



Language learning through music

Drífa Sigurðardóttir

Lokaverkefni til B.Ed.-prófs
Háskóli Íslands
Menntavísindasvið



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Language learning through music

Drífa Sigurðardóttir

Lokaverkefni til B.Ed.-prófs í Grunnskólakennarafræði

Leiðsögu kennari: Robert Berman

Kennaradeild
Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands
Janúar 2012

Language learning through music

Ritgerð þessi er 10 eininga lokaverkefni til B.Ed.-prófs við
Kennaradeild, Menntavísindasviði Háskóla Íslands

© 2011 Drífa Sigurðardóttir

Ritgerðina má ekki afrita nema með leyfi höfundar.

Prentun: Bóksala Menntavísindasvið
Reykjavík, Ísland 2011

Acknowledgments

I am thankful to have had my father as my number one role model and inspiration. He passed away when I was twelve years old but I am a strong woman because of how he raised me and I believe that he is by my side at all times, supporting me through life.

Thank you, Dad.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Robert Berman, for all his help throughout the process of creating my thesis. I have grown as a writer because of him and his constructive advice will remain with me forever.

Abstract

Music is a very effective tool that should play a larger role in the EFL/ESL classroom because it offers a great variety that appeals to the students. Most children enjoy music and therefore it should increase their interest in learning a new language in a very entertaining way. Educators need to be willing to incorporate music in their lessons in order to better enhance their students' learning.

Music can be used to remove language barriers and should be implemented as early as the first grade. More music in every language classroom will inspire more students to become creative and independent. Music will allow educators and their students to understand each other and connect in a new way.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	7
2.	My personal reasons for choosing this topic	8
3.	Music and languages	9
4.	Music for all levels of learning	12
5.	Using music to teach young learners	13
5.1	Letters	14
5.2	Numbers	15
5.3	Colors	16
5.4	Weekdays	17
5.5	Months	18
5.6	Seasons	19
5.7	Body parts	20
5.8	Clothes	20
6.	Using music to teach adolescents	21
6.1	Background music	23
6.2	Song lyrics	24
6.3	Grammar	26
6.4	Pronunciation	27
6.5	Figurative language	27
6.6	Creativity	29
7.	Conclusion	29
	Resources	31

1. Introduction

“Music is the universal language of mankind”
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

This quotation from Longfellow shows how connected language is to music.

Through melodies and lyrics people everywhere in the world share a mutual way of communicating. The main objective of this paper is to explore how a language can be taught with the use of music and songs and how it can be used to enhance the students’ learning as well as actively engage them in the teaching material. Methods for various levels will be addressed throughout this paper; however the main focus will be placed on methods for young learners (beginners) as well as adolescents since those two groups need very different approaches when learning a foreign language.

The first part of this thesis discusses music in general and the role and effect it has on peoples’ lives. *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner is connected into the subject as well, as it emphasizes the importance of using various methods in order to teach children in an effective way. According to Gardner, music is one of these intelligences.

The second part of this paper reveals different methods and ideas that can be used for these two stages of learning, i.e. for young learners and adolescents. Examples of pre-tasks, main assignments and post-tasks will be provided to give an idea of methods to use in the EFL/ESL classroom. I hope that these assignments will become the foundation that other language educators expand upon and thereby gain confidence in using music as a teaching tool.

2. My personal reasons for choosing this topic

As a singer/songwriter, I have always wanted to connect music and songs with one of my favorite subjects, languages. There was very little emphasis put on using music through learning when I was in grade school, but I do remember it specifically when songs were played because they have stuck with me through the years. During my training as a teacher in 2010-2011, I felt that many of the students had a negative attitude towards language learning and therefore I knew that I had to modify my teaching in order to spark their interest. This was successfully accomplished by incorporating music into the classroom activities and the students became more actively engaged in the teaching material. As one educator asked, “How is it that for most people music is a powerful part of their personal life and yet when we go to work or school we turn it off?” (Brewer, 1995. Pg.2).

Music in the classroom fits perfectly and I know that music and songs will be an effective tool for teachers to use for their learners. I hope that teachers will feel encouraged and as inspired to use music in the ESL/EFL classroom in the future which will eventually create a connection with their students in a way that will remain forever.

3. Music and languages

In order for children to develop and grow as learners, their difference in interests and intelligences must be taken into account. *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner is extremely important when it comes to teaching children and young adults. Gardner explains that, “It’s not how intelligent you are, but how you are intelligent” (Wise, 2001). Gardner hypothesizes that there are eight different intelligences, which included mathematic, linguistic and musical intelligence. Gardner claims that the intelligences very rarely operate independently (Brualdi, 1996). Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and that is why teachers need to be aware of using multiple approaches in the classroom and finding various tasks that suite more than one intelligence at a time.

When teaching foreign languages to children and adolescents, there are numerous methods that can be used to enhance the students’ learning and interest, and music is most definitely one of them. Students with different strengths need various approaches although our educational system has put too much importance on mathematic and linguistic intelligences while the equally important intelligences are neglected (Brualdi, 1996).

Musical intelligence is very often overlooked, and although music is not everyone’s strongest intelligence, it is usually something that most children as well as adults can appreciate because they have at least some musical intelligence. Mora explains that language learning and music relate to each other since music and speech connect through sounds and are used to convey a message, although language is precise and music mostly emotional” (Mora, 1999, p.147).

Throughout childhood and adolescence, emotions are rising and building, making life seem at times, overwhelming. Many children have a difficult time with sharing their feelings with others, and that is how music becomes their escape from the difficulties they are facing. According to Donald Roberts and Peter Christenson, most young people use music as motivation and to control their mood and enhance emotional states like loneliness or distraction from their troubles (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 400). Music can explain how a person is feeling at a certain time as it sometimes acts as a mirror to the soul. One study revealed that English as well as American adolescents, listen to music in an attempt to satisfy social and emotional needs (Tarrant et al., 2000). Usually people can relate to music through the lyrics, as most songs are about things that people experience in life such as love, pain, joy, loneliness and happiness. Many adolescents see song lyrics as sources that carry messages to reassure them that they are not alone in the world and that other people have gone through similar things that they might have experienced (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 228). Therefore, it is clear that music is often healing and may be used as a teaching tool.

Music contains authentic, informal language that is natural to the ear. Songs offer precious resources that develop students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing (Saricoban et al., 2010). One study shows that from a developmental perspective, music appears at every stage as well as age of human growth from infancy to childhood and into adulthood (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 221). Music connects people, meaning that even strangers who have nothing else in common can form a link through melodies and lyrics because it is a language that everyone understands.

Music tends to leave a deep trace in our memories, which is possible due to the fact

that it is related to factors that are affective and unconscious as well as possibly less energy- demanding because musical perception starts before birth (Mora, 1999, p.150). Most people learn song lyrics faster than words and melodies tend to store easier in the memory even though the meaning of the words might not be clear. “Through the use of songs, rhymes and music, children are able to retain much larger amounts of information’s” (Ortis, 2008, p. 207). Music is a way to enhance children’s learning procedures and the reasons for music’s success lie within the brain. Sound waves come into our ears and from there they transform into nerve impulses. These impulses are then sent out to areas in the left and right temporal lobes for processing. The functions that are used to process music and singing are stored in the brains other functions that include emotion, memory and language (Ortis. 2008, p. 206). This shows even more clearly why music is such a positive method to use for teaching a second language.

Music is a natural source to the human race and therefore it was surprising to see how little it was used in language lessons during my training. Teachers seem to be reluctant to try new teaching methods and tend to stick with methods that are more traditional such as the use of workbooks, which leaves very little space for activities that allow more creativity (Lefever, 2009, p.115). When children start their foreign language learning, using music should be a general activity because it has so many qualities that will engage students and make them more positive towards learning languages. The methods that teachers most frequently rank as receiving “little” or “no” emphasis in their teaching in most classes are the use of songs, games, role play, theme work, and computer and/or Internet use (Lefever, 2009, p. 114). Although many researches

demonstrate the benefits of using music when it comes to teaching languages, the method is rarely used within the Icelandic educational system, which is unfortunate.

4. Music for all levels of learning

Music contains a variety of vocabulary that can easily be adjusted to the appropriate age or level of learning. It is full of phrases and expressions that will prepare children for using genuine language. It teaches grammar and many songs can be used as grammar exercises, especially for adolescents since “in order to make a grammar lesson effective, beneficial, and interesting a teacher should use some well-developed and fascinating techniques in the classroom” (Saricoban & Metin, 2010).

Through music, culture as well as pronunciations and different accents can be taught. Figurative language and metaphors are a big part of music and songs and are very adjustable to our everyday experiences. Even slang can be introduced which is an ideal way for teachers to connect with their students on a new, exciting level. During my training in 2010 while teaching adolescents, I used a song named, “You got me”, by a Hip Hop group called The Roots, where I reviewed slang and figurative language with my students. The lesson was very successful as the students were so intrigued by this new way of learning that they became fully immersed with material. The song helped me to connect with my students and created a very relaxing atmosphere because the children were simply mesmerized.

The creativity of songs encourages the students’ imagination and enables original learning. Very often, songs tell a story and many lyrics are ideal for the students to build upon, using their own thoughts and ideas. During my teaching I felt that the material

being used lacked creativity and that textbooks replaced creative and original material that could have been used.

Through music, students will learn how to express themselves more effectively because song lyrics often spur lively discussions and different interpretations, which are needed in many EFL/ESL classrooms. Many students seem to be afraid of using the target language in the classroom because formal language learning creates a stressful atmosphere. Most of the time, the target language is only being used when students are reading from their textbooks or answering questions in their workbooks. Horwitz and Cope (1986) have shown that many students exhibit foreign language anxiety in the classroom. However, songs in the language classroom tend to entertain and relax the learners, thus stress may be reduced through the use of music (Jedynak, 2000, p. 2).

Music provides so many options and exercises and teachers can even involve their students when it comes to picking songs for the class or to work on to make the assignment even more personal. Music is fun, engaging, differs from the old routines and can be used for all ages and levels; although methods for each stage should vary since the focus on what needs to be taught is different.

5. Using music to teach young learners

Since most young learners love listening to songs and singing, it should be simple for teachers to apply music in their teaching. There are countless songs to be found online as well as on CDs that teachers can use for teaching. It is also important that teachers verify that every intelligence in the classroom is being met and therefore the assignments should be as variable as possible.

Most second language beginners have little vocabulary so the main focus needs to

be on using the target language through communicating verbally as well as listening rather than through writing or grammar exercises. Young language learners need to experience a new language as a natural exposure and it is extremely important that the teacher uses the target language most of the time during language lessons. Researchers claim that there are number of reasons for the lack of success on the part of many foreign language learners, such as the fact that the students are not engaged in meaningful interaction in the FL during class (Polio and Duff, 1994). There are numerous things that can be taught to young children through songs that will remain with them throughout their lives and there are songs to be found about most elementary concepts like letters, numbers, colors, weekdays, months, seasons, body parts and clothes that will make the lessons full of life and excitement. These different concepts can be taught to young learners in simple and effective ways, which will be discussed in more detail.

5.1 Letters

Children usually learn the alphabet from an early age and since almost every child knows how to sing their ABCs in their native language it is ideal to teach it in the target language as well.

During pre-listening activities, the teacher can go through the alphabet on the blackboard with his students to get them used to hearing the right pronunciations of each letter. The assignment itself could be that the teacher plays a simple version of the alphabet song for the class where the letters are displayed one by one on the screen or the board. Playing the song twice will make it more effective because many of the children will be hearing it in the target language for the first time.

For post-listening the students get a handout with the alphabet printed on it where they can color each letter the way they prefer. Even though the young learners are given handouts with printed letters and words on it, they are not obligated to know how to write or spell these words. They are taught and used verbally, although it does not hurt to have the students exposed to the words visually on the board or on handouts. This lesson is only an introduction to the alphabet so the next lesson could involve other more detailed things such as a song that introduces one letter at a time, the sound it makes and one object for each letter. Students can also try to find other words that start with the letter by brainstorming with their teacher and drawing pictures for each one.

It is important to take things slowly with beginners to make sure that everyone follows well. When teaching young learners in the fall of 2011 I noticed that the students' levels of English knowledge was extremely varied and while some learners knew more than a few words in English, others did not know one word. Therefore, it is better to teach at a slow pace so that the students will not feel discouraged.

5.2 Numbers

Teaching numbers through music is also a fun way for young children to learn. Most children already know how to count in their first language and quite a few will even know how to count in the target language as well.

An ideal pre-task would be for the teacher to draw each number from 1-12 on the board in numbers. The teacher will then tell his students about the song that they will be hearing to get them prepared for the main assignment. It is important to teach numbers from 1-12 because it will make it easier for the students to learn about the time as well as

the months later on since there are twelve hours in a day and twelve months in a year.

The assignment itself is a listening task with visual activities where the numbers will be sung and shown at the same time. Post-listening, the teacher will use flash cards with different pictures on them, ranging from one item on a card to twelve. The teacher will hold up one random card at a time, and ask one student to count out loud in the target language. Then the teacher will hold up the next card and ask another child to count the items on that particular card and so on. When all the children have finished counting the items on the flashcards, the teacher will play the song again for entertaining as well as educational purposes.

The following week, time can be introduced since the numbers will already be fresh in the students' memory.

5.3 Colors

Teaching colors is similar to teaching letters and numbers. Most children will already know the colors in their native language and can distinguish between the basic ones, such as red and blue. What needs to be taught is the correct pronunciation of the words. Pre-listening, the teacher tells the students about the colors around them in the target language and asks the students what colors they are wearing. This involves the students participating, which they often enjoy at this age.

The task itself would be a video where the young students can see the colors and hear the right pronunciation in a song. It is important to find songs that are simple and focus on what is being taught at the time being. Post listening, the teacher will hand out a black and white picture to each student and ask them to color it a certain way, like a blue

shirt, a red hat and yellow boots. It is up to the students to choose the correct color and complete the assignment. This way the children are hearing the word and connecting it visually while coloring.

Another option could be that the teacher asks one child at a time to point out a certain color, for example the color green. The child then needs to look around the classroom and point to the right color. Some children are insecure about speaking in front of others and therefore there cannot be any pressure on them to participate or speak. During my practice teaching earlier this year with young learners, I found out that most of them wanted to take part in most of the activities but some of them needed more time than others. They might also need time to adjust to new methods and tasks before feeling secure enough to participate because we are all different individuals with different needs and strengths.

5.4 Weekdays

There are songs to be found about the weekdays that are ideal for teachers to sing with their students. The Internet is a great source for finding music to use in the EFL/ESL classroom. Many of the songs are so simple that the teachers can easily learn them in a short period of time and sing for their students in class.

Pre-listening, the teacher can ask what day it is, what day it is tomorrow and so on to see if the students are familiar with the weekdays in the target language. After that the teacher can sing a song about the weekdays for the students to learn and then ask them to participate by singing along the second time around. Singing together creates an entertaining atmosphere that makes the lesson more memorable.

Post-singing, the teacher can hand out assignments for the students to work on either alone or in pairs and explains what is expected of the students. The assignments can be various, but an example of one would be that the teacher hands each student a paper where all the days of the month are written down and each day has numbers from 1-7. The children are supposed to draw a circle around the right number for each day, so for Wednesday they would draw a circle around 3 to show that it is the third day of the week. This can be done verbally as well, where the teacher asks the children one at a time where Wednesday belongs in a week and then writes the correct answer on the board. Later on, when the children feel more comfortable, the tasks can become more challenging.

As previously mentioned, young learners should not be required to know how to write or spell words correctly, but by giving them handouts with words printed on them as well as drawings or numbers, the learners might subconsciously learn to recognize how the words look and it could help them out in their language learning as time passes.

5.5 Months

The months in English sound similar to Icelandic so it should not be a very challenging subject. Pre-listening, the teacher talks to the students about what month it is, what month comes next and how many months there are in one year. After that a song about the months is played for the students so they will hear the correct pronunciation.

Post-listening, the children can draw a picture that describes their favorite month, and verbally share with the class what they drew and why the month they chose was their favorite one. This task is good for the students to enhance their creative side.

5.6 Seasons

Teaching the seasons can be done in numerous ways and even made into a theme where the students can work around the seasons for up to a month or more.

Pre-listening, the teacher tells the children about the four seasons. Then the teacher plays them a song about the seasons that they listen to, twice. It is good to have the song visual for students at a young age for them to be able to connect with the words better through pictures and graphics. “When prior knowledge is low, graphics, either still or animated, are better for learning descriptive facts than lessons with text only” (Stokes and Suzanne, 2002, p. 5). The Internet contains songs about the seasons, which include many different visual activities that can be used for young learners.

Post-listening, the teacher could use flashcards with pictures of items that connect with each season like a snowman, mittens and snow for winter; a sun, sandals and shades for summer; a jacket and sneakers for spring and a colorful leaf and a rake for autumn. The teacher can draw a simple picture for each season on the board and even write the names of them underneath the pictures for the students to have the visual aspect as well as the words. One student at a time will come up to the board, pick a flashcard with one item on it and glue it on the board under the correct season. Young learners love playing games so this is a good way to involve the students in a fun yet challenging game. Teachers can include words in their teaching along with pictures, as long as the main focus is being put on the visual aspect. This subject is also ideal to use for theme work where the teacher can have his students collect things from outside to decorate the classroom.

5.7 Body parts

Body parts are a fun subject to teach because there is already a song in Icelandic that most children recognize, called Höfuð, herðar, hné og tær, or Head, shoulders, knees and toes. It is a song that can be sung by the teacher as well as the students and involves moving and interacting, which is always a fun way of learning especially for kinesthetic learners.

A pre-task could be that the teacher talks about the song and asks her students if they have heard it before. After that, they can go through the body parts orally with the movements. The task itself involves singing the song in the second language for the children and then asking them to stand up and sing along. Since most of the children will already know the melody of the song, it is ideal for singing together.

A post-listening activity could be that the teacher shows the students pictures of each body part, one at a time and the students have to raise their hand to say what body part is being displayed. Since the song only teaches eight body parts, this subject has to be taught again where the teacher includes other body parts such as arms, legs stomach or back. After that, the teacher can move on to clothes and connect them with each body part so that the students will not forget what they already learned.

5.8 Clothes

It is good to have gone through the alphabet, the colors, the numbers, body parts, as well as the seasons prior to teaching young learners about clothes because that makes learning about them easier.

Pre-listening, the teacher should involve the students by asking them in the target

language what kind of clothes they are wearing by asking them questions like: “What are you wearing on your feet”, “What do you wear on your head in the winter” or “What do you have on that is purple?” The task itself would be a song about clothes and there is a song called “Getting dressed” that can be found on the Internet that teaches children about clothes.

Post-listening the teacher can ask the students’ things like: “Can you name clothes that start with the letter A?” The children raise their hands and the teacher writes or draws their suggestions down on the board, depending on the children’s age.

6. Using music to teach adolescents

Language learning becomes more challenging as the children grow older because the vocabulary increases. Emotions become more relevant and more emphasis is placed on grammar, correct spelling and pronunciation. The vocabulary develops into being more complex and the fun that young learners experience with playing games in the classroom becomes more serious with all the different emotions. Spelling and grammar become more important as pictures and visual aspects slowly disappear from the textbooks as the years pass.

Teaching adolescents is giving and the tasks vary from using background music while the students study in the classroom, to analyzing song lyrics and everything in between.

Background music is a controversial topic and does need more research, but it can be good to introduce older learners to the use of music in the classroom by bringing in background music to see how they respond. Many people are in fact able to study and

listen to music simultaneously and it can actually create a very peaceful atmosphere because music can be very effective to increase the students' ability to learn. "Music played at 60 beats per minute (SB/M) has been shown to produce a state of relaxation in both children and adults" (Chalmers, et al., 1999, p. 3). Background music can be appropriate to use when the students are working on their homework, creative assignments such as writing papers or journals, or even when working on other quiet activities that require the students to use their imagination and visualization. When brainstorming for assignments, background music can also be helpful because it can help with building emotions and creativity. Since all learners are different, it is important to ask them for feedback to see what suits each student.

Song lyrics are a task on their own when it comes to using music for learning because they contain so many variable assignments that include creativity, grammar, spelling and increased vocabulary. It is good for students to be able to work on assignments that accept various views and opinions because music and song lyrics enable creative writing and independent thinking. When lyrics have been placed into the music and they have been stored in the memory, their meanings can be discussed and analyzed where the students should be encouraged to use the target language. It has been shown that students' comprehension is better when tales are told with repetitions, comprehension checks and gestures (Cabrera and Martinez, 2001, p. 284-285). Adolescents can relate to most lyrics and often connect them to their own experiences in life so a wide range of vocabulary will help the students to improve their comprehension skills and add on to their vocabulary, grammar and correct spelling.

Through music, grammar can be taught in a new way. Nouns, pronouns, verbs,

adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and more can be introduced through music to break up the usual routine. During my practice teaching, I noticed that grammar was being taught through textbooks and handouts but never through songs. Many of the students seemed to dislike learning grammar and their attitudes were often very negative. Including songs with assignments from textbooks and handouts would enhance the lesson.

I will review a few methods that have to do with background music, songs with lyrics, grammar, pronunciation, figurative language and creativity. This is only a fraction of what music has to offer as a language learning method for children studying a foreign language.

6.1 Background music

When I was teaching adolescents in 2010, some of the children would ask if I could turn on the radio while they were working on their assignments in class. I had never used background music before but I decided to give it a try by using pop music that was soft and relaxing. The music seemed to calm the students down and make them more focused on their work.

Background music has been researched extensively and since adolescents use music a healing tool as well as a source of enjoyment, the music needs to be carefully chosen in order to influence and enhance adolescents' maximum learning in the classroom. Brewer states that background music stimulates internal processing and creativity, and encourages personal reflection (Brewer, 1995, p. 4).

Using background music while the students do their work is a good change from the normal classroom environment, but the right mood has to be set in order to get the

best results. Classical music is ideal for a good working environment although easy-listening pop music can most certainly be used as well. For adolescents, listening to music is very often connected to their feelings, so background music can be incredibly powerful to use in the classroom to enhance the students' creativity and a peaceful state of mind. A study done by Davidson and Powell (1986) on fifth graders reveals that the use of easy-listening background music was effective in increasing on-task-performance in both genders (Levy, 1986). Playing simple melodies and songs in the background while the students do their work creates a relaxed atmosphere that stimulates the brain. "Music stabilizes mental, physical and emotional rhythms to attain a state of deep concentration and focus in which large amounts of content information can be processed and learned" (Brewer, 1995, p.2). Since most adolescents like to work with music at home, this method will likely be appreciated in the language classroom.

6.2 Song lyrics

When choosing songs with lyrics it is important to begin with songs that the students are familiar with so that the teacher can see where their students' interest lies and also to get their full attention. As time goes by, the teacher can start using songs that are new to the students, yet appealing enough to engage them. The songs should have challenging vocabulary that is interesting and has a wide range. They should also contain language that can be analyzed and interpreted in many various ways. Songs, chants, poems, and raps will improve memory of content facts and details through rhyme, rhythm, and melody (Brewer, 1995, p. 3). There are so many different genres of music so the teachers need to be open minded and willing to explore music in many forms for all levels.

Pre-listening, the students would be introduced to the activity by viewing a photo of the artist singing the song and given the song title as well. Having the students brainstorm for a few minutes before playing the song will prepare them for the main task and can simply help relax the atmosphere. The teacher could ask questions about the artist to see if the students are familiar with the artist or ask if the students have heard of the chosen song before.

The assignment itself would be for the students to enhance their listening skills and vocabulary through a song. At first, the teacher should play the song for his students. After that, they are given handouts of the songs' lyrics with some of the words missing. The teacher plays the song again, and this time, the students can read along and fill the missing words into the blanks. Usually the songs need to be played at least twice. Finally, the teacher reviews these missing words with his students on the board. They discuss their meaning and the students take notes in their writing books. This exercise can be very challenging and the teacher needs to make sure that the songs' lyrics are clear so that the students will not feel discouraged. With time the lyrics can become more complex.

Another exercise would be to make skits from new vocabulary included in the song. The teacher will find a song with a wide range of vocabulary for the students to learn. The students get to hear the song and then they will get a list of words from the song that they might be unfamiliar with. The students will be divided into groups of 2-4, and they will have to go through the meaning of these words together by using dictionaries or guessing from a context. They will be encouraged to learn the words meanings and then asked to create skits, using these new words in the right form. This can be entertaining for both students and teacher because this is where the students get to use their imagination

freely.

6.3 Grammar

Teaching grammar can easily be done through song lyrics that are written especially with that in mind. There are also popular songs that teenagers can relate to that teach grammar. An example of a grammar exercise could be to learn about nouns and verbs through a pop song. Many song lyrics that can be found in pop songs include a good amount of grammar exercises, such as; “She loves you” by The Beatles that teaches the present tense, “Yellow” by Coldplay that teaches irregular past tense verbs, “Lately” by Stevie Wonder where the students can learn about present simple and continuous and “Every breath you take” by The Police that teaches future continuous, and is also ideal to use for other activities such as analyzing lyrics and creating discussions.

Pre-listening, the teacher tells the class about the days assignment, which is learning about nouns and verbs through a song. They will be told how they can distinguish between the two. The students need to know what to listen for when working through music so a pre-task is extremely important as a preparation. Next, the teacher hands out the song lyrics to everyone and the students will be told to highlight the nouns in one color and the verbs in another one while listening to the song. After that the song is played twice since the levels of English can be extremely varied in one classroom. Post-listening, the teacher reviews the students’ answers orally and explains everything as appropriate.

Another example of an exercise would be to learn about past tense through a pop song where the students get the lyrics to a song and are supposed to underline the verbs

that are in past tense while listening. Post-listening the students can write a short story, using the verbs from the song in the past tense. This way, the students can actually enjoy learning through music, which is rarely used to teach grammar in the EFL/ESL classrooms.

6.4 Pronunciation

What learners need to concentrate on when learning pronunciation is to be able to communicate successfully with other non-native speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds (Jenkins, 1997, p.119). Music is such a good way to teach pronunciation to children of all ages. It is good for learners to hear a variety of pronunciations so that they will know what suits their personalities.

Pre-listening, the teacher informs the class about different pronunciations and how music can display them. The task itself will be a song that contains lyrics with words that can be analyzed for their pronunciations and even syllables. It is important that the students are familiar with syllables since languages and music are mostly made from rhythm and pitch. The students will hear the song played once without reading the lyrics and then they will get to see the songs lyrics with some of the words missing from it. The students are supposed to listen to the song again and fill in the missing words. When all the words have been filled in, the teacher goes through their meaning and they explore how many syllables each word is.

6.5 Figurative language

In order to expand the students' vocabulary, it is important for them to become familiar with figurative language. Within figurative language I include metaphors. Often, metaphorical expressions vary between the first and the second languages and that creates problems for the students. Therefore metaphors should be discussed and compared for better comprehension of the target language (Deignan et al., 1997, p. 352). Music is a perfect tool to teach this, as there is figurative language and metaphors in so many songs of all genres.

When I was teaching figurative language and metaphors in 2011, I used a Hip Hop song that contained a lot of slang entitled; "You got me" by a group called The Roots. One sentence in the song is as follows: "That snake could be that chick, that rat could be that cool cat."

This sentence brought up many different ideas from the children, so I decided to connect to it with my students like this: "That chick over there could actually be a snake, meaning, someone who will go behind your back and sneak up on you, just like a snake would do. So a snake is someone that you cannot trust." My students were so intrigued by this new way of teaching. "That cool looking guy by the window could be a rat and we all know that rats have a bad reputation, so he could be someone that is not trustworthy." Prior to including my learners, I had gone through each word like "cat" to make sure that the students knew that a "cat" in Hip Hop language, means a guy. This was very entertaining for all of us and definitely brought us closer together.

Pre-listening, it is a good idea to explain what figurative language and metaphors are. The teacher could write a few examples on the board and have the students brainstorm for a few minutes. After that, the students listen to the song and read the lyrics

at the same time. Post listening, the teacher goes through every sentence with the students verbally and asks for their input. It is good to ask the whole class at once instead of one particular person to get a discussion going. Going through figurative language and metaphors though music is a successful teaching method.

6.6 Creativity

Music brings out people's creativity, which is very often needed in language classes. Some children might be afraid to express themselves because many of them are used to writing in their textbooks and workbooks instead of using their imagination and creativity. Music is a brilliant resolution to that. As mentioned earlier, background music does in fact enable the students' creative side and helps with their imagination as well. Soft pop music can be helpful when the students are doing independent work and can create a pleasant working atmosphere.

Song lyrics stimulate the brain and give the students ideas about how to write and use figurative language and metaphors. They increase the students' vocabulary and as a result help them to become better writers.

7. Conclusion

I see myself as a teacher whose main goal will be to implement music into language learning because it is extremely important to me that students enjoy learning. I want to bond with my students through a language that we all know and understand. I believe so strongly in music as a teaching method that I am willing to dedicate my teaching role to evolving it and making it accessible to all teachers. Music is one of children's biggest

influences in life and by moving it into the classroom the students' interest in learning and participating in different tasks will definitely be increased.

I have personally experienced the joy and success music brings in the classroom and I will continue to evolve my music ideas for better results in the future. Music is a strong method to use for teaching languages and it appeals to people of all ages and levels. It brings fun, creativity and depth into the classrooms and opens up new and exciting possibilities for second language teachers. I do hope that music will be heard more frequently in every language classroom in the future.

Resources

- Brewer, C. (1995). Music and learning: Integrating Music in the Classroom. *Quarterly Journal*, p. 1-13. Retrieved from:
<http://ignitetorch.net/community/articles/MusicandLearning.12.6.07.pdf>.
- Brualdi, Amy C. (2000). Multiple Intelligences: Gardner's Theory. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved June 1st 2011 from:
http://chants.coastal.edu/cetl/resources/Multiple_Intelligences.pdf
- Cabrera, M.P and Martinez, P.B. (2001). The effects of repetition, comprehension checks, and gestures, on primary school children in an EFL situation. *ELT Journal*. 55(3): p. 281-288. Retrieved from:
<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/55/3/281.full.pdf+html>
- Chalmers, L. Olson, M.R and Zurkowski, J.K. (1999). Music as a Classroom Tool. *Intervention in School and Clinic, Volume 35 no. 1* 43-52. Retrieved from:
<http://isc.sagepub.com/content/35/1/43.full.pdf+html>
- Deignan, D. Gabryś and A. Solska. (1997). *ELT Journal. Volume 51, Issue 4, p. 352-360*. Retrieved from:
<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/51/4/352.short>
- Horwitz, E.K. Horwitz, M.B and Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal. Vol. 70, No. 2. p. 125-132*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.jstor.org/pss/327317>
- Lefever, S. (2009). Are national Curriculum objectives for teaching English being met in Icelandic compulsory schools? *Tímarit um menntarannsóknir*, 6.

árgangur 2009, 107–128. Háskóli Íslands, Menntavísindasvið (University of Iceland, School of Education). Retrieved from:
fum.is/TUM-6.%20árgangur/7_samuel.pdf

Mora, C.F. (1999). Foreign language acquisition and melody singing. *ELT Journal. Volume 54, Issue 2, p 146-152.* Retrieved from:
<http://203.72.145.166/ELT/files/54-2-5.pdf>

Ortis, J.M. (2008). The Effects of Music, Rhymes and Singing in the Classroom Environment. *Conference Proceedings. p. 202-209.* Retrieved from:
[http://academic.evergreen.edu/curricular/mit2008/Win08handouts/CPBOOK08.pdf#page=205.](http://academic.evergreen.edu/curricular/mit2008/Win08handouts/CPBOOK08.pdf#page=205)

Jedynak, M. Classroom Techniques: Using Music in the Classroom. P. 1-4.
Retrieved 2011 from:
<http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum/archives/docs/00-38-4-g.pdf>

Jenkins, J. (1998). Which pronunciation norms and models for English as an International Language? *ELT Journal. Volume 52, Issue 2, p 119-126.*
Retrieved from:
<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/52/2/119.short>

Polio, C.G and Duff, P.A. (1994) Teachers' Language Use in University Foreign Language Classroom: A Qualitative Analysis of English and Target Language Alternation. *The Modern Language Journal. Volume 78, No. 3, pp. 313-326.* Retrieved from:
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/330110>

Roberts, R. Donald, F and Christenson, P.G. (2001) Popular Music in Childhood

and Adolescence. *Handbook of Children and the Media*. Edited by Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer, pp.395–413.

Retrieved from:

[http://www.google.com/books?id=moifZwJHunsC&lpg=PR11&ots=whb09u
piiJ&lr&hl=is&pg=PR11#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://www.google.com/books?id=moifZwJHunsC&lpg=PR11&ots=whb09upiiJ&lr&hl=is&pg=PR11#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Saricoban, A. & Metin, E. (2000). Songs, Verse and Games for Teaching Grammar. *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10. Retrieved from:
<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Saricoban-Songs.html>

Stokes, S. (2002) Visual Literacy in Teaching and Learning: A Literature Perspective. *Electronic Journal for the Integration of Technology in Education*. Volume 1, Issue no. 1, p. 10-19. Retrieved from:
<http://ejite.isu.edu/volume1no1/pdfs/stokes.pdf>

Tarrant, M. North, A.C and Hargreaves, D.J. (2000). English and American Adolescents' Reasons for Listening to Music. *Psychology of Music*, p. 166-173. Retrieved from:
<http://pom.sagepub.com/content/28/2/166.full.pdf+html>

Patricia Shehan Campbell, Claire Connell and Amy Beegle. (2006-2007). Adolescents' Expressed Meanings of Music in and out of School. *Journal of Research in Music Education*. Retrieved from:
<http://jrm.sagepub.com/content/55/3/220>

Wise, J. Multiple Intelligences Theory. *Serendip*. Retrieved from:
<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/biology/b103/f01/web2/wise.html>

Yiftach, L. (1986) The effects of background music on learning: A review of recent literature. *Department of Educational Technology*. Retrieved from:
<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/Courses/Ed690DR/Examples/LitRev/Levy.htm>