The role of music and songs in teaching English vocabulary to students

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ABSTRACT

Certainly, it might be difficult to imagine what the world would look like if tunes on the radio or on TV were off, or one could not listen to favourite song when working at home or driving a car. Not only do songs provide pleasure, but they also enhance language practice and positively affect vocabulary acquisition and memorisation. The author chose teaching with the use of songs as her target in the study because listening to music in English is highly motivating for students and songs are easily accessible for all learners. The prime objective of this MA thesis is to investigate whether teaching English vocabulary with the use of songs contributes to developing students’ better memorisation of vocabulary. This MA thesis consists of three chapters; the first two sections deal with a theoretical background and the third one focuses on an experiment with the use of songs at primary school.

Keywords: teaching of vocabulary; song on lessons of English language as strange language

Reviewer:
Dr. Marek Derenowski
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INTRODUCTION

The first chapter attempts to describe teaching vocabulary in the ELT classroom. This section opens with explaining such a wide term as vocabulary is. Next, reasons for teaching vocabulary are provided and also quite a vast part is devoted to six criteria for vocabulary selection. Another issue which is discussed in this chapter is the two elements of word knowledge – form and meaning. Then, the division into receptive and productive vocabulary is presented. Various vocabulary presentation techniques are also depicted in Chapter One. Different types of vocabulary practice as well as the role of games in practicing lexis are detailed. The final sections of this unit are dedicated to three types of memory and vocabulary testing techniques.

The focus of Chapter Two is on the importance of using music and songs in ESL classroom. Notions of music and a song are followed by presenting the role of music in everyday life, and discussing the importance of using songs in a foreign language classroom. The next subchapter, comprising six parts, is concerned with detailed advantages and some disadvantages of using songs in the classroom. The chapter also describes how to select songs in order to make them effective tools in ESL classroom. The rest of this section illustrates song procedures and then types of song activities.

Chapter Three contains an analysis of vocabulary acquisition tested through the introduction of the same item of lexis in two groups. A series of two lessons were conducted in a primary school among fifth graders and tests’ analyses are presented. One group was introduced to vocabulary through songs, and the second one through other techniques, mainly translations in L1. A day before the study both groups were given pre-tests to check if they already knew the vocabulary or not. Then, at the end of the lesson the students from an experimental group were handed out post-tests I. The following lessons also started with post-tests II to check how many words the learners could recall a week later after introducing lexical items through the song and how many they could remember after only simple translations into mother tongue. The analysis concentrates on comparing the results of the post-tests. The teachers’ observations, students’ evaluations and comments supplement the third chapter.
Chapter One. Teaching vocabulary

1.1. Definition of vocabulary

The very first definition which should be presented in the beginning of this MA thesis, is that of **vocabulary**. Unquestionably, it is not easy to explain such a wide term for the reason there are different definitions of vocabulary and various authors see them in a different way, the following part deals with three definitions.

To begin with, Ur writes that: “vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language” (1996: 60). However, she points out that word is inadequate to describe the phrase vocabulary. There are plentiful examples in which more than one word is used to represent an idea, for example mother-in-law, record shop. In these words there are two or three words used, but still, they present one concept. Next, the author also enumerates multi-word idioms, for instance call a day, in which the meaning is not possible to conjecture only by knowing the meaning of given words (Ur 1996: 60). Therefore, we cannot talk about vocabulary alone in terms of words. Ur finally suggests to talk about vocabulary ‘items’ rather than ‘words’ (1996: 60).

According to Scrivener (2005: 227), “vocabulary typically refers mainly to single words (e.g. dog, green, wash) and sometimes to very tightly linked two-or three-word combinations (e.g. stock market, compact disc, sky blue, go off).” Interestingly, the author also uses the term lexis, which “(...) refers to our ‘internal database’ of words and complete ‘ready-made’ fixed /semi-fixed/ typical combinations of words that we can recall and use quite quickly without having to construct new phrases and sentences word by word from scratch using our knowledge of grammar” (Scrivener 2005: 227). Thus, the distinction between the notion of vocabulary and lexis is clearly visible. Vocabulary is seen as single words and word combinations, on the other hand, the concept of lexis is much more wider.

The work of Carter and McCarthy (1988: viii) clarifies that vocabulary cannot be treated as “one such key topic”. The authors add that vocabulary “[i]s as if its subject-matter has been subsumed, as it were, within other fields, for example within the study of reading in a foreign language, or within writing, or as part of second-language acquisition more generally conceived” (Carter – McCarthy 1988: vii). Quoting from McCarthy (1990: viii), vocabulary is “(...) the single, biggest component of any language course”.

Searching for some other explanations, one may encounter that of Lewis, who metaphorically states that: “lexis is the core or heart of language but in language teaching has always been the Cinderella” (1993: 89). The author highlights the importance of vocabulary existence in a language, but in terms of language teaching he compares lexis to the Cinderella, who, was not treated seriously by her stepmother and her stepsisters.

1.2. The importance of teaching vocabulary

Although the answer to this seemingly apparent question is easy, it must be explained, as teaching any part of a language has to be firmly supported. Effective foreign language learning necessitates assimilation of all four skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The famous proverb says “actions speak louder than words.” Yet, very often these are the words that convey one’s information. Basically, it is impossible to imagine what life would look like if there were no words.
McCarthy (1990: viii) states that: “[n]o matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meaning, communication in L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way”. Thus, the goal of vocabulary teaching shown in this citation is being able to communicate. The author underlines the significance of vocabulary over grammar and pronunciation. Next, he also adds that vocabulary often seems to be the least well catered for of all the aspects of learning a foreign language (McCarthy 1990: viii).

Komorowska (2005: 151-152) is of the same mind as McCarthy, and she is of the opinion that the basic aim of language learning nowadays is communication and vocabulary plays an important role in conversation. Next, the author adds that the reason of communication blockage is unfamiliarity of indispensable words, whereas the fact that the sentence may be grammatically incorrect is not of a big concern. Additionally, she points out that without vocabulary exercise no speaking, listening comprehension, reading and writing developments are possible.

Vocabulary is fundamental to foreign language teaching because without adequate vocabulary students cannot not only express their own ideas but also comprehend others. This is how Wilkins (1972: 111-112) summed up the importance of vocabulary learning: “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Even without grammar, with some useful expressions and elementary words, people may manage to communicate at a basic level. When going abroad, people firstly learn basic vocabulary because it helps them to exchange information with native speakers of a given language (Wilkins 1972: 112).

Ur (2012: 3) writes that words carry meaning. If a person wishes to communicate, lexis and the minimum knowledge of grammar is useful, not conversely. Due to the knowledge of vocabulary the potential user of a language is capable of communicating. Within reading activities, students would not manage to understand a text, it they did not acquire enough vocabulary items. Similarly, the same scenario would develop while listening apprehension.

Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska (2009: 98) claim that it is known that students like learning new vocabulary. Not only they are curious of what a new word looks like, how it sounds, but also what it means. The authors add that students simply love experiencing with new lexical items, particularly with sounds. Some children are surely fond of practising them while doing varied pronunciation training. Still, even if children tend to forget words, developing and building new lexicon are the most essential principles while talking about teaching a mother tongue. Nonetheless, it is also worth remembering that vocabulary plays the fundamental role both in the course of learning and also in real life. Words describe things and carry the meaning. Additionally, it is nearly impossible to communicate with others using only grammar, notably when talking about young learners who do not operate advanced grammatical structures. Finally, the authors propose that the teachers should spend more time on practising and developing new language items (Szpotowicz – Szulc-Kurpaska 2009: 98).

1.3. Criteria for vocabulary selection

Teachers of foreign languages should be aware of the fact that teaching vocabulary is one of the most important and difficult aspects in teaching process. Even the choice of vocabulary which is to be taught to the learners does not belong to the simplest decisions. Most of classes are heterogeneous ones, hence, every student is not the same. Essentially,
teachers should accept that particular situations differ from each other and vocabulary components that are critical in some circumstances might be absolutely useless in other situations. However, one fact remains unaltered, namely, while selecting vocabulary, the teacher should take account of several criteria. These benchmarks are frequency, need and level, cultural factors, expediency, and also an aspect of learnability and coverage (McCarthy 1990: 66).

1.3.1. Frequency

To start with, the educator should think about the number of occurrences of words in the target language. According to McCarthy (1990: 66), “[i]t seems self-evident that the most frequent words in any language will be the most useful ones for the learners of that language, and therefore, the best to start off with, in order to give the learner a basic set of tools for communication.” The more iterated a word is, the more useful it becomes. Nation (1990: 18) suggests that word-frequency counts may help mentors and course designers in some ways. First and foremost, they may help the teacher build up a feeling about which words are valuable and should be given attention and which are uncommon. As a result, they can contribute to creating word lists for teaching, for designing vocabulary tests, and for preparing graded courses and reading texts. Unluckily, frequency does not always promise usefulness. That is to say, a word of low regularity may be essential if it is either hard to find its synonym or it is the only item that represents a specific semantic value. Very often useful and important words do no appear in the first or second 1000 words of frequency counts. It commonly happens that these words are concrete nouns, for example, a stomach, a bath, and stupid (Nation 1990: 20).

1.3.2. Need and level

Another important factors for choosing vocabulary components are learners’ needs and language level. Actually, it is the teacher’s responsibility to recognise what students need lexis for. Haycraft (1992: 44-45) is of the opinion that if a learner wants to know a certain word, it is worth teaching it to him because motivation will guarantee that he keeps it in mind. Next, the author notices that when a class is in a company, the essence of teaching depends on structure, expressiveness and idiom. Not only do businessmen and technical experts need a foreign language to know technical words, but also they learn because they want to travel to other countries, give and take hospitality, and talk with colleagues during business meetings. It is worth remembering that students may feel frustrated if the educator teaches them vocabulary that they do not need. Hence, choosing specialized vocabulary is generally a question of slanting teaching towards a particular direction, rather teaching nothing but only specialised terms (Haycraft 1992: 45).

McCarthy (1990: 89) is of the opinion that most currently well-known beginners’ course books identify the need to equip the learner with the fundamental core of the language. Interestingly, Allen (1983: 108) proposes four questions that should be answered in order to anticipate learners’ vocabulary needs. The first question is concerned with the words that students must know in order to talk about things, people and events in the place where they study and live. Next, which words must learners know as to respond to commands and routine directions. Classroom instructions like ‘close your books’, ‘come to the blackboard’ should be
learnt early, so that commonly repeated instructions may always be given in the target language. The third question should answer whether words are needed for certain classroom experiences like describing, writing a letter or classifying different animals. Finally, the author writes about students’ particular academic interests. The students who will specialize in science need words dissimilar to those who want to start business careers (Allen 1983: 108).

1.3.3. Cultural factors

A further principle to be considered is the question of cultural differences. Gairns and Redman (1992: 59) think that one drawback of word-counts is that being based on the utterances of native speakers they will reflect the cultural interests of these speakers. However, such interests may not be shared by L1 learners who may desire to express ideas and some experiences outside those of a native speaker. The authors give examples of words like ‘sleet’ and ‘double-glazing’ as lexical items which are about as useful to Brazilians as ‘mangos’ and ‘cockroaches’ are to Scandinavians, assuming that they will stay in their home environment. To add more, there are topics that take on a significance in certain countries but it is far in excess of their importance to English speakers (Gairns – Redman 1992: 59).

1.3.4. Expediency

Another important factor for choosing vocabulary items is expediency, which is connected with certain words which are dictated by classroom and without which the learners may have difficulties with basic understanding of the teacher, activities taking place in the class, or other students. Then, the authors enumerate words that are called classroom language. These are for instance, true/false, tick/cross, get into pairs/groups, fill in/cross out/leave out/underline. Expedient vocabulary teaching is developing as the learners’ language develops and in effect students desire for more complicated classroom language (Gairns–Redman 1992: 61).

1.3.5. Learnability and coverage

The last two aspects which should be taken into account while choosing vocabulary to be learnt in the classroom are learnability and coverage. According to McCarthy (1990: 86), learnability of vocabulary is not unconnected with the notion of frequency, hence, the most repeated words will presumably be absorbed and learnt because they occur routinely. However, words may be easy of difficult for a variety of other causes and also may need specific attention or focus in teaching. Next, the author describes the problems connected with learning new words. Firstly, he tells about spelling difficulties which may be troublesome even to native speakers of English. Secondly, words may present phonological problems, either because they consist of awkward clusters of sounds, or because spelling conflicts with perception of what the sound is. Additionally, some words may be perceived as very close in meaning by the student, and as a result, difficult to separate one from another. For instance, ‘make’ and ‘do’ are prominent in this respect of English (McCarthy 1990: 86).
1.4. Elements of word knowledge

Scrivener (2005: 246) is of the opinion that the definition of ‘knowing a word’ is rather limited. He points out that very often a learner knows just the basic meaning of a word, and what is more, the linguist wonders if the learner can use the word appropriately in a variety of contexts. As reported by Thornbury (2002: 15), at the most basic level, knowing a word involves knowing its meaning and its form.

1.4.1. Form

As it was already mentioned, to know a word means to know both its meaning and form. A learner should be familiar with “a clear image – visual or auditory or both – of the form of vocabulary item” (Hatch and Btown 1995: 378).

First of all, knowing the spoken form of a vocabulary item consists of being able to identify the word when it is heard and also being able to produce the oral form in order to convey a meaning. The knowledge of the spoken form may be broken into many parts. The ‘tip of the tongue phenomenon’ has revealed some of this scholarship. This phenomenon happens when a learner cannot recall a well-known word and searches brain for it (Nation 2001: 40). Next, the author writes about phonological short-term memory which must not to be underestimated. Papagno, Valentine and Baddeley (1991) conducted a series of experiments and then compared several conditions for learning word pairs. Their piece of research showed that learners associate word forms that are already well-known to them. Another condition part of the experiment proved that “learners associate word forms that consist of a known first language word and a foreign language word, where the foreign language resembles some other first language word, for example throat garlo, where the Russian word garlo has some formal similarities with the English word gargle” (Nation 2001: 41). Phonological short-term memory did not have consequences on this kind of learning because the learners used meaning cues rather than phonological rehearsal to keep in mind the new foreign language patterns.

Another aspect of gaining friendliness with the written form of words is spelling. This ability is strongly dominated by the way learners represent the phonological structure of the language. Comparing of the spelling of English speakers with speakers of other languages displays that irregularity in the English spelling system develops complication for learners of English as a first language. Even though there is no strong relationship between spelling and intelligence, some lecturers may perceive bad spelling as suggestion of lack of knowledge (Nation 2001: 45).

1.4.2. Meaning

Secondly, a learner should know the meaning of a given word. Ur (1996: 61) distinguishes three aspects of word meaning: denotation, connotation and appropriateness. Denotation is a definition which is given in dictionaries and it can be portrayed as a representation of something that exists in real world, for instance, ‘dog’ is a kind of an animal, and more categorically, it is a domestic carnivorous mammal. The next element of meaning is connotation. This concept identifies with associations, or positive or negative feelings a word
stimulates. Namely, a word ‘dog’ has positive connotations of loyalty and friendship, but in the Arabic culture it is connected with interiority and dirt (Ur 1996: 61).

Another keyword which is worth mentioning is appropriateness. Beyond question, there are many situations in our live when we are not sure if the form of the word we want to use is suited to a specific situation. Therefore, it is helpful for a learner to know whether a certain word is common, rare, or maybe ‘taboo’. Learners also should be conscious about the formal and informal language and should not to mix those two styles. What is more, some vocabulary items are used more frequently in speech, whereas some in writing. For instance, ‘weep’ is synonymous to ‘cry’, however, the former tends to be used more commonly in speech than in writing. Not to forget about words which are only used in some parts of a country, or, belong to a dialect (Ur 1991: 61).

Additionally, Ur (1996: 62) writes how the meaning of one vocabulary item relates to others. Here are some of these basic meaning relationships presented by Thornbury (2002) and Ur (1991):

- **Synonyms** – words which share a similar, or nearly the same meaning. ‘Old’, ‘ancient’, ‘aged’, ‘elderly’ and ‘antique’ are all the synonyms of ‘not young/new’, however, we are more likely to talk about an old record player than an elderly record player.

- **Antonyms** – vocabulary items that mean the opposite. ‘Rich’ is an antonym of poor. Antonyms, likewise synonyms, are not always the same. The opposite of an old woman is a young woman, but when talking about a record player, we say a new record player instead of a young one.

- **Hyponyms** – words that share a specific examples of a general conception. For instance, ‘dog’, ‘lion’, ‘mouse’ are hyponyms of animal.

- **Co-hyponyms or co-ordinates** – other vocabulary items that are the ‘same kind of thing’; blue, red, green are co-hyponyms or co-ordinates.

- **Superordinates** – general ideas that cover particular items. ‘Animal’ is superordinate of mouse, dog, lion.

- **Translation** – expressions or words which in the learner’s mother tongue more or less serve as the meaning of a given item in the taught language.

However, Nation (2001: 27) distinguishes third feature of word knowledge – use. The table below presents crucial information about what is involved in knowing a word. The author then enumerates what constitutes the use. These are grammatical functions, collocations and constraints on use.
Table 1. What is involved in knowing a word
Adapted from: Nation 2001: 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spoken</td>
<td>What does the word sound like?</td>
<td>How is the word pronounced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>written</td>
<td>What does the word look like?</td>
<td>How is the word written and spelled?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>word parts</td>
<td>What parts are recognisable in this word?</td>
<td>What word parts are needed to express the meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>form and meaning</td>
<td>What meaning does this word form signal?</td>
<td>What word form can be used to express this meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concept and referents</td>
<td>What is included in the concept?</td>
<td>What items can the concept refer to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>associations</td>
<td>What other words does this make us think of?</td>
<td>What other words could we use instead of this one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>grammatical functions</td>
<td>In what patterns does the word occur?</td>
<td>In what patterns must we use this word?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collocations</td>
<td>What words or types of words occur with this one?</td>
<td>What words or types of words must we use with this one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>constraints on use (register, frequency ...)</td>
<td>Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?</td>
<td>Where, when, and how often can we use this word?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: In column 3, R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge.*

Table 2 shows the most effective kinds of learning and types of activities. Primarily, if form of a word is practised, learning should be implicit and concentrated on noticing, whereas if meaning of a word is learnt, the author proposes using images and intentional inferencing. For grammar collocation he suggests implicit learning through repetition. Finally, apart from the basic meaning relationships mentioned by Ur (1991: 62) and Thornbury (2002: 9), Scrivener adds more features about a word knowledge. Table 3 below provides detailed information about knowing a word.

Table 2. Kinds of vocabulary knowledge and the most effective kinds of learning
Adapted from: Nation 2001: 35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of knowledge</th>
<th>Kinds of learning</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>implicit learning involving noticing</td>
<td>repeated meetings as in repeated reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>strong explicit learning</td>
<td>depth of processing through the use of images, elaboration, deliberate inferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>grammar collocation</td>
<td>repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>constraints on use</td>
<td>explicit guidance and feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. What are some things you can know about a lexical item?
Adapted from: Scrivener 2005: 247-248

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You can know ...</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>how it’s spelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the number of syllables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonemes</td>
<td>The sounds that make up the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which syllables are stressed</td>
<td>Short words usually have one main stress; longer words may have a number of secondary stresses, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which stresses are stronger or weaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what part(s) of speech it is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammatically related forms</td>
<td>e.g. the past-tense form of a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the basic, ‘core’ meaning</td>
<td>e.g. table = piece of furniture with a flat surface and legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ‘semantic space’ it occupies</td>
<td>Where the meaning of one word ends and another begins; for example, fence/wall/hedge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphorical meanings</td>
<td>e.g. the uses of ‘water’ words to talk about business: drowning in debt, cash flow, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connotation</td>
<td>The associations and ‘feelings’ that seem to attach to words quite apart from their literal, ‘dictionary’ meaning, e.g. junkie sounds more disapproving than drug user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriacy for certain social situations, contexts, etc.</td>
<td>e.g. It may not be appropriate to call a job interviewer mate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restrictions on meaning</td>
<td>Things that the item cannot be used for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immediate collocates</td>
<td>Words that typically go with the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collocational field</td>
<td>The range of words that an item collocates with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colligation</td>
<td>The grammatical position in a sentence that the word typically takes, and the grammatical patterns that typically go with this item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common chunks, phrases, idioms it appears in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation(s)</td>
<td>words often do not have a precise correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>false friends</td>
<td>Words which in translation suggest a wrong meaning, e.g. in Hungarian <em>kastély</em> looks similar to the English <em>castle</em>, but in fact means <em>palace</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>true friends</td>
<td>Words which mean almost precisely the same in the other language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexical families</td>
<td>Other words related to the word by its topic, e.g. <em>saucepan, frying pan, can opener, ladle, food mixer</em>, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexical sets</td>
<td>Many words are related to other words that cover a wider or smaller range of meaning, e.g. <em>sweater</em> is included within <em>clothes</em>. Similarly <em>sweater</em> itself includes <em>polo-neck sweater</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synonyms</td>
<td>Words that mean the same or nearly the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homonyms</td>
<td>Words that have the same spelling but have different meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homophones</td>
<td>Words that are pronounced the same but have a different meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposites (antonyms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffixes that can be added to the word</td>
<td>e.g. <em>possess – possession</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prefixes that can be added to the word</td>
<td>e.g. <em>flow – overflow</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the visual image people typically have for this word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal feelings about this word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mnemonics (things help you remember the word)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table presents more information about word knowledge. Scrivener (2005: 247-248) mentions for example about colligation, which informs us what place a word usually takes in a sentence. The author also recommends a learner should pay attention to which syllables are stressed. A student should know what part of speech the given lexical item is. What is more, the author writes that things that help you remember the given words should also be taught and this technique is called mnemonics. Besides, so called true and false friends are worth noticing when learning words because there are some vocabulary items which look similar to words in mother language but they may mean completely something else than they would suggest (Scrivener 2005: 247-248).

1.5. Vocabulary distinction

As the preceding subsection demonstrates, before you are able to use a word correctly, you have to know a little bit about it. Alongside meaning and form of word knowledge, there is also distinction between productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge that is used by researchers when investigating vocabulary learning. Thus, an important aspect when planning lexis work is the differentiation between productive and receptive lexis (Scrivener 2005: 229).

1.5.1. Receptive vocabulary

Basically, “receptive vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving its meaning” (Nation 2001: 25). Melka stresses that it is generally accepted theory that in one’s lexicon receptive vocabulary is much larger than productive vocabulary and that reception anticipates production (1997: 84). Beyond question, much of people’s everyday use of vocabulary is automatic and fluent. McCarthy (1990: 43) is of the opinion that people have really fast retrieval skills. According to him, receptive retrieval associates matching spoken or written input to stored sound and orthographic templates and their related explanations. Additionally, retrieving the suitable meaning relies on matching verbal input with features of the context and going very quickly to the appropriate definition (McCarthy 1990: 44). Interestingly, As Moore and Carling (1982: 196) think, it would be destructive if, every time the word ‘make’ appeared, the mind had to search every meaning of ‘make’ for the right one. Alternatively, contexts include ‘anchor words’ that restrict the possible search paths so that we go straightforward to the meaning. These words are words of low semantic variability which cooperate with other lexical items in the text to diminish the meaning choices.

1.5.2. Productive vocabulary

Benjamin and Crow (2010: 42) are of the opinion that: “you are in the productive control of words that you use to express yourself, in speech or in writing” Also, productive retrieval follows opposite paths to those of receptive retrieval. Namely, meanings have to be given forms and some of the forms will be simple words, some will be derivatives, compounds, fixed collocations or some binomials (McCarthy 1990: 45). Interestingly, transition of a vocabulary item from a learner’s receptive vocabulary to his productive one is a progressive development. Regularly reading or hearing the word over a period of time is often the most common way in which this transition happens.
To add more, this is the decision of a teacher to choose which items are worth learning for productive use and which are only needed for purposes of identification (Gairns and Redman 1986: 65). Then the authors say that with native speakers, receptive vocabulary far surpasses productive vocabulary.

1.6. Vocabulary presentation

There are many techniques of presenting new vocabulary items to learners that can be used while a vocabulary lesson. Gairns and Redman (1986: 73) list three techniques that are rather teacher-centred because lexical items are chosen by the teacher rather than the learners. These are verbal techniques, visual techniques and also translation.

1.6.1. Visual techniques

When thinking about visual aids, the most common way of presenting vocabulary to learners is showing visuals to students. Visuals are flashcards, blackboard drawings, flashcards, photographs, wallcharts and also realia. These aids may be used while teaching concrete vocabulary items, such as furniture, food, professions, places, descriptions of people, activities and actions. Using visuals may be quite efficient because seeing pictures helps to remember new words better. Additionally, the teacher can also use mime and gestures to convey the meaning of lexical items.

Gestures, for example, may be quite a good idea when introducing action verbs to learners (Gairns and Redman 1986: 73). Talking about advantages of visuals, Ernestova (1981: 5) has it that “[i]t is visual aid in one form or another that help the student enter an imaginative experience beyond the classroom”. What is more, Rijavec (1991: 51) adds that “pictures can be employed to enrich the context, add vividness and reduce boredom”. Beyond question, visuals are indispensable when working with young learners who can’t write the translation of a new word.

1.6.2. Verbal techniques

Techniques of verbal presentations may also take many arrangements. When vocabulary items are more abstract, it is advisable to use illustrative situations. The teacher presents a situation in which a specific word is used and then, learners speculate what the word is. The lecturer may ask comprehension checking questions as to check if students grasped the concept.

Learners may also be encouraged to use the new word or phrase in various contexts. Another form of verbal techniques is providing students with a synonym or a definition. Synonyms are both used with low level learners and with higher level ones. When it comes to a definition, if it is alone, it is frequently incomplete as a means of conveying meaning and without any doubt contextualised instances are in most cases required to explain the limits of them (Gairns and Redman 1986: 74).

Finally, the authors add that in order to represent the meaning of superordinates such as ‘furniture’, the lecturer may use the technique of exemplifying the given word with word as ‘table’, ‘chair’ and ‘sofa’ (Gairns and Redman 1986: 74).
1.6.3. Translation

The last technique of presenting new vocabulary items to learners by Gairns and Redman (1986: 75) is translation. Undoubtedly, giving a definition can save the precious time in a classroom and in monolingual groups this method may help to avoid the possibility of false cognates. For instance, the French word ‘sensible’ would be translated as ‘sensitive’ in English, not ‘sensible’ (Gairns – Redman 1986: 75). Komorowska (2005: 154) writes that translation is advisable when introducing abstract words and similarly, like Gairns and Redman claim, she thinks that translation helps saving time. Nonetheless, there are some negative effects of overusing translations into mother tongue. Primarily, a learner may become accustomed to literal translation of the target language, there is slow development to listening skills and learning becomes slower as there is no much exposure to mother tongue.

1.7. Practising vocabulary

Like people say: “practice makes perfect”, students should be given an opportunity to use new vocabulary in practice. There is no question that new words need to be integrated into existing knowledge – mental lexicon. Then, in order to ensure long-term retention and recall, the new words are placed in working memory and subjected to various operations. The operations may include for example matching, sorting, comparing, combining, etc. Very often these activities are called integration activities rather than reinforcement or practice activities because the latter terms have associations with a more mechanical and less cognitive approach to language teaching (Thornbury 2002: 93).

1.7.1. Types of vocabulary activities

In order to help move words into long-term memory learners should be given decision-making tasks which are more or less cognitively demanding. In these activities students make decisions about words. Thornbury (2002: 93-98) arranges the activities from least cognitively demanding to most demanding.

- Identifying words – finding words in various texts. Also listening out for specific words in a recorded or spoken text is a form of identification task. Then, the author gives a short characteristic of Mr Brown, Mrs Brown and Richard and proposes some questions: list all the clothes items you hear, raise your hand whenever you hear a clothes item, write clothes words under the appropriate person.

- Selecting tasks – these tasks are more complicated than identification activities, since they engage both recognizing words and preferring from among choices. In ‘odd one out’ task students are able to justify their choice and with this kind of activity there is no right answer imperatively. A useful selecting task may be ‘choose... words from thus lesson to learn” and think how you will show in the next lesson you have learnt them.

- Matching activities include first recognizing lexical items and then pairing them with – for example – a visual object, a translation, an antonym, a synonym, a collocate, or just a definition. A kind of memory-training game is pelmanism. In this task word pairs or picture-word pairs are printed on individual cards which are put face down in
a random disposal. Participants take turns to pick up a card and search for the pair and also they try to remember the place of each card in order to help them find new pairs.

- Sorting tasks want students to sort lexical items into distinctive categories. The categories can either be given, or guessed. Thornbury (2002: 98) describes two activities; in the first one students are to put adjectives into two groups – positive and negative. In another one, learners are to put words into four categories and think of name for each set.

- Ranking and sequencing tasks want students to put the words into order. This may include arranging the lexical items on a cline: for example, adverbs of frequency (always, sometimes, often, occasionally, etc.). It may be a good idea for a ranking activity to ask learners to organize items according to their preferences.

In addition to the above, Scrivener (2005: 236-237) lists two ideas around which some lexical activities are based. The first group concentrates on exercises like communicative activities, discussions and role plays requiring the use of the lexical words. The second idea is focused on written tasks. Accordingly, the author enumerates various exercises focused on lexis:

- matching pictures to lexical words,
- matching parts of vocabulary items to other parts, for example beginnings and endings of words,
- using suffixes and prefixes to form new words from given lexical items,
- categorizing words into lists,
- using words to complete tasks,
- filling in diagrams, crosswords and grids,
- memory games,
- filling in gaps in sentences.

Although, the majority of the above tasks seem to be designed for an individual work, they also can be easily adapted and used in the classroom.

Thornbury (2002: 100-101) explains that decision-making tasks are repetitive and students make judgments about lexical pieces, but do not naturally produce them. Obviously, the words may then become production tasks by the activity requiring the students to talk about their choices. Nevertheless, activities that productive from the beginning are those in which the learners are asked to integrate the newly learnt words into writing or speaking activities. Next, he classifies them into two types: completion – of sentences and texts, and creation – of sentences and texts. The former, sentence and text completion tasks are customarily known as gap-fills. As they are easy to create and mark, they are often used in tests. Gap-fills activities have many various formats, but a fundamental distinction can be made between open and closed gap fills. In open type fills the learners write in the gaps, sometimes there may be a hint, such as the first letter of the word. Whereas in a closed gap-
fill the words are equipped in the form of a list at the beginning of the task, for example (Thornbury 2002: 100).

In completion activities the context is arranged, and it is only the matter of choosing the right option. Texts and sentence creation activities, on the other hand, require students to build the contexts for particular words. The author gives some examples of typical sentence creation tasks: “Choose six words from the list and write a sentence using each one.” “Write a short narrative (or dialogue) which includes at least five words from the list” (Thornbury 2002: 101). Activities like these lead into speaking exercises – either comparing and discussing sentences in pairs, or reading aloud and then performing dialogues o the rest of class.

Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska (2009: 105) give techniques for practicing the oral and written forms of words. The first example is “what’s missing’ game in which for example objects are displayed on a table and then one or two are taken away and students task is t name the missing ones. The second activity is called “Simon says” – it is all about giving instructions. Then the authors propose a picture dictation where learners task is to draw what the teacher says. That activity may be also arranged as a colouring dictation in which picture outlines are distributed to individuals.

1.7.2. Games in vocabulary practice

Interestingly, Scrivener (2005) says little about the value of games for vocabulary learning. During games, teachers are responsible for creating conditions which enable students to use new lexicon. Indeed, a well-chosen game may help learner acquire English words (Allen 1983: 52). To add more, games are helpful because they may make learners feel that new words are essential and valuable because without those words, the object of the activity cannot be achieved. For example, guessing game creates conditions in which the use of the target language is indispensable for leading the players to the correct conclusion.

Allen (1983: 54) also points out that not all games are beneficial for language learning. Board games like checkers cannot do much for vocabulary development as they do not involve the participants to speak any language while playing the game. Not only some games are noisy but they also involve physical activity, and, in the excitement of the game learners forget to speak the target language and express their emotions in the native language. Games which do not help students learn the foreign language should not belong in the class. When integrating a game into a lesson the teachers should always ask themselves whether this game makes learners practise lexicon.

There are some games which practise both oral and written forms of words. Bingo, for instance, practices listening and also recognizing the meaning of words either in written forms or as illustrations. An other game, domino, requires learners to match words with parts of sentences or pictures. There are also spelling games like spelling shark or hangman especially for groups (Allen 1983: 54).

1.8. Remembering words

To achieve results in foreign language acquisition a student needs not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember them. Thornbury (2002: 23) is of the opinion that in fact, learning is remembering. He also contrasts it with learning grammar, which is basically a rule-based
system, whereas learning vocabulary is collecting individual items. The three types of memory – short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory will be characterised in the subsequent passages.

1.8.1. Short-term, working memory, and long-term memory

According to Thornbury (2002: 23), short-term memory is all about the brain’s capaciousness to store a restricted number of items of information for periods of time up to only a few seconds. The author explains that type of memory as the one which is acquired to hold in a head a telephone number for as long as it is required to dial the number. Another example can be repeating a word a student just heard from a teacher. Short-term memory may be smoothly changed into long-term memory though it needs practice. The telephone number, mentioned earlier, may be quickly remembered by for example, dividing it into chunks and drilling to oneself loud.

Continuing, the second type of memory, is called working memory, and its function is “focussing on words long enough to perform operations on them” (Thornbury 2002: 23). These are the cognitive tasks such as reasoning, learning, and understanding that depend on working memory. The author illustrates it with a kind of work bench, “where information is first placed, studied and moved about before being filed away for later retrieval” (Thornbury 2002: 23). The data that is being manipulated may come from extrinsic sources by means of the senses, or it may be loaded from the long-term memory. For instance, a student may hear a word tangi, then download a similar word from long-term memory like tango, and study the two in working memory, earlier than establishing if they are dissimilar or the same. Interestingly, the author notes that information stays in working memory for about twenty seconds (Thornbury 2002: 23).

As it was stated before, the information must be first stored in the short-term memory as to be transformed into the long-term memory. According to the author, in contrast to the short-term one, long-term memory has excessive capacity, and its elements are persistent over time. Due to the long-term storage learners may recall objects, words, or any data days, weeks, or even years after the first input. There are some research principles that may help to locate words into long-term storage (Thornbury 2002: 24).

Firstly, simple repeating an item (rote learning) seems to have little long-term result except that some attempt is made to gather the elements at the same time. The kind of repetition that is crucial is repetition of encounters with a word. Another type of repetition is called the retrieval practice effect. Namely, the act of bringing back a word from memory makes it more likely that a student will be able to call back it afterwards. Tasks which need retrieval, for example, using new verbs in written sentences, ‘oil the path’ for possible recalls (Thornbury 2002: 24).

Cooke (2012) indicated that being asked the inquiry about a given subjects is not efficient enough as revising the objects by oneself. In addition, Cooke says that sleeping also supports restoring memory. That is to say, when brain is ‘offline’ it chooses and repeats the material which should be remembered in the long-term memory.

Furthermore, Thornbury (2002: 25) emphasizes that putting words to use is the best way of adding them to long-term memory. There were many vocabulary exercises described in the precious subchapter. Apart from the school practice, a strong motivation to learn new lexis makes the student more likely to spend extra time on rehearsal, which in the end results in
putting the words the long-term storage. Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian (2014: 268) add that if a man learns the words of a song, they are stored in long-term memory. The ability to remember or recall words, facts, events, or years depends on spread around the cortex. Nevertheless, people may have brain damage that keeps them from remembering new data.

1.9. Vocabulary testing

Without testing, there is no trustworthy means of knowing how productive a teaching process has been. Read (1997: 303) notices that under the influence of communicative approaches to language teaching and testing, present thinking tends towards the view that teachers should assess students’ abilities to cope with vocabulary when occur in texts and activities. Secondly, the question arises if there is still a place for traditional vocabulary tests.

Thornbury (2002: 129) states that testing provides feedback, both for teachers and students. In addition, testing provides a useful backwash effect. Namely, if learners know they are going to be tested, they might consider learning vocabulary more seriously. In this aspect, testing motivates students to revise lexis in preparation for a test. Moreover, it also provides an excuse for post-test review when a teacher checks the answers to the questions with students.

It has already been discussed in this thesis what knowing a word means. Thornbury (2002: 130) points out that all aspects of word knowledge can be realized productively (in writing and speaking) and receptively (in reading and listening). Thus any vocabulary test should take into account the complex nature of word knowledge. Next, there are issues of validity (does the test evaluates what I want to evaluate?), of practicality (is it easy to conduct?), and of backwash (will the test have a beneficial effect on learning?) Another keyword is the test’s reliability. For instance, will it give it provide the same outcomes for students of the same ability, or will it give constant results irrespective of who checks it?

Continuing, there are many various types of vocabulary-testing methods. Ur (1996: 71-73) enumerate eight techniques of checking vocabulary knowledge. First off all, multiple choice questions do no require to know the words’ spelling, pronunciation, connotation, grammar, or how they would be used in context. These questions seem to be tricky and they are also time-consuming to create, but, on the other hand, if the answers are clear, very easy and fast to mark. A testee who does not know the answer has a twenty-five per cent chance to circle the right word not knowing the answer at all. Apart from this disadvantage, Thornbury (2002: 132) adds that multiple choice activities test only recognition – not the ability to produce the word. The author is of the same opinion as Ur in the aspects of a test design and choosing the right answer by shot in the dark, which hardly ever means knowing the appropriate answer.

As in the first technique, also in a matching test-type meaning is tested. Matching items are said to be faster and easier to construct than multiple-choice ones. The fact whether students know the meanings of words is not being tested, instead of that, a learner should only know the existence of combined words (Ur 1996: 72). Similarly, in odd out one tasks no meaning of all words is checked. However, it is more interesting to do and also easy to mark.

Another activity type is writing sentences. Students might be asked to write sentences making the meaning of given words clear. Again, spelling and pronunciation are not tested. The answers are difficult to mark objectively, but clearly check the learner’ knowledge of meaning of words (Ur 1996: 72).
Dictations, on the other hand, check aural perception of lexical items and spelling only. However, Ur (1996: 72) notices that if learners recognize and write a word correctly they presumably know what it means, as it is difficult to perceive, let alone spell, a lexical item which is unknown. This activity is easy to carry out and to check. In dictation-translation meaning and spell is checked only. But the problem is that mother tongue may be inaccurate and misleading.

Another keyword is gap-filling, which tests spelling, meaning, and to some extend collocation and grammar. The problem arises when a testee writes a word that fits the sentence, but is not the original. An easier version may be the one with words given to fill in. Surely, this variant is easier to mark and correct than the primary version (Thornbury 2002: 133). The author also names the best-known example of gap-fill as cloze test. He also adds that the ability to fill in the spaces depends on understanding the context. Interestingly, cloze tests were originally created as tests of reading, therefore, it is controversial whether they are vocabulary tests at all. Thornbury (2002: 133) writes than one way of controlling the problem with having more than one possible correct answer is to provide the first letter of a word. A variant of this approach is called C-test. It is all about deleting halves of words.

Finally, sentence completion and translation. The former checks meaning only, but is personalized, thus very attractive to students and interesting to read by the teacher. Ur (1996: 73) is of the opinion that translation can check all aspects of a word, but learners usually have difficulties with findings precise equivalents and it may be problematic to mark.

1.10. Summary

In conclusion, vocabulary is a broad notion and it has countless definitions. It is difficult to imagine what life would be like if there were no words, thus various linguists have tried to estimate the value of vocabulary teaching. The teacher’s part is to support learners in their learning and to direct their learning into a right course. Undoubtedly, without suitable support students vocabulary will be incomplete when communicating in a foreign language. Nevertheless, that is not the concern since usually learners’ aim is to become self-confident and courageous when using a target language.
Chapter Two. The importance of music and songs in the ELT classroom

2.1. Definition of music and a song

Murphey (1992: 7) names songs as ‘adolescent motherese’. According to him, ‘motherese’ means the highly affective and musical language that adults use to communicate with infants. As toddlers grow up they get less and less of that language. The language vanishes slowly as children develop and them may be replaced by a song. A typical example of ‘motherese’ speech may be a lullaby. Interestingly, people talk about a song at least two dissimilar ways. The first is as a purely musical work. On the other hand, a song might be understood as a rendition, that is, a realization of that song in a performance, a recording or a written material. Additionally, it is crucial to take a broad view of songs. They incorporate not only the tune and the lyrics, but also all of the contexts in which it is created, produced and consumed. It is important where the song was performed and by whom, the audience and the technology that produced it (http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/songs/whatis.html).

Dictionary.com provides seven entries under the headword music. The first explanation says that “music is an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color” (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/music?s=t). The definition emphasizes that music’s role is to describe emotions and there are four essential features which characterize music. The second definition says that these are “the tones or sounds employed, occurring in single line (melody) or multiple lines (harmony), and sounded or to be sounded by one or more voices or instruments, or both.” In fact, in this explanation it as all about instruments and voice. Simply, music is instruments or voices (or both) people hear (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/music?s=t).

2.2. The role of music in everyday life

Music has always been a vast part in people’s lives: it is ubiquitous, it surrounds us everywhere, and it is broadly accepted all around the world. Regardless of the extent to which the capacity and sensitivity to music are programmed in the human brain or are by-products of other authorities and tendencies in the culture of music, without a doubt it plays a fully central and fundamental role.

It seems that the passion for music is deeply rooted in human nature. Sacks points out: “we the people, we are a species to a lesser extent in music or speaking” (2009: 12). Presently, avoiding music is not an easy task, for it belongs to many aspects of life. Various kinds of music may be heard in almost every place and during performing important events such as Olympic Games. Seeing school, it is said that using songs during classes is not so popular. It is perceived in that way because for majority people listening to music is connected with spare time, not with working or learning (Murphey 1992: 7).

According to McDermott and Hauser (2005: 29), music may be found in every human culture. Namely, we can hear it almost everywhere: while listening to the radio, when watching television and on different family occasions, such as birthday parties, wedding ceremonies, at a funeral, in restaurants, shops, cars, and even in the streets.

The authors define music as, on the one hand strange, but on the other hand, a marvelling phenomenon since it has been for such a long time and still surrounds people.
It is common knowledge that music can create a wide range of feelings. Moreover, music is so accepted that people all over the world pay a lot of money for musical business (McDermott – Hauser 2005: 29).

People may naturally make use of music and songs for their own behoves in everyday life. Primarily, they may simply listen to music at any time and at any place. Next, there is a possibility to sing without listening to any recording. Still, some people like humming or whistling while listening to a piece of music. Not only people listen, but they also talk about it, as music seems to be quite a common topic especially among teenagers who share their opinions about the latest news connected with artists or brand-new video clips they have recently seen. Some people find it useful to use songs and music to make a social environment, form a feeling of partnership or just dance (Murphey 1992: 9).

All of the cases mentioned above show that music is really important phenomenon in our lives because it may be with us everywhere, whether we want it or not. Definitely, it has been with people for long times and has become part of our habitual lives.

2.3. Reasons for using songs in the classroom

Very often music is the main source of English outside the classroom. Thus, using it in the lesson seems to be a good idea. There can be distinguished affective and cognitive rationale for playing a song during a lesson.

As a matter of fact, affective reasons are connected with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis. In short, it gives an explanation why some learners learn and others do not. The crucial thing is that students need to develop a positive attitude towards learning (Eken 1996: 46). Krashen (1982: 45) has it that: “for effective learning the affective filter is must be weak. A weak affective filter means that a positive attitude to learning is present.” Hence teachers’ task is to provide a positive atmosphere favourable for learning. In this aspect music and songs may be one of the methods for obtaining weak affective filter (Eken 1996: 46).

Eken (1996: 46) enumerates eight reasons for the use of song in a language classroom. Firstly, a song may be used to present a topic, new vocabulary or a language point. Then, it may also be used as a practice of lexis. Beyond question, songs can be used as a material for extensive and intensive listening. Some teachers may use them to focus on frequent learner errors in a more indirect way. Not to mention that songs are a perfect source for stimulating discussions about feelings and attitudes. Learners may talk over with another in pairs or in small groups what happened in the song and then share their opinions with the rest of students. Additionally, songs may arrange a relaxed classroom atmosphere and contribute to fun and variety in language teaching. Finally, songs may be said to encourage the use of imagination and creativity during foreign language lessons.

Songs also give a chance to develop automaticity which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the classroom (Schoepp 2001). Automaticity is defined as “a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses” (Gatbonton – Segalowitz 1988: 473). To put it in other words, songs may help automatize the language improvement process. Essentially, the students should be placed in an environment in which it is possible to use the target language in a communicative way (Gatbonton – Segalowitz 1988: 476). As a matter of fact, the nature of songs is said to be quite repetitive, logical and persistent.
2.4. Benefits of using music and songs in the classroom

Some teachers might not be aware of possibilities of using songs in the classroom. They may feel that such activities are not appropriate for classes which often cause discipline problems. To add more, lecturers may think that using music may create chaos or students may be reluctant to sing. Stanislawczyk and Yavener (1976: 60) are of the opinion that a song is an advantageous tool and a teacher should take advantage of it during linguistic practice. She also emphasizes the importance of the engagement learners get when listening to songs or creating own lyrics: “In the era when guitar players are ubiquitous, music must be an integral part of language study. It is a part of classroom activities from the start of the work in language, supplying additional language learning and cultural insights. At the advanced level, students become even more actively involved in music by creating songs” (Stanislawczyk – Yavener 1976: 60). The passage below attempts to present rationale for using song activities in English foreign language classrooms.

2.4.1. Motivation

Fundamentally, popular songs touch the lives of learners, and are connected with their various interests and everyday experiences. Almost all popular songs are related to the same topic of friendship, love, dream, sorrow, and the rest which are the common feelings of people. Since most young people nowadays are interested in a wide range of cultural forms outside classes, songs may be a really motivating and unique teaching tool. Experiencing with films, television, computer games and popular music seems to be highly motivating. Accordingly, more time and concentration to popular music in English foreign language classroom would surely increase learners’ motivation as classroom tasks would reflect on their knowledge, their music and the vocabulary they already know from the songs (Baoan 2008).

Although motivation is absolutely important in learning all school subjects, this is studying a foreign language that makes motivation play a huge role (Williams – Burden 1997 in: Siek-Piskozub – Wach 2008: 144). Dorneyi (2007: 727-728 ) points out that learning a language is a long-term process and learners are in charge of their learning at length. The students need to support their efforts for a long time, very often against numerous failures and difficulties.

2.4.2. Positive atmosphere

Another important factor making a song valuable for an English lesson is that it may create really favourable conditions for learning. Murphey (1992: 6) is of the opinion that “the use of music and songs can stimulate very positive associations to the study of a language, which otherwise may only be seen as a laborious task, entailing exams, frustration, and corrections”. People usually identify songs with fun, which is why learning through songs is associated with an enjoyable atmosphere.

Moreover, music may be used to relax students since for many learning a new language is a new experience. Our mother tongue – our basis of communication, is in some classes forbidden to use and learners may feel lost or helpless (Griffey 1992: 4). The author also adds
that especially instrumental playing silently in the background makes students feel more secure when doing the task at the same time.

Songs played in the background when learners read some conversations, are typical of *Suggestopedia*. This teaching method was invented by Georgi Lozanow in Bulgaria and its valuable element is music in the background. Essentially, the Suggestopedia method involves the students’ barriers and negative attitudes such as low self-esteem, anxiety or lack of motivation to learning. Meanwhile, students’ learning occurs subconsciously and may be amusing for them as well. These are some important features of that teaching technique: a relaxed atmosphere, a classroom positive environment, a new identity of learners, or music activities themselves (Larsen – Freeman 2000: 73-80).

### 2.4.3. Cultural and historical knowledge

Listening to songs is an excellent way of learning about the culture of a specific country, as well as the language that is used inside the cultural community, as language is one of the branches of culture.

Griffe (1992: 5) remarks that music is not universal and, therefore, music is a reflection of the time and place that produced it. There are many songs which are a culture capsule including within themselves a meaningful piece of social information. The songs of the 1940s reflect not only the accessible sound technology of their time, but also the hopes and fears of their period. The same phenomenon is for the songs of every decade. For that reason playing a song into the classroom means bringing the culture of the song in with it.

Another benefit is that songs may be used as a way of looking at a culture and contrasting it with other cultures. Moreover, pieces of music can be used to recapture historical times. For example, Christmas carols from Europe tell the history and the geography of that area, too. Furthermore, there are many songs which are about famous cities and they may be used to learn about important sights, feelings or sounds of a city (Griffe 1992: 5).

Baoan (2008) is also of the same opinion as Griffe. He notices that pop songs ten years ago may sound old-fashioned to modern learners’ ears. In this aspect, today’s popular songs will be perceived either rubbish or classics in the future. Searching for the reasons why some particular kind of music is well-known at a certain time and abandoned at another time may supply a lot of background knowledge for both learners and teachers.

### 2.4.4. Linguistic knowledge

A further advantage of using songs in English classroom is that they include linguistic information, for instance vocabulary items, pronunciation or grammar. Thus, students acquire new knowledge very often with no intention of doing so. Also, for many teachers the didactic role of music would be the first to appreciate.

Songs may be considered as representing ‘distortions’ of the normal speech patterns of a language. Jolly (1975: 11) states that normal speech and songs are on the same continuum of vocally-produced human sounds. Namely, they both represent forms of communication in a linguistic sense and have melodic and rhythmic content.

As stated earlier, songs may contain rich linguistic knowledge. It is all about the about learning that this process takes place in many different ways and all kinds of learning are
going on all the time. However, occasionally it is deliberate because learners acquire information presented in a classroom or when they look up a word in a dictionary. Sometimes, on the contrary, the learning process can be unexpected, as when the students listen to music. Ergo, it is advisable for foreign language teachers to use songs and their students will learn language elements through unintentional learning (Baoan 2008).

As Griffie (1992: 4) writes, there is a deep relationship between rhythm and speech an sensitivity to rhythm is a fundamental first step in language learning. When music and songs are used in the classroom then the students are exposed to the rhythms of the language. Besides, popular songs include a lot of examples of colloquial speech. For instance, in some songs the ‘-ing’ ending is frequently reduced from the full ‘-ing’ to just ‘n’ sound. This is the natural and everyday language of songs as opposed to the artificial language in many course books that is a good way to incorporate living into the classroom (Griffee 1992: 5).

Also Schoepp (2001) shares the same opinion as Griffie, and gives an example of a song “My Best Was Never Good Enough” by Bruce Springsteen as a good example of colloquial English. This song is full of jargon-ridden like “every dog has his day ” and “every cloud has a silver lining”. As expected, most English second language students will encounter an informal language of conversation outside the classroom. Beyond question, using songs may prepare learners for the authentic language they will be confronted with.

2.4.5. Other advantages

Not only do songs are appealing for the students, but also the teachers find them quite attractive. Imprimis, songs are short and self-contained recordings, texts, and films that are easy to use in a lesson. Additively, the supply is almost infinite and there is a broad range of titles to choose from (Griffe 1992: 8).

Furthermore, learning a foreign language through music can be seen as an informal method called *edutainment*. Edutainment software are all the applications that are used for example, in game-like activities or teaching or rely on visual materials. The principle of edutainment is to draw learners’ attention, keep them emotionally involved and make them interested in the lesson (Okan 2003: 255). Activities which are conducted with the use of the edutainment method are done in an enjoyable way and this is why teaching with the use of music is the combination of the words education and entertainment (Okan 2003: 255).

When young learners are disruptive the teacher can discipline them with a song. Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska (2009: 196) notice that singing a song is a lockstep activity in which all the students are engaged in the same exercise at the same time. A song may be also a reward for a good behaviour. The authors also state that singing is a nice variety from language work in class and may provide a break from sameness. Finally, they add that music acts as a key to the imagination even with many students who think that they have no imagination at all.

2.4.6. Disadvantages of using songs

Although, songs have many good aspects, there are some less positive concerns about music and songs teachers should regard in the language classroom. Murphey (1992: 8-9) writes that loudly playing songs may disturb neighbouring classes. Secondly, some learners get too excited and may forget about the discipline. Another issue is the fact some students
may disagree about musical pieces and they have dissimilar musical tastes. Teachers often complain that the learners just want to listen, not work. More importantly, many songs may be intelligible for students since they contain many colloquial expressions and the pace is too fast. Siek-Piskozub and Wach (2006: 91-97) add that there are songs which touch taboo topics like violence and sexism and thus such songs may confuse the learners or embarrass them.

2.5. Criteria for a song selection

There are no strict rules teachers should obey when selecting a song for a language work, but there are several factors lecturers should take into consideration. Griffee (1992: 6-8) categorizes the criteria into four groups: the class, the teacher, classroom opportunities and music.

Firstly, the teachers should take account of students’ age. Young learners may not be able to understand songs which contain deep ideas like envy, suffering or forgiveness. Besides, each age group has its own musical favourites and disfavoured ones. Also, the time of the day is important. Some learners are tired in the evening and music might energize them, while other classes may need to have their energy disciplined a bit more (Griffee 1992: 6-7).

Next, the author writes that it is unwise to use both music that the teacher does not like and music that the learners do not like. It may be a good idea to let the students bring the lyrics of songs they like and then choose appropriate ones. It is worth remembering that “you can use songs and music when the curriculum has been predetermined, but there is time remaining in the class period” (Griffee 1992: 7). The teachers claim that usually they use songs for special holidays lessons like Christmas or Easter lessons. The crucial thing is also the language teaching purpose. The song should have instructional value, it should not be just for fun. The situation is satisfactory when the selected song is a direct component to the lesson, thus contains for example, a practiced grammatical structure or a discussion theme that can be used in a lesson. Finally, music may disturb other classes, so it should not be played loudly. There are some rooms which are large and seem to eat up sound, thus choosing an appropriate classroom should be taken into consideration (Griffee 1992: 7-8).

2.6. Songs in the ESL classroom

Songs play a meaningful role in life. Music can be heard almost in every place around the world. Such kind of entertainment as music may be applicable for students’ to learn, efficiently and enjoyably.

2.6.1. Three stages of a song

Songs are traditionally presented in three stages, with pre-study activities, while-studying activities and post-study activities. This classification is very useful as the students may get involved and then consolidate the knowledge.

The purpose of the pre-stage is to develop the students thematically, linguistically, educationally and psychologically for the activity (Davanellos 1999: 14). The learners may be introduced to the subject matter and key lexis, or any linguistics features from which they may benefit at a later step. The essential element of pre-stage is to create a reason for the students to want to listen to the song. Arevalo (2010: 125) clarifies that the concept of prior
knowledge is a part of the cognitive model of language processing. When people read or listen, they process the message they hear both bottom-up and top-down. The latter means using experiences and prior knowledge, whereas bottom-up processing means using the information people have about word meanings, sounds, and discourse markers like ‘first’, ‘then’ to bring together their comprehension of what they hear or read step by step (Arevalo 2010: 125).

During the second stage, which might be seen as the main focus of the lesson, the learners complete the activities and tasks which directly concern the song. Interestingly, the author gives the idea of grading tasks as the students familiarize with the song. For instance, when listening to “An Englishman in New York” by Sting, first activity might be to identify the subject matter of the song. Next, a later task might be dealing with specific information and intensive listening or reading by asking them for example, to tick sentences true or false (Davanellos 1999: 14). In this stage, the learners are very often perform activities simultaneously, their task may be to listen to a song and underline something in the text.

Additionally, the students might be asked to reflect on its language and content after the comprehensive exploitation of the song. Arevalo (2010: 125) is of the opinion that having a purpose for listening helps listen more efficaciously. He compares a listening activity to listening to a weather forecast and illustrates it with a desire to know whether to wear a coat or not; thus the focus is on the temperature. That is to say, in this stage the teachers should explain their students what is the aim of the task. Essentially, the students may listen for details, for the main idea, and for making conclusions. Accordingly, the learners develop a sense of why they listen and which skill use to listen better. The lecturers may develop these skills by asking the students to focus on their purpose for listening every time they listen. This form of strategy is called training. The concept of knowing the reason of listening is a very efficient first strategy because it helps the students to organize and reflect on their learning (Arevalo 2010: 125-126).

The third stage usually involves follow-up activities that practise the productive skills of writing and speaking in different ways. Although the students might have been writing or speaking in order for example to discuss their personal experience of the topic, the aim and focus of the pre-stage is not the improvement of productive skills, but the means for motivation increment and introducing the general theme. In that stage, it is the text of the song that stimulates for further exercises which improve other language skills. The author gives an example of follow-up work to “She’s leaving home” by the Beatles where the learners either write the letter the girl wrote for her parents, or roleplay the dialogue between the girl and her parents. At this stage the activities will almost exactly include the assimilation of previously-taught language with new languages and ideas recently introduced through the song (Davanellos 1999: 14).

Interestingly, Arevalo (2010: 125) notices that usually when the teachers think of listening activities, they have inclination to think of the learners listening to a recording and doing an activity. However, the teachers may use post-listening tasks to check apprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and also continue the knowledge gained to other contexts. A post-listening activity might relate to a pre-listening task, such as predicting, may transfer what has been learnt to writing, reading, or speaking activities, or may extend on the topic or the listening text (Arevalo 2010: 126).
2.6.2. Song activities

Songs may be used in the classroom in many ways. Here are a few ideas presented quickly. The first activity is related simply to listening to a song and then discussing what happened in the song, to sharing students’ interpretations, or reactions to that piece of music. Printed lyrics may be distributed to students as to help them take part in discussions (Scrivener 2005: 338).

Table 4. Activities for exploiting songs and texts
Adapted from: Davanellos 1999: 15.
A well-known exercise that can be done with a song is gap filling. Learners are handed out sheets of paper with the lyrics of a song and while listening their task is to write the heard words. Scrivener (2005: 339) writes that this activity is very common and calls it a cliché. He suggests varying this task, for example by changing it into a pre-listening activity where students are to predict the missing words. Another song oriented activity is song jumble. Students put in order certain lines of a song that are jumbled. After that, learners listen to the song and compare their guesses. This activity may also be done with pictures, which they have to put in order while listening to a song. Next activity proposed by the author is called action movement and it is addressed to students of lower levels. Learners listen to one line at a time and invent mimed actions. They teach each other and then all present their versions. However, some tasks can be more challenging, for instance, students may be asked to create their own lyrics to the tune (Scrivener 2005: 339).

Finally, Scrivener (2005: 339) mentions about ideas for using music on its own in the classroom. A teacher may use music to set the mood, especially at the beginning of a lesson. Also, when a lecturer wants their students to talk about something at the beginning of a lesson to warm them up, he can play music, too. An interesting proposal is that of playing music while students are doing ‘dull’ activities. Moreover, background music may be used to set the scene when students work on a specific task, for example ‘space’ music played while discussing life on other planets. Simply, music may be used for relaxation between demanding activities. Davanellos (1999: 15) enumerates forty activities arranged around songs and music in a linguistic classroom. Some of these activities were described above.
Undoubtedly, Davanellos (1999: 15) presents a wide range of song activities. Every teacher may choose the most favourable and apply them in his own practice. Obviously, activities connected with songs may take various forms but definitely they should be conducted in an enjoyable and pleasing way.

2.7. Summary

To conclude, one may say that songs and music are a valuable means to introduce to foreign language practice. Such sort of entertainment as music may be appropriate for students’ learning process, subconscious, and fun. Not only do they make a lesson more interesting because of authentic language and breaking the routine, but they also develop learners’ language skills in many fields. Without doubt music may bring certain benefits into the classroom. What is also worth mentioning is the proper selection of a song as well as the exercises which are planned to be used in a lesson. Although there is no one ideal method in foreign language teaching, songs can surely strengthen students’ motivation towards language adventures.
Chapter Three. The study

3.1. Aims of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine to what extent teaching English vocabulary with the use of songs has impact on better vocabulary memorisation. The author’s aim was also to learn about students’ musical preferences and a song-oriented lesson’s perception.

3.2. Description of the participants

The subjects of the study were twentyeight learners from one class. The research was carried out among two groups, each comprised of fourteen participants aged eleven and twelve, who were in the fifth grade of primary school at a beginner level. There were sixteen males and twelve females. The students had three lessons of English each week. All the participants started their English education at the age of seven in the first class of the primary school so they have been learning it for five years. The book which each group used was called “Welcome II”, Express Publishing by Elizabeth Gray and Virginia Evans. Almost all of the children had no contact with English outside the classroom, only 7 % of the learners admitted to take part regularly in extra lessons organized by private language schools.

3.3. Instruments and procedures

Three types of data collection tools were used during the sequence of two lessons: a questionnaire: a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A) and an evaluation questionnaire after lessons with the use of songs (see Appendix B), and the teacher observations. Additionally, the students were also asked to write a pre-test before the new vocabulary was introduced and also to write post-tests on vocabulary after lessons to reflect their knowledge.

The investigation started at the beginning of May 2015. Before starting the study the teacher conducted a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A) to find out the learners’ general and classroom-related attitude towards songs and music. The survey consisted of seven short questions which were in Polish as the participants could better understand and answer to them easily. The aim of question one was to find out whether the students are interested in music or not. The three following questions (2-4) were oriented towards the use of songs and music during classes. The second question asked if learners had already took part in English classes with the use of songs or not. Then, only if their answer to the previous question was “yes”, their task was to choose if they liked using songs during lessons and enjoyed it a lot, or it was difficult to say, or maybe the did not like it at all. The fourth enquiry pointed at using songs to teach vocabulary, the learners had to choose whether this is a good idea, rather good, or this way is not appealing to them.

The next questions were oriented towards general music outside the classroom. Question five aimed at learning if the students listened to songs in English after school at their homes. The sixth query concerned the learners’ favourite genres of music (they could choose a few options), and if the genre was not in question, they could write their favourite genres of music. The seventh enquiry pointed at taking advantages of the media and other devices in order to listen to songs. The learners could choose among five proposed answers: the Internet,
CDs, radio, telephone, and television. The penultimate query asked how many hours students listen to music per day. The last question was an open question type and its objective was to learn what were the participants’ favourite bands’ or singers’ names.

Two lessons were conducted in two groups from the thirteenth of May 2015 to the twentieth of May, 2015. One day before the research the teacher asked the students to write pre-tests on vocabulary. Students’ task was to write Polish equivalents of verbs: lean on, touch, spread, soar, stare, swear, mess around, lay and comb (see Appendix C). The lessons with both groups took part on the thirteenth of May, 2015. At the very beginning of the investigation, the teacher had distributed the preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A) and after about five minutes the lesson finally started.

The lesson in the experimental group took part on the thirteenth of May and was oriented towards verbs. At the beginning of the lesson students were asked to fill in a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A). Then, the lecturer asked students to work in pairs and write down as many verbs as they know. The learners from the team which won the competition were given a “+”. Next, the lecturer asked students to work in two groups of seven participants and think about songs which have a verb in their titles. Surprisingly, they guessed the title of one song prepared by the teacher (“I believe I can fly” by R. Kelly). After that, the learners’ task was to listen to two songs and write down as many verbs as they could hear. Students compared their outcomes and the teacher could distribute copies with spaces to fill in. The task connected with “I believe I can fly” song was listen to and fill in the blank spaces (see Appendix D). Afterwards, the lecturer checked what the students had written in the gaps and wrote the missing vocabulary items on the board. The participants could also see the lyrics of the original song displayed by the computer projector (see Appendix E).

The next task was to read the lyrics of “The Lazy Song” by Bruno Mars and complete in the blank spaces with the given verbs (see Appendix F). Later, the teacher checked students’ choices and presented the meanings of the unknown verbs. She used synonyms, gestures and translation technique. Finally, the class could sing the songs. Finally, the teacher asked them to work in pairs and to write nine sentences with the new verbs. The learners could use bilingual dictionaries from the teacher’s bookcase. The students were asked to learn the words by heart and additionally, their homework was to listen to the songs at their homes. A few minutes before the end of the lesson the students were asked again to write a test (see Appendix C), and additionally, fill in the evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The first question’s purpose was to learn whether students enjoyed the lesson, the second question asked if they felt relaxed and the third one asked which part of the lesson was the most interesting for them. The fourth question was an open one and its aim was to learn if students would change something in that lesson.

The second lesson in the control group was carried out on that same day. At the beginning of the lesson students were asked to fill in the preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A). Although the lesson was concentrated on verbs, it was conducted without the usage of the two songs. The first stage of the class was the same as in the experimental group, then the teacher wrote eighteen verbs on the blackboard and elicited some Polish equivalents in Polish. The trainee used contextualization and translations techniques for the unknown verbs. Afterwards, the learners’ task was to match the verbs with pictures and do the crossword (see Appendix G and Appendix H). Then, the learners were asked to write as many sentences with the new verbs as they could – the lower limit was seven sentences. Finally, the teacher divided the group into two smaller teams and their task was to find out what verbs are
shown by the opponents, the participants could use only gestures, no words were allowed. Similarly, at the end of the class the students they were asked to write a short test and their homework was to learn the verbs by heart.

After one week, on the twentieth of May 2015, at the beginning of the English lessons, the two groups were tested whether they memorised the vocabulary. The groups were asked to fill in post-tests II which looked the same as pre-tests and post-test I from the previous lesson (see Appendix C). Both classes did not know there would be a test, what is more, the trainee did not revise the lexis earlier or ask the students to review it at home. Another step was to analyze the collected tests and questionnaires. The teacher examined the documents and described the results.

3.4. Presentation of the results

According to the results from the preliminary questionnaire in the both groups (28 students), for 71% of the students (that is 20 students) music is one of the interests, whereas 29% (8 students) of them are not interested in music (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Preliminary questionnaire.

As it is shown in chart 2, 93% of the students already experienced English lessons with the use of songs (26 students), but there was difference among the frequency of participation in lessons with a song. 29% of students (8 students) opted for the frequency – very often, and 64% of the class (18 learners) said they took part in such lessons, but not very often. Only two of the interviewees said he had not taken part in English classes with songs – 7% of the interviewees (see Chart 2).
Chart 2. Preliminary questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever taken part in English lessons with the use of songs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes, very often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72% of the group (20 learners) said that the lessons with the use of songs were really appealing, and 21% (6 learners) of the group liked the lessons with songs. Two students – that is 7% of all, chose the “c” option – “I do not like classes with the use of songs” (see Chart 3).

Chart 3. Preliminary questionnaire.

Did you like the lesson(s)? (Only if you said yes in question 2)

- 72%: Yes, they were very interesting
- 21%: I liked them
- 7%: No, I did not like them

Interestingly, the results of the fourth enquiry present that 86% of all the participants in the group (that is 24 students) were of the opinion that learning vocabulary through songs was a good method; for the rest it was rather a good method (14% of the learners), nobody said that this was not a good method (see Chart 3a).
Chart 3a. Preliminary questionnaire.

The results demonstrate that 93% of the learners listened to English songs at home (26 students). 64% of the group listened to English songs almost every day (18 students), 29% very occasionally (8 students), and 7% of the group (2 students) did not like listening to English songs (see Chart 4).

Chart 4. Preliminary questionnaire.

As shown in the chart 5, the students mostly opted for pop and disco music. The three dominant genres of music in that question were: pop (28%), disco (25%) and club/electronic music (19%). Only 14% opted for rock, and 11% chose hip hop.
Chart 5. Preliminary questionnaire.

The results demonstrate that most students take advantages of the Internet (71 %) and television (57 %). Next, the most approved manner of listening to music, was radio (36 %) and telephone (36 %). Only 14 % of the group was willing to use CDs (see Chart 6).

Chart 6. Preliminary questionnaire.
As it is shown in the chart 7, most students listened to music up to two hours a day – eight students (57% of the group). Four learners listened to music more than three hours a day (29%), and only two up to one hour (14%). Nobody chose from two up to three hours.

**Chart 7.** Preliminary questionnaire.

![Chart showing the distribution of hours spent listening to music per day](chart_image)

Presenting the results from the pre-test in the experimental group one may observe that the interviewees on average knew the meanings of 1.14 words out of the nine and that is 13% of all the verbs presented during the lesson. The outcomes in the control group were similar; on average, the students knew 1.07 verbs out of the nine verbs and that is 12% of all the introduced verbs (see Table 1).

The results display that the learners in two groups did quite well in the post-test I; however, the experimental group performed better. On average, the students in the experimental class translated 7.79 words out of the nine words, which says that they knew 87% of the material (see Table 1).

Presenting the results from the post-test I in the control class one may notice that the learners knew fewer verbs than their friends in the experimental group. On average, they knew the meanings of 5.14 verbs out of the nine and that is 57% of all the verbs presented a week earlier (see Table 1).

The results demonstrate that the learners in the both groups did better in post-test II than in post-test I. However, it was the experimental group that acquired better results in the post-test II. The results are also distinct enough to indicate that the groups’ results are dissimilar (see Table 1).

When looking at the results of the post-test II in the experimental group, it is easy to notice that the new translations appeared; on average, the students knew the meaning of 8.12 words out of the nine words – that is 90% of the vocabulary tested in the lesson.

The outcomes from the post-test II in the control group show that the students translated fewer words than the learners in the experimental class, but the results also indicate that the
students knew more words than a week earlier. On average, the students from the control group knew 7.02 words out of the nine verbs and that is 78 % of all the tested words. The results present that the students in the both groups did well in the post-tests II. Nevertheless, it seems that the experimental group obtained better results in the both post-tests (see Table 5).

**Table 5.** Mean values and standard derivations of pre-tests and post-tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of tests</th>
<th>The experimental group</th>
<th>The control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean value</td>
<td>standard derivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-test</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-test I</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-test II</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the evaluation survey from the end of the lesson in the experimental group (14 students), asked if they liked the lesson, ten out of fourteen said “yes” (71 %), one learner choose “it is difficult to say” (7%), and three participants said they did not like that English class (21%) (see Chart 8).

**Chart 8.** Evaluation questionnaire after the lesson.

The following results present that nine learners (64 % of the group) felt relaxed due to the song, but five respondents could not asses if the song did help them to relax or not - 36 % of the students (see Chart 9).
When looking at the results of the third question, one may conclude that listening to the song was definitely the most liked stage (71 %), however, 29 % of the students said they liked writing sentences at the end of the lesson. Finally, the learners gave their ideas about possible changes in that class. They said that there should be more than only two songs during the lesson (three indications – that is 21 %), the songs should be sung many times – not only two times (four indications – that is 29 %), the teacher could play the music video of the song (four indications – that is 29 %) and four students gave no reply to the last enquiry.

3.5. Discussion of the results

As it is shown in chart 1, there are many students interested in music. That is because music is heard almost everywhere and is easily accessible for young people. The students for whom music is not a hobby, could say that because they might have not understood the question.

In addition, students were of the opinion that songs help in learning vocabulary; probably, they must have experienced learning words from songs at school, or on their own, which is a good practice. Music can be found on the Internet, on the radio, and on the television, thus there are so many young music listeners nowadays. Often those listeners search for their musical taste and that is why they listen to music almost every day.

Pop and disco music are the kinds of music which learners mostly opted for. After the questionnaire the teacher discussed that question with learners and got to know that most of them listen to what is being played on the radio or on the television. Simply, choosing pop and disco music may result from the students’ interests in those kinds of music. This is the teacher’s responsibility to find out what genre of music his students like the most. But definitely, popular music is being played on the radio more often that electronic music or hip hop.

Indeed, people like music which suits their own specific personality or mood. Just like there are no identical people, like the song may be perceived in different ways. For one student it may be a happy song, whereas other learners may find it a soulful melody. Some
students might have not felt relaxed at the lesson because one of their tasks was to fill in the gaps while listening to the song. The pace might have been too fast or the lyrics itself could have been too difficult for some learners.

When looking at the results of the pre-tests, they show that both groups did not know all the vocabulary. The words might have not appeared yet or they might have occurred during previous lessons, but the learners did not pay attention to them. Some words’ meanings are retrieving only when listening or reading in foreign language, whereas some are used productively in writing or speaking.

Probably it was using the song that helped the experimental group to receive better outcomes in post-tests. Listening to songs at home helped the learners from experimental group to put the verbs in long-term memory. In this manner, repeating words with the use of songs possibly helps words to transform into long-term storage. Additionally, the students were exposed to the music at their homes, thus they were relaxed and could listen to the songs as many times as they wished. Thus, the manner of vocabulary introduction does really influence the memorization of vocabulary by learners. Repetition of songs could help the learners to put the words into long-term memory because things repeated multiple times are almost impossible to forget.

3.6. Weaknesses of the study

The results show that using songs to teach lexis influences learners’ acquisition. In general, a questionnaire as a type of a quantitative research, may be regarded as rather unreliable source of information. The questionnaires conducted in this study may not be reliable and have some disadvantages. Some teenagers could ignore questions and leave the questions empty, luckily, there were not so many of such answers. Moreover, they could have made fun of the questionnaires and choose the same answers in each question. Besides, one should bear in mind that learners could cheat while writing post-tests. The study was conducted by a young and non-experienced teacher, thus the ideas for the song lessons could not be perfect examples of that lesson type.

3.7. Pedagogical implications

The use of songs in the classroom has an influence on teaching English words. However, teachers should remember that song selection plays a crucial role. The pace of the chosen song should be appropriate for the learners’ level of language. Before listening to a song a teacher should also check the song in all particulars, especially the grammar in the song.

Foreign language teachers should also bear in mind that it is a good idea to conduct a survey after the first lesson and then draw conclusions. In that way the author learnt that students like if there is more than only two songs in the lesson and that they find singing a song interesting. Another issue to keep in mind is that students find language lessons more attractive when multimedia equipment, for example an interactive board assists a teacher. When it comes to working with dictionaries, it could be a good option to set a time limit for using them, as students get distracted easily and search for other entries, often connected with explicit language. The preliminary questionnaire proved that students find songs as a way to relax, therefore, teachers may play music after a high-demanding work at class. Finally,
teachers may assign homework based on listening to songs at learners’ homes (as in the experimental group), and encourage students to learn new words by listening to music.

CONCLUSIONS

Music has always played a big part in society because it has been present with people during important events and in many different places. Songs have also found niche in English classrooms. Nowadays, foreign language teachers find using songs and music useful, because songs are perceived as motivating sources, thus beneficial in language learning.

One of the aspects of a foreign language that may benefit from teaching and learning via songs is vocabulary. Teachers play a meaningful role while teaching vocabulary. They help their students expand and improve, and build a new stock words to choose from. Songs allow for interesting changes in the classroom, thus energizes learning activities. Since people find listening to songs as a good technique for learning a foreign language, thus in order to know what a song is about, they read and translate lyrics on their own. Subsequently, they learn new words subconsciously; it does not resemble a study. Additionally, many words in songs are repetitive and this makes them stay in mind. Tunes and lyrics infiltrates people’s thoughts and they may stay in our memory for a long time. Hence, learning through songs may be a good method of vocabulary memorization because lyrics are sung repeatedly and catchy tunes help to remember them. It needs to be noticed that because of the easy access to music, everyone may benefit from it.

What also speaks in favour of using songs in language teaching are the results from the study. The outcomes of the post-tests presented that the students who were stimulated by music achieved better results. To sum up, the author has shown that music and songs may foster lexicon memorisation, but it does not negate introducing new vocabulary without songs’ accompany.

References


(Received 02 February 2016; accepted 01 March 2016)

_Słowa kluczowe_: nauczanie słownictwa; piosenki na lekcjach języka angielskiego jako języka obcego
Appendices

Appendix A

Ankieta wstępna dla ucznia

Ankieta składa się z 7 pytań i jest anonimowa. Wiadomości zgromadzone na jej podstawie będą służyć jedynie do celów poznawczych w ramach pracy magisterskiej.

Wybierz odpowiedź, która Twoim zdaniem jest najbardziej adekwatna.

😊 Staraj się odpowiadać samodzielnie i udzielać prawdziwych odpowiedzi 😊

1. Czy muzyka jest jednym z Twoich zainteresowań?
   a) tak
   b) nie

2. Czy uczestniczyłaś/łeś już w lekcjach języka angielskiego, podczas których wykorzystywano muzykę/piosenki?
   a) tak, bardzo często
   b) tak, ale rzadko
   c) nigdy

3. Jeśli wyżej odpowiedziałaś/łeś tak, to czy te lekcje podobały Ci się?
   a) tak, były naprawdę bardzo interesujące
   b) trudno powiedzieć – średnio mi się podobały
   c) nie, nie przepadam za lekcją na której jest piosenka

4. Czy uważasz, że nauka słownictwa poprzez piosenki to dobry sposób na naukę?
   a) tak
   b) raczej tak
   c) nie

5. Czy słuchasz piosenek w języku angielskim w domu?
a) tak, prawie codziennie
b) bardzo rzadko
c) nie, nie lubię słuchać piosenek w j. angielskim

6. Jakiej muzyki słuchasz najczęściej? (Można zaznaczyć kilka)
   a) pop
   b) rock
   c) disco
   d) hip-hop
   e) inny gatunek (napisz nazwę) ………………………………………

7. Muzyki słucham … (można wybrać kilka)
   a) w Internecie
   b) z płyt CD
   c) w telewizji
   d) z radia
   e) z telefonu

8. Ile mniej więcej czasu poświęcasz na słuchanie muzyki w ciągu dnia?
   a) mniej niż 1 godz.
   b) 0-1 godz.
   c) 1-2 godz.
   d) 2-3 godz.
   e) więcej niż 3 godz.

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix B

Ankieta ewaluacyjna dla ucznia

1. Podobała Ci się dzisiejsza lekcja z użyciem piosenek?
   a) tak
   b) trudno powiedzieć
   c) nie

2. Czy piosenki pozwoliły Ci się zrelaksować?
   a) tak
   b) trudno powiedzieć
   c) nie

3. Który element lekcji podobał Ci się najbardziej?
   a) wprowadzenie do piosenki – wypisywanie czasowników i nazw piosenek
   b) słuchanie piosenki i uzupełnianie jej słowami
   c) praca w parach – pisanie zdań

4. Co zmieniłabyś/zmieniłbyś w lekcji?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix C

Pre-test /Post-test I/Post-test II

Translate the verbs into Polish (przetłumacz czasowniki na język polski)

1. lean on-
2. touch-
3. spread-
4. soar-
5. stare-
6. swear-
7. mess around-
8. lay-
9. comb-
Appendix D

"I Believe I Can Fly" by R. Kelly

I used to 1)………….. that I could not go on
And life was nothing but an awful song
But now I 2)…………… the meaning of true love
I'm 3)………………. the everlasting arms

If I can 4)…………... it, then I can do it
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

[Chorus:]
I believe I can fly
I believe I can 5)…………... the sky
I think about it every night and day
6)…………………… my wings and fly away
I believe I can 7)…………...
I see me running through that open door
I believe I can fly
I believe I can fly
I believe I can fly

See I was on the verge of breaking down
Sometimes silence can seem so loud
There are miracles in life I must 8)……………..
But first I know it 9)…………...... inside of me, oh

If I can see it, then I can be it
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

[Chorus]
Hey, cause I believe in me, oh

If I can see it, then I can do it (I can do it)
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

[Chorus]
Hey, if I just spread my wings
I can fly
I can fly
I can fly, hey
If I just spread my wings

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Appendix E

"I Believe I Can Fly" by R. Kelly

I used to think that I could not go on
And life was nothing but an awful song
But now I know the meaning of true love
I'm leaning on the everlasting arms

If I can see it, then I can do it
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

[Chorus:]

I believe I can fly
I believe I can touch the sky
I think about it every night and day
Spread my wings and fly away
I believe I can soar
I see me running through that open door
I believe I can fly
I believe I can fly
I believe I can fly

See I was on the verge of breaking down
Sometimes silence can seem so loud
There are miracles in life I must achieve
But first I know it starts inside of me, oh

If I can see it, then I can be it
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

[Chorus]

Hey, cause I believe in me, oh

If I can see it, then I can do it (I can do it)
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

Taken from: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rkelly/ibelieveicanfly.html and adapted by the teacher
[Chorus]

Hey, if I just spread my wings
I can fly
I can fly
If I just spread my wings
I can fly-eye-eye-eye
Hum, fly-eye-eye-eye

Taken from: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rkelly/ibelieveicanfly.html

Appendix F

Fill in the gaps. Use the given verbs. Some verbs need “ing” ending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lay</th>
<th>wake up</th>
<th>mess around</th>
<th>lounge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wait</td>
<td>stare</td>
<td>comb</td>
<td>swear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pick up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Lazy Song” by Bruno Mars

Today I don't feel like doing anything
I just wanna 1)…………….. in my bed
Don't feel like 2)……………….. my phone
So leave a message at the tone
’Cause today I 3)……………… I'm not doing anything.
Uh!
I'm gonna kick my feet up
Then 4)………………… at the fan
Turn the TV on, throw my hand in my pants
Nobody's gonna tell me I can't

I'll be 5)………………… on the couch,
Just chillin' in my snuggie
Click to MTV, so they can teach me how to dougie
’Cause in my castle I'm the freaking man

Oh, yes I said it
I said it
I said it 'cause I can
Nothing at all!
Ooh, hoo, ooh, hoo, ooh, ooh-ooh
Nothing at all
Ooh, hoo, ooh, hoo, ooh, ooh-ooh

Tomorrow I'll 6)......................, do some P90X
Meet a really nice girl, have some really nice day
And she's gonna scream out: 'This is Great' (Oh my God, this is great!)
Yeah

I might 7).........................., and get my college degree
I bet my old man will be so proud of me
But sorry pops, you'll just have to 8).................
Haha

Oh, yes I said it
I said it
I said it 'cause I can

No, I ain't gonna 9)............... my hair
'Cause I ain't going anywhere
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no
I'll just strut in my birthday suit
And let everything hang loose
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

Nothing at all
Ooh, hoo, ooh, hoo, ooh-ooh
Nothing at all
Ooh, hoo, ooh, hoo, ooh-ooh
Nothing at all

Taken from: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/brunomars/thelazysong.html and adapted by the teacher
Appendix G

Match verbs with appropriate pictures.

1) think a b
2) touch
3) start c d
4) lounge
5) wake up
6) wait e
7) comb
8) stare f
Appendix H

Complete the crossword.

**VERBS**

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker](https://www.theredcircle.com/crossword/)

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Across
2. to pull a comb through your hair in order to make it neat
4. to rise quickly and smoothly up into the air
5. to begin doing or using something
6. to use rude or offensive language, usually because you are angry
7. to put your hand or another part of your body onto somebody/something

Down
1. to hope or watch for something to happen, especially for a long time
3. to behave in a silly and annoying way, especially instead of doing something useful
4. to look at somebody/something for a long time

All definitions taken from: http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/