Authentic Songs in EFL Classes

(Kurz DVPP s akreditací MŠMT v rámci projektu ESF

Moderní učitel – pedagogické kurzy pro učitele základních a středních škol

Libereckého kraje CZ.1.07/1.3.03/02.0021)

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Tento projekt je spolufinancován z Evropského sociálního fondu a státního rozpočtu České republiky
**Why authentic songs?**

→ Rámcový vzdělávací program / the Framework Education Programme: pupils will “understand the content and meaning of simple authentic materials (magazines, graphic and audio materials) and use them in his/her work” (2007, 24)

→ The Common European Framework of Reference – A2 level – listening comprehension: students “can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements”

→ Generally, authentic materials:
  - represent more natural language (x textbooks)
  - convey some cultural information
  - can be motivating (if properly chosen and used)

→ In songs, some lines are often repeated → comprehension, language focus, remembering
→ Multiple intelligences → musical intelligence

**Factors that influence the choice of a song:**

- Relevance to student needs and interests (needs analysis, questionnaire, discussion – favourite types of music, artists)
- Relevance to the subject matter that has been covered in classes
- Quality of the recording
- Availability
- Copyright issues
Culture in EFL classes

Products: *all artifacts produced or adopted by the members of the culture.* Tangible: tools, clothes, documents, buildings; Less tangible: language, music, education, the institution of family, politics, religion...

Practices: *actions and interactions that members of the culture carry out.* E.g. forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal, interpretations of time, space; appropriateness, taboos...)

Perspectives: perceptions, beliefs, values and attitudes.

Communities: national culture, language, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic class, generation; political parties, social clubs, charity, family

Persons: individual members

Cultural Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Cross-Cultural Awareness</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits: stereotypes</td>
<td>Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one’s own</td>
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<td>Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Tourism, textbooks, National Geographic</td>
<td>Culture conflict situations</td>
<td>Intellectual analysis</td>
<td>Cultural immersion: living the culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Unbelievable, exotic, bizarre</td>
<td>Unbelievable, frustrating, irrational</td>
<td>Believable, cognitively</td>
<td>Believable because of subjective familiarity</td>
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Authentic songs and music always carry some aspects of culture and can help develop cultural awareness in learners.
Selected tasks

- **Task before listening**
  - predicting (Ss are given the title and guess what the song will be about)
  - providing Ss with the context (Ss may help)

- **General understanding and detailed understanding**
  - listen and complete the lyrics
  - listen and choose the correct word
  - read the text, complete it, then listen and check
  - comprehension questions, True/False statements...
  - put the stanzas / lines in the correct order (before listening → Ss listen and check; or while listening)
  - TPR (Ss do some action when they hear a word or a phrase)

- **Analysis (language, culture)**
  - inductive grammar presentation
  - new vocabulary
  - focus on pronunciation (and spelling) – e.g. American vs. British English
  - idioms (context, level of formality!!)
  - references in the text (geographical, historical...)

- **Follow-up activities (receptive, productive, study skills...)**
  - Ss sing the song
  - Ss discuss the message/content of the song
  - Ss discuss whether they like the song or not, possibly why
  - Ss modify the lyrics
  - Ss find more information about the song/group/film/musical... on the Internet
12 Keys to using songs (adopted from Lynch 2009)

1. You can use most songs for English Language Teaching, but learners usually prefer songs which are currently popular. Both you and your learners can collaborate on selecting songs.

2. You should also select songs with easy-to-understand lyrics, absolutely NO profanity, violent, illegal or immoral themes like sex, drug use, prostitution, gang violence, kill-your-mother, suicide, etc. (It's easier to fall into this trap than you think. Many popular song lyrics are horrid)

3. For motivating children take along a dozen or so children's songs on cassette or CD with the lyrics.

4. Most popular song lyrics are available online. You'll need to be very, very careful of downloads from sites like these since they frequently FULL of viruses, Trojans, worms and lord only knows what else.

5. Walt Disney has a truckload of great children's songs. Use films and shorts directly or just a recording with display pictures for visual support.

6. In addition to the above keys, there are the standard children's favorites any primary song child or teacher can tell you. You can even use songs from your childhood, if you were ever a child, that is.

7. Use inter-active games and Total Physical Response (TPR) along with the songs. Choreograph simple moves and actions to the beat and rhythm of the song.

8. Keep a fairly fast-paced class going as children get bored and restless easily with their short, short, short attention spans. Change activities every 15 minutes or so - even LESS with tiny "Chiquiticos".

9. Try incorporating some simple "dance" moves into the songs too for some added benefit. Have the "kiddies" ad lib, lip sync, pantomime, swing, sway kick, hop, slide, glide, whirl, spin, dip, step, jump and wave - you get my drift?

10. Use pictures as an aid in teaching key words in the song lyrics. Cutouts, posters, drawings, anything that provides positive visual support and reinforcement for lexical elements, grammatical them, connected speech, pronunciation or use in context is fair game in EFL classes for children (and adults too, actually)

11. Practice a couple of the songs and activities beforehand in front of a mirror on your own.

12. Oh yes, and be sure to have lots of FUN yourself!
**Music in EFL Classes**

Music can help students learn better. Music can be played when doing various activities in order to “distract” learners (e.g. party dictation), to make the activity more authentic (e.g. simulation) or to help students better concentrate. When discussing the use of music that would facilitate learning, we can refer to Suggestopedia.

**Suggestopedia**

Today, Suggestopedia is viewed as an alternative method (it focuses on learning – psychological and educational perspectives are central) in EFL learning and teaching. It was developed in 1971 by Georgi Lozanov – a Bulgarian psychiatrist and neurophysiologist. He claimed that when learning a foreign language, learners employ only their left brain hemisphere. In order for our brains to work more effectively, however, we should use both hemispheres. Listening to music can activate the right hemisphere (Richards & Rodgers 2001, Mothejzíková et al. 2004).

Suggestopedia is based on the above mentioned principles of brain functioning as well as on selected elements of yoga (relaxation, breathing) and Soviet psychology (all learners can learn everything). In Suggestopedia, the classroom environment is also important (pictures on the walls, boards etc.)

There are two levels of planning: (1) linguistic content and (2) the environment and experiences (e.g. music, decorations, posters etc.)

More information about Suggestopedia can be found in Richards and Rodgers (2001) or in Mothejzíková et al. (2004).
References


Lynch, L.M. 12 Keys to using songs for teaching children English as a foreign language. Ezine @rticles. 2009. Last accessed 01/05/2012


Other books & resources


http://www.listentoyoutube.com/process.php (saves youtube video as an MP3)


**Songs and tasks used in the seminar:**

1. **Working with the song title (song title → expectations)**

   **California Dreaming** – The Mamas and the Papas

   (→ What is the song going to be about? Then listen, read and check)

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dN3GbF9Bx6E

   all the leaves are brown
   and the sky is grey
   I've been for a walk
   on a winter's day

   I'd be safe and warm
   if I was in L.A
   California Dreamin'
   on such a winter's day

   stopped into a church
   I passed along the way
   well, I got down on my knees
   and I pretend to pray

   you know the preacher likes the cold
   he knows I'm gonna stay
   California Dreamin'
   on such a winter's day

   all the leaves are brown
   and the sky is grey
   I've been for a walk
   on a winter's day

   if I didn't tell her
   I could leave today
   California Dreamin'
   on such a winter's day x3
2. Ordering song lines, TPR

Fool’s Garden - Lemon Tree lyrics (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_owc6AfSOw)

I'm sitting here in the boring room
It's just another rainy Sunday afternoon
I'm wasting my time
I got nothing to do
I'm hanging around
I'm waiting for you
But nothing ever happens and I wonder

I'm driving around in my car
I'm driving too fast
I'm driving too far
I'd like to change my point of view
I feel so lonely
I'm waiting for you
But nothing ever happens and I wonder

Chorus
I wonder how
I wonder why
Yesterday you told me 'bout the blue blue sky
And all that I can see is just a yellow lemon-tree
I'm turning my head up and down
I'm turning turning turning turning around
And all that I can see is just another lemon-tree

I'm sitting here
I miss the power
I'd like to go out taking a shower
But there's a heavy cloud inside my head
I feel so tired
Put myself into bed
Well, nothing ever happens and I wonder

Isolation is not good for me
Isolation I don't want to sit on the lemon-tree

I'm steppin' around in the desert of joy
Baby anyhow I'll get another toy
And everything will happen and you wonder

Chorus 2 x
3. Colloquial language (& Fill-in the blanks)

Read the lyrics below and fill in the gaps with the verbs in the past tense. You will need these verbs (some of them more than once):

be  drink  get  go  happen  meet  save  stay  swim  take  tell

John Travolta / Olivia Newton-John - Summer Nights
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXlnMveRt-Y)

Summer loving had me a blast
Summer loving, __________ so fast
I __________ a girl crazy for me
I __________ a boy, cute as can be

Summer days drifting away,
To uh-oh those summer nights
Tell me more, tell me more,
Did you get very far?
Tell me more, tell me more,
Like, does he have a car?

She __________ by me,
she __________ a cramp
He __________ by me,
got my suit damp
I __________ her life,
she nearly drowned
He showed off, splashing around
Summer sun, something's begun,
But uh-oh those summer nights

Tell me more, tell me more,
Was it love at first sight?
Tell me more, tell me more,
Did she put up a fight?

I __________ her bowling in the Arcade
We went strolling, __________ lemonade
We made out under the dock

we __________ up until ten o'clock
Summer fling don't mean a thing,
But uh-oh those summer nights
Tell me more, tell me more,
But you don't gotta brag
Tell me more, tell me more,
Cause he sounds like a drag

He got friendly, holding my hand
Well she got friendly, down in the sand
He __________ sweet, just turned eighteen
Well she was good, you know what I mean

Summer heat, boy and girl meet,
But uh-oh those summer nights
Tell me more, tell me more,
How much dough did he spend?
Tell me more, tell me more,
Could she get me a friend?

It turned colder, that's where it ends
So I __________ her we'd still be friends
Then we made our true love vow
Wonder what she's doin' now

Summer dreams ripped at the seams,
But oh, those summer nights
4. Gummi bears – theme song (cards for the activity)

Stories to share
Sing out in chorus
High adventure
Magic and mystery
The secret of gummi berry juice
Take pride
When a friend’s in danger

(to be played e.g. from youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRTSZZgCUik)