



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI GUGLIELMO MARCONI

FACOLTÀ DI LETTERE

CORSO DI LAUREA IN LINGUE E CULTURE MODERNE

TESI DI LAUREA IN  
GRAMMATICA INGLESE

IL RUOLO DELLA MUSICA NELL'INSEGNARE E APPRENDERE  
L'INGLESE

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## Introduction

### 1. The intercultural dimension of language teaching

1.1. Overview: Linguistic communicative competence and intercultural understanding

1.2. Developing intercultural communicative competence

1.3. Intercultural English teaching and learning

### 2. The role of music in English language learning

2.1. Students' motivation in language learning

2.2. Using popular culture to develop intercultural communicative competence

3. Planning a lesson employing music in order to foster communicative competence and intercultural understanding

3.1. The rationale for the lesson

3.2. Lesson plan

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to argue and understand how music can be a great ally of both teachers and students, while learning and teaching 'English as a second language' (ESL).

Discussion will start highlighting the importance of the intercultural dimension once approaching the study of a new foreign language. Living in an ever more globalized world leads to an intercultural dimension and to an intercultural learning approach. Learners should be aware that they are not only learning a new language but should also acknowledge that they are entering into a new culture and need to know and understand that they have to learn not only a new idiom with its own grammar rules, peculiarities and pronunciations, on the contrary their commitment is bound to a bigger view which involves the knowledge and appreciation of the new culture, putting himself/herself (the learner) in discussion, approaching the new culture avoiding, as much as he/she can, stereotypizations. It goes without saying that learning a new language can be a very stressful process for learners. Language learners who are learning and improving the knowledge of a foreign language are well aware that they are 'non-native speakers', and that they are learning under this 'dimension', moreover should be aware that they are representing a unique identity and they should be ready and able to interact with another unique social identity. Moreover, even if the concept of 'culture' has changed becoming more extended, the idea of seeing a native-speaker as a model to imitate did not change at all. A non-native speaker is still often intimidated by a native-

speaker, admiring his/her natural language and pronunciation and trying to achieve a higher linguistic level which is, most of the times, unnaturally unachievable. This is the reason why very often native speakers are perceived and seen as experts and models to be followed.

Language teaching and learning in an 'intercultural dimension' can be considered as teaching and learning how to write and/or to say something in a foreign language in an appropriate way, but most of all it relates to the development of 'intercultural competence' helping learners to share and understand the different 'social identities' they are facing. Teachers who are eager to teach using an 'International Competence' approach should make their students aware of their own culture and habits before facing a foreign culture. Language acts like an instrument of culture, and above all, they are both in a perpetual state of change. With this in mind we could easily imagine how many learning tools both learners and teachers nowadays have at their disposal nowadays. However, even with all these technological tools at hand, motivation is a crucial attitude for both students and teachers. Students need to be motivated to get the best result. Teachers should find a way to bond teaching and learning with motivation, getting students involved, interested and even amused, making the classroom an enjoyable one. Teachers should be capable of arranging a very stimulating environment for his/her students. Getting a learner focused for an entire lesson represents one of the main challenges in any learning environment. Getting an amusing environment, using games, music, videos, songs,

movies and all the instruments that this globalized and technological world gives is very important and helpful. In this regard, using authentic material as a 'real time language' not only helps motivating students, keeping them focused with a purpose to achieve. Nowadays students, English students in this case, do not study English only because they have to, or because their parents want them to learn it. They study English because they want to be 'citizens of the world', being able to communicate with people all over the world.

With this in mind using music in a classroom (either a young learner classroom or an adult one) will make evidently the environment enjoyable but above all it will help enriching the vocabulary as well as the pronunciation, giving the possibility to students to get closer to the culture they are learning to know. Learning with music is not only an amusing way to learn. It is surely a way to learn new words with the correct pronunciation, grammar rules, getting in touch with a different culture. All this in an enjoyable environment. Surely 'Popular culture' can help making the classroom enjoyable, harmonious, intriguing students. 'Popular Culture' is to be considered here with its widest meaning including music, movies, newspaper and all it is considered 'popular' which surrounds students in their daily life. Using 'Popular culture' should be considered not only as an amusing and leisure activity but as a total expression of teaching and learning.

In conclusion, a teacher, a motivated teacher who is willing to teach in an 'intercultural dimension' using 'Popular culture' and music as allies' tools which help getting students

focused and motivated, feeding their mind not only with grammar rules but with the highest expression of a language, its culture, need to be aware that having all these tools at disposals means, more than ever, that a very detailed lesson plan is needed, and that the lesson should start from the lesson plan. This means involving students from the very beginning, planning a survey, asking them about their favourite singers or songs, choosing together which song to listen or which movie to watch together. This will not only make the classroom an enjoyable and relaxed environment, moreover will bond together teachers and students, working together as a team.

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