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Staging listening: Bridging the gap between the comprehension approach to listening in the young learner classroom and real life

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Relatório de Projeto

Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico

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To Laura, my everything.

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“Recomeça....

Se puderes
Sem angústia
E sem pressa.
E os passos que deres,
Nesse caminho duro
Do futuro
Dá-os em liberdade.
Enquanto não alcances
Não descanses.
De nenhum fruto queiras só metade.

E, nunca saciado,
Vai colhendo ilusões sucessivas no pomar.
Sempre a sonhar e vendo
O logro da aventura.
És homem, não te esqueças!
Só é tua a loucura
Onde, com lucidez, te reconheças...”

Miguel Torga, in *Sísifo*

RESUMO

O presente relatório de projeto visa responder ao importante desafio pedagógico de ajustar os exercícios de compreensão oral realizados em contexto de sala de aula às exigências de compreensão oral da vida real enfrentadas pelos alunos do ensino primário em contextos de EFL. Este estudo utiliza uma abordagem de metodologia mista concebida para avaliar criticamente as práticas de ensino de compreensão oral mais tradicionais e para analisar o impacto da utilização de experiências de compreensão oral da vida real nos currículos. Os resultados indicam que os métodos convencionais precisam de preparar adequadamente os alunos para as complexidades fonéticas e pragmáticas encontradas na oralidade. Este projeto procurou integrar experiências de audição autênticas que contribuíram para uma melhoria significativa das competências auditivas dos alunos em relação à compreensão e à interação com o inglês real, revelando também progressos em termos de consciência fonética e de utilização prática da língua. Este estudo apela à mudança de paradigma no que concerne estratégias de ensino, defendendo compromissos de audição dinâmicos e autênticos que consigam espelhar as interações linguísticas que ocorrem na vida real. Os resultados sugerem que os decisores políticos na área da educação devem considerar a revisão das normas de aprendizagem de línguas de forma a incluir componentes de audição autêntica obrigatórias, o que poderia transformar o ensino de línguas numa ferramenta mais eficaz para o desenvolvimento multilingue.

Palavras-chave: EFL; Audição Real; Compreensão Oral; Desenvolvimento Curricular; Competências Fonológica e Pragmáticas; Investigação com Abordagem de Metodologia Mista.

ABSTRACT

This research project tackles the significant pedagogical challenge of aligning classroom listening exercises with the real-life listening demands faced by primary school learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to critically evaluate traditional listening comprehension practices and explore the impact of integrating authentic listening experiences within the curriculum. Results indicate that conventional methods need to adequately prepare students for the phonetic and pragmatic complexities encountered in spontaneous speech. The project's introduction of real-world listening scenarios has markedly improved learners' abilities to comprehend and interact with natural English, demonstrating substantial enhancements in both phonetic awareness and practical language use. This study calls for a fundamental shift in teaching strategies, advocating for dynamic and authentic listening engagements that more closely mirror real-life linguistic interactions. The findings suggest that educational policymakers should consider revising language learning standards to include mandatory authentic listening components, which could transform language education into a more effective tool for multilingual development.

Keywords: EFL; Authentic Listening; Listening Comprehension; Curriculum Development; Phonetic and Pragmatic Skills; Mixed-Methods Research.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ESL - English as a Second Language

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

ELT - English Language Teaching

ELF - English as a Lingua Franca

SLA - Second Language Acquisition

YL - Young Learners

PH.A - Phonological Awareness

P.A - Phonemic Awareness

ICC - Intercultural Communicative Competence

EIL - English as an International Language

L1 - First Language

L2 - Second Language

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INTRODUCTION

Field's seminal 2009 work, "Listening in the Language Classroom," catalysed my exploration into the intricacies of listening, an interest further nurtured during my Delta qualification in London. My initial research focused on aiding advanced learners in comprehending anecdotes, revealing the significance of connected speech, phonemic awareness, elision, and word blending. This venture into previously uncharted educational territories underscored the richness of listening as a knowledge domain.

As an English Second Language (ESL) teacher in private language schools, I have dedicated myself to providing learners with authentic listening experiences. I acknowledge the limitations of conventional materials in reflecting real communicative scenarios. Observations indicate a positive learner response to exercises incorporating spontaneous speech features, pointing to a gap in traditional listening practice that emphasises comprehension over actual linguistic acquisition.

The motivation behind my research stems from a noticeable disparity among learners in their reading, writing, and listening skills, with listening and speaking often lagging (Cauldwell, 2013). Field's assertion that listening enhances spoken competence by exposing learners to new syntactic, lexical, phonological, and pragmatic information (2009) resonates deeply with my experiences. Many learners need help understanding spontaneous speech, often hindered by unfamiliar vocabulary and rapid speech rates.

Adopting Field's perspective that effective communication is reciprocal, I argue that ESL learners' speaking proficiency is contingent upon their listening competence. Thus, my research proposes a shift from viewing listening as merely a means to comprehension towards treating it as a fundamental component of linguistic acquisition. This approach prioritises phonemic awareness and pronunciation, aiming to equip learners with the skills necessary for navigating authentic listening situations, aligning with the overarching goal of language education: developing communicative competence.

This research paper is structured into four distinct chapters to systematically explore the multifaceted nature of listening in ESL contexts. Chapter One examines the linguistic aspects and features underpinning this study, including the nature of listening and its staging, providing a foundational understanding of the key concepts. Chapter Two contextualises English language teaching within the primary school setting in Portugal, examining the specific approaches to listening and speaking in young learners' (YL) classrooms alongside the challenges and limitations inherent in current practices.

Chapter Three outlines the research objectives, questions, and methodology, detailing the data analysis process to uncover insights into effective listening strategy development. Finally, Chapter Four opens the floor to further avenues of research, suggesting potential paths for continued exploration in enhancing listening competence among ESL learners, thereby contributing to the broader academic dialogue on language acquisition.

The ever-evolving educational ecosystem demands teaching strategies that surpass mere intuition. As John Elliott (1983) suggests, teachers are ideally placed to identify classroom challenges. This underscores the growing importance of educational research, with action research playing a pivotal role in driving transformative learning.

This study, conducted within a school using an action research approach with two third-year student groups, exemplifies this concept. Having employed a triangulated method, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. Drawing on established research in science, cognitive psychology, and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), we aim to move beyond relying solely on instinct. As teacher-researchers, we strive to ground English language teaching practices in robust evidence, ensuring our research is objective and solution-oriented. By actively questioning existing methods and listening to our learners (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), we prioritise student needs and pave the way for a more effective and impactful learning environment.

CHAPTER I – STAGING LISTENING

Listening to someone talk is not at all like listening to their words played over on a machine. What you hear when you have a face before you is never what you hear when you have before you a winding tape.
 Oriana Fallaci (b.1930), Italian writer and journalist, *The Egotists*, in "Field, J. (2008, p.58)

1. NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

The following chapter explores the fundamental concepts regarding Listening, which have led to the backbone of this research paper. Our classrooms predominantly tend to ignore the complexities of real-life language use. Field challenges the traditional over-explored comprehension approach as it favours a particular kind of text, and the learner's role is usually passive or non-participant, "*whose goal is to extract meaning rather than respond in any way*" (Field, 2009, p.58). The effective use of listening strategies, such as micro-listening, instead considers how Listening can provide input, which, in turn, triggers the further development of Second Language Proficiency in the Young Learners' English Language teaching classroom. Moreover, it advocates for introducing learners to authentic auditory experiences, which more accurately capture the essence and phonetic complexity of the target language, moving away from the simplified and segmented inputs traditionally used for teaching purposes.

1.1 MODELLING LISTENING

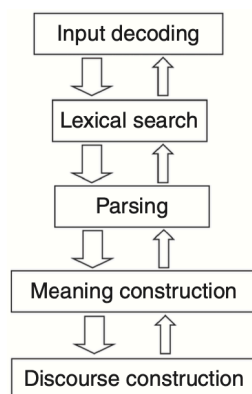
Field (2008) further articulates that listening is an intensely personal, internalised, and time-sensitive skill, often leaving learners overwhelmed by the challenge of mastering it in a classroom environment. "*Listening... often leaves learners feeling helpless in the challenge of honing such a skill*" (Field, 2008, p. 56).

I have decided to include a diagram below (adapted from Field, 2008a, 2019) to provide a visual cue and framework for understanding the various types of cognitive operations¹ that L2 learners have to master during the listening process. Therefore, as seen in Figure 1, the model features five distinct phases or, as the author refers, **operations**. The arrows indicate a progression: the downward arrow "from smaller to larger language units and from linguistic information based upon strings of words to

1 In psycholinguistics, "level" is a prevalent term, yet to avoid confusion with levels of proficiency, "operation" is preferred. The term emphasises its complex nature supported by various integrative processes rather than indicating isolation.

more abstract representations based upon meaning. However, the upward arrows remind us that this is not a purely linear progression" (Field, 2018, pp. 8-13).

Figure 1 – Simplified cognitive model of the listening process



Note: Field 2008a¹ (Adapted from Cutler & Clifton, 1999)

Analysing the model above reveals that listening is a dynamic process that employs multiple signals to comprehend speech content. Larger units operate top-down to facilitate the recognition of smaller units. Knowing the spoken form of a whole word can significantly influence what we perceive at a phoneme level.

Understanding the process of listening in a second language (L2) unfolds through a sequence of distinct yet interconnected stages, each critical for the comprehensibility of spoken language. Drawing upon the insights of Field (2018), Ellis (1985), Cutler (1981) and others, *Figure 1* clarifies the sophisticated journey from hearing sounds to grasping complex ideas and how this journey facilitates the identification of specific learning needs at various proficiency levels.

The journey begins with input decoding, where listeners translate acoustic signals into recognisable units of the target language; "listening begins with the perception of the acoustic signal and ends with the understanding of the spoken discourse" (Vandergrift, 2007, pp. 191-207). This foundational step transforms the raw auditory input into a format ready for further linguistic processing.

Following this initial decoding, the listener ventures on a lexical search, which Vandergrift (2006 pp. 3-4) refers to as "an approach to listening instruction", which is meant "to develop lexical segmentation

¹ For a more detailed account of what the models mentioned above entail, see Field (2013, pp.96-107)

and word recognition skills." This stage involves exploring the mental lexicon to match the decoded sounds with potential words.

After identifying potential lexical items, the third phase, coined as *parsing* by Gompel & Pickering (2007), drives the listener to "trace a syntactic pattern in a group of identified words" (Field, 2019, p.287), such as the standard Subject-Verb-Object order, and temporarily holding this structure in memory. *Parsing* is essential for understanding the grammatical framework of the message.

Early-stage second language (L2) learners may struggle to remember a long sequence of words because they need to concentrate on understanding each new word as it is heard. This process¹ must happen quickly, setting listening apart from reading. When listening, the information is fleeting, requiring immediate processing, without the option to revisit and verify the accuracy of word recognition or grammatical structures. Additionally, the speaker controls the speed of listening, "whereas a reader can modify reading speed according to the difficulty of the content or the goals of the task" (Field, 2019, p.288). As a result, listening is a "complex, problem-solving skill" (Wipf, 1984, p.345) encompassing much more than the mere perception of sounds, although perception, as seen before, is foundational. (Oxford, 1993, p.205)

Moving deeper into comprehension, we reach the *meaning construction or building* stage, where the listener interprets the syntactic arrangements responsible for constructing meaning by drawing upon a range of contextual cues that are often independent of the actual words used (Field, 2008, pp.116-121) This process which includes the listener's knowledge of the world, the speaker and recollection of what has been said so far demands a great effort. The listener/learner will feel inclined to use transfer processes from their L1 to decode the message and fill gaps in understanding in L2. Therefore, the unfamiliar nature of an L2 listening experience in conjunction with the learner's limited expertise will, in turn, inhibit their commitment towards listening exercises.

The culmination of this journey is *discourse construction*, where the listener integrates the sentence-level meaning with the broader context of the conversation or discourse. This involves understanding individual sentences to grasp the overall message, discern the speaker's intentions, and comprehend the conversation's direction and overarching purpose. Together, these stages provide a comprehensive listening framework that highlights where comprehension may falter and serves as a basis for a needs analysis.

This framework aids in diagnosing specific areas for improvement by outlining what a listener is capable of at different levels of proficiency. Much like a needs analysis survey, such a diagnostic tool is invaluable for tailoring learning and teaching strategies to meet the precise needs of L2 learners, ensuring a more targeted and effective approach to language acquisition. Therefore, this structured narrative serves as the backbone for understanding the complex processes involved in L2 listening and underscores the importance of a detailed needs analysis for enhancing language learning outcomes.

As seen before, the rapid-processing nature of listening creates challenges that learners need to be made aware of. A typical learner misconception is the belief that the mental representation of a word will always match its spoken form in real-life conversations. Field (2008) attends to the importance of raising learners' awareness towards lower-level (decoding) processes first, thus familiarising learners with L2's acoustic signal and how words blend in a stream of spoken English.

This is particularly challenging for our young and beginner-level learners, as they expect to hear a sentence almost identical to their memory of its graphic representation (sound substance vs sight substance¹), as stated by Cauldwell (2013, p.8). However, oral utterances or sound substances do not literally correspond to their graphic representation or sight substance. Function words—such as pronouns, articles, and auxiliary verbs— are often elided/omitted. Thus, co-articulation, connected speech, and prosody are critical elements in the early stages of language learning dynamics. Thorn (2021, p.65) states that “all three contribute to the fact that content words and function words in a stream of authentic speech may sound very different from their isolated citation forms.”

Cauldwell's (2013, pp.8-15) research also emphasises that listening involves much more than the passive reception of sounds; it requires an active, cognitive engagement with the language. Thorn (2021, p.65-67) further draws on this topic by stating that regardless of their target language, “learners have to work hard to identify the word from the sounds they are hearing”, as many of them shall be unfamiliar. This poses yet another challenge as our learners need to match the words to their meanings, which L1 speakers do effortlessly. This can be exceedingly daunting for learners at an A1 to A2 level, independent of their age range, as they are required to navigate limited vocabulary, emerging auditory discrimination skills, and varying attention spans. Therefore, our task as teachers is to craft strategies which align with our young learners' developmental stages and linguistic needs.

¹ For details on what this process entails, please read more about *processing lag* (Brown, 2015, pp. 313–388)

Although authors such as Krashen (1982) provide valuable insight into overcoming this challenge and propose that language acquisition is facilitated by exposure to input slightly beyond the learner's current level ("I+1"), Field's 2018 work is more cautious. It suggests a careful balance in the selection of listening materials that extend learners' abilities without overwhelming them. The development of auditory discrimination, or the ability to distinguish between different sounds in the target language, is fundamental to listening. Kuhl's (2004) studies reaffirm that exposure to a broad range of phonetic input is crucial for this skill. Therefore, integrating authentic auditory stimuli into the ESL curriculum represents a significant pedagogical shift. Cauldwell's (2013) concept of the "snake sentence" – a fluid, unbroken stream of words – exemplifies the type of listening experiences that mirror actual language use. This method, usually associated with the author's botanical analogy (greenhouse-garden-jungle metaphor¹), is meant to improve listening comprehension and enrich speaking proficiency by immersing learners in the natural rhythms and intonations of the target language.

This discussion draws on the scholarly work of Cauldwell (2013), Field (2008), Krashen (1982), Kuhl (2004), Hancock (2013), and McDonald (1995), who outlined the challenges and strategies relevant to enhancing listening proficiency among A1 to A2 level learners. Educators can significantly improve listening outcomes by focusing on authentic linguistic inputs and adapting teaching practices to meet the specific needs of young learners, laying a solid foundation for linguistic and communicative excellence.

According to Field (2008 p.56), listening is a personal, internalised, time-constrained skill that often leaves learners helpless to the challenge of honing such skills within a classroom setting. Learners frequently struggle to understand spoken English as it is more than individual spoken words; they have a void perception that their idealised version of a word will unequivocally correspond to what they will hear in a conversation. Learners need to be made aware of how words sound in continuous speech, as most grammar structures have strings of words. Eliding function words such as pronouns, articles, and auxiliary verbs are precisely some of the words affected by connected speech features.

Therefore, listening reinforces connections between groups of sounds and the learners' vocabulary, making sound-word links automatic. Understanding the nature of listening allows teachers to instruct weaker listeners regarding appropriate listening and decoding routines. Additionally, addressing young learners' attention spans presents another challenge. Healy (1990) suggests that traditional listening exercises might not captivate the young learner's interest. Field (2008) further proposes interactive

and multi-sensory activities as effective methods for maintaining engagement and enhancing auditory processing.

To sum up, the early childhood ESL classroom is a foundational and privileged setting for the development of practical communication skills. Educators can significantly improve listening outcomes by focusing on authentic linguistic inputs and adapting teaching practices to meet the specific needs of young learners, laying a solid foundation for linguistic and communicative excellence.

2. CONTRASTING L1 AND L2 ACQUISITION

This subchapter aims to clarify the distinctions between listening comprehension in L1 and L2 acquisition while also addressing some prevalent misconceptions (Thorn, 2021, p.20). While we might perceive listening in our L1 as effortless (Cutler, 2012, p.), it involves a complex interplay of mental tasks. However, as established earlier, comprehending spoken language as an L2 speaker presents a significantly greater challenge.

Researchers like Henshaw and Hawkins (2022, p.11) underscore the predominantly unconscious process of first language (L1) acquisition, in which individuals construct a linguistic system by forming connections between form and meaning within their linguistic surroundings. In contrast, the acquisition of a second language (L2) requires a more intentional strategy, as highlighted by Lightbrown and Spada (2008, p. 59), with input and its meaning playing a pivotal role. These components significantly contribute to the comprehension of messages, as noted by VanPatten (2003). This distinction is critical: L1 acquisition occurs through an implicit mechanism, whereas L2 acquisition typically involves an explicit process.

Even in L1 comprehension, intricate steps are involved. Field (2018) observes that accurate word identification relies on multiple auditory cues. Notably, larger units like syllables influence the recognition of smaller units like phonemes. This implies that prior knowledge of a word's spoken form can impact its recognition at the phoneme level.

The focus now shifts to the unique challenges of L2 listening comprehension. Unlike L1 acquisition, L2 learners grapple with unfamiliar sounds, grammatical structures, and potentially limited phonological awareness in their mother tongue. Their limited understanding of these features can make it challenging to discern between sounds which are absent in their L1 repertoire, as exemplified by the

¹ For a visual representation of these terms please see Annex 1 and 2

English "th" sound [θ/ and /ð/], which often confounds speakers of languages lacking this distinction.

The transition from phonological to phonemic awareness further highlights the complexity of auditory language processing across linguistic contexts, a topic I shall explore in greater depth in a subsequent chapter. Understanding how individuals recognise and use phonemic units within languages is vital, as it significantly impacts learning and comprehension in L2 acquisition. While both L1 and L2 acquisition processes emphasise the importance of input, the conscious effort required in L2 listening requires distinct strategies. These strategies include techniques to address phonological and phonemic awareness, tackle pronunciation challenges, and, ultimately, boost overall comprehension and confidence.

3. LEARNING TO LISTEN: L1 AND L2 DIFFERENCES

Analysing the intricate interplay of similarities and inherent differences between L1 and L2 acquisition accentuates the complexities of the language learning journey. While both share the foundational process of linguistic system development through exposure to input, a deeper understanding uncovers significant differences in language learning, indicating the need for specialised teaching methods. One of the most pronounced distinctions arises from the pre-existing linguistic framework possessed by L2 learners. This existing system sets the stage for unique challenges, including transfer errors, which are typically absent in L1 acquisition. As Grosjean (1989) aptly noted, "a bilingual brain is not the same as a monolingual brain," underscoring the profound impact of having a prior language on acquiring additional ones. This reality necessitates strategies that address and leverage the unique architecture of the bilingual brain.

Furthermore, individual differences and external factors play a much more significant role in L2+ acquisition than in L1 acquisition. Intrinsic factors like motivation, aptitude, and identity profoundly affect L2 learning outcomes, whereas L1 acquisition in infancy occurs relatively independently of these elements. This observation highlights these variables' critical role in shaping the trajectory and success of L2 learning, diverging significantly from the more automatic and universally successful process of L1 acquisition.

The role of age in language acquisition throws another twist into the L1 vs. L2 debate. The "critical period hypothesis" (CPH) popularised by Lenneberg (1967) suggests a limited window for effortless L1

acquisition in childhood. While this theory remains a point of contention for L2 learners, it highlights the age factor. Unlike children acquiring their first language, L2 learners grapple with "transfer errors" (as discussed in Chapter 1). These stem from their existing language and cause them to mix up the rules of both languages. Additionally, L2 learners experience developmental errors distinct from the natural mistakes made during L1 acquisition.

Despite these differences, the necessity of input and the occurrence of U-shaped development across both L1 and L2 learners signal underlying similarities in the language acquisition process. While some similarities between L1 and L2 learning may exist, these should not overshadow the significant differences. Notably, explicit instruction, unlike in other learning contexts, has little impact on the natural process of acquiring a second language. For instance, research by Schmidt (2001) on noticing and attention emphasises the importance of drawing learners' attention to specific linguistic features for improved comprehension. This strategy moves beyond rote memorisation and aligns more closely with natural language acquisition mechanisms.

In conclusion, while L1 and L2 acquisition processes share foundational elements, the significant differences highlighted – particularly regarding the pre-existing linguistic system, the impact of individual differences and external factors, and the role of age – emphasise the critical need for a tailored approach to language teaching. Recognising and addressing these differences is paramount for developing pedagogical strategies that facilitate successful L2 learning, moving beyond the one-size-fits-all methodology often found in language instruction. The failure to acknowledge these fundamental differences can cause language learning to become unnecessarily challenging and frustrating for learners, hindering their progress and motivation. Conversely, employing pedagogical approaches that cater to the unique characteristics of L2 acquisition can create a more engaging and effective learning environment, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for additional languages.

4. EXPLORING LINGUISTIC DYNAMICS IN L2 LISTENING SKILLS

Language is a constantly evolving system of intricate patterns and symbols (Cutler, 2012, p. 33), which allows us to communicate through receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Linguistics draws on language by employing scientific methods and seeks to understand how humans acquire and use this system. This part focuses on phonology and phonetics,

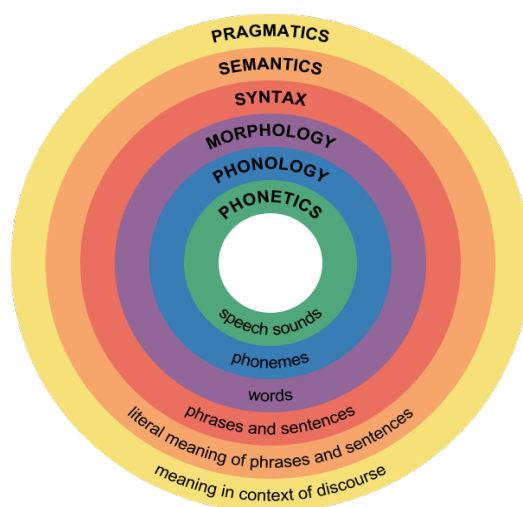
the main constituents of spoken language, to bridge the gap between traditional listening comprehension approaches in the YL classroom and real-life listening experiences.

The diagram below vividly illustrates the layers of linguistic analysis, which form the basis for understanding how language functions in spoken and written forms. At its core are phonetics, "the study of the way in which *speech sounds* are articulated," and phonology, "which encompasses the study of the unconscious rules governing speech-sound production" (Jager Adams et al., 1998, p.3). These are encircled by morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, the outermost layer.

I have focused my attention on three of these layers: pragmatics and semantics (decoding), phonology (meaning building and phonological awareness) and phonetics (phonemic awareness), as they encircle and triangulate the essential characteristics of listening in L2, which are at the helm of my research questions and project.

Phonetics is at the centre, studying speech sounds, their physiological production (articulation), acoustic properties, and auditory perception. Phonemes, which are the smallest units of sound in a language, distinguish one word from another, such as the /p/ in "pat" versus the /b/ in "bat". Phonetics lays the groundwork of linguistic understanding, providing the raw material which is, in turn, shaped and patterned by phonology.

Figure 2 - Main domains and subdomains related to the study of language - Linguistics



Note: Retrieved from <https://www.collegesidekick.com/study-guides/boundless-psychology/introduction-to-language>

As seen above, phonology subsequently examines these sounds in the context of a particular language. It is not just about the individual sounds or phonemes but about the role they play and the rules they follow to convey meaning. Conversely, morphology studies how these sounds combine to form words, syntax organises words into sentences, and semantics gives those sentences meaning. However, pragmatics, the outermost layer, situates this meaning within the full context of discourse. Pragmatics encompasses how language is used in actual situations to achieve communication; it looks beyond the literal meanings to understand intention and effect within the given social and environmental context.

I have chosen to link this model to Cauldwell's (2002, pp.2-14) approach to phonology for listening, as the author shifts the traditional methodology for listening's focus towards the "messy reality of spontaneous speech", with "stream-like characteristics" instead of the neatly segmented and sanitised misrepresentation of "tidy forms of speech" often presented in language education. Cauldwell (2002, pp.2-14) argues that real-life listening involves decoding a stream of sounds far from the idealised, discrete units of phonemes usually taught. This 'messiness' includes intonation, stress, rhythm, and how sounds change in fast, natural, connected speech. You will be able to read more about this in the subsequent subchapters. In this light, Figure 2 reminds us of the inherent complexity of teaching and learning listening skills in a second language.

5. UNLOCKING L2 LISTENING: BEYOND PHONEMES

Integrating phonemic awareness, phonology, pragmatics and semantics within the second language acquisition (SLA) framework is integral, particularly in refining learners' listening skills. This comprehensive approach addresses the multifaceted nature of language learning, where understanding and producing speech extend beyond mere phonetic recognition to include the adaptive use of language in a variety of contexts.

Anderson and Lynch (1988, p.21) highlight a critical observation in SLA research, noting, "regrettably, there is very little research into teaching listening in a second language," which underscores a significant gap in applied linguistics and pedagogical strategies. Educators have traditionally relied on first-language (L1) listening research to inform their methodologies in response to the scarcity of specialised research (Cauldwell, 1999, p.2). However, this practice introduces considerable limitations by neglecting the pragmatic aspects of language comprehension, shaped by the dynamic interplay of contextual cues and the inherent variability of spoken language. Such an oversight neglects the

essence of language as a versatile communication device, thereby failing to fully address the varieties and fluidity characteristic of authentic linguistic exchanges. Listening transcends the mere decoding of phonemes and syntax; it is an active engagement with meaning, interpreted within a rich tapestry of social signals and ambient noise.

As seen before, despite the well-established importance of phonemic awareness in enhancing reading abilities among English as a Second Language (ESL) learners¹, research on listening comprehension significantly trails behind. The disparity between the extensive body of research on the role of phonemic awareness in reading and the limited exploration of its impact on listening skills underscores a glaring oversight in ESL pedagogy; this is particularly concerning given the challenges learners face in real-listening environments, where A1-A2 level students often struggle to retain spoken information, signalling an urgent need for effective listening comprehension strategies.

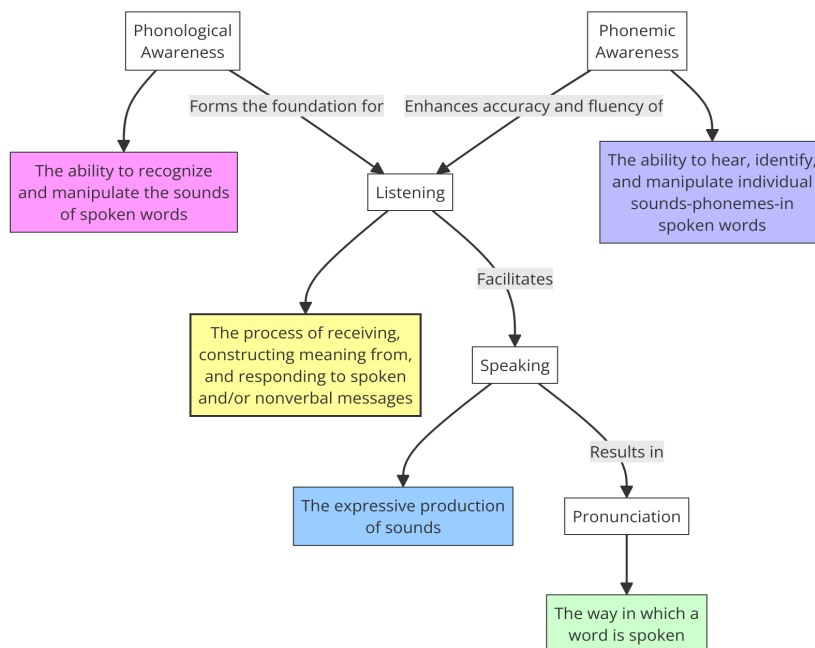
Goh (1997, p.388) and Cauldwell¹ (2013, p. 17) vividly illustrate this predicament through "**Ying's dilemma**," where a Singaporean English learner was unable to understand words when part of a sentence; however, she had no problem recognising them in isolation;

"I believe I need to learn what the word sounds like when it is used in the sentence. Because sometimes when a familiar word is used in a sentence, I couldn't catch it. Maybe it changes somewhere when it is used in a sentence." (p. 17)

Ying's learning diary entries illustrate our learners' critical need to navigate the phonetic shifts words undergo in fluid spoken discourse—a challenge emblematically represented by changes in a word's "soundshape" in response to its placement within a sentence and its proximity to other words (Cauldwell, 2002, pp.2-14). Strictly speaking, **Ying** failed to recognise words that should have been familiar to her because they were in the stream of speech. Interestingly, **Ying** describes her difficulty identifying lexis as an obstacle to progress. However, the issue is actually deeply rooted in the concepts of 'word' and 'sentences', which need to be deconstructed. This insight highlights the intricate complexities of listening comprehension and how instructors must use approaches that tackle these phonological nuances.

¹ For a visual representation of these terms please see Annex 1 and 2

Figure 3 - The Impact of Phonological and Phonemic Awareness on Listening, Speaking, and Pronunciation



Note: Adapted from Hanging Around in Primary (<https://www.hangingaroundinprimary.com/2017/07/what-is-the-difference-between-phonological-and-phonemic-awareness.html>)

At the core of this discussion lies the interconnectedness of phonological and phonemic awareness and their collective impact on listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills. **Figure 3** clearly illustrates how phonological awareness, which focuses on recognising and manipulating spoken parts of sentences and words, lays the foundation for advanced listening capabilities. This linguistic field also encompasses identifying rhyming words, recognising alliteration, segmenting sentences into words, and discerning syllables. Phonemic awareness (vide **Figure 3**), as detailed by Goldstein et al. (2017, p.89), is defined as "the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) within a language," signifying its role as a critical element of phonological awareness. This distinction is crucial for appraising the skills required for adequate language mastery.

The essential link between phonemic awareness and listening comprehension must be emphasised. Early exposure to phonemic variations enhances auditory perception and facilitates the discernment of distinct sounds in a second language, as noted by Kuhl (2010, pp.713-724). This neuroplastic adaptability is particularly pronounced among young learners, highlighting how mainstream educational resources miss opportunities and repeatedly fail to fully embrace the complexity of

language, including critical phonological features like word stress and blended sounds (Hancock et al., 2005). Exposing young learners to the language's rich soundscape is key to closing the listening comprehension gap in the classroom. Therefore, exposing students to real-world language experiences can sharpen their listening skills and give them the confidence to communicate in different situations. Developing an awareness of phonemes, the building blocks of language, is more than just a classroom task; it is a critical step in truly understanding and enjoying the language. This assertion, in turn, makes students more skilled and confident listeners.

I am hence advocating that by engaging our students in fun and meaningful activities and highlighting these building blocks; we are taking stock of the most favourable conditions to make language learning and, specifically, listening more rewarding. This approach helps prepare them for the challenge of using a new language in everyday life. Classrooms should nurture learning spaces that are both effective and lively, ensuring students are ready to tackle the practical use of language with confidence.

6. AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO L2 LISTENING

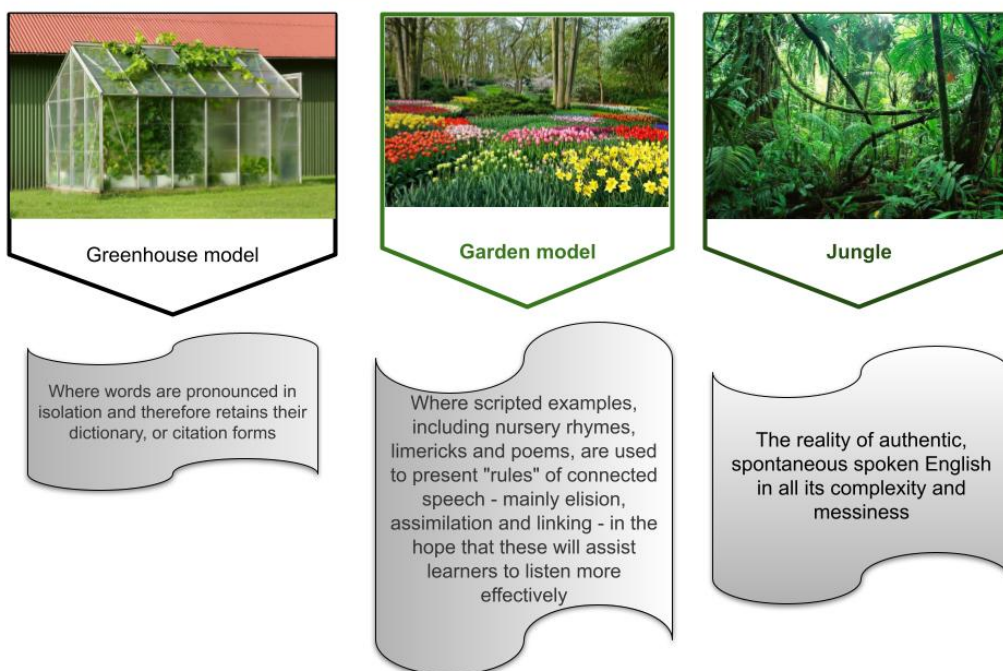
Opinions on listening in second language acquisition have yet to be universally favoured, revealing various perspectives ranging from traditional methodologies to more innovative approaches. This diversity in thought and practice has sparked vigorous debates within the educational community. This subchapter is not about picking a single teaching method for listening. Instead, it highlights the variety of valuable approaches that teachers can use. I aim to explore the diverse and contrasting approaches, emphasising the points where they intersect and complement each other, weaving a narrative that acknowledges the complexity of listening comprehension and its pivotal role in L2 learning.

As seen in Figure 4 below, Cauldwell examines various types of spoken English from a listener rather than a pronunciation perspective (Thorn, 2021, p.57). This is a markedly innovative approach, as the learner is at the centre of their learning process. The botanical metaphor helps explain the difficulties students face when decoding and why essential features regarding the sound substance of speech are not adequately dealt with in our classrooms and ELT.

At the heart of this journey is the realisation, as brought to light by Field (2008, pp.43-48), that auditory learning transcends mere passive listening to become an active, vibrant process. It demands engagement with the intricate ebb and flow of speech, where the harmonious structure of language often conceals the subtle roles of grammatical elements. This deep engagement with auditory

perception processes uncovers the vital link between the sound patterns of speech and vocabulary, enabling learners to navigate the linguistic subtleties of a new language skillfully.

Figure 4 – Myth vs reality: English Language Teaching versus real-life English usage



Note: Adapted from Cauldwell's 2013 botanical metaphor for different speech types.

Effective auditory education uncovers a terrain filled with both hurdles and opportunities for enrichment. Therefore, although repetitive exercises have long been a staple in ESL teaching, primarily aimed at honing hard skills, Richards (2005, p. 92) argues that "effective language teaching involves not only the repetition of structures (drills) but also engaging the learner's cognitive and sensory faculties." This perspective is increasingly supported by emerging studies in active learning methodologies, which suggest that traditional methods might not actively engage with learners' imaginations. Long (2005, p. 78), aligning with this view, adds that "innovation in language teaching needs to go beyond the familiar and embrace dynamic techniques that stimulate both the mind and senses". Therefore, educators advocate for a shift toward more dynamic, sensory-enriched strategies. Richards (2009, pp. 1-35) expands this dialogue regarding the reconsideration of auditory learning, not merely as a vehicle for message decoding but as a catalyst for linguistic evolution, where learners are encouraged to think critically about the sounds of the L2. As the complexity of auditory learning unravels, both the perceptual and cognitive dimensions become evident. The initial stage of auditory

perception involves sophisticated cognitive skills such as decoding, characterised by the variability and fluidity of speech sounds (Field, 2009, pp. 110-121).

The previous subchapter investigated the cognitive foundations of auditory learning, distinguishing two primary strategies: top-down and bottom-up processing. The former draws upon an extensive reservoir of prior knowledge to aid in understanding conversations within familiar contexts. Meanwhile, bottom-up processing establishes itself as the bedrock of auditory learning, intricately dissecting spoken input into its essential elements.

Nonetheless, researchers such as Hancock (2022, pp. 6-7) and Cauldwell (2013, p.9-30) are critical of the exaggerated importance placed on the **greenhouse and garden soundscapes**, as seen in Figure 4, (top-down processing), as little attention is given to the true nature of the sound substance of the speech. Our learners need help to make out the sounds in the jungle (which is spontaneous and unruly). One might argue that using a model based on the order and organisation of both the greenhouse and garden is ideal for teaching and learning clear, intelligible pronunciation; however, this will have little to no effect when our learners are faced with the unruliness of everyday speech, where "words are crushed out of shape" Cauldwell (2013, p.13). In the same vein,

As a profession, we have become experts at activating expectations of meaning ("schema activation"), playing recordings and rewarding the capture of meaning. We are less expert at the level of decoding (bottom-up activities), and as a consequence, we spend far less time on teaching the nature of the sound substance than we spend on the level of meaning. (Cauldwell, 2013, p. 16)

Therefore, advocating for a shift in teaching strategies, models, and materials by rethinking the previous model is pivotal and long overdue. Our focus as EFL/ESL professionals is on our learners' needs and using a principled approach that aims to enhance their auditory skills. Hence, a united call emerges for a comprehensive pedagogical approach combining analytical, bottom-up approaches with inferential top-bottom approaches. This cooperative strategy facilitates linguistic mastery and deepens our students' understanding of the complexity involved in listening.

7. SHARPENING YOUNG EARS: MINIMAL PAIRS & MICRO-LISTENING

Exploring the significance of noticing minimal pairs in micro-listening tasks for young learners necessitates an intricate understanding of phonological awareness and its role in language acquisition. As seen before, scholars such as Hancock, Field, Thorn, Richards, and Cauldwell's views offer a rich tapestry of insights into how attention to minimal pairs can enhance listening skills, particularly in authentic listening experiences. These insights, when juxtaposed with the limitations of current course books, underscore a significant pedagogical gap in language education for young learners.

Adequate listening comprehension in a second language (L2) extends beyond simply recognising individual words. The intricacies of connected speech, where words flow together and subtle phonetic distinctions become crucial, pose a significant challenge for learners (Field, 2008). This article explores the pivotal role of minimal pairs and micro-listening tasks in addressing this challenge, fostering a nuanced approach to L2 listening instruction.

Minimal pairs, words that differ only by one sound (e.g., "ship" vs "sheep"), offer a potent tool for honing learners' phonological awareness, the ability to perceive and differentiate sounds in a language (Hancock, 1995, p. 34). The author states that strategically integrating minimal pairs within connected speech activities can significantly enhance this awareness; "noticing minimal pairs within the context of connected speech activities fosters an acute phonological awareness that is foundational for developing proficient listening skills" (Hancock, 1995, p. 35). Therefore, through principled exposure and practice of such subtleties, learners develop a deeper understanding of the target language sound system, becoming more sensitive to the fluidity and dynamism of spoken communication.

Micro-listening tasks, short listening activities with a targeted focus on specific sounds or features, further amplify the effectiveness of minimal pairs in L2 listening instruction (Field, 2008, pp.327-331). These tasks are crucial in refining learners' auditory acuity and demystifying spoken language's inherent unpredictability (Field, 2008, p. 120). As seen above, whenever learners are encouraged to delve deeper into language's intricacies, they develop a closer appreciation for the variations and nuances in natural speech. This targeted practice fosters a more sophisticated listening skillset, enabling learners to move beyond basic comprehension and grasp the subtle cues that convey meaning in spoken language.

Cauldwell (2013) underscores the necessity of prioritising the recognition of minimal pairs through micro-listening tasks in L2 listening pedagogy, emphasises that the inherent complexity of spoken English necessitates a pedagogical approach that equips learners with the skills to navigate the "fluid dynamics of real-world listening scenarios" (Cauldwell, 2013, p. 187). The prioritisation of bottom-up features, such as minimal pairs and micro-listening tasks, empowers learners to decipher the intricacies of pronunciation and develop the auditory acuity needed to comprehend spoken language in authentic contexts effectively.

The disparity between traditional course materials' controlled listening exercises and real-world spoken language's phonological challenges presents another critical consideration (Richards, 2013, pp. 219-240). The author emphasises the limitations of these materials in preparing learners for the complexities of natural language use. He argues that authentic listening experiences enriched with exercises on minimal pairs are essential for bridging this gap (Richards, 2009, p. 142). Integrating these exercises into L2 listening instruction allows learners to bridge the divide between classroom learning and the demands of real-world communication.

In conclusion, incorporating minimal pairs and micro-listening tasks into L2 listening instruction offers a cultured and practical approach to addressing the challenges of connected speech. Additionally, fostering a refined understanding of the phonological distinctions and the unpredictable nature of spoken language further enables learners to develop the auditory acuity needed for successful L2 listening comprehension.

8. GREENHOUSE TO JUNGLE: MASTERING CONNECTED SPEECH

Language in its natural habitat – flowing, dynamic, and brimming with nuance – is a far cry from the isolated words and textbook examples encountered in classrooms. This continuous flow of sounds, words, and phrases, aptly termed connected speech, forms the very fabric of everyday communication (Crystal, 1980, p. 81). While traditional linguistics often dissects language into discrete units, connected speech paints a different picture, one where sounds morph and meld together. Processes like *assimilation* and *elision* reshape pronunciation, demonstrating how language adapts to the demands of real-time interaction.

Language learning is a dynamic process with challenges spanning cognitive, phonological, and instructional domains. Traditional teaching methods often simplify language to a degree that does not

prepare learners for the unpredictable nature of everyday speech. This discussion draws upon Cauldwell's (2013) innovative approach to phonology, the role of the phonological loop in memory retention, and the educational implications of limited classroom exposure, as discussed by Lightbrown and Spada (2013).

Traditional phonology teaching, grounded in the Careful Speech Model, falls short when faced with the "unruliness, wildness, and massive reductions that occur in spontaneous speech" (Cauldwell, 2014, p. 40). Cauldwell advocates for a model that reflects the true nature of everyday interactions; the Spontaneous Speech Model (SSM) acknowledges the complexities and irregularities inherent in natural language, preparing learners for actual communicative scenarios. Cauldwell emphasises, "We need to prepare learners for the jungle of spontaneous speech, where the vegetation is crushed together in a messy and unruly manner" (Cauldwell, 2014, p. 41), challenging the neatly arranged traditional models that often lead to a disconnect between classroom learning and real-world application.

The *phonological loop*, a facet of working memory, plays a pivotal role in how language learners process and retain new information. This system involves the phonological store and the articulatory rehearsal process, which is essential for keeping a temporary hold on verbal information. The effectiveness of this cognitive tool is amplified through clear pronunciation, a key component of Cauldwell's (2013) phonology model. As learners navigate through the complexities of natural speech, the clarity of pronunciation directly influences how successfully new vocabulary is encoded into long-term memory. The phonological loop's significance underscores the necessity for phonological accuracy in language teaching to aid in retaining and retrieving linguistic knowledge.

The speed and spontaneity of natural speech often result in a *processing lag*, where learners struggle to interpret language as it is spoken. This lag reflects the cognitive load that spontaneous speech imposes on listeners, particularly those not accustomed to the rapid pace of native communication. Cauldwell critiques traditional models for their failure to address this reality, pointing out the need to "let go of some of our favourite rules of connected speech" (Cauldwell, 2013, p. 40). Changing our approach to teaching is essential for helping students develop effective listening skills and for handling the mental effort needed to understand spoken language in real time.

The challenge of limited contact hours in language learning environments is a significant barrier to language acquisition. Lightbrown and Spada (2013) highlight that effective language learning requires

classroom instruction and extensive exposure to the language in various contexts. "Time is a critical factor in second language acquisition, and learners require sufficient exposure to the language and opportunities to use it" (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013, p. 123). This statement stresses the importance of integrating language practice outside of traditional learning environments to ensure comprehensive language mastery. This synthesis of Cauldwell's (2013) phonological theories with cognitive psychology and instructional challenges offers a holistic view of language learning. It connects theoretical frameworks with practical teaching applications, emphasising the need for realistic and robust language education strategies. These strategies are designed to equip learners with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of real-world language use, thereby bridging the gap between academic studies and practical communication skills. Through such integrated approaches, educators can more effectively prepare learners for the demands of both understanding and participating in natural language exchanges.

Conversely, this very dynamism presents a significant obstacle for language learners, particularly those at the beginning stages of their journey (Cauldwell, 2018, p. 41). The concept of "*soundshape*" becomes paramount. Imagine a word's pronunciation changing dramatically in connected speech, creating a potential mismatch between what learners expect (based on textbooks) and the reality they encounter in natural conversations. This is precisely the challenge highlighted by Field (2008, p. 150). Rapid speech with merged and morphed phonemes can make it difficult to distinguish between similar-sounding words, potentially obscuring the intended message. Adding another layer of complexity is the human tendency towards efficiency, as Ladgeford (2000, p. 250) points out. Speakers often prioritise ease of articulation, resulting in "messy" sound shapes and reduced forms that further challenge learners' listening comprehension.

This is where the gap in traditional L2 learning materials becomes evident. Textbooks often dedicate minimal space to the complexities of connected speech. However, a growing body of research consistently demonstrates the significant improvements in awareness and comprehension achieved by learners who receive explicit instruction in this area (Celce-Murcia et al., 2004; Brown & Kondo-Brown, 2006). Developing strategic competence in connected speech is no longer a luxury but a necessity for L2 learners.

As Celce-Murcia et al. (2004, p. 165) highlight, the challenges posed by connected speech are more fluid. Unfamiliarity with reduced forms hinders listening comprehension and can negatively impact pronunciation. Learners fixated on clear, individual word enunciation often need help to achieve the

smooth blending essential for natural speech, resulting in a choppy delivery. This becomes even more critical when a learner's native language has completely different sound patterns.

Textbooks often leave learners unprepared to navigate these real-world linguistic phenomena. Bailey (2023, p. 102) emphasises raising awareness and providing targeted listening practice. Learners need to develop the ability to swiftly and accurately decode subtle phonetic cues for effortless comprehension. This training bridges the gap between a learner's initial exposure to language and the ability to process spoken English in real time.

My 30-day research project aimed to bridge this gap by equipping learners with practical tools for classroom practice. The focus was on sound distinction (particularly weak forms), word stress, sentence stress, and rapid speech. Initially, many participants reported difficulty keeping pace, perceiving my speech as too fast. However, as the project progressed, this became a diminishing concern, demonstrating an improvement in their ability to process and understand rapid, connected speech. I believe that educators can empower learners to understand and engage in natural spoken communication effectively through a combination of strategic teaching methodologies, consistent practice, and a heightened awareness of the phonetic and prosodic features of connected speech. Recent literature consistently highlights and endorses the effectiveness of exposing learners to diverse speech examples (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 2004). As this trims the gap between formal learning and real-world application, thus significantly enhancing listening skills.

In closing, this chapter has endeavoured to lift the veil surrounding the connected speech, the dynamic lifeblood of everyday communication and explored the significant challenges it presents for L2 learners, particularly the disconnect between textbook ideals and the realities of spoken language. However, a path forward exists. If we equipped teachers with a practical toolkit which fostered a heightened awareness of connected speech's intricacies, we could empower our learners to overcome their challenges and find sense in the jungle of spoken language. This transformation goes beyond simply understanding the complexities of connected speech; it unlocks the ability to actively participate in natural conversations, an essential skill for successful language acquisition. Let us move beyond rote memorisation and textbook exercises and, instead, embrace the richness of connected speech, empowering learners to become confident and articulate participants in the global conversation.

9. PEDAGOGICAL GAP – COURSE BOOKS

Despite the recognised importance of phonological features such as minimal pairs, word and sentence stress, previous analyses of ESL/EFL textbooks have revealed that textbooks are inadequate in presenting not only sufficient pragmatic information but also lack authentic dialogues that resemble naturally occurring conversations (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Boxer, 1993; Bowles, 2006; Nguyen, 2011; Wong, 2002). Consequently, course books often fail to address these components constructively, especially for young learners. The pedagogical materials frequently employed in language education tend to prioritise vocabulary and grammar (hard skills) over phonology's subtle yet crucial features. This oversight is particularly detrimental for young learners who are in a prime developmental phase to acquire phonological sensitivity and linguistic nuance.

Portuguese primary schools strive to cultivate a fertile ground for English language acquisition. Textbooks brim with exercises designed to nurture a love for language, building a strong vocabulary and a solid grasp of grammar. However, amidst this linguistic bounty, a crucial element seems to be fading into the background – listening skills. As Thorn (2021, p. 59) aptly observes, these resources often prioritise "comprehension practice" based on scripted recordings, leaving learners unprepared for the "listening encounters beyond the English language classroom" (Thorn, 2021, p. 59).

This pedagogical gap becomes particularly evident regarding phonology and prosody. While textbooks offer a prolific corpus of exercises to hone lexical knowledge, they often need to improve in regard to fostering aural development. My analysis, though limited, reveals a consistent problem: textbooks neglect to cultivate listening skills, which are essential for understanding the richness of English pronunciation. Furthermore, textbooks, with their meticulously structured exercises (*garden and greenhouse*), often resemble a carefully manicured garden path; however, the sanitised, sterile approach we mimic in our classrooms fails to prepare learners for the "jungle" of natural speech, characterised by informality, word reduction (think "gonna" instead of "going to"), and rhythmic variations.

Cauldwell (2013, pp.18–20) identifies a significant shortcoming in the over-reliance on the Careful Speech Model (CSM) in L2 listening instruction. Often presented in textbooks and language labs, the CSM emphasises clear pronunciation and deliberate grammar, resembling a meticulously manicured garden path (Cauldwell, 2013, pp. 14–15). While this model has its place for pronunciation teaching, it fails to capture the essence of real-world communication. As Brown (1990, p. 46) aptly describes it, the

CSM is a model "never spoken to L1 English speakers by L1 English speakers." It is a model spoken exclusively to foreigners. Therefore, Cauldwell (2013, pp. 14-15) argues that teachers need to include a "separate model of speech - a Spontaneous Speech Model (SSM) - when it comes to teaching listening." The syllabus needs to include a model which accounts for a description of the sound substance of the Jungle, capturing the "wildness, messiness and unruliness of the sound substance of everyday speech." By doing so, we are preparing students to encounter and handle the soundscapes of words confidently.

In my pedagogical practice, I have addressed this *lacuna* by integrating partial dictations and dictogloss activities to acclimatise learners to the sound systems of English as well as its several varieties. Such activities coax the auditory faculties to discern and reconstruct the spoken language, which in turn illuminates the contrasts between the phonetic landscapes of the student's mother tongue and English.

Additionally, the deployment of 'snake sentences'—an approach where the boundaries between words are blurred in a stream of continuous speech—serves as a practical tool to acquaint learners with the natural flow of English. This method is demonstrative of the **inherent "messiness" of spoken language**, a critical feature that is often sanitised in textbook content.

Figure 5 - "Snake sentences" - An example¹

7. **Look and** **write.**

There are five books on my desk. There are five books on my desk.

1) There is a rubber in my pencil case. _____

2) There are fifteen students in my class. _____

3) There is a book on the chair. _____

4) There are two notebooks on the desk. _____

EASPP © Paulo Esteves

fifty-three 53

Note: Sourced from Regina Abreu & Reis Esteves, (2024, p.53)

To further enhance phonological awareness, I have incorporated 'earworms', a technique inspired by the phenomenon of involuntary musical imagery. This approach imprints linguistic patterns onto the

¹For more examples please refer to Annex 12 and 13

learner's mind through melodic and rhythmic repetition. This strategy has shown efficacy in reinforcing word stress, intonation, and the articulation of minimal pairs.

While these strategies offer a panacea to the outlined pedagogical deficit, their necessity speaks volumes about the current state of L2 English textbooks. It is evident that to cater to the auditory dimension of language learning truly, textbooks must evolve to present learners with listening activities that mirror the organic variability of native speech. Until such a paradigm shift is universally embraced within educational materials, the onus falls upon educators to creatively bridge the chasm left by these instructional resources. Therefore, in the interim, it is the teacher who must become the "craftsman of listening" by sculpting the raw materials provided by textbooks into a form that genuinely serves the needs of the L2 learner in developing a robust, phonologically attuned command of the English language.

10. BEYOND THE GUIDELINES AND REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

The educational guidelines¹ for primary English language instruction in Portugal, as delineated in the documents for the 3rd and 4th-year curricula, adhere to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). They are crafted to foster the broad competencies set forth in the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education. These guidelines envisage a learning trajectory where, by the end of the third and fourth years, students are positioned at the A1 level of English proficiency.

Within this framework, learners are immersed in a linguistic environment that encourages the assimilation of familiar expressions and simple sentences, essential for meeting immediate needs and social exchanges. For instance, students are expected to comfortably navigate scenarios where they introduce themselves or others and interact regarding personal details such as their residence, acquaintances, and possessions. The pedagogical approach advocates for communicative simplicity, contingent on the interlocutor's clarity and patience.

This pedagogy emphasises engagement with thematic and situational areas, such as daily routines and school life, which resonate with the students' immediate experiences. An integral part of the learning process is the exposure to and practice of L2 through '*sugestão de atividades relacionadas*

¹ You will be able to find original copies of the Regulatory Documents - "Core Learning Outcomes - In articulation with the student profile" and the "Syllabus guidelines" in Appendixes **3-8**

com um evento determinado' and *'produção de um objeto, texto ou solução face a um desafio'* as specified in the guidelines (AEI - 3º ano, p. 5). This hands-on approach is designed to cement not only linguistic skills but also intercultural understanding, a vital component of the curriculum.

A particularly salient aspect of the instructional strategy is the development of listening skills, where learners are encouraged to identify words and phrases within a familiar context and follow simple instructions to carry out tasks. Oral narratives and storytelling, supported by visual and audiovisual aids, play a crucial role in facilitating comprehension and helping learners draw parallels between the language they hear and the visual context provided.

In terms of production skills, both oral and written, learners are steered towards articulating elementary personal information and preferences within structured scenarios. They are also introduced to creative linguistic expression through rhymes and songs, which serve the dual purpose of language learning and phonetic exposure. This aspect is further reinforced by *'atividades dramáticas'*, storytelling, and intercultural projects that encompass a range of auditory and visual stimuli, fostering a holistic educational experience (AEI - 4º ano, p.7).

However, despite the comprehensive nature of these educational materials, a noteworthy omission is the explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and pronunciation practice. In my opinion, the Ministry of Education needs to reassess L2 teaching in primary schools by extending English language teaching to the first and second years. In parallel, the curriculum should acknowledge recent ESL research and guidelines, thus ensuring a more systematic approach to phonics instruction and training, as its absence has left a void in the learners' ability to discern and reproduce the many sounds which comprise the English language. It is important to state that there is a significant need for the principled inclusion of bottom-up and top-down processing models, especially as phonemic awareness underpins illegibility, which is critical to the development of communicative competence.

The pedagogical strategy outlined for introducing English to third—and fourth-grade learners in Portugal reveals an immersive and contextually relevant syllabus which places a strong emphasis on listening and speaking. Indeed, the study programme¹ meticulously scaffolds listening skills, advocating for exposure to *"palavras e expressões muito simples, comunicadas de forma clara e pausada num contexto familiar"* (AEI - 4º ano, p. 5). This directive nudges students towards the understanding of spoken English through narratives and songs that are culturally enriching and educationally engaging.

¹ You will be able to find original copies of the Regulatory Documents - "Core Learning Outcomes - In articulation with the student profile" and the "syllabus guidelines" in Appendixes 3-8

For instance, young learners might listen to the clear and deliberate narration of a familiar story, thus marrying auditory comprehension with the delight of storytelling.

Pronunciation, while not explicitly highlighted in the curriculum, is interwoven into these activities. Rhymes such as "It's raining; it's pouring" or interactive language play such as "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?" introduce learners to the rhythm and phonetic structure of English, albeit indirectly. The pedagogical materials suggest that through such means, learners are expected to "identificar ritmos em rimas, lengalengas e canções em gravações áudio e audiovisuais" (AEI - 3º ano, p.5). Nonetheless, this method presumes that pronunciation will be absorbed naturally, which may not account for the marked differences between Portuguese and English phonetics. This is a classic example of how L2 is taught using methods that are better suited for L1.

Regarding speaking, the curriculum is clearly geared towards the functional use of language. The young learners are encouraged to "utilizar formas de tratamento adequadas quando se dirige ao professor ou colegas" and to engage in dialogues such as "What's your favourite drink?/Orange juice." (*Interação Oral/Spoken Interaction*, third and fourth years). These scripted interactions provide a scaffolded setting where students can practice English in a controlled manner, reinforcing the vocabulary and structures they have been exposed to in listening exercises.

The current curriculum¹ provides a strong foundation for communicating in familiar situations. However, it may only partially prepare students for the unpredictable nature of real-world conversations. There's a lack of activities specifically designed to develop phonemic awareness, a crucial skill for accurate pronunciation and distinguishing sounds. This is particularly important for sounds like the "th" in "think" and "that," which do not exist in Portuguese. Additionally, the curriculum needs to address the diverse English accents and dialects. This limitation could restrict students' ability to understand different ways of speaking the language.

In summary, the approach taken within Portuguese primary schools is commendable for its commitment to creating an engaging and relatable English-language learning environment. However, to fully equip students for the complexities of English pronunciation and spontaneous conversation, a more comprehensive strategy that includes explicit phonemic instruction and diverse listening experiences may be required. Kolb (1984) draws on what was previously said by adding that

¹ You will be able to find original copies of the Regulatory Documents - "Core Learning Outcomes - In articulation with the student profile" and the "Syllabus guidelines" in Appendixes **3-8**

experiential learning is a philosophy based on the ideals of active and reflective learning. The author's work advocates that learners develop a personal involvement with their learning experience by building on their past experiences. This would better position learners to navigate the intricacies of English pronunciation as learning becomes more meaningful, hence enhancing their ability to communicate confidently in a global context.

The English teaching syllabus in Portuguese primary schools focuses on creating engaging and contextually relevant language learning experiences. For example, in the third-grade curriculum, students are introduced to basic conversational skills within familiar themes such as greetings, personal identification, countries, nationalities, and family. They might practice saying, "Hello, my name is..." (Olá, o meu nome é...) or "This is my friend..." (Este é o meu amigo...) (AEI - 3º ano, p.5).

The documents indicate that pronunciation is expected to be acquired through engaging "rimas, lengalengas e canções ouvidos em meios áudio e audiovisuais" (AEI—3º ano, p.5), suggesting a learning-through-listening approach. Teachers might employ familiar English nursery rhymes, like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," to help students assimilate the sounds and rhythms of English.

The fourth-grade curriculum continues with structured speaking activities, where students are instructed to use appropriate forms of address with teachers and peers and engage in simple Q&A about personal preferences, as indicated by "utilizar formas de tratamento adequadas quando se dirige ao professor" and "fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspetos pessoais; perguntar e responder sobre temas previamente apresentados" (AEI - 4º ano, p.6), which may involve rehearsing dialogues such as "Thank you, Mr Silva" (Obrigado, Sr. Silva) or "My favourite colour is blue" (A minha cor favorita é azul)

Nonetheless, there is no clear evidence of direct phonemic awareness instruction or focused pronunciation drills. For example, learners may not practice the subtle distinction between the voiced 'th' in "this" and the unvoiced 'th' in "thing," which could result in pronunciation issues later on. Not to mention the difficulty Portuguese learners at this level have in articulating such sounds.

Several strategies can be implemented to address the gap in phonemic awareness training. One approach involves using minimal pairs – words that differ only by one sound, such as "ship" and "sheep." By focusing on these minimal pairs, learners can develop a heightened awareness of the distinctive sounds that differentiate words in English (Derwing et al., 2004). Tongue twisters, another

engaging technique, can help students practice the rhythm and articulation of English sounds. For example, the tongue twister "She sells seashells by the seashore" challenges learners to differentiate between the "sh" and "s" sounds.

Exposing learners to a variety of English accents can significantly improve listening skills and pronunciation. Currently, the syllabus¹ focuses on a single mode of speech. However, the exposure to various accents and regional varieties broadens students' comprehension and reduces the likelihood of them being hindered by unfamiliar pronunciations encountered in real-world settings (Jenkins, 2000).

The effectiveness of any curriculum requires ongoing evaluation and adaptation. Research plays a critical role in this process. By continuously assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum, educators and policymakers can ensure it remains aligned with best practices in L2 learning and effectively equips students with the necessary skills to thrive in a globalised world. Future research endeavours could explore the impact of incorporating dedicated phonemic awareness training and varied listening experiences on students' English pronunciation development and overall language acquisition.

The syllabus could incorporate activities that raise awareness of sounds, boundaries, and pronunciation. For example, teachers could play recordings that isolate specific sounds and encourage students to identify them. Additionally, activities that involve clapping or tapping along to the rhythm of spoken language can enhance students' awareness of prosody (stress, intonation, rhythm) (Lynch, 2008).

Furthermore, the curriculum might find greater success by prioritising bottom-up processing strategies. This approach emphasises building foundational listening skills by focusing on individual sounds and gradually progressing towards understanding larger units like words and sentences (Lynch, 2008). This aligns with the notion of scaffolding, where instruction provides the necessary support for learners to acquire more complex skills gradually. The curriculum could incorporate activities like matching spoken words to pictures or identifying rhyming words within a short listening passage.

The programme's focus on comprehension may inadvertently encourage mindless imitation of spoken English, where students attempt to replicate speech patterns without a clear understanding of the underlying sound system. This approach is unlikely to lead to successful long-term pronunciation development. The absence of dedicated "learning how to listen" activities suggests a potential missed

¹ You will be able to find original copies of the Regulatory Documents - "Core Learning Outcomes - In articulation with the student profile" and the "Syllabus guidelines" in Appendixes **3-8**

opportunity. The first years of English language instruction could prioritise building a solid foundation in sound awareness, prosody, and essential listening skills. This foundation would then provide a solid platform for progressively more complex listening comprehension activities in subsequent years.

Integrating these suggestions shall pave the way for a well-rounded listening curriculum. When learners master the foundational listening skills, they shall not only gain immediate comprehension but also develop the ability to navigate increasingly complex listening scenarios as they progress on their English learning journey.

In conclusion, the Portuguese primary school English curriculum is designed to encourage the practical use of language through familiar contexts and activities. However, this approach lacks explicit phonetic instruction, which is critical for developing clear pronunciation, especially in a language with sounds not found in the student's mother tongue. Drawing on my experience in ELT and informed by countless hours of research, I believe the current curriculum falls short by neglecting explicit instruction in connected speech, pronunciation, and principled listening models. This is no longer an acceptable oversight; it is a critical barrier to fluency. We must bridge the divide and empower learners to become confident, articulate speakers through a holistic approach to language acquisition.

CHAPTER II – APPROACHES TO LISTENING AND SPEAKING

*"The word is half his that speaks and half his that hears it."
Michel de Montaigne (1553-1592), French essayist*

This section will analyse the methodologies employed in teaching listening and speaking skills. Considering the topics previously mentioned, I aim to carefully examine research derived from applied linguistics and theory concerning the inherent characteristics of listening and speaking skills. Subsequently, we shall also explore the implications arising from these insights. The initial focus will be on listening and speaking and how these approaches have evolved.

1. LISTENING AND SPEAKING PEDAGOGY: THEN AND NOW

The evolution of teaching listening and speaking skills has undergone significant changes over time, reflecting a broadened understanding of their central role in language proficiency. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012, p.1), listening is considered a foundational skill in second language acquisition and essential for effective communication and mastery. The authors further state that "listening has become a core skill in language teaching and testing, and its importance has been recognised in recent years."

Pedagogical approaches to teaching listening have evolved considerably over the years. Initial approaches focused on mastering micro-skills, as noted by Rost (2011, p. 1), who observed that "research trends in the 1970s and 1980s were largely devoted to the study of bottom-up listening processes, the recognition of phonemes, words, and syntax". However, advancements in cognitive psychology have led to a more streamlined understanding of listening as an interpretive process, which encourages and requires the active engagement of the listener in employing strategies to facilitate, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension, incorporating theories of bottom-up and top-down processing and the role of prior knowledge and schema in comprehension. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010, p.6) concur by stating that "listening is an active process that requires the listener to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies to comprehend spoken language."

Furthermore, recent advancements in the understanding of real-time discourse and conversational analysis have highlighted the limitations of using read-aloud texts for developing listening skills.

Vandergrift and Baker (2015, p.1) argue that "authentic listening materials are essential for learners to develop the practical listening capabilities needed to understand real-world spoken discourse". Beyond comprehension, listening plays a vital role in language acquisition, fostering language awareness and the "noticing" of linguistic forms. Well-known ELT author and researcher Thornbury (2015, p.28) adds that, "noticing, the process of becoming consciously aware of the language features of input, is a key component of language acquisition".

Regarding teaching speaking, past methodologies centred on repetition, memorisation, and drills, as noted by Nunan (1989, p.10), who observed that "the focus was on the sentence as the basic unit of communication, and speaking was seen as the ability to produce error-free sentences". However, the advent of communicative language teaching in the 1980s catalysed a paradigm shift, replacing grammar-centric syllabuses with communicative frameworks emphasising notions, functions, skills, and tasks. This transition elevated fluency as a pivotal objective, advocating for authentic communication and strategic use of language for real-life interactions.

Another significant shift in language teaching has been the recognition of English as an international language. According to Byram and Grundy (2003, p.2), this has increased the emphasis on intercultural competence, expanding beyond the norms established by L1 speakers. Therefore, "the ability to communicate effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries is now recognised as a crucial aspect of language teaching and learning" (Byram & Grundy, 2003, p.2). Informed teaching practices now advocate for materials that reflect conversational dynamics and natural speech, moving away from reliance on textbook intuition.

In conclusion, the pedagogy of listening and speaking has matured significantly, aligning more closely with the principles of communicative language teaching. As Vandergrift and Baker (2015, pp.191-210) note, this approach provides learners with realistic models for listening and speaking, enhancing their preparedness for English as a Lingua Franca. The emphasis has shifted towards achieving intelligibility and effective communication across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts rather than mirroring the pronunciation and idiomatic expressions of native speakers.

2. PRONUNCIATION FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

The contemporary landscape of English language education reflects a significant shift. As English transcends national boundaries, evolving into the lingua franca of diverse backgrounds, the focus in English Language Teaching (ELT) has been transformed. The emphasis has shifted from striving for native-like accents to fostering international intelligibility, enabling effective communication across various linguistic communities, which aligns with the emergence of English as an International Language (EIL) pedagogy, which prioritises providing learners with the necessary skills to navigate intercultural communication effectively, priming them for Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Throughout history, pronunciation has played a role in communicative competence, a concept that gained prominence in the 1970s. However, the concept of pronunciation has not just evolved; it has transformed due to the 'inevitability of globalisation, which has broadened the scope of English usage' (Walker & Archer, 2024, pp. 5-28). This transformation signifies the rise of EIL, where the core principle is to cultivate the necessary language knowledge and usage for successful communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds, with pronunciation now being seen as a transformative component of this process.

Nevertheless, specific changes take time to come to fruition; Gilbert (2010, p. 1) states that "the teaching of pronunciation should not be seen as an optional extra, but as an integral part of language learning", yet pronunciation is still not part of the English Curriculum in Portugal even though it is a challenging skill to master. In fact, Walker & Archer (2024, pp. 5-28) recently published a position paper emphasising that pronunciation issues "account for a substantial proportion of communication breakdowns among L2 speakers" and underlining its vital role in achieving international intelligibility. Empirical studies advocate for targeted pronunciation training, including speaking practice and phoneme-specific exercises, as crucial for boosting learners' confidence.

The emphasis on pronunciation reflects a broader shift in ELT practice. Walker & Archer (2024, pp. 5-28) advocate for integrating focused pronunciation pedagogy within the curriculum. Far from being a peripheral skill, pronunciation is essential for enhancing learners' performance in various aspects of English proficiency, mainly spoken communication. Empirical studies advocate for targeted pronunciation training, including speaking practice and phoneme-specific exercises, as crucial for

boosting learners' confidence. Setter (2021, p.5) observes that learners with doubts about their pronunciation are reluctant to engage in speaking tasks, thereby hindering their linguistic progress.

Furthermore, the consequences of poor pronunciation extend beyond mere communicative effectiveness. They can also have a profound impact on learners' self-esteem, potentially impeding their overall language learning progress. Difficulties in articulating specific sounds and the resulting intelligibility issues can discourage learners from engaging in oral communication. To address this, educators can implement a range of simple yet effective classroom strategies to boost learners' speaking confidence, thereby enhancing their overall language learning experience.

In conclusion, the interconnectedness of the global landscape has propelled pronunciation to the forefront of ELT pedagogy. "The shift towards international intelligibility, rather than native-likeness, marks a pivotal advancement in language learning and use in the era of EIL" (Jenkins, 2000, pp. 10-12). Educators must adapt to the evolving needs of their learners by adopting approaches that improve pronunciation and empower them as confident, competent, and culturally adept communicators.

3. INTELLIGIBILITY OVER ACCENT: TEACHING ENGLISH AS L2 IN PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A significant transition has taken place in the dynamic field of English language education, particularly for young Portuguese learners. The focus has shifted from the traditional pursuit of a native-like accent to the more practical goal of international intelligibility. This shift is not just a change in approach but a reflection of the global recognition of English as a lingua franca, highlighting its usefulness across diverse linguistic contexts, not just in native environments.

Jane Setter (2021, p. 102) champions this global perspective on English, advocating for teaching strategies that foster mutual intelligibility rather than striving for native-like pronunciation: "A focus on mutual intelligibility over imitation of native accents can empower learners to use English more effectively in global contexts".

Furthermore, Jenkins (2000, p. 238) argues that "native-like pronunciation is not only an unrealistic goal for most learners, but it is also often an unnecessary one." Thus stressing the importance of focusing on practical communication skills rather than a perfect accent. Another noteworthy

consideration stated by Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 133) is the need to address accents with sensitivity within educational settings to "mitigate potential biases and foster a more inclusive learning atmosphere", which ensures that learners are assessed based on their ability to communicate effectively rather than their accent, empowering them to focus on their communication skills rather than their accent. This view, supported by Archer & Walker (2024, p.10), emphasises the importance of teaching practical aspects of pronunciation that enhance understandability and develop intercultural communicative competence, thus promoting a learner's ability to interact effectively in diverse settings.

Echoing these sentiments, Walker et al. (2021, p. 116) articulate that the modern pedagogical focus on international intelligibility offers a more inclusive and attainable goal for English learners, hence affirming that "the objective of pronunciation teaching should centre on learners achieving comprehensibility rather than imitating an elusive native norm". Concurrently, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 105) highlight the importance of considering the social context of language learning: "Pronunciation is a social phenomenon, and social considerations should inform our aims in pronunciation teaching." Therefore, practitioners need to consider the social and cultural aspects of language learning, which can significantly influence the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction.

This approach is particularly beneficial for primary school children in Portugal, as it alleviates the pressure to perfect an accent and instead encourages functional communicative skills. It is vital in contexts where young learners begin to navigate their bilingual abilities and often find the English phonemic systems challenging due to their foundational linguistic framework in Portuguese—a language with notably different phonological and orthographic systems. This shift in focus reassures educators that they are guiding their students towards a practical and attainable goal rather than an elusive native-like accent.

Integrating music and rhythm into language teaching makes learning more engaging, enhances memory retention, and aids in the development of automaticity. Segalowitz (2005, p. 88) discusses how musical stimuli can effectively facilitate the acquisition of a second language by enhancing learners' phonological processing abilities: "Musical stimuli can effectively facilitate the acquisition of a second language by enhancing the learners' phonological processing abilities" (Segalowitz, 2005, p. 88).

Using realia to demonstrate the manner of articulation and engaging experiential teaching methods are highly beneficial for further enhancing pronunciation skills. For instance, Walker, Low, and Setter (2021) highlight innovative strategies, such as using lollipops to show tongue placement for different vowel sounds (Maley & Peachey, 2015, p.89), which makes the learning process more concrete and accessible for young learners: "Employing tangible teaching aids like lollipops to show tongue placement for different vowel sounds makes the learning process more concrete and accessible for young learners" (Walker et al., 2021, p. 134). These hands-on approaches help make abstract phonetic concepts tangible and directly observable, significantly enhancing the learning experience. These methods make lessons more interactive and enable students to visualise and physically understand the mechanics of sound production, thus bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Automaticity describes the ability to process language fluently and effortlessly. Through repeated exposure and practice embedded within musical activities, learners can internalise sound patterns and pronunciation rules, leading to more natural and confident communication. For example, learners can engage in activities like singing English songs, clapping out syllable rhythms, or creating simple chants focusing on targeted sounds. These musical experiences provide a fun and engaging context for pronunciation practice, ultimately promoting fluency and reducing the cognitive load associated with speaking English.

One notable challenge in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of Latin-based languages like Portuguese is the phoneme-grapheme correspondence, which is particularly difficult in English. Young learners often struggle with distinguishing English words such as "three" and "tree," or "chip" and "cheap," and "ship" and "sheep," where subtle differences in vowel and consonant sounds can significantly alter meaning. Richard Cauldwell's concepts of "sound shapes" and "sight shapes" highlight the discordance that often arises between the phonemes (sound shapes) and their visual representations (sight shapes), illustrating how learners may pronounce "three" as "tree" because they are not yet aware of the phonemic distinction between /θ/ and /t/ in English (Cauldwell, 2018, pp. 8-15). Bailey (2020) addresses this issue by suggesting that "a strategic approach to teaching phoneme-grapheme correspondence can significantly enhance learners' pronunciation skills by clarifying the often opaque English spelling system" (Bailey, 2020, p. 130). This might involve using phonics-based instruction that explicitly teaches the sounds associated with particular letters and combinations, using visual and auditory cues to reinforce these connections.

Furthermore, the advantage that Portuguese-speaking children might theoretically hold due to the transparent orthographic nature of their language diminishes when faced with English's high phonological variability, especially at the beginner (A1-A2) and young learner levels. Effective teaching strategies that incorporate multisensory learning experiences are crucial to bridge this gap. These include interactive games that connect sounds or catchy rhythms and beats to work on fragments of authentic language, such as words, chunks or formulaic language, with particular attention to their natural rhythm.

In summary, the shift from achieving native-like pronunciation to enhancing international intelligibility represents a significant evolution in English language teaching. This approach aligns more closely with the realities of global English usage and supports a more practical and reassuring learning environment for young Portuguese learners. By centring instruction around the Lingua Franca Core and addressing specific challenges like phoneme-grapheme correspondence with tailored strategies, educators can effectively equip students with the necessary skills for successful communication in an increasingly interconnected world.

4. TEACHING LISTENING PROACTIVELY

Teachers continually seek innovative strategies to enhance speaking and pronunciation skills, leveraging a variety of recorded audio inputs that prove versatile and practical for learners at all levels. Bailey (2020) outlines several audio inputs that can be seamlessly integrated into language lessons, each serving unique purposes in the language acquisition process.

Firstly, recordings provided in published textbook materials are commonly used. These are designed to complement the learning objectives and are typically well-suited to the students' linguistic level. However, Bailey (2020, p. 125) also suggests that teachers should produce their own authentic recordings (i.e., using a conversation between friends) or encourage learners to record themselves, as this introduces a personalised element to the learning experience, making it more engaging and relevant. This could be done in class using a recording device. Students could perform a dialogue, which would then be documented on a device and later played for feedback and reflection. This approach reinforces the lesson content in a meaningful way and encourages students to actively participate in their learning journey.

Expanding the range of resources, Bailey (2020, p.128) advocates for authentic materials sourced from the Internet, radio, or television broadcasts. Unlike textbook recordings (*greenhouse and garden models*), these materials expose students to the natural rhythm and intonations of the language as it is spoken in various contexts, providing them with a more holistic understanding of its practical usage. This exposure to real-world communication, which is invariably complex and unscripted, not only offers valuable language insights but also makes the learning experience more significant as learners become aware of the *messiness* and *jungle-like* demands of real-world communication.

Bailey (2020, p. 130) recommends tailoring these authentic materials to the student's specific needs. This principled approach, which veers away from the strict definition of authenticity defined by Larimer and Schleicher (1999, p.43), is crucial as it ensures that the materials are an effective learning tool rather than an overwhelming challenge. Therefore, by modifying the content to better align with the student's proficiency levels, teachers can create a more accessible and productive learning process.

Bailey (2020, p. 134) highlights the potential of partial dictation, a technique also known as or *dictogloss*. This focused listening activity involves learners filling in missing words from a provided text based on what they hear. As Graham & Walsh (2018, p. 1) point out, the dictogloss goes beyond simply listening; it is a valuable tool that can help learners improve both their listening comprehension and speaking skills by encouraging the accurate reproduction of language. The aeroplane announcement exercise exemplifies this method. Learners actively listen for specific details like flight numbers and gate information, filling in the blanks as they hear them. This approach strengthens listening comprehension and focuses on precise pronunciation and familiarisation with spoken English's natural rhythm.

In summary, the array of audio-based activities recommended by Bailey (2020, p. 132), enriched by the rhythmic exercises of Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants, offers a comprehensive toolkit for language educators aiming to enhance their students' speaking and pronunciation skills. Practitioners can thoughtfully select and adapt these resources to foster a dynamic, immersive language learning environment. This environment, characterised by active learning and student engagement, improves linguistic abilities while enriching learners' cultural understanding. This holistic approach ensures that learning remains effective and engaging, preparing students for real-world communication in a globalised context.

5. THE LISTENING CLASSROOM: A PRACTICAL THREE-PHASE MODEL

The pre-listening stage is a cornerstone of language education, particularly in bolstering listening comprehension. This phase lays the foundation for adequate comprehension and active participation during the listening activity. Therefore, Teachers can significantly enhance the efficacy of the listening exercises by honing in on key elements such as pronunciation, target language, form and usage, and the overall meaning of the content.

Once the groundwork is set in the pre-listening stage, learners are ready to deal with the audio content. This phase unfolds in a structured manner, progressing through three key steps: initial exposure, detailed engagement, and final verification. Each step builds on the previous one, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the audio content.

First phase: Initial Exposure (Listen):

The initial listen aims to acquaint learners with the broad content and context of the audio. During this phase, the focus is on understanding the main themes and overall message without needing to grasp every detail. This exposure helps students become accustomed to the speaker's pace, accent, and background noises, setting them up for more concentrated listening later. It allows learners to adapt to the listening environment and anticipate the key pieces of information they will need to identify.

Second Phase: Detailed Engagement (Listen and Do):

During the second playback, learners direct their focus towards identifying specific details outlined during the pre-listening stage. For example, in an exercise based on a flight announcement, they would pay close attention to flight numbers, gate numbers, and scheduled departure times. This focused engagement reinforces their grasp of the language and structural elements and enhances their skill in isolating specific data from a stream of spoken content.

Third phase: Final Verification (Listen and Check):

This is the last opportunity learners have to confirm and tweak the previously collected information. This step involves being able to handle information presented in several ways. Learners need to be

able to check the accuracy of their notes and make the necessary changes. This process ensures the assimilation of the target language or information as learners check their initial expectations against what they heard. This is a dynamic part of the learning process and ensures reliance on their listening abilities, which are crucial for real-world applications.

Post-listening Phase: Consolidation, Feedback, and Metacognition

The post-listening phase in language learning is crucial for reinforcing and deepening learners' understanding of the material covered. This stage provides targeted feedback on pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary choices, which is essential for correcting and refining language skills. Lazaraton (2014, p. 144) emphasises the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction, especially when it is integrated with context and includes feedback as part of a comprehensive listening strategy.

Additionally, the post-listening phase offers a thorough analysis of language use through the language focus phase, which can involve teacher observations, learners' recollections, or recordings from earlier tasks. Willis and Willis (2001, p. 178) describe this stage as an opportunity "for deeper and more systematic study of the task cycle."

On the other hand, assessment during the post-listening phase is critical. Bailey & Curtis (2015, p. 226) differentiate between assessment types, noting that assessment for learning "aims to determine the learners' progress based on their needs, with a focus on feedback from the teacher." This formative approach supports proactive student learning in contrast to traditional summative assessments. Swain (2005, p. 476) considers that "research has shown that learners do modify their output in response to such conversational moves as clarification requests or confirmation checks." As seen before, this indicates that feedback actively engages learners in re-evaluating and refining their language use.

Lastly, the potential of feedback to motivate and inspire learners is significant. Bailey (2020, p. 202) reflects, "Giving our students feedback on how they can improve and encouraging them to interact frequently in the target language can be highly motivating and can lead to language development." This observation highlights the dual role of feedback as both a corrective tool and a motivator, essential for effective language learning.

Integrating comprehensive feedback strategies and incorporating a metacognition phase into the post-listening phase ensures that students understand and apply the language skills they acquire meaningfully and authentically.

5.1 INTEGRATING PARTIAL DICTATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Partial dictation is a powerful educational tool in language learning designed to improve attentive listening skills and precise comprehension. This technique proves particularly effective in scenarios where learners are required to understand and remember specific details from spoken information. As Bailey and Curtis (2015, p. 34) illustrate using a practical example, partial dictation can be effectively applied in real-world contexts, enhancing both the learning experience and the utility of language skills in everyday situations.

Consider a classroom exercise simulating an airline announcement: "Flight seven-forty-six to Singapore will depart from gate seventy-three at nine-thirty p.m." In this scenario, the educator omits key information—such as gate numbers and departure times—from the recording. Students are tasked with listening carefully and filling in these blanks, focusing on sharpening their listening comprehension. Additionally, the exercise helps develop inferencing skills essential for processing spoken language in real-time environments. Michael Rost (2016, p. 56) emphasises the importance of inferencing in listening comprehension, stating that listeners must "draw relevant inferences repeatedly before comprehension can continue."

In partial dictation, learners practice this skill by deducing missing information, effectively "filling in missing parts of a text or adding reasoning processes to make sense of a text" (Rost, 2016, p. 288). This task mirrors real-world listening scenarios where individuals must often infer details not explicitly stated. Partial dictation challenges learners to focus on listening for specific information and accurately transcribing numerals, which can be particularly tricky in a second language due to similar sounding numbers and words (bottom-up processing). Bailey and Curtis (2015, p. 34) suggest enhancing the realism of these exercises by assigning students specific flights to track, thereby simulating how travellers selectively listen to announcements pertinent to their journeys.

John Field (2008, p. 276) advocates for listening exercises that simulate meaningful, authentic and relevant scenarios, as these are more likely to engage learners and help strengthen the phonological loop, enabling them to hold more in their auditory memory. As seen before, learners become more engaged when participating in activities which integrate real-life situations, such as airport announcements directly related to hypothetical travel plans. Their heightened interest in the activity maximises enjoyment and makes the learning experience more effective and enjoyable. The airline announcement example elegantly exemplifies how partial dictation is an engaging and effective teaching strategy, markedly boosting language proficiency. Through its strategic implementation, partial dictation endows students with valuable competencies, ensuring their applicability extends far beyond the academic environment.

Moreover, young learners' age range makes them particularly receptive to engaging and interactive learning activities. Simulating real-life scenarios, such as airport announcements, captures their interest and motivates them to participate actively. This approach makes the learning process enjoyable and deeply ingrains the skills being taught, enhancing the likelihood of students retaining the information.

The practical application of partial dictation, such as tracking specific flights, turns abstract listening skills into tangible tasks that students find understandable and relevant. This connection to real-life scenarios highlights the importance of these exercises, effectively preparing learners to navigate language complexities in everyday settings. Therefore, partial dictation enriches the educational experience and equips students with crucial skills far beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, partial dictation in young learner classrooms is not only practical but profoundly beneficial across various dimensions of language acquisition. This technique leverages young students' natural dynamism and curiosity, making it an ideal fit for their energetic learning style. Partial dictation effectively utilises bottom-up processing strategies by focusing on specific details such as numerals and essential words. This approach encourages learners to pay close attention to phonemic details and nuances, thus significantly enhancing their phonemic awareness.

CHAPTER III – RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS, AND METHODOLOGY.

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow." – John Dewey.

1. BASELINE DATA

This chapter describes how the research project was applied. I implemented this research project on two groups of third-year students, each comprising 24 individuals. The decision to carry out this research project with two groups stemmed from the intention to compare their outcomes, ensuring a robust analysis of the results. At the onset of the observation period, a needs analysis was conducted for both groups to tailor the study to their specific requirements.

Both groups reside in a small coastal town adjacent to a larger city; however, Group X faced significant challenges in various aspects of Listening. These challenges directly impacted their pronunciation and decoding abilities, primarily because these students were accustomed to listening for meaning rather than focusing on speech sounds. This discovery marked the beginning of the research, highlighting the necessity to address specific issues and develop effective strategies to aid students' learning process.

The learning environment for students in Group X was complex, as many came from low to medium-income families with limited support at home and numerous responsibilities beyond schoolwork. These children faced additional hurdles, often living with a single parent and spending long hours at school due to their early arrival and late departure. Working collaboratively and analysing language was unfamiliar, but their eagerness to participate in activities involving movement, rhythm, and song provided helpful information for creating effective educational interventions.

Conversely, the second group, Group Y, exhibited a markedly different profile. Despite being in the same academic year, these students showed greater maturity, concentration, and language abilities. This was evident after conducting a needs analysis, which revealed that most students from this group came from medium to high-income families with academically accomplished parents. This background offered them more substantial support at home and well-established study habits. Unlike Group A, Group B encountered fewer difficulties in listening comprehension and were adept at decoding messages and grasping meanings from context. Their pronunciation issues were minimal,

and they demonstrated superior phonemic awareness. The stark contrast between the two groups underscored the importance of customising teaching approaches to meet the varied needs of students, setting the stage for the research project's interventions and strategies.

Considering the scope of my analysis and objectives, and after a careful review of related literature, it was apparent that I would have to adopt an action-research methodology as I would be basing my analysis on

2. INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

As classroom educators who frequently benefit from educational research, it is essential to grasp core concepts and basic terminology within this field. Research is one of the diverse strategies that humans use to find answers to their questions (Mertler, 2017, pp. 4-6). Educational research stands out from traditional research because it focuses on studying people, settings, or programs. A myriad of personal and professional questions continually surface throughout our workday; hence, the use of educational research to improve our working environment is essential.

Stenhouse (in Rudduck, 1988, p.35), who saw "teachers as the single most important factor in the task of revitalising schools", highlights the crucial role of teachers as agents of change, stating that curriculum projects should enhance teachers' professional learning, allowing them to test theories directly in their classrooms. This philosophy resonates deeply with the action research framework, which positions educators as central figures in the transformative process of educational environments. Further emphasising the critical role of education, Aronowitz and Giroux (1985, p.6) advocate for schools as places of critical education where students are guided towards reasoned and responsible autonomy rather than being programmed to behave in predetermined ways. This perspective underpins the necessity for educational research to foster a public sphere of citizens capable of controlling their own lives, particularly in knowledge acquisition.

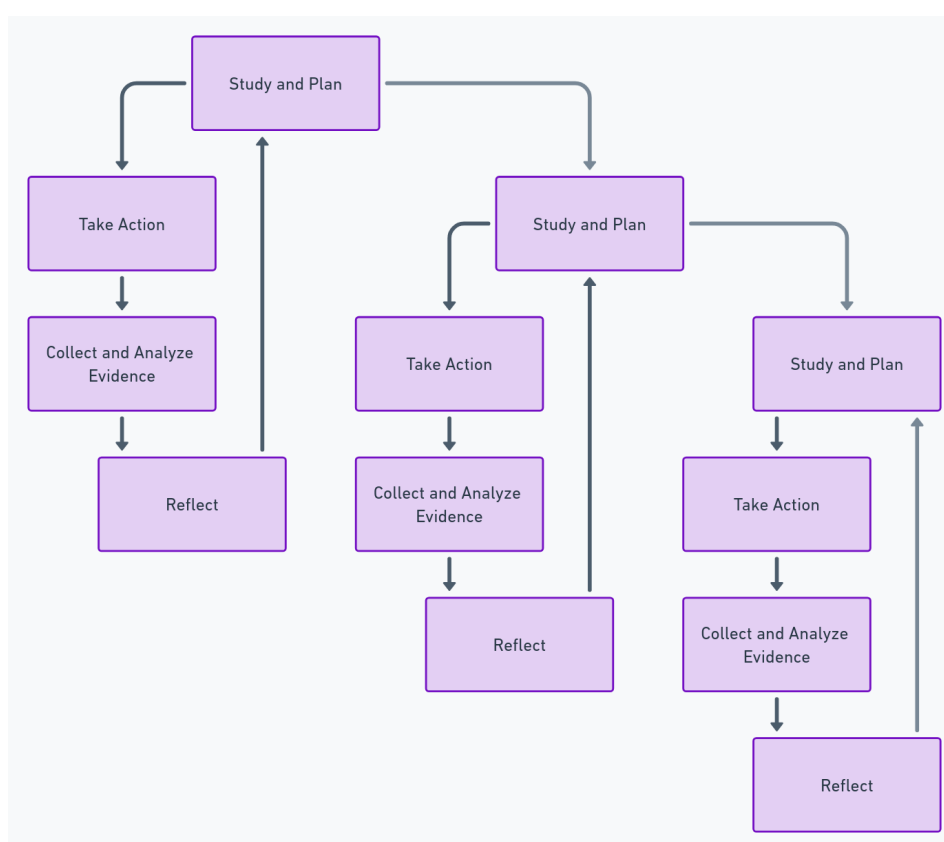
2.1 CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITATIONS OF ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Action research is widely acknowledged as an effective method for educational practitioners dedicated to improving their practices and the overall academic landscape. This approach, characterised by a

pragmatic and cyclical process, involves educators in reflective and active phases that significantly influence teaching effectiveness and student learning.

In selecting a research model for my educational inquiry, I gravitated towards a hybrid approach that combines Bachman's action research spiral with Riel's action research model. This choice was rooted in the preparatory phase of my research, where I engaged in an extensive observation period lasting over a month. This prolonged observation allowed me to immerse myself fully in the classroom environment, identifying specific issues and challenges that needed addressing.

Figure 6 - A hybrid approach to Bachman's action research spiral with Riel's action research model.



Note: Adapted from pp.16-17 in Mertler, C. A. (2017). *Action research: improving schools and empowering educators*. Sage Publications.

Bachman's model, with its emphasis on cyclical planning, action, and reflection, provided a robust framework for iterative development. Simultaneously, Riel's model added depth by focusing on the systematic collection and analysis of evidence, ensuring that data supported each phase of action. This methodological synergy facilitated a deeper understanding of the classroom dynamics and enhanced the effectiveness of the implemented interventions, thus directly impacting student

outcomes. Additionally, monitoring learner outcomes¹ was critical, as it provided concrete metrics to gauge the impact of interventions and refine approaches accordingly.

On the other hand, observing changes in learner engagement, comprehension, and overall academic performance became central to evaluating the success of each action cycle, allowing continuous refinement of practices aimed at improving educational results. Additionally, anticipating potential problems and developing proactive solutions was crucial, as noted by Kemmis *et al.* (2014, p. 182), who argue that "effective action research involves not only responding to unforeseen consequences but also anticipating barriers and preparing practical responses." This foresight enriches the action research process, ensuring it is dynamically informed and responsive to the complexities of real-world educational settings.

Stenhouse (1975, p.208) echoed Halsey's (1972, p. 165) reflections tied closely to this approach when he noted, "It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it." This statement highlights that educators adjust and deeply understand their environment through a detailed approach to action research, which is crucial for driving significant and lasting change.

Regarding problem-solving within educational contexts, action research stands out for its ability to incorporate change fundamentally, as noted by Mertler and Charles (2011, p. 5). This method empowers educators by involving them directly in research, enabling them to test and adapt educational theories in real-world classroom settings. Johnson (2008, p. 7) highlights that action research facilitates a "two-way flow of information" where theory informs practice and observations from practice feedback into theoretical understandings.

The iterative cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting is a core characteristic of action research. This cyclical nature ensures that teaching practices are continually assessed and modified, leading to sustained improvements. McMillan (2004, p. 9) describes this process as "focused on solving a specific classroom or school problem, improving practice, or helping make a decision at a single local site."

Despite its benefits, action research comes with limitations that educators must consider. The potential for bias is significant, as the researchers are also the practitioners. Mertler and Charles (2011, p. 339) caution that the subjective nature of the educator's involvement might affect the objectivity of the findings. Moreover, the scope of action research is typically confined to small-scale studies, which

¹ Please refer to the Lesson plans found in the annexes where you shall be able to find example of student outcomes linked to the research questions.

may not readily generalise to other contexts or broader educational settings. Another challenge refers to time and resource constraints. Conducting action research requires a substantial commitment, which can be taxing for practitioners already burdened with heavy workloads. As Schmuck (1997, p. 28) points out, "(...) action research is not the usual thing that teachers do when thinking about teaching; it is more systematic and more collaborative," indicating that its rigorous nature may deter some educators from engaging in such studies.

The selection of specific action research models can influence its effectiveness and applicability. For instance, Stringer's (2007, p. 8) "look, think, and act" model offers a straightforward framework particularly suitable for educators new to action research. This model simplifies the research process into manageable stages, reducing the complexity often associated with more elaborate research designs. Conversely, Kurt Lewin's model (Smith, 2007, p. 3), which includes fact-finding, planning, action, and evaluation, provides a more detailed roadmap for conducting action research. This model is beneficial for addressing more complex educational problems, where each phase requires careful consideration and rigorous evaluation.

My initial belief and research found that although action research represented a robust framework for educational improvement, as it was characterised by its cyclicity, reflective nature, and practitioner involvement, it had limitations. Some, such as potential biases and resource demands, had to be carefully managed; hence, my emphasis laid on the selection of appropriate models in order to leverage the strengths of this hybrid approach to foster meaningful changes in both my teaching practice and student outcomes¹, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience.

3. RESEARCH PLAN DEVELOPMENT: MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

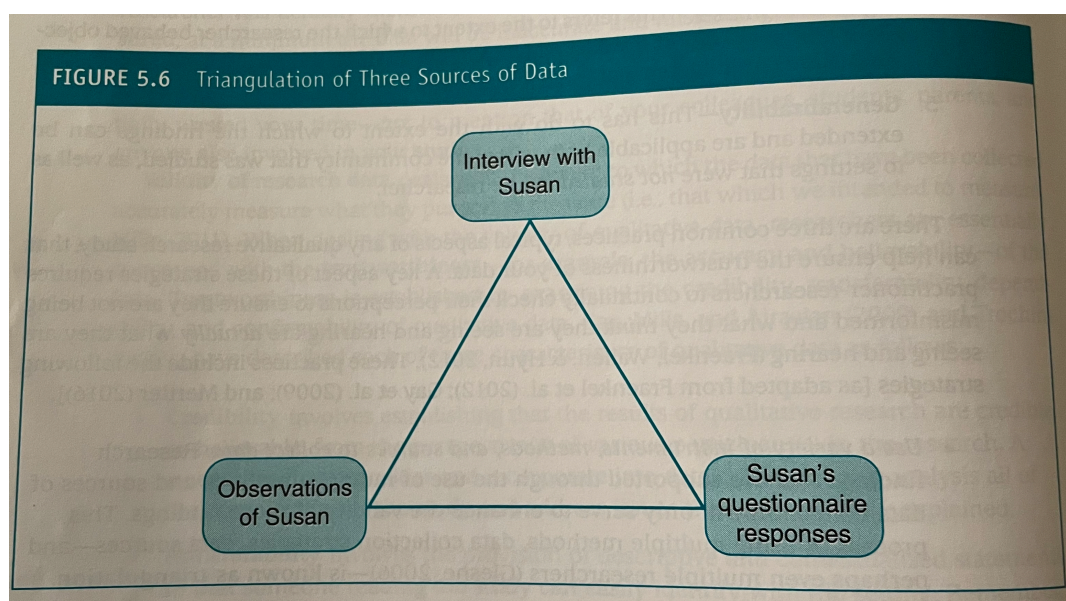
In my research practice, I employed reflective teaching and triangulation mixed-methods designs, giving equal emphasis to both qualitative and quantitative data to bolster the validity and reliability of my findings. This integrated approach allowed me to secure a comprehensive understanding of educational phenomena, ensuring that my interpretations were robust and credible.

Triangulation as seen by the example illustrated by Figure 7, is key in mixed-methods research as it employs various data sources and methods to validate findings. As Ivankova (2015, p. 204) notes,

triangulation " is supported by integrating different measures of it [the phenomenon] that tend to agree with each other or do not directly contradict each other." To gather a well-rounded understanding, I employed various research tools: observations, interviews, lesson plan analysis, video/audio recordings with transcripts, and pre-and post-tests. This diversity, as Hubbard and Power (2003, p. 147) suggest, strengthens the credibility of my findings. By using multiple data sources, I ensured that the evidence supported my research questions.

The process of obtaining informed consent is crucial in research to respect the privacy and autonomy of participants. As noted by Mills (2011, p. 102), "intentionally deceiving your participants should be avoided at all costs; there is no place for deception in action research." This ethical commitment was foundational in my approach, ensuring that participants were thoroughly informed about the research's aims, their involvement, and the data utilisation. This transparency helped maintain the integrity of the research process and ensured voluntary and informed participation.

Figure 7 - Triangulation of 3 sources of data



Note: Retrieved from Mertler, C. A. (2017, p. 142). Action research: improving schools and empowering educators. Sage Publications.

Reflective teaching was a core strategy in my research methodology. As Glesne (2006, p. 34) emphasises, spending a substantial amount of time "in the field" is critical in research using qualitative data. I engaged in various reflective practices such as informal conversations, hot feedback moments, colleague reflections, and detailed observations. Additionally, I utilised continuous assessments

through lesson plans, videos, audio, and transcripts, which provided a deep, rich dataset for analysis. This rigorous reflective practice allowed me to critically evaluate and refine my teaching strategies, promoting an ongoing cycle of improvement.

4. EXPLORING RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

In this section, I relate the research questions and objectives that have shaped the trajectory of my study. Based on a 30-day observation period conducted in October 2023, these questions target specific challenges and gaps within the existing academic corpus and regulatory documents my research seeks to address. The objectives, identified through the same reflective process, stand as benchmarks for assessing the progress and impact of my work.

Each question and corresponding objective were carefully considered and crafted to ensure that they are theoretically robust and practically oriented. As Thompson (2006, p. 47) aptly noted, the inquiries which stem from classroom observation should bridge the gap between intellectual curiosity and tangible outcomes. Echoing this sentiment, McNiff (2017, p. 89) emphasises that "action research is about working towards practical outcomes, and also about 'creating new forms of understanding, since action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless.'" With this dual focus, I have constructed my objectives; they not only pursue academic enlightenment but are also deeply rooted in the reality of application.

The discussion that follows lays the groundwork for the data analysis section, providing a comprehensive explanation of how each objective was pursued. Drawing upon past observations and projections for future inquiry, I have developed this blueprint to reflect the methodological approach on which my research is based, ensuring my study remains academically robust and directly applicable to educational practice.

Figure 8 – Research Questions and Objectives

Research questions	Objectives/Area of focus statements
How do targeted listening activities influence the development of phonemic awareness in learners?	The study aims to design and assess targeted listening activities which focus on phonemic acquisition, aiming to enhance learners' pronunciation and phonemic awareness.
How can a guided approach incorporating top-down and bottom-up processing improve learners' comprehension of spoken discourse?	This study aims to develop and apply strategies rooted in top-down and bottom-up processing to heighten learners' auditory comprehension, thereby creating an environment conducive to second language acquisition.
In what ways can the integration of listening tasks with speaking tasks offer learners opportunities to observe and understand language usage in diverse contexts?	This study aims to implement active listening strategies within the instructional framework, enhancing learners' ability to decode messages and directly influencing their spoken language proficiency.

As mentioned earlier, I have always been interested in Listening and Pronunciation. I have spent a good part of my teaching career helping my students, whether in multilingual or monolingual environments, develop strategies to overcome their difficulties in these skills. Whenever a new school year commences, I conduct a needs-analysis session to discuss each learner's aims and objectives, difficulties, expectations, reasons for wanting to learn or improve their language skills, and an estimated timeframe for achieving a specific aim. Many learners identified listening, speaking, and pronunciation as their most significant vulnerabilities. They often shared their frustration in being unable to find and employ adequate strategies to overcome such challenges. During these discussions, many students shared that their feelings about English and their confidence in specific skills often tied back to their previous experiences at school and with English teachers. Some recalled a damaging incident, others mentioned their shy and reserved nature, and some felt they struggled with languages. In every instance, I saw it as my duty to reassure them of their abilities while captivating them with the beauty of the English language and gradually reducing their *affective filter*. (Krashen, 1982, pp. 30-33)

I have taught in a private language school for six years. I teach various ages and levels, from absolute beginners (A1 – kiddies, juniors and adults) to proficient (C1 & C2) language learners seeking an international certificate. Similarly, my students differ in age; the youngest group is four or five and the oldest group (in their sixties). As for the reasons learners attend classes at my school, they are usually related to maintaining a high grade at school, obtaining an international certificate (such as Cambridge)

or for professional reasons; many want to improve in order to get a promotion, others are taking English lessons for fringe benefit. The reasons why learners learn a language are significant, as there is a direct correlation between being forced to learn a language and doing it for fun.

Throughout these past six years, my learners consistently complain about their listening tests and difficulties (especially at an A1-A2 level). There are a few complaints which never change: the terrible sound quality, as sound is often muffled and coarse as it comes from the projector speaker; the rapid speech, vocabulary – they do not recognise the words, not enough time to complete the task, focus on comprehension, they are only allowed to listen to the recording twice, background noise is also an issue as well as lack of confidence and anxiety. Learners approach the test feeling defeated. They sit the test believing they will get a low grade or perhaps fail. According to them, listening practice activities are rarely conducted in class, inevitably resulting in gap-fills or comprehension questions which mimic summative assessment moments.

I have always struggled to comprehend how one can master a skill without being exposed and taught how to master such a skill. Listening is a foundational skill upon all the others (Speaking, Reading and Writing) built, as seen in Chapter I. Ignoring such a premiss is ignoring the groundwork on which any language is based. Listening needs to play a central role in language development as it is a critical receptive skill that directly impacts two major productive skills: Speaking and pronunciation.

5. ANALYTICAL DATA: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter is going to provide quantitative evidence of the data collected over a month at a public primary school in the Aveiro District. During this study, I worked with two groups of third-year students, henceforth named 3X and 3Y, each comprising 24 individuals who participated in two assessment moments. The first assessment phase was equivalent to a needs analysis. I observed that learners struggled with the pronunciation of specific minimal pairs and word stress and were not used to bottom-up process activities in L2. I had already found that there was a lapse in activities and practice in this field in their textbook, and after deciding on my research questions and objectives¹, I got to work. Learners were given a "Pre-Test²", which focused on minimal pairs and common difficulties Portuguese learners exhibit in L2. Each learner got a worksheet with five pairs of pictures, from minimal pairs to plurals and singular sentences such as /tea/ and /bee/; /peach /and /beach/; "there is a fox in a box" or "there are foxes in boxes". I would then enunciate the sentences at a natural speed

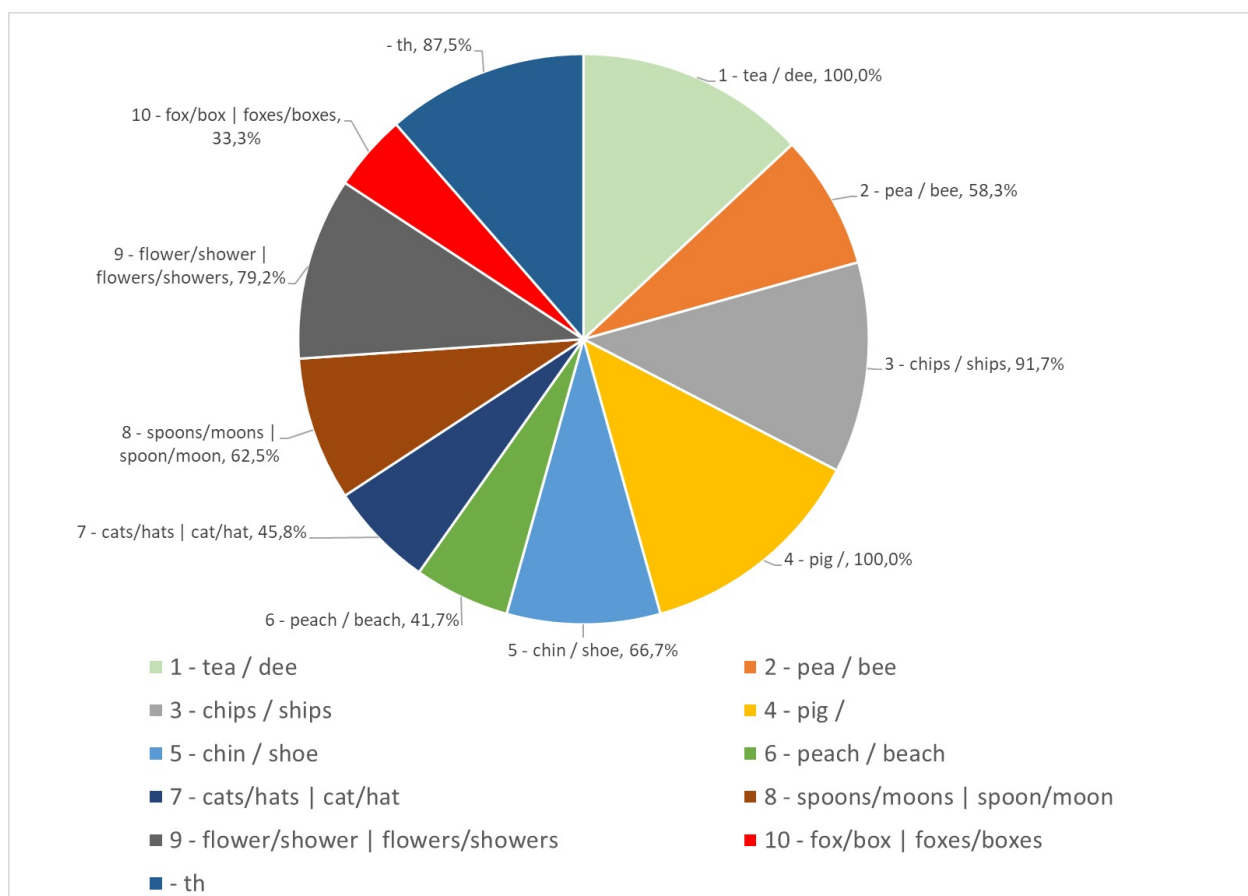
of delivery. I did not pre-teach the target language and counted on the learners' world and background

¹ Please refer to p.62

² Please refer to p.109

knowledge to be able to complete the task. The results are as follows:

Figure 9 – Pre-test – Group 3X

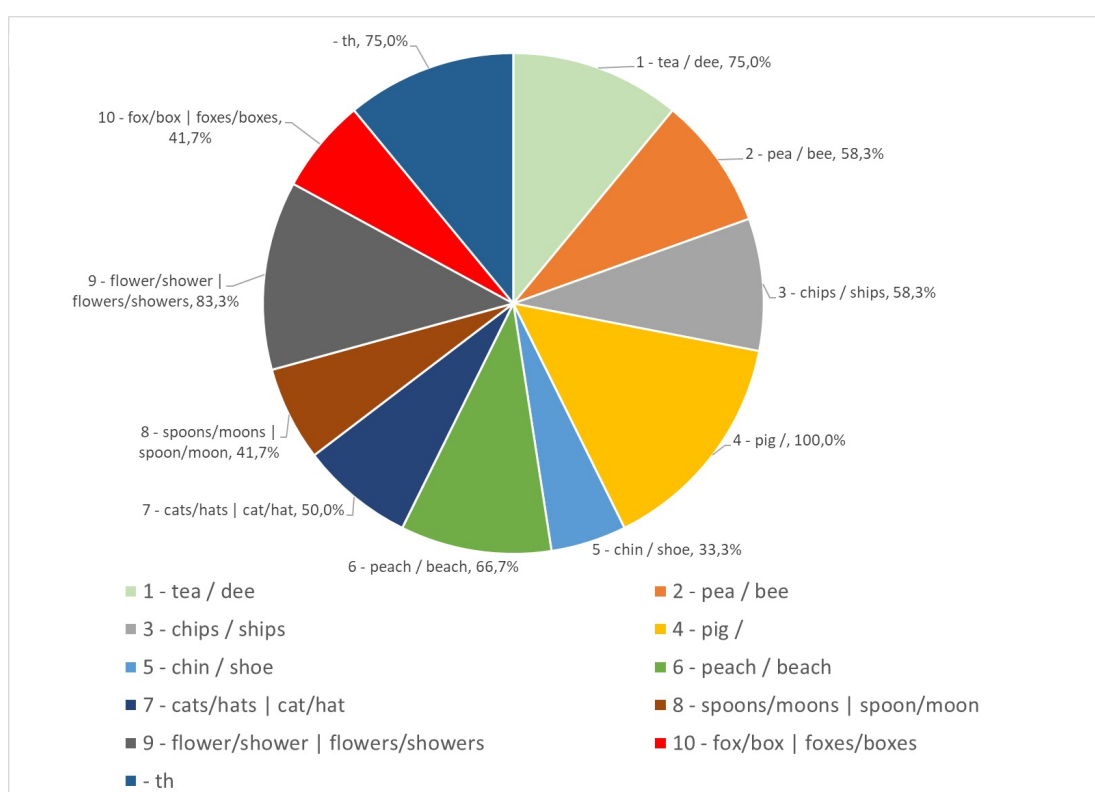


As we can see from the pie chart above (Figure 9), 3X struggled most with plural and singular statements, as some results were below 50%. For instance, sentences 10 – 33.3% had the most incorrect answers, followed by statements 8 – 62,5% and 7- 45.8. These statements refer to plural sentences such as "There is a fox in a box" and "There are foxes in boxes," "There is a spoon on the moon", "There are spoons on the moon," "There is a flower in the shower" and "there are flowers in the shower. This could indicate that learners had difficulty in recognising the pronunciation variation in regular and irregular plurals as these patterns are substantially different in their L1. Students might have also needed help understanding my accent as they were still getting used to having me teach the sessions.

Learners from Group 3X struggled with minimal pairs, particularly pairs 6 (41.7% accuracy), 2 (58.3% accuracy), and 5 (66.7% accuracy). These pairs, like "peach-beach," "pea-bee," and "chin-shoe," involve sounds that appear similar. This difficulty likely stems from L1 interference. Since Portuguese lacks the /tʃ/ sound (as in "chin"), learners might misinterpret the /ʃ/ sound (similar to "sh") in English.

Another interesting consideration is that learners struggle to distinguish between minimal pairs such as "tea-dee", "chips-ships", "peach-beach", "pea-bee", and "chin-shoe." This could suggest that the learners were unable to distinguish the chips-ships" and "chin-shoe" pairs because their L1, being Latin-based, does not have the [Tch] sound. Learners usually use the L2 [ch] and [sh] interchangeably.

Figure 10 - Pre-test - Group 3Y



Group 3Y, as seen in Figure 10, had different struggles. Unlike Group 3X, they mainly had trouble with how words change sounds when you add an "s" for plural (e.g., box vs boxes). Therefore, Group 3Y battled with plural forms, particularly pair 10 (41,7% accuracy), which had the most incorrect answers, followed by statements 8 (41,7% accuracy) and 7 (50,0% accuracy). These statements refer to plural sentences such as "There is a fox in a box" and "There are foxes in boxes," "There is a spoon on the

moon", "There are spoons on the moon," "There is a flower in the shower" and "there are flowers in the shower. As indicated in the previous group, this could suggest that learners had difficulty in recognising the pronunciation variation in regular and irregular plurals as these patterns are substantially different in their L1.

Another interesting conclusion is that 3Y also struggled with plural and singular forms. However, most results were above 50%. For instance, sentences 5 - 33,3% accuracy, followed by statements 2 - 58,3% and 5- 58,3% accuracy. The problems with pairs like "peach-beach" and "pea-bee" continued. As seen in the previous graph, these pairs involve sounds that appear similar. This difficulty likely stems from L1 interference. On the other hand, since Portuguese lacks the /tʃ/ sound (as in "chin"), learners might misinterpret the /ʃ/ sound (similar to "sh") in English.

The fact that I conducted this analysis provided conclusive evidence that learners found pronouncing specific L2 sounds quite challenging. I can mention a few examples, such as /three/ was confused by /tree/, /cheese/ became /sneeze/. There was an instance where I realised that the 3X learners were even unable to hear specific sound changes, as they were unable to recognise the difference between long and short vowel sounds as found in "sheep and ship"; "cheap and chip". My goal was then to provide learners with practice in articulating sounds (raising awareness towards mouth movements and manners of articulation) and voicing the words using a variety of different drills which used catchy rhythms.

In addition to this, I believe that we need to support our learners as much as possible during this process, as it is quite intense. Learners are being exposed to information they have never encountered before, and therefore, it is essential to remain mindful of learners' limitations and feelings. Although I do privilege English in the YL classroom, I resort to the learners' L1 during these activities as I find it lowers the learners' affective filter and helps them recognise the differences in how each language articulates sounds.

I explained that these pairs were just words where one sound could change, altering its meaning, and offered examples in their L1. This helped students practice pronouncing these pairs in both English and Portuguese and exemplified the way our mouths and tongues (articulation) move according to the sounds we are making. We would also analyse how air flowed or was interrupted depending on the word we were saying. Students really enjoyed these practical activities and often provided positive feedback after the session.

After 30 days, I conducted another test to gauge how much learners had benefited from this experiment. Learners were given a worksheet¹ on the [sh] and [ch] sounds, and they would have to circle the correct picture according to the word I said. Learners had already practised these minimal pairs extensively and had grown in confidence and ability to recognise sounds more autonomously. After class, I would often have a little chat with the students' head L2 teacher, and she would usually say that she found that some learners' pronunciation had changed. I attribute this to the fact that learners were being exposed to targeted authentic listening activities, which aimed at improving their overall intelligibility and pronunciation.

The last test delivered exceptionally positive results. Again, I did not teach the target language, and I trusted that the learners would be able to overcome the challenge. They did, with flying colours. Nonetheless, the results could have been better if I had anticipated specific difficulties, such as learners choosing not to choose a particular picture because they did not know what the word meant. Group 3X performed exceptionally well, and the results were outstanding. This group greatly benefited from the use of an integrative listening approach, which acknowledged that listening comprehension relies on processing the sounds we hear (bottom-up) and drawing on our existing knowledge and expectations (top-down). This activity aimed at assessing if learners were able to recognise the difference in [ch] and [sh] in order to identify and match the visual representation to its aural counterpart.

Figure 11 – Test – Group 3X – [ch]¹

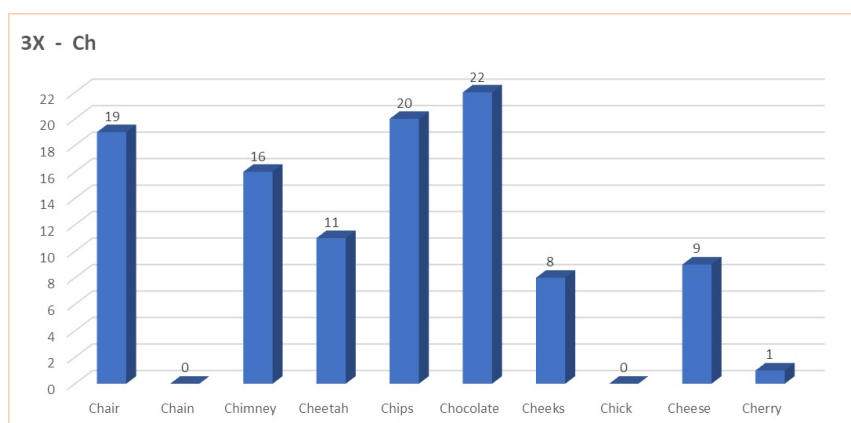
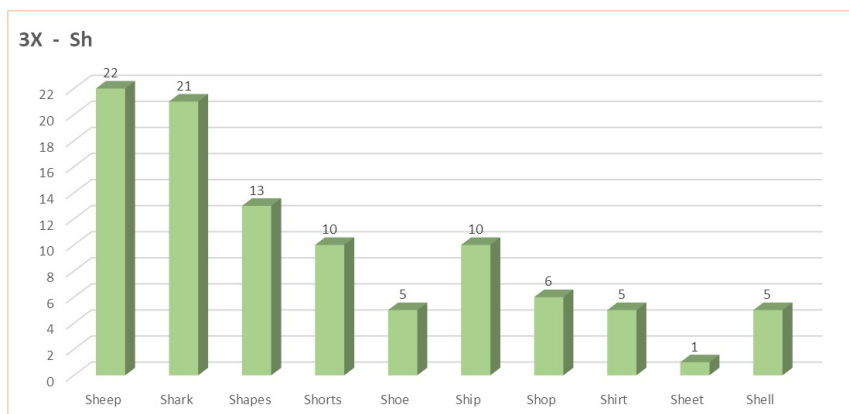


Figure 12 – Test – Group 3X – [sh]¹

When comparing the graphs side by side (Figures 11 and 12), much like the layout in the test worksheet, it becomes evident that Group 3X demonstrated a strong ability to recognise words with the [sh] sound. Specifically, "Sheep" and "Shark" garnered the most correct responses, indicating a firm

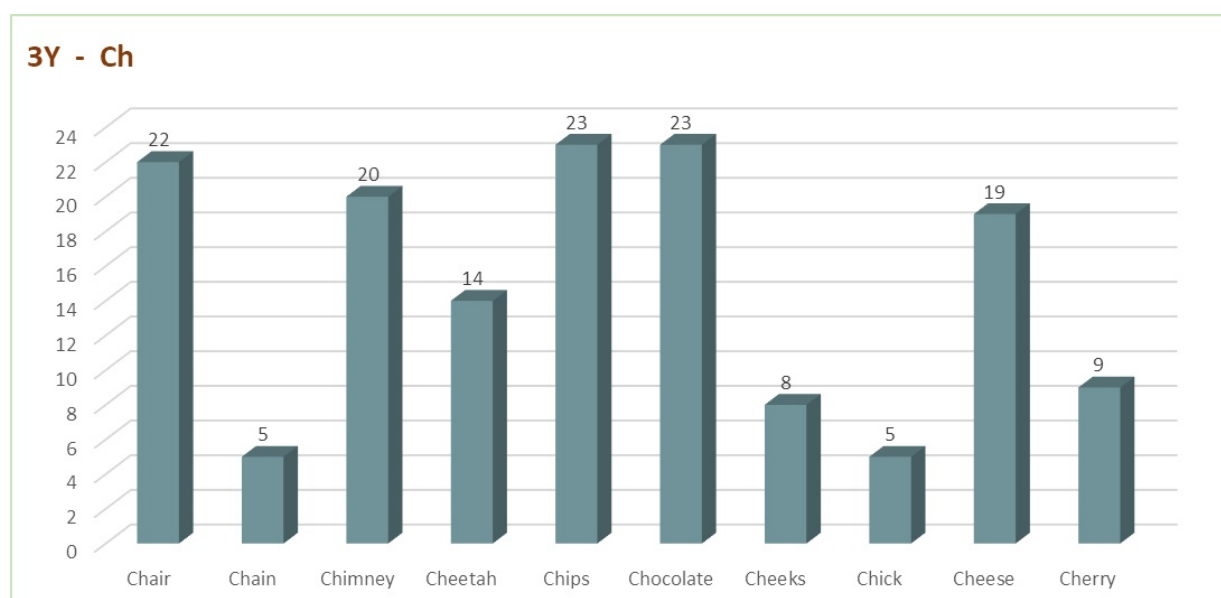
¹For more information on the Test, please refer to pp.110-111.



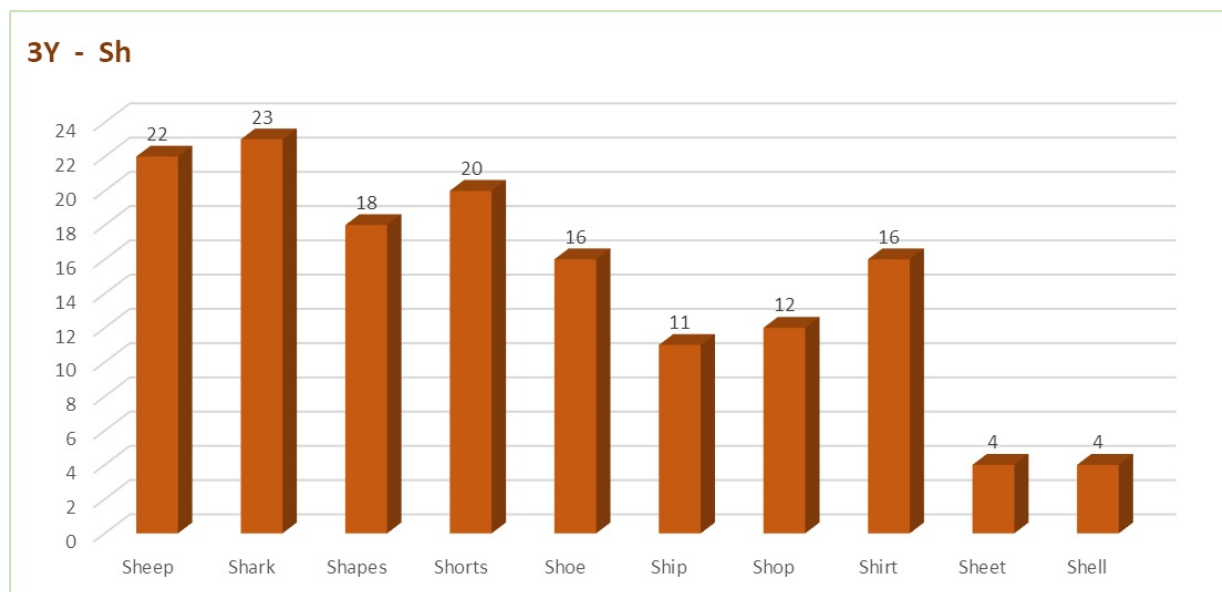
understanding of this phoneme. This could be due to the frequent exposure to these words in everyday settings. "Shapes" also yielded a satisfactory level of recognition. However, "Shirt" and "Sheet" elicited a significantly lower response rate. This discrepancy might be partially explained by my accent or the unfamiliarity of the word "sheet" for the learners.

Moving on to the [ch] phoneme, as seen in Figure 13, "Chips" and "Chocolate" were the most recognisable words. This likely reflects a familiar presence in children's environments, facilitating memorisation. Conversely, "Chair," "Chain," and "Chick" yielded very few correct responses, indicating an apparent difficulty with these words. Interestingly, "chair" is a familiar word to the learners. The lower performance on "Chain" and "Chick" might be due to unfamiliarity with the vocabulary itself rather than the sound association. Nevertheless, the lack of recognition for "Chair" and "Chain" is noteworthy and aligns with the previously identified challenge – the absence of a similar sound (like "tch") in their native language (L1).

Figure 13 – Test – Group 3Y – [ch]¹



¹ For more information on the Test, please refer to pp.110-111.

Figure 14 – Test – Group 3Y – |sh|¹

As seen above, in Figure 14, the columns are placed in parallel in order to visualise both graphs as an organic sequence of the same activity. Group '3Y' demonstrated a similar pattern to their cohorts in their recognition of |sh| sounds, with 'Sheep' and 'Shark' once again observed as the most frequently identified words. This recurrence underscores a consistent comprehension of the |sh| phoneme across different cohorts. 'Ship' and 'Shop', however, displayed a moderate recognition, with 'Shop' showing an exciting variance from the '3X' group, suggesting a differentiated learning trajectory or instructional impact.

Concerning the |ch| phoneme, 'Chips' and 'Chocolate' were the most accurately identified words, mirroring the '3X' results and reinforcing the notion that these terms are more deeply ingrained in the children's lexicon. The term 'Chair' received a fraction of the recognition, which, while minimal, is an improvement over the '3X' group's results. Still, this modest increase indicates that the |ch| phoneme remains a hurdle for learners, one that requires continued educational focus.

In both cohorts, specific terms consistently elicited higher recognition rates, suggesting effective teaching strategies or intrinsic ease with these phonemes. In contrast, words that garnered fewer correct identifications may signal that those terms were unfamiliar to learners or that they needed help recognising the visual representation of what I had said.

To sum up, seeing learners' progress was very rewarding, and I am proud of their achievements. However, even better results might have been possible with a more extended implementation period. This would have allowed for more practice and consolidation of the learned sounds. Upon reflection, I

¹ For more information on the Test, please refer to pp.110-111.

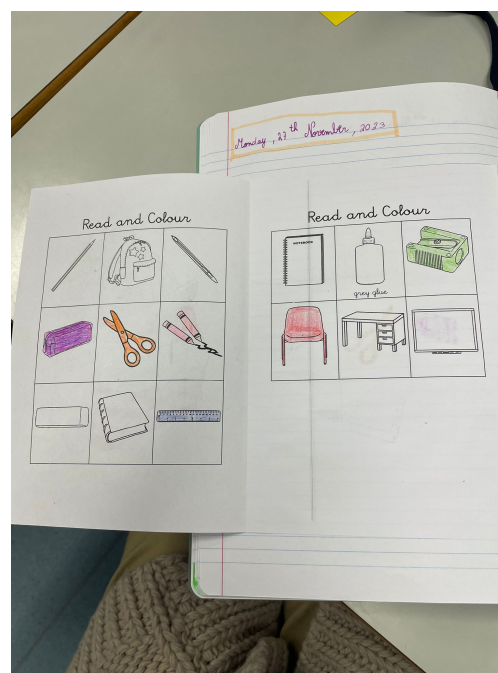
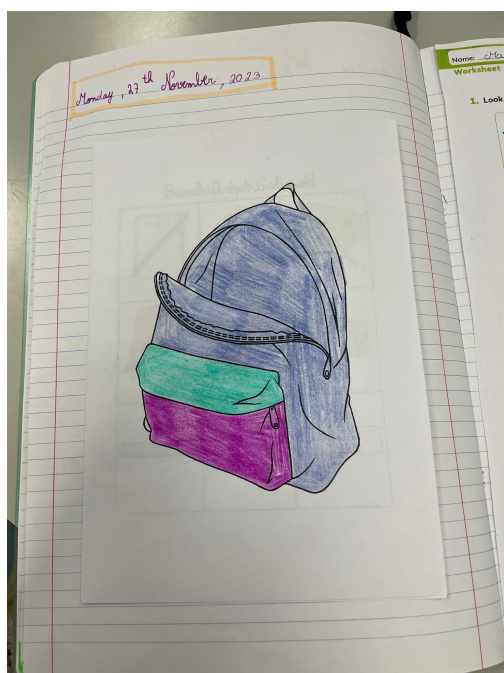
also see room for improvement in the data collection methods. There might be some ethical concerns related to the learners' unfamiliarity with certain vocabulary. This lack of prior knowledge could have contributed to lower scores on specific word pairs.

Interestingly, the learners demonstrated the ability to pronounce and use both [sh] and [ch] sounds accurately within sentences. The [sh] sound is significantly more straightforward to distinguish, likely due to a combination of factors. Firstly, it is a more concise sound itself. Secondly, the vocabulary used for testing [sh] was likely familiar to the learners, leading to more correct responses compared to unfamiliar terms used for [ch].

6. ANALYTICAL DATA: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The following pictures were part of a picture dictation activity I conducted with the learners. The activity aimed to provide an opportunity for the assessment of learner outcomes. Still, it was also meant to understand how much learners were able to grasp in terms of pronunciation and free practice. Each learner had a worksheet which looked like a backpack. When the learner opened the worksheet, they would find several school objects. Next, learners would do the picture dictation as a game in pairs. I would then walk around the classroom, monitoring and providing feedback on pronunciation and language usage whenever necessary. Learners had to name a colour and an object (i.e., blue rubber, green glue, etc.)

Figure 15 – Picture Dictation activity



I believe students thoroughly enjoyed this activity, as they were often asked to repeat it using other prompts. Picture dictation activities (Figure 15), similarly to partial dictation (as seen in the previous chapter), are positive listening activities, as learners need to listen carefully to complete the task accurately. However, they do not cater to the rapid speed of everyday speech.

Reflections such as the one I made above were very natural and occurred after every session I taught at the school. I believe that by analysing my work and planning critically, I am better able to provide my students with more meaningful and principled learning experiences. I collected data using various qualitative methods. I kept a journal where I would note down feedback after a session. My teaching practice colleague would also include her take on what had happened, and these sources were fundamental as they provided valuable insights into the learner's reactions or suggested changes in approach. It also helped me gauge how close I was to achieving my objectives and answering my research questions. I would then draw on those reflections and adjust my practice accordingly, as per Bachman's (2001) and Riel's (2008) action research model.

The last activity I shared with the learners was called the "food train chant". Learners were now quite used to learning the target language with the aid of a catchy rhythm or beat or by clapping. During the summer, I came across a book which had a fun character by the name of "Pete the Cat" (Dean & Dean, 2013), and after flicking through the story, I immediately thought it would be an excellent resource for my sessions. After having decided on the research questions and objectives, it felt obvious that "Pete the Cat" would become our pronunciation mascot! Pete the Cat (Dean & Dean, 2013) books are a valuable tool for young learners who are acquiring a new language. These books offer a positive and supportive environment which fosters language learning through play, with catchy rhymes and endearing illustrations. Another advantage is that the Pete the Cat stories (Dean & Dean, 2013) feature simple, repetitive phrases which introduce new vocabulary and sentence structures in a clear and accessible way.

Each book focuses on a specific theme, such as colours or emotions, therefore providing context for the target language. However, I was taken by the rhythmic flow of the stories as young learners rarely resist a good beat. This would be the perfect way to raise phonemic awareness and work on pronunciation and everyday speech all in one. The playful illustrations naturally encouraged children to participate, and we noticed that they became attached to Pete. Such engagement helps develop phonemic awareness and the repetition of sounds in Pete's name, and in other words, further

strengthens sound recognition, laying the groundwork for clear pronunciation. The consistent pronunciation used throughout the books serves as a model for young learners.

They would often imitate the sounds they heard and sing along to the story, singing the chorus by heart; this was a great way to encourage children to practice pronunciation and intonation in a fun and engaging way. I found that this approach was more effective than rote memorisation, as it allows children to internalise the natural flow of the language. Additionally, Pte the Cat stories are full of short, clear sentences where keywords are naturally emphasised. Therefore, by listening to these patterns, learners became better able to pick up on the stressed syllables and rhythmic structure of the language, which helped them develop proper word stress, essential for fluency. I consider that one of the most important features of these books is the positive and nurturing environment they were able to create. Not to mention the bright colours, friendly characters, and positive messages they carry.

Food Train Chant

During my last teaching practice session, we focused on language related to food, using a chant. Learners were encouraged to look at pictures and repeat the words in a drill, aligning their speech with the rhythm of a train embarking on a journey—starting slowly, gaining momentum, and eventually sounding the horn. This rhythmic approach not only made the activity engaging but also helped learners learn pronunciation and rhythm effectively.

The simplicity of the "lyrics," or the words used, made it easy for everyone to sing along, which was particularly effective in teaching the language. These visual lyrics provided a clear and recognisable substance that helped learners navigate the complexities of language without the confusion often brought about by their first language's grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

"Milk and sugar, milk and sugar (leaving the station)

Strawberries and cream, Strawberries and cream, (adding speed)

Chocolate cake and chocolate biscuits, Chocolate cake and chocolate biscuits (picking up speed)

Fish and chips, fish and chips (faster pace)

Soup, Soup! (Pulling the horn)"

Moreover, the sequence of the lyrics was strategically designed to reinforce phonetic skills by focusing on minimal pairs like /sh/ and /ch/, highlighting word stress, and exploring word blending and

¹ For more information on the Test, please refer to pp.112.

connected speech. This structured approach not only enhanced their understanding of these phonological features but also made the learning process more dynamic and accessible.

The rhythmic teaching method using the "Food Train Chant" not only effectively introduces language concepts but also provides a multisensory learning experience. Therefore, the chant integrates visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic elements and facilitates a comprehensive learning environment that caters to different learning styles. The combination of music and movement ensures that the lessons are not just heard but also felt and experienced, which can significantly boost memory retention and learner engagement.

Moreover, this approach builds learner confidence by immersing them in the target language's sounds and rhythms. A supportive, low-pressure environment encourages active participation and reduces the fear of making mistakes. This, in turn, bolsters confidence when using new vocabulary and phrases in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, the repetitive nature of the chant allows for continuous practice and reinforcement of critical phonetic and phonological concepts. This repetition is crucial for language acquisition, as it solidifies learners' understanding and ability to recall what they have learned. The usage of resources such as musical storytelling not only makes the learning process enjoyable but also significantly meaningful, as it sets a solid foundation for further language development.

This session was particularly successful as I was able to witness how much the learners had progressed. I was able to gauge this by how they were reacting to the task and their answers and by the fact that they were participating in the tasks autonomously.

After reading my colleagues' feedback, I was glad to see that I had been able to achieve my aim as well as successfully react to my learners' needs. First, students were fully engaged in the tasks and participated spontaneously. They remembered the food items we had discussed the day before and completed the activities in a good rhythm. My colleague took note of several metacognition phases where I invited learners to participate in their learning process by asking them about the difficulty of the tasks. I noticed that learners enjoyed being asked about their take on the difficulty of a task. The repetition of this procedure enabled me to gather more data to substantiate my research and determine whether I needed to make any adaptations.

Due to time constraints, I was only able to practice the "food train chant" with class 3X. Nonetheless, I could not be happier with the outcome. As I have mentioned before, when I first met this group, they showed difficulty in recognising sounds; they had not been exposed to *bottom-up* listening tasks and struggled to stay on task. After about a month, they had become more receptive to fast-paced activities and were now using English more confidently.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Over the past sessions, I have delved deep into a research project focused on enhancing language skills through rhythmic teaching methods like the "Food Train Chant." This approach draws on the engaging nature of rhythm and music, simulating a train's journey to introduce new vocabulary and phonetic patterns. During these sessions, learners followed the rhythm of a train, starting slowly and gradually picking up speed, which proved to be an effective method for teaching pronunciation and rhythm. The simple lyrics, aligned with the visuals, helped the learners anchor the new vocabulary without confusion, even with the challenges of different grapheme–phoneme correspondences from their first languages.

However, there were some oversights in the initial stages of the project. In the pre-test phase, I needed to scaffold the language more effectively while conducting a needs analysis, which might have set an initial bar too high. Reflecting on this, performing two separate tests might have been more beneficial in accurately gauging the learners' levels and needs. Furthermore, in the second test, I should have pre-taught some of the target language, but I relied too heavily on the learners' background knowledge, which sometimes aligned with the instructional goals.

Despite the tight timeframe of 30 days, the use of rhythmic exercises like clapping to a beat and incorporating 'earworms'—catchy tunes that help reinforce language learning—was particularly successful. Stories like "Pete the Cat" were excellent for scaffolding information organically through songs, allowing the vocabulary to be taught implicitly. This setup not only kept the energy high but also made learners more receptive to new and unconventional tasks. Classes like 3X, which were typically more unruly, showed remarkable engagement and improvement, responding well to the dynamic pace and sequence of tasks that required quick transitions of thought and application.

The progress was notably noteworthy in Class 3X, which, despite starting at a lower proficiency level than Class 3Y, managed to catch up over the short program. This was partly due to the multi-sensory approach that catered to various learning preferences, enhancing their phonemic awareness and fluency. The additional support from having three teachers in the classroom also provided the necessary attention and scaffolding that this group particularly benefited from, unlike Class 3Y, which required less support.

The introduction of musical stories combined with a *bottom-up* processing approach yielded excellent results, enhancing the learners' engagement and speeding up their learning process. The informal feedback from both my supervisor and university tutor highlighted noticeable improvements in the learners' confidence and fine-listening skills. Surprisingly, Class 3Y, despite their stronger start, struggled with identifying pictures related to certain vocabulary words, likely due to fatigue from concurrent testing schedules.

This teaching practice was not just about imparting knowledge but also about embracing reflective teaching as a tool for continuous improvement. As Donald Schön advocates in "The Reflective Practitioner," such reflection is essential for professional growth. This project confirmed that adapting teaching methods and materials in response to direct feedback and reflective practice leads to more effective teaching and organic learning.

Moving forward, I am excited to extend this project and pursue a doctorate to explore these methods further. My goal is to implement significant changes in the primary school syllabus to enhance listening skills comprehensively. The initial findings suggest that a longer-term study could provide even more substantial data to support these educational adjustments, promising a richer understanding of effective teaching strategies in phonetics and beyond.

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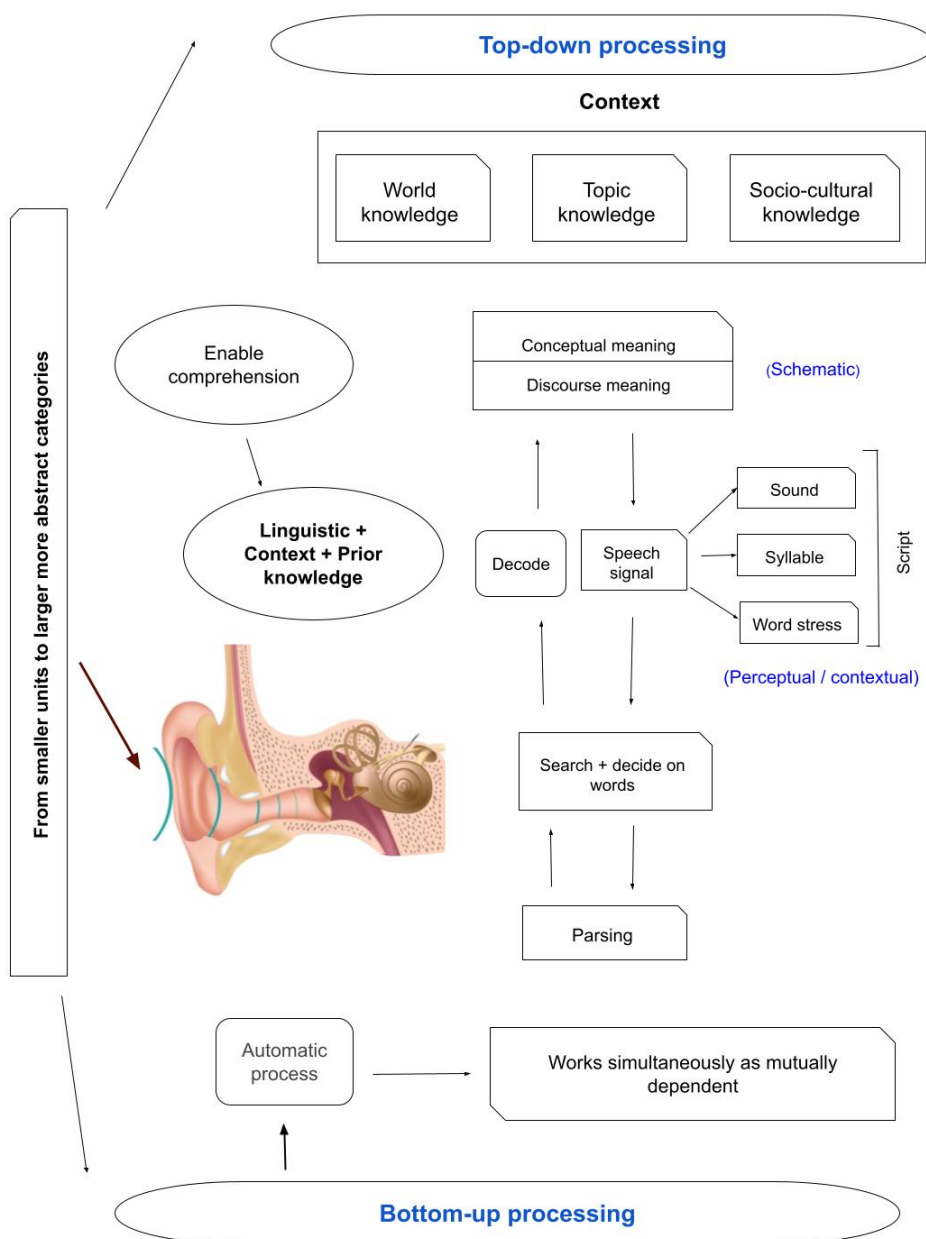
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APPENDIXES

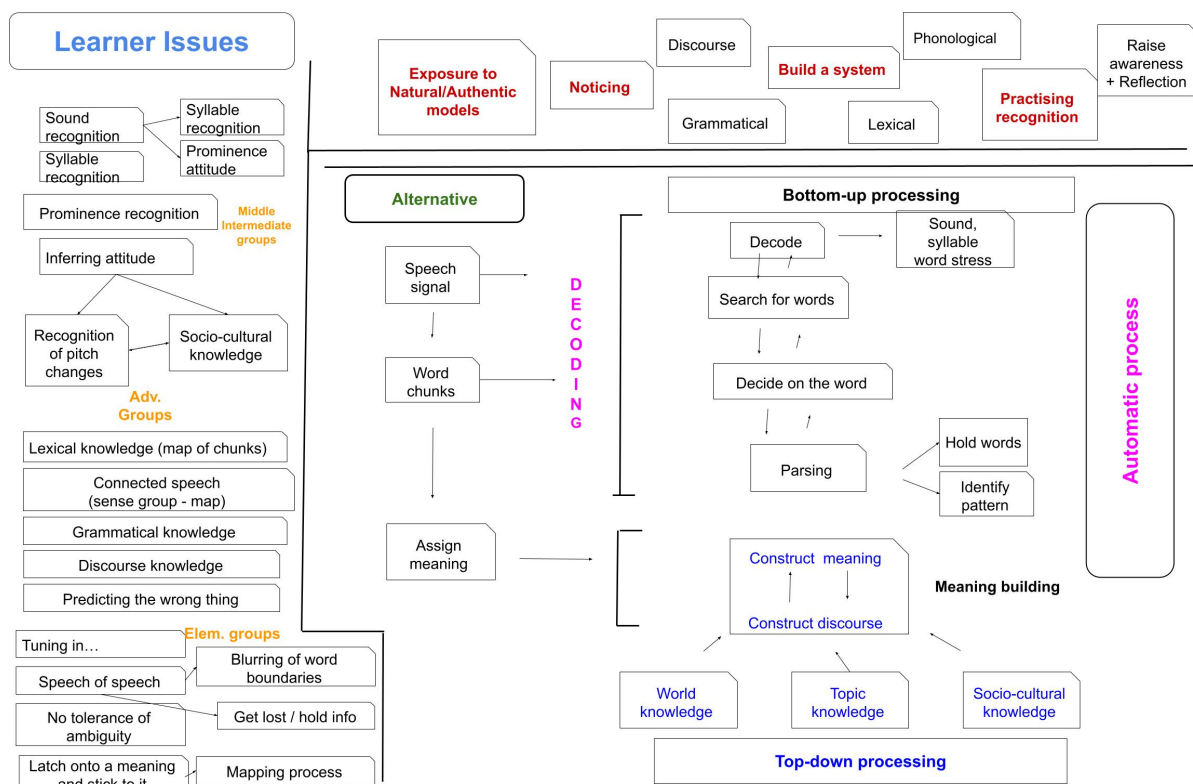
APPENDIX 1

Nature of Listening



Bever (1970); Clark + Clark (1977); Conrad (1985); Marsten-Wilson and Tyler (1980); Cherry (1957); Neisser (1982)

APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3

Third year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

As Aprendizagens Essenciais de Inglês têm em conta a análise dos documentos curriculares em vigor para a disciplina, nomeadamente os Programas, as Metas Curriculares e o *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para as Línguas* (QEER, Conselho da Europa, 2001), documentos de referência para a docência da disciplina. Os exemplos de Leitura (*R*), Compreensão oral (*LC*), Interação oral (*SI*), Produção oral (*SP*), Escrita (*W*), o Domínio intercultural (*ID*) e Léxico (*L*) remetem para os descritores referentes a cada ano de escolaridade.

Em relação ao Inglês do 3.º ano (A1), o aluno deve ser capaz de: compreender e utilizar expressões familiares e quotidianas, assim como enunciados muito simples que visam satisfazer necessidades concretas; apresentar-se e apresentar os outros; fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspetos pessoais como, por exemplo, o local onde vive, as pessoas que conhece e as coisas que tem os objetos que possui; comunicar de modo simples, se o interlocutor falar lenta e distintamente e se mostrar colaborante (adaptado de QEER, Escala Global, Nível A1: Utilizador Elementar; Conselho da Europa, 2001).

Fourth year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

As Aprendizagens Essenciais de Inglês têm em conta a análise dos documentos curriculares em vigor para a disciplina, nomeadamente os Programas, as Metas Curriculares e o *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para as Línguas* (QEER, Conselho da Europa, 2001), documentos de referência para a docência da disciplina. Os exemplos de Leitura (*R*), Compreensão oral (*LC*), Interação oral (*SI*), Produção oral (*SP*), Escrita (*W*) e Domínio intercultural (*ID*) remetem para os descritores referentes a cada ano de escolaridade.

Em relação ao Inglês do 4.º ano (A1), o aluno deve ser capaz de: compreender e utilizar expressões familiares e quotidianas que visam satisfazer necessidades concretas; apresentar-se e apresentar outros; fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspetos pessoais como, por exemplo, o local onde vive, as pessoas que conhece e os objetos que possui; comunicar de modo simples, se o interlocutor falar lenta e distintamente e se mostrar colaborante (adaptado de QEER, Escala Global, Nível A1: Utilizador Elementar; Conselho da Europa, 2001).

APPENDIX 4

Third year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

3.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

ORGANIZADOR Domínio	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1 O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS (Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	DESCRIPTORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
	<p>Compreensão escrita</p> <p>Identificar vocabulário familiar acompanhado por imagens; compreender pequenas frases com vocabulário conhecido; desenvolver a literacia conhecendo o alfabeto em Inglês; fazer exercícios de leitura (silenciosa/em voz alta) de palavras acompanhadas de imagens para assimilar combinações de sons e de letras mais frequentes; desenvolver a numeracia em língua inglesa, realizando atividades interdisciplinares com a Matemática.</p> <p>Interação oral</p> <p>Fazer perguntas, dar respostas sobre aspetos pessoais; interagir com o professor, utilizando expressões/frases muito simples, tais como formas de cumprimentar, despedir-se, agradecer, responder sobre identificação pessoal e preferências pessoais.</p> <p>Interação escrita</p> <p>Preencher um formulário (<i>online</i> ou em formato papel) muito simples com informação pessoal; responder a um <i>email</i>, <i>chat</i> ou mensagem de forma muito simples.</p>	<p>Promover estratégias que desenvolvam o pensamento crítico e analítico dos alunos, incidindo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no reconhecimento de conceitos e factos, numa perspetiva disciplinar e interdisciplinar, a um nível muito incipiente; - na análise de textos com diferentes pontos de vista para encontrar semelhanças e diferenças. <p>Promover estratégias que envolvam por parte do aluno:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recolha de dados e opiniões; - pesquisa incipiente e orientada. <p>Promover estratégias que requeiram/induzam por parte do aluno:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tarefas de planificação e revisão; - organização de sumários; - preenchimento de relatórios; - completamento de esquemas; - promoção do estudo da língua com o apoio do professor; - identificação de dificuldades e formas de as ultrapassar. 	<p>Crítico/Analítico (A, B, C, D, G)</p> <p>Indagador/ Investigador (C, D, F, H, I)</p> <p>Sistematizador /Organizador (A, B, C, I, J)</p>

Fourth year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

4.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

ORGANIZADOR DOMÍNIO	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1 O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS (Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	DESCRIPTORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
COMPETÊNCIA ESTRATÉGICA	<p>Comunicar eficazmente em contexto</p> <p>Valorizar o uso da língua como instrumento de comunicação, dentro e fora da sala de aula; reformular a sua capacidade de comunicar, usando a linguagem corporal para ajudar a transmitir mensagens ao outro; preparar, repetir e memorizar uma apresentação oral como forma de ganhar confiança e apresentar uma atividade <i>Show & Tell</i> à turma ou outros elementos da comunidade educativa.</p> <p>Trabalhar e colaborar em pares e pequenos grupos</p> <p>Revelar atitudes como, por exemplo, saber esperar a sua vez, ouvir os outros e refletir criticamente sobre o que foi dito, dando razões para justificar as suas conclusões; demonstrar atitudes de inteligência emocional, utilizando expressões como <i>please</i> e <i>thank you</i>, solicitando colaboração em vez de dar ordens ao interlocutor; planejar, organizar e apresentar uma tarefa de pares ou um trabalho de grupo.</p> <p>Utilizar a literacia tecnológica para comunicar e aceder ao saber em contexto</p> <p>Comunicar com outros a uma escala local, nacional e internacional, recorrendo a aplicações tecnológicas para produção e comunicação <i>online</i>; contribuir para projetos e tarefas de grupo interdisciplinares que se apliquem ao contexto e experiências reais e quotidianas do aluno, utilizando aplicações informáticas.</p>	<p>Promover estratégias envolvendo tarefas em que, com base em critérios, se oriente o aluno para:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a identificação de pontos fracos e fortes das suas aprendizagens; - a heteroavaliação para melhoria dos saberes; - o aprofundamento de saberes, considerando o <i>feedback</i> dos pares; - a reorientação do trabalho, individualmente ou em grupo, a partir do <i>feedback</i> do professor; - a resolução de problemas face a um desafio. <p>Promover estratégias que criem oportunidades para o aluno:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - de colaboração com os outros; - de <i>feedback</i> para melhoria ou aprofundamento de ações; - de apoio aos seus pares na realização de tarefas. 	<p>Autoavaliador (transversal às áreas)</p> <p>Participativo/ colaborador (B, C, D, E, F)</p>

APPENDIX 5

Third year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

3.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

ORGANIZADOR Domínio	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1 O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS (Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	DESCRITORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
	<p>Produção oral</p> <p>Comunicar informação pessoal elementar; expressar-se com vocabulário limitado, em situações organizadas previamente.</p> <p>Produção escrita</p> <p>Ordenar letras para escrever palavras e legendar imagens; ordenar palavras para escrever frases; preencher espaços em frases simples, com palavras dadas; copiar e escrever palavras aprendidas; escrever os numerais aprendidos.</p>	<p>Promover estratégias que envolvam por parte do aluno:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elaboração de questões para os pares, sobre os conteúdos estudados; - autoavaliação do conhecimento. <p>Promover estratégias que impliquem por parte do aluno:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ações de comunicação unidirecional e bidirecional; - ações de resposta e apresentação. <p>Promover estratégias envolvendo tarefas em que, com base em critérios, se oriente o aluno para:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a identificação de pontos fracos e fortes das suas aprendizagens; - a heteroavaliação para melhoria de saberes; - a reorientação do seu trabalho, individualmente ou em grupo, a partir do <i>feedback</i> do professor; - a resolução de problemas elementares face a um desafio. 	<p>Questionador (A, F, G, I, J)</p> <p>Comunicador (A, B, D, E, H)</p> <p>Autoavaliador (transversal às áreas)</p>
COMPETÊNCIA INTERCULTURAL	<p>Reconhecer realidades interculturais distintas</p> <p>Reconhecer elementos da sua própria cultura, tais como diferentes aspetos de si próprio; reconhecer características elementares da cultura anglo-saxónica.</p> <p>Sugestão de tópicos a serem trabalhados</p> <p>Localizar alguns países no mapa e identificar as bandeiras nacionais; identificar climas distintos; identificar algumas festividades.</p>		

Fourth year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

4.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO DAS APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS (AE)

ORGANIZADOR DOMÍNIO	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1 O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS (Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	DESCRITORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS/SITUACIONAIS	Escola e rotinas escolares; objetos pessoais; corpo humano; comida e alimentação saudável; casa e cidade; animais; numerais cardinais até 100, numerais ordinais nas datas; as horas; os cinco sentidos.	<p>Promover estratégias de aquisição de conhecimento, informação e outros saberes, relativos aos conteúdos das AE, que impliquem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rigor, articulação e uso de conhecimentos; - seleção de informação pertinente; - organização sistematizada de leitura; - tarefas de memorização e consolidação, associadas a compreensão e uso do saber. <p>Promover estratégias que envolvam a criatividade dos alunos na:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sugestão de atividades relacionadas com um evento determinado; - criação de situações nas quais possa ser aplicado um conhecimento determinado; - produção de um objeto, texto ou solução (por exemplo de um modo gráfico) face a um desafio; - apresentação de soluções estéticas criativas. 	<p>Conhecedor/ sabedor/culto/ informado (A, B, G, I, J)</p> <p>Criativo (A, C, D, J)</p>
COMPETÊNCIA COMUNICATIVA	<p>Compreensão oral</p> <p>Compreender palavras e expressões muito simples, comunicadas de forma clara e pausada num contexto familiar e com apoio visual; entender instruções simples para completar pequenas tarefas; acompanhar a sequência de pequenas histórias conhecidas com apoio visual/audiovisual; identificar palavras e expressões em rimas, lengalengas e canções.</p> <p>Compreensão escrita</p> <p>Identificar vocabulário familiar acompanhado por imagens; ler pequenas histórias ilustradas com vocabulário conhecido; compreender instruções muito simples com apoio visual; desenvolver a literacia, fazendo exercícios de rima e sinonímia; desenvolver a numeracia, realizando</p>		

APPENDIX 6

Third year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

3.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

ORGANIZADOR Domínio	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS	DESCRITORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
	O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	(Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	
COMPETÊNCIA ESTRATÉGICA	<p>Comunicar eficazmente em contexto Valorizar o uso da língua como instrumento de comunicação, dentro e fora da sala de aula, e de reformular a linguagem; usar a linguagem corporal para transmitir mensagens ao outro; preparar, repetir e memorizar uma apresentação oral, muito simples, como forma de promover a confiança; expressar de forma muito simples o que não compreende; apresentar uma atividade <i>Show & Tell</i> à turma ou outros elementos da comunidade educativa.</p> <p>Trabalhar e colaborar em pares e pequenos grupos Revelar atitudes como, por exemplo, saber esperar a sua vez, parar para ouvir os outros e refletir criticamente sobre o que foi dito, demonstrar atitudes de inteligência emocional, utilizando expressões como <i>please</i> e <i>thank you</i>; solicitar colaboração; planear, organizar e apresentar uma tarefa de pares ou um trabalho de grupo.</p> <p>Utilizar a literacia tecnológica para comunicar e aceder ao saber em contexto Comunicar de forma simples com outros a uma escala local, nacional e internacional, recorrendo a aplicações tecnológicas para produção e comunicação <i>online</i>; contribuir para projetos e tarefas de grupointerdisciplinares que se apliquem ao contexto e experiências reais e quotidianas do aluno, utilizando</p>	<p>Promover estratégias que criem oportunidades para o aluno: - de colaboração com os outros; - de apoio aos seus pares na realização de tarefas.</p> <p>Promover estratégias e modos de organização das tarefas que impliquem por parte do aluno: - consciencialização de responsabilidades adequadas ao que lhe for pedido; - organização e realização progressivamente autónoma de tarefas; - cumprimento de compromissos; - <i>feedback</i> relativo ao cumprimento de tarefas e funções; - apresentação de trabalhos simples com auto e heteroavaliação.</p> <p>Promover estratégias que induzam: - ações solidárias para com outros nas tarefas de aprendizagem ou na sua organização; - disponibilidade para o autoaperfeiçoamento.</p>	<p>Participativo/ colaborador (B, C, D, E, F)</p> <p>Responsável/ autónomo (C, D, E, F, G, I, J)</p> <p>Cuidador de si e do outro (B, E, F, G)</p>

APPENDIX 7

Third year – Core Learning Outcomes – In articulation with the student profile

APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS | ARTICULAÇÃO COM O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS

3.º ANO | 1.º CICLO | INGLÊS

OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO DAS APRENDIZAGENS ESSENCIAIS (AE)

ORGANIZADOR Domínio	AE: CONHECIMENTOS, CAPACIDADES E ATITUDES Nível A1 O aluno deve ficar capaz de:	AÇÕES ESTRATÉGICAS DE ENSINO ORIENTADAS PARA O PERFIL DOS ALUNOS (Exemplos de ações a desenvolver na disciplina)	DESCRITORES DO PERFIL DOS ALUNOS
ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS/ SITUACIONAIS	Saudações e apresentações elementares; identificação pessoal; países e nacionalidades; família; numerais cardinais até 50; dias da semana; meses do ano e estações do ano; escola e rotinas; jogos; meios de transporte; tempo atmosférico; cores e formas; vestuário; animais de estimação.	Promover estratégias de aquisição incipiente de conhecimento da língua e outros saberes relativos aos conteúdos das AE que impliquem: - algum rigor, articulação e uso de conhecimentos; - leitura de <i>chunks of language</i> conhecidas; - algumas tarefas de memorização, associadas à compreensão e uso da língua.	Conhecedor/ sabedor/culto/ informado (A, B, G, I, J)
COMPETÊNCIA COMUNICATIVA	Compreensão oral Compreender palavras e expressões muito simples, comunicadas de forma clara e pausada; identificar sons e entoações diferentes na língua inglesa por comparação com a língua materna; identificar ritmos em rimas, lengalengas e canções em gravações áudio e audiovisuais; reconhecer o alfabeto em Inglês; acompanhar a sequência de histórias conhecidas, muito simples e curtas, com apoio visual/audiovisual.	Promover estratégias que envolvam a criatividade dos alunos na: - sugestão de atividades relacionadas com um evento determinado; - criação de situações nas quais um determinado conhecimento possa ser aplicado; - produção de um objeto, por exemplo, um desenho ou um pequeno texto face a um incentivo.	Criativo (A, C, D, J)

Syllabus Guidelines”

Utilizador Elementar (nível de iniciação)	A1+	5.º	É capaz de compreender e usar expressões familiares e quotidianas, assim como enunciados muito simples, que visam satisfazer necessidades concretas. Consegue apresentar-se e apresentar outros e é capaz de fazer perguntas e dar respostas sobre aspetos pessoais como, por exemplo, o local onde vive, as pessoas que conhece e as coisas que tem. É capaz de comunicar de modo simples, se o interlocutor falar lenta e distintamente e se mostrar cooperante.
	A1	3.º/4.º	

APPENDIX 8

Syllabus Guidelines”

Interação Oral/Spoken Interaction

3.º ano A1	1. Exprimir-se, com ajuda e de forma adequada, em diferentes contextos
	1. Utilizar interjeições/expressões para expressar alegria e surpresa (<i>Great! Wow!</i>).
	2. Interagir com o professor, utilizando expressões/frases simples
	1. Cumprimentar (<i>good morning Miss Santos, bye James</i>).
	2. Agradecer (<i>thanks, thank you</i>).
	3. Despedir-se (<i>bye, see you later</i>).
4.º ano A1	4. Responder sobre identificação pessoal (<i>When is your birthday, Pedro?/In May.</i>).
	5. Responder sobre preferências pessoais (<i>I love summer. And you?/Me too!</i>).
	6. Responder sobre temas previamente apresentados e com a ajuda de imagens.
	3. Exprimir-se de forma adequada em contextos simples
	1. Utilizar formas de tratamento adequadas quando se dirige ao professor (<i>Mr Silva, Miss Costa</i>).
	4. Interagir com o professor e/ou com os colegas em situações simples e previamente preparadas
1. Utilizar palavras e expressões para concordar (<i>me too, so do I</i>).	
2. Utilizar palavras e expressões para aceitar e recusar (<i>sure/no, thank you</i>).	
3. Perguntar e responder sobre preferências pessoais (<i>What’s your favourite drink?/Orange juice.</i>).	
4. Perguntar e responder sobre temas previamente apresentados.	

Syllabus Guidelines

Compreensão Oral/Listening

3.º ano A1	1. Compreender sons, entoações e ritmos da língua
	1. Identificar sons e entoações diferentes na língua estrangeira por comparação com a língua materna.
	2. Identificar ritmos em rimas, <i>chants</i> e canções em gravações áudio e audiovisuais.
	2. Compreender palavras e expressões simples
	1. Identificar diferentes formas de cumprimentar (<i>hi, good morning</i>).
	2. Identificar diferentes formas de se despedir (<i>bye, see you later</i>).
	3. Identificar diferentes formas de agradecer (<i>thanks, thank you</i>).
	4. Identificar diferentes formas de elogiar e de incentivar (<i>good, well done</i>).
5. Identificar formas de aceitar e de rejeitar (<i>yes, please/no, thank you</i>).	
6. Entender instruções breves dadas pelo professor (<i>come in, colour the sun yellow</i>).	
7. Identificar números e datas.	
8. Reconhecer vocabulário simples referente aos temas estudados.	
4.º ano A1	3. Compreender palavras e expressões simples
	1. Identificar as horas.
	2. Identificar palavras e expressões em rimas e canções.
	3. Identificar palavras e expressões em pequenas histórias conhecidas.
	4. Compreender frases simples, articuladas de forma clara e pausada
1. Entender instruções dadas diretamente para completar pequenas tarefas (<i>pick up the paper, put your hat on</i>).	
2. Entender frases sobre os temas estudados.	
3. Acompanhar a sequência de pequenas histórias conhecidas.	

APPENDIX 9

Third year –“Syllabus Guidelines”

Léxico e Gramática/*Lexis and Grammar*

3.º ano A1	1. Conhecer vocabulário simples do dia a dia
	1. Reconhecer nomes próprios (<i>António, Sue</i>).
	2. Reconhecer nomes de alguns países (<i>England, USA</i>).
	3. Reconhecer diferentes origens (<i>Portuguese, English</i>).
	4. Identificar membros da família restrita e alargada (<i>mother, grandfather</i>).
	5. Identificar números até 20.
	6. Identificar os dias da semana.
	7. Identificar os meses do ano.
	2. Conhecer vocabulário relacionado com a escola
	1. Identificar pessoas dentro da sala de aula (<i>teacher, student</i>).
	2. Identificar objetos dentro da sala de aula (<i>desk, chair</i>).
	3. Identificar atividades e jogos dentro e fora da sala de aula (<i>reading, playing hide and seek</i>).
	4. Identificar meios de transporte de e para a escola (<i>car, bus</i>).
	3. Conhecer vocabulário simples, de forma contextualizada, com base nas estações do ano
	1. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o outono/ <i>autumn</i> .
	• Condições climáticas (<i>chilly, cloudy</i>).
	• Vestuário e calçado (<i>jumper, shoes</i>).
	• Cores (<i>grey/clouds, brown/leaves</i>).
	• Atividades (<i>collecting leaves, eating chestnuts</i>).
	• Festividades (<i>Halloween</i>).
	2. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o inverno/ <i>winter</i> .
	• Condições climáticas (<i>raining, snowing</i>).
	• Vestuário e calçado (<i>coat, boots</i>).
	• Cores (<i>white/snow, brown/mud</i>).
	• Atividades (<i>skiing, drinking hot chocolate</i>).
	• Festividades (<i>Thanksgiving, Christmas</i>).
	3. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com a primavera/ <i>spring</i> .
	• Condições climáticas (<i>warm, mild</i>).
	• Vestuário e calçado (<i>dress, sandals</i>).
	• Cores (<i>black/bees, red/flowers</i>).
	• Atividades (<i>picking flowers, having a picnic</i>).
	• Festividades (<i>Easter</i>).
	4. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o verão/ <i>summer</i> .
• Condições climáticas (<i>hot, sunny</i>).	
• Vestuário e calçado (<i>t-shirt, shorts</i>).	
• Cores (<i>yellow/sun, blue/sea</i>).	
• Atividades (<i>swimming, eating ice cream</i>).	
4. Conhecer, de forma implícita, algumas estruturas elementares do funcionamento da língua	
1. Usar <i>lexical chunks</i> ou frases que contenham:	
• <i>Nouns in the singular and in the plural (boot/boots, pen/pens)</i> .	
• <i>Adjectives (brown dog, sunny day, hot chocolate)</i> .	
• <i>Determiners (this is my book, that's your pencil)</i> .	
• <i>Personal Pronouns (I'm from Portugal, he's 8 years old, they're English)</i> .	
• <i>Prepositions of Place: in, on, under, near (put a tick in the box, the pen is on the table)</i> .	
• <i>Prepositions of Time: in, on, at (in the morning, on my birthday)</i> .	
• <i>Imperative (clap your hands, stand up, look at the picture)</i> .	
• <i>Verb to be</i> .	
• <i>Verb to have (got)</i> .	
• <i>Present Simple (I love summer, he hates winter)</i> .	
• <i>Present Continuous (the man is wearing boots, they are playing hide and seek)</i> .	
• <i>Question Words: what, where, when, how, how old (What's your name? How are you?)</i> .	

APPENDIX 10

Fourth year -Syllabus Guidelines

4.º ano A1	5. Conhecer vocabulário simples do dia a dia
	1. Identificar numerais cardinais até 100.
	2. Identificar numerais ordinais nas datas.
	3. Identificar as horas (<i>eight o'clock, half past nine</i>).
	6. Conhecer vocabulário com base nos temas apresentados
	1. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o espaço escolar/ <i>at school</i> .
	• Diferentes espaços na escola (<i>playground, library</i>).
	• Atividades na escola (<i>singing, running</i>).
	• Reciclagem na escola (<i>don't litter, pick up papers</i>).
	• Ecopontos (<i>yellow bin, green bin</i>).
	2. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o corpo humano/ <i>our body</i> .
	• Rosto (<i>eyes, mouth</i>).
	• Corpo (<i>legs, arms</i>).
	3. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com comidas e bebidas/ <i>food is great</i> .
	• Alimentação saudável (<i>fruit, milk</i>).
	• Snacks (<i>sandwiches, juice</i>).
	4. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com os espaços à nossa volta/ <i>where we live</i> .
	• Tipos de casa (<i>house, flat</i>).
	• Divisões da casa (<i>kitchen, bedroom</i>).
	• Locais e edifícios (<i>park, hospital</i>).
	5. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com animais/ <i>let's visit the animals</i> .
	• Animais e sons (<i>cat/meow, mouse/squeak</i>).
	• Animais na quinta (<i>cow, horse</i>).
	• Animais do jardim zoológico (<i>lion, zebra</i>).
	6. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com os cinco sentidos/ <i>the five senses</i> .
	• Taste (<i>taste the sweet orange</i>).
	• Touch (<i>feel the fluffy dog</i>).
	• Sight (<i>look at the photos</i>).
	• Hearing (<i>hear the dog barking</i>).
	• Smell (<i>smell the flowers</i>).
	7. Identificar vocabulário relacionado com o sol/ <i>the sun is shining</i> .
	• Atividades ao ar livre (<i>playing on the beach, having a picnic</i>).
	• A praia (<i>sand, sea, sun</i>).
• Proteção contra o sol (<i>hat, sunscreen, sunglasses</i>).	
7. Compreender algumas estruturas elementares do funcionamento da língua	
1. Reconhecer e utilizar as estruturas dadas, de forma implícita, no 3.º ano.	
2. Usar <i>lexical chunks</i> ou frases que contenham:	
• Articles: a/an, the .	
• Nouns in the singular and in the plural -s/-es .	
• Possessive Case: 's/' .	
• Connectors: and, but, or .	
• Determiners: this, that, these, those .	
• Prepositions of Place: next to, behind, in front of (<i>sit next to João, stand behind the table</i>).	
• Prepositions of Time: at, on, after (<i>at two clock, after school</i>).	
• May, can/can't .	
• Let's (<i>Let's go to the beach!</i>).	
• Positive, negative, question forms and short answers with to do .	
• Question Words: who, whose (<i>Who is your teacher? Whose book is this?</i>).	



APPENDIX 11

“Syllabus Guidelines”

Produção Oral/Spoken Production

3.º ano A1	1. Produzir, com ajuda, sons, entoações e ritmos da língua
	1. Repetir as letras do alfabeto.
	2. Repetir sons e vocábulos conhecidos e memorizados.
	3. Pronunciar, com alguma clareza, palavras conhecidas.
	4. Repetir rimas, <i>chants</i> e canções ouvidos em meios áudio e audiovisuais.
4.º ano A1	2. Expressar-se, com vocabulário muito limitado, em situações previamente preparadas
	1. Comunicar informação pessoal elementar: <i>name, age, family</i> .
	3. Produzir sons, entoações e ritmos da língua
	1. Dizer rimas, <i>chants</i> e cantar canções.
	4. Expressar-se, com vocabulário limitado, em situações previamente preparadas
1. Expressar agrado e desagrado (<i>I love Christmas pudding, I don't like turkey</i>).	
2. Descrever o que é/não é capaz de fazer (<i>I can ride a bike, I can't swim</i>).	
3. Falar sobre os temas trabalhados.	

APPENDIX 12

Snake sentences



2. Look and write.

This is my sister.

– This is my sister.

1) Her name is Monica.

– _____

2) This is my father.

– _____

3) His name is Peter.

– _____

4) I've got two brothers.

– _____

5) This is my half-sister.

– _____

Oral Production



1. Listen and practise.

Hi. Today I'm going to show you my school bag.

Look, it's big and it's blue.

There is a small pencil case in my school bag.

There are 6 pencils, 6 crayons and 10 markers in my pencil case.

I love my school bag.



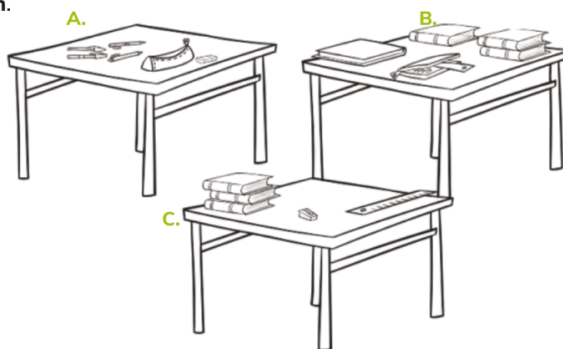
APPENDIX 13

Snake sentences

6. Listen and match.



- 1) Tom
- 2) Zuri
- 3) Cheng



7. Look and write.



There are five books on my desk. There are five books on my desk.

- 1) There is a rubber in my pencil case. _____
- 2) There are fifteen students in my class. _____
- 3) There is a book on the chair. _____
- 4) There are two notebookson the desk. _____

ILLUSTRATION: PETER RABBIT

fifty-three 53

Pronunciation practice

Vocabulary

Means of transport

1. Listen and repeat. Then stick.



car



bus



train



underground



bike



motorbike



truck



boat



helicopter

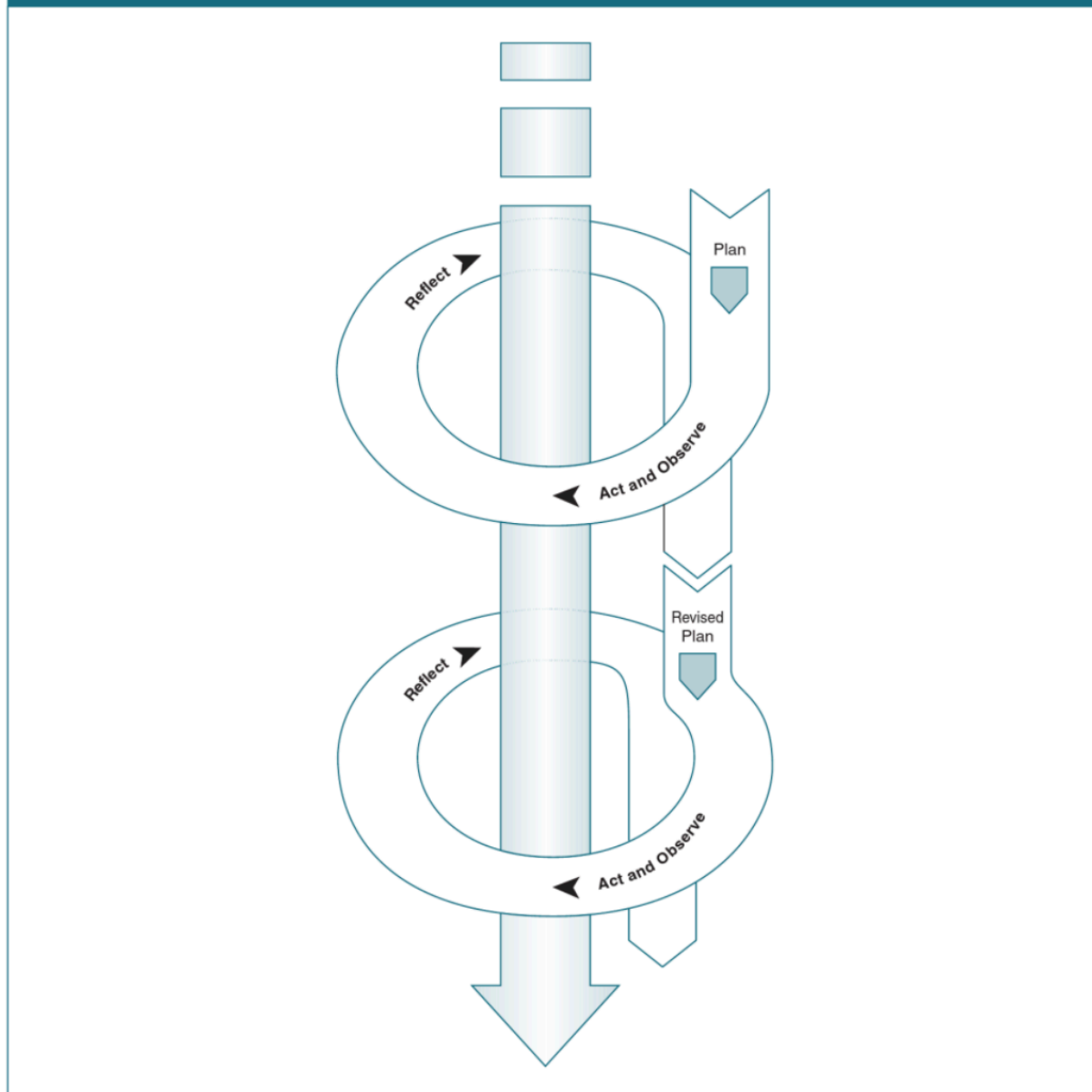


plane

ILLUSTRATION: PETER RABBIT

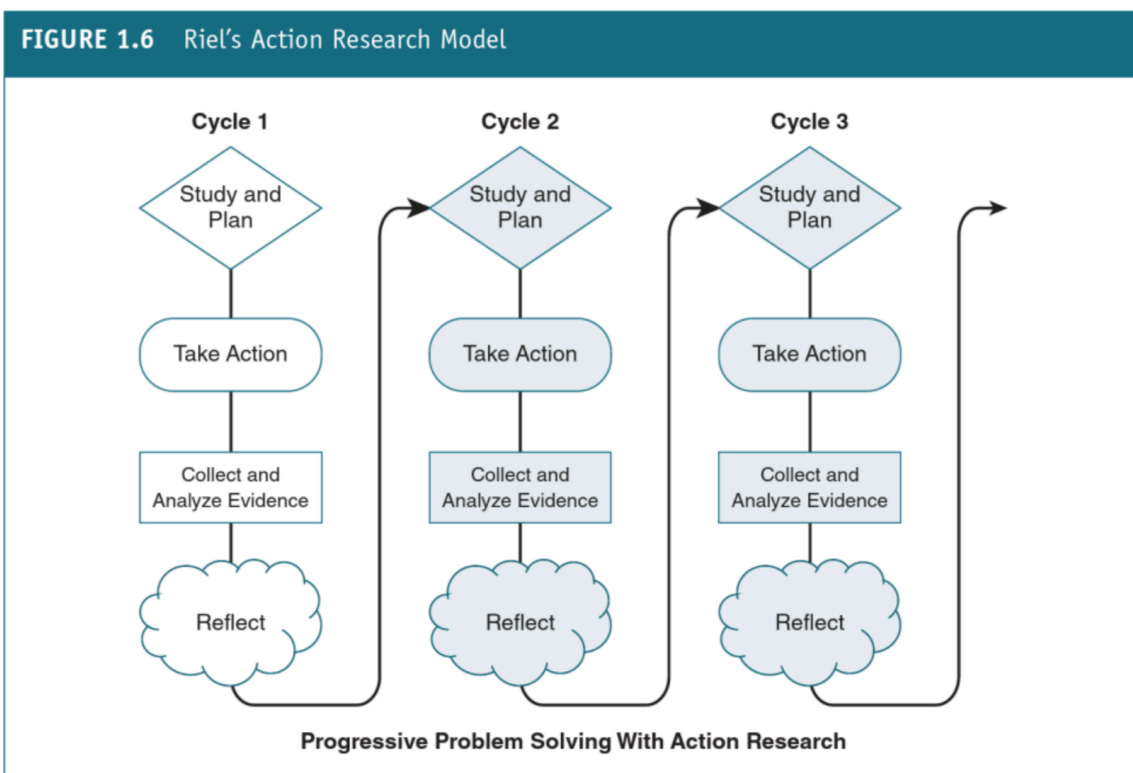
APPENDIX 14

FIGURE 1.5 Bachman's Action Research Spiral



SOURCE: Adapted from "Review of the Agricultural Knowledge System in Fiji: Opportunities and Limitations of Participatory Methods and Platforms to Promote Innovation Development" (unpublished dissertation), by Lorenz Bachman, 2001, Berlin, Germany: Humboldt University of Berlin. Copyright 2001. Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/dissertationen/bachmann-lorenz-b-r-2000-12-21/HTML/bachmann-ch3.html>. Reprinted with permission of the author.

APPENDIX 15



SOURCE: Adapted from *Understanding Action Research*, by Margaret Riel. Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html>. Copyright 2007 by the Center for Collaborative Action Research, Pepperdine University. Reprinted with permission of the author.

APPENDIX 16**LESSON PLAN I****Lesson Plan I**

Pete the Cat - Rocking in my school shoes

Skills - Listening and Speaking

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Subsidiary Aim

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Class Profile

Overview

This is a monolingual group comprised of 24 students (17 girls and seven boys) and shall, from now on, be named 3rd X due to data protection regulations. This group is studying English at a primary school level, and this is their first year learning a foreign language. At the end of the fourth grade, these students shall be at an A1 level in all four skills.

Classes are held twice a week, every Monday and Wednesday from 0900-1000 and 1000-11.00 respectively, at the P. Educational Centre.

Although there are more female learners than male learners in this group, their age range is well-balanced. All students seem to be very enthusiastic and motivated to learn and are working well together in a group setting.

We have been able to identify a range of linguistic strengths and weaknesses based primarily on their L1 and age. All learners enjoy a more communicative approach to learning and are especially keen on taking part in activities where they can move around the classroom, sing, use their bodies as sound boxes, dance, or share their opinions in a cross-classroom conversation.

Our learners are learning English as part of their primary school education programme. English became a curriculum subject in 2015, and since then, students have been gradually exposed to English, its form, and its usage to guarantee a smooth transition between cycles of education.

This lesson plan and subsequent lesson plans aim to expose learners to listening tasks that will be pivotal to the development of their spoken competence and further apprehension of syntactic, lexical, phonological, and pragmatic information.

By introducing learners to authentic listening materials, I intend to provide learners with natural language examples and usage, therefore working towards their autonomy and independence. The proposed activities and tasks intend to provide the learners with the possibility of learning even after the course is over and the teacher is no longer there. (Field, 2008)

Overall Aim

Main Aims:

By the end of the lesson, learners will have been able to further develop their listening skills by being exposed to rhyming words and repetitive phrases.

By the end of the lesson, learners will have been able to learn new vocabulary related to means of transport by means of songs, chants and several drilling exercises.

Subsidiary Aim

By the end of the lesson, learners will have revised and practised using previously taught language.

Timetable fit:

This class will be on Wednesday, and it will be the learners' first session of the day. Their last lesson focused on school objects, drilling, and a song using authentic texts, which aimed to expose students to authentic listening materials that were lexically and functionally related to the topic.

Today's session, however, shall focus on introducing a new character: "Pete the Cat", which shall accompany these learners for the duration of the teaching practice period. This character, which is part of a homonymous book series, uses engaging and relatable content with simple language and repetitive phrases. Some books incorporate musical storytelling and rhythms, which I anticipate will help create a safe, non-threatening learning space where learners feel free to experiment with language by means of music and rhythm.

These stories are dynamic and engaging, catering to this specific age group. By combining the songs, chants, and rhymes present in these books with specific language-centred activities, I hope to enhance the students' phonemic awareness and pronunciation skills.

My goal is to explore the possibility of using the inherent musical storytelling characteristics of the "Pete the Cat" books to create an effective, meaningful, and significant learning experience. Thus, I aim to help students develop a better understanding of the English language's sound patterns and intonations, as well as the meaning-building and decoding processes associated with understanding stories.

Assumptions

Listening Skills

- 1) This is a mixed-ability beginner group of learners. I have assessed that they are reasonably well equipped to deal with the basic perceptual skills of listening, such as recognising sounds, syllables and prominent words. I believe they will be able to cope well with the proposed activities.
- 2) Students will be able to follow more than 70% of the session in English, as we have previously witnessed.
- 3) Students are usually keen on trying new activities and love being challenged. Learners react positively to the repetitive nature of songs, chants and rhymes.
- 4) My assumption is that the repetition found in songs and rhymes fosters and encourages active participation and learning. As a consequence, these activities will boost our pupil's learner autonomy and confidence as it's easier to create a solid emotional connection with the material/character if it is meaningful to them. As a result, we might be able to determine that musical storytelling promotes enhanced language retention and understanding.

Topic Fit

- 5) Students are accustomed to hearing authentic texts in the classroom; they have used several examples during the past months.
- 6) Listening to the "*Pete the Cat - Rocking in my school shoes*" story will be a fun and dynamic activity which shall create a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Linguistic

- 7) I have deliberately chosen the story: "*Pete the Cat - Rocking in my school shoes*" because it addresses previously taught vocabulary related to school objects and also introduces vocabulary related to action verbs, means of transport and places around the school. Although there is a lot of vocabulary involved, I am mostly interested in analysing how learners perceive these activities and how much they can recall from their short/long term memory. In the first part of the session, the majority of the lexical items will be familiar to the learners, nonetheless, I would like to challenge them in terms of their understanding of certain features related to rhymes and fixed expressions.
- 8) Learners will be given the opportunity to experiment with language freely when performing a role-play related to school objects. This activity intends to provide learners with simulations and revision of previously taught language and for fluency practise.

9) My aim is to help learners acquire language both organically and holistically. Musical storytelling is a way of offering learners a good quality reference model of contextualised language.

Anticipated problems/Solutions

Listening Skills

Problem 1:

Students might feel sleepy and take longer to get on task.

Solution 1:

The first activity which is the “Hello” song shall work on waking everybody up. We shall also do a few drilling activities in case they are extra tired.

Problem 2:

Students might have difficulty understanding certain concepts/words such as *slides, swings, reading, eating, painting, running, adding, writing, riding, seats, school is done, goodness no!*.

Solution 2:

Learners will be provided with several opportunities to repeat the listening activities as many times necessary. These tasks are collaborative so I’ll encourage students to work together to decode difficult chunks of language/vocabulary. Learners will also have visual cues to scaffold the vocabulary beforehand.

Phonology

Problem 3:

Students might find Pete the Cat’s narrator’s accent difficult to understand.

Solution 3:

I’ll play the song as many times as needed. The song has an animated video-clip which should provide the learner’s with the visual cues they need.

Technical

Problem 4:

The lesson involves using the internet. There is a risk that the internet connection may not work on the day of the lesson.

Solution 4:

The recording will be downloaded from the internet and kept on a usb drive.

Affective

Problem 5:

Some students have noise-sensitivity.

Solution 5:

As I am now aware of this situation, I shall be careful to adjust the volume according to the student's needs.

Problem 6:

Learners don't understand the instruction.

Solution 6:

Concept check and monitor closely.

Problem 7:

Students take too long to finish a task.

Solution 7:

Monitor closely and offer praise and encouragement. Ask fast finishers to lend a hand.

Problem 8:

Rowdy students.

Solution 8:

Use buzzers and shhh - quiet down please.

Materials used:

- IWB- Powerpoint
- Flashcards + Wordcards
- Whiteboard + Magnets
- Previously downloaded youtube clip of: "*Pete the Cat - Rocking in my school shoes*" and others.
- Guided Discovery Worksheets
- Story sequencing Poster - (**flexistage**)

Procedure:

Time	Stage and Aims	Procedure	Interaction Pattern (pairs, whole class etc.)
09.00	<p>Warmer - Lead in</p> <p>To generate interest in the topic.</p> <p>To revise previously taught vocabulary</p>	<p>- <i>Hello everyone! How are you feeling today?</i> (exemplify and go over vocabulary related to feelings: tired, happy, sad, ill, hungry, etc) Play song: "Hello song - around the world" - Super Simple songs <i>(Invite learners to stand up and follow the song)</i></p> <p>- <i>Well done everyone!</i></p> <p>- <i>Do you remember the games we played on Monday? Would you like to play them again?</i></p> <p>- <i>Great! which words do you remember from Monday?</i> - Use Realia or Bomb</p> <p>Feedback and Praise</p>	<p>T-Sts-T</p> <p>St – St</p>
09.10	<p>Speaking - freer practise</p> <p>To provide students with simulations and revision of previously taught language.</p> <p>To provide learners with freer practise of a specific language point</p>	<p>Explain that Sts shall now given a chance to practise the vocabulary they learned during the previous lesson. Students should open their <u>student books on page 50</u> and point to a random object in <u>activity 1</u> and ask partner:</p> <p>- <i>What's this?</i> To which they should answer: - <i>It's a pen.</i> (for example)</p> <p>If they happen to answer incorrectly, partner A should say: - <i>Sorry. Try that again.</i> (until they get the correct answer) You have 5 minutes.</p> <p>Concept Check Instructions - Monitor - Feedback on pronunciation - Praise. Keep eye on time!!!</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>St – St</p>

09.20	<p>Noticing - Lead in</p> <p>To activate schemata and generate interest in the topic.</p> <p>To encourage Sts to predict what the story is about from analysing the book cover.</p>	<p>Show learners the cover of the “<i>Pete the Cat - rocking in my school shoes</i>” book. Ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What can you see in this picture?</i> - <i>Where do you think it’s from?</i> - <i>What do you think the story is about?</i> - <i>Do you recognise anything? Any words? Which ones?</i> - <i>Where do you think Pete the Cat is going? Why?</i> - <i>How do you think he goes to school?</i> <p>PWT - check predictions Feedback + Monitor - Praise. Keep eye on time!!!</p>	T – St
09.25	<p>Pronunciation - Disappearing Pellmanism</p> <p>To focus Sts attention on the target language and its usage.</p> <p>To provide learners with opportunities for freer speaking.</p> <p>To assess persisting knowledge gaps.</p> <p>(Flexistage)</p>	<p>Ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How do YOU go to school?</i> <p>Collect answer from 3/4 and board the answers.</p> <p>CCQ’S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What other ways can we use to get to school?</i> - Check Sts previous knowledge on the topic. <p>Show PWT and ask Sts to answer. Nominate Sts individually.</p> <p>Conduct a class survey on the board - Get students to make predictions based on what they see. Provide language. Do an overall analysis but explain that the data shall be analysed in more detail in the following session. - graph.</p> <p>Worksheet - How do you get to school? - handout Circle your situation and the rest is for homework.</p> <p><i>- Wonderful job!</i></p> <p><i>- We are now going to complete a challenge! Are you ready? Let’s play a game.</i></p> <p><i>Explain that you will now put up all the flashcards related to means of transport and that we shall drill them 2/3 times. (more if needed)</i></p> <p><i>After this, I shall start removing one flashcard at a time until there are none left. Students shall have to continue to drill the vocabulary even if it’s not visible anymore.</i></p>	<p>T- St</p> <p>St-St</p> <p>T- St</p>

09.35	<p>Lead in</p> <p>To activate schemata and generate interest in the topic.</p> <p>To check its prior knowledge of the subject.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Your school is so big and beautiful! I love it here!</i> - <i>Do you like your school?</i> - <i>I've noticed there are many different rooms in this school, there are many (gesture classroom to get students to use previously taught target language).</i> - <i>What other rooms are there? What do we do in these rooms? Do you know? (gesture)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Library - read</i> - <i>Canteen/Cafeteria/Lunchroom - eat</i> - <i>Playground - play, run</i> - <i>etc</i> - <p>Model language + Use PWT to elicit language</p> <p>Collect answer in Group Feedback + Drill when necessary.</p> <p><u>Keep eye on time!!!</u></p>	<p>T - St</p> <p>St-St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>
09.40	<p>Listening for specific information: <i>decoding chunks of language</i></p> <p>To raise Sts awareness to rhyming words an catchy choruses.</p> <p>To provide Sts with an authentic context for target language use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are now going to watch an animated video of <i>Pete the Cat's: Rocking my school shoes</i> book. - <i>I'd like you to check 2 things: Does Pete the Cat go to school by bus?</i> - <i>Where does Pete the Cat go?</i> - <i>Ready? Let's go!</i> <p>Play video (as many times necessary) and monitor for understanding.</p> <p>Encourage extroverted students to sing along/ act out the song.</p> <p>When song finishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>So, was Pete the Cat's school like ours? Did he go to school by bus?</i> - <i>What do you remember from the song?</i> - <i>Which rooms did you see?</i> - <i>What does: "Is he scared? Goodness No!" mean?</i> 	<p>T-St</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>




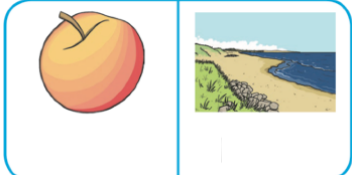


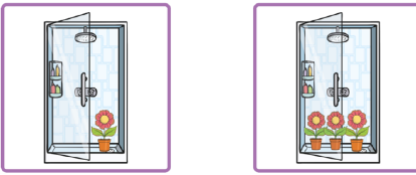
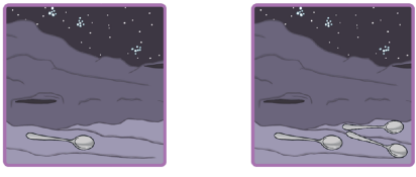
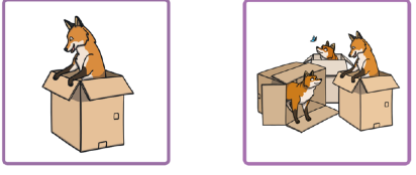
09.45	<p>Outcomes check</p> <p>To allow Sts an opportunity to use their own knowledge.</p> <p>To allow opportunity for T. to assess achievement of overall aims.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>You were absolutely fantastic! Thank you so much for your effort.</i> - <i>Now I'd like you to think about the story you just hear. Where did "Pete the Cat" go first, second, third, fourth, fifth? You have 3 minutes</i> <p>Board Bus + nominate 5 students to come up and place the cards in the right place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Does everyone agree?</i> - <i>Please cut out your cards and glue them, <u>in the right order</u>, on your bus. Please check the board.</i> <p>CCQ'S - INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Monitor + Praise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What do we do in the classroom? - learn</i> - <i>What do we do in the library? - read</i> - <i>What do we do in the canteen? - eat</i> - <i>What do we do in the playground? - run and play</i> <p>CCQ'S + Monitoring + Feedback and Praise.</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p>
09.55	<p>Metacognition: Reflection</p> <p>To encourage students to reflect on the listening strategies they used in class</p>	<p>Encourage students to assess learning outcomes by having a WG discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>So, what did we do today? Can you order the activities?</i> • <i>Did you like today's story?</i> • <i>Which activities did you find difficult? Easy?</i> • <i>Which activities would you like to do again?</i> <p>Praise Sts effort and hard work during the lesson.</p>	<p>T- St</p> <p>St-St</p>
10.00	Break	Students leave for break.	St – St

APPENDIX 17

PRE-TEST

<p>Pre-test: <i>Staging listening: Bridging the gap between the YL classroom and real-life</i></p>	
<p>Name:</p>	<p>Date:</p>

A. Please select the picture you think you hear with a tick (✓)

1.		2.	
3.		6.	
5.		7.	
9.		8.	
10.			

Thank you for your hard work! 🥰🌈❤️⭐

Cláudia Antunes

APPENDIX 18

LAST TEST

Initial Sound I Spy **ch**Find and circle all of the things that begin with **ch**.**ch**

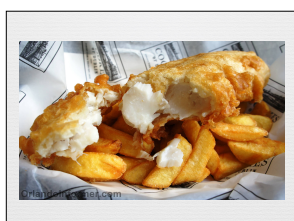
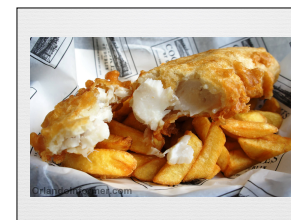
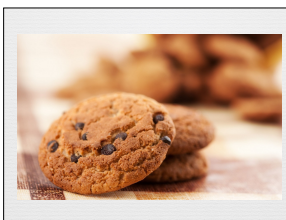
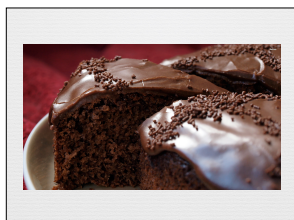
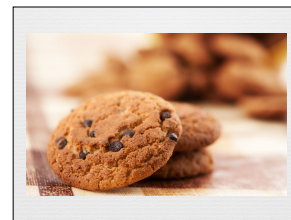
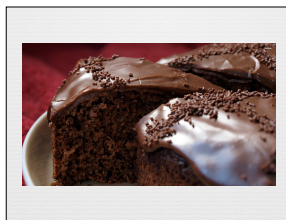
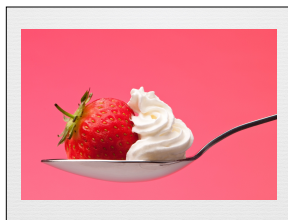
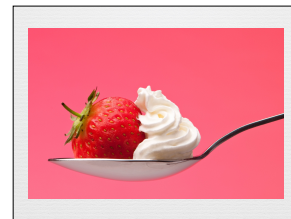
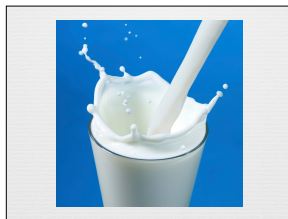
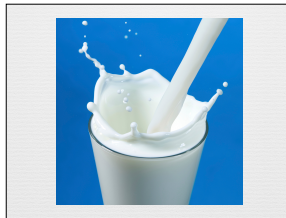
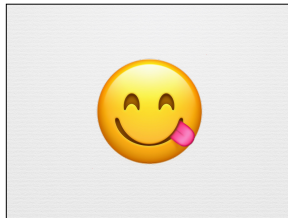
APPENDIX 19

LAST TEST

Initial Sound I Spy **sh**Find and circle all of the things that begin with **sh**.

APPENDIX 20

FOOD TRAIN CHART - PROMPTS



The End

APPENDIX 21

LESSON PLAN IV

Lesson Plan IV

Food Train Chant

Skills - Listening, Pronunciation, Speaking

ESE - Escola Superior de Educação do Porto
Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo

15/01/2024 - 3º X/Z

Cláudia de Sousa Antunes - 3110450

Class Profile

Overview

This is a monolingual group comprised of 24 students (15 girls and eight boys) and shall, from now on, be named 3rd X and 3rd Z due to data protection regulations. This group is studying English at a primary school level, and this is their first year learning a foreign language. At the end of the fourth grade, these students shall be at an A1 level in all four skills.

Classes are held twice a week, every Monday and Wednesday from 9 am-10 am and 10 am-11 am, respectively, at the P. Educational Centre.

Although there are more female learners than male learners in this group, their age range is well-balanced. All students are enthusiastic and motivated to learn and work well in groups.

We have identified linguistic strengths and weaknesses based primarily on their L1 and age. All learners enjoy a more communicative approach to learning and are especially keen on taking part in activities where they can move around the classroom, sing, use their bodies as sound boxes, dance, or share their opinions in a cross-classroom conversation.

Our learners are learning English as part of their primary school education programme. English became a curriculum subject in 2015, and since then, students have been gradually exposed to English, its form and usage to guarantee a smooth transition between cycles of education.

This lesson plan and the subsequent lesson plans aim to expose learners to pronunciation tasks, which will be pivotal to developing their spoken competence and further apprehension of phonological and phonemic information.

By introducing learners to authentic listening materials and *micro-listening tasks*, I will provide them with natural language examples and usage, working towards their autonomy and independence. The proposed activities and tasks intend to allow the learners to learn even after the course is over and the teacher is no longer there. (Field, 2008)

Overall Aim

Main Aims:

By the end of the lesson, learners will have been able to further develop their listening skills by identifying the difference between the following minimal pairs: *ch/sh* (initial and final position) and practice using them in a chant.

By the end of the lesson, learners will have practiced listening and pronouncing *ch / sh* words in both in an initial and final position - (chant)

Subsidiary Aim

By the end of the lesson, learners will have revised and practised using previously taught language: (food items)

Timetable fit:

This class will fall on a Monday and will be the learner's first session of the day. Their last lesson focused on listening to a story: "*Pete the Cat's BIG Lunch*", and students learned the target language related to food. Students were also exposed to the minimal pairs */ch/* and */sh/* present in words such as *chocolate* and *fish* (both in an initial and final position).

Learners shall have a test on the 24th of January, so we shall clarify their doubts on the previously taught topics.

However, today's session will continue to focus on identifying and pronouncing the following minimal pairs: *sh/ch* when placed both in an initial and final position and practising these sounds.

We shall use a chant today that mimics the sounds of a train, and learners will be encouraged to pronounce the words (*milk and sugar, strawberries and cream, chocolate cake and chocolate biscuits, fish and chips, soup, soup*) according to a specific rhythm which sounds like a train on its journey. This activity is usually quite popular among young learners; they are always eager to take part in every phase of the activity, so I anticipate that the fact that it is a very dynamic, physical activity shall cater for a safe, non-threatening learning space where learners feel free to experiment with language through music and rhythm.

I will also use a short song as a warmer to help learners get in the mood for our class.

Chants are dynamic and engaging, catering to this specific age group. By combining catchy rhythms with specific language-centred activities, I hope to enhance the students' phonemic awareness and pronunciation skills. I intend to elicit features of rhyming words and word stress.

Assumptions

Listening Skills

- 1) This is a mixed-ability beginner group of learners and I have assessed that they are fairly well equipped to deal with the basic perceptual skills of listening, such as recognising sounds, syllables, prominent words, and sentence stress. I believe they will be able to cope well with the proposed activities.
- 2) Students will be able to follow more than 80% of the session in English, as we have previously seen.
- 3) Students are usually keen on trying new activities and love being challenged. Learners react positively to the repetitive nature of songs, chants and rhymes.
- 4) However, as this is their first session, learners' are usually sleepy and shall certainly need more dynamic, hands-on activities.
- 5) My assumption is that the repetition found in today's chant shall encourages active participation and learning. As a result, we might be able to determine that chants and specific sound patterns promote enhanced language retention and improved pronunciation of difficult sounds such as the minimal pairs /ch/, /sh/, /k/, /l/.

Topic Fit

- 6) Students have previously learnt and given controlled practice of the previously taught target language related to food. The lexis was part of the story: "*Pete the Cat's BIG Lunch*".

7) Listening to a fun, TPR type song as a warmer shall help learners' who take longer to engage in the session as they feel sleepy. It is also a fun and dynamic *sing-along* activity which shall create a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

8) Learners should already know some of the vocabulary they learnt before therefore, I am confident that they will be able to complete the activities successfully.

Linguistic

This topic shall be a brief introduction to Unit 4 which works on Family and Routines. I shall focus on meals and lexis related to food.

9) I have deliberately chosen this specific activity as the chant focuses on a repeated pattern where the word's stress is correctly marked according to the chant's pattern. The utterances are short and repetitive, and we are able to practice the sh/ch sounds and word stress whilst singing along. (I can also assess learners' difficulties)

10) Learners will complete 1 worksheet as reference and controlled practice of what they did during today's session.

11) Learners will also complete another worksheet as homework and freer practice of the language point.

12) My aim is to help learners acquire language both organically and holistically. Chants are a way of offering learners good quality reference models of contextualised language.

Anticipated problems/Solutions

Listening Skills

Problem 1:

Students might feel sleepy and take longer to engage in the lesson.

Solution 1:

The first activity which is the “Hello” song shall work on waking everybody up. We shall also do a few physical activities in case they are extra sleepy.

Phonology

Problem 2:

Students might have difficulty understanding the difference between *lunch* and *lanche*. Although these words sound like homophones, they have completely different meanings in L1 and L2 .

Solution 2:

Learners will be provided with several opportunities to repeat the listening activities. The chant can be accompanied by gestures which shall help learners learn-by-doing. Learners will have visual cues to scaffold the vocabulary beforehand.

Problem 3:

Students might have difficulty identifying the stress in words such as: *chocolate*, *strawberries*, *biscuits*.

Solution 3:

I'll play the song as many times as needed. The chant has a powerpoint which should provide the learner's with the visual cues they need.

Problem 4:

Learners might struggle with the pronunciation of certain sounds /ch/ and /sh/ - L1 influence. Students struggle to pronounce the words/sounds correctly.

Solution 4:

Use sound patterns and choral/individual drilling. - *Chips/Chocolate/Fish/Biscuits*. Monitor closely and offer praise and encouragement. Model the sounds and show learners how to position their mouths when saying these sounds.

Technical**Problem 5:**

The lesson involves using the internet. There is a risk that the internet connection may not work on the day of the lesson.

Solution 5:

Both the PWT and the songs will be downloaded from the internet and kept on a usb drive.

Affective**Problem 6:**

Some students have noise-sensitivity.

Solution 6:

As I am now aware of this situation, I shall be careful to adjust the volume according to the student's needs.

Problem 7:

Learners don't understand the instructions.

Solution 7:

Concept check and monitor closely.

Lexical**Problem 8:**

Students might want to write down the words, however it is important that they refrain from doing so as I am trying to prove that the fact that learners see the words too soon creates pronunciation difficulties, namely in words such as *chocolate* or *biscuits*. Learners would

almost automatically resort to their L1 reading references and assimilate that model instead of the L2 model.

Solution 8:

Monitor closely and clarify any doubts. Explain that writing is unnecessary at this stage and that they shall have time to do so later.

Materials used:

- IWB- Powerpoint
- Whiteboard
- Previously downloaded youtube clip of the songs: Hello song.
- Worksheets

Procedure:

Time	Stage and Aims	Procedure	Interaction Pattern (pairs, whole class etc.)
09.00	<p>Warmer - Lead in</p> <p>To generate interest in the topic.</p> <p>To revise previously taught vocabulary</p>	<p>DONT FORGET TO RECORD SESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hello everyone! How are you feeling today?</i> (exemplify and go over vocabulary related to feelings: tired, happy, sad, ill, hungry, etc) - <i>How was your weekend? Did you read? Did you play football? Did you go to a party?</i> - <i>That's wonderful!</i> - <i>We are now going to listen to a song to wake up and get ready for English!</i> - Ready? <p>Play song: "Hello - Spin around" - Super Simple songs (Invite learners to stand up and sing-along)</p> <p>Play song twice if needed.</p> <p>Keep eye on time!!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Well done everyone!</i> <p>Feedback and Praise</p>	<p>T-Sts-T</p> <p>St – St</p>
09.10	<p>Speaking</p> <p>To activate schemata, to focus on target grammar</p> <p>To elicit previously taught vocabulary</p>	<p>Bomb game - ask if any of the students minds using the bomb.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you remember the story we heard last week? - What was it about? <p>Feedback + Monitor - Praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Great job! Now, were going to play the bomb game. Do you want me to turn on the timer or shall me leave it off?</i> - <i>Which words can you remember from last lesson?</i> <p>Possible words: apple, banana, (fruit), milk, bread, cheese, fish, mayo, crackers, hot dog, tomato, pickle, ice-cream, baked beans, egg, etc.</p> <p>(Play the game for 2/3 rounds and them feedback.)</p> <p>Feedback and Praise Correct pronunciation</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>

09.20	<p>Speaking + Listening</p> <p>To provide an opportunity for students to take charge of their learning process and reflect on why they are learning certain things.</p>	<p>Great job everyone!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you remember the game we played last week, where I said a few words and you had to circle them on your worksheet? - <i>Wonderful!</i> - Was it easy or difficult? (Take notes) - Do you still remember the pictures? What's this? - Why do you think I did this activity with you? <p><i>-Can you show me the difference between /sh/ and /ch/?</i></p> <p><i>-Look at these pictures chair/sheep/chips/ship</i></p> <p><i>-How do we say this words?</i></p> <p>Move to slide 7 - - Encourage students to participate.</p> <p>Feedback + Monitor - Praise. Keep eye on time!!!</p>	T – St
09.30	<p>Speaking</p> <p>To enable students to speak freely about their preferences.</p>	<p>Move to slide 11 - -question - let students try to guess question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now that we've talked about food, what is YOUR favourite food? - Do you like...chocolate, chips, cake, soup, fruit? <p>Play "Do you like" song if necessary.</p> <p>Move to slide 13 - -emojis</p> <p>- What do these emoji's mean?</p> <p>Feedback + Monitor - Praise.</p>	T- St T- St

09.35	<p>Listening + Speaking + Pronunciation</p> <p>To ear-train and practice pronunciation of the <i>ch/sh</i> sounds.</p> <p>To provide learners with the opportunity to reflect on the sounds of the English language.</p> <p>To raise learners phonemic awareness of the sounds of the English language.</p>	<p>Move to slide 15 - -Food Train Chant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>We're going to do a different activity now.</i> - <i>I'm going to say a few words and I'd like you to just listen very carefully. What sounds am I making? What do they make you think of?</i> - <i>Please put your heads on the table, close your eyes and just relax.</i> <p><i>Say chant (3 times)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What did it sound like? (A train?)</i> <p>CCQ'S + Monitor + Feedback - Praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now, let's look at the pictures, (sugar) What other words/ sounds does this sound/word make you think of? (Shoe, shhh) - What about chocolate, cake, biscuits? - When I say these words, how many words do you hear? - If you had to write down this word (soup) how would you write it? - How do you say this word? (Board - SOUP) - (Flexistage) Which words rhyme with SOUP? <p>Move to slide 13-19 - -Food items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Now, were going to practice the chant.</i> <p><i>Drill CHANT - Use rhythm</i></p> <p>Model language train sounds + Use <u>PWT</u> to elicit language</p> <p><i>Wonderful job!</i></p>	<p>T - St</p> <p>St-St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>
09.55	<p>Metacognition + Reflection</p> <p>To allow Sts an opportunity to use their own knowledge + language.</p> <p>To encourage learners to share their ideas and opinions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Well done everybody! Thank you so much for your effort.</i> - <i>Did you enjoy this activity? Why?</i> - <i>What did you enjoy the most? Why?</i> - <i>When was it easier to learn the words? In a song or just saying them?</i> <p>Monitor + Feedback - Praise.</p> <p>You were amazing today! Well done everybody!</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p>

09.45	<p>Speaking + Pronunciation</p> <p>To allow Sts an opportunity to use their own knowledge.</p> <p>To allow opportunity for T. to assess pronunciation.</p> <p>To encourage learner assessment outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you try this sandwich? Is it yummy or yucky? - Did you already know many of these words? - Were they easy or difficult to pronounce? - Which one's were difficult? <p>Collect feedback and make notes.</p> <p>Praise students.</p> <p>Move to slide 27- -Pete's BIG sandwich</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were going to play a quick game now. I'm going to say some words and I want you to circle the word-pictures you hear, ok? <p>CCQ'S + Monitoring + Feedback and Praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's ok of you don't understand or know a word. It's just for me to understand what we need to work on next, ok? - Do you have any questions? <p>Repeat words 3 times. CH/SH</p>	
09.55	<p>Metacognition: Reflection</p> <p>To encourage students to reflect on the listening strategies they used in class</p>	<p>Encourage students to assess learning outcomes by having a WG discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>So, what did we do today? Can you order the activities?</i> • <i>Which activities would you like to do again?</i> <p>Praise Sts effort and hard work during the lesson.</p>	<p>T- St</p> <p>St-St</p>
10.00	Break	Students leave for break.	St – St

APPENDIX 22**LESSON PLAN III**

Lesson Plan III

Pete the Cat - Pete's BIG Lunch

Skills - Speaking, Listening and Pronunciation

ESE - Escola Superior de Educação do Porto
Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo

15/01/2024 - 3º X/Z

Cláudia de Sousa Antunes - 3110450

Class Profile

Overview

This is a monolingual group comprised of 24 students (15 girls and eight boys) and shall, from now on, be named 3rd X and 3rd Z due to data protection regulations. This group is studying English at a primary school level, and this is their first year learning a foreign language. At the end of the fourth grade, these students shall be at an A1 level in all four skills.

Classes are held twice a week, every Monday and Wednesday from 9 am-10 am and 10 am-11 am, respectively, at the P. Educational Centre.

Although there are more female learners than male learners in this group, their age range is well-balanced. All students are enthusiastic and motivated to learn and work well in groups.

We have identified linguistic strengths and weaknesses based primarily on their L1 and age. All learners enjoy a more communicative approach to learning and are especially keen on taking part in activities where they can move around the classroom, sing, use their bodies as sound boxes, dance, or share their opinions in a cross-classroom conversation.

Our learners are learning English as part of their primary school education programme. English became a curriculum subject in 2015, and since then, students have been gradually exposed to English, its form and usage to guarantee a smooth transition between cycles of education.

This lesson plan and the subsequent lesson plans aim to expose learners to listening tasks, which will be pivotal to developing their spoken competence and further apprehension of syntactic, lexical, phonological and pragmatic information.

By introducing learners to authentic listening materials and *micro-listening tasks*, I will provide them with natural language examples and usage, working towards their autonomy and independence. The proposed activities and tasks intend to allow the learners to learn even after the course is over and the teacher is no longer there. (Field, 2008)

Overall Aim

Main Aims:

By the end of the lesson, learners will have been able to further develop their listening skills by identifying the difference between the following minimal pairs: *ch/sh* (initial and final position) and identifying word stress.

By the end of the lesson, learners will have practiced listening and pronouncing *ch / sh* words in both in an initial and final position.

Subsidiary Aim

By the end of the lesson, learners will have been able to re-tell a story and sequence the several parts.

By the end of the lesson, learners will have revised and practised using the target language: (food and drink items) *bread and egg, fish, milk, apple, crackers and a hotdog, tomato and pickle, ice-cream, banana, cheese and baked beans and mayo.*

Timetable fit:

This class will fall on a Monday, and it will be the learner's first session of the day. Their last lesson focused on revising previously taught language based on unit 3 - School objects and Means of Transport. Learners shall have a test on the 24th of January and we therefore clarifying their doubts on the topics.

Today's session however, shall focus on introducing new lexis related to food and practice identifying and pronouncing the following minimal pairs: *sh/ch* when placed both in an initial and final position.

I shall use a catchy story (*Pete the Cat - Pete's BIG lunch*) which has an engaging storyline to introduce and introduce and consolidate the new vocabulary. The students are now very familiar with the main character. This specific lexical point can also be elicited from the story, as the pictures describe the story. Additionally, the story uses engaging and relatable content with simple language and repetitive phrases and sounds. This book also incorporates musical storytelling and rhythms, which I anticipate will help create a safe , non-threatening learning space where learners feel free to experiment with language by means of music and rhythm.

I am also going to use two short songs as warmers to introduce the concepts of opposites as the story focuses on concepts such as *big, small, in, out, open, shut etc.*

The fact that these stories are dynamic and engaging caters for this specific age-group, and by combining the existing songs, chants and rhymes in the book with specific language-centred activities I hope to be able to enhance the students' phonemic awareness and pronunciation skills. I intend to elicit features of rhyming words and word stress.

My goal is to explore the possibility of using the inherent musical storytelling characteristics of the "Pete the Cat" books to create an effective, meaningful and significant learning experience. Thus, helping students develop a better understanding of the English language's sound patterns, rhythm and word stress, as well as acquire meaning-building strategies aimed at better understanding stories.

Assumptions

Listening Skills

- 1) This is a mixed-ability beginner group of learners and I have assessed that they are fairly well equipped to deal with the basic perceptual skills of listening, such as recognising sounds, syllables, prominent words, and sentence stress. I believe they will be able to cope well with the proposed activities.
- 2) Students will be able to follow more than 70% of the session in English, as we have previously seen.
- 3) Students are usually keen on trying new activities and love being challenged. Learners react positively to the repetitive nature of songs, chants and rhymes.
- 4) However, as this is their first session, learners' are usually sleepy and shall certainly need more dynamic, hands-on activities.
- 5) My assumption is that the repetition found in songs and rhymes fosters and encourages active participation and learning. As a result, we might be able to determine that musical storytelling promotes enhanced language retention and understanding.

Topic Fit

6) Students have previously learnt and given extensive controlled practice of the previously taught grammar point: *There is/are + school objects*. Learners' will continue making use of said functional language (*there is, there are*).

7) Listening to two catchy songs on opposites shall cater for those learners' who take longer to engage in the session as they feel sleepy. It is also a fun and dynamic *sing-along* activity which shall create a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

8) Learners should already know some of the vocabulary and have done sequencing activities in the past, therefore, I am confident that they will be able to complete the activities successfully.

Linguistic

This topic shall be a brief introduction to Unit 4 which works on Family and Routines. I shall focus on meals and lexis related to food.

9) I have deliberately chosen these specific songs as their melodies are catchy and have instant appeal. The sentences are short and repetitive, and we are able to practice the sh/ch sounds and word stress whilst singing along. (I can also assess learners' difficulties)

10) Learners will complete 2 worksheets as reference and controlled practice of what they did during today's session.

11) Learners will also complete another worksheet as a controlled test sample to assess learners' understanding and ability to recognise the difference between two minimal pairs: *sh/ch* when placed both in an initial and final position

12) My aim is to help learners acquire language both organically and holistically. Musical storytelling/Catchy tunes are a way of offering learners good quality reference models of contextualised language.

Anticipated problems/Solutions

Listening Skills

Problem 1:

Students might feel sleepy and take longer to engage in the lesson.

Solution 1:

The first activity which is the “Opposites” song shall work on waking everybody up. We shall also do a few physical activities in case they are extra sleepy.

Phonology

Problem 2:

Students might have difficulty understanding the difference between *lunch* and *lanche*. Although these words sound like homophones, they have completely different meanings in L1 and L2 .

Solution 2:

Learners will be provided with several opportunities to repeat the listening activities. Both songs can be accompanied by gestures which shall help learners learn-by-doing. Learners will have visual cues to scaffold the vocabulary beforehand.

Problem 3:

Students might have difficulty identifying the stress in words such as: *chocolate*, *mayo*, *crackers*.

Solution 3:

I'll play the song as many times as needed. The song has an animated video-clip which should provide the learner's with the auditory cues they need.

Problem 4:

Learners might struggle with the pronunciation of certain sounds /ch/ and /sh/ - L1 influence. Students struggle to pronounce the words/sounds correctly.

Solution 4:

Use sound patterns and choral/individual drilling. - *Cheese/Chocolate/Fish/Crunchy*. Monitor closely and offer praise and encouragement. Model the sounds and show learners how to position their mouths when saying these sounds.

Technical

Problem 5:

The lesson involves using the internet. There is a risk that the internet connection may not work on the day of the lesson.

Solution 5:

Both the PWT and the songs will be downloaded from the internet and kept on a usb drive.

Affective

Problem 6:

Some students have noise-sensitivity.

Solution 6:

As I am now aware of this situation, I shall be careful to adjust the volume according to the student's needs.

Problem 7:

Learners don't understand the instructions.

Solution 7:

Concept check and monitor closely.

Lexical

Problem 8:

Students might not be able to understand the concept of breakfast, lunch and dinner as this topic is related to Unit 4 - Family and Routines.

Solution 8:

Monitor closely clarify any doubts. Resort to L1 whenever necessary.

Procedure:

Time	Stage and Aims	Procedure	Interaction Pattern (pairs, whole class etc.)
09.00	<p>Warmer - Lead in</p> <p>To generate interest in the topic.</p> <p>To revise previously taught vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hello everyone! How are you feeling today?</i> (exemplify and go over vocabulary related to feelings: tired, happy, sad, ill, hungry, etc) - <i>How was your weekend? Did you read? Did you play football? Did you go to a party?</i> - <i>That's wonderful!</i> - We are now going to listen to 2 songs and I would like you to repeat the gestures. I will pause the song as we go to help you. - The song mentions many different opposites. <p>Play songs: "Open/Shut #3 and #1" - Super Simple songs (Invite learners to stand up and sing-along)</p> <p>Play song as many times as needed.</p> <p>Monitor - Feedback on pronunciation - Praise.</p> <p>Keep eye on time!!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Well done everyone!</i> <p>Feedback and Praise</p>	<p>T-Sts-T</p> <p>St – St</p>
09.10	<p>Speaking</p> <p>To activate schemata, to focus on target grammar</p> <p>To introduce and elicit new vocabulary</p>	<p>Project PWT on slide 5.</p> <p>Ask: <i>Are you hungry? (gesture tummy)</i></p> <p>Elicit answers from learners using gestures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I'm a little big hungry. I didn't have a big breakfast.</i> - <i>Did you have a big breakfast?</i> <p>(Make sure learners understand concept of breakfast - 1st meal of the day.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What do you usually have for breakfast? If they answer in Portuguese, repeat the words in English. Elicit as many words as possible praising learners who try in English.</i> <p>Possible words: apple, yoghurt, banana, (fruit), milk, bread, toast, cheese, cereal, biscuits/ cookies, jam/marmalade, orange juice, chocolate milk, etc.</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>St – St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>

09.15	<p>Speaking + Listening</p> <p>To provide an opportunity check predictions.</p>	<p>Great job everyone!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We're going to listen to a song now which asks you: are you hungry? - Let's see if your words are in the song. <p>Move to slide 6 - - Play song Encourage students to sing along.</p> <p>-</p> <p>PWT - check answers Feedback + Monitor - Praise. Keep eye on time!!!</p>	T – St
09.20	<p>Speaking</p> <p>To focus Sts attention on the target language and its usage.</p> <p>To provide learners with opportunities for freer speaking.</p>	<p>Ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you're hungry, what can you do? What do you do? (Tell my mum, open the fridge, make a sandwich, eat some fruit, etc.) <p>Move to slide 7 - -Fridge</p> <p>Ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What's in this fridge? What's in your fridge? <p>Move to slide 9 - -Fridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does your fridge also have ...? - <i>Elicit foods</i> <p>CCQ'S + Monitor + Feedback - Praise.</p>	<p>T- St</p> <p>St-St PW</p> <p>T- St</p>
09.30	<p>Speaking + Pronunciation</p> <p>To ear-train and practice pronunciation of the <i>ch/sh</i> sounds.</p> <p>To assess persisting knowledge gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of you mentioned that when you're hungry you make a sandwich. - <i>Check pron.</i> - Do you make a BIG sandwich or a small sandwich - What can we put in a sandwich? <p><i>Drill pronunciation - Use rhythm</i></p> <p>Move to slide 11 - -Fridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can you see in this sandwich? I can see... <p>Model language + Use PWT to elicit language <i>Wonderful job!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now, were going to learn some new words related to food. You already know many of them. :) <p>Move to slide 13-19 - -Food items</p> <p>Modelling and Praise.</p> <p>Keep eye on time!!!</p>	<p>T - St</p> <p>St-St</p> <p>T-St-T</p>

09.35	<p>Speaking + Pronunciation</p> <p>To allow Sts an opportunity to use their own knowledge.</p> <p>To allow opportunity for T. to assess pronunciation.</p> <p>To encourage learner assessment outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Well done everybody! Thank you so much for your effort.</i> - <i>Would you like to listen to a story? Pete the Cat has a new adventure!</i> - <i>Remember in the last story Pete the Cat had a box? What was it called? - Lunchbox</i> - <i>Why did he have that box? Because he had lunch at school.</i> - <i>Exactly. You are going to listen to the story. There are no pictures. You must tick all the foods you hear.</i> <p>Handout - + ccq's</p> <p>Move to slide 23- -Pete's BIG lunch</p> <p>Play story as many times needed.</p> <p><i>Well done everybody!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Now we're going to sequence the foods in the order they appear.</i> <p>CCQ'S + Monitoring + Feedback and Praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you get the order right? Let's check. <p>Move to slide 25- -Pete's BIG sandwich.</p>	<p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p> <p>T-St-T</p>
09.45	<p>Speaking + Pronunciation</p> <p>To allow Sts an opportunity to use their own knowledge.</p> <p>To allow opportunity for T. to assess pronunciation.</p> <p>To encourage learner assessment outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you try this sandwich? Is it yummy or yucky? - Did you already know many of these words? - Were they easy or difficult to pronounce? - Which one's were difficult? <p><i>Collect feedback and make notes.</i></p> <p><i>Praise students.</i></p> <p>Move to slide 27- -Pete's BIG sandwich</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were going to play a quick game now. I'm going to say some words and I want you to circle the word-pictures you hear, ok? <p>CCQ'S + Monitoring + Feedback and Praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's ok of you don't understand or know a word. It's just for me to understand what we need to work on next, ok? - Do you have any questions? <p>Repeat words 3 times. CH/SH</p>	
09.55	<p>Metacognition: Reflection</p> <p>To encourage students to reflect on the listening strategies they used in class</p>	<p>Encourage students to assess learning outcomes by having a WG discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>So, what did we do today? Can you order the activities?</i> • <i>Which activities would you like to do again?</i> <p>Praise Sts effort and hard work during the lesson.</p>	<p>T- St</p> <p>St-St</p>

10.00	Break	Students leave for break.	St – St
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