



Digital videos in the English as a Second Language classroom

Vídeos digitais na sala de aula de Inglês como Segunda Língua

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed at investigating the use of digital videos for L2 development, with the specific objectives of identifying the: 1) frequency of use and the sources of the videos, 2) selection criteria and instructional use, and 3) perception of their benefits. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire with thirteen English teachers from extracurricular courses offered at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. The results showed that 8 teachers reported using videos about 20% of their classes; 1, 40%; 1, 60%; and 3, 80%. Most teachers use videos from YouTube, TED talk videos, DVDs in general, and videos accompanying the textbooks. For the selection criteria, teachers use: video length, authenticity, difficulty level, topic adequacy in relation to the topic in class, grammar and vocabulary presentation in context; and for the instructional use, videos are used mostly to teach vocabulary and grammar, introduce and explain the topics related to the unit, contextualize the language and foster topic discussions, show diversity of language with abstract/poetic language, promote skills development, and prepare for activities. The perceived benefits include contextualization and authentic use of the language, language use in its natural pace, topic introduction and explanation assistance, attractiveness and engagement, delivery of visual input, and use of subtitles. The possible conclusions are that digital videos are present and can contribute for L2 development, and that teachers are capitalizing on their best use in their L2 classrooms.

KEYWORDS: Digital videos. L2 classroom. Benefits.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste estudo foi investigar o uso de vídeos digitais para o desenvolvimento de L2, com os objetivos específicos de identificar: 1) a frequência de uso e as fontes dos vídeos, 2) os critérios de seleção e uso instrucional, e 3) a percepção dos seus benefícios. Dados foram coletados por meio de questionário com treze professores de Inglês de cursos extracurriculares oferecidos pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina). Os resultados mostraram que 8 professores usam vídeos em 20% de suas aulas; 1, 40%; 1, 60%; e 3, 80%. A grande maioria usa vídeos do *YouTube*, mas também de outros *websites*, vídeos *TED talk*, DVDs, e vídeos que acompanham os livros didáticos. Como critérios de seleção, os professores usam: a duração dos vídeos, a autenticidade, o grau de dificuldade, a adequação do tópico relacionado ao assunto da aula, a apresentação de gramática e vocabulário em contexto; e para o uso instrucional, os vídeos são usados em sua maioria para ensinar

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vocabulário e gramática, introduzir e explicar os assuntos relacionados à unidade, contextualizar a língua, promover o desenvolvimento de habilidades e preparação para atividades. As contribuições percebidas incluem contextualização e uso autêntico da língua, uso da língua em ritmo natural, introdução de assunto e assistência às explicações, atratividade e engajamento, apresentação de *input* visual, e o uso de legendas. As possíveis conclusões são que vídeos digitais podem contribuir para o desenvolvimento de L2, e que professores têm feito o melhor proveito do seu uso em suas salas de aula de L2.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Vídeos digitais. Sala de aula de L2. Contribuições percebidas.

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1 Introduction

Videos have been a part of our society, particularly after the advent of video cassette recorder (VCR) with the technology for video home system (VHS) and of the digital video disk (DVD). More recently, digital videos have been made available in many formats on the Internet, particularly on YouTube, produced for various purposes, including educational ones (Tumolo, 2017; Almurashi, 2016).

Including videos as part of the second language¹ (L2) classroom has been part of various initiatives. Publishers of textbooks for L2 instruction have included packages of videos and more recently, the Ministry of Education in Brazil has promoted the incorporation of digital educational material, including videos, in the textbooks for L2 distributed to the schools as part of its *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD), now called *Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático* (PNLD) (Brasil, 2022; 2022).

Considering that teachers of English as an L2 may profit from the videos, this study aimed at understanding their presence in their classrooms. For that, its general objective was to investigate the use of digital videos for L2 instruction, with the specific objectives focused on the: 1) frequency of use and sources of the videos; 2) selection

¹ In this text, we are using second language as a general term for any language other than the first.

criteria and instructional use; and 3) perception² of their benefits. Next, section 2 presents a reflection on possible uses for video for L2 development³; section 3, the method, with information on data collection and analysis; section 4, the data analysis and discussion; and finally, section 5, the final remarks.

2 Videos in L2 development

Considered part of the language teaching classroom since the early 1980s (Rajadell; Garriga-Garzón, 2017), videos can be used for L2 development for various reasons. They are related to: 1) the exposure to and the provision of general knowledge and linguistic input; 2) the delivery of visual and oral sensory input; 3) the use of subtitles (or captions); 4) motivation and engagement; 5) the possibility of autonomous use by learners; 6) the provision of visual cues for the interpretation of situational and cultural contexts of communication; and 7) the possibility of pausing and repeating of the incoming information (input). All these aspects are briefly discussed next.

Videos allow for the exposure to and the provision of general knowledge. In watching the videos, the listening material becomes the source of oral input for the processes involved in comprehension and in the construction of mental representations and, thus, in development of various types of knowledge (mostly declarative knowledge). Also, they can assist the activation of prior knowledge (Deshpande, 2016), that is, knowledge already stored in the long-term memory. Hattan and Alexander (2020) say that the activation of prior knowledge is essential for inference making, content retrieval and relevance recognition of the material exposed to. Tumolo (2011) claims that the provision of prior knowledge makes it possible for

² Based on da Silva (2005, p. 1), perception in this study refers to “a physical and intellectual ability used in mental processes to recognize, interpret, and understand events; an intuitive cognition or judgment”. Thus, the participants’ interpretation and understanding of the benefits of using video were collected and analyzed. This helped to understand the reasons why they have chosen to use videos. In addition, it helps to provide rationale for the use of videos to be adopted by teachers.

³ In this article, the terms learning, acquisition and development are used interchangeably.

the cognitive operations involved in comprehension to consume less resource from the limited working memory capacity. The author adds that the use of cognitive resources made available benefits various processes, such as main idea construction, idea predictions, comprehension monitoring, assignment of word meaning and referent, and processing of complex syntactic structures and of ambiguities in garden-path sentences, all of them essential for comprehension.

In the context of L2 teaching, videos can be the sources of language input and, thus, important resources in fostering the development of the target-language (Berk, 2009). Ever since the late 1970s and the early 1980s, L2 theoreticians, such as Stephen Krashen (1982) and Rod Ellis (1994), have recognized language input as essential for language acquisition. It is essential in terms of providing declarative knowledge about the language, for example, vocabulary (word forms and their meanings) as well as grammar (rules and their applications), and providing opportunities of exposure for skills development, the receptive skills in particular.

Language input can be provided by materials developed for general communication with a general audience. Because they have the authentic purpose of communication, containing genuine speech, they can be called authentic material in the field of applied linguistics, which has accepted a consensual definition of authentic material as “any materials which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching” (Nunan, 1989, p. 54). Videos can be the authentic material to present the target language input (Bajrami; Ismaili, 2016). That is the case of the many videos made available on the internet, with the purpose of communicating about events, content, procedures, etc. The website YouTube, for example, offers a vast number of videos, from homemade presenting everyday life situations to professional productions, such as movies, movie trailers, documentaries, to name some.

Language input can also be provided in materials developed for the audience of language learners. In this case, the material has a controlled pedagogical design. It

can have pre-modified input (Ellis, 1994; Ellis; He, 1999) with control of the amount and type of language input, or have comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), with input that can be assumed to be comprehensible for the target learners. Alternatively, it can be a simple account (Widdowson, 1978), with the control of the content for the target audience. Videos designed for language learning, including those by textbooks publishers in the area, can have clear pedagogical objectives of focusing on specific language input, in terms of type, content and amount and, thus, can fall into this category of controlled pedagogical material.

Videos can deliver both visual input as well as verbal oral input. When learners are exposed to videos, not only can they hear the oral verbal language, but they also have access to information that is presented visually. This combination of visual and oral information may enhance the development of the language skills and improve language comprehension, particularly oral comprehension, since videos can provide much more information for listeners to keep their attention focused on the oral material (Wang, 2015).

In addition, providing both visual and verbal oral input can improve the information processing of the content conveyed by the video. The cognitive system in humans can receive both visual and oral verbal information through two different channels: the auditory/verbal channel and the visual/pictorial channel. Because of that, the limited processing capacity of the working memory (WM) is enhanced (Paivio, 1990; Sweller; Ayres; Kalyuga, 2011) and learning is improved. This follows the Modality Principle by Mayer (2009), which says, based on empirical evidence, that people learn better with images and oral narration than with image and printed text.

Also, the interaction of the information provided by each one of the two different channels within the working memory (Mayer, 2005b) may allow the processing of the visual information to compensate for poor processing of the oral verbal information resulting from poor proficiency level, in an L2, for example. Such

compensation process follows compensatory strategies, when linguistic shortcomings can be compensated by other sources in order to arrive at meaning and follows the assumptions of compensatory processing, explained, for example, in interactive-compensatory models of language comprehension, such as Stanovich's (1980), which says that a deficit in a specific process results in more reliance on other sources. In any case, clues provided visually may compensate for the poor oral decoding process resulting also from poor proficiency level in an L2, and assist in the construction of a mental representation of the video content and, ultimately in the development of an L2.

Videos can provide subtitles or captions⁴, resources that can be useful for L2 development. The use of subtitles is discussed by Lavaur and Bairstow (2011). According to them, at times viewers can have difficulties in comprehending the information presented orally in the videos, and subtitles can work as a strategy to help them in comprehending complex pieces of language, thus, fostering not only the understanding of the information, but also in making sense of the language input. The authors also argue that the use of subtitles can be of two types: *intralingual* and *interlingual*. Intralingual subtitles present viewers with subtitles in the same language as the one spoken in the video being viewed. Interlingual subtitles, on the other hand, present viewers with subtitles in a language different from the language on the video being viewed. The effect inter- or intralingual subtitles can have on the process of learning an L2 depends on the level of proficiency learners have. For more experienced learners, intralingual subtitles may be more beneficial, whereas for novice learners, interlingual subtitles may better aid comprehension.

Mitterer and McQueen (2009) investigated the effect subtitles can have in aiding the learning of a second language. In their study, Dutch participants were exposed to

⁴ The difference between subtitles and captions is mostly technical, and both refer to the availability on the TV screen of written verbal information corresponding to the oral verbal information.

two types of oral input (Scottish and Australian) with different accents presenting subtitles in their native language (Dutch), in the second language (English) or no subtitles. The results suggested that the use of intralingual subtitles appear to foster the learning of speech, once learners can easily observe which words and sounds are being spoken, making it easier for them to connect written words and sounds.

In a meta-analysis focusing on 18 studies, Perez *et al.* (2013) investigated the effects of captions in videos for the development of listening and the learning of vocabulary in L2. The authors concluded that, for listening, “captioning can be considered a powerful tool for reinforcing learners’ comprehension of video materials” (Perez *et al.*, 2013, p. 731), since they may a) ensure conscious monitoring of the speech, b) aid in word recognition and speech stream chunking problems and reduce decoding effort compensating for comprehension breakdowns, and c) encourage sound-script automatization. For vocabulary learning, they confirmed that “bimodal input fosters vocabulary learning” and concluded that captioning may a) contribute to a conscious focusing on the form; b) encourage attention, c) support learners in constructing an initial form-meaning link, that is, a link between a form, a meaning, and their relationship; d) assist learners to better understand each word; and e) reinforce contextual clues for inferring word meaning.

Videos can motivate and engage learners. They can have emotional features, appealing features for attracting viewers, such as colors, shapes, sizes, effects, etc., and engaging features, involving viewers in learning situations. Heidig, Müller and Reichelt (2015) have investigated the design features of multimedia materials and their effects on emotions and learning. The authors found by collecting data with a group of German college students that, although the direct impact on learning was low, its indirect impact was high, since there was a large impact on learners’ intrinsic motivation, especially to continue working with the material. Since videos are also multimedia material, it is possible to extend this positive indirect effect to them and assume motivation and engagement to be high in working with them.

Furthermore, Ismaili (2013) found that videos provide interesting and motivating clues to accompany oral and/or written inputs. They increased interests and motivation, and helped improve listening comprehension and speaking ability, especially because they provide the chance for learning real-life conversation by presenting learners with examples of conversational situations where characters use the L2 in interaction situations to get their messages understood by their interlocutors.

Park and Jung (2016) investigated the effectiveness of a video-based curriculum in motivating Korean secondary school EFL learners. They found, from the motivation surveys and interviews, that students were more motivated with the use of videos including TED talk, sitcoms, TV news reports, and movies, especially in terms of gaining a positive attitude for the English language. They showed that, after an 8-week instructional period, there was a positive change regarding motivation, particularly attitudinal changes towards learning English.

Bravo *et al.* (2011, p. 638) investigated the effect of the use of videos in Spanish university students' learning motivation. The videos used were the low-cost educational video, defined by them as "a short demonstration stream video which has a very specific goal and has been created in a very short period of time, with few resources and that can be combined or embedded within other materials of a course". They found that motivation is enhanced since these short videos help comprehension, making contents more attractive and more directed to students' questions, replacing long written paragraphs in response to particular questions.

Videos can provide learners with opportunities for autonomous search of information (Stanley, 2013). Learners can search for videos, available on the Internet, for assistance to learn about topics in the L2 or about the L2, on demand and just-in-time. Based on Gee (2005), on demand means accessing information when needed whereas just-in-time means accessing information when ready to be put to use. This means that whenever faced with a question, learners may resort to online videos for

answers, on demand and just-in-time, that is, answers are found and applied when needed. Answers no longer need waiting. A typical case can be the use of tutorials; new generations, when faced with a practical problem, find solutions in tutorial videos, available on YouTube, for example.

The autonomous search may also be specifically for the L2 learning. Salbego and Tumolo (2014) investigated students' perceptions regarding how autonomous initiatives fostered the four skills development in English in a public high school in Brazil. Based on their discussion in the area of autonomous learning and autonomous language learning, they found, with a qualitative approach, that the participants considered autonomous initiatives as essential for the development of the traditional four skills making up language ability, and that they had different examples of initiatives and actions for the development of the four skills, including using videos, that is, watching films, series and documentaries.

Videos also offer visual cues of nonverbal communication that, combined with verbal communication in the L2, can assist the interpretation of the content by the viewer. When watching a specific scene of a conversation in a video, for example, learners can actually see the participants and the context as well as have an idea of their age, their relationship – whether they are friends, co-workers, relatives, etc. – and grasp information that, at times, is not explicitly given, but that can be inferred based on the contextual clues, visual in the case. This also allows for the learning of cultural aspects shown in the video (Wang, 2015).

Based on Cherry's (2020) types of nonverbal communication, it is possible to say that these visual cues include facial expressions, gestures, and eye gaze. Facial expressions provide visual cues for the interpretation of emotions of the characters (for example a smile tends to be interpreted as a sign of happiness or even of irony), which are even similar around the world (such as for happiness, sadness, anger, and fear). Gestures provide visual cues – e.g., greeting or waving, showing arriving or leaving.

The eye gazes provide visual cues on people's honesty, trustworthiness or their opposite, as well as on people's feelings towards one another, showing, for example, hostility, interest, and attraction.

In addition, they also offer visual cues of body language and posture, personal space, physical contact, appearance, and artifacts. Body language and posture also provide cues on the attitude - emotions, beliefs, and behaviors - of a person toward a particular object, person, thing, or event, for example defensive postures, arm-crossing, and leg-crossing. Personal space (i.e., proximity to others) provides cues on social norms, cultural expectations, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity. Physical contact, such as touch or its absence, can provide cues on affection, familiarity, sympathy, and other emotions. Appearance, such as colors, clothing, hairstyles, and others provides cues on identity and the relation with others. And lastly, artifacts: objects and images provide cues on your identity, that is, who you are and the things you like, as well as the time period of the situation depicted.

Videos allow for pausing and repeating of information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic. The amount of information that can be processed is limited by the nature of the human cognitive system, in particular its working memory (Mayer, 2005a; 2005b). When the information presented is new to the viewer, processing capacity may be exceeded (Sweller; Ayres; Kalyuga, 2011) and viewers have the possibility of pausing (Ibrahim, 2012). In so doing, the viewer has the control of segmenting the amount of information entering the cognitive system. Such control can be associated to pausing the video and re-watching any parts necessary for understanding the information presented.

Furthermore, learners can replay the video, allowing for repeated exposures to the information under the control of the viewer. Repeated exposure has been shown to assist the learning process in committing the information to the long-term memory (LTM) (Stevick, 1982, Nation, 2011; Laufer, 2017). Also, the control over the

information provided allows for the most efficient type of exposure, i.e., spaced one. Kang (2016), reviewing research on spaced versus massed exposure to information, claims that the spaced one improves memory for essential facts and concepts, facilitating complex learning and problem solving. Specifically concerning linguistic information, Tumolo (2007) says that spaced exposure to L2 words is better than massed one for vocabulary development.

In sum, videos may assist L2 learning in many ways. They may present general knowledge and language input, both through material considered authentic, produced for a general audience, and/or through material with pedagogical design, produced for the audience of language learners, with language input adequate to their presupposed proficiency level. They can be developed or chosen considering the amount and quality of both visual and verbal oral input, and the possibility of having the visual information as an aid to the general comprehension of the content conveyed by the video that the L2 learners are exposed to and expected to process. They can assist listening development and vocabulary learning, with the resource of subtitles or captioning, particularly intralingual ones, especially for sound-script automatization and form-meaning link. They can motivate by providing chances of exposure to real-life conversation and to various video types (trailers, tutorials, documentaries or TED talk) as well as by providing short explanations replacing long written ones.

In addition, videos can afford opportunities for learners to become autonomous in searching for information about topics in the L2 or about the L2, on demand and just-in-time, with a reduction of the dependence on teachers and instructors. They can provide visual cues of nonverbal communication that, combined with verbal communication in the L2, can assist the interpretation of the context depicted. These visual cues also involve cultural aspects such as different customs, behaviors and beliefs, resulting, ultimately, in the development of cultural awareness, an important aspect in the development of intercultural competence, which assists the communication with people from other cultures. They also allow for the control over

pausing for segmenting the information, and over repeating the exposure to the relevant information.

Based on all the possibilities for videos, this study sought to investigate their presence in the L2 classroom, with a focus on the frequency of use and the sources of the videos, the selection criteria and the instructional use, and lastly the perceived contribution. Next, the method for the study is presented.

3 Method

This study is part of a larger research, approved by the Ethics Board for Scientific Research, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), and registered by the number CAAE 71559917.7.0000.0121. It follows mostly a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Information on participants, procedures for data collection and analysis are given as follows.

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were English teachers at the extra-curricular courses offered at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC). An email message was sent inviting them to participate in the study (n=32). From the thirty-two teachers invited, thirteen agreed to participate. Personal meetings were scheduled for further explanations about how the research would be conducted and for the signing of the Consent Form.

3.2 Procedures for data collection and analysis

A questionnaire was used to collect the data. It was structured with two multiple-choice questions, in which participants checked whether they used videos in their classes and the frequency they did, and eight open-ended questions, in which seven focused on the use of videos in their practice, and one for the case any

participants would check they did not use videos. The first multiple-choice question asked participants whether they used videos in their classes, having to click on the YES or on the NO button. As the data was collected by means of an electronic questionnaire, it is was set so that, depending on participants' answers, they would be directed to different questions. For participants that would click on the YES alternative, the questionnaire would proceed to the next multiple-choice and the seven open-ended questions that concerned with details about their use of videos. In the case participants would click on the NO alternative, they would be provided with a question in which they were asked to explain the reasons for not using videos in their practice. The second multiple-choice question participants answered was concerned with the frequency they used videos in their classrooms. They had to rate their practice in percentage according to how much they believed they used videos for teaching by choosing one of five alternatives: 100% of classes, 80% of classes, 60% of classes, 40% of classes, or 20% of classes.

After rating their video use, participants were provided with the seven open-ended questions focusing on videos in their L2 classes. The questions were associated to sources, criteria for the choices, uses in the class, and contribution for L2 development and required examples of videos used.

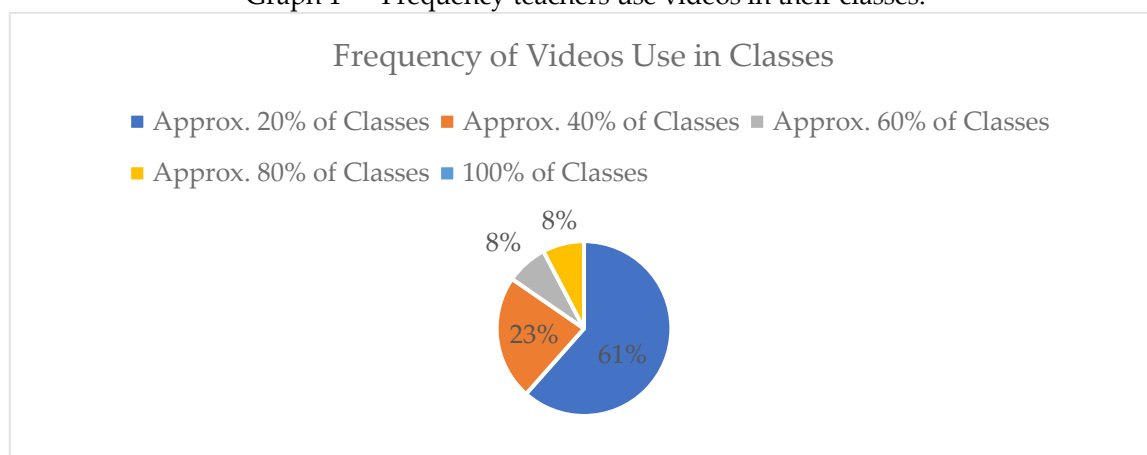
4 Data analysis and discussion

This section presents the data analysis and discussion based on the questionnaire used. The answers provided were interpreted and organized into three categories: in 4.1, frequency of use and sources of the videos: where the videos are taken from; in 4.2, reasons for the choices: why and how the videos are selected, and the instructional use, that is, how the videos are used in class; and in 4.3, views on their contribution: what they believed to be the contribution of the videos. They are presented in the subsections below.

4.1 Frequency of use and sources of the videos

A total of thirteen teachers took part in this research study. The frequency reported by the participants is represented in graph 1, below.

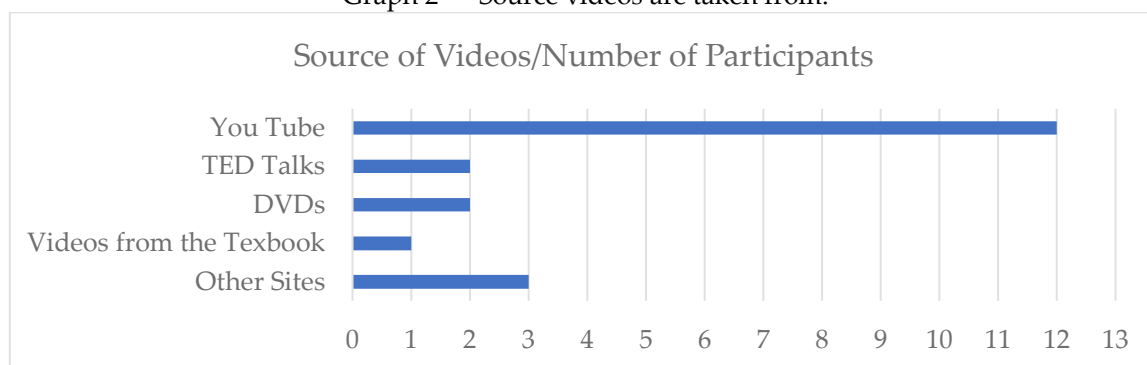
Graph 1 – Frequency teachers use videos in their classes.



Source: the authors (2021).

From the 13 participants, 8 reported to use videos about 20% of their classes; 01, 40%; 1, 60%; and 3, 80%, having no participant reported to use videos 100%. Concerning the sources of videos used in their classrooms to foster the learning of their students, five sources were mentioned, as in graph 2 below.

Graph 2 – Source videos are taken from.



Source: the authors (2021).

Once the question related to the sources of videos was open-ended, participants were not restricted to choose from readily available alternatives but were free to write as many sources as they used. From the 13 participants, 12 reported to use videos taken from the website YouTube (www.youtube.com), resulting in 92,3% of the participants. Possible explanations for the popularity of YouTube videos are: the easy access to the videos; the various time lengths; and the variety of types of videos, ranging from grammatical explanations to excerpts of films, talk shows, music videos and documentaries, to name some.

TED talk videos (www.ted.com), characterized as short videos, normally focusing on one participant giving a lecture or a talk on a certain topic, was another source for 2 participants (15,4%). As the website itself suggests “ideas worth spreading” the main objective of the website is the spread of different points of view brought and discussed by different people and intended to all audiences.

Still concerning using videos from the internet, 3 participants (23,1%) mentioned using videos from other websites, but without providing any further explanation in detail as to the names or links of the websites, or the kinds of videos they use from these websites in their classes.

Regarding DVD videos, 2 participants (15,4%) reported using them in their classes. One possible reason for the reduced number of teachers using DVD might be the fact that most of the films which are available on DVD can also be found on websites as YouTube. In addition, when the classrooms offer technological resources as computers, projectors and the internet, it becomes easier and faster for teachers to access and present the audiovisual materials to their students.

Finally, 1 participant reported using the videos which accompany the textbook used in the language course, representing 7,7% of the responses. This may be due to the fact that these videos are developed along with the pedagogical materials and are linked to the topics and language worked in the classes, possibly facilitating the

teachers' jobs to look at suitable materials which can meet students' needs and be in agreement with the topics worked in class.

Based on the teachers' responses, it is possible to say that videos are frequently used in their classes, possibly with the intention of exposing learners to oral input. Also, there is a preference for videos from YouTube, which are not necessarily produced for language instruction. This may show a concern for oral input from authentic sources.

4.2 Selecting and using videos for L2

Concerning videos for L2 development, it is possible to say that there were some criteria for selection and use in the classroom. They are explained below.

It is important to explain that, in order to preserve participants' identities, their names were replaced by numbers. The participants were numbered based on the order they answered the questionnaire and sent it to the researchers, that is, the first respondent was referred to a P01, the second as P02, ranging from P01 to P13. For the same reason, no gender was identified by pronouns; instead, the pronoun 'she' is used in all the cases, regardless of the participants' genders.

4.2.1 Selecting videos

There were several criteria for selecting the videos used. They were: length of the video; the authenticity of videos; the degree of difficulty; the adequacy of the topic in relation to the one discussed in class; the possibility of presenting both grammar and vocabulary in context. They are presented below.

One criterion mentioned by most participants was the length of the videos. P1 reported using videos lasting from 2 to 8 minutes; P3, up to 3 minutes; P5, up to 5 minutes; and P7, up to 10 minutes. Although participants provided no explanation for the choice of short videos, it may be possible to suggest that it is related to the period

of time for sustained attention (Cognifit, 2023). There is a general acceptance that sustained attention, in the case of lecturing, is from 10 to 15 minutes (Wilson; Korn, 2007). However, Wilson and Korn (2007) cast doubts in this estimate, arguing that studies are not based on empirical evidence and do not consider individual differences in attention. Hlas, Neyers and Molitor (2019, p. 109) say that, despite the doubts, “research during lectures indicate that students report regular attention lapses [...]”. The authors claim that there are a few factors impacting attention, such as fatigue and mental wandering. In fact, the processing in L2 may cause cognitive load in working memory since “paying attention in a second language involves attentional resources devoted to both language comprehension and informational content”. Assuming that both language comprehension and informational content must be processed, using attentional resources, shorter videos may be a good choice to keep the viewers’ attention sustained.

Criteria such as the topic and level of difficulty were also mentioned. P12 says:

Based on the topic discussed and the degree of difficulty for the groups.
(P12)

Authentic informative videos. Usually, these videos are chosen to instigate discussions on the topic in classroom. (P12)

Based on P12, it is possible to consider 3 different criteria: the authenticity of videos; the degree of difficulty; and the adequacy of the topic in relation to the topic used in class.

Choosing authentic materials has been one important criterion for language teachers. They present language in a way closer to what students may encounter outside the classroom, in situations of language use for communication, and there are good arguments for their adoption, such as engaging learners in texts to be found in real world (Nunan, 1989). However, they may also be difficult material to be understood by language learners in terms of language complexity: grammar may be

too complex and the new word density may be too high. Assessing the adequacy of language to the level of proficiency of learners may also be an important criterion. This concerns P12, in mentioning that the selection must consider “the degree of difficulty for the groups”. It also concerns P8, who says about the selection:

[...] I check whether the language is adequate to the level of students. (P8)

P08 expresses concern with using videos that are suitable for the groups being in accordance with their proficiency levels and states clearly that there must be the adequacy to the level of students. P1, on the other hand, chooses videos designed for educational purposes. P1 says:

[...] I try to find videos that were developed for educational purposes, for they have an adequate rhythm for the students. (P1)

The adequate rhythm mentioned by P1 as a selection criterion is probably related to the choices for the production of educational videos, including adequate choice for the amount of informational content and of L2 language complexity that a learner can process, especially in the case of transient flow of information of videos to be processed within the limited working memory capacity. Working memory has a limited capacity to retain and process information (Sweller, 2010), and for transient oral information, its capacity is even more limited because of the ongoing incoming information to be retained and processed next (Sweller; Ayres; Kalyuga, 2011; Ibrahim, 2012).

P10 chooses videos according to the topics in class. P10 says:

Usually according to the topic of the video, for example, I’ve already used a TED Talk in which a neuroscientist spoke about the relations of power and posture. (P10)

P10 chooses the authentic materials of TED Talk videos. These kinds of videos are developed for disseminating ideas brought by lecturers or people who give speeches on various general topics. It is possible to say that P10's choices of videos go beyond the teaching of the language structure, involving a discussion of social relations and possibly the role language has in the context, thus moving to a view of the language as a social practice.

In addition to general topics, grammatical topic was used as criterion for video selection. P1 said:

I start by searching for videos on the contextualized 'topic' of the class, and then I select some [videos] with the length I judge to be more appropriate (normally between 2 and 8 minutes). With some options, I watch the videos looking for the grammatical topic of the class and I choose the one which seems to have more tangible examples of the contextualized grammatical structure. (P1)

P1 mentions some steps followed for video selection. First, she looks for videos related to the topics worked in class, to present a contextualization of the topics. Then she considers the length, short videos preferably. Lastly, she chooses the ones with grammatical examples of the target language and the target grammatical aspects being worked, considering that they all are contextualized, once they are in videos.

Vocabulary teaching was another criterion mentioned for selecting videos for L2 classroom, as reported by P2:

[...] I select videos that will add vocabulary, present new vocabulary associated to the ones already being worked. (P2)

For P2, videos must be selected taking into consideration the target vocabulary, that is, with the focus on the consolidation of vocabulary being worked in class and, at the same time, the presentation of new related words, thus allowing for the creation of semantic or syntactic relations among words.

Participants 1, 2 and 10, thus, select videos for their topics. P10 selects them to assist the exposure to general topics, providing learners with the opportunities to construct knowledge. Videos can be sources of disseminating information on different topics. P1 and P2, in turn, mentioned specifically the videos as source of language input, both grammar and vocabulary.

4.4.2 Using videos

There were several uses for the videos. They were: teaching grammar; teaching vocabulary; showing diversity, with abstract/poetic language; contextualizing language and fostering topic discussions; developing skills; and preparing for activities. They are presented next.

Regarding the teaching of grammar, P5 said:

Most times, they are videos related to the grammatical topics I am teaching, which have some connection with the topics approached in the textbook. I use many music videos, some videos with grammatical explanations and several videos with curiosities about a certain issue, but which have a lot of dialogues, vocabulary, etc. (P5)

According to P5, the main factor for using videos in class is to present some kind of grammatical examples of the grammatical aspects from the textbook. In addition, the participant reported using different kinds of videos, such as music videos, or videos presenting curious information and various examples of language in use, with dialogs and vocabulary. In a similar way, P6 uses videos to foster the learning of the grammatical topics worked in class:

The videos are used to provide a different contact with the grammatical topics, that is, not limited to the textbook. [...]. (P6)

As can be seen, for the participant, videos are used in order to offer students with more examples of grammar in use, which are different from the ones provided in

the textbook. This can suggest that, in the language teaching context, providing students with different kinds of materials from different sources may be important.

In addition to teaching grammar, videos can be used to teach vocabulary. P9 said:

To introduce a topic (grammatical or vocabulary), to exemplify a pronunciation, or to explain a grammatical topic. (P9)

P9 used videos to introduce grammar but also vocabulary. She illustrated the use of one video to introduce a topic with vocabulary related to family members and the possessive adjectives⁵, and another one used for vocabulary related to routines and use of present simple⁶. In addition to grammar and vocabulary, she also mentioned using the videos to expose the learners to examples of pronunciation. Since videos have this oral component and present real oral language use mostly, they are suitable for that.

Videos are used to show diversity of language. P13 uses the videos due to their features and the diversity of language they may present:

Music videos, animations, informative videos, TV series, etc. I use them for many times they bring a more abstract/poetic language than the students are used to seeing in English [...]. (P13)

As can be observed from P13, videos are used due to the various ways in which they present the target-language, at times having a more referential function, for describing situations, objects, etc., and other times a more poetic function, for amusement. Based on P13, one important aspect is that language teaching can be supported by artistic productions, with the use of music videos and videos with

⁵ See the video mentioned by the participant: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bszz1h2QPgk>

⁶ See the video mentioned by the participant: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msqsxVX_gjs

abstract and poetics language. The mixture of features and types of videos can present a rich input, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, to the students.

Many participants mentioned, again, the use of video as a source for contextualization of the topics worked, or as topics for further discussions. P12, for example, reported to use videos to introduce a new topic or a topic for discussion:

[Videos are used] as a way to approach a new issue or discussion topic.
(P12)

P10 and P3 make the use of videos in a similar way:

I try to use [videos] as a tool to generate discussions related to a topic. [...] When a topic comes up in class that reminds me of any video, I show it to my students and this allows further topic discussion. (P10)

I use the videos for the contextualization of the topics to be explored. As I work with teaching reading, I use videos to awaken students' interest on the topics of the texts. Besides, I use them to trigger the activation of previous knowledge [...]. (P3)

For P3, videos can be a source of contextualization of the topics to be worked on and as a way of engaging and motivating learners. In addition, she stressed they can assist in the activation of prior knowledge. In fact, activating prior knowledge can assist the comprehension processes. As aforementioned, Tumolo (2011) shows there is the direct contribution of prior knowledge activation as a provision of an organized structured knowledge for the appropriate inferences and for the interpretation of events in a unified manner, and the indirect contribution that the provision of an organized structured knowledge allows for less resource use of the limited working memory capacity, benefitting other important processes involved in comprehension with the resources made available.

Videos can also be used for developing skills. P7 adds that videos can be used to work with listening comprehension:

[Videos] are used to introduce a topic, if the objective is a discussion about a specific subject, to develop listening skills, expand vocabulary or even exemplify a grammatical topic. (P7)

In fact, in addition to vocabulary and grammar, and topic introduction, videos can be used to develop listening skills. The exposure to the oral input in the target language is essential for the development of the oral skills (Müller-Hartman; Ditfurth, 2010). The natural exposure to the oral language may trigger its development, as claimed in the input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982). As all language input, oral input is essential in terms of providing declarative knowledge about the language, for example, vocabulary and grammar. However, there is also the possibility of enhancing the oral input, that is, directing attention to specific linguistic form by manipulating the input with, for example, highlights or repetitions (Cho; Reinder, 2013). This oral input enhancement can be a built-in feature of videos designed and produced for instructional purposes.

Videos can be used as a source for activities. P13 uses videos for activities, such as:

[...] group tasks, usually debates, interpretation, creation, etc. (P13)

As mentioned by P13, videos can be used to promote group work, where the students engage in discussions, exposing their opinions concerning how they interpret the information they present.

As has been presented, teachers can be considered to be well aware of the benefits videos can offer and the different affordances they can bring to the L2 classroom, in the process of teaching and learning. Depending on teachers' pedagogical objectives, videos can work as a rich source assisting the learning of new grammar structures and new vocabulary, showing diversity, contextualizing language, and fostering topic discussions. In addition, videos can work as a resource

that goes beyond supporting the learning of grammatical rules and/or vocabulary with the development of lexicon-grammatical competence. They can assist language skills development and promote group activities, having a social function (Firth, 2012), in which learners use the language to negotiate meaning concerning the content being watched, exposing their opinions as members of a social group. As reported by participants. Videos seem to have their place within the context of L2 teaching and learning.

4.3 Perceived contribution

In the questionnaire, participants were also asked about their perceptions on the contribution videos may have for L2 teaching, resulting in perceived benefits of videos. Based on their answers to the questionnaire, it is possible to say that they are related to: 1) contextualization and authentic use of the language; 2) language use in its natural pace; 3) topic introduction and explanation assistance; 4) attractiveness and engagement; 5) delivery of visual input; and 6) use of subtitles; all discussed next.

For many participants, the contribution videos can bring to the L2 classroom is to contextualize the linguistic knowledge. P1 and P2 say:

Above all, contextualize the linguistic knowledge. (P1)

It is possible to contextualize the topics. (P2)

In these cases, videos are a contextualized way to show essential components of the language ability, for example, L2 grammar and vocabulary, as well as to show the topics under discussion in context. In addition to that, participants mentioned that videos show language in use, when language is being used for communication, with authentic use. P1 and P7 say:

[...] the videos show the language being used with a real objective, in an organic context where the intention is not necessarily to teach the language

mechanics but only use it as a communication tool. (P1)

I think the use of videos is paramount because they are authentic and contextualized excerpts of the use of the target language. (P7)

For these participants, videos show contextualized and authentic use of the target language. Presenting language in context of use has the advantage of showing, for example, grammatical structures in sentences and ultimately how language works. Nunan (1998, p. 108) suggests that effective grammar instruction should include learners' exposure "to authentic samples of language so that the grammatical features being taught are encountered in a range of different linguistic and experiential contexts". It should also include opportunities for learners "to develop their own understandings of the grammatical principles of English by progressively structuring and restructuring the language through inductive learning experiences which encourage them to explore the functioning of grammar in context" (Nunan, 1998, p. 108). Videos can, thus, be appropriate material for the exposure to authentic samples of language and their viewing can offer the opportunities for the understanding and the development of grammatical principles.

Videos can also show language in its natural pace, that is, samples of language used in a normal pace, in its natural way. P2, for example, says:

Other contribution is the contact with the use of the English language in its "normal pace", which is usually faster than the audios and videos available in the Interchange textbook. (P2)

Likewise, P11 says that the videos present the language in a natural way, different from language in the textbook, and allow access not only to native speakers using the language, but to people from different cultures, nationalities and with different accents. P11 says:

Access to natural speaking, it is not that conversation from the textbook [...]. And, of course, access to the speaking of native speakers of diverse

nationalities. (P11)

Providing learners with different sources and kinds of input is also reported by P8. For her, videos provide learners with input different from the teacher and the textbook audios.

[Videos] help students have input different from the teacher and the audios. (P8)

For three participants, P2, P11 and P8, videos can provide learners with language in use with its natural pace, which, according to them, is different from the ones provided in the textbooks used.

In fact, there are advantages of exposing L2 learners to real uses of the language, with its natural pace. Learners may need to use the language in real situations in which the pace of the language is not usually controlled, as in the classroom. In these cases, the participants showed concern about preparing their students to communication in the real world.

However, there are advantages to use the material from the textbooks. They are produced for the specific audience of language learners, with controlled topic segmenting and controlled pacing. Videos have a transient flow of information and the processing capacity of the working memory is limited (Mayer, 2005b; Sweller, 2010). Videos designed for educational purposes may take that into consideration and the participants of this research are probably aware of that, although it was not mentioned.

Introduction to topics and assistance to explanation were also mentioned by participants.

It is also a different and interesting way of introducing a new subject. (P8)

[Videos] help in the explanation of some subjects [...]. (P9)

They [videos] can be an important source of topics for speaking activities [...]. (P6)

P8 mentioned the contribution of using videos as a way of introducing the topic of the didactic unit. In fact, videos can be used to present the viewers with related information. In case of familiar information, viewers start activating the background knowledge so that comprehension is facilitated. In case of new information, viewers may start constructing their mental representation with the use of the oral input as well as the pictorial input, in a compensatory manner in case it is needed.

P09, in turn, mentioned the use of videos for explanation of new or unfamiliar information. To be used for explanation, that is, to assist the comprehension process, videos must be designed or selected with a didactic purpose. For that, the explanation must show planning, considering principles such as the segmenting and the weeding⁷ principles (Ibrahim; Antonenko; Greenwood; Wheeler, 2012), which consider the video content in terms of amount and relevance of the information. Videos must have strategically selected informational and linguistic content. Comprehension is, thus, ultimately enhanced.

Videos as a source of topics for speaking activities was the perceived contribution of P6. This is in line with the approach adopted for flipped classroom, in which an activity is developed individually, preferably before class (at home) and class time is dedicated to group activities. In the case mentioned, it was a speaking activity (which involves listening) based on the video content, and that can use class time to be developed.

For some participants, videos can also contribute in terms of emotional aspects, since they can be motivating, interesting and engaging.

⁷ *Weeding* is a term associated to the design of educational materials, in this case, videos. It refers to the removal of any unnecessary pieces of information, such as written or spoken language, or imagery information that, rather than helping, might result in hurting learning.

Videos can be an efficient way of making the class more interesting and dynamic [...]. (P6)

[...] besides engaging students in narratives that enrich learning. (P2)

I think the videos call the attention, amuse and contemplate the topics approached in the book. The use of videos makes students more tuned and interested. (P5)

Moreover, the videos are tools that motivate students to have a better engagement during the classes. (P3)

Emotional aspects were identified to contribute to learning by P6, P2, P5, and P3. Interesting, engaging, motivating and attractive were the ideas expressed by them. These perceived contributions are corroborated with research in the area. With the use of videos, learners' intrinsic motivation and engagement can be high, especially to continue working with the material (Heidig; Müller; Reichelt, 2015), interests and motivation to improve listening comprehension and speaking ability can be increased (Ismaili, 2013), motivation towards learning English can become positive (Park; Jung, 2016) and comprehension successes resulting from short videos can be enhanced (Bravo *et al.*, 2011).

Another perceived contribution of videos is that they provide visual information. P5 says:

For being a rather visual person, I think this resource [the video] is very important. (P5)

P5 defines herself as a rather visual person and considers the possibility of visually oriented students. Koć-Januchta *et al.* (2017) carried out a study with visualizers and verbalizers using pictures and texts while learning, and found that visualizers spent more time looking at pictures than verbalizers while verbalizers spent more time looking at texts, suggesting that both visualizers and verbalizers use

information in line with their cognitive style for learning. Likewise, Plass, Chun, Mayer and Leutner (1998, p. 34) carried out a research with the use of two modes of presentation: verbal annotations (written translation of word) and visual annotations (picture or videoclip of word) and found that, for L2 story comprehension, the participants comprehended better when they could select their preferred mode. The authors elaborated further that for L2 learning, there are “advantages of adding a visual component to the traditionally strong emphasis on verbal modes of instruction”. Videos are, thus, appropriate, since they provide both visual and verbal information and learners may actively select the most appropriate mode or combination of both.

For P3, the use of multimodal material enhances the retention, acquisition and memory of the topics learnt.

Videos present information in a multimodal mode. I believe that the processing of multi-coded information improves the retention, acquisition and the retrieval of the topics learnt. (P3)

For P3, the use of videos can benefit the development of a L2, once information is presented visually and orally. As can be observed, the terms “multimodal” and “multi-coded” mentioned by P3 refers to the different modalities of presenting the information, (e.g., images, words, graphs), which may assist the comprehension and the retention of the information. Mayer (2009) carried out research aiming to investigate effectiveness of presenting information using different modes - visual and oral - can affect comprehension and learning. The results showed positive effects of the combination of different modes or media (images and sounds, for example). Based on the empirical findings of his research, he proposed the multimedia principle that says that “people learn better from pictures and words than from words alone” (MAYER, 2009, p. 223).

Providing visual information allows viewers to see nonverbal information. P2 recognizes that contribution by saying that videos:

[videos] show non-verbal language. (P2)

Non-verbal language, such as facial expressions, gestures, eye gaze, body language and posture, personal space, physical contact, appearance and artifacts, in fact, may assist the comprehension process, especially in the case of L2, in a way also compensating for low level of oral decoding of the verbal language.

Also, a perceived contribution of videos was the presentation of the language also in the written format, with the feature of subtitles or captions, displayed on the video itself, or even the automatic generation of subtitles, available with the video in platforms such as YouTube. Concerning that, P10 says:

I take the opportunities to teach some strategies they [the students] can practice the English language by using videos autonomously, for example, on the [web]site TED talk, the transcription of the video may be displayed as the speaker talks, or even, the automatic generation of subtitles of YouTube may be useful (P10).

P10 recognizes the contribution of videos for practicing the L2, and especially for the autonomous development of the L2 with the use of either transcriptions or subtitles. In fact, videos have the advantage of being available for access any time, as well as the advantage of offering the written format of the oral language, assisting the development of the vocabulary and of the oral receptive skill, as shown by the aforementioned research by Perez *et al.* (2013).

In sum, the perceived contribution of digital videos by the teachers participating in this study seems to include contextualization and authentic use of the language, language use in its natural pace, topic introduction and explanation assistance; attractiveness and engagement, delivery of visual and oral information, and use of subtitles.

5 Final remarks

Videos have been a part of the second language (L2) classroom for a long time. Considering all these possibilities, this study aimed at investigating the possible contribution of digital videos for L2 development, with the specific objectives of understanding their presence and use in the L2 classroom, specifically concerning how often teachers make use of videos in their classes, the sources of the videos, that is, where they are taken from (DVDs, Internet). In addition, the criteria teachers used for selecting the videos for their classes and how the videos were used, and what is teachers' perception concerning the benefits such resource can have in second language learning.

Based on the answers provided by the L2 teachers participating in this study, it was possible to find out that all the participants used videos frequently, including YouTube videos, TED talk videos, DVDs in general, and videos accompanying the textbooks, provided by the publisher. However, it is important to emphasize that the study has shown that not every video available can be considered cognitively suitable. The amount of information that learners are exposed to, as well as the information and language complexity presented on videos can be highly cognitively demanding, hurting learning rather than fostering it.

For the selection criteria, participants mentioned the short length of the videos, the authenticity of videos, the degree of difficulty, the adequacy of its topic in relation to the topic in class, the possibility of presenting both grammar and vocabulary in context. In relation to the instructional use, they mentioned the use to teach vocabulary and grammar, to introduce and explain the topics related to the unit, to contextualize language and foster topic discussions, show diversity of language, with abstract/poetic language, to promote skills development, and to prepare for activities. For the perceived benefits, participants mentioned contextualization and authentic use of the language, language use in its natural pace, topic introduction and explanation

assistance, attractiveness and engagement, delivery of visual input, and use of subtitles. In spite of being repetitive sometimes in relation to the actual instructional use, the focus on the perceived benefits was an important addition to the discussion, once the specific answers to the questionnaire involve deeper reflection to justify the presence of digital videos in the L2 classroom. Hence, participants seem to be concerned with providing learners with audiovisual materials that may work as a scaffold in the process of L2 learning.

The discussions concerning the incorporation of audiovisual resources in the language classroom, however, go far beyond. Although there is the concern with using videos that can be considered suitable for learners, there seems to be the need for a deeper understanding of how the human cognitive system works (Sweller, 2010; Sweller; Ayres; Kalyuga, 2011), so that the selection criteria for the videos can be informed based on how information is processed considering, especially, the working memory capacity. By having that information, teachers may provide learners with audiovisual materials that are in consonance with their cognitive system, thus, not overwhelming their information processing capacity.

The possible conclusion of this study is that digital videos are present in the L2 classroom and, based on the frequency and the sources of the videos, on criteria used for the selection and the instructional use and on the perception of their benefits, the teachers seem to be aware of the benefits videos can offer to aid learners in the process of L2 learning. Such awareness can have direct impact on how they explore such audiovisual resources. They seem to capitalize on their best use in the L2 classroom having in mind their students' needs and how to best provide them with diverse opportunities to learn the target language, considering videos as a resource for knowledge construction.

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