HOW SONGS INCREASE MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH

BY

ANGÉLICA BELALCÁZAR CHAVES

Submitted to the faculty of Human Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of B.A.

in English and French program

University of Nariño

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ADVISOR

PhD HELDA ALICIA HIDALGO DÁVILA

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En esta oportunidad agradezco a Dios por guiarme en cada paso y por todas las bendiciones recibidas. A mi familia por su apoyo y cariño constante. A mi hermano Isaac Belalcázar Chaves (Newton MC) q.e.p.d. cantante, poeta y escritor. Su música hace que aún se sienta su presencia entre nosotros. Gracias por tan inmenso legado, la música.

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RESUMEN

Dado que hay muchos estudiantes en escuelas y colegios que tienen dificultad para aprender inglés a causa de la falta de motivación para aprender, este trabajo de investigación discute como el uso de la música motiva a los estudiantes a aprender. Todas las ideas son respaldadas por profesionales e investigadores que manejan los tres conceptos que se va a discutir. Estos son: motivación, motivación en el aprendizaje de idiomas y el uso de canciones en el salón de clases. Primero se presenta el marco teórico referente al tema. Después se presenta una propuesta didáctica la cual menciona algunas actividades que se pueden llevar a cabo con la ayuda de canciones para motivar a los estudiantes a aprender. Finalmente se citan todas las fuentes que se usaron para respaldar esta investigación.

Palabras clave: música, canciones, motivación.

ABSTRACT

Since there are lots of students in schools and high schools who have difficulties to learn English because of the lack of motivation, this research paper discusses how the use of music motivates students to learn. All ideas are supported by scholars and researchers who manage the three main concepts this paper is about to discuss. These are: Motivation, motivation in language learning, and the use of songs in the classroom. First, it presents the literature review about the topic. Then, it presents a didactical proposal which mentions some activities that can be carried out with the help of songs to motivate students to learn. Finally, all the resources are cited which were used to support this research.

Key words: music, songs, motivation.

1.   How songs increase motivation to learn English

When learning English as a foreign language (EFL) we must consider important aspects to succeed throughout the learning process. One of those aspects that has great importance in this study is motivation. It is common to hear some students' complains regarding English learning. It shows they are demotivated to learn. In that way students' learning and results in this subject are poor. This is the topic this paper wants to discuss and based on the discussion provide a proposal to improve EFL learning and motivation towards learning. The significance to motivate students takes a big importance because it is a good way to keep them interested in this subject. As a consequence there will be motivated students in the classrooms. When students are motivated, learning can more easily take place.

In the English teaching field there are plenty of methods and approaches that help teachers to set a methodology to teach a second language (L2). There are also many materials teachers can take advantage of in order to contribute to the learning process and also make students interested in the subject matter. In the case of this research paper, it proposes to use one strategy that contributes properly to reach its main objective which is to motivate students to learn English. This paper explores the use of songs in the classroom to motivate English learning.

Of course the use of songs to learn and teach English has been discussed numerous times by several researchers. In fact, this study cites some of them such as Murphey (2002), Schoepp (2001), and Bastidas (2001) among others who talk about the use of songs in the classroom. Their arguments support this research paper too. There are also authors who talk about the advantages and benefits that songs have to learn a foreign language. However, this paper goes beyond because it wants to highlight the influence music has to increase students' motivation during the learning process.

This study presents theoretical support about motivation, motivation in language learning, and kinds of motivation in language learning. All that theory leads to note the importance motivation has when learning a foreign language. This paper also presents the literature related to the use of songs in the classroom, how to use songs in the classroom, reasons to use songs in the classroom, and how this strategy contributes to motivate students. Then, this paper shows that the use of songs when learning English helps to increase motivation in English learning. Based on empirical evidence, it could be said that first, music motivates students, so we have students who feel motivated towards learning English, and finally motivation in English learning leads students to learn. In addition, this research suggests some activities to be done with the help of songs. In that way it will be clear that the use of songs in the classroom increases motivation to learn English.

2. Literature review

Motivation has been studied by scholars and researchers because of its importance in the learning/teaching process. There are many strategies, activities, or methods to improve motivation in the English classroom. This section discusses the concepts of motivation itself, motivation in language learning, and the use of songs during the language learning process as an important resource to increase motivation regarding English learning.

2.1 Motivation

Harmer (2001) defines motivation as some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. It is a power that makes us act to take action and in that way obtain what we want to meet basic or secondary needs. The forces that motivate human beings are biological, social, emotional or cognitive.

Maslow's theory of human motivation (1954) states some basic needs which are: the psychological needs, the safety needs, the belonging and love needs, the esteem needs, the need for self-actualization, and the desires to know and understand. These needs are presented in a hierarchical order where the basic and first need is the psychological one. And on the top of the hierarchy is located the desires to know and understand. Maslow states that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs. Then, human beings try to satisfy their needs starting by the basic ones and in that way complete all of them in the hierarchical order.

To make ideas clear about the purpose of this research, in the following sections we will broaden the concept of motivation in terms learning.

2.2 Motivation theories for learning languages

There have been many theories of learning throughout the study of language learning/teaching. Since we will consider motivation in terms of language learning, there are

three different perspectives discussed by Brown (2007). The first one is the behavioral perspective in which motivation plays an important role since it presents an external level. Brown refers to it as the "M&M theory" of behavior and explains it as "the practice of administering M&M candies to children for manifesting desired behavior" (Brown, 1994. p. 35). Then, we have the constructivist perspective. Here, "motivation is determined by interaction in a specific social and cultural context. Motivation, in a constructivist view, is derived as much from our interactions with others as it is from one's self-determination" (Brown, 2007, p. 169). Finally, we have the cognitive perspective which will be deeply explained because of its importance regarding this study.

2.3 Cognitive perspective of learning

In the words of Keller (taken from Brown, 2007) the cognitive theory of learning takes motivation as "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect". Ausbel, (1968, pp. 368-379) identifies six needs to support the construct of motivation. They are:

a. The need for *exploration,* for seeing "the other side of the mountain," for testing the unknown

b. The need for *manipulation,* for operating-to use Skinner's term-on the environment and causing change

c. The need for *activity,* for movement and exercise, both physical and mental

d. The need for *stimulation,* the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings

e. The need for *knowledge,* the need to process and internalize the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to solve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and for self-consistent systems of knowledge.

f. Finally, the need for *ego enhancement,* for the self to be known and to be accepted and approved by others.

Those needs tend to force our decisions. In fact they help us to make choices. Since every learner has different needs, motivation varies from learner to learner.

In order to support this study, the cognitive perspective will be the most useful to consider because the main purpose is to make students learn English. It depends on the student's needs to consider English as an important subject because each one of them will have a specific need that makes them feel motivated.

2.4 Motivation in language learning

Motivation is a force that makes someone act to achieve a goal. In terms of language learning, motivation is a force that makes learners feel interested in learning a language. Petty (2009) considers motivation as a prerequisite for effective learning and points out that "the greatest challenge that many teachers face is to make their students want to learn. If students do not want to learn, their learning efficiency will be so low that they may learn virtually nothing". (p.44). Dörnyei (2005. p. 65) states the great importance of motivation in these words:

"It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement"

Therefore, keeping the learner's motivation in the learning process becomes necessary and essential to succeed in his/her purpose. Otherwise, demotivated learners cannot accomplish their goals.

At this point it is important to cite Y. Kong's (2009. p. 146) words referring to learners' attitude towards English learning:

"Students who have strong learning motivation take a correct and positive attitude towards study and make great efforts to master English with clear goals and desire and consequently gain better grades than those who haven't acquired motivation and those students usually regard English learning as a heavy and boring burden".

On the other hand, Ur (2006. p. 274) talks about 'motivated' learners rather than motivation itself because she considers that motivation is difficult to define. Then a motivated learner is: "someone who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress".

Ur mentions some characteristics that motivated learners have. Those characteristics are taken from the authors of a classic study of successful language learning (1978). These are the characteristics:

1. Positive task orientation. The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges and has confidence in his or her success.

2. Ego-involvement. The learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote his or her own (positive) self – image.

3. Need for achievement. The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.

4. High aspirations. The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.

5. Goal orientation. The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them.

6. Perseverance. The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.

7. Tolerance of ambiguity. The learner is not disturbed or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she can live with these patiently, in the confidence that understanding will come later.

Learning a language should not be a boring process because in this field we can find a lot of activities to develop inside or outside the classroom. On top of activities, there are many tools or materials that can be used when learning an L2. Then, a boring class comes from a teacher who does not know the variety of methods, materials, and activities that he/she could use to make his/her class interesting or the teacher does not know how to use them properly.

2.5 Types of motivation in language learning

There is no doubt that in the language learning field, motivation is an important topic to consider. Then, Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed two types of motivation regarding language learning: *instrumental motivation* and *integrative motivation***.**

2.5.1 Instrumental motivation

Learners with an instrumental motivation are those who are learning a language to achieve a goal. It could be related to obtain a reward in their job or studies. They want to fulfill a college language requirement. Instrumentally motivated learners intend to learn the language to understand and know in a better way the people who speak the target language.

This type of motivation needs a stimulus that comes from another person different from the one who is learning the language. They always hope to get a prize. That prize represents the recognition to the effort during the learning process. The recognition that the learners look for is tangible.

2.5.2 Integrative motivation

This type of motivation is stronger than the last one because the learner feels affinity for the people who speak the target language. The learner wants to learn the language because he/she wants to know someone that speaks the language. It makes this type of motivation more emotional. It could be family or friends. Besides, heritage language learners tend to have a particular strong integrative motivation for language learning. The desire to learn the target language is an inspiration that lasts until the learners get to manage the language.

Integrative motivated learners always have a positive attitude towards the target language. These kinds of learners do not need an external factor to be motivated. In fact, they are not looking for recognition, prizes, salaries, or jobs. Their only pleasure and satisfaction is a feeling of fulfilment because they managed to speak a language they love.

Since integrative motivated learners have a personal affinity with the target language, this study will be supported by this type of motivation. It is useful to take advantage of the integrative motivation because most students would be fanatics of a particular singer or musical group. Then, they would enjoy listening or practicing a song that will be given as activity or input.

From personal experiences and those of some colleagues that also enjoy learning English, it can be said that an integrative motivated learner tends to be self-taught. This learner regards the practice of the language as a leisure activity and also considers it is useful to improve in all aspects of language. Most times these learners do not need a teacher who asks them to practice the target language. They just go over the contents of the course and try to do by themselves extra activities that help to improve their knowledge. Even those learners who love English and do not attend languages courses enjoy being exposed to the language and look for ways to enrich their knowledge. Therefore they achieve a good level. The only formal classes they attend are in

their schools, high schools or other institutions, but thanks to their interest, they stand out by their richer knowledge.

Thanks to technology it is possible to access the language no matters the place or the time. An integrative motivated learner takes advantage of all the possible resources to receive input: internet, television, radio stations, songs, movies. Even though we do not live in an English speaking environment, there are many ways to be in contact with the target language. That is what an integrative motivated learner does.

2.6 The use of songs as a resource to motivate learning

Music has always been present in everyone's life. We listen to music almost every day, and we have a certain type of music for every moment in our life. We use music to dance, help us concentrate, dedicate to our loved ones, have a talk with someone or with friends, and so on. Moreover, there is always a song that reminds us of something, someone, or a certain unforgettable moment. What is more, music is something that we all have in common. It is something that we share and it has been in that way for thousands of years.

Harmer (2001) states "music is a powerful stimulus for student engagement precisely because it speaks directly to our emotions … it can make a satisfactory connection between the world of leisure and the world of learning" (p. 242). Consequently, music is a resource to consider because it is not only about motivating learners but also it leads to learning.

Seeing that music is such an important element of the daily life and can help to learn successfully, it is helpful to use it to motivate learners along the language learning process. Of course the use of songs is not a new subject of research. In fact, there have been a lot of studies related to the use of music in language learning. The main purpose is to know the usefulness of songs in the learning process and to know the strength it has to motivate students.

Considering the field of languages, Jones (2013) regards music as a language. Then, language is music, and languages represent a range of music with different pitches and rhythms. She has used music in a wide range of ways to grab students' attention to modify their moods and get them engaged with the target language. Among her ways to use music to motivate we find these:

1. Just music-no words: It is up to the students to come up with words! In this way, music is used as a brainstorming tool.

2. Music can also be associated with key parts of the lesson. This is great to minimize instruction time and reinforce routines.

3. Music can be used as a link into a new topic. Students listen and/or watch and figure out what the new topic is. The clues can be in the lyrics or in the video.

4. Just music and words: the use of karaoke versions of music video for students help learners to concentrate more on the words, and to reinforce the learning of specific structures. Most styles of music can be used to do this.

5. Made-up songs: the use of songs with clear or repetitive structure as a stimulus to get students to write their own made-up song/ rap/ poem. Playfulness with words is the beginning of serious language manipulation.

6. Singing pronunciation: Slow down-sing to students and help them remember the pronunciation of longer, trickier words to a tune.

7. Parallel texts, translations and cover songs:

If the song studied has a cover version in English, compare the language versions and get students to spot the differences as they are listening. Ask: Is it a straight translation? Why isn't it a straight translation? Are there any important differences in meanings?

Pérez (2009) agrees that music is a trigger that improves academic skills such as vocabulary and grammar, and also develops linguistic abilities. Besides, as a ludic activity, music is a discipline that reinforces language abilities and also acts as a great motivational source that helps teachers to make the class more enjoyable. That is way this study highlights the importance of music to increase learners' motivation.

2.7 Songs in language learning.

The adoption of songs in the classroom should be used to take advantage of its benefits. There are many motives to use songs in the classroom. Schoepp (2001) mentions three main reasons to use songs as a means of learning; affective, cognitive, and linguistic (Taken from Yi-Chun Chen and Pi-Ching Chen, 2009. p. 17).

> "First, songs can create a relaxing, entertaining and non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which learners lower their anxiety filter and be more open to learning. Second, the nature of songs is repetitive and it facilitates automaticity in language development process. To combine both affective and unconscious factors together, the power of 'song-stuck-in- my-head' (SSIMH) phenomenon appears (Murphey, 1990). Singing is an easy way of memorizing something and melody seems to help us retrieve the information effortlessly. Third, some songs consist of colloquial English which can prepare learners for informal conversation in real life situation. In addition to these three reasons mentioned above, songs can also be a culturally-rich resource and easy to be handled in a lesson". (Murphey, 1992).

Not only motivation is improved by the use of songs, but also other variables which allow learners to increase their knowledge in academic as well as in cultural aspects.

Those three reasons mentioned above by Murphey motivate learners because they come closer to the features that the target language has.

In addition to Schoepp's reasons to use songs as a means of learning, Brewer (2005) lists some benefits of the use of songs in the classroom:

- Play music to set a positive mood at the start of the day or at the beginning of a class.

- Play music throughout the day during breaks and transitions to maintain a positive attitude.

- Heighten attention with upbeat music as needed throughout the day.

- Play music to reduce stress levels, relieve frustration, and create a peaceful environment.

- Use music to help sustain student attention and concentration.

- Play music to motivate your students.

- Play music during independent work and group activities.

- Use music during writing, art projects, and reflective activities.

- Provide a recall mechanism by playing music to create an appropriate emotional connection to content.

- Play slow, quiet music and review content information for students in a calm and soothing manner.

- Play music to build a classroom community and to encourage interaction.

- Use music in the classroom to increase the joy of learning

As we can see, using songs in the classroom brings lots of benefits. Among all those benefits, the ones that have more importance in this study are those which bring affectivity regarding English learning. Besides, those reasons help the development of this study and its purpose which is to improve motivation. Music creates a relaxing and enjoyable environment where students find proper conditions to learn. On the other hand, teachers find a lot of activities that can be done with songs. Some activities will be mentioned later.

2.8 Reasons for using songs in the language classroom

The use of songs in the classroom is not an activity that suddenly appears. This is a technique that teachers use to achieve a specific outcome, and there are of course specific reasons to use them. According to Schoepp (2009) there are three reasons for using songs in the classroom: affective, cognitive, and linguistic reasons.

2.8.1 Affective reasons

To make ideas clear about the affective reasons, it is important to mention the affective filter hypothesis stated by Stephen Krashen (1982) in which he says that affective variables such as motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety and inhibition, affect or benefit the learning process. Proper language learning occurs when the filter is weak. On the other hand when the filter is up or strong, the learner is not in good conditions to receive the language input. Then, the learning process fails.

In order to apply the affective filter hypothesis, teachers should bring learners proper conditions and environment for the learning to take place. Songs are techniques for achieving a weak affective filter and promoting language learning.

Once the whole class acquires a weak filter, the four language skills are likely to benefit from songs, furthermore, songs can be used for the following purposes (Eken 1996, taken from Schoepp 2001)

- To present a topic, a language point, lexis, etc.

- To practice a language point, lexis, etc.

- To focus on common learner errors in a more direct way

- To encourage extensive and intensive listening

- To stimulate discussion of attitudes and feelings

- To encourage creativity and use of imagination

- To provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere

- To bring variety and fun to learning

As a result, using songs as an affective reason, improves the affective filter, brings enjoyment, develops the language skills, and of course motivates.

2.8.2 Cognitive reasons

The main cognitive reason for using songs in the classroom is automaticity. Automaticity is defined as "a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses." (Gatbonton and Segalowitz. 1988, in Shoepp, 2001) The repetition found in songs helps students' automatization. So that learners focus on a specific topic which is the desired outcome. For instance, the song All I Want is You by Barry Louis Polisar focuses on the use of the first conditional. Another example, principally to beginners, is the song Big Jet Plane by Angus and Julia Stone that uses repetitively the structure of *want to* and *going to.* Since it is necessary teaching language in real contexts, it is useful for students to learn the way that words are said in informal and popular contexts. In this song, those structures appear in their informal use *wanna* and *gonna*.

2.8.3 Linguistic reasons

As the example mentioned above, there are songs that show the informal use of English. This is part of the linguistic reason, to know the language in use. The importance of this reason is to prepare students to face situations that they could find in an English speaking country. This means, to understand the purpose of a real conversation with native speakers. An example for this case could be the song of Shania Twain, I'm Gonna Getcha Good. In its lyrics there are

sentences such as "You're a fine piece of real estate, and I'm gonna get me some land" or "I'm gonna getcha while I gotcha in sight".

There are other reasons to use songs in the classroom. Those reasons help learners to go beyond the desired outcome. Listening to songs helps students to improve pronunciation, listening skills, know different grammar structures, and know at least a little about other cultures.

All the reasons are important because they form part of the learning/teaching process. They depend principally on affective reasons. This study discusses 3 main topics: use of songs as a material in the classroom, motivation, and English learning. Each topic has a role. The use of songs is a stimulus that motivates learners (affective reasons). As a consequence, English learning takes place (cognitive and linguistic reasons). Thus, all the reasons mentioned above by Schoep are combined in this research to achieve the goal: increase learners' motivation through the use of music.

Furthermore, Maley (1992), in the foreword of the book music and song by Tim Murphey, states that there are two major advantages that songs offer:

1. Music is highly memorable. Whether this is because it creates a state of relaxed receptivity, or because its messages touch deep-seated emotional or aesthetic chords, or because its repetitive pattering reinforces learning without loss of motivation – whatever the reason, songs and music "stick" in the head.

2. It is highly motivating, especially for children, adolescents, and young adult learners. Popular music in its many forms constitutes a powerful subculture with its own mythology, its own rituals, and its own priesthood. As such it is part of students' lives in a way that so much else we use is not. If we can tap into it, we release unsuspected positive energy.

2.9 How can songs be used in language teaching?

Songs should be used to achieve specific objectives that lead to learn the target language. Every chosen song by the teacher has to have a goal. This is the planned objective of the class. It is true that songs are used to change the typical development of a class. But if the class uses songs all the time it could become boring for learners as well as teachers because teachers take time to prepare a class using songs. Then, using songs in English teaching is a different form of giving input.

As it is mentioned above, there are objectives when a class uses songs. Bastidas (2002. p. 66-67) mentions the following specific objectives when using songs in the English class.

1. To motivate students to learn the new language

2. To lower the student's anxiety and stress produced when one studies another language

3. To improve listening comprehension by doing a variety of listening tasks

4. To practice the oral skill by means of questions and answers, mini-dialogues, role plays, discussions, etc.

5. To improve reading comprehension by using various reading strategies

6. To practice the writing skills by doing different kinds of written exercises both at the sentence and paragraph levels.

7. To practice the four skills in an integrated way.

8. To improve the student's pronunciation and intonation.

9. To increase the students' knowledge of vocabulary.

10. To practice or review a number of grammatical structures according to the song.

11. To introduce, present, practice, produce, or review a certain language functions.

12. To identify some cultural facts of the English speakers.

Now, it is widely clear that the use of songs provides objectives and it also offers benefits. Before the teacher chooses a song, it is necessary to know what the teacher wants to do with the song. There are some things the teacher needs to think about to ensure he/she gets the right song. Simpson (2015) suggests a six-steps outline for making a song the focus of the class.

1. Listen to the song

Start things by just listening. It's important to remember that this is meant to be a fun activity; don't make it too serious or boring. When possible you can show a video clip considering some students' needs in terms of learning styles. Ask learners if they have heard it before, and don't overload them with tasks at this point; simply let them enjoy the music.

2. Ask some questions about the title

Most of the times the tittle of a song tells us a lot about what the is song about. Then, asking questions referring to the tittle lets students get a main idea. Those questions tend to work really well as conversation starters. Alternatively, prior to having listened to the song you can teach a couple of words and give a simple task for the first listening.

3. Listen to the song again, this time with lyrics

This time, the teacher should give learners the chance to read the lyrics of the song. At this point the teacher might do one or more of the following activities:

- Learners can just read the lyrics while they listen. They can possibly highlight unknown words for later discussion.

- Make a lyric worksheet as a gap fill; learners fill in the gaps as they listen (Off course there are lots of activities that can be done with the use of songs. It depends on the teacher's choice)

- You can make cut-out strips of selected missing words and again make a lyric worksheet as a gap fill; this time learners match the word strips for the gaps as they listen.

  4. Focus on a particular verb tense or aspect of grammar

  Virtually every song centers on a particular verb tense. This is a good opportunity to pass up in terms of uncovering the grammar. It is recommendable to start with questions such as these:

- How many examples can you find of the past simple in the lyrics?

- Why did the writer of this song choose this verb tense?

  This acts as a springboard for discussing the function of a specific tense, as well as examining its form. Furthermore, it often tends to raise awareness of grammatical flexibility and 'poetic license' in the construction of song lyrics. Students often expect songs to obey the grammatical rules that have been drummed into them. In a surprisingly large number of cases, this can lead to the enlightening discovery that rules can be broken.

  5. Focus on vocabulary, idioms and expressions

  Many songs break the rules of grammar. It's also useful to focus on the creative and artistic use of vocabulary we encounter in lyrics. Start with questions like these. Highlight those expressions or sentences that seem to be written in a bad way and discuss with learners and go through the meanings, illustrating with other examples if necessary. Songs often serve as really good contexts for phrases and idioms, but it's good to make sure that the meaning is clear. As with grammar, years of misunderstanding can come to light in this way.

  6. Round things off with some creativity

  Creativity is an important part of maintaining motivation but it shouldn't be limited to the teaching approach. Depending on the factors such as age, language level, or cultural specifics,

the teacher might want to try finishing things off with an activity that stimulates creative thought. Here are a few examples of things that can be done to get the creative juices flowing:

- Write another verse of lyrics, maintaining the same mood and style as the original. This can be done individually or in groups. These new lyrics can be presented to the rest of the class. Perhaps several groups can work on this to come up with a completely new set of lyrics for the whole song.

- A song tends to give you the perspective of the singer. Write a response (this can be a paragraph, i.e., not necessarily in lyric form) from the point of view of the person the song is being sung about, or any other protagonist.

- Have learners plan a music video for the song. In groups they decide the location, the characters, and what happens. Then each group explains their idea to the rest of the class and the learners vote for the best one. The results can be surprising, as they frequently come up with an interpretation that had not even occurred to you!

- Write a diary entry for a character in the song. Get learners to examine the thoughts and feelings that inspired the story being played out in the lyrics.

2.10 Choosing suitable songs

There are millions of songs all over the world, as well as millions of singers, groups and musicians. But not all of their songs can be appropriate to develop a class. To choose a song we should consider some aspects. First of all, the purpose of the song is to motivate students. Thus, we should use a song which students can enjoy. Consequently, they feel comfortable with the activity that the teacher has in mind, so that we achieve the purpose which is to foster the learning process.

In addition, Bastidas (2001. p. 67) says: "all of the songs are not suitable for teaching purposes. Teachers are reminded that even in the native language it is difficult to understand and sing a song". Bastidas also suggests the following criteria for choosing a song:

- Always select a song according to your purposes and teaching objectives. For example, if you are interested in grammar or vocabulary, choose those songs that exemplify a grammatical structure or certain selected vocabulary.

- As far as possible, look for songs that are popular for the students, so that they would enjoy them.

- Select those songs which are neither too fast nor too difficult to sing. Otherwise, the students will get frustrated and will begin to hate the English class.

- If you are interested in practicing pronunciation, select those songs whose words are fairly well articulated.

- For listening and reading comprehension purposes, choose those songs that concentrate on meaning. For example: story or narrative songs, action songs, show songs, film songs, and overall idea songs (Dubin 1974).

- In some songs, such as pop songs, it is quite common to find odd grammatical constructions, then you should analyze the kind of language used in the lyrics (Smith, 1976).

- Be careful with the quality of the recording and the clarity of singer's voice whenever you decide to use a song in the EFL class.

- Identify the cultural aspects included in the song, so that you can present them to your students.

- Ask your students to suggest some titles of songs that they like or borrow some songs from them in order to analyze them before you decide to use them.

- If you are going to work with children, choose those songs that are short, well-articulated and have a lot of repetition.

Murphey (2002) states a list that tells us what we can do with songs in the classroom. The list of possibilities that he mentions is useful in order to choose a song. First, the teacher has to think about what he or she wants to do with the song. When the teacher knows what to do in the class, it is time to choose a song that allows the development of the class and the planned activities. Murphey says that anything we can do with a text we can do also with a song. Then he presents a list of additional things we might do in teaching by using songs.

- Study grammar

- Practice selective listening comprehension

- Read songs, articles, books for linguistic purposes

- Compose songs, articles about songs, letters to singers, questionnaires.

- Discuss a song

- Translate songs

- Write dialogues using the words of a song

- Use video clips in many ways

- Do role plays (as people in the song, or the artist /interviewer)

- Dictate a song

- Use a song for gap-fill, cloze, or for correction

- Use music for background to other activities

- Integrate songs into project works

- Energize or relax classes mentally

- Practice intonation, pronunciation, and stress

- Break the routine

- Do choral repetition

- Teach vocabulary

- Teach culture

- Learn about your students and from your students, letting them choose and explain their music

- Have fun.

On the other hand, it is also valid and recommendable to use the students' choice as much as possible. "Any songs can be useful and to some extent motivating … those that the students listen to already and want to hear will probably have the greatest impact on them" (Murphey. 1992. p.14). Besides, Murphey talks about several advantages using the students' choice:

- Using music and songs are "tools for living", and the topic holds great value, especially when students select the material.

- Allowing them to choose gives them some responsibility, involves them more in the lesson, and gives school relevance to their everyday lives and concerns.

- Looking at music and song critically, with student-generated criteria, we can also help them to develop the means to sort out the good from the bad.

- Talking about the teacher, it can be a tremendous learning experience in which the students actually teach the subject matter (their songs and music), while the teacher is a resource for the language.

- Handling material in this way equalizes the encounter between students and teachers (Thomas 1984), creating mutual respect and approximating the more equal interactions that they find outside the classroom.

- It reduces the teacher-time and work spent searching for materials which many not have as much appeal as those which students themselves contribute.

Choosing a song cannot be done at random. It needs preparation. Every song is different. They can express different feelings, emotions, or ways of thinking. For instance we have songs about happy or sad stories, songs about expectations, songs that reveal against the government or organizations, songs that express a deep feeling of love, songs dedicated to relatives or loved ones, songs about friendship, etc. The song can be chosen depending on the outcome that the teacher expects to obtain.

3. Didactical proposal

This part of the research paper suggests some activities to be carried out with the help of songs. Their principal objective is to motivate students to learn English. It also suggests different activities addressed to different levels and audiences to show that the use of music is suitable to any kind of learners. It does not matter their age and level of English knowledge. It is important to mention that these activities also promote interaction and group work.

3.1 Activity: song cards –take-sort-write

This activity is a modification made by Lorenzutti (2014). It was first suggested by Griffee (1992) in his book *Songs in Action*. The original version of this activity can be found in the English teaching Forum Magazine, volume 52, number 1, page 19 (2014). Lorenzutti recommends this activity to draw attention to the prosody features of English (emphasis on key content words) In this case this activity is recommended to introduce new vocabulary. It proposes teachers can choose the words they will present (verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns) some changes are adapted to this activity taking into account our own context. Now, this is the explanation.

Level: beginner to pre-intermediate

Preparation: Select a song and choose 12 to 20 vocabulary words from the lyrics. Make sure you do not take words from the chorus. Write down the words, each one of them in a different card. Make enough cards of each word depending on the number of groups you will organize.

Procedure:

Step 1: divide the class into small groups of four students and spread the cards face-up in front of them. Make students read out loud each word so they get familiarized with the pronunciation of each one of them.

Step 2: Explain the meaning of each word. Use examples if needed. In this way, students will

learn new vocabulary which is the objective of the activity.

Step 3: Play the song and students compete to grasp the words they hear. When the song

finishes, go around the classroom to notice which is the group with the least number of words

remaining.

Step 4: Give students the whole lyrics of the song. Learners will find the verbs they had in the

small pieces of paper. Then, they will pay attention to the grammatical structure where each

word belongs.

Step 5: Play the song a third time so that learners pay attention to the pronunciation of it.

3.2 Activity: Song strip connections

Lorenzutti (2012) also proposes this activity as a modification of the original one created

by Griffee(1992). In this activity, learners need to notice coherence of ideas. It also helps to

reinforce comprehension about grammatical structures. Then, students complete clear and

coherent sentences.

Level: low intermediate

Preparation: Select a song and divide each line into two parts. The first half of the line will

have a color. Either use colored paper or a highlighter. The second part of the line will have

another color, as in figure 1. Then, you have the lyrics divided into small cards. So that students

can identify what the first part of each line is.

I was lost on the dark side,	till you crashed into my life
We were scarred	by the bright lights
Falling stars	through the night sky
I know we're broken parts,	but ain't that just who we are

Figure 1. Song strip connections for "together" by Selah Sue

Procedure:

Step 1: Divide the class in couples and give each one of them the first half of the lyric cards. Students organize the cards on the table and read them to get familiarized with the sounds they are about to listen.

Step 2: The teacher plays the song and students listen to the first part of each line to place the cards in order. Play the song again to correct possible mistakes and check students' work. Make sure it is well done to continue with the next step. You can play the song a third time if needed.

Step 3: Give to each group the second half of the lyrics. Students read each card and try to complete the lines they already organized. Make sure they use all the cards and they have completed the lyrics. It does not matter if it is not well done at first. Go over the groups and check if students considered coherence when completing sentences.

Step 4: Now play the song and students will compare their guesses with the actual lyric of the song.

Step 5: Play the song the last time to make students complete the song in its correct form

Step 6: Students discuss in each group what the song is about.

3.3 Activity: Advertising jingles

Based on the book *Music and Songs* by Tim Murphey (2002), this paper suggests practicing the activity called "advertising jingles". Murphey's goal with this activity is "to play

with the language of advertising and to show the power of music accompanying a message"

Murphey (2002. p. 44). In this activity, learners combine many skills to perform a task. Off

course this activity has also been adapted in order to succeed in our context and learning

conditions.

Level: upper intermediate to advanced

Preparation: Prepare a list of 5 to 10 songs (it depends on the time the class lasts). Every piece

of music must be different in style and tempo.

Procedure:

Warm up: since this activity is about advertising, the teacher needs to present students the

vocabulary we use when advertising a product. For doing so, it is helpful to show them different

advertisements of any kind of product. It can be radio or TV commercials. Learners can notice

the language that is used in commercials as well as the music that accompanies each one of them.

Step 1: The teacher asks students to write in a sheet of paper a list of numbers from 1 to 10 (it

depends in the number of songs that are going to be played)

Step 2: The songs will be played one by one. The first ten or twenty or thirty seconds of the

songs are enough. Students will listen to each song and will decide what kind of product would

be appropriate to advertise with each song. In the sheet of paper they have to write the name of

the product they think belongs to the song in front of each number as the songs are played. The

teacher should make pauses between songs to let students think and choose a product.

Step 2: Once all the songs are played, students can share their choices with a partner to compare

their guesses (there are not wrong answers). Next, the class can be divided into small groups to

choose among all the lists the product they like the most.

Step 3: Now, learners will listen to all the songs again and each group will decide what kind of product they choose to make a role play in which they create a commercial. It can be a TV or radio commercial.

Step 4: Students will have 15 to 20 minutes to prepare their commercials and then act them in front of the class. At the end of the activity, the teacher and pupils can choose what the best performance was and what product would be really attractive to buy.

3.4 Activity: Interpreting meanings

This activity was presented in a workshop in the 21st annual ELT conference carried out in Cali in May 2014. The workshop was presented by Professor Hernando Escobar. It is about interpreting the meaning of the lyrics of any song. The main objective is to raise awareness of any particular issue related to society, racism, xenophobe, nature, or sexism. In this case, the activity will use the song *"They do not Care About Us"* by the King of Pop *Michael Jackson* which carries a powerful message against government and people who have the power to control the world.

Level: All levels

Preparation: Give copies of the lyrics of the song to each learner "they do not care about us" by Michael Jackson. It is better to develop this activity by watching the video of this song (preferably with the prison video)

Step 1: Have a short discussion with students about what they think of government, police, and people who have power to control the world.

Step 2: Play the video and ask students to pay attention to every single detail on it.

Step 3: Distribute the lyrics of the song and play the video again. Once students finish let them

know the words they do not know if needed. It is important that learners understand the lyrics of

the song.

Step 4: Now give students a chart in which they find some lines of the song, as in figure 2. In

front of each one, they have to interpret the meaning of them by saying what the lines are really

saying.

Bang bang, shot dead Everybody's gone mad	
I look to heaven to fulfill its prophecy... Set me free	
Tell me what has become of my rights Am I invisible because you ignore me?	
Your proclamation promised me free liberty, now I'm tired of bein' the victim of shame	
They don't really care about us	

Figure 2 Interpreting meanings for "They don't really care about us" by Michael Jackson

Step 5: Once students finish the activity make a group discussion to compare learner's

interpretations.

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Appendix

LESSON PLAN 1

Activity: song cards –take-sort-write

Teacher's name: Angélica Belalcázar Chaves

Class level: beginner to pre-intermediate

Length of lesson: 40 minutes

Teaching point:

Grammar / Listening: verbs in first and third person

Main lesson aims: By the end of the lesson learners will be better able to:

- Identify verbs in first and third person

- Identify the affirmative and negative form of the simple present tense

Evidence:

- Students will listen to the song to grab the verbs they hear

- Students will learn some new verbs

Assumptions: Students already studied the simple present tense in affirmative and negative form and also understand the conjugation for first, second, and third person in the simple present tense.

Materials to be used: Speakers and small cards with some verbs taken out from the lyrics of the song

Preparation: The song to be used with this activity is Beautiful Tango by Hindi Zahra (2009, Oursoul Records). Take out 15 verbs from the lyrics. Make sure you do not take words from the chorus. Write down the words, each one of them in a different card. Make enough cards of each word depending in the number of groups you will organize. The verbs are: gonna, show, take,

don't go, wanna, speaks, makes, make, put, come, don't know, love, move, turns out, and don't wanna.

Procedure:

Warm-up:

The teacher will explain to students they are going to reinforce the simple present tense in affirmative and negative form by listening to the song Beautiful Tango.

1. Divide the class into small groups of four students and spread the cards face-up in front of them. Make students read out loud each word so they get familiarized with the pronunciation of each one of them (5 to 7 minutes).

2. Explain the meaning of each word. Use examples if needed. In this way, students will learn new vocabulary which is the objective of the activity (5 to 8 minutes).

3. Play the song and students compete to grasp the words they hear. When the song finishes, go around the classroom to notice which is the group with the less quantity of words remaining. (5 minutes)

4. Play the song again so that students grasp the remaining words. (5 minutes)

5. Now, the teacher will give students the whole lyrics of the song. Learners will find the verbs they had in the small pieces of paper. Then, they will pay attention to the grammatical structure where each word belongs (5 to 7 minutes).

6. Finally, the teacher will play the song a third time so that learners pay attention to the pronunciation of it (5 minutes)

Assessment: After the activity, the teacher will know:

- If learners are able to identify words when listening to the song

- How well students differentiate the conjugation of first and third person

Predicted problems:

- Students will need to listen to the song more than twice

- Students do not differentiate the suffix S for the verbs conjugated in third person

LESSON PLAN 2

Activity: Song strip connections

Teacher's name: Angélica Belalcázar Chaves

Class level: low intermediate

Length of lesson: 1 hour

Teaching point: complete coherent sentences grammatically correct

Main lesson aims: By the end of the lesson learners will be better able to:

- Complete sentences considering cohesion and coherence

- Reinforce comprehension about grammatical structures

- Develop a little bit more their listening skill

Evidence:

- Students will listen to the song twice to complete the activity

- Students will complete sentences grammatically correct

- Students will complete the activity

Assumptions: students already know the simple, continuous, and perfect tenses in their three

forms; present, past and future.

Materials to be used: speakers and lyrics of the song.

Preparation: The song to be used is *Together* by Selah Sue of her album Reasons (2015,

Because Music). Divide each line of it into two parts. The first half of the line will have a color.

Either use colored paper or a highlighter. The second part of the line will have another color.

Then, you have the lyrics divided into small cards. So that students can identify what the first part of each line is. Take into account that the chorus does not appear in the cards, only the stanzas are in the cards. The lyrics will look like this:

I was lost on the dark side	Till you crashed into my life
We were scarred by the bright lights	Falling stars through the night sky
I know we're broken parts	But ain't that just who we are
Everything that we both know	Summer nights left me so cold
Let me dream of this fair love	**All the things that I'm…**
I know we're far apart	I don't know where to start
And I know what the people say	But I choose your love anyway
Yeah, love so good yeah could have signed	Got the one thing that I couldn't buy
Niggas so mad when I walk through	With you on my arm what they gonna do
Men in my life	you're the top two
Hi mom! Lights on	Lights off
Dylon	Rap like dude this is my come
Fell on my face and	awoke with a scar
Another scape living deep in my heart	Wear it on top of my sleeve in a flick
I can admit that it did look yours	I can see the danger, Falling down the streets

PROCEDURE:

Warm-up:

At the beginning of the class, the teacher will discuss the importance of coherence in language. Students will be told to put coherence in practice when completing sentences. Then, the teacher will use some examples so that learners understand what they are about to do. For instance, the teacher will give a part of a sentence and three options to complete it. Students will complete the sentences with the best option which is grammatically correct and ends the sentence considering coherence (5 minutes).

1. Divide the class in couples and give to each one of them the first half of the lyric cards. Students organize the cards on the table and read them to get familiarized with the sounds they are about to listen (8 minutes).

2. The teacher plays the song and students listen to the first part of each line to place the cards in order. Play the song again to correct possible mistakes and check students' work. Make sure it is well done to continue with the next step. You can play the song a third time if needed (15 to 20 minutes).

3. Give each group the second half of the lyrics. Students read each card and try to complete the lines they already organized. Make sure they use all the cards and they have completed the lyrics. It does not matter if it is not well done at first. Go over the groups and check what they get to notice their coherence when completing sentences (10 minutes).

4. Now play the song and students will compare their guesses with the actual lyric of the song. (5 minutes).

5. Play the song the last time to make students complete the song in its correct form (5 minutes)

6. Students discuss in each group what the song is about (5 minutes)

Assessment: after the activity, the teacher will know:
- How well students have developed their listening skills
- How well they are able to complete coherent sentences
- If students have learned grammatical structures that enable them to do the activity

Predicted problems:

- Difficulty to listen to the song to organize the sentences.

- Learners can complete a sentence with two or more options.

- Students will need to listen to the song more than twice

LESSON PLAN 3

Activity: Advertising jingles

Teacher's name: Angélica Belalcázar Chaves

Level: upper intermediate to advanced

Length of lesson: 1 hour

Teaching point:

Grammar / Speaking: Develop and put in practice speaking skills

Main Lesson aims: By the end of the lesson learners will be better able to:

- Produce language on their own

- Catch public's attention when speaking

Evidence:

- Students will list several products according to the song they listen to

- Students will be able to create a commercial producing language by themselves

- Students will be able to convince that their products are the best to be bought

Assumptions: students have a good command of language which allows them to express any idea, opinion, or suggestion they want.

Materials to be used: DVD or any video player, speakers, pen, and paper.

Preparation: Prepare a list of 10 songs. Every piece of music must be different in style, rhythm, and tempo. For this activity, the songs to be used are: Pump It by the Black Eyed Peas (2005, A&M Records), All About That Bass by Megan Trainor (2014, Epic), I Put a Spell on you by Annie Lenox(2014, Blue Note Records) All I Want Is You by Barry Louis Polisar (1977, Rainbow Morning Music Alternatives), Addicted to You by Avicii (2014, Universal Music), Tennis Court by Lorde (2013, Universal Music New Zealand), P.I.MP. by 50 cents 2003, Shady

Records), Stronger Than Me by Amy Winehouse (2003, Island Records), and luxurious by Gwen

Stefani (2004, Interscope Records).

Procedure:

Warm up: since this activity is about advertising, the teacher needs to present students the

vocabulary used when advertising a product. For doing so, the teacher will show them different

advertisements of any kind of product. It can be radio or TV commercials. Learners can notice

the language that is used in commercials as well as the music that accompanies each one of them

(3 to 5 minutes).

1. The teacher asks students to write in a sheet of paper a list of numbers from 1 to 10 (1
   minute)

2. The songs will be played one by one. The first twenty or thirty seconds of the songs are
   enough. Students will listen to each song and will decide what kind of product would
   be appropriate to advertise with each song. In the sheet of paper they have to write the
   name of the product they think belongs to the song in front of each number as the songs
   are played. The teacher should make pauses between songs to let students think and
   choose a product (5 minutes).

3. Once all the songs are played, students can share their choices with a partner to
   compare their guesses. Remember that there are not wrong answers (3 minutes)

4. Next, the class can be divided into groups of 3 or 4 students to choose among all the
   lists the product they like the most (5 minutes).

5. Now, learners will listen to all the songs again and each group will decide what kind of
   product and what song they choose to make a role play in which they create a

commercial. The product they choose could be real or a students' invention. It can be a TV or radio commercial (7 minutes).

6. Students will prepare their commercials and the product they want to sell (8 to 10 minutes).

7. Then, each group will present their commercials in front of the class (15 minutes).

8. At the end of the activity, the teacher and the pupils can choose what the best performance was and what product would be really attractive to buy (5 minutes).

Assessment: After the activity the teacher will know:

- How well students use language to express their ideas and convince the public.

- How well students work in group to prepare a presentation.

- If students' speaking skills are good enough.

- If students use language that is used in TV or radio commercials.

Predicted problems

- Lack of imagination to create a commercial

- Poor command of language to act a commercial and sell a product.

- Shame of acting in front of the class

LESSON PLAN 4

Activity: Interpreting meanings

Teacher's name: Angélica Belalcázar Chaves

Level: all levels

Length of lesson: 1 hour

Teaching point:

Grammar / Writing: find ways to express an idea in different forms by keeping the meaning

Main Lesson aims:

- Use the language to interpret ideas.

- Discover and explain the deep structure of a song's lyric.

- Raise awareness about society issues.

Assumptions: more than understand and interpret the target language, students are aware of different society issues.

Materials to be used: DVD or any video player, lyrics of the song "They do not Care About Us" by Michael Jackson.

Preparation: Give copies of the lyrics of the song to each learner They do not Care About Us by Michael Jackson (1995, Epic). It is better to develop this activity by watching the video of this song. Preferably use the prison video.

PROCEDURE

Warm-up: Have a short discussion with students about what they think of government, police, and people who have power to control the world. Each learner can say what they think. It can be positive or negative opinions. At least 5 students should participate (3 to 5 minutes).

1. Explain students they are about to watch a video which shows disagreement against government, police and other organizations (2 minutes).

2. Play the video and ask students to pay attention to every single detail on it (6 minutes).

3. Have a short discussion about what called their attention on the video (3 to 5 minutes)

4. Distribute the lyrics of the song and play the video again. Once students finish, let them know the words they do not know, if needed. It is important that learners understand the lyrics of the song (10 to 12 minutes).

5. Now give students a chart in which they find some lines of the song. In front of each

one, they have to interpret the meaning of them by saying what the lines are really saying

also considering what they see on the video (15 minutes).

Bang bang, shot dead Everybody's gone mad	
Beat me, hate me You can never break me	
Tell me what has become of my life I have a wife and two children who love me	
I am the victim of police brutality, now I'm tired of bein' the victim of hate	
I look to heaven to fulfill its prophecy... Set me free	
Tell me what has become of my rights Am I invisible because you ignore me?	
Your proclamation promised me free liberty, now I'm tired of bein' the victim of shame	
You know I really do hate to say it The government don't wanna see	
They don't really care about us	

6. Once students finish the activity make a group discussion to compare learner's

   interpretations (5 minutes).

7. Finally, students give their opinions about the society issues found in the video and the

   lyrics. So that, they raise awareness them (5 to 8 minutes).

Assessment: After the activity the teacher will know:

- How well students interpret the lyrics of the song after watching the video.

- How well students express their ideas and opinions.

- How well students find ways to explain something.

Predicted problems:

- Students could misunderstand the content of the video and the lyrics

- Poor language to interpret meanings

- Decontextualization of society issues