

LYRICS AS AN AUTHENTIC TOOL FOR TEACHING  
ENGLISH TO ADULT LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

English is a language for international communication and trade. For adult Colombians this demand may become an important part of daily life, skills for communication in English could be solicited by employees and future academic and social endeavors, adult Colombians may see this ability as an advantage. Language instruction for adult learners may need didactic approaches and didactic tools that could help them achieve the goal of being more proficiency and fluent in English. This work pays special attention to Lyrics in English as they may be an interesting and important resource helping adult learners get closer to this foreign language. Music consistently surrounds our lives and may potentially assist educators in removing boundaries between the various communities that students belong to (Nagy & Herman, 1987). This study compiles information dealing with the use of lyrics as teaching tools and resources that may help adult learners find a better way to access this foreign language, developing strategies to language based instruction and self-instruction dynamics. This uses a qualitative approach to navigate authors and ideas supporting that lyrics in the target may act as language motivators and language developer devices. Cheung (2001) prefers the image of music bridging gaps between ‘formal and informal’ learning as opposed to breaking boundaries and Huy Le (1999) extends this bridging of formal and informal learning environments to include the bridging of the gap between teachers and students as well.

*Keywords:* listening, real and authentic materials, motivation, adult learners

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This degree is a personal goal that started many years ago, it is part not only of a necessity but a way of life, a path to achieve and enjoy this existence. It has been a long journey, a discovery of personal fragility and at the same time of my strength and courage. It has not been easy or just difficult, it has both flavors, and I think this is what gives this effort its final color, a color of peace and happiness. I want to thank those who in many ways were involved and help me understand and develop this experience, without their help and support I would not be able to navigate through these academic and living endeavors. I feel relief and motivated to continue this part of my life with dedication. I dedicate this result to my family, especially to my parents, Gloria and Fabio, and to Ada, my partner in life, they were the first pillars of what made me finish and achieve this happy time. I want to thank to UNAD and the staff of tutors that were there providing this opportunity to grow, not only as a professional but as a new human being. Let me express my total gratitude.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This research explains the impact of lyrics in songs as a didactic tool in teaching English as a Foreign Language. This also wants to make a compilatory analysis from different sources stating that thanks to the use of lyrics, adult students can improve listening as part of their communicative skills.

The interest in this topic comes from personal experience as an English teacher since 2009 in the Department of Antioquia, Colombia. Using lyrics in the classroom has permitted to verify the importance and usefulness of using songs in English class. This has allowed learning, motivation and understanding of the culture and the language. To help support this interest, this study will focus on theoretical and research texts stating that the use of lyrics can help develop listening skills to adult learners.

This monograph is a compilatory work, which considers lyrics as a very important tool, making training and apprenticeship more fun and effective. First, it will explore the importance and value of lyrics as an authentic instructional resource. Next, it will review how Lyrics in songs can be used as a Learning Activator Device (LAD), the "innate facility" for acquiring language. Finally, it will go through how The Song Stuck in My Head Phenomenon: A Melodic Din in the LAD? Validates lyrics as a teaching tool for learning a foreign language and endorses

the use of lyrics as an effective way for learning English, helping students enhance their abilities for listening.

This will help English teachers use the new concepts about the use of lyrics shown here in their classes to teach English to adult learners, showing that lyrics have a favorable effect in adult learners. This tool can be used to make them eager and open to the idea that learning a new language is possible.

This work shows how lyrics are an authentic teaching tool that makes students feel calm, confident and empathetic. Music provides proximity and simplicity when learning. The use of this assistance leads to assimilation of the Foreign Language. This monograph wants to bring considerations, remarks and elicit the use of this resource for training and learning English. It also seeks to highlight how music can help achieve this goal.

This work will show how this instrument is an intelligent method to introduce students to different aspects of the language and its native culture. Understanding that lyrics can be used for formal grammar training and helping listening, vocabulary and fluency abilities.

### **Significance of the Study**

After years learning and teaching English language in places like Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) institution, a project for teaching English to elementary and secondary teachers in Antioquia. Called Antioquia Bilingüe, and private schools; methods for enhancing these aspects became something relevant and important. English learning and teaching are a priority in Colombia, this is a part of different strategies to insert the country in the dynamics of global exchange.

The following is found at the Colombian Ministry of Education from its plan called Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (Bilingualism National Program) stating:

Strengthening the command of a foreign language is essential for any society interested in being part of global dynamics of academic, cultural, economic, etc. The improvement of the levels of communicative competence in the English language of a particular society or population necessarily leads to the emergence of opportunities for its citizens, recognition of other cultures and individual and collective growth, increasing the possibilities of social mobility and more egalitarian conditions for development.

(Colombia,MinEducación, 2004)

After teaching English for many years, it is relevant to show up the positive impact of lyrics when seeking the development of listening and communicative skills among adult students. Teachers face daily requests from their students to provide lessons with elements that make them feel engaged and motivated trying to obtain better results, these goals can be achieved by the use of lyrics as part of the different strategies used in the classroom. Another advantage of using pop songs in language teaching and learning is the involvement of cultural knowledge, (Cheung, 2001).

This study reviews theoretical sources highlighting the benefits of lyrics as a training resource. An instrument that has been used for a long time, as a secondary asset when teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English songs: are a rich mine of information about human relations, ethics, customs, history, humor, and regional and cultural differences, (Lems, 2001).

This paper aims to present lyrics as a first teaching source, that when teachers use lyrics as part of a designed instructional plan, students achieve better results, promoting communication and interaction. One of the advantages of using songs in teaching is that the texts in the lyrics represent authentic examples of English structures and real uses of the language, and



here is when the work with songs takes paramount relevance at the moment of teaching the language, (Lopera, 2003)

The use of lyrics as a tool for instruction in English as a Foreign Language emphasizes that language education always needs innovative strategies for teaching English to students and, in the case of this work, to adult learners, helping them enhance their listening skills. For Coromina (1993) lyrics provide a break from the text book and workbook routine.

Another important aspect is that this research helps see songs in the correct way for training a Foreign Language, demonstrating that they have a positive effect especially focusing on adult learners. Dubin & Olshtain (1977) consider that the inclusion of music in English lessons is effective because: music is a pleasurable outlet... is a good way for students to relax and feel more at ease in using the new language.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The use of English is increasingly important in universities, the work place and the social life. It is important for teachers to implement teaching strategies using pedagogical tools like lyrics that facilitate the assimilation of this language. Segura & Villalba (2005) consider that the use of songs related to the students' interests can help the class to engage and motivate them develop the activities involving things they like. Cárdenas (2000) supports that listening is carried out through practices that can produce boredom, panic or even frustration. To change that and avoid negative experiences music can be used as a pleasant resource, bringing not only joy but authentic materials to enhance the practicing and learning of the language.

### **Hypothesis**

Lyrics provide language instruction with a dynamic and playful approach, bringing authentic materials and approaches to the class experience, changing the mood of the class and

the view students have in front of something that might be a difficult task, easing the pain and the frustration, lyrics and music are a great ally in language education, helping students achieve their goal of learning a new language. Lopera (2003) mentions that lyrics provide the opportunity to work with the students in specific points, improving and enhancing the learning possibilities beyond texts books or non-authentic materials.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

To compile the impact of lyrics in teaching English to adult learners based on authors that mention and support their use for teaching English.

### **Specific Objectives**

To identify different authors and bibliographic sources about the use of lyrics for teaching English.

To demonstrate the relevance of using Lyrics mentioning authors talking about the importance of lyrics for teaching English.

To create a blog presenting this study and a set of resources related to the use of lyrics for teaching adult learners.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Lyrics in music as a Learning Activator Device (LAD)**

This theoretical framework reviews the concept defined as LAD or Learning Activator device. Humans are born with an ability that helps them acquire a first language and subsequently acquire or learn other languages, this is key to language teaching in adult learners. This ability to learn another language at an adult age is essential to understand the use of verbal songs in language teaching, as reviewed before music and lyrics are motivators and tools that can create conditions to stimulate and facilitate learning. One piece of evidence for the existence of a LAD is the fact that physical areas of the brain concerned with production and comprehension have been identified, (Murphy, 1990).

This paper aims to explore different sources expressing the way music and verbal songs may play a role as motivators and facilitators in contexts where learners are reluctant or nervous in front of the learning task. This devices could provide the environment and the space needed to articulate and engage students in the class playing the role as a long term educational source, students could take it with them, they could choose the songs and lyrics they like expanding their training and learning capacities, this could be an important asset when considering learners as active participants and self-drivers of their own learning achievements, according to Bartle (1962), Richards (1969) and Jolly (1975), the use of music and songs in the English language-

learning classroom is not new and scholars have been arguing for the use of music in a language acquisition context for both its linguistic benefits and for the motivational interest it generates in language learners.

For Murphy (1990) the belief that acquisition is possible lies at the heart of any method that involves engaging the learner in natural communication and authentic input, these include what he calls task-based learning, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and some story- and activity-based programmes, Murphy (2007).

About language acquisition: In the 80s, Krashen (1987; 1988) distinguished acquisition from learning by advocating the idea, which, until nowadays, has underlain researches and textbooks that claim to be communicative, that only a language considered as one's mother tongue is acquired and the others are learned. It means that one's first language is what defines him/her as a subject, and it is acquired without its grammar knowledge, better yet without one's formal knowledge of it. The other languages, which are best known as foreign languages, are learned (grasped) in formal contexts, once the learners are not directly in touch with the speakers of those languages or in an immersion situation.

Thanks to the information found, it was possible to understand that music could act as a bridge between the adult learners and the new language, which would satisfy the need to have access to a new language, and therefore, to a new set of cultural and social features. Lyrics as Learning Activator Devices may become the structure that forms the bridge.

The so called LAD could act as a link and as a mechanism that could be used to form the Foreign Language inside the learner's mind and brain, making it a social habit, a tool for meaningful interactions. Arias, Duque, & Mitchell (1996, p. 125) include lyrics songs as a teaching material because they are not graded material, produced by native speakers and for the

users of that language, without any modification, and with the purpose of helping English language instruction.

The Language Acquisition Device, or LAD, is part of Noam Chomsky's acquisition hypothesis. The LAD is a system of principles that children are born with that helps them learn language, and accounts for the order in which children learn structures, and the mistakes they make as they learn. Second language learning theory proposes that acquisition is possible in second and subsequent languages, and that learning programmes have to create the conditions for it. (British Council, 2008)

To link the LAD theory with adult learners language training, we can say that lyrics have the ability to allow them act as a LAD as lyrics may have the Target Language as part of their communicative role, learners could listen to them all the time, they could take them to many places, this could provide the constant touch with the language as music, this means the possibilities of engagement, repetition and cultural awareness could be part of what they offer as in the LAD proposal, this may be in some form a natural way to access the target language. For Bartle (1962) and Kanel (2000) Music had been used on occasion with the Audiolingual Method (This method is Based on Skinner's Behaviorism theory, it assumed that a human being can be trained using a system of reinforcement. Correct behavior receives positive feedback, while errors receive negative feedback) in language teaching classrooms to reduce the boredom that could occur from repetitive drills from the 1950s through to the 1970s.

Segura & Villalba (2005, p. 70) declare that when lyrics or songs are used related to students' interests can help the class to find motivation and engagement in the activities involving specially things they like. These resources can be used to create lessons that can help students develop the skills they need to improve.

## **The Song Stuck in My Head Phenomenon**

This chapter uses an article from Tim Murphey (1992), raising awareness and dealing about the relationship of four different phenomena paying special attention to two of them: The involuntary verbal rehearsal, also called the “Din in the head”, and the song-stuck-in-my-head (SSIMH) phenomena.

According to Murphey (1992) the DIN is a phenomenon that occurs as the result of constant repetition, this leads to language acquisition, to have the DIN as part of a learning process there must be an input, for example when in class this input is provided, the DIN starts to operate and no so much time needs to be applied to this the development of language to happen. Barber (1983) mentioned that the DIN in the head as a rehearsal of a foreign language in a person's mind.

The DIN phenomenon was first discussed in the literature of second language acquisition by Krashen (1983), who defends that the DIN is a form of mental rehearsal in which words, sounds, and phrases of the target language are spontaneously replayed in the mind. These elements integrate listening the language as a form of lyrics and in this exercise repetition is helping language acquisition, another key feature presented here to support the idea that the lyrics are appropriate teaching resources for adult learners, (De Guerrero, 1987).

For Orlova (2003), the following aspects are part of the methodological purposes for using lyrics in class: 1. Practicing the rhythm, stress and the intonation patterns of the English language. 2. Teaching vocabulary, especially in the vocabulary reinforcement stage 3. Teaching grammar. In this respect songs are especially favored by teachers while investigating the use of the tenses. 4. Teaching speaking. For this purpose, songs and mainly their lyrics are employed as a stimulus for class discussion 5. Teaching listening comprehension 6. Developing writing skills.

For Cárdenas (2000) listening comprehension is added on to established stages of reading, writing and speaking. And Willis (1981) states that for students it is fundamental to get the chance to listen to different types of English, so they will be able to listen with understanding to spoken English outside the classroom.

The input may come in many forms, drills, exercises and activities that could provide comprehensible information, and learners could start repeating language forms more and more. According to Nagy & Herman (1987) Music consistently surrounds our lives and may potentially assist educators in removing boundaries between the various communities that students belong to extending their work, and in the same regard, Medina (1990) suggests that it may be beneficial to attempt methods that more closely resemble life outside of the institutional classroom, which is generally filled with music, songs, stories and visual images.

Guerrero (1999), tried to find if students can start the DIN rehearsal voluntarily, they may be aware of different forms used before, providing them with opportunities to deal with conversations and forms in future opportunities. It is like a bank of language features that are part of the mind that can come when needed, as an output. As mentioned before, this output has to be preceded by a comprehensible input, something Guerrero (1999) calls: I should have said that experience (ISHTE).

For Krashen (1983) the Din in the head refers to an involuntary rehearsal of the target language words, sounds and phrases. The DIN in the head is also a result of stimulation of the language acquisition device, when the acquirer receives a good amount of comprehensible input. This is important and relevant to know when real input is being provided in classes or thanks to the target language exposure.

Lyrics may be seen as perfect devices for repetition of language in the learner's head, and they could be a pleasant way to take advantage of the use of constant elements of vocabulary. This also may help training listening, and by that way, this may help the development of the other skills needed to be a fluent user of the target language, as seen by Cheung (2001), the image of music bridge gaps between 'formal and informal' learning as opposed to breaking boundaries.

On this same matter, Huy Le (1999) extends this bridging of formal and informal learning environments to include the bridging of the gap between teachers and students as well. And Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) place students in an environment in which it is appropriate to use target utterances in a genuinely communicative fashion. Songs and lyrics are consistent and repetitive, which is helpful for listening comprehension and fluency, not to mention language and vocabulary acquisition.

This DIN in the head phenomenon is related to exposure to the target language and by repetition, the sounds, words, etc. of the target language stay in your head. The Din in the head operates thanks to appropriate amounts of language inputs and becomes instinctive like a child uttering words and sounds. Bedford, Krashen (1983), and De Guerrero (1986) tried to provide evidence of the DIN phenomenon applying questionnaires to different groups of students and speakers of a second language. Regarding the DIN phenomenon, De Guerrero (1987) performed a study of 52 Spanish-speaking English as a second language college students, which revealed that the din phenomenon (a form of spontaneous mental rehearsal in which words, sound, and phrases are replayed) was very common among subjects and at all stages of language acquisition.

Murphey and Alber (1985) consider that pop songs register was described as the "motherese of adolescents" and as an affective foreigner talk referring to the simple and affective



language they provide. This is interesting when considering lyrics as part of the training process, they provide repetition, vocabulary, cultural context and emotions, and they will stay with the learner as they are elements that can be used by repetition as many times as the student wishes to use them for training or pleasure purposes.

To give a base to the previous idea, let us consider the following statement, Widdowson (cited by Cárdenas, 2000, p. 12), that says that: it is a function of the interaction between the hearer and the text, which incorporates the intention of the speaker. The song stuck in my head (its relation to the DIN phenomena) and the relation between songs and the Din as something that implies repetition, and stays with the learner as language acquisition, and the LAD can help see lyrics as learning tools or learning devices, in which songs are repetitive DINS that stuck to the listener's head. This repetition of important input features is relevant to understand lyrics/songs as excellent language learning activator devices.

Crystal (cited by Lopera, 2003, p. 138) states that: Throughout the world, English is probably encountered more often today in music than on the printed page. And Carrier (2000) says that lyrics can be an enjoyable way to get in contact with the words and expressions and the culture of the target language.

Lyrics in songs have the possibility to stick to the head, repetition is the key to explain how music, songs and lyrics can affect in a positive way the form we learn foreign languages. As lyrics become part of a constant routine, they will help interiorize the language. Research into the discourse of pop songs shows that they have an extremely high verb count with few concrete referents for participants, times and places, Murphey (1992).

The inner speech is helped by the privacy in which the listener is in touch with the songs and its verbal components, then when it is part of the listener, this silent period becomes the

opposite, this is what Murphey (1992) calls the talkman. Verbal songs help the inner voice to come out, making speech possible, listening opens the door to pronunciation, and this is a result provided by the song stuck in my head phenomenon.

According to Murphey (1992), lyrics are playing a fundamental teaching role worldwide because of the popularity of songs in English and the availability through mass media. This helps us conclude that songs and lyrics can play a fundamental role in language teaching, they are a favorable source of materials that can help develop language proficiency skills. Learners can develop a long term process of self-training and cultural awareness, an open door to the target language, thanks to a powerful tool that carries the language and the culture it represents. For Milington, (2011), using songs as language learning tasks can help to maximize the potential of songs as teaching and language learning tools.

Pop, rock, and folk music is an idiom which is embraced by a broad span of young people –and not only those living within English speaking countries. It is familiar to students both in academic and non-academic settings, Dubin & Olshtain (1977). To support this, let us mention Griffie (1992) declaring that it is important to point the advantages in using songs and music in the language classroom and during the learning acquisition process.

### **Lyrics as an authentic teaching resource to enhance listening skills to adult learners.**

From the previous pages of this monograph, the importance of lyrics as a teaching tool has been related to understand the need for innovative and appropriate teaching resources that can fit students and teacher's needs. Verbal songs in English are seen as an important and useful intangible asset related to what teaching communities call as real and authentic materials. Music in education and lyrics as language links can enrich training and make learners more active, motivated and engaged. Supporting the previous ideas, we can mention that: All normal (non-

brain damaged) people possess some musical intelligence, (Gardner, cited by Fonseca-Mora, 2000).

Songs and music can help the training/learning process, this tool is dynamic and fluid, it relaxes the mood and as mentioned by many authors it creates a favorable space for learners that might feel frustrated or inhibited in front of the “challenge” that represents learning a Foreign Language. Students concentrate on messages and ideas as they would in their native language, they are doing something with language: they are participating actively in the game called communication, Murphey (2010).

When a song is integrated in a language class as a learning motivator device, a lot goes on, regarding the listening process and other abilities, for Schoepp (2001) it is important to recognize the grounded theory when a teacher uses a song in class, he states that teachers see patterns emerging from the material they use, they help them create a language teaching theory that helps fit teaching and language into the students’ needs and goals.

These patterns, accordingly to Schoepp (1999), include components that are affective, linguistic and cognitive. These elements are the reason for what they use lyrics in their classes. The temporality of music, spoken language and other kinds of performances such as plays, poetry readings and dance, provides social cohesion by tying the participants together in a bounded collective experience, Arleo (2000) and adults sing at many places, Gugliemino (1986).

Music possesses similarities to spoken language, it relates meaning and connects it to our experiences, social memory and feelings, and for Gordon (1993) music contains from our early age, syntactic, phonetic and semantic components. Many authors support the idea that music increases creativity and eagerness towards the learning process. For Deutsch (1991) there is a connection between perceiving musical sounds and linguistic backgrounds.

For many authors, music and the lyrics it contains will provide a great opportunity for teachers to establish a close relationship with their pupils, helping find elements that connect many aspects, not only for pleasure, but to create language inputs and outputs. The rhythm and melody of the music could be considered tantamount to stress and intonation, Arleo (2000).

For Horn (2007) we can understand that using lyrics in class does not pretend to replace language production or linguistic features or valuable speaking techniques, it is to present language in an enjoyable and interesting way.

It (Foster, 1993; Gugliemino, 1986; Karimer, 1984; Lowe, 1998; Olhaver, 1998) states the merits which music holds and could be used in the classroom such as music for relaxation, concentration, motivation, cultural awareness, vocabulary acquisition, ear training and pronunciation. On the contrary of the endeavors done by language teachers for creating some varieties in their classes, high numbers of classes consist of drills, short dialogues and repetition, (Ashtiani, 2015).

Musical lyrics in the target language bring a lot of real use of new vocabulary and real language forms. Gugliemino (1986) asserts that ESL instruction, regardless of its focus, involves a great deal of drill and repetition. Since music provides pleasant repetitions in an enjoyable manner, it holds a great significance in a language class (Gugliemino, 1986). To continue this part let's define ESL or L2:

The first area of difference between first (L1) and second (L2) language learning is input – specifically the quality and quantity of input. It is the idea of the "connectionist model that implies... (That the) language learning process depends on the input frequency and regularity" (Macnamara, J. (1975), pg. 71-94). It is here where one finds the greatest difference between L1 and L2 acquisition. The quantity of exposure to a target language a child gets is immense

compared to the amount an adult receives. A child hears the language all day every day, whereas an adult learner may only hear the target language in the classroom – which could be as little as three hours a week.

The relationship between lyrics with the way we learn a language at the beginning of our life is that we learn from the original source, we start listening sounds, rhythms and that is what makes music and lyrics interesting when implementing them in teaching a foreign language, focusing in the importance and usefulness when talking about developing the listening skills needed in the communication process. This relationship between sounds and rhythm enhances students' listening skills. Suggestopedia (Bancroft, 1982) and the method of Tomatis (Tomatis, 1991) take advantages of music to elevate relaxation and allow the learners to learn more efficiently.

For García-Sáez (1984) the use of lyrics is a great asset because it helps practice phonetics in a way other techniques cannot do it. There are two elements when talking about listening skills, this can add feelings and understanding and can help checking for understanding the target language and the communicational processes going on or being transmitted by the song, this accordingly to McDonough and Shaw (2003).

Along with lyrics come motivation and feelings that create or facilitate the learning process. It is true that, as mentioned before, the use of lyrics is not meant to replace other language training ways, strategies or materials. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) realized four motivational elements in foreign language learning including interest in the lesson, relevance, expectation, and satisfaction.

Students may summarize orally the action or theme of a song or give oral presentations about a song or musician, playing musical selections for the class. To involve the whole class,

students can fill out response sheets about each presentation, answering questions about the featured topic, something new they learned, and something they enjoyed. Verbal songs or lyrics are part of a variety of possibilities that can be explored by teachers and researchers of language teaching today. When the learners of that language are out of that country, songs put an enjoyable and effective way to introduce the culture and encourage students, Murphey (2010).

Teachers are multi-role actors and adult learners are active players. Due to these premises they can easily find lyrics as a fundamental resource to use for a long life learning process, strengthening listening and the rest of skills needed to be a fluent user of the target language. A long term learning journey that takes dedication, motivation and commitment from the student. To be sure, songs have a place in the classroom for helping create that friendly and co-operative atmosphere so important for language learning, but they can offer much more. They offer insights into the culture and especially the stories and myths of different societies, providing a window into the frames of reference and values of the peoples whose language we are learning, (Candlin, 1992).

Moreno et al. (2009) studied the effects of music on learners' language development and found that exercising musical tasks for even a short duration could positively influence the ability to perceive and differentiate individual phonemes of the language. Music training enhances aural skills (Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010), music training enhances verbal memory (Cheung, 2001). And that is of a significant importance, since songs are a cultural representation of the target language and its culture.

Lyrics are also interesting when helping students to achieve a good level of proficiency regarding the target language. Learners can use the songs they like and they enjoy as learning tools using lyrics with the level of language everyone needs. Segura & Villalba (2005) mention

that using songs related to the students' interests can help the class engage willingly and meaningfully in the activities involving things they like.

Listening as ability, when we use audio, we are directly affecting the sense of listening, as listening being an important part of the communicational process, acquiring the listening skills needed to understand the target language is essential, lyrics in the target language supported by the enjoyable feature of music help the development of this skill. Words in songs have this melodic character that makes them a nice tool for repetition. Dubin & Olshtain (1977) consider that the inclusion of music in English lessons is effective because: music is a pleasurable outlet... is a good way for students to relax and feel more at ease in using the new language.

Cárdenas (2000) considers that in most cases, listening is carried out through practices that produce boredom, panic or frustration. In contrast to that, we can say that through lyrics and music the level of frustration and fear drops. We can help students achieve their learning goals understanding that a song they listen to and they enjoy is a great way to go further in understanding and using the target language codes, promising them that their path to become fluent users of the language can be ahead with the correct use of these type of strategies and tools.

Lyrics can help make many types of exercises and objectives to be achieved, they can help with different aspects and accordingly to Lopera (2003) lyrics in songs provide the opportunity to work on specific teaching points, mentioning the following:

- To have a contextualized topic for compositions or discussion
- To make associations in English with other aspects of our lives
- To facilitate translation exercises
- To provide listening material

We can add that to develop vocabulary, cultural awareness and the colloquial language used in real life by native users in different contexts and situations, are among the best elements that lyrics can bring to the learning experience. Thanks to listening to the songs and the way lyrics are used to express emotions and values, it helps learners connect with the essence and the way native users use language to measure important aspects of life and the way they communicate their feelings, and how they establish a relationship with the world around them.

Listening is an important skill to understand and have access to the development of other skills, when we listen to a song we can start a discussion or an activity about feelings or emotions, or cultural differences, or establish relations between these aspects and specific vocabulary. Thanks to that we can state that listening brings other abilities. Here speaking, writing and reading altogether are present when we use this type of learning tool in a class. Cárdenas (2000) states: that listening comprehension is added on to established stages of reading, writing and speaking.

Oxford (1993), defines listening as a complex problem solving skill and it is more than just perception of the sounds. Listening includes comprehension of meaning words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connected discourse.

Listening is essential in the communication process, it gives the input required to establish communication. When we use lyrics to help adult learners, we are training their ability to understand the target language, we are providing the opportunity to follow a sequence of sounds and ideas that are connected within the songs' lyrics. Another interesting quotation about the importance of listening in the learning process is given by Saricoban (1999), stating that listening is fundamental, it is the medium humans use to obtain information from the world around them.



For adult learners, it is fundamental to develop this skill as it is part of the ways they need to interact in different contexts. That is why, it is important to understand the connection between lyrics and the idea of using them helping train adult learners for listening in English or a foreign language.

Through the different sources investigated, it is important to make a remark that listening is an ability that is part of the communicative goal when we use a foreign language. The development of all the skills is a fundamental element, and lyrics are among the most interesting and useful tools for that. Rivers (1978) states that listening is a creative skill, thanks to it we recreate the sounds and articulate the ideas that come with them, we generate understanding thanks to this ability. For Rivers (1978) listening brings comprehension, attention and appreciation. Besides that, the listening activity needs the integration of other skills that take part of language; we are talking about pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, writing, speaking, and reading.

Some difficulties when using listening activities are related to the fear students might feel if they do not understand every word or expression, they are used to listen to a teacher that might speak slowly so they can understand as much as possible, but when another material is used such as a song, the speed of language is different and students might feel frustrated if they get lost. That is why strategies and materials must be selected very carefully; they have to be interesting enough to make learners feel motivated. Oxford (1993) states: that listening is a complex problem solving skill and it is more than just perception of the sounds. Listening includes comprehension of meaning words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connected discourses.

Motivation is another important aspect to consider when we look what a learner is and we need to understand their needs and their fears. Music and lyrics can provide this relaxing and

familiar scenario that can give this security to them. Motivation plays an important role here, and lyrics are a good way to help students obtain motivation and knowledge of the target language. Saricoban (1999) considers that listening is a fundamental language skill. It is a medium that helps children, young students and adult students obtain a lot of information, understanding of the world and of human issues, their dreams and ideals, their sense of values, and their appreciation.

Another interesting quotation by Hornby (1990) states that: a song is a piece of music with words that is sung. And as mention before, lyrics in the target language are connections with the real use of the language and the people who use it as their mother tongue. Futonge (2005) points: A song is also a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs can also provide a relaxed lesson. They can also form the basis for many lessons.

Before Orlova (2003) was mentioned, stating that it is possible to suggest that among the methodological purposes with songs used in class, it is possible to have elements such as practicing the rhythm, stress and the intonation patterns of the English language, teaching vocabulary and grammar, developing listening comprehension, writing skills, and speaking. For this last purpose, songs, and mainly their lyrics, are employed as a stimulus for class discussion. As for Griffe (1992), it deals with having a classroom atmosphere with cultural input, text and student interest.

Songs create enjoyable classroom atmospheres, and dealing with this atmosphere, songs and music can be used to make students relaxed and provide enjoyable classroom conditions. They can introduce the culture of the songs. Either songs or music are reflection of the time and

place that produce them. When the teacher brings songs into the classroom, he will also bring the culture of the songs in the classroom.

In this way, lyrics are very useful and interesting when used for instruction. Many teachers will conclude that songs and lyrics will be effective, not only for young learners, but for kids too. Kids enjoy it as they see it as a playful tool and teens can be engaged as they are interested in the pop culture. This not only will provide class materials, but information regarding their favorite artists and bands. This aspect can be useful too, when integrating lyrics to a class for adult learners. They need to find motivation and be engaged into using these tools as learning devices that can help them achieve what they need in terms of developing skills. Domoney & Harris (1993) and Little (1983) investigated the prevalence of pop music in the lives of EFL students. Both studies found that music is often the major source of English outside of the classroom.

Adult learners will enjoy songs that they recognize and can listen to all the time. Frustration and anxiety drop, and the class can be turned into a new space for learning and cultural exploration. The Contemporary Music Approach by (Anton, 1990) and the KELP project (Johnson al., 1995), explore pop songs to encourage, motivate the students, and provide a more bustling and active ambience in the classroom. Thain (2010) emphasizes the use of songs in lessons, since songs help developing the four skills and believes that songs bring about activation of both sides of the brain. Gatti-Taylor (1980) states: that phonetic instruction could be both easy and enjoyable. And that: “It is relatively easy to find song lyrics that stress a particular phoneme” (p. 466).

Adults will find interesting the use of lyrics as they will help them. This implies a serious and conscious use of these materials, used in an intelligent way that can be effective as a tool for

bringing as much knowledge as possible to the adult class and the adult learner. Music, songs and lyrics are present in our life. Gugliemino (1986) declares that adults sing at many places and moments, such as religious services, bars, in the shower, and listening to the car radio. Songs are an integral part of our language experience, and if we use them in a language lesson they can be some resource of great importance and value for the language instruction.

To conclude these ideas on how lyrics are positive resources for teaching English to adult learners, we can mention an interesting work by Kevin Schoepp (2001) mentioning that:

What actually occurs in a language classroom is, in fact, very valuable. The first step in developing a theoretical rationale for using songs in the classroom is to label the types of listening processes and then identify the reasons teachers and researchers provide. From here, we can see that the teachers' motives are actually grounded in theory. Patterns emerge from the literature as to why teachers and researchers find using songs valuable. These patterns include affective reasons, cognitive reasons, and linguistic reasons.

To continue following his article, where Schoepp (2001) mentions that there are two processes involved in listening, and both can be utilized when songs are used in the classroom. The activity which is selected for a particular song will determine which of these processes is active.

In this article we found that Cullen (1999) declares: The first is bottom-up processing where the listener builds up the sounds into words, sentences and meaning. The second is top-down processing where the listener uses background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Practicing both of these processes is essential for developing listening comprehension. The affective, cognitive, and linguistic reasons for using songs which follow, are all grounded in learning theory, and provide insights into the benefits of songs in the classroom.

For Schoepp (2001) the affective filter hypothesis is one of five proposed hypotheses developed by Steven Krashen (1994). Basically, it is an explanation of how the affective factors relate to language learning. It is particularly appealing to teachers because it provides an explanation to why some learners learn and others do not. Krashen (1983) explains that for optimal learning to occur the affective filter must be weak. Claerr and Gargan (1984) argue that songs have unique advantage for the practice of listening comprehension because of their meaningful context and topics of broad human interests.

Lyrics are positive for teaching adult learners in a foreign language; their features are elements providing language elements helping learners have language acquisition and fluency. Saricoban and Metin (cited by Schoepp, 2001) said that songs can develop the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. And Eken (1996, p.46) states that songs can be used:

- 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

Lo and Li (cited by Schoepp, 2001) offer similar suggestions, writing that songs provide a break from classroom routine, and that learning English through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the four language skills can be enhanced. The belief that songs provide enjoyment and develop language skills is also noted by several other authors

(Adamowski, 1997; Bechtold, 1983; Domoney & Harris, 1993; Griffiee, 1992; Gugliemino, 1986; Lems, 1984; Little, 1983; Monreal, 1982). The enjoyment aspect of learning language through song is directly related to affective factors.

Schoepp (2001) defends that Cognitive Reasons Songs also present opportunities for developing automaticity which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the classroom. This author quotes Gatbonton and Segalowitz (cited by Schoepp, 2001) who define automaticity as a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses.

For Schoepp (2001) using songs can help automatize the language development process. Traditionally, it was believed that automatization would occur through repetitive exercises in a non-communicative environment. However, the major shift towards the communicative teaching methodology requires that automatization occurs in a different manner. For this to happen, teachers place students in an environment in which it is appropriate to use target utterances in a genuinely communicative fashion, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988).

The nature of songs is fairly repetitive and consistent (Schoepp, 2001). According to Ur (1984, P.65) “ there are two periods of pleasurable listening in a typical song-learning process in the foreign language classroom: the beginning, when students hear the song for the first time and try to catch as many of the lyrics as they can; and the end: when they know the song well”.

And for Linguistic Reasons Schoepp (2001) states:

Besides automatization, there is also a linguistic reason for using songs in the classroom. Some songs are excellent examples of colloquial English, that is, the language of informal conversation. A song such as "My Best Was Never Good Enough" by Bruce Springsteen is a prime example of a song that demonstrates colloquial language use. This song is full of phrases

like "Every cloud has a silver lining." and "Every dog has his day." Of course, the majority of language most ESL students will encounter is in fact informal. Using songs can prepare students for the genuine language they will be faced with.

Schoepp (2001) mentions two studies, Domoney and Harris (1993) and Little (1983). These two authors investigated the prevalence of pop music in the lives of EFL students. Both studies found that music is often the major source of English outside of the classroom. The exposure to authentic English is an important factor in promoting language learning. It relates directly to both the affective filter and automaticity. If students are exposed to songs which they enjoy, more learning is likely to occur since they may seek out the music outside of the classroom. The repetitive style of songs then helps promote automatization of colloquial language.

Before concluding this chapter, Schoepp (2001) gives conclusions that fit what we have been discussing in this work, the benefits and interesting elements lyrics bring for language instruction, and these benefits go beyond any negative effects. At the end learners, teachers and language teaching obtain better results from authentic materials like lyrics.

In what Schoepp published we found that Rosová suggested several activities to enhance the EFL students' listening and speaking skills. The following activities are some of what EFL teachers can do with songs in the classroom to teach listening and speaking:

- Listen to the song
- Sing the song
- Sing without listening to any recording
- Perform songs
- Talk about the music

- Talk about the lyrics
- Talk about the singer / group
- Do interviews
- Practice pronunciation, intonation and stress
- Do choral repetition
- Use music as background for role play

For Schoepp (2001) the three theoretical reasons he mentions in his article are all intertwined and help demonstrate the value of using songs in the classroom. The next step in the procedure is to successfully integrate the songs into a language lesson. Internets, access to music, lyrics, and activities have been simplified, which makes it easy for the teacher to effectively use songs in the classroom.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This monograph has a compilatory approach, presenting and analyzing the different studied sources and its findings. Part one: Lyrics in music as a (LAD) Learning Activator Device. Part two: The Song Stuck in My Head Phenomenon, validating lyrics as a teaching tool for learning a foreign language. Part three: Lyrics as an authentic teaching resource to enhance listening skills to adult learners. Songs have unique advantage for the practice of listening comprehension because of their meaningful context, appealing “package”, and topics of broad human interests, Claerr and Gargan (1984).

Learning a new language might imply many aspects, music is an authentic material bringing a lot of good elements to learners, this can help teachers use innovative and helpful resources to help students learn and improve their teaching approaches for good. There are two periods of pleasurable listening in a typical song-learning process in the foreign language classroom: the beginning, when students hear the song for the first time and try to catch as many of the lyrics as they can; and the end, when they know the song well, Ur (1984).

#### **Research Approach**

This monograph work followed the “Bilingualism in Distance Education through technology” research line established by the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia. The objective of this investigation line is to guide to a reflection and review of teaching-learning

processes of foreign languages of all the models, face-to-face, distance, and virtual education, through information technology. (Lineamientos para los trabajos de grado ECEDU).

This specific line was selected because it deals with teaching-learning processes for foreign languages and also the development and implementation of didactic material for language learning processes. As already said, this monograph aims to compile literature for the analysis of how the use of lyrics affects in a positive way the learning process of a language. This monograph, compiled information supporting the lyrics in songs as useful resources for language teaching, they can be used as part of learning curriculums, by the students in and outside the classroom helping they enhance their skills for the new language they are learning.

Like language, music is a human universal involving perceptually discrete elements organized into hierarchically structured sequences. Music and language can thus serve as foils for each other in the study of brain mechanisms underlying complex sound processing, and comparative research can provide novel insights into the functional and neural architecture of both domains (Patel, 2003: 674).

The authors referenced here support lyrics as teaching tools and they explain how this can solve many situations during the teaching period, teachers and students could use these materials in many ways in class and the information provided by these authentic materials are ended suitable for teaching a foreign language. Candlin (1992) says:

To be sure, songs have a place in the classroom for helping create that friendly and co-operative atmosphere so important for language learning, but they can offer much more. They offer insights into the culture and especially the stories and myths of different societies, providing a window into the frames of reference and values of the peoples whose language we are learning.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

This work has brought interesting information and theoretical sources supporting the benefits of using lyrics in language teaching, these benefits are equal to students and teachers, lyrics provide many elements such as the listening input, vocabulary used in daily life, pronunciation and emotions expressed by the concepts and ideas related by the lyrics. As early as Bartle (1962), Richards (1969) or Jolly (1975), using lyrics it is not new, many teachers have used them as part of their didactical tools and strategies, the importance here is that this compilation of information has provided different theories supporting why these type of resources need to be understood and intelligently used to help training student learn and be fluent in a new language. For Leith (1979) there is probably not a better nor quicker way to teach phonetics than with songs. Phonetics instruction is one good use to which songs can be put even in beginning classes.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Thanks to the authors and their teachings, we can conclude that lyrics can play an interesting role in foreign languages instruction and learning, lyrics are not the only resource, there are many other tools that teachers can use to help learners achieve their goal of be fluent users of a foreign language, teachers can discover and understand the benefits of using these resources to change and improve the way they teach and motivate their learners.

Learners can learn the way they can use resources like lyrics to find strategies to motivate themselves and develop their own learning strategies.

There are two periods of pleasurable listening in a typical song-learning process in the foreign language classroom: the beginning, when students hear the song for the first time and try to catch as many of the lyrics as they can; and the end, when they know the song well, Ur (1984).

It is recommended that these authentic materials that are not designed as teaching materials, must be used in ways that they can help learners use them improving skills such as listening, vocabulary, speaking and cultural knowledge, making them understand that lyrics are not academic texts and there are other resources that can bring more academic approaches of the target language and lyrics are another interesting and useful way to help them learn and be fluent users of a foreign language.

Rosová (2007) says that: Songs can be very helpful as far as learning pronunciation is concerned. They provide the authentic language with all its traps (such as connected speech, different pronunciation of the same sound, or difficult pronunciation of some words) laid for learners, who should be exposed to it as much as possible to strengthen their ability to understand it.

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