



UNIVERSIDAD FASTA

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH SONGS.

Final Research Project

AUTHOR: CEPEDA, María Verónica.

TUTOR: INSAURRALDE, Andrea.

Mar del Plata, November 2014.

INDEX:

Abstract.....	4
Key Words.....	4
1 -INTRODUCTION.....	4
2-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
2-1 The role of Music.....	6
2-2 The psychological Effects of Music.....	7
2-3 The Lexical Approach	8
2-4 Introducing Songs in the Classroom.....	10
2-5 What is Listening?	14
2-6 The Importance of Listening.....	15
2-7 Listening difficulties.....	15
2-8 Memory.....	16
2-9 Conclusion.....	18
3- RESEARCH STUDY.....	18
3-1 Methodology and Objectives.....	18
3-2 Background of the Respondents.....	19
3-3 Instruments.....	20
3-3-1 Description of the Song Lesson.....	20
3-4 Analysis of Data.....	22
3-4-1 Results of the First Questionnaire.....	22
3-4-2 Description of the Song Lesson Experiment.....	25
3-4-3 First Song: “ If I were a Boy”	25
3-4-4 Second Song: “ Don´ t wanna miss a thing”	26
3-5 Aims.....	26

3-6 Results Collection of the Second Questionnaire.....	28
3-7 Test results.....	30
4- FINAL CONCLUSION.....	30
*Bibliography.....	32
*Electronic Sources.....	32
*Appendix 1.....	33
*Appendix 2.....	35
*Appendix 3.....	37
*Appendix 4.....	41
*Appendix 5.....	45

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH SONGS:

Abstract:

The main objective of this work is to explore the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language through songs to improve students' proficiency with lexis. The study was conducted with intermediate level students at Escuela Secundaria N° 2, in Mar del Plata. The experimental group was taught some vocabulary items with the help of selected songs and class activities including singing. The data was collected through a set of questionnaires to gather information about the students' music preferences. Afterwards, the students completed a written exam which measured the students' lexical competence. This study suggests that teaching through songs is among one of the best methodologies to use when teaching a foreign language.

Keywords: songs, teaching, active learning, fun, motivation, sing, memory, lexis.

1-Introduction:

In the Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995), music is defined as "the sounds made by instruments or voices in a way that is pleasant or exciting". Music can be divided into genres and subgenres. To many people in many cultures, music is an important part of their way of life. To musicians, music is their life. They eat, breathe, and live music. Music is their passion. For others, music is a hobby or a pastime. Music is something that arouses interest and is pleasurable. Music is a means of relaxation for some people, while others simply enjoy listening to the sounds, melodies, and rhythms that music brings to their ears, minds, and hearts.

Nowadays, it is almost impossible to escape music. It is used in films, advertisements; it is on the radio, on the web and even in most shops, restaurants and other public places. Current technological inventions, such as the MP3 player, mobile phones and iPods, enable users to take their music with them wherever they go and whenever they want. In fact, a lot of school students

get into trouble in class for listening to music on their headphones. So, why not use music to our advantage?

Music has always been important to most young people. They love to share music with one another. Talking about their favorite artists or songs is some of their every day communication topics. Music is connected to many areas of their lives. For example, young people who like similar kind of music usually dress similarly or share free time activities. Therefore, music can be used by teachers to get into students' world and build rapport in order to increase motivation.

Music is a tie that binds all cultures and languages, and therefore, one of the best ways to make learning English fun. As music is a universal language, melody, rhythm and harmony go beyond linguistic barriers and can be enjoyed by any human being. Usually, when students listen to songs, they experience emotion and connection which can be a bridge to the learning of the specific skills that they need to learn.

When teaching English as a foreign language, teachers need to be very creative in order to keep their students' interest. Since the best way to learn a foreign language is by total immersion, using music and songs is one of the tools that professionals may employ in their classes to help students develop language proficiency, create a positive attitude and increase motivation in the language learners.

The reason why I am undertaking this project is my interest in analyzing and revising different methodologies and approaches for teaching English, and especially vocabulary, through the use of songs and music. I will therefore attempt to show that the use of songs in the foreign language classroom motivates the learners and promotes the acquisition of formal aspects of the language. The main purpose is to find out how music in the second language classroom may help to motivate students, raise their self-esteem, and help them to memorize vocabulary items, grammar structures and to improve pronunciation. I intend to test the hypothesis using the results obtained after working with a secondary school class for a given period of time. The aim is to prove if working in class with the English-language music that teenagers listen to could have a positive impact on their learning skills.

2-Theoretical Framework:

2.1-The Role of Music:

Music has always played an important role in humans' lives. During the first years of life, mothers sing lullabies to their children. In addition, music is used in different important occasions, such as weddings, funerals and celebrations. Each country has its own anthem. Music brings emotion to life and it also serves as a testimony of people from any land or time. It fills the gap between nations and reveals facts about people. From a scientific point of view, it has been proved that music reduces the signs of nervousness. Music is used therapeutically in child Psychiatry and Pediatrics. With the aid of music some function failure, such as stammering, dyslexia and dysgraphia can be cured.

Tim Murphey, in his book "Music and Songs" (2000), suggests that "Mood music is very popular nowadays. Music is usually present in the dentist's office to relax patients or in the shopping centers to encourage customers to buy. Heart surgeons use music to relax operating teams during long and stressful operations. In some London hospitals, women can listen to music during childbirth to relax them" (ibid: 37). He also says that "Music has the potential to change the atmosphere". Therefore, he makes a connection between music and language teaching: "Music seems to give energy where there was none and sparks off images when students complain of having nothing to write about".

Murphey made the following list about what people usually do with songs. They:

- *Listen.
- *Sing, hum, whistle, tap and snap fingers while listen.
- *Sing without listening to any recording.
- *Talk about music.
- *Talk about the lyrics.
- *Talk about the singer/group.
- *Talk about the video clips.
- *Use music to set or change an atmosphere or mood.
- *Use songs and music to create a social environment, form a feeling of community, dance, make friends and lovers.

*Read about the production, performance, effects, authors, producers, audiences of music and songs.

*Use music in dreams.

*Use music and songs to make internal associations between people, places and times in our lives, so they become the personal soundtrack of our lives” (1992:9).

Music touches topics that people can relate to Murphey adds: “songs can be appropriated by listeners for their own purposes, because many pop songs do not have precise people, place or time reference. For those who find them relevant , songs happen whenever and wherever one hears them and they are, consciously or subconsciously, about the people in one’s life” (1992:8).

All of the above mentioned arguments indicate that music is a subject of everyday communication and it is present in people’s lives intentionally or unintentionally. In addition, songs can be considered cultural artifacts. They may reveal some aspects of society and culture. For this reason, it can be beneficial to use songs to teach English vocabulary, since it increases the possibility that students get involved in the lessons that deal with topics they find relevant.

2-2. The Psychological Effects of Music:

Music has it effects on people, animals and plants. Robertson (“The Effects of Music” http://www.dovesong.com/positive_music/effects_of_music.asp) claims that “music with a “beat” can stimulate your body; music with powerful melodies and harmonies performed with feeling can make you weep or cry out with joy; and music like Bach and Mozart can be mentally invigorating”

The film industry is also aware of the power of music to create a certain atmosphere, since it is through music that love, anger or any other feeling are brought into scene. This proves that music influences the way people perceive things, as well as the way they behave. That is why music is used in different contexts, even as therapy.

In the website of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) there is a brief account of the history of music therapy. After the First and the Second World Wars, many community musicians of all genres, both amateur and professional, went to veterans hospitals around the country to play for thousands of veterans suffering both physical and emotional trauma from the wars. Doctors could realize that there existed physical and emotional responses to music. However, they noticed that hospital musicians needed some training to deal with patients before entering the institution. Therefore, the first music therapy degree program in the world was funded In Michigan State University in 1944. Many years later, in 1988 the AMTA was funded.

The goal of Music Therapy is to achieve therapeutic goals. According to the AMTA, this therapy “improves the quality of life “and “music therapy intervention can be designed to:

- *manage stress;
- *alleviate pain;
- *express feeling;
- *enhance memory;
- *Improve communication and
- *promote physical rehabilitation.”

Music therapy is beneficial for people of all ages. All styles of music can be used for therapeutic purposes. The AMTA website suggests that “the individual’s preferences, circumstances and need for treatment may help to determine the type of music a therapist may use”. Music therapies can be used with individuals and groups. The patients needs determine the kind of activities performed in therapy: music improvisation, receptive music listening, song writing lyrics discussion, music performance, role-plays and learning through music.

The aspect of music therapy connected with language teaching is that teaching vocabulary through songs is used in schools to improve students some skills, such as, communication skills; which is probably the most important skill when learning a foreign language.

2-3-The Lexical Approach:

In his “Lexical Approach, Michael Lewis (1993) suggests that lexis is the basis of language. Lexis is misunderstood in language teaching because of the assumption that grammar is the basis of language and that the mastery of the grammar system is a prerequisite for effective communication. The key principle of a lexical approach is that “language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar”. The Lexical Approach to second language teaching is an alternative to grammar-based approaches. This approach concentrates on developing learners’ proficiency with lexis, or words and word combination. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical

phrases as “analyzed wholes or chunks”, and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (1993: 95).

Instruction focuses on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently in spoken language, such as, “I’m sorry” or “that will never happen to me”, rather than on originally created sentences (1997:112).

The Lexical Approach makes a distinction between vocabulary -traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meaning- and lexis, which includes not only single words but also the word combinations that we store in our mental lexicon. The Lexical Approach advocates that language consists of meaningful chunks that, when combined, produce continuous coherent text and only a minority of spoken sentences are entirely novel creations.

Lewis (1997) suggests the following taxonomy of lexical items:

- a. Words (pen, chair)
- b. Polywords (by the way, upside down)
- c. Collocations (community service, absolutely convinced)
- d. Institutionalized utterances (we’ll see, If I were you)
- e. Sentence frames (the problem was, that is notas you think)
- f. Text frames (Firstly, secondly)

Within the Lexical Approach, special attention is directed to collocations and expressions that include institutionalized utterances and sentence frames. As Lewis expresses:” Instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these expressions. Rather than trying to break things into smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic ways”(1997: 204).

Collocation is “the phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency” (1997: .8)

Furthermore collocation is not determined by logic frequency but is decided only by linguistic convention. Some collocations are “fully fixed”, such as the expression: “to catch a cold”; while others are less fixed and may be completed in a small number of ways, as in the following examples:

*Blood/close/distant/relative.

*Badly/severely/deeply/hurt.

In the Lexical Approach, lexis in its various types is thought to play a central role in language teaching and learning. Nattinger (1980: 341) suggests that teaching should be based on the idea that language production is the piecing together of ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation. Comprehension of such units is dependent on knowing the patterns to predict in different situations. Instruction, therefore, should focus on these patterns and the ways they vary and the situations in which they occur. Activities used to develop learners' knowledge of lexical chains include the following:

- *Intensive and extensive listening and reading.
- *Repetition and recycling activities.
- *Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.
- *Noticing language patterns and collocations.

As a conclusion, implementing a lexical approach in the classroom does not lead to radical methodological changes. Rather, it involves a change in the teacher's mind. The activities that teachers implement with a lexical approach must be directed toward naturally occurring language and toward raising learners' awareness of the lexical nature of language. Teachers using the Lexical Approach will not analyse the target language in the classroom, but will be more inclined to concentrate learners' attention upon these chunks. To sum up, The Lexical Approach shows how lexis, grammar, and phonology interact in ways that directly affect the ways learners store new language.

2-4-Introducing Songs in the Classroom:

According to Thornbury, words are organized in the human mind in, what is called, the mental lexicon. The vocabulary is stored in "highly organized and interconnected fashion" (2002: 16). He believes that "knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning" as well as "knowing the words commonly associated with it, its connotations ; including its register and cultural accretions" (2002:15). According to Harmer (1998), it is difficult to say which words that students know are passive and which are active: "a word has been active through constant use may slip back into passive store if it is not used. A word that students have in their passive store may suddenly

become active if the situation or the context provokes its use". Therefore, the status of vocabulary items does not seem to be a permanent state.

In his book "How to Teach Vocabulary" (2002), Thornbury describes the challenges that a learner of a foreign language has to face:

- making the correct connections between form and meaning of words;
- using the correct form of a word for the meaning intended;
- remember words over time and be able to recall them readily;
- acquire a critical mass of words for both production and understanding of language;
- developing strategies for coping with gaps in a word knowledge.
-

Using music in the classroom may help, since the words in songs are remembered along with the melody of the song. Thornbury also mentions three ways of acquiring words-labeling, categorizing, and network building. Labeling means mapping words on the concepts. Categorizing skills enables a child to "extend the concept of a word", which means that a child understands that the word dog includes "other people's dogs, toy dogs and even picture of dogs". Network building stands for "constructing a complex web of words so that some items can be interconnected" (2002:18).

When learning vocabulary, some words seem to be easier to remember than others. What makes a word difficult? Thornbury made a list of "several factors that make some words more difficult than others":

*difficult pronunciation

*Spelling

*length and complexity

*grammar

*multiple meanings

Due to these difficulties, Thornbury makes some suggestions (2002: 30):

*Words need to be presented in their typical context, so that learners can get their meaning, register, collocations and syntactic environments more easily.

*Teaching should direct attention to the sound of new words, particularly the way they are stressed.

*Learners need to be actively involved in the learning of words.

*Learners need multiple exposures to words and they need to retrieve words from memory repeatedly.

* Memory of new words can be reinforced if they are used to express personally relevant meaning.

When using songs to teach vocabulary, several conditions for teaching stated by Thornbury are met. In lyrics, where words usually appear in context, the sound of new words is easily remembered along with the melody of the song and by listening to the song students are exposed to new words many times. Krashen's Input Hypothesis may also provide explanation on how new vocabulary is learned. According to this hypothesis, new and unfamiliar vocabulary is acquired when its significance is made clear to the learner. Meaning is conveyed by providing extra linguistic support such as illustrations, actions, photos and realia. This, in turn, results in what Krashen refers to as "comprehensible input", since the linguistic input is made comprehensible to the second language learner. Krashen further states that the amount of comprehensible input is proportionate to the amount of vocabulary acquired. Thus, vocabulary is incidentally acquired through stories because familiar vocabulary and syntax contained in this type of discourse provide meaning and context to less familiar vocabulary.

In the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen (1981) says that the extent to which linguistic input is received from the environment largely depends upon the learner's inner feelings and attitude. Negative emotions, functioning much like a filter, can prevent the learner from making total use of the linguistic input from his environment. Therefore, if the learner is anxious, unmotivated or simply lacks confidence, language acquisition will be limited.

Suzanne Medina, in the website "ESL through music, adds: "songs share all of the same elements of an oral story". Suzanne Medina is a professor at "School of Education" in Carson, California, who conducted research on the effect of music on second language acquisition. She found her theoretical support for her study on Krashen's second language acquisition hypothesis. According to Medina, music evokes positive emotions which can lower the affective filter and brings about language acquisition. Her research was carried out in a group of forty eight teenager students with limited English proficiency. They were divided in four groups. Each of which had a different presentation of the story song that was sung or spoken, with or without illustrations. The results of the tests that measured vocabulary acquisition were the following: "while the effect of illustrations was quite powerful, it was the addition of music which appeared to boost the positive effects of the illustrations".

What can we do with a song in language teaching? The following is a list of activities published by Tim Murphey in his book "The Discourse of Pop Songs", which provides a convincing answer to that question. These are the activities that can be performed with a song in a language classroom.

- 1-Listen.
- 2-Sing, whistle, tap and snap fingers while listen.
- 3-Sing with out listening to any recording.
- 4-Talk about the music.
- 5-Talk about the lyrics.
- 6-Talk about the singer/group.
- 7-Use songs or music to set the atmosphere or mood as “background furnishing”.
- 8-Write songs.
- 9-Perform songs.
- 10-Draw pictures.
- 11-Do interviews.
- 12-Write articles.
- 13-Study Grammar.
- 14-Practice selective listening comprehension.
- 15-Read songs for linguistic purposes.
- 16-Compose songs or questionnaires.
- 17-Translate songs.
- 18-Write dialogues using words of a song.
- 19- Do role plays.
- 20- Dictate a song.
- 21-Gap-filling or correction.
- 22-Integrate songs into project work.
- 23-Practice vocabulary.
- 24-Do repetition.
- 25-Teach vocabulary, culture, pronunciation.

26-Have fun.

Looking at this list, we see that all four skills-speaking, reading, listening and writing-can be very well and equally practiced.

2-5-What is Listening? :

“Listening is a complex skill which operates various levels. It is a skill which involves a series of different strategies and micro-skills that we use at different times for different purposes”, state J. McDowell and Ch. Hart who describe a group of strategies and micro-skills as follows:

*We use the information we already have about the topic and about how the language works, to anticipate and predict what is coming.

*We listen selectively rather than listening to every word.

*We listen for key words and expressions that give us clues to infer meaning, and not to every word.

*We make use of information we already have about the topic being spoken about; the more we know the less intensively we have to listen.

Since the idea of what is listening varies, Michael Rost defines listening “in terms of the necessary components which listening consists of:

*Discriminating between sounds.

*Recognizing words.

*Identifying grammatical grouping of words.

*Identifying pragmatic units, expressions and sets of utterances which function as whole units to create meaning.

*Recalling important words and ideas.

2-6-The Importance of Listening:

The students of language usually agree that speaking is the most important and difficult skill to master. But hardly anyone is aware of the fact that before speaking we have to listen to be able to react. So, we can agree with Michael Rost, who wrote that “progress in listening will provide a basis for development in other language skills” (1991: 3)

“No one knows exactly how listening works or how people learn to listen and understand. It is a skill which seems to develop easily for mother-tongue listening but requires considerable effort where listening in a foreign language is concerned”, expresses Mary Underwood (1998:1). She also considers that “listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. To listen successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions and not simply to understand the words themselves” (1998 :1)

Jeremy Harmer describes the main three reasons why it is also important to teach listening. He supports that “one of the main reasons for getting students to listen to spoken English is to let them hear different varieties and accents “. This is an accurate argument for involving listening to songs in a classroom, since the songs provide an inexhaustible quantity of different varieties of English. However, this advantage does not relate just to songs: “the students can be exposed to spoken English through the use of different sort of material such as advertisements, poetry reading, plays, speeches, telephone conversations and all manners of spoken exchanges” (1998:98). Harmer also adds:”the second major reason for teaching listening is because it helps students to acquire language subconsciously even if teachers do not draw attention to its special features. Exposure to language is a fundamental requirement for anyone wanting to learn it. Learners get vital information not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, pitch and stress” (1998 :98).

2-7-Listening Difficulties:

Most students experiment frustration when they are not able to understand a piece of spoken discourse. Unfortunately, quite often it happens that they get lost in what is being said to them, and they get angry, sad and helpless. This reflects the experience of many teachers in their classrooms. Jim Scrivener expresses that “even if someone knows all the grammar and lexis of the language, it does not mean that the will be able to understand a single word when it is spoken”

(2005:170). Most students agree that the most common difficulties they have to deal with during a listening activity are the following:

- *People speak too fast.
- *They cannot recognize where words start and end.
- *They cannot work out details of what is being said.
- *They cannot even get a general sense of the message.
- *People pronounce words they just do not recognize.
- *They cannot pick out those parts that are most important for them to understand. (Scrivener P.170)

As a conclusion, according to what has been written about listening, there is a considerable evidence to suggest that listening is a skill worth paying attention to.

Shelagh Rixon claims that the “principal aim of listening comprehension is not to provide a model for oral production, but to strengthen the ability to understand spoken messages” (1986:13). For this reason, I consider that songs include both practice to strengthen the ability to understand and to improve oral production.

2-8-Memory:

Memory plays a key role when learning vocabulary or a foreign language in general. Linhart defines memory as “an organism’s ability to store, retain and retrieve information for a certain time” (1982:126). Memory can be classified in several ways. The classifications are based on duration, nature and retrieval of information. There are three stages in the formation and retrieval of memory- encoding, storage and retrieval. Encoding involves “processing and combining received information”. Storage describes “a creation of permanent record of the encoded information” and retrieval means “calling back the stored information in response to some cue for use in a process or activity” (Memory).

There are several types of memory. Sensory memory is defined as “the ability to retain impressions of sensory information after the original stimulus has ceased. It refers to items detected by the sensory receptors which are retained temporarily in the sensory registers and which have a large capacity for unprocessed information but are only able to hold accurate images of sensory information momentarily” (Sensory Memory).

Thornbury also mentions working memory as “a work bench where information is first placed, studied and moved about before being filed away for later retrieval” (2002:23). He writes that “the

material remains in working memory for about twenty seconds” (2002:23). According to him, this is made possible by the existence of sub vocal repetition.

There is also a long term memory. While short term memory is limited in capacity, the capacity of long term memory is enormous and its duration can cover an individual’s lifetime. However, Thornbury , points out that learners sometimes “retain new vocabulary items the length of a lesson , but have forgotten them by the next lesson” (2002:24). He mentions some principles that need to be observed in order to store material in a permanent long-term memory:

*Repetition and an attempt to organize material.

*Retrieval: activities that require retrieval of the new material, such as using the new words in written sentences.

*Spacing: distributing memory work across a period of time.

*Pacing: giving the opportunity to pace learners’ own rehearsal activities.

*Use: Putting new words to use.

*Personal organization: the judgment that learners make about a word are more effective if they are personalized.

*Imaging: Learners remember visualized words better. That is why is recommended that learners associate even abstract words with some mental image.

*Motivation: strong motivation makes the learner to spend more time on rehearsal and practice.

*Attention/Arousal: words that trigger a strong emotional response are more easily recalled than those that do not (2002; 24,25).

Using students’ favourite songs definitely ensures repetition, motivation and certainly arouses students' attention. Since the lyrics of the songs are going to be analyzed, students should always connect the words used in the song with the melody, associating it with a mental image. Rost (1991) believes that there is no better way for storing information in long term memory than through music. He stresses that “probably nothing imprints linguistic patterns better than words wedded to memorable music. Because of the nature of melodic music, students will retain grammatical structures and vocabulary for the rest of their lives”.

Medina states that “in the psychological research, music and its subcomponent, rhythm, both benefit the memorization process”. It is also indicated that the retentive effects of rhythm can be

maximized when the target verbal information carries meaning. Several research studies have proved that rhythmic presentation benefited memorization when the items were either meaningful or meaningless. Yet, the impact of rhythm was greater when the verbal information was more meaningful. (Warner: 1971; Glazner,1976). (“The Effects of Music upon Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition”).

2-9-Conclusion:

The objective of the theoretical framework was to analyze the role of music in people’s lives; the psychological effects of music and the scientific findings on using music for language teaching, especially when learning new vocabulary. All the previous information was presented to support the potential effects that the method of using songs to teach English as a foreign language may have.

3-RESEARCH STUDY:

The practical part of my final research project deals with action research I carried out over a period of time with a group of twenty one students of sixth year in a public secondary school in Mar del Plata. The aim of this study is to find out whether music can help learners to develop vocabulary acquisition when learning English as a foreign language.

3-1- Methodology and objectives:

In the present study the relationship between English language music and English language learning is under focus. I intend to find out if a group of students of upper secondary school consider that the English language music they listen to could have an impact on the acquisition of their language skills. It was also essential to begin by mapping out their music listening habits to receive an image of them as consumers of music, and especially, of English language music.

The main research questions were the following:

- a- Do Argentinean secondary school students believe that listening to English language music has an effect on their learning of English?
- b- Are there any differences between the views of males and females?
- c- In which areas of language skills do the students think English language music has an effect on learning?

Two questionnaires were used as the method of data collection where I was able to ask very specific questions and use scales that enabled an accurate comparison between the answers. The first questionnaire was handed in to the students before they completed the song-lessons. It consisted of a set of seven questions that I employed to enquire students about their familiarity with music in English and to find out their preferences in order to deal with material that they consider interesting. After filling the first questionnaire the students completed a set of activities based on a group of songs that had been chosen by the subjects of research and by myself, fitting their favourite genres and artists. These songs were used in a sequence of different activities during three lessons of sixty minutes each.

Finally, after the song-lessons, the students completed the second questionnaire which was focused on the students' evaluation of the lessons.

3-2- Background of the Respondents:

As I expressed before, this research study was carried out in a sixth year of a public secondary school in Mar del Plata. There are twenty one students, ten boys and eleven girls. The students' ages are between seventeen and eighteen years old. They are intermediate learners of English. The school is situated in an urban area of the city, near downtown. Most of the students belong to middle class families. Nearly 80% of the students are planning to start a course of studies at University after they graduate from high school.

The class atmosphere was positive, since the students are used to working in a relaxed and actively engaged manner. I selected upper secondary school students as subjects of study because they already have some experience as music consumers and they represent a young generation that is perhaps more familiar with the English language music culture than younger

students, who are more familiar with Spanish Latin American speaking music, like reggaeton or cumbia music.

3-3 Instruments:

The first part of my research study consists of handing in questionnaire number one to the group of students (appendix 1), to be completed in no more than forty five minutes. The subjects are allowed to answer the questions anonymously. The objective of this first questionnaire is to gather information about the students' attitude towards music and to find out what kind of music they prefer.

QUESTION 1: This question is significant since the aim of this research study is to find out if music can help students to learn new vocabulary in an interesting and enjoyable manner.

QUESTIONS 2,3 and 4: The reason why I decided to include these questions is to find out whether the students are familiar or not with songs in English, their reaction towards them and their favourite music styles in order to choose suitable songs for the lesson.

QUESTION 5: The students' answers to this question will indicate the frequency with which they listen to songs in English and how often they are exposed to the English sounds in songs.

QUESTION 6: The aim of including this question in the first questionnaire is to check the students' familiarity with the concepts of rhythm and intonation.

QUESTION 7: The importance of this question is to know the students reaction towards the instrument of repetition.

3-3-1 Description of the Song Lesson:

After the students have finished questionnaire number one, they will listen to two songs and complete some activities focused on vocabulary acquisition. The aim of these activities is to highlight some vocabulary items and expressions related to "feelings and emotions". The two songs that the students will listen to in class are: "If I were a boy", by Beyoncee and "Don` t wanna

miss a thing”, by Aerosmith. The activities that the students will complete before and after they listen to the songs are the following:

- a- Fill in gaps
- b- Order the lines
- c- -Choose the correct word
- d- Translation comprehension check activities
- e- Repetition and singing

Questionnaire Number Two:

The second questionnaire will be handed in to the students after they have completed the songs lessons. The aim of these questions is to evaluate the students' experience on working with songs to improve their vocabulary acquisition (Appendix 2).

3-4- ANALYSIS OF DATA:

3-4-1 Results of the first questionnaire:

The first questionnaire is the foundation for the description of the song lesson experiment. These are the results:

QUESTION 1: DO YOU LIKE LISTENING TO MUSIC?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
ALWAYS	7	8	15
USUALLY	2	1	3
SOMETIMES	2	1	3
NEVER	0	0	0

The answers provided by the students were significant. The results show that the vast majority of the learners always like listening to music and there is nobody who does not like listening to music, which is a very positive fact.

QUESTION 2: DO YOU PREFER SONGS IN ENGLISH OR IN SPANISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
ENGLISH	8	6	14
SPANISH	3	4	7

The results of question number two indicate that most students prefer to listen to songs in English rather than to listen to songs in Spanish. These results show that the students are indirectly exposed to the sound of the English language, its rhythm and intonation.

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE KIND OF MUSIC IN ENGLISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POP MUSIC	5	3	8
HIP HOP/RAP	1	1	2
ROCK MUSIC	9	5	14
HEAVY METAL MUSIC	0	0	0
REGGAE MUSIC	1	1	2
TECHNO MUSIC	0	0	0

QUESTION 4: IS THERE ANY KIND OF MUSIC IN ENGLISH THAT YOU DO NOT LIKE?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POP MUSIC	0	0	0
HIP HOP/RAP	0	0	0
ROCK MUSIC	0	0	0
HEAVY METAL MUSIC	7	4	11
REGGAE MUSIC	0	1	1
TECHNO MUSIC	4	5	9

These two questions can be evaluated together as they closely relate to each other. The purpose of these questions was to know the favourite music style of the majority of the students in the group, in order to choose a suitable song. The outcome shows that pop music and rock music are the most preferred and heavy metal and techno music are the least preferred.

QUESTION 5: HOW OFTEN DO YOU LISTEN TO SONGS IN ENGLISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
VERY OFTEN	6	6	12
OFTEN	4	2	6
SOMETIMES	1	2	3
NEVER	0	0	0

In the results of question number five all the students in the class expressed that they very often, often or sometimes listen to songs in English, which shows that they are accustomed to listen to the sounds of English.

QUESTION 6: DO YOU PLAY ANY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
YES	2	3	5
NO	9	7	16

The fact that most students do not play any musical instruments determines the choice of activities that they will perform during the song lesson experiment.

QUESTION 7: DO YOU LIKE SINGING?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
YES	8	8	16
NO	3	2	5

This question was very important since singing is regarded as a significant instrument of repetition to help students acquire new vocabulary items during the learning process. The chart shows that the majority of the respondents in the group enjoy singing songs in English.

3-4-2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE SONG LESSON EXPERIMENT:

The lesson consisted of listening to two songs and performing some pre, while and post listening activities with each song.

3-4-3 FIRST SONG: “If I were a boy” (Beyoncee)

- Pre listening activity:

- * Guessing what the song will be about after reading the title.

Most students were able to guess correctly. The majority of the girls in the class had listened to the song before and they agreed with the author of the song in the way she depicts men.

- While listening activities:

- *Read the verses and put them in the right order.

- *Listen and circle the correct words.

- *Listen and fill in the blanks with some words from a list.

- *Listen carefully and complete the verses.

- Post listening activities:

- *Answer some questions about the song. Give personal opinions.

- *Sing the song altogether.

3-4-4 SECOND SONG: "Don't wanna miss a thing" (Aerosmith)

- Warm up activities: Ask the group:

*Do you know the band? What do you know about them?

*Can you guess content of the song?

*What feelings does it refer to?

- While listening activities: Talking about feelings:

*Correct the mistakes.

*Complete the lines.

*Match the parts of the song.

*Number the lines.

- Post listening activities:

*Complete the description of feelings according to the situations. Example: "I feel.....when I've passed all the exams.

*Complete the sentences so that they are true for you.

3-5 AIMS:

**The aim of performing the pre listening activities was to:*

+Set the context to give the students an idea about what they were going to work with.

+Generate interest. Motivate our students is a key factor for any teacher.

+Activate background knowledge and activate existing vocabulary to help students to perform the listening activities.

+Predict content. Once we are familiar with the context of situation, we are able to predict possible content.

**The aim of performing the while listening activities was to:*

- +Practice listening comprehension.
- +Focus attention.
- +Practice vocabulary.
- +Encourage intensive and extensive listening.
- +Work with authentic pieces of discourse.
- + Focus on common errors in a more direct manner.

**The objective of performing the post listening activities was to:*

- +Stimulate and encourage discussion.
- +Bring fun to learning.
- +Remember and practice newly introduced vocabulary.
- +Practice rhythm, intonation and pronunciation.
- +Repeat singing the song with bigger confidence.

3-6 RESULTS COLLECTION OF THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE:

QUESTION 1: WHAT WAS THE LESSON LIKE FOR YOU?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
INTERESTING	4	3	7
ENJOYABLE	5	6	11
NORMAL	2	1	3
BORING	0	0	0

The vast majority of the respondents perceived the song lesson as enjoyable and interesting, which corresponds to the theory that working with songs is highly enjoyable and motivating for students.

QUESTION 2: DID YOU CONSIDER THE LESSON INSTRUCTIVE?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
VERY INSTRUCTIVE	8	7	15
A LITTLE INSTRUCTIVE	3	3	6
NOT AT ALL INSTRUCTIVE	0	0	0

Most of the students in the class considered that the song- lesson was very instructive or at least, a little instructive. None of them considered that the song-lesson was not instructive at all. In conclusion, there was nobody who would not recall at least something from the song.

QUESTION 3: HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE LESSON?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POSITIVE	2	3	5
RELAXED	6	6	12
NORMAL	3	1	14
STRESSED	0	0	0
NEGATIVE	0	0	0

The results of this question clearly show that most of the students felt relaxed and some of them felt positive. Despite the fact that some students felt normal, there was nobody who would have felt stressed or negative during the activities, which is a very satisfying result.

QUESTION 4: AFTER LISTENING TO THE SONGS, WERE YOU ABLE TO RECALL ANY WORDS, PHRASES OR SENTENCES FROM THEM?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
SOME WORDS	6	6	12
SOME PHRASES	3	4	7
SOME SENTENCES	2	0	2
NOTHING	0	0	0

The majority of the students were able to recall some words, some phrases and some sentences from the songs.

3-7 TEST RESULTS:

To conclude, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this method, the students were tested on the vocabulary that they had learned through the songs. They completed a written exam (Appendix 5) focusing on different vocabulary testing techniques. In activities number one and number two, the students were supposed to write and complete some sentences using some words or expressions that they had worked with in the songs experience. The aim of these activities was to check meaning and the students' production. In activity number three, the students were asked to carry out a multiple choice activity completing some expressions using prepositions. Finally, in activity number four the students were asked to find the opposites of some expressions. The right answers were in the songs that they had worked with.

The tests results on vocabulary learned through music were positive. Eight female students out of eleven got passing grades and, as regards male students, seven out of ten passed the test. Putting all the test results aside, the greatest achievement of this experiment was that the students of the sixth year of Secondary School number two were eager to continue with this method. They have already handed in some lists of their favourite songs and artists in order to include songs in the following English lessons. Some students have already started to analyze, translate and try to understand lyrics of their favourite songs on their own. In addition, another important achievement was the improvement in the atmosphere during the classes and bigger involvement of the students in the lessons.

4-FINAL CONCLUSION:

Music and songs in the context of teaching English were the areas which this work was focused on. The aim of this work was to support the theory that music has the ability to help acquire and remember vocabulary.

Various theories about music and many examples from everyday life have shown that music belongs to mankind from its very beginning and it is a part of our lives. There is a power in it that can bring about a certain atmosphere, evoke particular feelings, and influence physical and mental conditions of our bodies.

One of the best examples of how to use the power of music in language teaching is working with songs. The outcomes of my investigation and the theoretical support presented before have proved that music has the ability to help students acquire and remember vocabulary more

effectively. Furthermore, music helps language learners to recall the lyrics of a song easily, and thus, encourages confidence and motivation.

In addition, working with songs in the language classroom helps students to perceive the lessons as more interesting, instructive and enjoyable. "Songs can be a tool which can be used to animate and facilitate language learning and acquisition", as stated by Tim Murphey (2000:16).

To conclude, after finishing with my research, I am convinced of the truthfulness of Tim's Murphey's statement as, in my experience, songs create an indispensable part of my life and culture. In addition, using songs to learn vocabulary in the English classroom clearly helps students to learn effectively and to encourage their self esteem. After correcting the exams, I could notice that, by introducing songs in the classroom, as well as a variety of interesting topics and activities, students were more motivated and interested, and they were eager to practice and to achieve good results.

Bibliography:

- * Harmer, J. (1998). *How to Teach English*. Addison Wesley Longman Limited
- *Murphey, T.(2000). *Music and Songs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- *Rost, M. (1991). *Listening in Action*. Prentice Hall International.
- *Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning Teaching*. London: Macmillan Publishers Limited..
- * Underwood, M.(1998). *Teaching Listening*. London:Longman Group Limited.
- *Thornbury, S.(2000) *How to Teach Vocabulary*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- *Ellis, N.C.(2001). *Cognition and Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- *Krashen, S. D.(1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Pergamon Press.
- * Lewis, M.(1993). *The Lexical Approach: The state of ELT and the way forward*. England: Hove..
- *Lewis, M.(1997). *Implementing the Lexical Approach: Putting theory into practice*. England: Hove
- *Nattinger, J (1980). *A Lexical Phrase Grammar for ESL*. TESOL, Quarterly.

Electronic Sources:

- * “American Music Therapy Association”. <http://www.musictherapy.org/>
- * Medina ,Suzzanne “ESL through music” <http://www.forefrontpublishers.com/eslmusic/about-2/>
- * Robertson, Don “The Effects of Music”
http://www.dovesong.com/positive_music/effects_of_music.asp

APPENDIX 1 :

Questionnaire number one:

QUESTION 1: DO YOU LIKE LISTENING TO MUSIC?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
ALWAYS			
USUALLY			
SOMETIMES			
NEVER			

QUESTION 2: DO YOU PREFER SONGS IN ENGLISH OR IN SPANISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
ENGLISH			
SPANISH			

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE KIND OF MUSIC IN ENGLISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POP MUSIC			
HIP HOP/RAP			
ROCK MUSIC			
HEAVY METAL MUSIC			
REGGAE MUSIC			
TECHNO MUSIC			

QUESTION 4: IS THERE ANY KIND OF MUSIC IN ENGLISH THAT YOU DO NOT LIKE?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POP MUSIC			
HIP HOP/RAP			
ROCK MUSIC			
HEAVY METAL MUSIC			
REGGAE MUSIC			
TECHNO MUSIC			

QUESTION 5: HOW OFTEN DO YOU LISTEN TO SONGS IN ENGLISH?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
VERY OFTEN			
OFTEN			
SOMETIMES			
NEVER			

QUESTION 6: DO YOU PLAY ANY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
YES			
NO			

QUESTION 7: DO YOU LIKE SINGING?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
YES			
NO			

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire number 2

QUESTION 1: WHAT WAS THE LESSON LIKE FOR YOU?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
INTERESTING			
ENJOYABLE			
NORMAL			
BORING			

QUESTION 2: DID YOU CONSIDER THE LESSON INSTRUCTIVE?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
VERY INSTRUCTIVE			
A LITTLE INSTRUCTIVE			
NOT AT ALL INSTRUCTIVE			

QUESTION 3: HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE LESSON?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
POSITIVE			
RELAXED			
NORMAL			
STRESSED			
NEGATIVE			

QUESTION 4: AFTER LISTENING TO THE SONGS, WERE YOU ABLE TO RECALL ANY WORDS, PHRASES OR SENTENCES FROM THEM?

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
SOME WORDS			
SOME PHRASES			
SOME SENTENCES			
NOTHING			

APPENDIX 3:

First Song:

If I were a boy

By Beyonce

I. PRE - LISTENING ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss:

- a) Reading the title, what do you think the song will be about?

II. LISTENING ACTIVITIES.

A) (Chorus) Read the verses, and order them from 1 to 8.

1. ____ And go (music on demand) drink beer with the guys
2. ____ I'd roll out of bed in the morning
3. ____ And I'd never get confronted for it
4. ____ And throw on what I wanted
5. ____ I'd kick it with who I wanted
6. ____ If I were a boy even just for a day
7. ____ 'Cause they stick up for me.
8. ____ And chase after girls,

B) Listen to the verses and cross out the correct words.

- (Chorus)-

9. If I were / was a boy
10. I think I could take the stand / understand
11. How it feels to love a girl / hurl
12. I stare / swear I'd be a better man
13. I'd listen to er / her
14. Pause... / 'Cause I know how it hurts
15. When you choose / lose the one you wanted
16. 'Cause he's breaking / taking you for granted
17. And everything / anything you had got destroyed.

C) **Listen and complete with:**

Myself - Broken - Turn off - Waiting - Think - Alone - Faithful - Make

18. If I were a boy (music on demand)
19. I would _____ my phone
20. Tell everyone it's _____
21. So they'd _____ that I was sleeping _____
22. I'd put _____ first
23. And _____ the rules as I go
24. 'Cause I know that she'd be _____
25. _____ for me to come home, to come home.

- (Chorus)-

D) **Listen carefully and complete the verses.**

26. It's a little _____ for you to come back
27. Say it's just a _____
28. Think I'd _____ you like that
29. If you _____ I would wait for you
30. You thought _____
31. _____ you're just a boy
32. You _____ understand
33. And _____ don't understand, oh
34. How it _____ to love a girl
35. _____ you wish you were a _____ man.

E) **Listen carefully and order each word to complete correct verses.**

20. don't / her / You / listen to _____
21. care / it / don't / how / You / hurts _____
22. the / lose / one / wanted / you / Until / you _____
23. her / taking / 'Cause / you're / for granted _____
24. had / everything / you / destroyed / got / And _____
25. just / a / you're / ...But / boy. _____

III. **POST - LISTENING ACTIVITIES**

1. Who is she singing to?

2. How does she feel? Why?

4. What things would change in her life if she were a boy?

5. What's the image she has about boys?

If I were a boy

If I were a boy even just for a day
 I'd roll out of bed in the morning
 And throw on what I wanted
 And go (music on demand) drink beer with the guys
 And chase after girls
 I'd kick it with who I wanted
 And I'd never get confronted for it
 'Cause they stick up for me

(CHORUS)

If I were a boy
 I think I could understand
 How it feels to love a girl
 I swear I'd be a better man
 I'd listen to her
 'Cause I know how it hurts
 When you lose the one you wanted
 'Cause he's taking you for granted
 And everything you had got destroyed

If I were a boy (music on demand)
 I would turn off my phone

Tell everyone it's broken
So they'd think that I was sleeping alone
I'd put myself first
And make the rules as I go
'Cause I know that she'd be faithful
Waiting for me to come home, to come home

(CHORUS)

It's a little too late for you to come back
Say it's just a mistake
Think I'd forgive you like that
If you thought I would wait for you
You thought wrong
But you're just a boy
You don't understand
And you don't understand, oh
How it feels to love a girl
Someday you wish you were a better man

You don't listen to her
You don't care how it hurts
Until you lose the one you wanted
'Cause you're taking her for granted
And everything you had got destroyed
...But you're just a boy.

Appendix 4

Second Song:

I don't wanna miss a thing - By Aerosmith

Warm-up

- a-Do you know something about Aerosmith?
- b-Where are they from?
- c-What's the whole meaning of the song?
- d-What does it talk about?
- e-What feelings it refers to?

Talking about FEELINGS:

1. Some sentences have mistakes, correct them.

- A- I always felt her close my heart
- B. When listening to soft music, I tend to fall sleep.
- C. I wish you were here.
- D. I'm wandering what you are feeling.
- E. I've always dreamed of finding true love.

While Listening:

2. Listen and fill in the blanks. Choose the correct word.

I could _____ awake just to hear you breathing .(rest/stay)

Watch you smile while you are _____(sleeping/ dreaming)

While you're far away and _____ (singing/dreaming)

I could _____my life in this sweet surrender
(waste/spend)

I could _____lost in this moment forever (stay/ be)

Every moment spent with you is a moment I

(measure/treasure)

3. Number the lines as they appear:

Then I kiss your eyes and thank God we're together _____

And I'm wondering what you're dreaming _____

I just wanna stay with you _____

Laying close to you _____

In this moment forever, forever and ever _____

Feeling your heart beating _____

Wondering if it's me you're seeing _____

4. Listen to the 2nd part of the song and fill in the blanks:

Hold	moment	kiss	heart	smile	just	rest
------	--------	------	-------	-------	------	------

I don't wanna miss one _____

I don't wanna miss one _____

I _____ wanna be with you

Right here with you, just like this

I just wanna _____ so close to mine

Feel your _____ so close to mine

And just stay here in this _____

For all the _____ of time

Post-Listening

FEELINGS

5-Complete the following descriptions of feelings and the situations that cause them.

a- I feel..... when I've passed all the exams .

- b- I felt.....when my friends told me I had toilet paper on my shoe. After coming from the rest room.
- c- I feelwhen people talk at the cinema.
- d- I feel verywhen I finish doing yoga.
- e- I feelwhen I studied very hard for an exam and I only got a “C”
- f- I waswhen my best friend accused me of flirting with her boyfriend because I’d said hello to him

6-Complete the sentences below with adequate responses to make them true about yourself.

- A. I’m good AT _____
- B. I’m scared OF _____
- C. I’m concerned ABOUT _____
- D. I’m fed up WITH _____
- E. I’m Interested IN _____
- F. My friends are keen ON _____

APPENDIX 5:

Final Examination:

Vocabulary Test:

Name:

Date

1-Write sentences using the following expressions/ words:

_____/25

- a- Take _____ for granted: _____
- b- Turn off _____
- c- Roll out _____
- d- Mistake: _____
- e- Faithfull: _____

2 - Complete the sentences using your own ideas

_____/25

- a- I feel totally fed up after _____
- b- _____ I _____ feel _____ calm when _____
- c- The other day, I was shocked when _____
- d- I felt really disappointed when _____

e - I feel nervous
 when _____

4- Choose the correct alternative: _____ / 25

a- I'm goodplaying the guitar.

For - at - in

b- I'm interested.....Ecology

at - in - on

c- I'm scaredhorror movies!

On - in - of

d- I'm fed updiscrimination.

at - with - for

e- My friends are keen.....sports

on - at - in

5- Find the opposites of the following expressions:

_____ / 25

a- To be awake :.....

b- Bitter dream.....

c- Open my eyes:.....

d- To be near :.....

e- To leave:.....

