Trabajo Fin de Grado
Gradu Bukaerako Lana

The effects of stories and songs on ECEC learners' EFL spoken production

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Resumen

Este estudio comparativo busca resolver la duda de si las canciones o las historias son una mejor herramienta multimodal para mejorar la producción oral del alumnado de Educación Infantil en inglés como segunda lengua. Mediante la aplicación de ambos métodos en un centro PAI inglés - castellano de la Comunidad Foral de Navarra, se ha llegado a la conclusión de que las historias resultan un mejor recurso multimodal si se trata de producción de frases y adquisición más rápida, sin embargo, las canciones también resultan útiles y han demostrado producir mejoras al menos en producción de palabras sueltas de vocabulario en emociones. Para llegar al resultado, se ha realizado un estudio comparativo cualitativo utilizando como medios una canción, un cuento y una plantilla de observación en la que se anotó la respuesta diaria de cada alumno o alumna durante el tiempo en el que se llevó a cabo el estudio.

Palabras clave: EFL; Canciones; Cuentos; Adquisición; Infantil

Abstract

Producing output is considered fundamental to guarantee attainment in foreign language learning processes (Fleta, 2019) therefore, it is necessary to promote authentic spoken production among students enrolled in Early Childhood Education bilingual or multilingual programmes. With this aim in mind, the present comparative study explored whether songs and stories helped to promote spoken language among young learners and to decide which of the two multimodal resources promotes further and faster learning. To do so, we investigated two groups of 3-4-year-old children following an English Learning Program (English-Spanish) in a State School in Navarre. Divided into two groups, a story and a song group, students were told a story or sang a song to trigger spoken language about the routines of feelings. Students' responses were annotated in an observation sheet and after 8 observation sessions, the results showed that stories are a better multimodal resource when it comes to multi-chunk sentence production and faster acquisition. However, songs have also demonstrated to be useful and to encourage single word English production. Pedagogical implications will also be drawn.

Key words: EFL; Songs; Stories; Output; Infant

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INTRODUCTION

Cada vez es más extendida entre las familias españolas la opción de educar a los hijos y las hijas en un entorno plurilingüe como consecuencia del proceso de globalización. En Navarra, cada vez son más los centros educativos que ofertan modelos o programas lingüísticos en el que se integran varios idiomas como son el euskera, el francés, el alemán o el inglés, que sigue siendo el más ofertado, para así formar ciudadanos multilingües. La educación multilingüe, cada vez es más ofertada en Navarra, donde existe un gran número de centros cuya oferta lingüística se basa en el PAI o Programa de Aprendizaje en Inglés, ofertado desde el segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil (Departamento de Educación del Gobierno de Navarra, 2021).

Desde hace algunos años, varios centros educativos ofrecen la posibilidad a las familias de que sus hijos e hijas reciban una enseñanza bilingüe español-inglés desde el segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil. Los centros que ofrecen programas *PAI* o Programa de Aprendizaje en Inglés imparten asignaturas en castellano o inglés indistintamente, mediante una metodología AICLE o Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua Extranjera. También existe la posibilidad de escoger el modelo PAI en inglés y euskera, la lengua cooficial de la comunidad (Departamento de Educación del Gobierno de Navarra, 2021).

A la hora de enseñar en otros idiomas, el profesorado en Educación Infantil se encuentra ante el reto de conseguir la adquisición de una segunda lengua (L2) cuando todavía no se ha completado la de la lengua materna (L1) del alumnado. La producción oral de distintas frases y expresiones se presenta como un objetivo difícil de alcanzar en los primeros cursos y sobre todo en el primer año de la etapa escolar de las y los menores (Fleta, 2018).

Dado que las rutinas son una de las bases de aprendizaje del alumnado más joven, resulta lógico pensar que ese es el momento ideal para comenzar a introducir nuevas palabras y expresiones, ya que van a ser repetidas a diario por maestros y maestras y el propio alumnado, favoreciendo un ambiente de seguridad, reforzando la adquisición de diferentes objetivos de currículo y estructurando y manteniendo una serie de constantes temporales que ayudan respetando el desarrollo cognitivo y socioafectivo del alumnado (Doblas & Montes González, 2009).

Una de las partes más importantes de la rutina es la expresión de sentimientos y emociones del alumnado, para que el profesorado sea capaz de comprender y apoyarles en sus expresiones y desarrollo emocional, pero en una lengua diferente

a la propia resulta difícil de conseguir a la edad de 3 años. Dada la gran importancia que tiene esta expresión de los sentimientos y sensaciones y su dificultad a la hora de hacerlo en una lengua extranjera en el caso del alumnado cursando sus estudios en un colegio que ofrece un programa PAI es necesario encontrar métodos que favorezcan esta expresión en inglés, y dos de los métodos utilizados en Educación Infantil son las historias y las canciones (Kirsch, 2012).

Para intentar promover la producción lingüística y favorecer esta expresión emocional y desarrollo del alumnado de primer curso de Educación Infantil se han utilizado una canción (Wormhole English- Songs For Kids, 2020) y un cuento de elaboración propia basado en la canción ya que estudios anteriores como los de Davis (2017), Ghanbari y Hashemian (2014) o Kaminski (2016) han demostrado que las canciones reducen ansiedad y mejoran las habilidades comunicativas (Davis, 2017), mejoran la pronunciación (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014) y aumentan el vocabulario adquirido (Kaminski, 2016).

Por otro lado, se ha demostrado que el uso de cuentos e historias resulta útil para mejorar la retención y recordar diferentes estructuras y vocabulario aumentando y mejorando el desarrollo de estructuras lingüísticas (Kirsch, 2012) y mejorando la expresión y comprensión de vocabulario (Campana et al., 2016; Porras González, 2010).

Así pues, es fácil creer que estos dos recursos pueden resultar herramientas útiles a la hora de introducir nuevas estructuras y vocabulario en etapas tan tempranas, pero existen muy pocos estudios que hayan comparado ambos para resolver la duda de cuál resulta más útil y los que lo han hecho se centran en alumnado con un desarrollo cognitivo superior (Kaminski, 2019) o en la adquisición únicamente de vocabulario (Albadalejo, Coyle, & Roca de Larios, 2018; Lesniewska & Pichette, 2016).

Por lo tanto, este estudio busca encontrar medios para resolver la dificultad del alumnado de primer curso de Educación Infantil a la hora de expresar sus sentimientos y emociones en el momento de las rutinas aplicando y comparando dos recursos multimodales: una historia y una canción.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Early language learning programs in Navarre

There is a fastly growing demand for bilingual (or plurilingual) education programs from a very early age (Fleta, 2018) and parents and schools choose them over monolingual alternatives. This growth of bilingual education's popularity is supported by some authors, who explain that, unlike adults, children are better at acquiring language in social contexts (Cameron, 2001; Gass & Selinker 2008; Lightbown & Spada 2013 as cited by Fleta, 2018). Schools can be considered such type of contexts. Using the biological predisposition of children to learn and work out the rules of language will help students acquire the second language without the need of providing them with formal instruction based on boring and meaningless activities (Haas, 2000 as cited by Shin, 2006).

Supporting this idea of engaging young students in bilingual school contexts, Fleta (2018) states that it is never too late to start learning a language, but neither too early to expose a child to a second language (L2). Teachers can foster the implicit ability of very young learners to decode the language and to learn in a social context rather than in a formal learning one. For this reason, Navarre's Foral Decree 23/2007 19th March (Article 6.2) states that students need to be introduced to the L2 in the second cycle of Infant Education. At this time, students will be taught basic reading and writing notions, in order to start developing their communicative skills (Gobierno de Navarra, 2007).

Most schools in Navarre follow a Plurilingual Education Model, integrating the main language of the Foral Community with at least one foreign language (FL), which can be English, or a second and a third language and even a fourth language, English and Basque, or English, Basque and French. The way languages are integrated is by teaching the areas for Early Childhood Education or subjects for Primary Education in the different languages taught in the school, this means that schools follow a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology (Departamento de Educación del Gobierno de Navarra, 2021).

The teaching in the second cycle of Infant Education will be global and pupils need to be offered meaningful activities that will arouse their curiosity which will result in a more favorable disposition towards knowledge acquisition and a more positive attitude towards the learning process (Gobierno de Navarra, 2007). It is also important

to offer students different opportunities to learn by encouraging relaxed and enjoyable moments in which students will be willing to participate. These opportunities must be offered in the bilingual context, and as students get involved they will acquire the foreign language almost effortlessly (Cameron, 2001; Gobierno de Navarra, 2007).

It is widely known that it is easier for younger students to acquire an L2 and reach a native proficiency level, provided they are exposed to sufficient input (Tsimpli, 2006; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015)). But when they cannot read or write, they depend on the teacher's ability to create situations and provide them with opportunities that stimulate their interest in the second language and that foster L2 learning in the school environment. Activities at this level must be engaging and fun, and students should associate words and actions in order to understand what they are being told (Albadalejo, Coyle, & Roca de Larios, 2018; Gobierno de Navarra, 2007; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015).

Fleta (2018) explains that the teacher is the person who should know how these very young students approach the L2 and provide them with a good amount of the target L2 input for them to be able to acquire it and start producing their output. Pupils must have time for interactions between them and with an adult in the target language. These interactions must be meaningful, of good quality and systematic and sustained for several hours a week.

Creating such interaction opportunities in the FL, however, is not easy and teachers in these schools face every day the difficulty of teaching in a FL to very young learners, who are naturally predisposed to learning in order to be able to communicate but who do not have the necessary tools to do so in the FL yet.

If the teaching is going to be successful, these are the main features that characterize very young language learners (Harmer, 2012):

- They need several hours of exposure to a language if one wants them to acquire it.
- It is very important to provide them with multisensorial input.
- They usually like learning and feel curiosity towards new topics.
- If they are very young they will not be able to understand abstract aspects of language.
- Very young learners are self-centered, so activities should be related to their daily lives.
- They seek adults' approval.

- To help students' attention, activities need to combine a fair amount of routines that will grant them security with new activities by increasing the level of difficulty or adding new elements.
- Children need a lot of scaffolding in order to acquire the new language.
- Pupils are different even though they are at the same age and supposed to be more or less at the same level, they each have their own path.

Given that our students are very young learners with the characteristics explained above, we can think that when we look for activities and situations to trigger language development these should be student centered, not too repetitive but enough for children to acquire the vocabulary and language we want them to be able to produce, related to pupils' daily life, there needs to be some kind of support or scaffolding and they need to be somehow engaging for our learners to focus.

Young learners are very enthusiastic and they like to please the teacher more than older learners do (Cameron, 2001). Their attention spans are very short, however, and they lose interest faster than older learners do. They need to receive a good source of input to make them stay motivated, this means that students should receive several hours of input in real-life contexts (Cameron, 2001).

To promote high levels of attainment, producing language is fundamental (Fleta, 2019) and routines seem perfect candidates, given that, according to Doblas and Montes González (2009), routines contribute to the structuration of the students' daily life and trigger authentic interactions that promote students' capabilities. Routines, therefore, might become an ideal source and site for second language learning.

Shin (2006) states that very young learners love the repetition of certain structures and activities, and routines give teachers a grip point and a support to be able to get the students' attention and introduce either songs or stories that feature interesting and familiar contexts to them and that that can be enjoyed and repeated day after day. These resources, if accompanied by gestures, colourful images and lots of attractive scaffolding happen to be an important tool to help students in the process of L2 acquisition (Shin, 2006).

At school, speaking about how one feels or a fellow student feels is part of the set of routines that are followed every day in the Early Childhood Education Care classroom. Therefore, any increase in the amount of output students produce will result in a meaningful improvement because it will allow students to start sharing their ideas, feelings, and personal views in the foreign language. This will help students to

feel more secure and confident about speaking and might reduce their anxiety when it comes to speaking out loud in a foreign language.

To do so, in this study, we will proceed to review two teaching methods, storytelling and songs, both as multimodal texts applied in the context of the students' daily routines and to discuss whether the storytelling or the songs are better teaching tools to help three-year-old students who attend a *PAI* school in Navarre for their first year to express themselves and communicate their feelings to others.

1.2. Routines

Routines in the English as a Foreign Language classroom are a good starting point for different activities (either linguistic or other kinds of meaningful activities) to take place. They are child-centered, they can be modified to be more challenging each day, but at the same time, they are repetitive and allow teachers to expose pupils to the target language for a good amount of time every day (Cameron, 2001). This is the reason why this moment has been chosen to undertake the study.

As explained by Cameron (2001), routines are familiar to pupils, so they can anticipate and guess the meaning of what they are being told because the situation is well-known to them. Students expect teachers' questions and commands so even if teachers rephrase the commands, students might still be able to understand and follow them. By slightly changing the sentences and vocabulary teachers allow learners to enlarge their knowledge of the target language and at the same time, teachers provide them with opportunities to develop meaningful learning.

In Early Childhood Education, pupils are familiar with routines. Routines encompass songs and drills in which vocabulary on the weather, food, days of the week, letters, names and feelings take center stage (Doblas & Montes González, 2009). For instance, each day, one of the pupils is in charge of speaking and explaining the day it is, how the weather is like, what they had for breakfast, who is absent or how they and their classmates feel.

Pupils love to be "the driver" which is the name given to the student who is in charge of carrying out the routine that day. The singing and the movements that accompany the routines make them more enjoyable for students, and this makes them get more engaged (Shin Kang, 2017).

Given that in routines students tend to be presented with a situation in which they need to use English to communicate, using multimodal resources to scaffold these situations seems sensible as this comprehensible input will foster L2 learning (Shin, 2006).

1.3. Multimodal texts

Multimodal texts use various modes or channels to represent meaning and they combine at least two of the five main semiotic systems namely (Anstey & Bull, 2010):

- Linguistic (vocabulary and grammar).
- Visual (color, moving and still images).
- Audio (volume, pitch and rhythm of music, sound effects).
- Gestural (movements, facial expression, body language).
- Spatial (direction, proximity, position, objects in space).

Multimodal texts have been said to be able to help very young students understand new materials presented in the Foreign Language classroom (Kaminski, 2019). This possibility positions them as good pedagogical tools for FL classrooms.

Kaminski (2019) reported that multimodal texts were very useful to promote L2 acquisition when integrated as part of routines after a study she conducted with a group of German 8-to-10-year-old EFL primary learners over three years. Students had minimum contact with English and received one 50-minute English session per week. The results she reports, come from three classroom observations that featured multimodal texts: a story, a song and a videoclip. . In the study, Kaminski observed how the teacher presented the different multimodal texts. Kaminski (2019) claimed that right from the start, students showed signs of engagement as they began to join the teacher with verbal and non-verbal contributions and imitating actions. She observed that students had constructed meaning through visual clues, not only through listening, and that they were content with partial understanding, speaking about what the person in the videoclip said rather than about the exact meaning of particular words. Learners also went from just saying individual familiar words, to more unknown words and multi-item chunks from the texts. She concluded that multimodal texts were advantageous because students' verbal discourse grew when the encounters with multimodal texts grew and, when students had seen the story for the

third time, they were able to almost tell the whole story by themselves. The author concluded that students responded to every kind of the multimodal texts presented and that the meaning constructed was mostly from what they saw. Learners partially understood the situation and tried to imitate what they heard even if they did not totally understand. According to Kaminski, it might not be beneficial for L2 learners to focus on the meaning of individual words at an initial stage, given that they will be focused on all the different ways they receive input which transmits meaning and motivates students to repeat and rehearse, creating opportunities for language learning. Stories and songs are two resources that are used very frequently in FL classrooms. Students love them and combine different semiotic systems, linguistic, visual, gestural and audio for the songs and linguistic, visual and audio for the stories. As if as concluded by Kaminski (2019), multimodal texts promote FL among primary learners when they are used as part of routines, it seems necessary to see whether they are of help for younger students with very limited abilities in the FL and whose routines integrate multimodal texts extensively. However, there is a scarcity of studies that have investigated this with such a young target group and even less which have contrasted two of the most frequent types of multimodal texts used in the Early Childhood education stage: stories and songs.

1.4. Songs

Songs are a very important part of a country's culture and folklore, and they have existed even before written language existed, so they are transmitted generation after generation orally. According to Davis (2017) songs transmit norms and values from the culture from which they come. In English speaking countries, nursery rhymes and songs (that are also known as Mother Goose Rhymes) are passed down generation after generation. This "language play" can include some rhymes that allow children and adults to move and interact (Mullen, 2017).

When a baby is born, the hearing of nursery rhymes, lullabies and the fatherese and motherese infant-directed speech with higher pitch benefits the baby whose babbling also follows the same prosodic pattern (Davis, 2017). The different tunes that rhymes and songs include are used to attract the children's attention towards the speaker, creating a bond that will help them stay engaged with the language that is being transmitted (Mullen, 2017).

Music is thought by researchers to share some brain functions with language, which does not mean that music can help improve language acquisition, but there might be some ways for music to support language development (Davis, 2017). At school, songs are used in very young learners' everyday routines, to get them attracted to and engaged in the target language acquisition (Shin, 2006).

According to Davis (2017) songs are a widely used resource in young learners' classrooms but she found surprising the fact that there were not many pedagogical studies drawing attention to the use of songs even though in recent years the onset age to learn English has lowered dramatically and FLs are taught at schools from a very early age.

In order to fill in this research gap, Davis (2017) published a review article where he included studies that investigated the effects of songs in the teaching of English in students aged 3 to 12. Generally speaking, Davis (2017) concluded that the use of songs in English classrooms was mostly determined by teachers' intuition rather than solid research. Few of the studies reviewed by Davis (2017) targeted pronunciation and communicative abilities or literacy. The limited evidence, however, suggested that phonemic segmentation and pronunciation improved when songs were present in the teaching routines. Students who learned through songs also showed improvement in their communicative skills, being able to produce longer sentences and communicate their needs and feelings. Their listening skills also improved, and students could understand and remember more complex instructions. Some students in the classroom in which the songs were implemented were also able to read before the ones in the classroom in which no songs were displayed. In addition, students in which music was integrated were more excited about school and in the ones in which music was not present the students were quieter and more reserved. In other words, music improved motivation and predisposition, reduced anxiety and students were less self-conscious when it came to learning and producing L2 output (Davis, 2017). Studies in the review article mostly targeted receptive and vocabulary acquisition.

Vocabulary development was the most explored area in the review article and studies dealt with how using songs could promote receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition. Few studies, however, obtained positive results: out of the nine studies reviewed only one did for receptive vocabulary and another one for receptive as well as productive vocabulary (Coyle & Gómez Gracia 2014 and Chou 2014, respectively, as cited in Davis, 2017). Coyle and Gómez Gracia (2014)

investigated vocabulary production in a study involving 25 5-year-old students that were presented with English songs and had to practice the actions and words in the song for 3 consecutive days in 30-minute sessions. They concluded that the use of songs accompanied by images and gestures in Preschool EFL classrooms improved the acquisition and learning of new language items. In another of the articles reviewed, Davis and Fan (2016, as cited in Davis, 2017) carried out a study involving also 64 Chinese 4 and 5-year-old students during 7 weeks in which students learned and practised several texts through choral repetition or singing in 15 lessons of 40 minutes each and found out that both lead to productive vocabulary acquisition in comparison with other control items that were not included in the study, but neither of them had a better result than the other (Davis, 2017).

Davis (2017), however, observed that the age, exposure time and the kind of resources applied were factors that interplayed with the success of the experience. For instance, one of the articles reviewed included which the oldest group showed improvements in productive vocabulary. Nevertheless, it was also this group which was presented with the widest range of resources, including songs, stories, and games for 500 minutes (Moradi & Shahrokhi 2014 quoted in Davis, 2017). The youngest of all groups, however, was a group of 3-year-olds that was presented a single song for 90 minutes (Lesniewska & Pichette 2016 quoted in Davis, 2017) did not report benefits. Davis (2017) could not disentangle the confounding variables of age or exposure time from the effects of songs and he insisted that more investigations controlling for these variables were needed.

Similarly, Kaminski (2019) in a study she undertook with 8-10-year-old students, she demonstrated that listening to music and songs during their free time enlarged primary students' vocabulary. She also added that nursery rhymes fostered L1 learning and comprehension due to the repeated actions and the verse language used. She concluded that by taking advantage of these repetitions, pupils might be able to master pronunciation even before they can fully understand the meaning of what they say. This part of her research is important to us because Kaminski (2019) explains that L2 learners focus on prosodic and phonetic features of the target language at the initial stages, which is the case of our very young L2 learners.

Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) also obtained positive results with songs in a group of 60 Elementary School EFL Iranian learners aged 8 to 11 whose L1 was Persian. In their study, with a pre-test and post-test design, the authors wanted to

investigate whether songs could enhance students' comprehension and pronunciation skills. Divided into a control and an experimental group, students in the experimental group received three sessions a week in which they worked on language acquisition through listening to songs 3 sessions per week for 12 weeks. Meanwhile, the control group followed the ordinary listening activities presented in the English textbooks. Students were tested through listening comprehension activities to see if their proficiency level and comprehension skills had increased. The results showed that while in the pre-test both groups had listening comprehension levels, in the post-test, the experimental group showed significantly higher proficiency and listening comprehension skills. This proved that the use of songs developed listening comprehension skills and contributed to the L2 learning process. Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) claimed that students who used songs felt more comfortable and relaxed, which minimized the anxiety towards L2, letting students acquire the target language in a less tense and more naturally flowing way. Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) highlighted the importance of selecting songs that matched students' levels, age and preferences as this increased their eagerness to join and learn because as a result of motivation boost (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014).

All these articles show that songs might have positive effects on very young learners that are just starting to acquire an L2. Songs seem to boost motivation when they are used as whole group activities which leads improvements in recall and production (Kaminski, 2019). In addition, they seem to reduce anxiety (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014) and increase excitement and eagerness (Davis, 2017), which result in enhanced output production (Kaminski, 2016). Furthermore, songs effectivity might be enhanced if they are combined with videos, another multimodal channel since as Kaminsky (2019) states their learning will be scaffolded by the visual input and not only rely on their listening skills (Kaminski, 2019).

All in all, songs seem to be a good pedagogical tool for L2 teaching, however, there is no much research investigating their effectiveness in very young learners' classrooms and consequently, teachers' application decisions are seldom based on research findings (Davis, 2017) which brings the need for investigations coupling the use of songs and young learners into the spotlight. When very young learners are involved, we need to bear in mind that every pupil is different and not all of them like songs and singing, so, there might be some pupils for whom this methodology would not have such a positive impact. Therefore, other methods should also be taken into account, teachers should think about other multimodal resources that could be integrated into the daily routines of the classroom and that allow students to acquire

the target language without being forced to sing if they don't want to. This is the case of the second multimodal resource that is being reviewed: stories.

1.5.   Stories

Stories are another kind of multimodal resource considered effective when it comes to language acquisition (Kirsch, 2012) and that is used frequently in early childhood education classes (Harmer, 2012). Students who have been exposed to this kind of resource are supposed to acquire the target language unconsciously and without effort in comparison to other kinds of teaching resources like simply hearing the commands given by the teacher or using ordinary textbooks (Kirsch, 2012). Also, being exposed to stories and storytelling seems to trigger a faster and better development of the different communicative skills (Kirsch, 2012) including listening and speaking, but also, in the case of very young learners, it can help to establish the foundations of literacy skills (Bal & Tepetas Cengiz, 2020).

Stories engage very young learners and invite them to empathise with the main characters in the story as well as to pick favourites. Frequently, they ask teachers to repeat them which allows them to receive a good amount of L2 input. If the right book and the right moment for storytelling are chosen, L2 learners will find in the stories substantial meaningful input that will be easily acquired, resulting in a better and faster L2 acquisition (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonnehouse, 2009).

However, little research exists examining the impact of stories among very young learners. Most of the existing literature deals with primary or secondary learners (Kirsch, 2012) and they overwhelmingly have focused on vocabulary learning and not on how they can contribute to promoting functional communication which, according to Fleta (2018), it is the language that goes with students' daily routines that allows them to develop the target language and participate in communicative activities at school.

In 2012, Kirsch carried out a research study in which she introduced stories to a total of 6 children aged 11 living in London and were learning German. Students were divided into three pairs, low-achievers, medium achievers and high-achievers in mathematics and English. This experiment was carried out in two different moments of the academic year and with two different stories. The first story was told in February 2010 and students were asked to retell the story to see if they had understood it. The second one was told in June and consisted of a project that lasted for 5 weeks in

which students received two half-hour sessions. These students were asked also to retell the story while they continued working on the language presented in the story. the 5-week project finished with an oral presentation. To avoid shyness or anxiety students had to retell the story in pairs. The tests consisted of observation and simple assessment tests and documents. Results showed that students had good text comprehension and that the number and type of sentences that they remembered depended on the student and the proposed task. Students demonstrated confidence when narrating the stories that they had been told and their retention and recalling of sentences was very good. Every student was able to recall more or less the same number of key sentences from the stories, but bilingual learners recalled the biggest amount of words (Kirsch, 2012). According to the teacher, stories provided the students with authentic language, and they were engaged for the weeks the project lasted. Moreover, the vocabulary acquired by the students increased from the beginning to the end of the projects, showing that stories helped students acquire L2 vocabulary. (Kirsch, 2012)

Campana et al. (2016) carried out a research study of the effectiveness of storytelling to promote early literacy skills in English as L1 in several libraries that provided informal learning to very young children in the US. Children were 0 to 5 years old and were divided into three groups for the investigation: up to 18-months, 18 months to 36 months and 36 months to 60 months. We will focus on the last group which is closest to our target group, aged 3 to 4 years old. The researchers examined whether storytelling could help young children in the development of early literacy skills including oral language, vocabulary, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, background knowledge and print conventions. Data were gathered using the Benchmark Curricular Planning and Assessment Framework (BCPAF) and the Program Evaluation Tool (PET) tests. The BCPAF test is an observation rubric used to track a group of children's behaviour during the storytelling that covers domains such as communication, language or literacy. Meanwhile, the PET included similar categories but was used to observe the storyteller and his providing of early literacy indicators to see if the achievements of students were correlated with the storyteller's performance.

The BCPAF results showed that over 90% of the 3 to 5-year-old children showed comprehension and the ability to understand and respond to the vocabulary used in the storytellings (either verbally or with gestures), 56% used expressive vocabulary, 99% used language for a variety of purposes such as asking questions, sharing information, solving conflicts or asking for help, and 100% were able to

communicate effectively (Campana, et al., 2016). The PET results also showed that 99% of the children used receptive vocabulary and demonstrated comprehension and meaning in language, 65% of children used expressive vocabulary and 73% used language for a variety of purposes. 68% demonstrated understanding of language by listening and 100% could communicate effectively (Campana, et al., 2016).

Campana et al. (2016) concluded that children were showing many types of early literacy skills when they attended the library storytimes and that there was a correlation between the stories presented and the children's early literacy behaviors such as the use of vocabulary and the comprehension improvement, given that children that were seen several times in these storytimes increased their skills.

Porras González (2010) carried out a study about EFL teaching to students attending first, second and third grade in state elementary schools in Colombia (aged 6, 7 and 8 years old, respectively). Porras Gonzalez (2010) wanted to observe whether students' language acquisition and comprehension improved and if they were more motivated through the use of stories created to fit their curriculum, needs and likes.

The results showed that students were enthusiastic about learning the target language and the stories were appealing to them. Children also demonstrated understanding of the language, they were loaded with comprehensible input that was meaningful and interesting for them. The activities related to the storytelling provided students with an environment that felt familiar and fun, letting students acquire the target language.. Porras González (2010) concluded that using stories that appealed to students preferences was a meaningful and enjoyable way of teaching English to young learners and that their use seemed to help to accelerate the language learning rate.

These articles seem to indicate that stories are a good choice for teachers to foster L2 acquisition and learning due to the motivational and intimate atmosphere that they create. Also, stories have demonstrated to improve early literacy skills in L1 (Campana, et al., 2016) and by picking age-appropriate stories (Porras-González, 2010), teachers are able to introduce contextualized new language which seem to be helpful for students as they are more likely to use them in other contexts and acquire it easily, resulting in an improvement of the target language acquisition (Kirsch, 2012).

The articles reviewed so far, describe the benefits of using either songs or stories, but there exists a dearth of research comparing the effectiveness of both of them when used as tools to teach very young learners an L2.

1.6.　Comparing Stories and Songs

Even though positive effects have been reported in studies that have investigated whether songs and stories foster language development among young learners, few studies have contrasted the effectiveness of stories and songs in an attempt to determine which of the two methods is more effective in boosting very young learners' communicative skills.

Kaminski (2016) investigated the effects of using songs, stories, and chants in the primary EFL classroom for her Doctoral Thesis. Her purpose was to find out how English was taught to young learners in Germany and how learners reacted to being taught in English. Her study involved 4 different age groups (children from 6 to 10) and half of them belonged to non-German speaking families while the other half were fluent in German.

In her study, Kaminski (2016) observed how the various age groups reacted to the stories and songs. Each group of students was exposed to 20 multimodal texts: 9 songs and 11 stories. The songs were accompanied by gestures and actions that children could imitate which was considered a sign of enthusiasm. The 11 stories combined actions and visual support to engage children and avoid confusion.

Kaminski (2016) considered not only students' verbal reactions but also the non-verbal ones. She concluded that students were ready to join in and they imitated what they saw. Firstly, students joined for individual words but after several days of exposure to these songs and stories, students were able to memorize and reproduce multi-item sequences. Not a single child was able to remember the whole song well. Some students, however, were able to remember parts of the song very well, and they seemed eager to try and sing along with the song and move. Kaminski (2016) concluded that the onomatopoeic expressions present in the songs scaffolded their understanding of the text and served as an access point for language production. Lack of delayed post-tests, however, did not allow the author to observe longer retention rates as well as students' capacity to break these chunks into smaller reusable phrases that could be used creatively in the longer run. When stories were introduced, on the other hand, students were asked to raise a flashcard whenever they identified the word in the story. After two iterations, every student succeeded at it. Later, students were asked to draw a picture of themselves wearing the vocabulary items featured in the story but not every student was able to understand and do it.

These results hinted that stories might be faster at promoting understanding and recalling. But, similar to what was observed for songs, not a single student could remember the whole story well but Kaminsky (2016) did not point out big differences between stories and songs.

Focusing exclusively on vocabulary learning, Albadalejo, Coyle and Roca de Larios (2018) undertook a where theyinvestigated a group of very young learners in their first year of Early Childhood Education in an EFL class (aged 2-3). The pupils were 22 L1 Spanish students from a state school in Spain. They had never been exposed to English until they started school 4 months before the study was undertaken.

With a pre-post-delayed-test design, Albadalejo et al. (2018) compared the effectiveness of songs, stories and a combination of songs and stories to help students recall 5 vocabulary items in each condition. The study was conducted over 6 weeks, one intervention per week in which one of the three conditions was presented: songs, stories or a song and a story combination. An immediate post-test was taken after the intervention. 3 weeks after the exposure to each of the conditions, a delayed post-test was administered. Students' recalls were tested by asking them to point at a flashcard (out of 4) that had the vocabulary item named by the researcher. The results showed that the exposure to the story was the most effective followed by the combined condition that students' ability to recall the 5 target vocabulary words improved significantly after these two conditions. Exposing students to songs did not help students in identifying the target vocabulary items. They concluded that the mode of input to which the students were exposed affected the learning outcomes operationalized as their lexical recalls. They concluded that the difference could be due to the inappropriateness of the pace of the song (maybe the melody was age-appropriate but not its fast pace) as well as to the fact that the words might have not been relevant enough for them (Albadalejo, Coyle, & Roca de Larios, 2018). According to the authors, the story and song did not share the same topic and it could be the case that the topic of the song was not sufficiently relevant to them. Albadalejo, Coyle and Roca de Larios (2018) stated that special attention had to be given to the topic as well as to how songs were introduced, their repetitiveness, the easiness to follow them and the contextualization of the target language.

Along the same line, Lesniewska and Pichette (2016) conducted an investigation to find out whether songs or stories were more effective at helping 3-5-year-old L2 English students recall vocabulary items better. Songs and stories were

presented, separated by a short game or activity. Students' recalling of 37 words was tested through identification and students were asked to select one out of the 4 images presented in a flashcard after having had heard the target vocabulary item (Lesniewska & Pichette, 2016).

Their results showed that the recall of vocabulary items was about 50% higher when they were presented through a story than when they were presented in a song context and that the vocabulary items that were present in both the song and the story (they were repeated and shown in both texts) did not trigger a better recall from the children. Likewise, animate concepts were better recalled than inanimate ones, which needed more emphasis to be recalled.

The few studies that have contrasted the effectiveness have invariably reported that stories promote a better recalling of vocabulary items than songs among young learners. Nevertheless, no study to date has controlled for the topic of the stories and songs and has looked at larger structures beyond isolated vocabulary items. Therefore, more contrastive studies are needed in which the effectiveness of songs and stories to promote functional communicative skills among very young learners are examined. This is precisely what we will undertake in the present study.

2. THE STUDY

2.1. Objectives and research questions

The present study examines the effectiveness of songs and stories to promote functional communication among very young English learners (N= 20) in their first year in a bilingual English, PAI, programme (aged 3-4 years old).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study has specifically examined the effectiveness of songs and stories to help very young learners increase their oral production in one of the school routines, the feelings routine. These are the questions entertained:

1) Will the repetition of a story about feelings help very young learners produce output about feelings in English?
2) Will the repetition of a song about feelings help very young learners produce output about feelings in English?

3) Which type of the two multimodal teaching resources (the song or the story) will be more efficient in helping students produce language about their feelings?

Based on previous results with very young learners, it is expected that students in the song group, will improve their vocabulary acquisition (Davis, 2017) and feel more motivated when it comes to EFL acquisition (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014), feeling more relaxed and improving their recall (Kaminski, 2016). On the other hand, students in the story group, are expected to also improve their vocabulary acquisition and recall (Albadalejo, Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2018; Campana et al., 2016; Kirsch, 2012) and feel relaxed and motivated (Porras González, 2010). However, the little amount of studies that compare stories and songs (Albadalejo, Coyle, & Roca de Larios, 2018; Kaminski, 2019; Lesniewska & Pichette, 2016) show evidence that students in the story group might perform better. Although all this literature review would make us think that students in the story group, we find several limitations, students in this research study are much younger, the story and the song follow the same topic and there are no studies that analyze the production of whole sentences, they all focus on vocabulary recall and not on output production.

2.2. Participants and school

This study was carried out in a bilingual *PAI* state school located in the town of Barañáin, Navarre in Spain. Participants were 23 first-year Early Childhood Education students from two different classes (Group A and Group B) who were between 36 to 45 months old when the first observation was made.

Children had only been at school four 4 months before the first observation and had received the same amount of teaching in English, about 9 hours of English per week (approximately 117 hours). For the remaining hours, 16, students in group A received 4 hours of Basque language arts classes and the rest of classes, 12, were in Spanish. Group B received the remaining 16 hours in Spanish.

Participants had different backgrounds and not all of them came from Spanish-speaking households. Group A was formed by 13 students, 7 boys and 6 girls. One student came from an English-speaking household, so although he took part in the study his results were not considered for the analysis. Another student came from an Arab-speaking family, but his exposure to English as a FL started at the same time as the rest of his fellow students and he followed the standard development. A third

student was being tested for language and developmental delays, and although he participated in the activity, he was not considered for the study due to the difficulties he presented in understanding and following the lessons. The remaining 10 came from Spanish-speaking families and followed standard development. All the students included in the study (n=11) had started school in September (4 months before the study took place) and that was when they all had their first exposure to English as a Second Language. This group will finally be formed by 11 students.

On the other hand, Group B was formed by 10 students, 7 boys and 3 girls. Many of them came from foreign language-speaking households, some of them had not fully acquired the Spanish language but did not seem to have additional difficulties with English. Out of the 10 students, only 3 came from Spanish-speaking households. The L1s of the other students were: 1 Ukrainian, 1 Polish, 1 Bulgarian, 1 Rumanian, 1 Russian and 2 Portuguese. One of the students was being tested for autism spectrum disorder, so this student was not considered in the study although he was exposed to the same materials as his peers. Two students had some type of language impairment and presented difficulties in language development, but they were completely able to produce the basic sentences and words in English, so they were taken into account as the rest of the students in the research because their delay was in pronunciation, but they were able to produce simple sentences and words good enough to be understood. This group will finally be formed by 9 students.

Both groups were taught in English by the same teacher who did the exact same activities with the two of them. The input was the same for both of them. The class was organized around stations. These stations were the places in which pupils spent most of their time in the classroom. The students were divided into 3 different groups and wherever their group picture was stuck they knew they had to play for some time in that station. The three groups rotated between stations and the total amount of time spent in each one was less than 20 minutes per session. In each station, students could freely choose one activity and not every student had to work on the same one.

There were different stations, but 3 are the ones in which students worked the most:

- There was a symbolic play corner, there students played in a small house in which there were babies with several clothing items, a shopping cart, lots of food items and a kitchen for students to develop the symbolic play and work on the names of the different objects and actions.

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- The second station or corner was the logical-mathematical one. Students had colorful puzzles, stackable blocks with geometrical shapes, number cards to decompose, Montessori's pink tower and rainbow and some wooden puzzles to find the matching silhouettes. The games in the station were changed from time to time.

- The third station was the artistic one, this one was the most guided. There were some modelling clay trays, sheets to paint with many kinds of crayons and markers, paint, a small blackboard, games to match the students' names with their pictures and so on. Here students needed to ask for what they wanted and since they did not produce words in English the teacher would say it out loud and they would be expected to repeat what she had said.

The stations contributed to the acquisition of the English language, given that they learned by doing, which is fundamental in the Content Language Integrated Learning methodology they followed. Pupils did the same kind of activities in English or Spanish, the only thing that changed was the language. In the sessions that were undertaken in English, the teacher only spoke in English and she scaffolded what she said with actions. In addition, as the procedures of the activities were already known to the pupils, it made it easier to access the target language meanings and structures.

They also had "big group" sessions in which they worked all together. They listened to stories told by the teacher and to songs along which they were supposed to sing and dance, however, they did not produce words in English. Students also did many painting activities in big-group and the teacher tried to introduce colors so that students would get used to speaking English but at the time of data collection, this goal had not been achieved yet, they did not produce any word or understand if it was not for the visual clues. Experiments and recipes were also some of the activities undertaken regularly. The visual scaffolding provided by the teacher helped students following the commands. During these big group sessions, students also worked on synthetic phonics and early literacy skills such as singing the songs for every letter in the alphabet, trying to recognize their written names or feeding a monster box with flashcards of vocabulary items starting with the letter the monster had written.

Routines were also important in the students' everyday organization. The routines were done in big-group at the beginning of the day, but with a leading pupil,

the driver, who got to run the activity with the teacher's help. This is the part of the day in which the research took place.

Every morning students got ready and started preparing for the routines. The driver got to sit at the front, on the bench with the teacher and started leading the routine. This driver stack the different words and pictures in the routine wall, the student was the protagonist and was in charge of writing names on the blackboard and circling the day it was. Also, this student was the first one to answer the question "How are you?" and the one who asked the same question to the rest of the students.

When I first entered the classroom, I noticed that when pupils had to express how they felt many of them did not even try to speak and they either made gestures or did not speak at all. The fact that students were not trying to speak about feelings and emotions in English surprised me, because young learners tend to like sharing their emotions and experiences. I realized they did not even know the name of simple emotions or feelings such as happy, sad, angry, hungry or sleepy in English. The English language seemed to be blocked for them when it came to expressing feelings and emotions. Since Fleta (2018) finds it very important to foster communication, we decided to use this as an opportunity to encourage more English production.

2.3.   Materials

Three materials were used to gather data: (1) a song; (2) a story; and (3) an observation sheet.

To make sure that both tools used similar topics and any potential differences obtained could thus be attributed to the tool and not the topic (Albadalejo, Coyle, & Roca de Larios, 2018), the song and story used had to share not just the topic but also most of the words., and it was even more difficult to find a book that would also have those same words.

It was very difficult to find a song that would have exactly the words and emotions that children used in their routines. Finally, the song chosen was the video song "How are you?" by Wormhole English (2020) (see Appendix 1). It was age-appropriate, not too hard, and it featured daily life situations that students could recognize and identify with, such as being sad for having fallen, being happy when playing, being angry when somebody spoiled their drawing, being hungry or tired after a long day. Thought of as an "Early Domain Instrument (Mullen, 2017)", the song

contributed towards the dimensions of "Communication and General Knowledge" and "Emotional Maturity" which encompass the ability to communicate needs, recognize others' emotions and act empathetically (Mullen, 2017).

The song (Wormhole English- Songs For Kids, 2020) involved two characters, a bunny called Judy and a bear called Bobby. These two characters acted out different emotions according to what happened to them. Each character showed a couple of emotions which were the emotions of happiness and anger for the bunny and sadness and hunger for the bear. An additional emotion was added to the song about feeling sleepy, given that this was another important emotion that students during their routines. The final script of the song was the following:

> "Hi Judy. How are you?
> I am happy! Let's sing a song!
> Hi, Judy. How are you?
> Hi, Judy. How are you?
> I am happy! Yes, I am happy!
> Hi, Bobby. How are you?
> Hi, Bobby. How are you?
> I am sad. Yes, I am sad.
> Oh, don't be, sad Bobby!
> Hi, Judy. How are you?
> Hi, Judy. How are you?
> I am angry! Yes, I am angry!
> Hi, Bobby. How are you?
> Hi, Bobby. How are you?
> I am hungry! Yes, I am hungry!
> Here, Bobby. Have my ice-cream.
> Thank you! Now I am full!
> Hi, children. How are you?
> Hi, children. How are you?
> I'm happy!
> I'm sad!
> I'm angry!
> I'm hungry!
> I'm happy!
> I'm sad!
> I'm angry!

I'm hungry!"
(Wormhole English- Songs For Kids, 2020)
Hi, Judy. How are you?
Hi, Judy. How are you?
I am sleepy! Yes, I am sleepy!

The last sentences were sung by the researcher when the video finished to add the sleepy feeling into the song. As pupils' engagement will be affected by the performer's verbal and non-verbal communication, the performance included visual contact, very expressive intonation and movement (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonnehouse, 2009). The whole song had lots of visual scaffolding from the videoclip, and the last part was scaffolded by gestures from the researcher for students to understand what was being said. The video of the song lasted 2:11 minutes.

The story used in the investigation was called "Bobby and Judy" and it was created by me based on the song by Wormhole English (2020) (see appendix 2). Finding an existing story was discarded because we wanted to control the content and language included in it. The story followed some of the success ingredients put forward by Birckmayer et al. (2019) and was short and simple, and designed to instil a desire for repetition in the students. The repetitions in texts will allow our pupils to try to repeat the sentences or rhymes in the target language and eventually they will memorize them and be able to retell them as the teacher. Pupils aged 3 and above should be able to recognize and speak about the feelings of the characters in the story (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonnehouse, 2009), but this becomes more difficult when they need to use a second language. This story was really short and easy to understand. As for the song, the story featured many daily life situations that students would recognize and identify with (being sad for having fallen, being happy when playing, being angry when somebody spoiled their drawing, being hungry or tired after a long day).

The story about emotions was based on the song by Wormhole English Songs for kids (2020) which was drawn by the researcher and then, laminated to increase durability (See appendix 2). The story consisted of the main scene of the two main characters with the question: How are you? And five other scenes, one per feeling. The sleepy feeling was drawn according to the characters and aesthetic of the video song. The total number of pages of the story was 10, which seemed appropriate for the attention span of such young learners. The final story was:

"Bobby and Judy are friends.

One day, Bobby asks Judy: Hi Judy! How are you?

And Judy answers: I am happy! I am playing!

Another day, Judy asks Bobby: Hi Bobby! How are you?

And Bobby says: I am sad! I fell from a chair!

The next day, Bobby says to Judy: Hi Judy! How are you?

And Judy says: I am angry! Somebody spoiled my drawing!

Another day Judy says to Bobby: Hi Bobby! How are you?

And Bobby answers: I am hungry! I want food, I want to eat!

And Judy says: Here Bobby, have my ice-cream!

And last day Bobby says to Judy: Hi Judy! How are you?

And Judy says: I am sleepy, I am going to bed!"

Finally, the third material used was the excel observation sheet where the researcher annotated the answers of every student by checking the box that applied (see appendix 3). The first chosen options (shown in appendix 3) were modified according to the answers given by the students, the first observation (made in January) was the one that marked the possible categories, however, some of them (such as saying the first chunk in English) were never repeated, so they were taken out of the final tables. The annotations of the students' answers were made in a notebook and transcribed to the excel sheet later so that no answer was missed, the final categories were the following: gesture, nod to a proposal, word in English, word in Spanish, first chunk in Spanish, whole sentence in Spanish, whole sentence in English, absent.

2.4. Procedure

A month before data collection, students' reactions were observed and all their linguistic and non-linguistic responses were annotated. The observation process took place in January and February for 2 sessions. This was done because such young learners can be at very different stages in their linguistic and non-linguistic development and we felt it was necessary to describe all the possibilities if we wanted to track the development of their responses. The first observation was crucial to describe this development, and notes were taken about verbal and non-verbal responses given by each student, so that every possible answer was collected and represented in the final table. However, as the consequence of students' linguistic

progression and the elimination of 3 students from the final study two of the categories, doesn't answer and first chunk in English, were finally eliminated from the data displayed in the present study.

Notes were also taken to observe how the teacher performed the feelings routines. She used to introduce that part of the routine with the following words: *Hello, how are you? Hello, how are you? I am happy, I am sad, I am angry, I am hungry, I am sleepy.* The song was accompanied by gestures that scaffolded vocabulary understanding and acquisition. After singing the song, the driver would answer the question: How are you? By either saying the word in Spanish or English, making the gesture or even answering yes or no. After answering, the driver would pick a picture of a baby that was mimicking the feeling or emotion and they would stick it on the routines train. Throughout the observation period, some students would not even match the picture with what they had said yes to, which made me think that they were not even understanding or paying attention to what they were being asked.

Once the observation criteria were decided and the teacher's regular procedure was observed, using multimodal resources seemed to be the best option (Kaminski, 2016) to foster the FL development of young children: a song scaffolded by movement and visual elements that would give students a clue to understanding and a story with illustrations and narrated out loud so that students would construct meaning through the different stimuli they received. The book and the song had to fulfil the needs of the classroom. It was necessary to find a song that had the question "How are you?" and that covered if not all, most of the 5 emotions and feelings chosen by the teacher. The storybook also had to have the same characteristics. Both of them needed to have visual support to scaffold the target language learning (Kaminski, 2019) and they needed to have the same questions and answers in order for the groups to receive the same input and avoid potential topic related differences as in Albadalejo et al., (2018) and Kaminski, (2016).

After having searched for books and songs for a while, the (Wormhole English-Songs For Kids, 2020) seemed to be the best fit, but there was not any book matching it, so it had to be tailor-made. To control for the input students received and grant comparability, the story was drawn with attractive colors and the exact same characters as the video song, and the result was the material showed in Appendix 2. The biggest difficulty, was to try to adapt the song into a story with as few slides as possible, given that students were very young and were not able to stay quiet and sit still for very long.

One group would be listening and watching the video song and the other would be listening to and watching the story, so, according to the preferences, characteristics and number of students, Group A was assigned to the video song treatment group. Students in Group A tended to move more and have more difficulties staying still, they loved to participate in songs and Total Physical Response activities and many of them preferred watching videos on the classroom's interactive whiteboard rather than reading books or listening to stories. Group B was a quieter group, students were more relaxed and easy-going, they were able to sit still and participate in stories if required and they loved listening to stories and asking for stories from the teachers, so they were assigned to the story treatment group.

The scaffolding was visual, written and physical. Students received the input from the researcher who was in charge of singing the song and telling the story. The gestures that accompanied every feeling (touching the cheeks and smiling for happy, touching the tummy for hungry, rubbing the eyes with clenched fists for sad, tilting the head to one side, closing the eyes and resting the head on the hands for sleepy and putting the hands on the sides of the waist and frowning for angry) were the same as the ones that were made by the teacher since the beginning of the school year so that students would not feel lost. Taking all this into account, the song had to be accompanied by these gestures and also other explanations were added to the song (Bobby fell from a chair, somebody spoiled her drawing…) and an extra sentence was added to be able to introduce the sleepy feeling. The story was also highly scaffolded with gestures and was made to fit all the requirements.

Before starting with the investigations, students had to get used to the researcher helping them with the routines instead of the teacher, so little by little the change from the teacher to the researcher was made. Once the students felt confident, they were told that the researcher was going to be taking notes of what they said, they felt curious, but it was not a big change, they asked several times to look at the device where their answers were being recorded. After the students got used to the researcher taking notes, they did not seem to notice it anymore.

The first observation was made after Christmas break and it lasted two days for each group, it served for the researcher to take notes of how students responded to the question and to have a first observation to compare with the next one and see if students had improved naturally. Students were not confused or nervous because they were used to the researcher taking notes and doing the routines with them. Once

the first observation was made, the observation chart was created according to the possible answers given by the students (See Appendix 3).

Once the observation chart for the study was made, the second observation could start, it was made right before Easter break (after about 6 weeks) and it lasted for another two days to see if there had been any improvement from the one after Christmas break in January and to have an observation chart before the application of the two resources to compare with.

The third observation was the treatment. It was done a month after the second observation. The song or story was introduced in the pupils' everyday routines and it lasted a total of 8 sessions for each group. What students said was annotated right after their answer to the question, so that the answers were as faithful to what was happening as possible. Table 1 shows when observations were made and if the resources were applied or not.

Table 1.

Moment of observation	Number of sessions	Application of multimodal resources	AIM
January (After Christmas break)	2	No	Select criteria and observe teacher performance development
March (Before Easter break)	2	No	
April (After Easter break)	8	Yes	Measure the effectiveness of songs and stories

2.5.   Analysis of the results

The data collected during the three observations were taken into account for the study. The first observation, made right after Christmas break in January, was used to have initial measures to compare against students performance in the second observation, before any treatment was applied.

Results from the second observation were used to compare against the results after the treatment, to see whether students' improved with the methods and their relative efficiency.

Each observation was analyzed and a mean and percentage for each criterion was calculated for each group and day to see if the answers varied and evolved from less to more verbal. Results from the two groups were then contrasted to determine if songs or stories were more helpful to promote spoken English.

2.6. Results and discussion

In the following sections, our results will be presented by research question.

2.6.1. *Stories to promote spoken language*

The first question deals with whether stories helped students producing more spoken language about feelings when integrated into the feelings routine.

Table 2 features students' responses to the routine prior to any treatment (results from the second observation). It shows that 3 indicators were the only ones used by the group. When the mean for the two days was considered, the most common response to the teacher's question was using a single word in English (50%), then using a gesture (27.78%) and finally, producing the Spanish alternative (16.67%). When the individual days were observed, variability across these 4 processes is observed: while on Day 1 using a word in English was the most frequent strategy (66.66%) on Day 2 almost half of the students (44.44%) preferred to use a gesture.

Table 2

Story Observation Chart Pre-Implementation (P.I.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Mean
Gesture	1/9 11.11%	4/9 44.44%	5/18 27.78%
Nod to a proposal	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/18 0%
Word in English	6/9 66.66%	3/9 33.33%	9/18 50%
Word in Spanish	2/9 22.22%	1/9 11.11%	3/18 16.67%

First chunk in Spanish	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/18 0%
Whole sentence in English	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/18 0%
Whole sentence in Spanish	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/18 0%
Absent	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	1/18 5.56%

Regarding the results obtained throughout the treatment, (Table 3), we can observe a notable change in the responses of students when compared to what they did in the second observation (Table 2). Using an isolated word in English became the most frequent strategy used half of the times (47.22%). Moreover, they started producing chunks (1.39%) and sentences in English (23.61%), which was not observed in the previous observation. Using words or sentences in Spanish was not very frequent either (below 13%). When the different days were observed separately, it is notable that students started producing English words and sentences from the first day (over 70%), although after day 5 (66.66%), the percentage of English production seems to be somewhat reduced: they utter an English word 33.33% of the times while an English sentence was supplied 22.22% of the times. Graphic 1 shows the evolution of the strategies visually. The graphic clearly shows that providing an English word was very frequent from the third day on, while gestures were quite frequent in the first 4 sessions and English sentences appeared more notably after session 5.

It seems that stories helped young learners producing spoken language (Campana, et al., 2016; Kirsch, 2012). Students showed signs of recall as they reproduced the words and sentences heard in the story which seemed to encourage increased vocabulary recalling and production most probably thanks to the different stimuli that scaffolded the acquisition (Kaminski, 2019) and to the familiar situations that appeared in the story (Kirsch, 2012; Porras González, 2010). The story seems to have made them feel more confident and secure in that environment of calm and small group storytelling atmosphere (Birckmayer et al., 2009; Porras Gonzalez, 2010). .

Table 3.

Story Observation Chart During Implementation (D.I.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Mean

Gesture	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	2/72 2.78%
Nod to a proposal	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/72 0%
Word in English	5/9 55.55%	5/9 55.55%	6/9 66.66%	5/9 55.55%	4/9 44.44%	3/9 33.33%	3/9 33.33%	3/9 33.33%	34/72 47.22%
Word in Spanish	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	2/9 22.22%	2/9 22.22%	6/72 8.33%
First chunk in Spanish	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	1/72 1.39%
Whole sentence in English	3/9 33.33%	2/9 22.22%	1/9 11.11%	2/9 22.22%	2/9 22.22%	3/9 33.33%	2/9 22.22%	2/9 22.22%	17/72 23.61%
Whole sentence in Spanish	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	2/9 22.22%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	0/9 0%	3/72 4.29%
Absent	1/9 11.11%	2/9 22.22%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	0/9 0%	1/9 11.11%	2/9 22.22%	1/9 11.11%	8/72 11.11%

Graphic 1.

Story: Criteria evolution
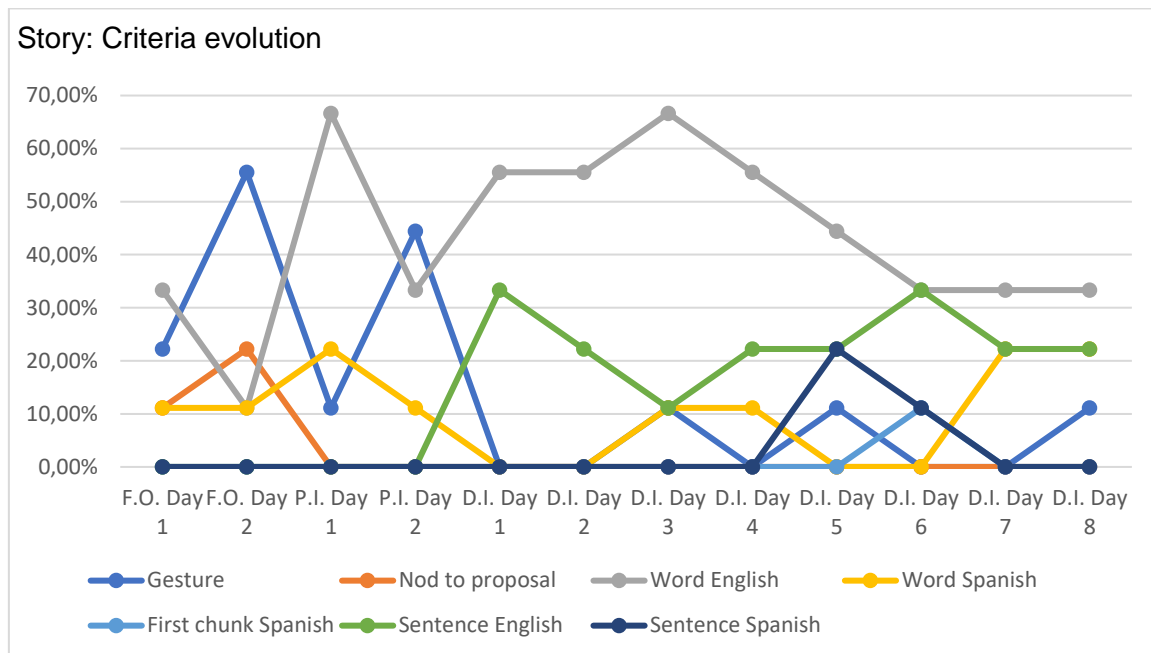
2.6.2. Songs to promote spoken language.

The second question examines whether songs helped students producing more spoken language about feelings when integrated into the feelings routine.

Table 4 features the responses of Group A students in the second observation, before the treatment was implemented. It shows that there were 4 strategies used by the students to answer the question. The most common response considering the mean for the two days was nodding to the proposal (36.36%), followed by saying a single word in English (27.27%), saying the word in Spanish (18.18%) and lastly, making a gesture (9.09%). When the two days are observed independently, we can see that the two non-verbal answers (nodding to a proposal and making a gesture) were more popular on Day 1 (from 45.45% to 27.27% and 18.18% to 0 respectively) than on Day 2, where we can see an increase in the proportion of verbal responses, the percentage of students answering by saying a single word in Spanish increases from 9.09% to 27.27% and the percentage of students saying a single word in English goes up from 18.18% to 36.36%.

Table 4.

Song Observation Chart Pre-Implementation (P.I.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Mean
Gesture	2/11 18,18%	0/11 0%	2/22 9,09%
Nod to a proposal	5/11 45,45%	3/11 27,27%	8/22 36,36%
Word in English	2/11 18,18%	4/11 36,36%	6/22 27,27%
Word in Spanish	1/11 9,09%	3/11 27,27%	4/22 18/18%
First chunk in Spanish	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/22 0%
Whole sentence in English	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/22 0%
Whole sentence in Spanish	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/22 0%
Absent	1/11 9,09%	1/11 9,09%	2/22 9,09%

The data gathered in the treatment shows that producing a word in English became students' most used strategy (Table 5). The second most popular strategy was that of providing the word in Spanish (21.59%). After the eight sessions, students still resort to the non-verbal responses (nodding to a proposal represents a 11.36% and making a gesture a 7.95%) and the single words in Spanish (21.59%) while the use of whole English sentences is only observed once and by one student in Day 7. A closer examination of each day reveals the same pattern and providing an English word followed by the strategy of providing the Spanish words are the most common strategies in each day too. Students increase their production of single words in English up to 72.72% on the seventh day and on the eighth day it decreases to a 63.63%, still being a much higher percentage than on day 1 (36.36%). The production of a whole sentence in Spanish happens only once (day 7, a 9.09%) and it never happens again. Graphic 2 shows a visual representation of the evolution of the criteria. Providing an English word is by far the strategy that is used most on all Days and for all students.

The results obtained suggest that songs are a good tool when it comes to motivating students to try and produce L2 output (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014) as evidenced by the fact that using an English word was systematically the most used strategy. As Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) defend, it might be the case that the relaxed and fun environment created by songs reduces students' self-consciousness encouraging output. Nevertheless, songs did not help to remember whole sentences (Kaminski, 2016) and therefore, were unable to provide students with the necessary

linguistic skills to perform the routines in English maybe because, as she stated, although songs seem to highlight the prosodic features of speech, this does not seem enough for students to transform it into spoken and not chanted language (Kaminski, 2016) focusing more on other features of the input received.

Table 5.

Song Observation Chart During Implementation (D.I.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Mean
Gesture	1/11 9.09%	2/11 18.18%	0/11 0%	1/11 9.09%	1/11 9.09%	1/11 9.09%	0/11 0%	1/11 9.09%	7/88 7.95%
Nod to a proposal	3/11 27.27%	1/11 9.09%	2/11 18.18%	1/11 9.09%	1/11 9.09%	2/11 18.18%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	10/88 11.36%
Word in English	4/11 36.36%	5/11 45.45%	6/11 54.54%	5/11 45.45%	5/11 45.45%	5/11 45.45%	8/11 72.72%	7/11 63.63%	45/88 51.13%
Word in Spanish	2/11 18.18%	3/11 27.27%	1/11 9.09%	3/11 27.27%	3/11 27.27%	3/11 27.27%	2/11 18.18%	2/11 18.18%	19/88 21.59%
First chunk in Spanish	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/88 0%
Whole sentence in English	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	1/11 9.09%	0/11 0%	1/88 1.13%
Whole sentence in Spanish	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/88 0%
Absent	1/11 9.09%	0/11 0%	2/11 18.18%	1/11 9.09%	1/11 9.09%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	1/11 9.09%	6/88 6.81%

Graphic 2.

Song: Criteria evolution
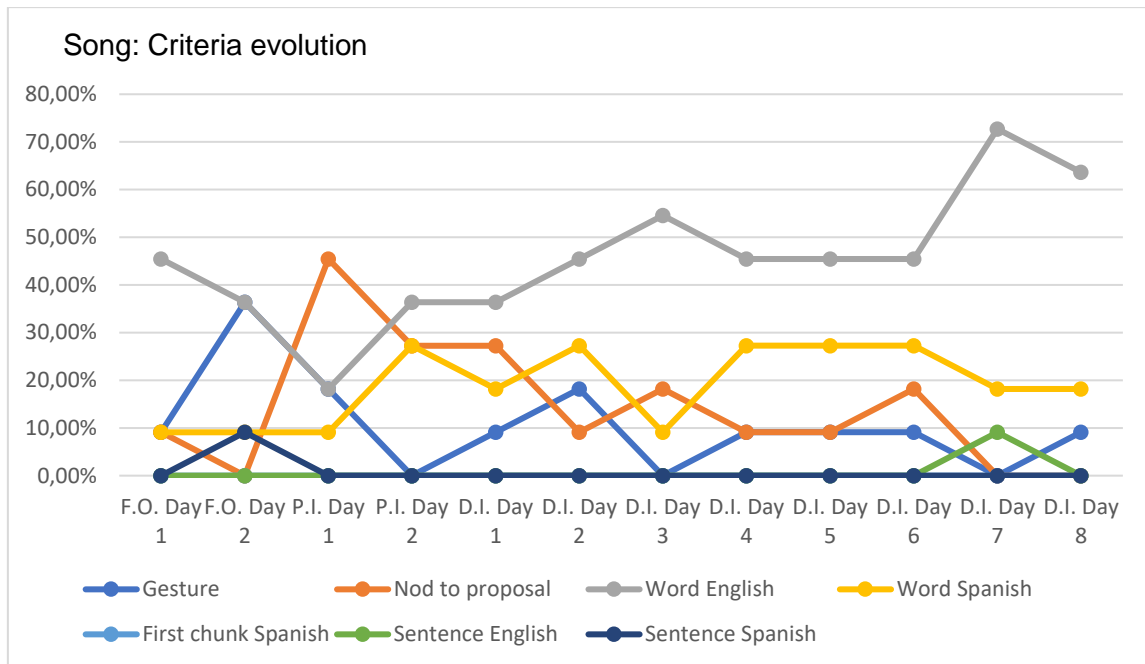
2.6.3.   Songs vs stories to promote spoken language

The third and final question contrasted the results obtained with songs with those of stories with the aim of discovering which of the two pedagogical tools helps students to produce more spoken output.

The answer is that although both improved students' output production in English, the story showed a better result because students in the story group produced English sentences notably more than those who had been presented with songs (23.61% against 1.13%). Speaking about single words production in English, both groups showed almost the same percentage (51.13% in songs and 47.22% in stories). Regarding non-verbal answers, however, the song group seemed to resort to them more often than the story group. In fact, the story group reduced their use significantly (from a 27.78% to a 2.78% in making a gesture) while the song group only reduced markedly the nodding, while the gestures were used at similar rates (9.09% to 7.95% in the case of making a gesture and 36.36% to 11.36% in the "nod to a proposal" criterion). This difference is clearly observable in graphics 3-9 where the behavior of the two groups for each criterion is compared.

Our findings, therefore, show that stories seem to promote spoken production further and beyond the single word production into multiword production. Students in

the story group have started to repeat whole English sentences, although the strategy is not yet achieved by the whole group. Songs, however, promote single word productions but they do reach most of the class. These differences could be explained by the fact that although both resources do have a positive effect in learners' EFL acquisition and both foster a relaxed environment due to the context of routines in which they are presented, promoting significative learning (Doblas & Montes González, 2009; Shin, 2006), stories are presented and read out loud by a well known person to the children, making this even more significant to them.

Also, the fact that both multimodal resources gave a good result, as shown in Kaminski's (2019) research, probes that presenting children with situations that are important and that happen in their real life also makes a difference (Albadalejo et al., 2018; Cameron, 2001; Davis, 2017; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Lesniewska & Pichette, 2016). However, stories seem to foster a bigger and faster improvement, maybe due to the fact that students seem to deeply proccess meaning when they receive language through a story but the music in the songs might be a distracting factor (Albadalejo, Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2018; Kaminski, 2019)

Graphic 3.

Criterion 1: Make a gesture

Graphic 4.

Criterion 2: Nod to a proposal

Graphic 5.

Criterion 3: Say the word in English

Graphic 6.

Criterion 4: Say the word in Spanish

Graphic 7.

Criterion 5: Say the first chunk in Spanish

Graphic 8.

Criterion 6: Say the whole sentence in English

Graphic 9.

Criterion 7: Say the whole sentence in Spanish
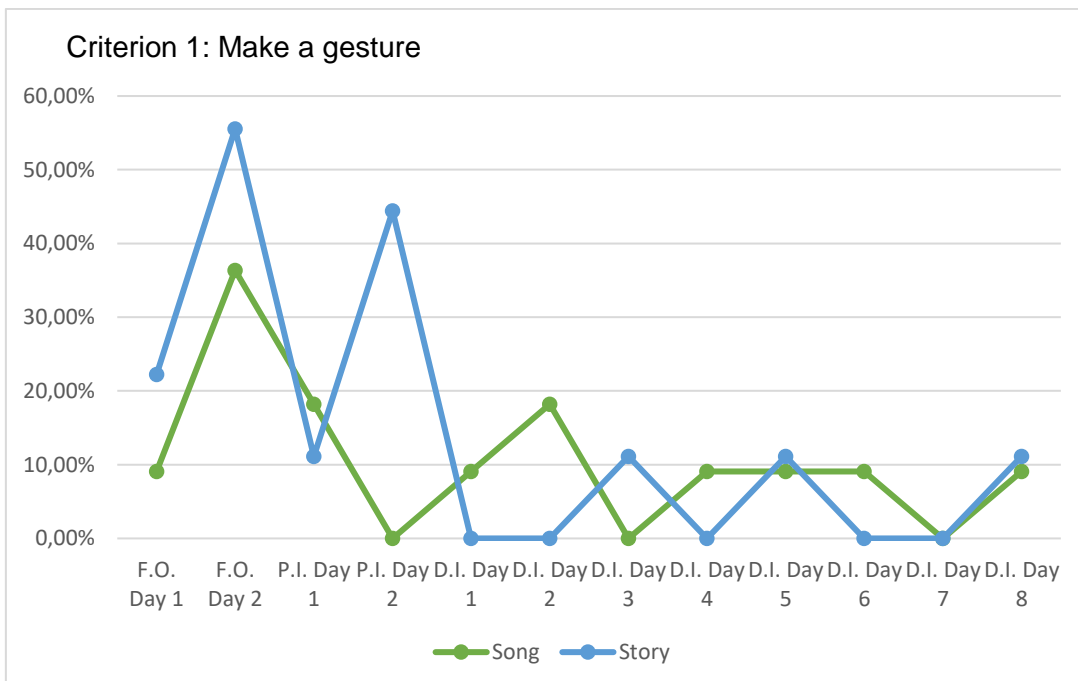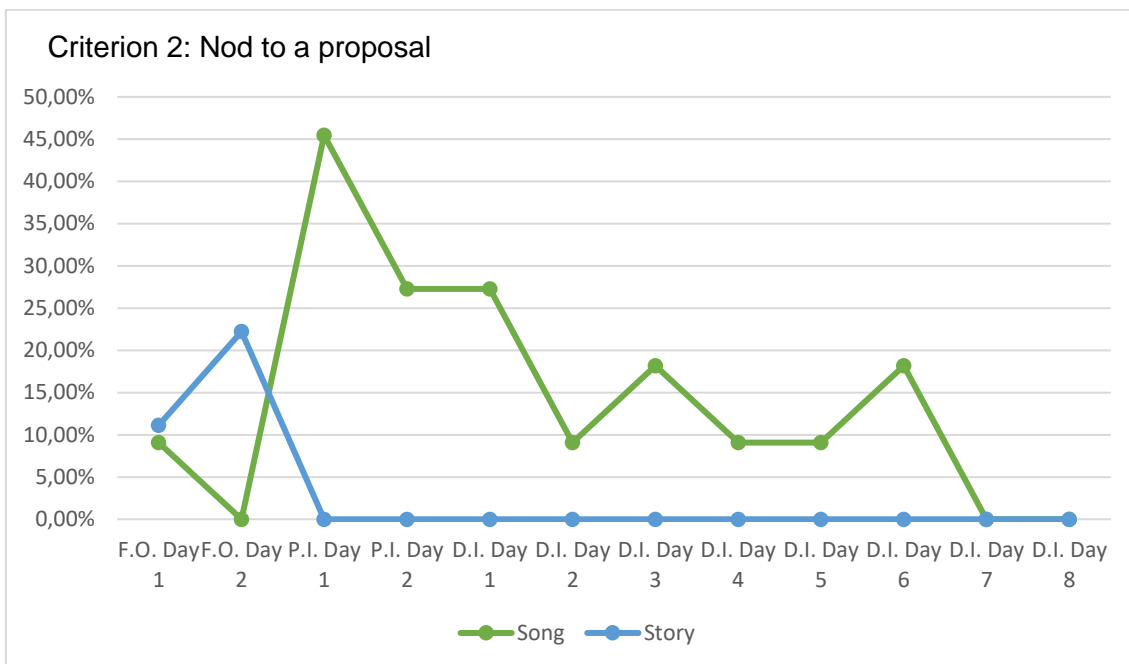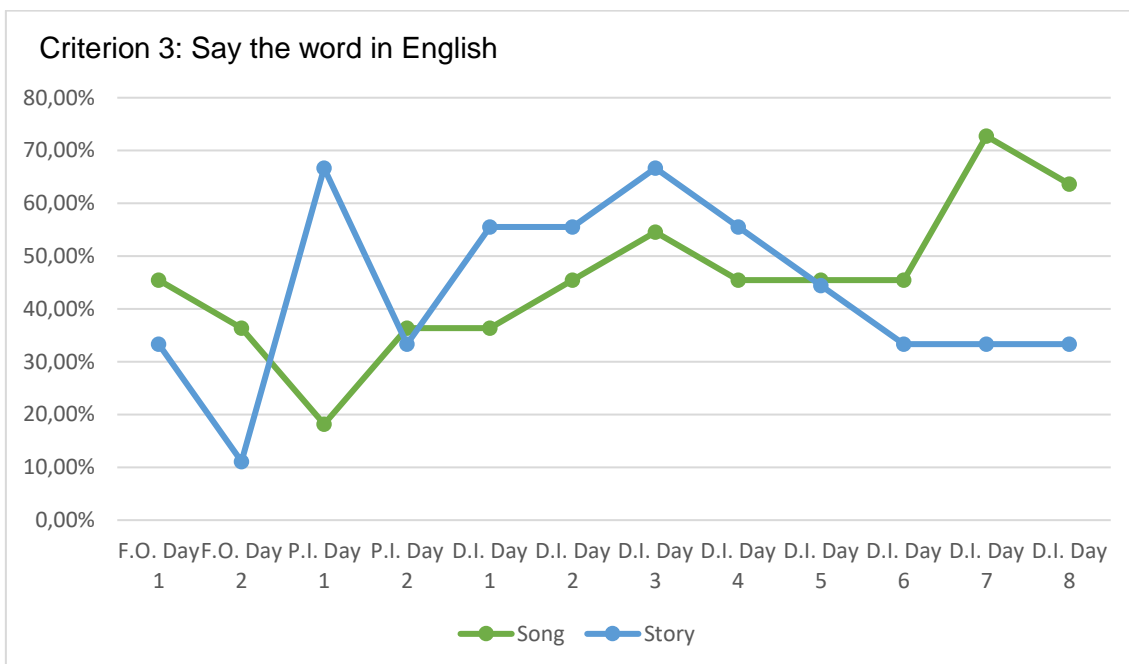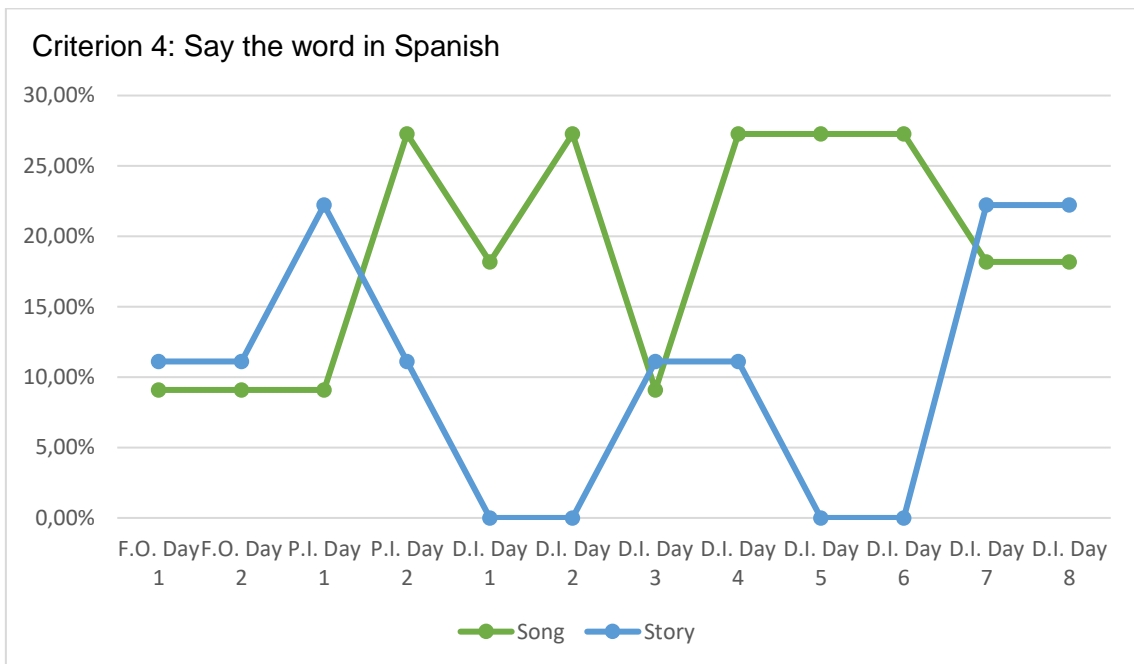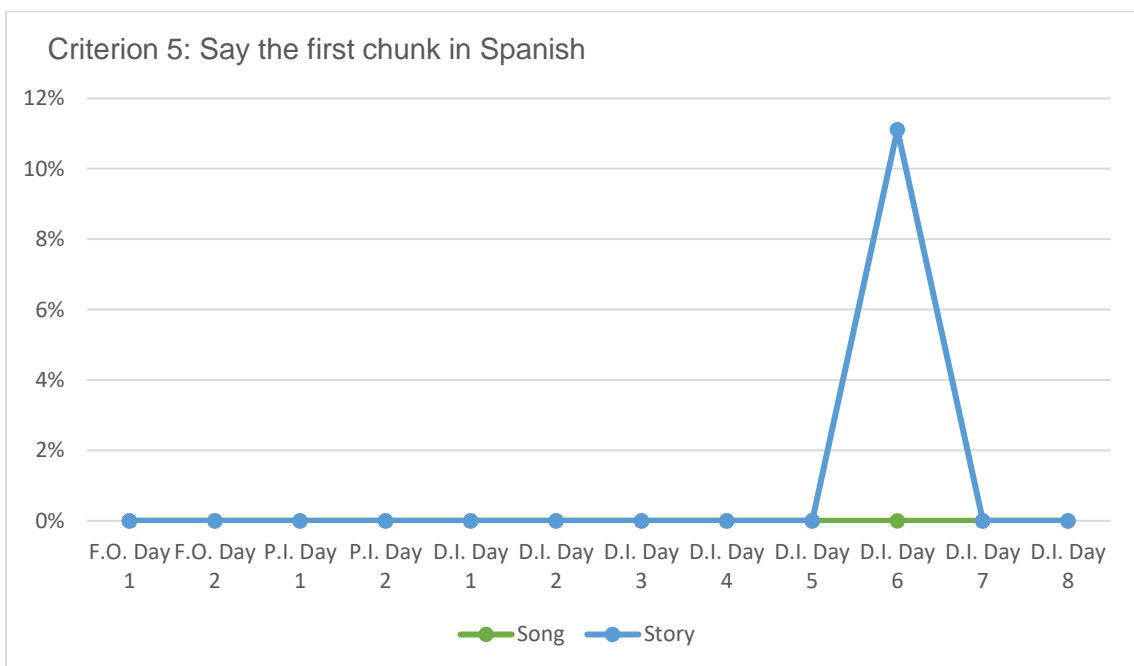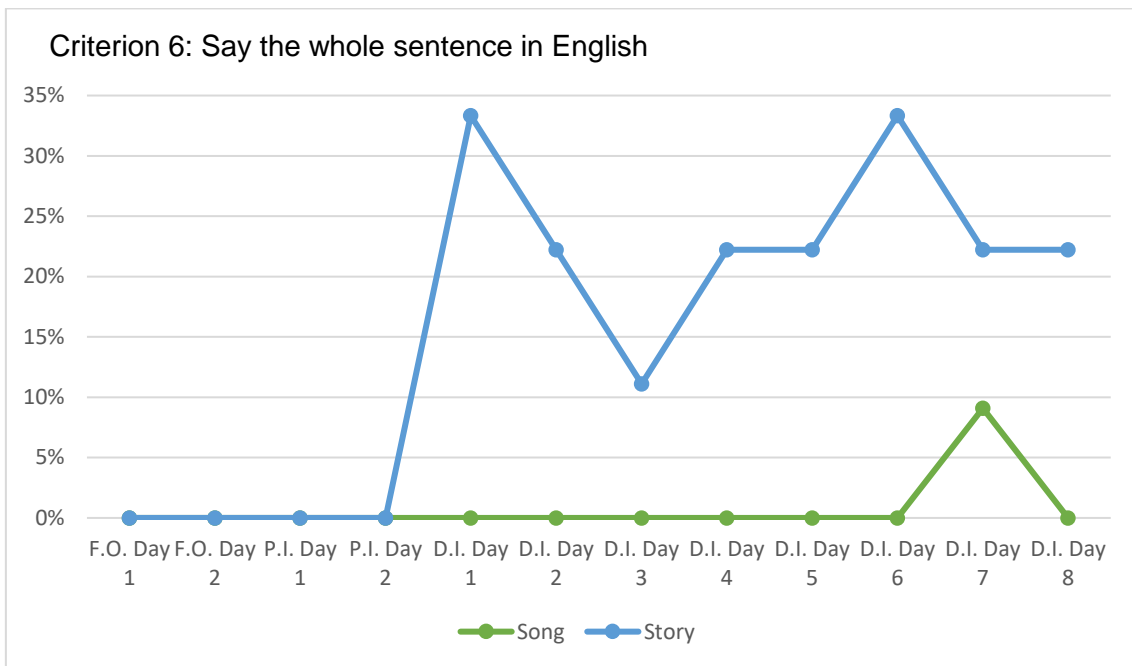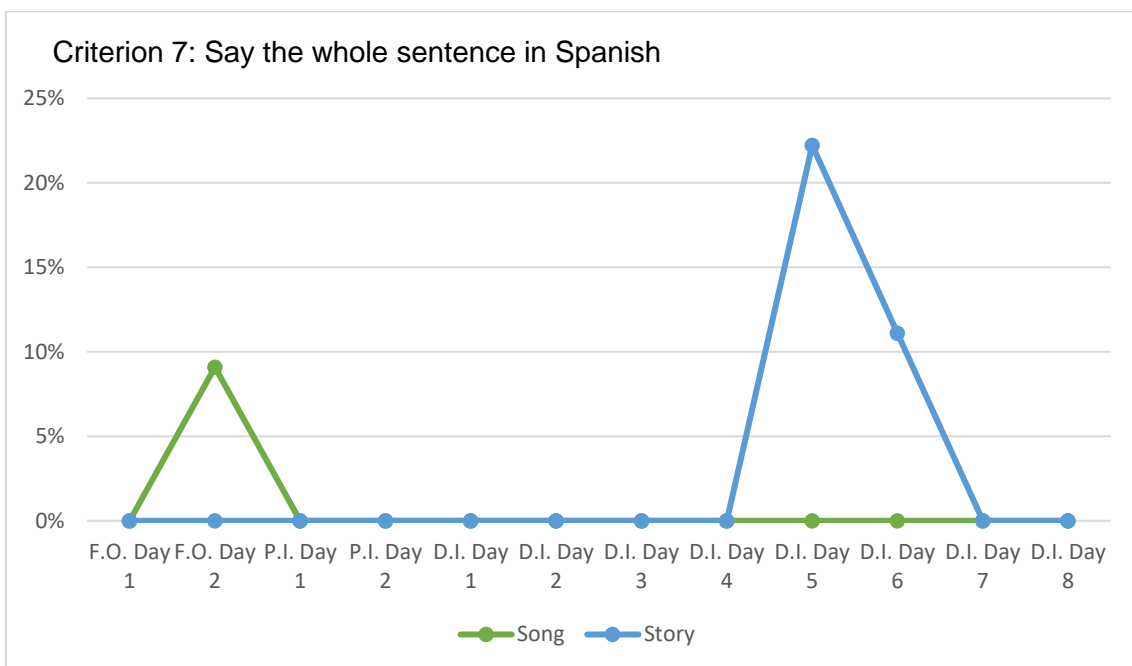
CONCLUSIONS

El uso de cuentos y canciones en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y en las rutinas en Educación Infantil es una gran base de apoyo para los y las docentes (Shin, 2006). La elección de los recursos que van a ser utilizados por el o la docente en el aula y su alumnado están fuertemente condicionados por las características de este último, que debe ser quien guíe la decisión.

El uso de recursos multimodales en ese momento tan importante como es el de las rutinas en Educación Infantil permite al alumnado adquirir el lenguaje en un momento en el que se siente cómodo, favoreciendo esta adquisición gracias también a la ayuda de recursos de andamiaje que favorecen la comprensión de aquello que se está transmitiendo, pero suele resultar difícil saber qué recurso es el más adecuado para nuestro propósito.

Este estudio demuestra que, al igual que en aquellos de Albadalejo, Coyle y Roca de Larios (2018) o Kaminski (2016) el uso de cuentos supone una mejora mayor de la adquisición y producción del lenguaje oral en el inglés como lengua extranjera cuando se aplica a la enseñanza de alumnado tan joven como el de primer curso del segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil.

A pesar de que el uso de canciones es muy común en las aulas de este alumnado en todo el mundo y su uso parece mejorar la adquisición del lenguaje (Mullen, 2017), parece evidente que no es la mejor opción si el objetivo es la mejora significativa de la producción oral en una segunda lengua ya que la mejora es lenta y no tan significativa como la que se produce mediante el uso de cuentos.

A pesar de todo esto, será labor de la parte docente decidir si el alumnado disfrutará más con uno u otro recurso y si es realmente necesaria la adquisición rápida del lenguaje o, por el contrario, resulta más interesante anteponer las preferencias del alumnado a la hora de aprender y llevar un ritmo más lento.

Por otro lado, este estudio demuestra que el alumnado más joven podría beneficiarse de la escucha de cuentos e historias a la hora de producir frases completas en la segunda lengua que sirvan al alumnado para comunicarse y no solo adquirir y reconocer el vocabulario (Albadalejo, Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2018; Lesniewska & Pichette; 2016).

Tras demostrar estas evidencias, sigue quedando en manos del profesorado la toma de decisiones sobre qué recurso didáctico multimodal aplicar en el aula

atendiendo a sus necesidades específicas en cuanto a la adquisición de la segunda lengua, la edad del alumnado y sus preferencias, priorizando unos u otros factores según el momento y los objetivos.

Para concluir, me gustaría agradecer a mi tutora del TFE por su ayuda y correcciones durante estos meses y al centro, al alumnado y a mi tutora del centro por permitir que lleve a cabo el estudio durante mis prácticas.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Wormhole English: How are you? Original song link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O13gITUS5t4

Appendix 2

Story made to fit the requirements of the study following the song's pattern.

Image 1. Slide of the story with the question that is presented right before every feeling, it is 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th slide of the story.

Image 2. 2nd slide of the story, happy feeling.

Image 3. 4th slide of the story, sad feeling.

Image 4. 6th slide of the story, angry feeling.

Image 5. 8th slide of the story, hungry feeling.

Image 6. 10th slide of the story, sleepy feeling.

Appendix 3

Student	Makes gesture / Chooses picture	Says word in English	Doesn't answer	Says word in Spanish	First chunk in English	First chunk in Spanish	Absent	Nods to a proposal	Whole sentence in English	Whole sentence in Spanish
Student 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 7	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 8	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 9	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 10	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 11	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 12	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student 13	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Image 7. Excel sheet to track the students' answers.