The one less traveled by: Second language learning and teaching through songs and poems

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Abstract

Given the popularity of music worldwide, this article makes the case for its use in the language classrooms. A solid theoretical basis is provided, covering the necessary conditions for second language learning and the impact of songs and music on second language learning. In addition, the arguments promoted stem from practical experience using songs in language courses and workshops, as well as teacher training workshops. The article presents and elaborates on the essential components of a poem- and song-based language learning program implemented in language learning courses. Pedagogical implications and applications of using songs and poems for second language learning are offered. The article provides a sample unit based on a song as a model to be implemented by language teachers. It positions songs as a solid teaching tool upon which an entire course can be based, rather than merely a "fun" thing to do in class.

Keywords: language learning through songs; language learning through poems; L2 learning; L2 teaching

1. Introduction

Worldwide, music is part of life. In diverse cultures, the ubiquitous presence of music is evidenced in multiple domains of life, such as the media, public spaces, liturgic or cultural ceremonies, to name but a few. The mere existence of a plethora of music radio stations in a variety of geographical areas can be indicative of the importance of sounds and songs for people. The once massive presence of record stores around the globe, and the subsequent advent of digital music listening with numerous channels also testify for the centrality of music in people's lives. Some music videos accessed through the internet can reach billions of views (one recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* has 171 million views on YouTube; Beyonce's official *If I Were a Boy* video has 378 million views; Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole's rendition of *What a Wonderful World* has over half a billion; Justin Biber's *Sorry* has 2.9 billion views). In sum, it is commonsense knowledge that music naturally appeals to individuals from all ages and from all walks of life; as such, it has immense educational potential. Monitored song listening can be beneficial for first and second[1] language learning. It serves as a pleasant means of providing language input, it can expose listeners to the target culture, and it can augment interest and motivation in the target language. Yet, anecdotal evidence indicates that many teachers believe that songs are a useful teaching tool but do not use them.

Notwithstanding the usual exposure to songs and song lyrics, listeners often enjoy the music without paying attention to the lyrics. Vocabulary, sentence structure, text structure, register, and the general message of the lyrics are some of the language issues that may go unnoticed by the listener. In fact, the educational potential and learning materials that stem from songs and poems are sorely overlooked not only by learners but also by teachers. Therefore, the purpose of the present paper is to examine the ways in which songs and poems can be used to promote the acquisition of language in general and of additional languages in particular. Basing our discussion on an interpretation of the connection between theory and practice, we aim at providing readers with research-based insights on the applicability of existing textual and musical resources into second language teaching and learning.

2. The impact of music and song on language learning

Much research has been carried out on the effects of music in language learning. In a review of classroom studies among young learners, Davis (2017) shows that

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[1] For the sake of simplicity, we refer to foreign, second, third and additional languages by its more widespread terminology, "second languages."

the use of songs in the language classroom contributes to language acquisition. Several researchers have shown the impact of using songs on foreign language skills, namely, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2016; Medina, 2002; Murphey, 2013). Murphey (2013) adds that songs have an emotional and relaxing effect, and that learning through songs makes it memorable and motivating. Regarding cognitive processes involved in learning language through songs, Abbott (2002) asserts that songs possibly "enhance and stimulate memory because dual coding leads to deeper processing and better retention" (p. 10). Below we discuss the contribution of listening to songs to the development of different areas of the target language.

2.1. Listening comprehension

Songs have the clear value of enhancing listening comprehension skills in a second language. Vandergrift and Baker (2015) refer to the extra challenge that learners have with listening comprehension (as opposed to reading comprehension). Listening is done online and the listener has to process the input immediately without the possibility of controlling the speed or going back to fill gaps of missed information. Input is presented with the phonological constraints of spoken language so L2 listeners commonly fail to discern between words that are pronounced as a stream. Listening to songs can aid in the development of a sensibility to connected speech.

2.2. Reading comprehension

Songs also can mediate between listening comprehension and reading comprehension by facilitating decoding and illustrating grapheme-phoneme relationships. When learners listen to songs and concomitantly accompany printed lyrics, there exists a mediation between the two modalities (Vanderplank, 2016). This is favorable to the simultaneous acquisition of both reading and listening skills, both sharpening the knowledge of grapheme-phoneme relationships and promoting listening comprehension. Vanderplank's (2016) review article points to general benefits of same-language subtitling (SLS) to several domains of language development, from vocabulary to literacy.

Listening to songs while following the lyrics is a type of SLS that can promote various aspects of language learning. In a study involving over seven thousand residents from four Indian villages, Kothari and Bandyopadhyay (2014) found an increase in reading and writing abilities of those who watched subtitled Bollywood

songs. The research team convinced the broadcasters of a TV program to broadcast Bollywood songs to add same-language subtitles for one entire year. Viewers provided a self-report of the frequency of watching and also took baseline and endline reading and writing tests. The results indicated that the SLS group (those who watched the songs with subtitles) significantly improved in several indicators of literacy skills in comparison with those who reported on lower viewing frequency.

2.3. Vocabulary

The most obvious contribution of songs to vocabulary learning is the exposure to foreign-language input. The immediate availability of songs and their lyrics in many foreign languages makes it an invaluable resource to learners. Pavia et al. (2019) investigated incidental vocabulary learning through listening to songs in a foreign language. Their results point to increased vocabulary knowledge. They also found that repeated listening and frequency of exposure positively affected vocabulary gains. Similarly, Papantoni, and Anastasiadou (2023) documented lexical gains by students who attended song- and poem-based lessons. In their study, 14 out of 46 students scored 75-100% in the pre-test. This number more than doubled in the post-test, when 35 students scored above 75%.

3. Extra-linguistic factors

Extra-linguistic factors also play an important role in the learning process. The enjoyment that is usually gained from involvement with music might have a positive impact on learners' attitudes toward the language learning experience. Songs and poems may also increase motivation to learn and may enhance engagement with the learning materials. Additionally, the use of songs and poems has been shown to be conducive to independent learning (Sockett & Toffoli, 2012).

3.1. Attitudes

With reference to extralinguistic factors involved in the use of songs in the language classroom, Abbott (2002) stresses that activities with songs can be so pleasurable that they contribute to intense student interest in the target language and in class materials. Engh (2013) has also shown that the use of songs for language learning had a positive effect on students' attitudes. Indeed, unpublished data collected by the authors point to dramatic changes in the attitudes

of learners towards the target language after the implementation of a language-through-songs approach in several contexts.

3.2. Motivation

This positive attitude towards the target language that comes with the use of songs has a strong relationship with motivation and achievement. In their review article, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) summarized findings of tens of studies, concluding that suggest learners who have positive attitudes toward a language will have higher motivation to invest effort in language learning. Past research was mainly concerned with social and pragmatic aspects of language learning motivation, yet later studies added external factors to the motivation scene. Specifically, it is recognized that multiple environmental and contextual factors can contribute to learner motivation. These include grades, the nature of classroom tasks, class atmosphere, team spirit, subject matter, and learning materials. Considering extrinsic motivation, then, *task motivation* is a significant factor to be considered when teaching. This kind of motivation occurs when the task itself is so engaging that the learner is driven to its completion. Carefully-crafted classroom activities can become crucial in motivating learners to dedicate time and effort to the learning endeavor (Dörnyei, 2003). Stavrou (2022) concluded that English as a foreign class activities that included popular songs clearly enhanced student motivation, interest, and engagement among Cypriot university students. This is in accordance with Dörnyei's (e.g., 2003) extensive work on second language learning motivation that points to task motivation as a good predictor of student engagement and achievement. Learners might be motivated to complete a task simply because it is interesting and enjoyable.

3.3. Student engagement

An in-depth study by Palacios and Chapetón (2014) in a high school in Colombia concluded that students whose EFL teachers used songs in class felt highly motivated, engaged, and committed to the learning effort. They also felt they were more willing to participate in class and interact with classmates in song-based activities, a finding reported by Davis (2017) as well. In this regard, Oxford (2016) stresses that "learners become engaged in that which they consider meaningful and try to avoid that which they feel is not meaningful" (p. 25). It is crucial then that teachers maximize diversity and interest when preparing learning tasks for their students.

3.4. Student autonomy and agency

Additionally, the use of songs enhances student autonomy. In their discussion of learner autonomy in informal learning, researchers point to songs as an accessible and pleasurable means of learning that is independently sought for by learners (Lamb, 2004; Sockett & Toffoli, 2012). In this respect, Kao and Oxford (2014) describe the case of a learner highly motivated to learn English because of his connection with hip-hop songs. His learner autonomy was reflected in the strategies he developed to learn the vocabulary and other elements in the songs. Learner autonomy was also documented by Stravou (2022).

In the context of the research detailed above, songs and poems have unique features that make them effective language learning and teaching tools. Both songs and poems are condensed texts with a high incidence of literary and linguistic elements that contribute to L2 development. They also have immense potential in what regards learner attitude and motivation.

4. Pedagogical contributions

Besides the language focus inherent to any text, a number of pedagogical contributions are unique to songs and poems. Songs and poems expose learners to the target language in a way that assists their development of syntax, grammar, vocabulary, morphology, reading comprehension, and writing skills. Carefully chosen songs and poems provide intensive exposure to these aspects of the target language separately or holistically. Songs and poems comprise a short text which is discussed in depth, leading learners to be deeply involved with, and attentive to, specific language and content. Such condensed texts cover numerous language topics for learner or teacher reference. Specific pedagogical contributions of songs and poems are detailed below:

4.1. How songs can support language learning

The following language skills are facilitated through the use of songs:
- *Listening comprehension.* Repeated listening to songs can contribute to increased understanding of connected speech. Learners can intersperse listening to the song with and without lyrics and learn to discern word segmentation and thus connect the listening to vocabulary. The learner has control over the input and can go back to fill gaps of aural information. When learners hear *backdoor key*, they might find it hard to segment the three morphemes (*back + door + key*) to the correct formation of the two words.

- *Pronunciation.* When encouraged to sing along with the song (individually or in class), L2 learners can practice their pronunciation and diction in the target language. They must be carefully guided and should receive specific instruction regarding the best way to improve pronunciation and diction. Attentive listening and rigorous comparison between one's rendition and the singer's pronunciation are pivotal in the process.
- *Reading fluency* can be expedited by the simultaneous reading and listening to the song. Decoding is supported by the listening that accompanies the reading. Chunking can be illustrated (*Wednesday morning at five o'clock/as the day begins*) and readily available for individual practice by the learner.
- *Spelling.* Listening to the song while reading to the lyrics illustrates and reinforces knowledge of specific grapheme-phoneme correspondences and orthographic rules. It facilitates the identification of spelling patterns that appear naturally in the language present in the songs (*le͟aving-li͟ving; ho͟me-alo͟ne).*

4.1.1. Example from song 1: *Baby, I've been low* by Bruce Springsteen

Below is only one stanza from the song which illustrates that, in just a few words, language can be examined from different angles:

> *Baby, I've been low,*
> *But never this low,*
> *I've had my faith shaken,*
> *But never hopeless*

Teachers and learners can focus on verb tenses (*I've been*), the past participle (*shaken*), morphology (*hopeless*), vocabulary (*faith*), a specific syntactic structure (*I've had my faith shaken*), and cohesive devices (*I've had my faith shaken but never hopeless*). This stanza can also be used as pre-reading activity for a longer text, or as a prompt for a writing assignment. Singing (rather than listening or reciting a poem) can increase writing fluency among second language learners (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2016).

4.1.2. Example from song 2: *If I were a boy* by Beyonce

This is another example of a song that is often very popular among junior-high and high-school students. It can be very effective not only for teaching and consolidating knowledge of the third conditional in a hypothetical situation (*If I*

were . . . I would . . .), but also to encourage spoken and written discussion of gender issues if contextually and culturally appropriate.

4.1.3. Example from song 3: *She's leaving home* by The Beatles

In the song *She's leaving home,* a plethora of linguistic elements fundamental to many EFL curricula are included in only one stanza. They are presented in a natural context and a range of teaching activities can be created to provide for language-focused learning, an essential part of a well-balanced course (Nation, 2007), such as connectors (*as*), adjectives (*free*), noun modifiers (*bedroom*, *backdoor*), adjective clauses (*that she hoped would say*), and adverbs (*silently*, *quietly*):

> *Wednesday morning at five o'clock as the day begins*
> *Silently closing their bedroom door*
> *Leaving the note that she hoped would say more*
> *She goes downstairs to the kitchen clutching her handkerchief*
> *Quietly turning the backdoor key*
> *Stepping outside she is free*

In sum, in addition to the benefits of a language learning program based on songs and poems as described above, there are specific linguistic components present in songs (but not in poems) that make them a unique L2 teaching and learning tool. Attitude and motivation are salient by-products of the use of songs in the classroom. The use of songs makes language materials relevant, increases motivation, and produces positive attitudes to language learning.

4.2. How poems can support language learning

Poems are similarly rich in linguistic structures and have enormous potential for L2 teachers. Taking content-based instruction into consideration, teachers can effectively use poems and songs as springboards to discuss meaning and language.

4.2.1. Example from poem 1: *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

This poem provides a meaningful opportunity for discussing dilemmas and personal choices and carries with it with tremendous potential for language development. It also focuses on several language components essential for L2 development, including verb tenses (regular and irregular past: *diverged, bent, stood*),

morphology and intra-word awareness (*undergrowth*), and polysemous vocabulary (*wood*):

> *Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,*
> *And sorry I could not travel both*
> *And be one traveler, long I stood*
> *And looked down one as far as I could*
> *To where it bent in the undergrowth*

Later in the poem, Frost looks back into his choice, creating favorable circumstances for the L2 learner to discuss the subject of choices. Besides this potential for the development of oral and writing skills in L2, grammatical issues abound in the poem and can be attended to at the discretion of the teacher. These include verb tenses (*shall be telling*), syntactic structures and referents (*the one less traveled by*), as well as vocabulary (*hence, diverged*) and an idiomatic expression (*And that has made all the difference*):

> *I shall be telling this with a sigh*
> *Somewhere ages and ages hence:*
> *Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—*
> *I took the one less traveled by,*
> *And that has made all the difference.*

It is clear that when teaching an additional language by means of poems, music is usually absent and its attendant benefits may be lost. Nevertheless, specific characteristics of poems bring about additional value language learning. Inevitably, the need for interpretation of the poem and the significant cognitive effort put into understanding the text as a whole may promote the learning of specific linguistic elements of the target language present in the poem. Indeed, vocabulary research points to the benefits of deep processing (indicated by cognitive effort and engagement) to the retention of new vocabulary. Hadaway et al. (2001) found that poems may contribute significantly to second language teaching, as reading poems aloud may promote second language fluency. They go on to claim that the repetition, rhythm, and rhyming assist the reader in making sense of the meaning of the text. Also, poetry may be a good way of introducing a topic in a pre-reading exercise.

4.2.2. Example from poem 2: *The Rose that Grew From Concrete* by Tupac Shakur

To illustrate the theme discussed above, we present below a poem by an accomplished young rapper who grew up in the Harlem and was killed in a drive-by shooting.

The Rose that Grew From Concrete
Autobiographical

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete
Proving nature's laws wrong it learned 2 walk without having feet
Funny it seems but by keeping its dreams
It learned to breathe fresh air
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
When no one else even cared!

As stated by Tupac Shakur himself in the manuscript above, in this auto-biographical poem there are several words and phrases which may symbolize diverse aspects in the poet's life:

- *Rose* is a metaphor for something pure and valuable. It may symbolize Shakur himself, who was able to grow and succeed despite his difficult circumstances.
- *Concrete* is grey, hard, and could have the connotation of harshness. Is it a metaphor for the ghetto, the disadvantaged neighborhoods Shakur grew up in?
- *Nature's law* seems to represent the tracking and lack of social mobility which many social and ethnic groups face. In this poem, the overall expectation that people from the ghetto will stay in the ghetto is reflected.
- *Feet* are a possible metaphor for the physical and mental strength gained from the roots which connect Shakur to the ghetto.
- *Dreams* and their fulfillment are possibly what helped him get out of his deprived conditions, symbolized by the metonymy *fresh air*.

In order to arrive at a plausible interpretation and gain meaning from the text, the reader must increase his knowledge regarding the poet and his life. However, even if a nonspecific interpretation is being made, the basic universal symbols of the poem can allow individual readers to relate to the poem's ideas. Clearly, the poem is also a fertile text for language-focused learning and teaching, including lexical chunks (*Long live . . .*, *Funny it seems*, *Did you hear about*, *prove X wrong*), relative clauses (*the rose that grew from a crack*), orthography (*seems*, *dreams*, *breathe*), to name but a few.

5. A sample unit blueprint based on a song

A poem/song based language learning program relies on solid theoretical underpinnings. It must include written and aural input, written and oral output, language-focused learning, oral fluency development, language awareness, cultural awareness, and cultural fluency. The integration of cognitive effort needed to understand a song or a poem, combined with elements inherent to music (e.g.,

motivation, interest, relevance, involvement), increases learner engagement with the text. Consequently, the learning potential of the text is enhanced.

The following model of a poem/song-based unit for teaching language is based on the theory discussed above and on workshops and courses held by the authors at various colleges in Israel in the years 2012-2020. The target languages in said courses and workshops were English (for native speakers of Hebrew, Arabic, Russian and other languages) and Hebrew (for native speakers of Arabic).

We define a teaching unit as a series of lessons around a language- or meaning-focused theme. Each lesson in a unit is a step toward the fulfillment of a teaching goal. For example, if the goal is to teach and reinforce the third conditional in English, teachers might choose the song *If I Were a Rich Man* (a language-focused theme). If the goal is to discuss, say, slavery, Bob Marley's *Redemption Song* (a meaning-focused theme) might be chosen. Clearly, if the teacher chooses to cover additional issues, each song provides the basis for myriad activities and topics. The teacher can also limit the focus of the lesson to the specific item chosen for that unit.

To exemplify a song-based unit, we have chosen a song in English written by the Brazilian composer Caetano Veloso. It is noteworthy that following Avirbach (2021), the song below could also be considered a musicalized poem given the different layers of meaning arise from the text:

London, London, by Caetano Veloso

I'm wandering round and round nowhere to go
I'm lonely in London, London is lovely so
I cross the streets without fear
Everybody keeps the way clear
I know, I know no one here to say hello
I know they keep the way clear
I am lonely in London without fear
I'm wandering round and round here nowhere to go
While my eyes
Go looking for flying saucers in the sky
Oh Sunday, Monday, Autumn pass by me
And people hurry on so peacefully
A group approaches a policeman
He seems so pleased to please them
It's good at least to live and I agree
He seems so pleased at least
And it's so good to live in peace and
Sunday, Monday, years and I agree
While my eyes
Go looking for flying saucers in the sky
I choose no face to look at

Choose no way
I just happen to be here
And it's ok
Green grass, blue eyes, gray sky, God bless
Silent pain and happiness
I came around to say yes, and I say
But my eyes
Go looking for flying saucers in the sky

5.1. Pre-listening stage: Facilitating understanding and building an expectation

As with any pre-reading activity in a reading-based course or lesson, some preparation is necessary before listening to a song. It is intended to spark curiosity and activate or build a learner's schemata, or prior knowledge, before presenting the song – a known stepping-stone towards effective reading comprehension (Hudson, 2007). The teacher brainstorms on a certain topic or teaches/reviews a language-related subject such as vocabulary or grammar. Background about the singer, the poem, the context in which it was written, and the topic are just a few of the directions that a pre-listening activity could take. Below are a few examples of pre-listening activities before delving into the close reading of *London, London.* Clearly, these may need to be adapted according to level:

1. Ask students to write a sentence saying what they think the song is about based on the title.
2. Play the first stanza of the song and elicit student's ideas on the theme of the song.
3. Play a section of the song without stopping and have students transcribe as much as they can.
4. Disclose song theme and discuss *inter alia* dictatorship in general and the Brazilian dictatorial government of the 60s and 70s, exile, loneliness, human rights, and police behavior.

5.2. While-listening stage: Facilitating listening comprehension through active listening

The while-listening stage keeps students focused while listening to the song. It is paramount that students have "something to do" while listening. It increases attention to the text, promotes and maintains active participation, directs learning to specific targets, and enhances learners' individual responsibility for their own learning. While-listening activities do not necessarily have to cover the entire

song; they could be based on a line, a stanza, or whatever part of the song seems appropriate for the intended teaching. While-listening activities directed at the improvement of reading skills should be "marketed" as such for students to encourage individual work later, to encourage engagement, and to encourage requests for clarification by the class. As with any activity, it is crucial that the teacher be attentive to the level of engagement during a pre-listening activity, closely monitoring student attention. The while-listening stage should be interrupted before students lose interest. Activities suitable for this stage include, but are not limited to:

1. *Filling in blanks in the lyrics*. Teachers prepare a printed page of the lyrics with words missing. The number and type of words expunged from the students' copy will depend on the level of the class and the learning goals. The first time teachers play the songs for students to fill in the blanks they should not stop even if students are not be able to fill in all the blanks. It keeps them on the edge. Play a second time stopping at each line, and perhaps once more. The number of times should be established *in loco* by the teacher, who should gauge student enjoyment with the experience to avoid frustration or boredom. For example, in the song *London, London,* a stanza with a large number of adjectives could be played and advise students that all adjectives have been expunged from the lyrics. When learning about adverbial endings in English, the teacher could delete all adverbs of the song *She's leaving home* by the Beatles and tell students to be on the lookout for adverbs.

2. *Highlighting specific categories of words or concepts*. Teachers could have students highlight word categories such as parts of speech, abstract/concrete words, phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, etc. These could or could not be related to the focus of the lesson contents; the goal of this while-listening activity is to maintain a high level of attentive listening. In the song *London London*, the while-listening activity could ask for students to highlight all adjectives, nouns, words with the long /i:/ phoneme (to elicit different spellings). They could highlight words that indicate a positive of a more melancholic mood. They could circle lines that refer to the experience in exile and underline lines that refer to homesickness.

3. *Creating and filling out a Bingo card with words from the song*. In the Bingo activity, learners choose words from the lyrics and copy them into a bingo-like card (see Appendix A). When the song is played, learners cross out words they hear. Teachers should encourage learners to include words they do not know in their Bingo cards.

5.3. Post-listening stage: integrating and applying acquired knowledge

Learning through songs and poems does not end after the lesson is over. Constant reference to the text is beneficial for the reinforcement of subjects learned either in class or individually outside of the classroom. Naturally, teachers can continue teaching according to the conventional curriculum while keeping a link to the song or the poem learned in class. See examples below.

1. *Discussion*. With *London, London*, teachers may include a small-group discussion of the verses below, with the purpose of offering an interpretation of this section of the song:

    I'm wandering round and round here nowhere to go
    While my eyes
    Go looking for flying saucers in the sky

2. *Output*. A more advanced task can be to ask learners to produce output by writing their understanding of the songwriter's perception of his current situation in relation to his life under the dictatorial regime and to substantiate their argumentation with sections from the text. It is noteworthy that in order to provide an explanation of the poem, learners must invest cognitive effort, since the connection with the singer's life circumstances is not explicitly stated in the poem. A cogent interpretation of the text necessitates an exploration of the general political reality in Brazil in the 1970s, and the persecution of artists during the dictatorship in particular.

3. *Making connections*. Learners could be prodded for contributing their own song choices on related themes. The mere action of searching for songs, or reading the lyrics of a song to ascertain it is connected to the song covered in class is already beneficial to language learning,

4. *Translations*. Translations can summon metacognitive sources that may advance language learning. They may as well as a deep and conscious involvement with vocabulary and with the target language in general. Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez (2021) point to the many benefits of translation as a learning tool. In their view, different types of translations (see Appendix B) can bear many benefits to students including an enhancement of contrastive awareness of both the source and target language; it can help sharpen learners' understanding of grammar, and promote learning autonomy. Some learners become so engaged with certain songs or with music in general that they may want to visit lyrics translation sites on the internet to examine the translations. Teachers

could require teams of students to translate lyrics into different languages and add them to the sites (for example, lyricstranslation.com).

6. Pedagogical implications

In this section, we provide some practical advice for the implementation of a poem/song-based language learning program. Specific suggestions are presented below:

- *The referendum approach.* When teachers ask students for suggestions of songs and singers they like, there are increased chances of catering for the taste of the class. Teaching songs chosen by the class habitually brings about a sense of involvement and motivation to learn. Choosing the song usually follows a three-step process: collect suggestions, scrutinize songs for appropriateness (language, diction, pace and rhythm, values), and take a vote.
- *Have the cake and eat it too.* It is legitimate to use only a fraction of a text for teaching purposes. It is not mandatory to cover the entire piece. In fact, using only one stanza/verse might arouse learners' curiosity to continue reading the poem or listening to the song after class, thus promoting autonomous learning.
- *Choose your words and know your audience.* Sometimes students are curious about a structure that might be too complex for the level of the class. It is acceptable for teachers to decline to delve into a specific grammatical structure if the class is not ready for it yet. Also, teachers must be meticulous about choosing materials and read them until the end: a marvelous song may turn out to be inappropriate in terms of level and content.
- *Obey the speed limit.* Some songs seem to be a perfect addition to the materials being covered in class. Yet they might be sung too fast or with poor diction, making them unsuitable for most students. These should be avoided for class use despite their learning potential but can be recommended as individual work outside of the classroom for those particularly interested. The teacher may also want to take advantage of lower-speed playing available in many apps or even on YouTube.
- *Line 12, fifth word.* Numbering the lines is as basic as it is essential. It is helpful for students in the while-listening stage, as teachers may regularly announce the place in the text in case someone got lost. It also makes the post-listening discussion more efficient.

7. Conclusion

The language teaching approach described in this paper is based on the premise that songs and poems can be effective tools for second language learning. We emphasized that songs and poems have a variety of attributes that make them appropriate for the development of various language skills. This can be a solid contribution to foreign language learning courses. Awareness of the distinct nature of each of these subgenres of literary tasks may facilitate a language teacher's effort when choosing a text for language learning. The blueprint for a sample unit described above can provide a fertile ground for the generation of ideas regarding the use of poems and music in any language-learning program.

Empirical research is necessary to provide further evidence for the objective outcomes of the use of each literary text described above. Also, a data bank needs to be developed to include a categorization of potential texts according to the songs/poems. This said, songs and poems make the learning more experiential and depart from traditional reading comprehension texts customarily used in traditional language learning contexts. Music makes them motivating for many learners. Hence, songs and poems seem an ideal tool for teachers who wish to teach out of the (boom)box.

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APPENDIX A

Bingo card

(a) An empty 'Bingo' card for example:

B	I	N	G	O

(b) A filled 'Bingo' card with words from the poem: 'London, London'

B	I	N	G	O
wandering	peacefully	seems	clear	autumn
peace	lonely	saucer	least	flying
group	hurry	fear	round	policeman
cross	good	pleased	approaches	without

APPENDIX B

Types of translations (from Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez, 2021)

All of the following can be effectively adapted to poems and songs

- Back-translation: students are given two translations of the same text and have to reconstruct, in pairs, the source text to identify issues to do with linguistic choices and stylistic nuance. They are then given the source text, and a discussion on translation strategies and techniques follows.
- Translating plays: focus on oral and pragmatic features, as well as the challenges of translating for the stage. Students translate a scene and film themselves acting it out.
- Translating comics and graphic novels: constraints of text and image, cultural references, phonic features (onomatopoeias, interjections). Working with poetry can also be productive in analyzing phonic aspects (rhyme, alliteration).
- Group projects: collaborative translation using shared documents (discussing choices and negotiating a final version), translating for nongovernmental organizations, etc. • Individual portfolios: compiling own translations and reflecting on progress; using and assessing new technologies (linguistic corpora, glossaries, automatic translators, etc.).