocabulary development is a continuous process, it needs constant revision and recycling so it can be implemented in the child's long-term memory. Research has showed that songs will be very productive as they create many opportunities for repetition without becoming boring and achieve positive results (Davies, 2017:5).

Griffiee (1992:3) defines what a song is comparing it to speech and to poetry:

“Both songs and speech are vocally produced, are linguistically meaningful and have melody. Both songs and poetry use words to convey meaning, both are usually written down before publication, both can be put to music and both can be listened to...”.

Although, for him, songs have particular characteristics that make them different from poetry. In songs the message is brief, repetitive, making it something very simple. He then explains that “the simplicity of songs is not, however, a weak point. Because a song is heard for a short time, simplicity, redundancy and a certain ‘expectedness’ contribute to our understanding” (Griffiee,1992:4).

Through my readings I have realised that there is not much action research to verify the power of songs and effectiveness of songs in the EFL classroom, but through my teaching experience and as someone that loves music, I agree with Griffiee when he writes about the power of music: “songs are powerful... They are a satisfying art form: the lyrics fit the music and the music fits the lyrics and together they form a complete unit” (1992:4).

According to Gardner (2011), musical intelligence is the first to be developed in young learners. Children have a natural predisposition to music. They will hardly oppose to singing, most children love it. As mentioned before, this happens probably due to the fact that music and songs are a part of them even before birth, and children seem to be “naturally inclined to hum or to sing a tune” (Paquette & Rieg, 2008:228).

2.3 Songs are a holistic tool for the EFL classroom

Out of the available papers and research studies I read from Abdellah (2002), Santos & Pauluk (2008), Sevik (2011 & 2012), Kusnierek (2016), Engh (2013), Shin (2017), I was able to conclude that songs are considered a holistic learning tool and, properly used, will help young learners' cognitive, affective, linguistic, social, cultural and psychomotor development.

a) Cognitive development

As Kusnierek (2016:23) notes "songs are very repetitive, logical and persistent", this allows for the development of automatized language, which is related to fluency that relates to being able to speak quickly with flow.

Songs can also help prolong young learners' attention span and their repetitive nature allows for more natural fixation and memorization. There is one question on the research questionnaire that tries to get the teachers' perspective on this matter of whether songs capture the learners' attention or if they distract them.

b) Affective development

Music has a deep connection with emotions; happiness, fun, excitement, sadness, discontent and anger are just a few of the feelings songs can transmit.

For a productive classroom environment, teachers need to arrange for Young Learners a fun and relaxed setting. This is related to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. Krashen (1982) stated that a weak or lower affective filter will provide a productive learning atmosphere. This affective filter applies to motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and fear. If, for example, a child feels anxious his or her learning will be affected by that. Learning needs to be a pleasurable experience and songs can create just that, providing a fun and enjoyable moment, or they can also motivate and keep a positive and relaxed classroom environment.

Abdellah (2002) states the importance of songs to assist on a closer relationship between the teacher and the learners and as a stimulus to incentivise foreign language learning.

c) Linguistic development

Very few action-research studies have been conducted with young learners, although, of all the studies Davies (2017) was able to review, it showed that songs can possibly be very effective on vocabulary acquisition, developing pronunciation and oral proficiency.

With the proper activities, songs can be used to develop all four linguistic skills (Brewster *et al.*, 1992, Abdellah, 2002). Shin (2017) points out that songs provide a great opportunity for oral practice, helping improve student's pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and word stress. Hancock (2013) mentions that "songs can be used to focus on the form of language, including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation". Paquette & Rieg (2008) note that the informality present in most songs can provide children with a great amount of authentic language.

Most course books recently released in Portugal, to address the scarcity of age appropriate material that existed before English became compulsory in 3rd and 4th grades, are filled with songs that help teachers introduce new vocabulary or language chunks and help revise or recycle previously learned lexicon; most of these songs were created with that specific purpose.

One of the questions of this research is to find out if teachers make proper use of those songs, since in Portugal, every state school has adopted a course book, and most private schools have done the same. When it comes to having appropriate material to use in the EFL classroom, I find that teachers in Portugal can be very well equipped.

There is also a question regarding songs' pedagogical value, attempting to verify if the teachers are aware of that and share the same opinion.

d) Social development

While children are singing songs in the classroom, they are participating of a shared group activity (Brewster *et al.*, 1992), giving children a sense of belonging. At the same time, songs are a mean of communication and of interaction with others (Santos & Pauluk, 2008). This sense of being part of a group is very important in the age group of 3rd and 4th graders, as children's scholar success also depends on this.

e) Cultural development

Since songs are filled with authentic material, they can be a great source to introduce children to different cultures. Like Kusnierek (2016:25) mentions "listening to songs is an excellent way of learning about the culture of a specific country, as well as the language that is used inside that cultural community...". Songs are an echo of the time and place they were created (Griffee, 1992:5), containing cultural and social information that makes each song an individual piece of art.

f) Psychomotor development

Songs and movement are two things that go very well together, especially when it comes to using them with young learners that are very energetic (Shin, 2017). Music associated with gestures can help develop "fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye coordination" (4parentsandteachers, 2018). Adding physical movement, like the very popular Total Physical Response (TPR), to singing songs will enhance memorization (Phillips, 1993).

Murphey (1992:6) states that "songs alone (...) will not teach how to use language." Any foreign language will not be learned and acquired just by singing and listening to songs. This means that it is very important that the teachers know how to properly explore this valuable tool. Learning success through songs will depend on the activities prepared.

There are many ways a teacher can use songs in the classroom. Kirsch (2008) explores how songs can be used to practice greetings, personal introductions, to teach

body parts. The central idea is to pick a specific song and change it adding different vocabulary, that will enrich the activity but it won't pose as a big challenge, since the child is already familiar with the rhythm of the song. Shin (2017) gives an example of how one of Carolyn Graham' jazz chants (1979) can be used to take pupils' attendance. Jazz Chants became very popular because they add rhythm to language, that enriches language and makes it more engaging (Gobbi, 2001).

Certain aspects need to be previously taken into consideration, such as the students' language level and their age. Songs also need to have a pedagogical value, if they are used mainly to entertain, the didactic purpose will be lost. The teacher should also ask for the students' opinions and should be familiar with their tastes. Every class has its own dynamic, and what works well in one group, may not work well in another.

To summarise, one can assert that music is everywhere and its power among people is undeniable. With the addition of lyrics, we can create songs, that have many benefits when it comes to teaching English to Young Learners. They enhance memorization and are considered to be a very complete tool as they can address many aspects of the learner's development. As previously showed, songs can help on cognitive, affective, linguistic, social, cultural and psychomotor development. Teachers should make proper use of them in as many occasions as possible in their classrooms.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The study

This research will replicate a study conducted by Mustafa Sevik, in Turkey, in 2011, entitled “Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners”. The research questions will be the same, but now addressing the Portuguese reality:

1. What are Portuguese EFL teachers’ beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in their YL EFL contexts?
2. What are the Portuguese EFL teachers’ attitudes toward using songs in teaching EFL to YLs?
3. What do Portuguese EFL teachers’ think about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching EFL to YLs?
4. In what frequency do Portuguese EFL teachers use songs in their YL EFL contexts and can they access to appropriate songs easily?

After analyzing the results obtained by the Portuguese teachers, there will be a comparison between the Turkish and the Portuguese realities. The aim of this comparison is to verify if both realities are as different as I imagine them to be. While analyzing the results obtained in the Turkish study, immediately I considered that that would not be the case in the Portuguese results when it comes to finding it difficult to access appropriate songs to use in the classroom.

Since the decision to run a research study about the role of songs in the EFL classroom was made, I found that the original study represented a great starting point, to collect the teachers’ perspectives. For future studies, pupils’ perspectives could be collected and longer and more complex action research should be conducted in various Portuguese state and private schools.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Research design

This research intends to descriptively analyze the Portuguese reality when it comes to Portuguese EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes and thoughts towards songs and the frequency of their use in the classroom, followed by a comparison of the results from the original study and the results of this present one.

Data was collected through the replication of the questionnaire used in the original study. This self-administered questionnaire was applied to various Portuguese teachers of English, working either in state or private schools of the country. The original study received 52 answers, this study was able to collect a total of 85 answers.

Brown (1997:111) defines questionnaire as “any written instrument that presents participants with a series of questions or statements to which they should react either by selecting from existing possibilities or writing out their answers”. Questionnaires with Likert scaled questions are very frequent (Burns, 2010), these do not pose questions, but instead statements (McDonough & McDonough, 2014) and are a very popular method in language research, due to the fact that they allow an almost precise and clear data collection of opinions, many times called “opinionaires” (Dornyei, 2003:5).

For this type of research and due to some of the constrains that existed during the period of this research, this data collection method was the most appropriate, since it was efficient in terms of “time, effort and resources” (Dornyei, 2003:9). It was posted on Facebook in three different private teachers' groups, this way it was not necessary to print any paper and no mailing was required. Answers were collected in less than a day, starting 14th May, after eight o'clock in the evening and ended the following day around noon. No traveling was necessary, which made it very cost effective.

The original questionnaire was very well constructed and organized. The affirmations were very clear and did not last more than five minutes to answer. The information that was collected was intended to measure “three types of data about the respondent:

factual, behavioral and attitudinal" (Dornyei, 2003:8). Information about the respondents like age, gender and years teaching is factual, information regarding the teachers' actions and habits is behavioral, and information related to attitudes, opinions and beliefs are attitudinal.

3.2.2 Participants

The participants are all teachers of English with experience in the 1st cycle of Education. Their ages vary from less than 30 to over 51, although only three of the participants were 30 or less and only eight participants were 51 or older. Those who were at the age range of 36-40 occupied the highest share with 45.9% (n=39), followed by the age range of 41-45 that represented 23.5% (n=20). Both combined account for almost 70% of the participants, showing that the majority of the respondents is situated within the age range of 36-45. In regards to gender, the vast majority of the participants were female with a total of 80 (94.1%) and only 5 (5.9%) were male teachers. In regards to teaching experience, 29 (34.1%) out of the 85 participants occupied the highest share with a teaching experience of 11-15 years, followed by 19 (22.4%) participants with a teaching experience of 6-10 years, showing that the majority of respondents is situated within the range of 6-15 years of teaching experience. Tables 1 and 2 show the demographic information related to gender, age and years of experience of the participants.

Gender		Teaching Experience (years)				
Female (%)	Male (%)	Less than 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 and more
80 (94.1%)	5 (5.9%)	5 (5.9%)	19 (22.4%)	29 (34.1%)	17 (20%)	15 (17.7%)

Table 1 – Demographic information about the questionnaire participants – gender and teaching experience (n=85).

Age					
30 and less	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51 and more
3 (3.5%)	11 (12.9%)	39 (45.9%)	20 (23.5%)	4 (4.7%)	8 (9.5%)

Table 2 – Demographic information about the questionnaire participants – age (n=85).

3.2.3 Research instrument

Since this is a replication of a previously conducted study, the original questionnaire was adapted. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions. In the first part the participants were informed of the purpose of the research. Secondly, in order to collect the demographic information, the participants were asked about their gender, age, and years of teaching experience. The third part was composed of the 18 questions, where the participants had to choose, according to their opinions, the best option. The five-point Likert scale was included with the following options: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The last question referred to the frequency of using songs in the EFL classroom and the participants were asked to choose one of the following seven options: "I teach one song..." per week, per two weeks, per three weeks, per month, per unit, per term, or per year. These options were slightly different from the original study, as I considered that two months usually represent a unit of work, and most course books have a minimum of a song per unit. I wanted to understand if the teachers only followed what is proposed by the course book, or if they went a little further.

3.2.4 Data analysis

The questionnaire was created using Google Forms, the results were gathered through that software and were analyzed using graphics created with an Excel spreadsheet. A descriptive analysis method was used. The amounts and correspondent percentages are presented in tables very similar to the ones of the original study.

3.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.3.1 Results of the Portuguese study

In this part of the study, the results collected from the analysis of data for each item will be given in five tables and an analysis about each table will follow.

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 - I believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for young learners.	66	77.6	19	22.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 – I believe that songs present many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in many language areas.	51	60	32	37.6	2	2.4	-	-	-	-
7 – I believe that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value.	62	72.9	22	25.9	1	1.2	-	-	-	-
11 – I think that teachers must use songs only for fun and breaking down boredom.	8	9.4	5	5.9	11	12.9	27	31.8	34	40
14 – I believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of young learners.	67	78.8	18	21.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3 – Teacher's beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in teaching English to Young Learners (n=85).

Regarding Table 3, teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in teaching English to YLs were examined through five statements. The analysis of the results for the first statement reveals that all of the participating EFL teachers, 100% believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for YLs, so no one disagreed with the first statement, reinforcing what was mentioned previously, that all recently released course books are filled with appropriate songs, having at least one song in every unit of work created specifically to teach the target vocabulary or lexical chunks. Results for the fourth statement indicate that a great majority of EFL teachers (97.6%) believes that songs present many opportunities for YLs to show their skills in many language areas. Only 2.4% stated that they were undecided, and no participant disagreed with statement four. Results for the seventh

statement show that again nearly all of the participating EFL teachers (98.8%) believe that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value. Only one teacher stated that she was undecided, and no participant disagreed with statement seven. The eleventh statement asked whether teachers should use songs only for fun and breaking down boredom. The results reveal that the majority of the participating EFL teachers (71.8%) disagrees with statement eleven. 12.9% stated that they were undecided, and 15.3% agreed with statement eleven. Finally, the results for statement fourteen indicate that all of the participating EFL teachers, 100% believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of YLs. No one stated that they were undecided, and no one disagreed with statement fourteen.

Evaluated overall, Table 3 demonstrates that, for the Portuguese EFL teachers, songs are pedagogically valuable in the YL contexts, that they should be an essential part of the YL EFL curriculum, and that songs are very important for developing listening skills. Both statements one and fourteen were the most 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' items in Table 3, having both 100%. Statements four and seven, followed with 97.6% and 98.8% respectively. These results validate the participating EFL teachers' strong beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in the YL EFL contexts and justify Brewster *et al.* (1992) affirmation stating that all linguistic skills can be developed with the proper use of songs in the classroom. Statement eleven was the only 'strongly disagreed' and 'disagreed' item with 40% and 31.8% consecutively.

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2 - I believe that I do not have enough songs to use in the classroom.	2	2.4	23	27.1	15	17.6	30	35.3	15	17.6
5 – I find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum.	8	9.4	23	27.1	17	20	28	32.9	9	10.6
8 – I believe that using songs to teach English may distract students’ attention during the lesson.	4	4.7	3	3.5	14	16.5	30	35.3	34	40
12 – I believe that using songs in my English class can be time consuming.	1	1.2	4	4.7	16	18.8	34	40	30	35.3
15 – I believe that I cannot measure students’ knowledge of English when I use songs in my classes.	1	1.2	14	16.5	23	27.1	31	36.5	16	18.8

Table 4 – Teacher’s attitudes toward using songs in teaching English to Young Learners (n=85)

Concerning Table 4, one can see the teachers’ attitudes toward using songs in teaching English to YLs, these were explored through five statements. After analyzing the results for the second statement it’s revealed that the majority of the participating EFL teachers, 52.9% believe that they have enough resources to use as songs. 17.6% stated that they were undecided, although 29.5% agreed with statement two. This is a high percentage and raises the question Why? Results of the fifth statement indicate that the majority of EFL teachers, 43.5% don’t find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum. 20% stated that they were undecided, and 36.5% disagreed with statement five. Raising the previous question of why this happens. Results for statement eight show that 75.3% of the participating EFL teachers, disagree that using songs to teach English may distract students’ attention during the lesson. 16.5% stated that they were undecided, and only 8.2% agreed with this statement. Statement twelve asked whether using songs in English classes could be time consuming. The results reveal that the great majority of the participating EFL teachers, 75.3% disagree with this statement. 18.8% stated that they were undecided, and only 5.9% agreed with the twelfth statement. Finally, the results for statement

fifteen indicate that the majority of the participating EFL teachers 55.3% believe that they can measure students' knowledge of English when they use songs in their classes. 27.1% stated that they were undecided, and 17.7% agreed with statement fifteen. These results validate that there are more benefits when it comes to using songs in the EFL classroom than disadvantages, favoring the use of songs with Young Learners as a pedagogical tool and not as just a mere distraction or a moment of pure entertainment.

Overall, the majority (52.9%) thinks that they have enough resources to use as songs, and that they (55.3%) do not find it difficult to find appropriate songs. These findings show that the majority of the participating EFL teachers does not have problems in finding and reaching to appropriate songs, but the percentage of the participants that have problems finding appropriate songs is also very high. This develops another research question, as an attempt to investigate why. Is it because some teachers lack technological skills and are not very familiar with all the materials available online?

The percentage of those who believe that using songs to teach English may distract students' attention is low (8.2%) as opposed to those who disagree with this (75.3%) so the participating teachers do not consider songs to be a distraction. Results of statement twelve reveal that 75.3% of the participating EFL teachers consider that songs are not time consuming. This finding strengthens teachers' positive attitudes toward using songs in YL EFL contexts. Finally, the results of statement fifteen reveal that 55.3% can measure student knowledge when they use songs and 27.1% are undecided, making a total of 82.4%. This finding shows that the greater part of the participating EFL teachers does not have trouble measuring students' knowledge when they use songs.

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
3 - I believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary.	64	75.3	21	24.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
6 – I believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language.	54	63.5	26	30.6	3	3.5	2	2.4	-	-
9 – I believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for young learners.	63	74.1	22	25.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
13 – I believe that songs are not very effective in teaching English to young learners.	5	5.9	4	4.7	10	11.8	24	28.2	42	49.4
16 – I believe that using songs can lower students’ anxiety toward learning English.	49	57.6	30	35.3	4	4.7	2	2.4	-	-

Table 5 – Teacher’s thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to Young Learners (n=85).

As can be seen in Table 5, teachers’ thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to YLs were explored through five statements. The analysis of the results for the third statement reveals that all of the participating EFL teachers (100%) believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary. This confirms what Abdellah (2002) mentioned about songs being highly memorable. Results of statement six indicate that the great majority of EFL teachers (94.1%) believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language. 3.5% stated that they were undecided, and 2.4% disagreed with the sixth statement. Kusnierek (2016) mentioned that songs repetitive nature grants the development of

automatized language. Results for statement nine show that all of the participating EFL teachers (100%) believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for YLs. Results of statement thirteen show that the great majority of the teachers (77.6%) disagreed with this statement that songs are not very effective in teaching English to YLs. 11.8% stated that they were undecided, and 10.6% agreed with statement thirteen. Finally, the results for the sixteenth statement indicate that the majority of the teachers (92.9%) believe that using songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English. 4.7% stated that they were undecided, and only 2.4% disagreed with statement sixteen. Supporting the theory that songs provide a stress-free learning environment and a more pleasurable experience, highly productive when it comes to language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

Regarding Tables 6 and 7, the teachers' frequency of using songs and their thoughts about the accessibility of songs in teaching English to YLs were explored through three statements. The analysis of the results of the tenth statement reveals that the majority of the participating EFL teachers (76.4%) agree with the statement that they can easily access and find appropriate songs to use in their English classes. 15.3% stated that they were undecided, and only 8.3% disagreed to statement ten. This was one of the expected results, as with the Internet and all the specific course books released there is a wide array of materials to use with YLs in the EFL classroom. Results from the seventeenth statement, show that 95.3% of EFL teachers think that they use songs in their classes as much as possible, the rest 4,7% stated that they were undecided.

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
10 – I can easily access and find appropriate songs to use in my English classes.	20	23.5	45	52.9	13	15.3	5	5.9	2	2.4
17 – I use songs in my classes as much as possible.	48	56.5	33	38.8	4	4.7	-	-	-	-

Table 6 – Frequency of using songs and accessibility to songs (n=85).

Statement	Per week		Per two weeks		Per three weeks		Per month		Per unit		Per term		Per year	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18 – I teach one song to young learners...	13	15.3	30	35.3	20	23.5	7	8.2	15	17.6	-	-	-	-

Table 7 – Frequency of using songs (n=85).

In general, one can assert that the majority of the participating EFL teachers do not have difficulty in easily accessing to and finding appropriate songs to use in their classes. Furthermore, it also shows that they use songs in their classes as much as possible. Finally, the analysis of song usage frequency points that the mostly preferred two frequencies of using songs were; one song per two weeks with 35.3%, and one song per three weeks with 23.5%. The least preferred two frequencies were; one song per month with 8.2%, and one song per week with 15.3%. One can argue that the ideal and common frequency that the participating EFL teachers prefer is the teaching of a song per 2 or 3 weeks.

After analyzing all of the teachers' responses in this research, four statements received 100% approval, therefore all participants: believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for young learners (statement 1); believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary (statement 3); believe that songs are highly motivating and entertaining (statement 9); and believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of young learners (statement 14). Additionally, with a very high percentage of approval there was statement 7, that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value with 98.8%; statement 4, that songs present many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in many language areas with 97.6%; statement 6, that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language with 94.1%; statement 17 that they use songs in their classes as much as possible with 95.3%, and statement 16, that using songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English. Overall, it is possible to conclude that the participating EFL teachers have very positive thoughts, attitudes and beliefs when

it comes to the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to YLs and as being a holistic tool that helps develop the child as a whole.

3.3.2 Comparison and discussion of the Turkish and the Portuguese results

After analyzing the results obtained with the Portuguese study, a few differences are well noticed. In regards of age and years of teaching experience, the Portuguese participating teachers are older with 36-40 holding the highest percentage of 45.9%, while in the Turkish study it was the 26-30 range with the highest percentage of 48.1%. The Portuguese participating teachers being older, consequently have more years of teaching experience with the 11-15 years range holding 34.1% while the Turkish participating teachers had 55.8% in the 6-10 years range. Regarding gender, there is a higher percentage of female teachers in both studies with 94.1% in the Portuguese study and 73.1% in the original study.

In regard to the teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in their EFL classroom, it is clear and certain that both groups believe in the effectiveness of using songs. The only aspect that I would like to note is that the Portuguese participating teachers are more firmly convinced and certain of that value, as there were two statements that received 100% of agreement in that matter. This might be related to having more years of experience and therefore feeling more confident about their approach to using songs in the EFL classroom.

Concerning the teachers' attitudes toward using songs in their EFL classroom, here is where the Portuguese results counter the Turkish results. While in the original study 69.3% believed that they did not have enough resources to use as songs, in the Portuguese study only 29.5% shared that belief. Additionally, while in the Turkish study 77% find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum, as in this study 36.5% claimed that difficulty. Although, according to the results, the majority of the Portuguese participating teachers do not share the same attitudes towards using songs in their EFL classrooms as the Turkish teachers, it is clear that the answers to these statements are not as assertive as in the previous statements. This can happen due to the fact that there are considerable differences in the English course books that were released when English became compulsory in

Portugal. Some are very complete in regards of having the appropriate songs for the units of study, while in others that is not the case. In the Portuguese public schools, an English course book is a mandatory requirement for 3rd and 4th grades, but it is not a personal choice of the English teacher, so sometimes teachers may have some difficulty in having the appropriate songs to work with in their classroom. Despite that fact, teachers can always search within the extensive array of songs that are freely available on sites like Youtube.

When it comes to measuring students' knowledge of English while using songs in their classroom, 42.3% of Turkish participating teachers considered that they could not measure students' knowledge, while only 17.7% of the Portuguese participating teachers shared that belief. This can happen due to the fact that every teacher of English in primary of education had to undergo training to be able to start teaching these two specific grades. In such a manner, not only are the Portuguese participating teachers more experienced, they have just had specific training regarding teaching English to young learners, and that training combined a variety of aspects, from materials, resources, approaches, methodology and assessment.

Regarding teachers' thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in the EFL classroom, there are no differences in the results obtained in the two studies. Both groups agree that songs accelerate memorization, that songs provide a large amount of repetition, that songs are highly motivating and entertaining and that songs can lower student's anxiety toward learning English. This reflects a parallel with the other research studies that were previously analyzed in the second chapter.

In regards to the frequency of using songs in the EFL classroom, there is a considerable difference between the original study that shows an average of one song per month, followed by one song per two months, while in the Portuguese study, the average is one song per two weeks, followed by one song per three weeks, meaning that the Portuguese students can possibly learn double the amount of songs that the Turkish students do. This is intrinsically related to the fact that Portuguese teachers have a wider access to appropriate songs, having more opportunities to work with this approach in their EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research replication intended to descriptively analyze the Portuguese reality when it comes to Portuguese EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and frequency of use towards songs in the classroom.

This paper began by introducing the specific characteristics that define Young Learners, and how they learn, since being familiar with these, helps understand how songs can be such a powerful and complete learning tool in the EFL classroom. Young Learners are naturally motivated, curious, active and very receptive. They are very energetic, eager to participate, naturally curious and open-minded, very creative, distracted, self-centred, and social learners. They are very eager to learn in a fun and engaging way. It is up to the teacher to provide children with the proper songs that keep the interest and motivation going. The results of this study have concluded that the Portuguese participating teachers do not have difficulty finding appropriate songs to use in their classrooms.

Songs and music have been around for centuries, and its use among young learners has been a current practice for a long time. The second chapter attempts to show how songs are a holistic learning tool for the EFL classroom, as they help develop the child's cognitive, affective, linguistic, social, cultural, and psychomotor skills. The results of the conducted study reflect that the participating Portuguese teachers believe in the pedagogical value of songs and 100% agreed that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for young learners.

This study replicated one previously conducted in Turkey, in 2011, by Mustafa Sevik, entitled "Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners". After comparing both results I was able to conclude that the Turkish reality is somehow different from the Portuguese reality. Portuguese participating teachers do not find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum, and they also do not believe that they cannot measure students' knowledge of English when using songs in their classrooms. But since there is a separation of seven years between the studies, and a lot has changed in Portugal since English became compulsory three years ago. Many course books have been released, that come with

a variety of songs and other materials. Furthermore, Portuguese editor companies have invested in creating learning online platforms like *Escola Virtual* from Porto Editora, or *Aula Digital* from Leya, that are available to every teacher that is working in a school. It would probably require a remake of the original study today to truly evaluate if those differences remain.

For further research I find that it would also be important to get the pupils' perceptions on the value of songs. In fact, I find that there should be more research collecting pupils' perceptions in many other subjects: how important learning English is for them, what methodologies they prefer and consider more effective, what approaches, and so on. Regarding the use of songs in the EFL classroom, I find that more action research should be conducted, using control and experimental groups to truly assess the pedagogical value of songs and its effectiveness.

To finish I would like to leave a citation from Joan Shin:

“The more energy and excitement teachers have for music and movement, the more energy and excitement their YLs will have. Remember, enthusiasm for singing, moving and dancing is contagious. The goal is to get YLs motivated to learn English...” (2017, p:25).

Teaching and learning with enthusiasm and motivation can definitely go a long way.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Data collection questionnaire.

Appendix A

Data Collection Questionnaire

1 - I believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for young learners.

2 - I believe that I do not have enough resources to use as songs.

3 - I believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary.

4 – I believe that songs present many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in many language areas.

5 – I find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum.

6 – I believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language.

7 – I believe that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value.

8 – I believe that using songs to teach English may distract students' attention during the lesson.

9 – I believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for young learners.

10 – I can easily access and find appropriate songs to use in my English classes.

11 – I think that teachers must use songs only for fun and breaking down boredom.

12 – I believe that using songs in my English class can be time consuming.

13 – I believe that songs are not very effective in teaching English to young learners.

14 – I believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of young learners.

15 – I believe that I cannot measure students' knowledge of English when I use songs in my classes.

16 – I believe that using songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English.

17 – I use songs in my classes as much as possible.

Possible answers: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

18 – I teach one song to young learners.

Possible answers: Per week, per two weeks, per three weeks, per month, per two months, per a unit, per a term, per year