FINAL PROJECT

MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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The Teaching of English through Tasks Based on Songs in a State School of Primary Education in Colombia: A Methodological Proposal

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Abstract

My Master's Thesis consists of the design of a Didactic Unit made with tasks based on songs for students of the first and second cycles of an elementary school in Bogotá (Colombia). The activities/tasks proposed aim at helping teachers and students of the aforementioned levels to focus on an alternative way of learning a foreign language. I endeavor to make this methodological approach feasible by integrating the improvement of both brain hemispheres of the student. In my opinion this is possible by enhancing the student's brain power through the use of tasks based on songs. I expect to be able to provide him/her with a more effective capacity for learning English as a foreign language with less effort than any other more conventional methodology.

Key Words

EFL – Primary education –- English songs – Tasks – Didactic Unit – EFL in Colombia – Skills.

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To my supervisor, Dr. Vanessa Anaya, who encouraged me to develop this project based on this methodology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

I have elaborated a didactic unit where music takes a major role in the learning of English as a language. I have designed a number of tasks based on songs, for which I have employed appropriate activities and didactic resources for the second and third cycles of primary education in a state school in Bogotá. It encourages these young students to feel motivated to learn a foreign language and allows them to learn not only the English language itself but also some cultural aspects of English-speaking countries.

The inclusion of songs (and music in general) in foreign language teaching brings benefits to the learning process by increasing the student's capacity for memorization, by increasing his/her vocabulary, by allowing the practice and reinforcement of grammatical structures and pronunciation. Songs may also be used to strengthen the students' skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as introduce them into relevant cultural knowledge.

This methodological perspective is faithful to the fundamental principles of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching. It also generates a high level of motivation in students as they willingly become actively involved in the song's activities and tasks. Furthermore, the four skills are integrated and the students' autonomous learning is promoted too. The tasks are based on proven authentic material, so the language input is equally authentic. The students can work in groups or in pairs, using a cooperative attitude, as well as individually at their own pace .These are indeed the main learning results of the proposal I will endeavor to explain in the following pages.

Music encourages students to discover their abilities and interest around this topic. It enables students to develop a project. Music is one of the most powerful tools available in education because it improves concentration, develops sensitivity and memory, helps to express feelings and enhances attention and memory. It is also essential in children's education, as it encourages learners to sing, to concentrate while listening or even to play musical instruments. Children take activities with music as games, as a chance to play with their friends and to show what they can do. It helps to relieve stress and physical pain, and it also strengthens the immune system of children (Silberg, 2012:1).

On the other hand, English language learning allows the students to communicate within other contexts and to extend their knowledge and proficiency in their professional lives. It also allows communication with other cultures in our globalized world for English the knowledge of English is of paramount importance. Nobody doubts that English has become the universal language of communication, the Esperanto of the 21st century.

2. JUSTIFICATION

As I will try to prove, the incorporation of music/songs in the English classroom can be an excellent alternative for slower learning students of a foreign language. Equally, it increases the ability to listen, facilitates memorization and provides a more than a reasonable approach to the students because music is one of the areas of interest that is present in all stages of life (Fonseca and Toscano, 2012:197-213).

This designed project through tasks based on the exploitation of songs aims to be a model and a bank of resources for teachers of English as a foreign language and take advantage of this tool in order to allow students to find pleasure in the learning of a foreign language in a simple way.

By using music in the classroom through songs, I can put into practice various types of activities on the pronunciation of specific phonemes, or look up words that are pronounced the same in a particular song; but other usual activities related to the exploitation of songs can relate to the completing of the lyrics of a song, drawing comic strips, etc. These and many more activities have the purpose of allowing the students to be fully integrated into their educational process. Similarly, other tasks can be introduced, such as word search, unscrambling words, putting words in alphabetical order and making a picture of the contents of the song. These activities will help the students to memorize new vocabulary and at the same time make their learning process enjoyable and motivating.

Music is one of the most powerful tools available in education, because it improves the student's concentration, develops his/her sensitivity, helps him/her to express impressions, opinions and feelings, creates a smooth atmosphere in the class, reduces class noise and enhances the student's capacity for attention and memorization. At the same time, it is essential for the achievement of the emotional, intellectual, sensory and motor balance that is intended in education. It can also be made part of the language classroom routine and contribute to the change of the atmosphere of the class, should the teacher deem it convenient.

Music is present in all activities of our life, in a supermarket, in the car, at a party, the radio, TV, the cinema, religious services, games, etc. It is through music that many people begin to be interested in learning a new culture. My proposal here is to make the most of the potential of music for the teaching of English as a foreign language. I am of the opinion that by learning English through music, our students will enjoy doing activities assigned by the teacher. My approach will therefore be focused on the exploitation of music and songs through a task-based learning methodology.

Therefore, this project will endeavor to find a way to allow students of English as a foreign language to learn the language through tasks: they will have the opportunity to link and connect music with English with the purpose of reinforcing their learning and help them build their knowledge capacity.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General Objective:

To design a methodological teaching and learning model for English as a foreign language supported by tasks based on songs to generate effective learning and achieve a favorable outcome in primary school education.

3.2. Specific Objectives:

To conceptualize, articulate and adapt material so that it can be meaningful to primary school students.

To design practical material for the use of students aged between 7 and 12.

To encourage students to use new technologies when they learn English through songs.

To use technical tools such as a computer, the internet (my website http://www.englishforchildren.com/) and other information sites.

To provide the students with the opportunity to improve their learning and acquire new knowledge by carrying out tasks based on songs.

To promote the student's autonomous and responsible learning skills.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Language and Music

Bever and Chiarello's studies (1974:537-9, cited by Jancke, 2012:1-3) have focused on the different roles of both brain hemispheres in processing music and language information. The left hemisphere is considered more specialized for propositional, analytical, and serial processing and the right hemisphere is more specialized in appositional, holistic, and synthetic relations.

Research on the function of music and speech has evolved in the last decades. New findings have shown that the assimilation of music and speech has many aspects in common and several neural modules are similarly involved in speech and music (Tallal and Gaab, 2006:382-90).

Based on many research studies, Giuliano et al. (2011:146) have demonstrated that as Mandarin Chinese is highly sensitive to small pitch changes and interval distances, its

speakers have developed a level of musical sensitivity that was absent in the control group of non-Mandarin Chinese speakers.

Similarly, Peretz et al. (2011:145) have reported that native speakers of a tone language in which pitch contributes to word meaning are impaired in the discrimination of falling pitches in tone sequences as compared with speakers of a non-tone language. This suggests that the native use of the tone leads to an overall improvement in the sharpness of tone representation.

In their study, Tillmann et al. (2011:120) have revealed that the performance of congenital amusia (a musical disorder that mainly affects pitch perception), was lower to that of controls for all materials, including Mandarin Chinese. This therefore suggested a domain-general pitch-processing deficit.

Ott et al. (2011:195) have demonstrated that professional musicians process unvoiced stimuli (regardless of whether these stimuli are speech stimuli or non-verbal stimuli), suggesting that early phonetic processing is organized differently depending on musical expertise.

Strait and Kraus (2011:113) have reported perceptual advantages in musicians for hearing and neural encoding of speech in background noise. They argue that musicians possess a neural proficiency for selectively engaging and sustaining auditory attention to language and that music thus represents a potential benefit for auditory training.

Gordon et al. (2011:352) have examined the interaction existing between linguistic stress and musical meter and established that the alignment of linguistic stress and musical meter in songs enhances musical beat tracking and the comprehension of lyrics. Their study thus supports the notion of a strong relationship between linguistic and musical rhythm in songs.

Hoch et al. (2011:112) have investigated the effect of a musical chord's tonal function on syntactic and semantic processing and conclude that neural and psychological resources of music and language processing strongly overlap.

Omigie and Stewart (2011:109) have demonstrated that the difficulties that amusical individuals have with real-world music cannot be accounted for by an inability to internalize lower-order statistical regularities, but may arise from other factors. Although there are still some differences between music- and speech-processing, there is growing evidence that speech and music processing strongly overlap.

On the other hand, *La Vanguardia* newspaper (September 25th, 2007) published an article about a study carried out by scientists of Northwestern University (Evanston, Indiana, USA) in which they concluded that musical training may improve the acquisition and development of language. This is because the brain stem provides a common mechanism that processes music and speech. Consequently music may be employed to help children with reading and writing learning disorders because it is more accessible to them than phonemes and letters. This article stated that the perception of music requires the ability to hear the notes, rhythm, tones, sequences, silences, spaces, and a musical, motor and verbal

memory is required from the listener. It directly influences emotions, attention, and the capacity for learning and thinking.

Equally, in an interview conducted by Univision Program, Susanna Zaraysky (author of *Language is Music*, 2013) stated that music activates more parts of the brain than spoken language; when people begin to mix languages, they run the risk of mixing the languages forever. So, music can help people to distinguish between Spanish and English. Through music Zaraysky learnt seven languages and argues that the more musical external tools we use, the easier it is to learn English or any other language. She said that it is better to listen, talk and then write. Neurologically, this is easier because if a person knows the song, the lyrics, and what the lesson is about, and then learns the grammar, it is a neural network and therefore it is more fun and natural. She argues that a person learns accents through music, radio, television and movies. Music is present in every culture. If the learner is tuned to the music of the language that is being taught, it is going to provide the range of frequencies that exist in a language. She recommends listening to the language before learning it. Many English classes become boring because teachers only teach grammar and vocabulary.

4.1.1. Advantages of Using Music in the Classroom

Listening to music in the classroom maintains a positive attitude in the students:

- It improves the student's energy level with upbeat music as needed throughout the day.
- It helps sustain the student's attention and concentration.
- It reduces stress levels, relieves frustration and creates a peaceful classroom environment.
- It motivates and increases the pleasure of learning.

4.2. Structural Integration in Language and Music

The domains of the language and music share a number of similarities at the sound level, i.e., at the structure level. Firstly, language and music involve temporally a number of sequences of sounds with a salient rhythmic and melodic structure. Secondly, language and music are based on systematic rules in which limited basic elements can be combined to generate an infinite number of higher structures, e.g., sentences in a language and harmonic sequences in music (Fedorenko et al., 2009:3).

In the comprehension of language and music, the structural relationship of incoming elements such as words or chords to preceding events must be determined in order to make sense of the sequence. On the basis of neuron imaging data and cognitive theory, Patel (2012:13) suggested that some aspects of this structural integration process be shared by language and music. The structural integration involves the rapid and selective activation of items associative networks, and language and music share the neural resources that provide this activation to the networks where domain-specific representation reside (13-14).

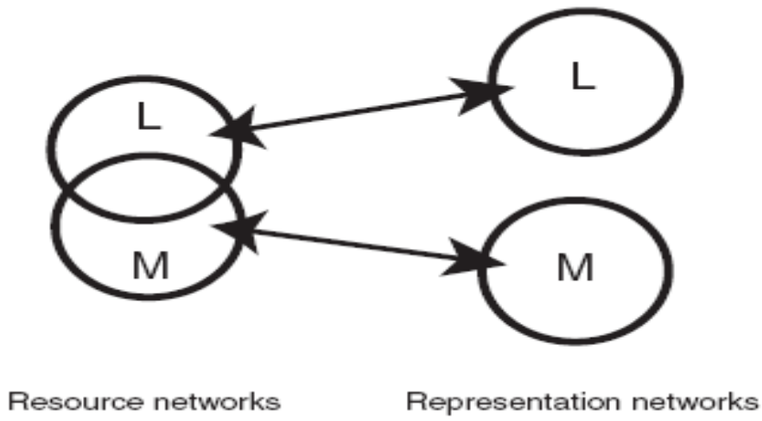


Figure 1.Schematic diagram of the functional relationship between linguistic and musical syntactic processing. L= language, M= music. Patel (13-14).

4.3. The Importance of Music and Songs for Students

The use of music to improve our learning skills is justified by Howard Gardner's theory (1983). He asserts that people possess varying degrees of musical intelligence as well as mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and musical intelligence.

For Thomas Armstrong (1994, cited by Levinowitz, 1998:1-4), intelligence is animated by the participation of some kind of culturally-valued activity and the growing of the person in this activity, which follows a developmental pattern.

The importance of music instruction for children's musical development has been widely researched upon since World War II. The Pillsbury's studies (carried out between 1937 and 1958) provided the first glimpse into preschool children's musical lives and informed us about the nature of their spontaneous music behavior (4-7).

Singing is an excellent method for learning foreign languages. It encourages brain and language development and it is an essential tool to foster development and healing in children with any kind of special needs. There are three essential educational activities for students: reading, playing, and singing. Through songs, children learn about themselves and the world around them. Self-expression through singing provides satisfaction and happiness. While children sing, they learn vocabulary, grammar, mathematics, history, geography and science.

Songs create a link between generations; they carry history and traditions in families and in nations. While children are singing, they develop listening and cooperative skills, coordination of the tongue and lips, fine motor skills through creative movement and keeping the beat, self-control, concentration skills and memory; it helps the students to speak clearly and with ease. Music teaches phrasing, storytelling, gives the child confidence and develops eagerness to communicate, teaches patterning, rhythm and rhyme. Songs encourage students to learn even more about vocabulary but also phonetics, syntax and semantics.

The use of music/songs in a foreign language classroom offers a unique approach to the study of culture through texts and musical styles; at the same time it reinforces the four communication skills. Music represents a common interest among all types of people, uniting students of different cultures. Music constitutes an important part of their lives, so it is important that teachers take advantage of this in order to motivate and add another dimension to the assigned class activities.

4.4. Proficiency Activities for Communication

Music can be incorporated into the classroom without assuming that the teacher or the student has to compose or perform music. Therefore, music can easily become a teaching tool of similar status to the audiovisual material or computer software. It can be incorporated into listening, speaking, writing and reading activities in all languages and adapted to all ages and levels. Students struggling with foreign language learning may find their communication skills improved when linked to the music, because many people remember rhyme, rhythm or melody better than ordinary speech (Failoni, 1993:97-98).

4.5. Why Teach English Language through Songs and Tasks?

"Even historical topics like the French Revolution can benefit from the inclusion of music" as Claude-Michel Schönberg and Raymond Jeannot (music) and Alain Boubill and Jean-Max Rivière (lyrics) have proved in their the rock opera *La Révolution Française* (1973). Indeed, all the historical characters used in this musical feast are represented by different types of music. The clergy sing a chant-like melody with a pipe organ accompaniment, the French citizens sing in a rock style, the King's children sing playful tunes, and other characters are depicted appropriately. Because music evokes an emotional response, the use of this musical story portrays the Revolution not just as an historical, but also as a human event (Failoni, 1993:102).

In the process of learning a language, a song can be a valuable tool to internalize the target of a foreign language. There are two processes that take place in the acquisition of language skills: intuitive and conscious. Therefore, the use of songs can contribute successfully to them. The student can learn more quickly with songs than with systematic study and the lyrics can be used in different types of learning activities (Lifelong learning program, 2012).

These two processes are connected through the use of both brain hemispheres. The left part of the brain is responsible for logic and analytical thinking, whereas the right hemisphere ensures creativity by using images, metaphors and emotions and expressiveness.

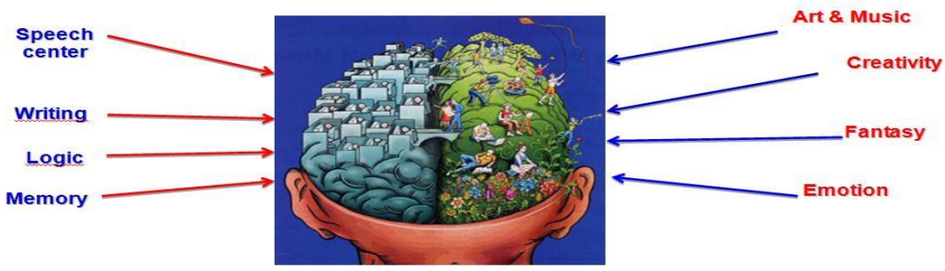


Figure 2. Both brain hemispheres. Lifelong learning program (2012).

In a song, emotion and language live together: they are inseparable. So, the language, rhythm and melody guarantee that the language patterns, words and forms are transferred to long-term memory.

Songs may contain lyrics that are easy for students provided that their teachers know how to make the right choice. At the same time, activities with songs possess the communicative aspect of language coupled with the entertainment aspect of music (Jolly, 1975:11). While the teacher teaches the English language, the function of the song is to involve the students in speaking and understanding the English language, while reinforcing the fundamentals of language and communication.

Songs have other advantages in the classroom: they are repetitive. Repetition is of the highest importance for developing vocabulary and language skills. When students repeat the words many times, they begin to understand the meaning of the words until their utterance becomes a natural act. When using songs in the classroom, the teacher can provide tasks such as the following: students can try to perceive the frequency of specific key words in a song, cross out the letters or the words or the lines not pronounced in the song, find homonyms (for students of a higher linguistic level), fill in the missing words, order a list of words/lines as they appear in the song and so on. An excellent way to teach phonetics/pronunciation is through songs and music activities. In fact, in her musical research Elliott (1977:400) determined that a song repeated many times with pleasure puts students in the habit of using the structures correctly while mastering the content at the same time.

In reading and writing, music can be incorporated too; students can practice spelling by filling in the missing words from a printed song text. Equally, the teacher may change places, names or substitute words in the lines. In the writing section, students may write summaries, express (written) opinions about the song and write their own song lyrics, among others.

4.5.1. Advantages of Songs

- Songs can help students to improve their listening skills and pronunciation.
- They are useful tools for learning vocabulary and sentence structures.
- They teach culture and civilization.
- They encourage creativity.
- They motivate the students to learn a foreign language.
- They develop oral and written expression.

- They develop the student's rhythmic and musical sense.
- They are easy to memorize and therefore encourage the consolidation of vocabulary.
- Everybody likes music: it provides a good atmosphere to the class.
- It is an excellent exercise for the practice of pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation.

4.6. Criteria for the Selection of Music/Songs

For the selection of music, it is important to use songs that students like. The lyrics of the songs must be clear and the sound optimal, because that raises the level of the student´s motivation and determines whether or not the selected songs are appropriate. It is also important to make sure that the language used in the songs is appropriate for the age and interests of the students. Swear words, slang, taboo expressions, insults, violence, drugs, unhealthy habits, discriminatory language of any type, etc, must always be barred from our songs.

In the First Cycle of Primary education (5-8 year-olds), students are receptive and interested in everything, so the teacher can teach songs in general referring to any appropriate topic for their age and level of linguistic and intellectual maturity (the alphabet, colors, numbers, family, animals), including those referring to key events in the child's life such as "Happy Birthday", "Merry Christmas", "Trick or Treat", and so on.

In the Second Cycle of Primary education (8-11 years) the teacher should use songs that reinforce the previously acquired knowledge, but also those that are currently significant and always in context (i.e. "Another Day in Paradise", "Wheel Cars", etc).

When choosing adequate songs, popular songs are also most useful, depending on the purpose of the teacher and interest of the students.

There are several types of songs:

- Counting Songs: Appropriate for children of the first and second cycles of Primary education, because the students of this age enjoy repetitive songs. Number counting is in itself an act of repetition.
- Action Songs: Students accompany the songs with gestures, miming, body movements, for example: "If You're Happy and You Know It", "Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", etc. This type of song is closely connected with the Total Physical Response methodology.
- Songs for special occasions, e.g., Christmas and birthdays and other seasonal or national celebrations.
- Pop and Rock Music.
- Adapted Songs: Songs specially written for language teaching. They can be found in textbooks and FLT materials supplied by publishers. They usually concentrate on teaching grammar and specific families of words.

- Traditional (folklore) songs: Birthday, sports, carnival, eating habits, family, animals, specific socio-cultural factors, national anthems, etc.

Additionally, the teacher should take into account some criteria for choosing classroom songs:

- Students like a song and wish to share it with their classmates.
- Words should be easily understood.
- There is enough repetition to provide oral practice.
- It contains values and themes that the teacher wishes to introduce in class.
- They serve as clear illustrations of grammar item targets.
- Additional consideration based on level: 1. Low Level, the vocabulary should be limited, no more than 16 lines of text. 2. Intermediate level, manageable load of vocabulary (Lems, 1996:2-3).

4.7. Ability and Motivation

According to Gardner (2005:1-21), there are two different factors involved in the learning of a foreign language: ability and motivation.

4.7.1. Ability

Students with higher levels of ability (both intelligence and linguistic aptitude) will tend to be more successful in learning a foreign language than students with less ability. Students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels because they will put more effort into it, will be more attentive, persistent, have a better time, will want to learn more, will display optimal levels of interest and they will be more self-confident with their performance. All these aspects contribute to making the learning experience more enjoyable and fruitful. Therefore, the educational material and the cultural context have an influence on the motivation level, but the ability is not as important in this case.

The Socio-educational Model is aligned primarily by motivation and other factors that support it (see figure 2.1), and it assumes that other variables such as personality can be explained in terms of the motivation model.

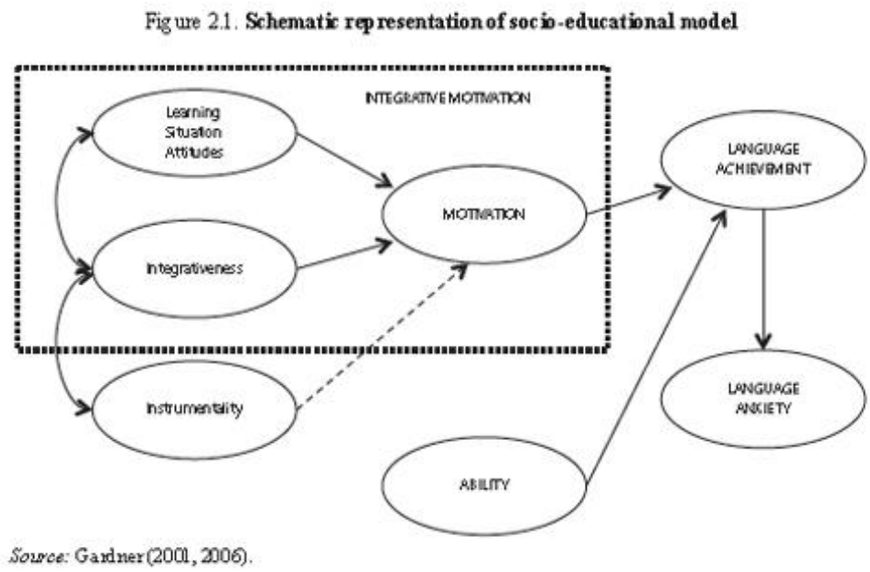


Figure 3. Schematic representation of socio-educational model. Gardner (2005:6)

4.7.2. Motivation

Figure 4. Representation of motivation "Listen to Music". Restrepo (2011).

Motivation refers to the internal state of an individual that leads to specific action. In this respect, motivation becomes an activator of human behavior. Attitudinal forms of motivation are generated by the effect of a set of interacting factors or variables such as human needs, beliefs, opinions and values, level of interest and desire to accomplish the goal, and emotional factors.

Ellis (1985, cited by Barrios, 1997:25) emphasizes the role of the teachers in promoting the students' motivation that derives from the latter's sense of having participated with success through careful selection of materials. Equally, Fairbairn and Pegolo (1983, cited by Barrios, 1997:25) confirm that motivation is to encourage, and more appropriately in classes where there is an emphasis on the use of the language through a range of practical activities. According to Foucardé (cited by Castro, 1991:13), motivation in the process of learning a second/foreign language comes from different sources:

- Accidental motivations are produced by the external environment and are aggressively imposed by society and television.
- Cultivated motivations are developed by teachers, as well as through the academic condition surrounding the student (e.g., the methodology of the teacher).
- Deliberate motivation, which is based on the students' own desire to improve their learning process.

Keller (1983:389, cited by Gardner, 2010:8) states that motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort the students will act on this respect.

4.8. Using Songs through Technology

Due to the advance in technology in the last decades, more and more people have had access to the Internet either to do research or to communicate. The ages of the English students have also changed; children start learning a foreign language earlier than ever so that in the future they may use it as an effective tool to learn other topics. Therefore, technology develops positive attitudes for the EFL students and improves their learning capacities.

The Internet can transform the classroom into an interactive environment between culture and society. Frommer (1998:213) reminds us that there is a myriad of authentic texts to be found on the internet which may support the gradual building of a cognitive context of the students, and adds that the computer provides images that enrich the mode of learning with a multi-dimensional format (video, audio and text). The employment of Youtube or similar musical webpages is of paramount relevance in practicing a foreign language through music and songs.

The computer as a Language Learning tool improves the student's foreign language. It offers a number of advantages such as allowing students to work at their own pace, get immediate correction; carry out various tasks and become fairly independent in their learning process.

Therefore, the students will access the songs of their interest with the assistance of their computers in their free time. In this way, the students will improve their pronunciation, their understanding abilities, their speaking skills, accent and fluency by giving continuous monitoring to each one of the student´s learning process and assessing their individual learning capacities.

4.9. The Task-Based Approach

4.9.1. What is a Task?

Teaching through tasks was initiated in 1980 as an attempt to find real communication in the classroom. This approach was born as an innovative approach in the design of communicative language teaching and it focused on how to organize sequence and carry out learning activities in the classroom.

The communication tasks according to authors such Nunan (1989:2) and Breen and Candlin (1987:23) involves solving a problem or completing an information gap

which activates a mental process. Students are obliged to use the target language and it is considered to be through that process that language is acquired.

Nunan (1989:10, cited by Vicenti and Braman, 2011:276) considers that a task is a teaching unit that involves students in understanding, manipulating, producing or interacting in the second/foreign language while his/her attention is focused primarily in meaning rather than form (Benítez, 2007:1-3).

4.9.2. The Objective of a Task

The objective of a task determines the development of this task. The teacher wishes to achieve the completion of tasks successfully; all decisions made for its implementation depend on the ultimate goal of the task.

In a task-based approach, the student is focusing on the resolution of the task and forgets that it is a foreign language that he/she is using and that he/she is in a classroom; therefore the students learn by playing, singing and creating. This approach takes the students through tasks to explore and develop their own strategies, stimulating their creativity and logical thinking. Hence, the chosen tasks should be motivating and interesting for the students and close to their interests.

4.9.3. The Three Stages of a Song as a Task

Cameron (2001:347) indicates three stages and components of classroom tasks which reinforce the language learning focus of the analysis:

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES → CORE ACTIVITY → FOLLOW UPACTIVITIES

Figure 5.Three Stages in “Task for Young Learners” (Cameron, 2001:47)

Preparation and Follow-up Activities are internal stages of a task and the Core Activity is central to the whole process of language learning and teaching.

Preparation Stage: Taking into account that the objective of the task is singing the song in the core activity stage, it is functional to activate the vocabulary and form basic sentence structures in the preparation stage. For example: in order to activate the vocabulary the teacher may need to use a picture of a bus for the song “The Wheels of the Bus Go Round and Round”. These pictures will provide the students with the new vocabulary items and form basic sentence patterns.

Core Stage: It involves the students and maximizes their interests. The song could be sung/played several times as the central activity of the task, each time varying the pace or volume and having the students perform actions and sing along chorally. For example, the teacher could begin by asking the students to sing the word “wheels” at first, and have the

students make a circle shape with their hands. Then the teacher could have the students turn around 360 degrees when singing round and round.

Follow-up Stage: When the students have sung the song, they have to be encouraged to use the vocabulary or the sentence structures of the song. The follow-up stage could be used to develop written production, either through sentences or gap filling activities, or even oral production, where the vocabulary learned is used in a role-play (Millington, 2011:138-139).

Developing a song from a mere activity into a task following the usual protocol (preparation, core, and follow-up stages) is a good way to transfer the words in a song and maximizes the potential of songs as teaching and learning tools.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. The Approach Adopted.

The approach adopted is inspired in the Task-Based Learning methodology. These tasks provide the students with the opportunity to communicate and understand the foreign language through interesting activities according to the students‘ needs, developing their intrinsic motivation and helping the teacher to see if they are developing the ability to communicate in a foreign language. The activities based on tasks create the need to use the language significantly. Carrying out tasks stimulates the learning capacities of the students and encourages them to perform different activities in the new language.

The material provided is a didactic unit to use as support to the textbook in order to reinforce oral (speaking and listening) and written (writing and reading) skills. I will use popular songs such: “Musical Instruments”, “Numbers from 1 to 20”, “The ABC Song”, “Good Morning Teacher”, “If You Are Happy and You Know It”, “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”, “Old McDonald Had a Farm”, “Jingle Bell Rock”, “Objects of the Classroom”, “The Alphabet”, “The Family”, “Colors”, “The House”, “Jingle Bells", “Lemon Tree”, “Pretty Woman”, “Yesterday”.

5.2. The Structure of the Supporting Material

The unit is designed as support material to be used in elementary schools as well as additional reinforcement in speaking, writing, listening and reading skills.

As mentioned in section 4.5., this material is a valuable tool to internalize a foreign language. The songs contain lyrics to read, listen to, sing, etc. Songs involve students in speaking and understanding, they are repetitive and they provide the grammar structures correctly and in the right contexts as authentic texts, usually written and sung by a native speaker. Activities that help students to learn cultural aspects and the language in the

learning process, such as stress, intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary and rhythm can be put into practice too. (See my webpagemarthap.simplesite.com).[1]

5.3. Description of Approach Based on Tasks

Following the learning needs of my school and students, I propose designing a task-based unit based on songs. The objectives of its activities are to increase the students' long-term memory more than any other methodology, to increase their motivation, to foster their creativity, to improve their participation and progress and to reduce their anxiety and fatigue.

The material is designed for Spanish-speaking monolingual beginners of English as a foreign language aged between 7 and 11 immersed in a monolingual social context. The idea of putting into practice the following Didactic Unit is to allow the students to have a first contact with the foreign language. The activities and their instructions are usually given in English (although there are some logical exceptions to this rule depending on the difficulty to understand them) and the illustrations used are in color.

The Didactic Unit presents different activities which will help the teachers interact with the children. Students will use their imagination and creativity to color beautiful folders of a variety of exercises/activities with songs. The activities will keep the students stimulated and entertained and will provide them with an extra share of interest and motivation to learn while having fun and to activate their right brain hemispheres. To complement these activities, I have prepared a website with a number of English songs of different types and styles to allow my students to choose the type of song they prefer to work with in class, to have the opportunity to practice these activities out of the classroom and to reinforce the listening skill, their grammatical proficiency with the exercises that I provide, to practice pronunciation, the speaking skill and learn and revise vocabulary.

5.4. The Creative Process

The design of materials involves a creative and interactive process where it is necessary to know who the students are and what they are like: their hobbies, likes and dislikes, background, etc, I consider of utmost importance to analyze their needs, their expectations and their learning style, the time constrains and resources, etc, in order to be able to establish an assessment protocol.

The objectives are described in relation to the song activities, communication skills and the contents are selected and organized around the tasks that the student will put into practice. Next, the tasks are sequenced and the time temporalized; the total of the course is 30 hours and the tasks will be defined as initial, intermediate and final. Afterwards, I will

[1] Some other material top class material such as different children's music genres, poems, vocabulary, video clips, songs, Halloween, Saint Valentine´s day, Christmas and TV programs such as "Sesame Street" (The Children's Television Workshop, USA), "Barney & Friends" (Public Broadcasting Services, USA), "The Tweenies" (BBC), "Fun Song Factory" (Children's ITV, Britain), "Teletubbies" (BBC), "Bananas in Pijamas" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), cartoons, etc., can be used too.

check the strategies and activities concerned in order to develop the communicative skills. Finally, the project will start by developing the song tasks, activities that serve as support for vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension and grammar reinforcement.

5.5. Types of Materials and Activities

Nunan (1999, cited by Oura, 2012:67) defines authentic materials as spoken or written language data that have been produced in the course of genuine communication.

The songs constitute authentic material due to the fact that they are not planned by native speakers as FL material; in other words, they have not been created with the purpose of teaching a FL. Songs are real products that are used in real contexts. Music is everywhere, it is part of our life; each person has a different musical taste. Therefore, music and songs are useful tools in the class of English as a foreign language for different types of audiences (i.e., learners).

According to Ellis (1985:243, cited by Estaire and Zanon 1994:1), tasks have three principal phases: 1. Pre-task, which refers to various activities that the teacher and the student can undertake before they begin the task. 2. During-task, centered on the task itself; it informs us teachers about whether the students are required to operate under time pressure or not. 3. Post-task, which involves follow-up procedures on the task performance.

Tasks are focused on enabling the active participation of the students in a more personalized type of learning. Therefore the planned activities for each song in the didactic unit follow the model for the sequence of the activities:

1. The task should begin with an introductory activity of the topic. The warming-up task changes the mood of the students from the very beginning of the class.

2. The tasks are focused on the active participation of the students in the development of the sequence tasks.

3. The students have sung the songs and are encouraged to use new vocabulary or a new sentence structure from the song. At the same time, the students could develop some written production by creating simple sentences, filling the blanks and producing an oral text through a role play activity based on the song.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Didactic Proposal

My main aim is to provide tasks based on songs according to the needs of the students. These songs should allow the learning and revision of grammatical issues (especially pronouns, verbs and prepositions) as well as thematic vocabulary. My proposal of songs are classified into action songs, counting songs, traditional songs, phonic songs (that is, where the practice of rhythm, stress and intonation is encouraged) and pop music.[2]

6.1.1. Title of the Didactic Unit

"Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!"

6.1.2. Justification

Songs and singing constitute a communicative act expressed in a verbal way. To facilitate this communicative process, there must be a sender and a receiver. The sender produces the message and the receiver decodes it. The communication process is closed by accepting the message conveyed and providing feedback to the sender. In songs, the purpose of the sender (singer, composer, lyricist, etc) is to make the song's lyrics and/or melody to stay in the receiver's mind as long in time as possible, thus producing a deep impact in the audience's minds. This is one of the reasons why songs make excellent pedagogical material.

Communication through songs arouses love feelings in many people, brings back memories and provides mood changes. Besides, through assigned tasks and activities teachers may promote habits of individual and group work. Teaching English through music and its lyrics (that is, the text or words of the songs) allows the students to express ideas and feelings spontaneously. Songs facilitate the learning of knowledge of various cultural events and promotes linguistic communication.

The activities and tasks employed in this Didactic Unit are addressed at elementary students of the first and second cycles of the Colombian primary education (i.e., from seven to eleven years old). The songs employed are exploited in such a way that they are all provided with specific didactic objectives such as the teaching and/or revision of Christmas vocabulary, easy grammatical structures, the familiarization with the standard American or British English accents (depending on the chosen songs), stress, rhythm and intonation, as well as, last but not least, pronunciation.

As one of my purposes is to create a relaxed state in the learner and to promote positive suggestion, and music is one of the main sources of this state of mind, I do not wish to forget to acknowledge my inspiration in several aspects of Georgi Lazanov's Suggestopedia. As it is widely known, music is central to this methodological approach. Besides, Suggestopedia provides an excellent opportunity to encourage communication between the teacher and students. In order for real communication to exist, the teacher must believe in what he/she does and feel real affection for it, without being something artificially simulated. When the student perceives it, they begin to uncover their mental reservation and learn more, while feeling good. My interest in creating the most comfortable and motivating

[2]This is a personal taxonomy of FLT songs that suits my pedagogical interests. I am aware that there are other classifications of songs. For example, Demetriou and Ruiz Mas (2009:40-45) speak of the following types, some of which coincide with my proposal: actions songs, grammatical and morphological songs, cultural songs, and songs for the introduction of social and moral values.

atmosphere in the classroom is a clear evidence of my debt to this methodological approach in FLT.

Suggestopedia raises the need to involve our mental capacity in the learning process due to the fact that the brain works with the two hemispheres in an integrated manner. It helps to increase memory capacity, concentration, and motivation, overcoming blockages and inhibitions to learning. This leaves students feeling relaxed through continued participation in enjoyable activities and learning about the culture and customs of the English-speaking country/ies.

6.1.3. Temporalization

I would suggest six sessions of 45 minutes each. By putting into practice this Didactic Unit, the teacher must adapt the duration of the activities to the pacing of the target group.

6.1.4. Survey

Taking into account that in previous years songs were not focused on tasks at my school, the methodology used for my current study is based on the responses to four questions of a group of 159 students aged between 7 and 11 years old of Darío Echandía School (Bogotá). The purpose of the survey was to gauge the students' interest and level of motivation in learning a foreign language through songs.

These are the four questions posed as part of the aforementioned survey:[3]

What do you like best about your English classes?
How often do you listen to English songs in the classroom?
Do you like it when English songs are used in the English classes?
Why?/Why not?

Table 1. What do you like best about your English classes?

What do you like best about your English classes?	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Songs	Word games

[3] I am aware that many of these students may not understand the questions in English. I am most willing to help them, even if this means translating them into Spanish. The same applies to their understanding (or lack of understanding) of the table I use in my survey. I am also aware that many of them many not be mature enough to give a reasoned opinion on the most appropriate EFL methodology to use for their own benefit, but I believe it is a fair attitude to provide them with the opportunity to express themselves on an issue that is so important and relevant for them, i.e., the learning of a foreign language. We also have to take into consideration that at this elementary level of their English language learning, the teacher's main objective to achieve is, in my opinion, to make his/her students' learning of English a motivating and enjoyable experience. Songs are no doubt excellent aids in order to achieve this.

How often do you listen to English songs in the classroom?		Usually		Rarely	Never
Do you like it when English songs are used in the English classes?	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT		
Why?/Why not? YES	To improve the mood of the class	To feel relaxed in class	To learn to pronounce and understand another language	Other reasons. Indicate:	
NO	Music and songs are boring	I feel embarrassed when I sing	I do not think it is the best way to learn English	My singing voice and/or pronunciation is not good enough	Other reasons. Indicate:

The survey provided me with the following results:

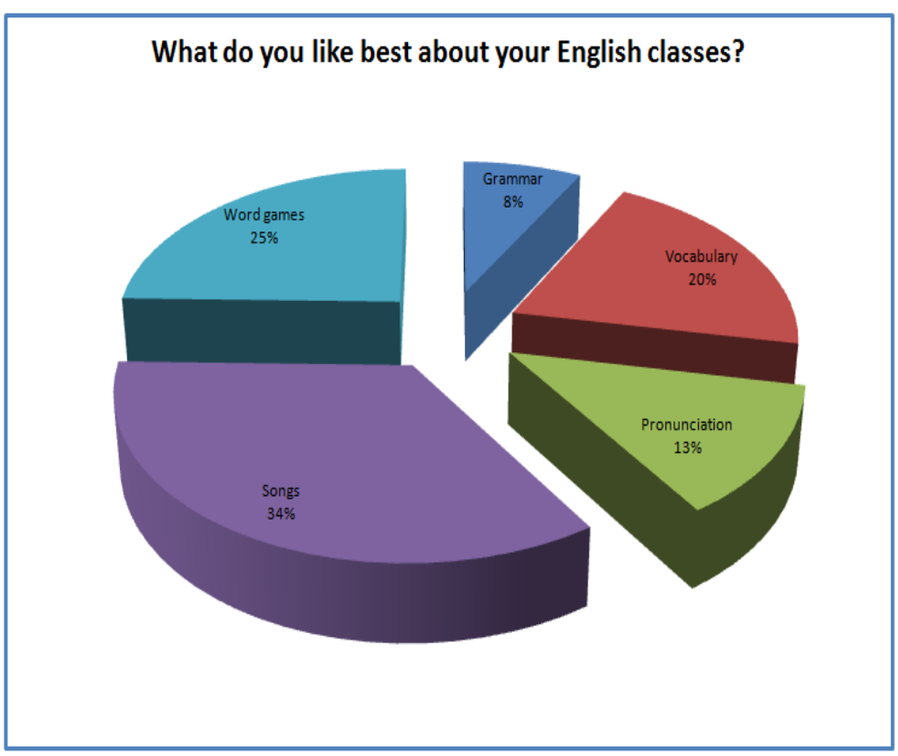


Figure 6. What do you like best about your English classes?

Item	# of students	Options	# of options answered
	7	5	35
	11	4	44
	29	3	87
	67	2	134
	45	1	45
Total	**159**		**345**

The survey indicated that out of a total of 159 students surveyed, seven students answered they liked the five options (Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Songs and Word games), 11 students answered four options, 29 students answered 3 options and 67 students answered two options. None answered one or no options.

The survey showed that 34% of the students (that is, 119 students) like the idea of using songs in their English classes, 25% (that is, 85 students) like Word games, 20% (70 students) like vocabulary, 13% (44 students) like pronunciation activities and 8% (27 students) grammar activities.

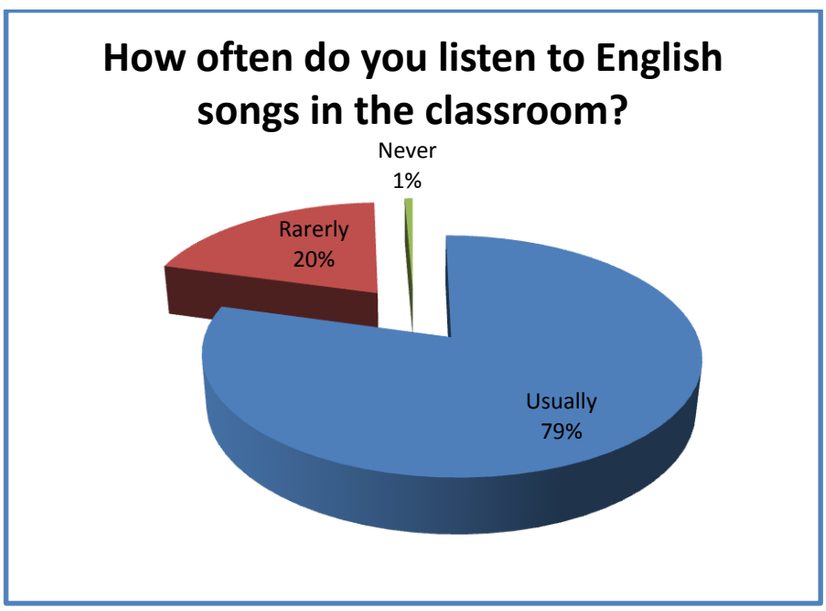


Figure 7. How often do you listen to English songs in the classroom?

The percentage of students that indicated that they had used songs in the classroom was the following: usually (79%), rarely (20%) and never (1%). In terms of number of students, the results were the following: usually (123 students), rarely (31 students) and never (1student).

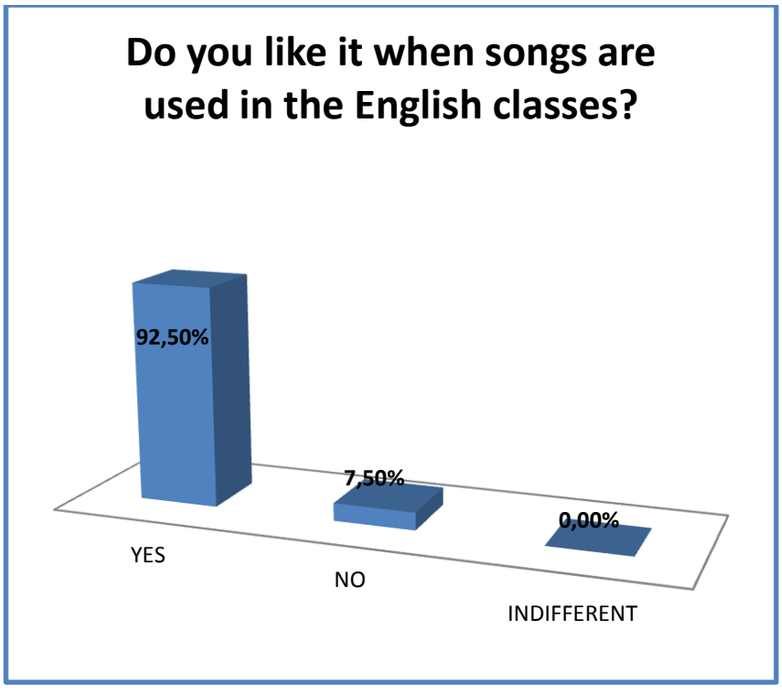


Figure 8. Do you like it when songs are used in the English classes?

This question showed that 92% of students liked English-language songs to be used in English classes (that is, 148 students); 8% of them did not like the use of English songs (that is, 12 students). Nobody opted for the answer "Indifferent".

Students reacting positively to the use of English songs cited the following reasons : 133 students indicated that songs are better resources if you wish to learn pronunciation and understand another language (86%), 14 students said that they felt more relaxed (9%), and eight students indicated the importance of songs to change the mood of the class (5%).

The four students reacting negatively to the use of English songs justified their answers with the following reasons: three of them indicated that they felt embarrassed to sing and make mistakes; one student indicated that music and songs are boring.

6.2. Description of the target group

The survey was carried out with elementary students between 7 and 12 years of age, in the second, third, fourth and fifth grades in a Colombian (district) state school of Bogotá.[4]

[4] In Colombia, a state school is part of a comprehensive community composed of students coming from different social strata. This type of school caters for students from Preschool level to the 11th grade. The following step in to go to university for more highly specialized education.

"The General Law of Education (Law no. 115) of 1994", complemented by numerous decrees, resolutions and directives, governs nearly all aspects of Colombia´s educational system. Education in Colombia is classified into three categories:

1. Formal education, which constitutes the core of the educational system. Formal education is subdivided into five levels: Preschool, elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher education.

2. Non-Formal Education is the type of education meant to allow students to have access to the employment market and to their personal development.

6.2.1. Preschool and Elementary Students

My elementary students (7-12 years of age) belong to the preschool and elementary levels of a district (state) school in Bogotá. In order to improve education in Colombia, the National Program of Bilingualism encourages the students to comply with the international standards in English proficiency and therefore, after completing their high school education, they should be prepared to achieve a B1 level in English. Subsequently, it is necessary to strengthen and promote methodologies and strategies from the beginning of their school years. Madrid and McLaren (1981:12) argue that according to some previous studies, children who begin to study a foreign language at school tend to attain a more positive attitude and aptitude than others who do not. Children are capable of showing not only an ability to imitate sounds and expressions, but also exhibit greater flexibility, spontaneity, and eloquence than young adults or fully-fledged adults (Fandiño et al., 2012:374).

So, it is important to teach and use methods that encourage students to concentrate, increase their memory capacity, their motivation, avoiding blockages and inhibitions to their individual learning processes, make them feel relaxed through continued participation in enjoyable activities, provide them with resources to allow them to get to know the culture and customs of a chosen country, avoiding distraction and lack of listening during the teacher's explanation and solving activities in class.

6.2.2. Language objectives for beginners

To design tasks based on songs (pre-activities, while-activities and post-activities) I should make sure that I use the four skills.

6.2.3. Description of the Syllabus

One of the main objectives of the English syllabus should be to motivate the students into studying this foreign language as a way of approaching and gaining knowledge of other cultures. This can be done by stimulating the foreign language learning through songs. Songs should be employed in a simple and progressive way, in an entertaining manner, making the most of them as far as the four skills are concerned. Activities should be introduced as pre-, while- and post- activities. They must involve the students' interest as much as possible.

6.2.3.1. Objectives

Table 2. Objectives of the proposed syllabus

COGNITIVE	PRAXIOLOGICAL	AXIOLOGICAL
Familiarize the student with new vocabulary and basic	Use, pronounce and remember new words.	Value the English language as a vehicle for learning and

3. Informal Education is the knowledge acquired freely and spontaneously from individuals, institutions, the media, cultural traditions and customs, social norms, and other non-structured social behaviors.

(International Qualifications Assessment Service, IQAS, 2010:12-13)

structures in a simple and playful way. Develop basic listening skills. Listen and identify the sound of words and associate them with the meanings. Use some grammatical structures of frequent use: simple present, present continuous, etc. Use the English language orally through songs so that the student may obtain a communicative competence.	Experience language through songs, rhymes and games and through the instructions given by the teacher. Listen to words and use their drawing abilities to represent them graphically. Identify actions on short sequences by using grammatical structures. Memorize the songs provided according to their age and personal ability.	communication. Show a positive attitude when learning a foreign language. Participate and motivate the class by creating a comfortable atmosphere. Be involved in the process of learning and participate in activities assigned. Show a positive attitude and motivation to continue advancing in higher levels.

6.2.3.2. Contents: Songs

1. Counting/Alphabet/Greetings Songs
   1.1. Numbers from 1 to 40
   1.2. The ABC Song
   1.3. Good Morning Teacher
2. Action Songs
   2.1. If You're Happy and You Know It
   2.2. Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes
   2.3. Time to Say Good Night
   2.4. Old Mc Donald Had a Farm
3. Traditional Songs
   3.1. Jingle Bell Rock
   3.2. Jingle Bells

4. Pop Music
   4.1. Lemon Tree
   4.2. Pretty Woman

4.3. Yesterday

5. Phonic Songs

5.1. Phonic songs 2 - The Alphabet

Table 3. Phonic songs

Objectives	Songs
Identify the parts of the body	Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
Christmas Decoration	-Jingle Bell Rock - Jingle Bells
Pronounce vowels and learn names of animals	Old McDonald Had a Farm
Spell and pronounce consonants and vowels	The ABC Song
Get to know some imperatives and parts of the body	If You´re Happy and Your Know It
Learn the numbers from 1 to 40	Numbers from 1 to 40
Follow instructions	Time to Say Good Night
Identify verbs and make sentences using the present continuous tense.	Lemon Tree
Make affirmative sentences using the simple present tense.	Pretty Woman
Identify the simple past tense and some regular and irregular verbs.	Yesterday
Identify sounds and intonation patterns of letters/phonemes and words	The Alphabet

6.3. Evaluation (Beginner's Level)

The assessment is formative. Through the aforementioned songs the students can get a feedback of their performance, increasing their motivation to improve their learning. The evaluation is also continuous and progressive: the student is evaluated according to the tasks and activities carried out, which indicates if he/she has any specific limitations in learning.

Additionally, the students have a self-evaluation sheet at their disposal which helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

*Figure 6.*Representation of self-evaluation (“Strategy Planning”, Rangel, 2010).

Table 4. Self-Evaluation Sheet

SELF-EVALUATION-					
Name_____ Term 1-2-3 Grade_____					
Activities/Tasks based on English Songs	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. I come to English class on time.					
2. I use the new vocabulary learned in my English class.					
3. I respect the opinions of my classmates during the work group activities.					
4. I do my homework.					
5. I can understand the teacher´s instructions in English and I answer actively.					
6.I have my learning tools: Guide, notebook, pencils, pen, crayons, ruler, etc.					
7. I do my writing song activities.					

8. I feel comfortable trying to pronounce words, even if I make mistakes.					
9. I ask and answer questions and participate as much as I can.					
10. I usually enjoy the song activities.					

6.4. Evaluation Criteria

Through the song tasks proposed, the students should use the vocabulary and the grammar being practiced in class in order to create short messages about their likes and dislikes, not forgetting to use simple courtesy rules and taking into consideration the values and respect to their teachers and classmates encouraged in them.

Additionally, for their assessment, I would take into account their level of achievement of the objectives outlined (with special attention to their final task), the quality of their class work, their active participation, their work in group and their individual work, the level of acquisition of basic strategies such as the use of the dictionary, the quality and presentation (i.e., clear organization and cleanliness) of their personal notebooks and homework and their level of interest and motivation.

Table 5. Evaluation criteria

English	**1st Cycle**	**2nd Cycle**
Oral and written questionnaires.	30%	30%
-Tasks performed in class. Especial attention should be paid to the final task. - Active participation in class in communicative activities.	30%	30%
Respectful attitude toward their classmates, as well as	20%	20%

to the foreign language and culture.		
Interest and motivation. Self-assessment.	10% 10%	10% 10%

6.4.1. Tasks Based on Songs

6.4.1.1. The exploitation of songs

SONG BOOK

TEACHER: MARTHA ROMERO

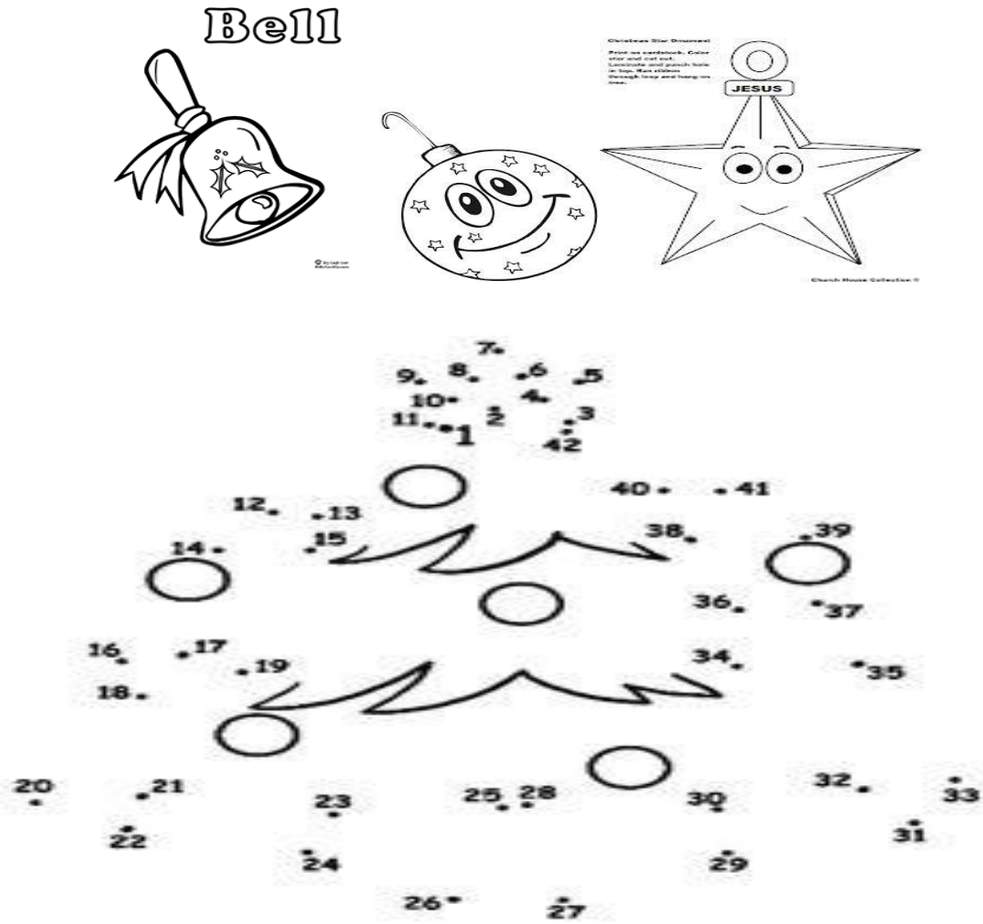
STUDENT'S NAME_____

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify vocabulary and distinguish spoken words through listening skill.
- Understand the meaning of the stanzas and practice them orally.
- Enjoy participating and learning English.

JINGLE BELL ROCK

ACTIVITY No. 1. Join the numbers and color the Christmas tree and ornaments. Make sure that you learn to count up to 40 and learn the names of the colors that you use.



- FATHER CHRISTMAS - JINGLE BELL ROCK

*Figure 7.*SANTA CLAUS- Jingle Bell Rock. www.English Exercises.org. Éva (2008).

ACTIVITY No. 2. Read and listen to the song. Don't worry if you don't understand everything. Underline the words that you know and make circles with the words that you would like to know.

Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell rock
Jingle bells swing and jingle bells ring
Snowing and blowing up bushels of fun
Now, the jingle hop has begun

Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell rock
Jingle bells chime in jingle bell time
Dancing' and prancing and Jingle Bell Square In the frosty air

What a bright time, it's the right time
To rock the night away
Jingle bell time is a swell time
To go gliding' in a one-horse sleigh

Giddy-up jingle horse, pick up your feet
Jingle around the clock
Mix and a-mingle in the jingling feet
That's the jingle bell rock, yeah

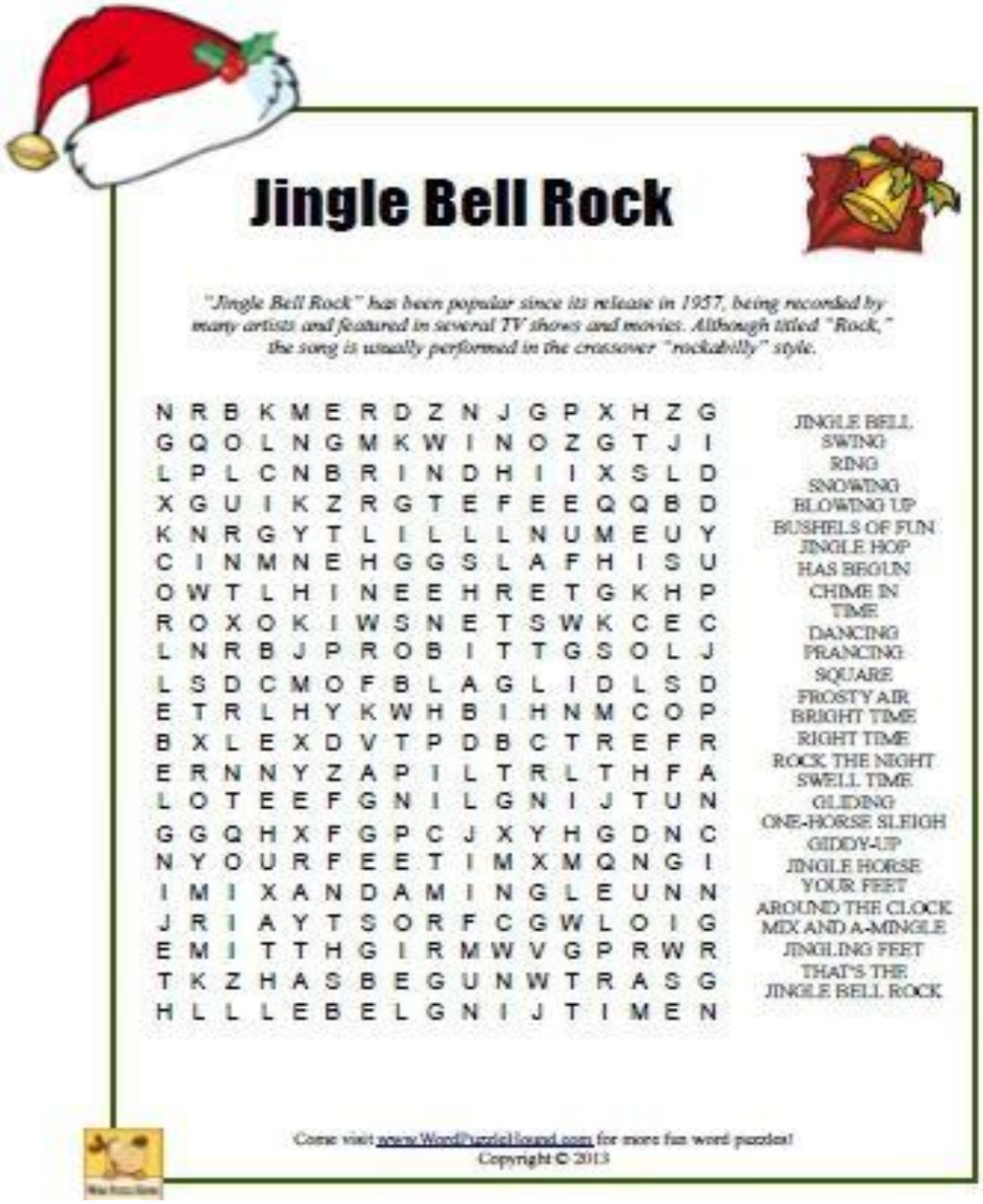
Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell rock
Jingle bells swing and jingle bells ring
Snowing' and blowing' up bushels of fun
Now, the jingle hop has begun

Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell twist
Jingle bells chime in jingle bell time
Dancing and prancing in Jingle Bell Square in the frosty air

What a bright time, it's the right time
To rock the night away
Jingle bell time is a swell time
To go gliding' in a one-horse sleigh

Giddy-up jingle horse, pick up your feet
Jingle around the clock
Mix and a-mingle in the jingling feet
That's the jingle bell, that's the jingle bell,
that's the jingle bell rock

ACTIVITY No. 3. Solve the word puzzle.



Jingle Bell Rock

"Jingle Bell Rock" has been popular since its release in 1957, being recorded by many artists and featured in several TV shows and movies. Although titled "Rock," the song is usually performed in the crossover "rockabilly" style.

N R B K M E R D Z N J G P X H Z G
G Q O L N G M K W I N O Z G T J I
L P L C N B R I N D H I I X S L D
X G U I K Z R G T E F E E Q Q B D
K N R G Y T L I L L L N U M E U Y
C I N M N E H G G S L A F H I S U
O W T L H I N E E H R E T G K H P
R O X O K I W S N E T S W K C E C
L N R B J P R O B I T T G S O L J
L S D C M O F B L A G L I D L S D
E T R L H Y K W H B I H N M C O P
B X L E X D V T P D B C T R E F R
E R N N Y Z A P I L T R L T H F A
L O T E E F G N I L G N I J T U N
G G Q H X F G P C J X Y H G D N C
N Y O U R F E E T I M X M Q N G I
I M I X A N D A M I N G L E U N N
J R I A Y T S O R F C G W L O I G
E M I T T H G I R M W V G P R W R
T K Z H A S B E G U N W T R A S G
H L L L E B E L G N I J T I M E N

JINGLE BELL
SWING
RING
SNOWING
BLOWING UP
BUSHELS OF FUN
JINGLE HOP
HAS BEGUN
CHIME IN
TIME
DANCING
PRANCING
SQUARE
FROSTY AIR
BRIGHT TIME
RIGHT TIME
ROCK THE NIGHT
SWELL TIME
GLIDING
ONE-HORSE SLEIGH
GIDDY-UP
JINGLE HORSE
YOUR FEET
AROUND THE CLOCK
MIX AND A-MINGLE
JINGLING FEET
THAT'S THE
JINGLE BELL ROCK

Come visit www.WordPuzzleHound.com for more fun word puzzles!
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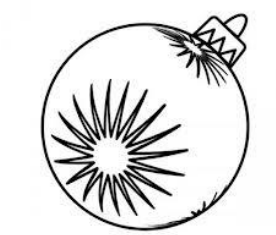
Figure 8. Jingle Bell Rock. Word Puzzle Hound (2013).

ACTIVITY No. 4. Recognizing Vocabulary. Sort each group of words in alphabetical order. Make sure that you learn how to say the different letters of the alphabet.



___.December

___. Christmas

___. Rudolph

___. North Pole

___. Santa Claus

___. Decoration

___. Stocking

___. Holly

___. Present

___. Winter

___. Reindeer

___. Sleigh

___. Snowman

___. Ornament

___. Green

ACTIVITIY No. 5. Circle the correct word. Check your answers with the dictionary.

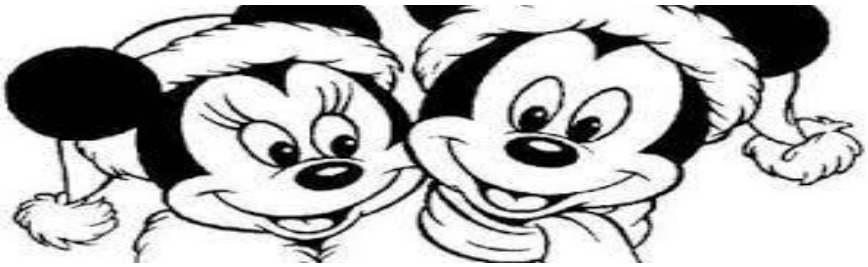


*Figure 9.*abcteach. The educator's online resource (2012).

Snowmahn Snomwan Snoweman Snowman	Sleigh Sleight Seighlt Sleghtei	Rudolf Rurdohp Rudolph Ruudolph
Cristmas Christmas Christmahs Chrihstmas	Saentaclas Santa Claus Sanntaclaeus Satnaclahus	Stockeng Stockinng Stockihng Stocking
Giefts Gitfs Gifts Gefts	Decembur Decemeber December Decemberr	Wihnter Wintehr Wenter Winter

ACTIVITY No. 6. Unscrumble the following words.

1. ulodphR _____

2. mrrey _____

3. hsleig _____

4. Stnaa _____

5. Wtnier _____

6. scktiong _____

7. yollh _____

8. docaitreon _____

9. nnswmao _____

10. ireedner _____

11.shiCtmras _____

12. ptresen _____

13. Deembecr _____

ACTIVITY No. 7.Complete the following words in the table with the missing letters.

R__DOLPH	DEC__BER	N__RT___ POLE
ORN__MENT	PRESE___T	S__NTA __LAUS
CHRI___MA__	R___INDEER	D__CORA___ION
HOL__Y	ME__RY	ST__CKING
____LEIGH	W___NTER	SNOW____

ACTIVITY No. 8. Christmas vocabulary. Look at the pictures and give each one its name. Use the following words.

Reindeer – Candy Cane – Sleigh – Candle – Stocking – Tree - Star – Wreath

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

ACTIVITY No. 9. Use your dictionary and match the following words and definitions:

a. Rock	1. very cold, with a thin layer of white ice covering everything
b. Swing	2. to move easily and without interruption from one side to the other
c. Bushel	3. a type of popular music
d. Fun	4. a unit of measurement equal to approximately 36.4 liters in Britain or 35.2 liters in the US
e. Frosty	5. to walk in an energetic way and with more movement than necessary
f. Prance	6. pleasure, enjoyment, amusement

ACTIVITY No. 10. Vocabulary: use the dictionary of the internet to find out the meanings of the following words and expressions.

- To rock the night away:
- To glide:
- One-horse sleigh:
- To ring:
- To jingle:
- To chime:

ACTIVITY No. 11. Read the following text and answer the questions the best way you can. Don't worry if you don't understand everything.

Jingle Bell Rock" was composed by Joseph Carleton Beal (1900–1967) and James Ross Boothe (1917–1976). "Jingle Bell Rock" is a popular Christmas song first released by Bobby Helms in 1958 (who was born in 1933 and died in 1997). He was an American singer who became famous in 1957 with the "Jingle Bell Rock" song.

"Jingle Bell Rock" has been performed by many artists, but Helms' version is the best known in the world. Its title and some of its lyrics are takeoffs on the old Christmas standard, "Jingle Bells"

When was Beal born? _____

When did Boothe die? _____

Who composed the song "Jingle Bell Rock"? _____

Is "Jingle Bell Rock" a popular version of "Jingle Bells"? _____

ACTIVITY No. 12. Fill in the missing words. Don't worry if you don't catch all of them. We will listen to the song three or four times.

Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell rock.

Jingle bells swing and jingle bells ring.

Snowing and blowing up bushels of fun.

Now the jingle …….. has begun.

Jingle bell, jingle …... jingle …….. rock

Jingle …….. chime in jingle bell ……...

Dancing and prancing …….. Jingle Bell ……...

…….. the frosty ……...

What …….. bright ……..

it's …….. right ……..

To …….. the night ……..

Jingle …….. time …….. a swell time

To …….. gliding in a one-…….. sleigh

Giddy-…….. jingle horse,

pick …….. your ……...

Jingle …….. the ……...

Mix …….. a-mingle in …….. jingling feet.

That's the …….. bell ……...

What a …….. time,

…….. the …….. time,

to …….. the …….. away.

Jingle bell …….. is a swell ……..,

to …….. gliding in a …….. -horse sleigh.

Yeah! All ……..!

Giddy-…….. jingle ……..,

…….. up …….. feet.

Jingle around the clock.

Mix …….. a-mingle in …….. jingling feet.

That's the …….. bell,

That’s the …….. bell,

that's …….. jingle …….. rock.

…….. the jingle bell ……...

ACTIVITY No. 13. How many times did you hear the following words?

JINGLE _____

BELL_____

ROCK _____

HORSE _____

RIGHT _____

TIME_____

ACTIVITY No. 14. Final activity. Draw a Christmas card. Don’t forget to include as many English words about Christmas as you can. You can send the card to your teacher or to any member of your family or to your friends. Merry Christmas!

7. CONCLUSIONS

For the last few years of my professional career I have been putting into practice the activities and tasks that I have described here in relation to the two songs also included. As can be easily perceived, I have laid most of the emphasis on the practice of the four skills at the level of my 7-12 year-olds and on the familiarization of some thematic vocabulary (Christmas, in this instance). The fun element has also been of paramount importance to make my students enjoy their learning of a foreign language. Being able to follow the teacher's task instructions in English has also been one of my main objectives to achieve in my students. Through my Master's studies, I have learned that the foreign language teacher can use different methodological approaches, a fact which allows me to work with my students more freely, avoiding following a behaviorist methodology wherein the students get bored and the instructions become meaningless to them.

My survey methodology has also included a questionnaire addressed to elementary students of the second, third, fourth and fifth grades. After analyzing the survey results, these confirmed that the students feel more motivated by using music and songs in the classroom.

My students are beginners. This methodology based on songs and tasks based also on songs has motivated the children's interest and enthusiasm to learn a foreign language. In the second, third, fourth and fifth grades, they expressed that they felt relaxed, enjoyed singing, listening, solving tasks and imitating the teacher by doing body gestures to explain vocabulary and instructions, that is, to explain what they meant. They found all these procedures most motivating and entertaining.

The effect of using songs in the classroom helped the students to relax, concentrate and avoid the noise that they usually make when they come back from the break time and therefore to concentrate on their activities.

Students prefer fast-paced songs to slow songs. In the fourth and fifth level, the students showed more interest in pop music than in children's songs for obvious reasons of age. They enjoy singing aloud, repeating the songs many times, keeping the beat and I have taken advantage of this to develop didactic activities such as posters, crosswords, gap-filling activities, coloring, and creating pictures and cartoons related to the songs.

They have had the opportunity to use the computer and interact with my web page, marthap.simplesite.com. It includes different music genres and exercises that any young

person can solve and listen to. It allows the students to identify music styles, learn vocabulary, grammar, practice sounds, rhythm and intonation of different words and phrases.

In the fifth grade, I had two students with specific learning disabilities. They came from other schools and did not have the basic knowledge to follow the level of the class. I had to apply different strategies and a fair share of patience and understanding so that they could adapt to the new methodology and linguistic level of the grade. However, when they began to use the song through tasks, they began to sing, something that was initially difficult for them. They gradually felt more comfortable in the classroom and with their classmates. Their listening skill and their level of gap-filling was increased.

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