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Desarrollo de la Competencia Oral a través de la Implementación de Canciones sobre Relaciones Románticas en el Aula

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Trabajo de Fin de Máster

**DESARROLLO DE LA COMPETENCIA ORAL A TRAVÉS DE LA
IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE CANCIONES SOBRE RELACIONES
ROMÁNTICAS EN EL AULA**

**DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL COMPETENCE THROUGH THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF SONGS
ABOUT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CLASSROOM**

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ABSTRACT

The present document offers a Language Teaching project focused on the development of oral production competence, through the teaching of suprasegmental features mainly. In order to give students enough chances to practise those, music will be implemented in the classroom, since it is common and relatable to them. Despite possible limitations, like time, this project is aimed at a final goal, making a cover of a song. This project will consist of different stages in which students will be able to increase their competence, always in a way that makes it possible for the teacher to evaluate them. Thus, learning and creativity are merged into a project that is overall focused on students' developing competence.

Key words: *teaching, Foreign Language, music, songs, romantic.*

RESUMEN

El presente documento ofrece un proyecto para la enseñanza del Inglés que, sobre todo, se centra en el desarrollo de la competencia de producción oral a través de la enseñanza de los rasgos suprasegmentales; estos se podrán practicar en diferentes oportunidades a través de la implementación de la música en el aula, que les será común y cercana a todos. A pesar de las posibles limitaciones, como el tiempo, el objetivo final de este proyecto será hacer una cover de una canción, para lo cual habrá diferentes etapas en las que los alumnos serán capaces de ir mejorando en sus competencias, siempre de forma que el profesor pueda evaluarlos. Así, el aprendizaje y la creatividad se unen en un proyecto que está principalmente centrado en el desarrollo competencial de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: *enseñanza, Lengua Extranjera, música, canciones, románticas.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Music is constantly present in our daily lives; it surrounds us from the moment of our birth until our death, both as a form of cultural expression and as a product of entertainment. Despite the value that it has as such, it is also a useful tool for language teaching. What's more, it has been qualified as a vital element not only for this area of instruction, but for a complete and integrative development of ourselves (Almeida & Zambrano, 2020). As Salcedo (2010) stated, "music represents an integral part of the human culture, and particularly language and communication" (p.19). Education is the only area in which our society does not take the greatest advantage possible from music (Murphey, 1992).

Taking said statement as a reference point for the development of this essay, the present dissertation aims to prove the importance of music concerning English as a Foreign Language Learning.

Concerning the justification of the musical input proposed in this paper, popular songs about toxic relationships or situations of abuse in a romantic relationship have been chosen as a consequence of the requirements put forward by the new LOMLOE (2020) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In both of these two documents gender equality appears as a rather important, fundamental objective to be achieved as an international community and on the basis of working this social problem since the very first stages of the educational growth of our populations. It is due to this demand that the dissertation will frame its linguistic input within this area.

This will be done so by means of revising the theory and research carried out in relation to this area of expertise, at the same time that by proposing a classroom programming. The aim of this program will be to help students belonging to 4th Grade of Secondary Education develop their oral production skills and understand its working concerning theoretical aspects.

To that end, this paper proposes an innovative project in which these oral productive skills are learnt and put into practise by means of being exposed to music in the target language. However, not only will students be exposed to music, but also they will produce it. This will be achieved by means of singing it,

composing it, reciting it, or other ways in which students can interact with music in order to learn English.

This is, undoubtedly, a rather complicated matter in the area of Language Teaching, and it has been recognised as such by different researchers that will be mentioned in the following pages. However, this proposal aims at facing some of these problems to achieve a better teaching of the oral productive skills.

As it has already been said, music will be used to achieve this learning. It will be implemented from the very first moment of the project, going from a more background position into the main focus of the activities. To go through that process, the design is structured following a story so that students can feel like there is continuity in their learning, and so that they pay more attention to learning since they will need what they approach in one activity for the following stage.

Concerning the structure of the present paper, it consists of six sections. It will first enumerate the objectives that are pursued with this innovative proposal; secondly, it will provide a theoretical framework about the topic that will be discussed forward on; thirdly, it will present the state of the art commenting on the most recent research in the area of this paper's topic; fourthly, the didactic proposal will be presented, containing an introduction and justification for the proposal and its design, the specific goals of the didactic proposal, the programming for the project, the design of the evaluation for the mentioned project, the necessary materials for the development of the project, and some considerations for any possible curricular adaptation; fifthly, there will be a discussion about the strengths and weakness of this proposal; and, finally, there will be a conclusion considering everything that has been discussed through this paper.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this document is to offer a didactic proposal that can help in teaching students' about oral suprasegmental features in English and, subsequently, helps them to improve their oral production competence.

This will be the main goal, the linguistic goal. However, there are other secondary goals:

- Introducing students to the theoretical aspect of English pronunciation, presenting them linguistic elements like intonation, time-stressed languages or pitch.
- Creating or raising motivation in students when it comes to learning English by means of relating it to music and songs that may be interesting to them.
- Helping in the creation or improvement of social relationships among students by means of making them realise possible similarities that they were not aware of.
- Instigating a creative personality within students or supporting their already present curiosity about artistic creation.
- Offering innovative knowledge, ideas and possibilities for the teaching of English pronunciation.
- Attempting at making students discover other artists that they might not be familiar with and who are out of their comfort zone or do not share their vision of the world, possibly due to cultural differences.
- Making students get more relaxed in language learning matters, so that they are able to control or leave behind any possible learning or social anxieties.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Despite the many benefits and positive features that music may have for our development, it is in the quality of a language learning resource that it has the greatest interest for this dissertation. The relation between musical abilities and its influence on language learning has been widely proved. Livingstone (1973, as cited in Salcedo, 2010) found evidence of *Homo Sapiens* being able to sing before being able to produce a sensible way of speaking. Also, Howle (1989, as cited in Salcedo, 2010) argued that music is beneficial for children since they end up establishing a musical-linguistic connection that helps them identify linguistic features and lexical items they do not know yet.

Several other scholars have linked human development through our history with the impact that music has had upon the species as a whole. For example, Trehub & Trainor (1998) stated that these musical traditions concerning children acquiring a language are descendants of customs that are centuries old and have managed to survive until our days. Incidentally, the influence of learning by means of songs has also been observed in the perdurance of oral literature due to some elements like the emotional aspects of music or its rhythm, that facilitated its learning (Rubin, 1995).

All these considerations make it impossible to doubt about the important role that music plays in human history and development, altogether with human learning.

3.1. Social Perspective

Concerning the sociological aspect of it, the importance that music has as a group activity cannot be disregarded. In addition, it may be practised without any instruction, experience or specific environmental conditions being required. It has been argued that music as an activity may bring about the creation of a safe and trust-worthy environment as a consequence of the links that it creates among the participants (Lake, 2003). This creation of a sense of belonging has been proven to facilitate the motivational aspect and the cooperative work in the classrooms so that the possibilities of learning may increase (Gao, 2008).

Consequently, this feature of music as a way of creating groups in a classroom also means that marginalisation of some other groups is possible, so it must be handled carefully. This aspect of musical input has been termed as *unification* (Fonseca & Gant, 2016: 10).

The matter of including music in language lessons leads to an important way back in the field of research. Littlewood (1981, as cited in Torras-Vila, 2021: 42) already proved that using language in a practical, useful way is rather important for learners' development, since it impacts the motivational factor and leads to the creation of functional and profitable personal relationships among the students that compose the classroom.

This has been argued as due to the fact that incorporating music in FL lessons is proven to make an important impact on three different levels, those being linguistic competence, affective factors and sociolinguistic competence (Toscano-Fuentes & Fonseca, 2012). This has been observed to be true concerning both merely instrumental music and music including vocalised sounds.

In relation to the affective factors, it could be argued that the social aspect is improved as a result of the implementation of music in the classroom due to the fact that it affects our physical state. Some of these changes are improvements in students' breathing or heartbeat. This way, a more relaxed state of mind can be achieved, allowing for a better learning and development of their competence in the Foreign Language (FL).

As far as these affective factors are concerned, it has been argued that it might be a better option to try to build commitment in students rather than motivation as a way to overcome anxiety (Torras-Vila, 2021). This idea arises from the conception that language lessons might be more personal than any other subjects and, consequently, might create a higher quantity of anxiety in learners than the rest. Through this investment, a more complex object of reasons to learn a language than mere motivation, students would arrive at said motivation, at the same time that they develop enough endurance to be able to face the anxiety that they may suffer.

Fonseca & Gant (2016: 11) has come to term this aspect of music as *arousal*. This is something that has been witnessed throughout human history, like the marching bands that accompanied armies into the battlefield as a way of

motivating soldiers. However, it is a double-edge issue since it can also lead to losing control of the classroom dynamics, so repetition of the song, volume, and other similar factors are to be taken into account when working with music.

All in all, music has the potential to help us, as teachers, to build a learning environment that is favourable for every student. However, we must be careful concerning its implementation due to its potential disadvantages, which can be present as well.

3.2. Cultural Perspective

In this sense, music has been argued by several scholars to erase the frontiers existing between the different conditions of every learner and even the teacher, bringing them together in a mix of informal learning and formal one, as a way to make place in the classroom for authentic samples of the FL input (Harwood, 1998; Huy Le, 1999; Cheung, 2001).

Furthermore, apart from providing these environments that enhance learning by community and cooperation, music has also been granted the capacity of letting learners know the speaking community of the FL at a greater level (Salcedo, 2010). Plagwitz (2006) ascertains this role of music as a guide through the target culture, as a way to help learners establish a deeper connection with the language that they are to learn.

This fact should be considered of uttermost importance since it will be determinant for the language learners to be able to acquire and develop a necessary cultural competence. In the case of this not happening, they would not be able to properly communicate with people belonging to another culture, no matter their other competences. Music could play a vital role in the achievement of this fundamental skill.

At the same time the music chosen for its playing in the classroom must be in contact with issues that are of relevance for students, no matter their culture, so that they can truly commit themselves to it. This might become a problem for finding the appropriate material, but it can also become an opportunity for teachers to create a bridge between cultures focusing on the common aspects that are shared.

By means of addressing problems or matters that are shared by the conjunct of the students, they might become able to establish interpersonal relationships based on empathy, respect and self-esteem, since music appears to be able to link knowledge and emotions (Torras-Vila, 2021).

In relation to this, it has been acknowledged that musical input in the FL offers a greatly significant quantity of possibilities in terms of the creation of a possible storification for learners to follow throughout their language learning.

Concerning the way in which students might become acquainted with the target culture in the classroom, Fonseca (2016: 16) suggested using protest songs on the basis that “are specifically designed to mobilize and motivate people, and the lyrics tend to be clear, direct and repetitive (...) the songs tend to be highly prosodic, and hence provide useful models of the language”.

In a rather similar way to the previous section, music can also serve as a way to bring together students that are originally from different cultures, and to bring other cultures closer to them. That is, once again, music can help teachers create a more profitable and interesting learning environment for the whole conjunct of students.

3.3. Cognitive Perspective

At the cognitive level, the workings of linguistic and musical procedures have been discussed and considered from different perspectives and data. Some postures consider them as parallel and collaborative; while others defend that some common areas are present.

Concerning the former, evidence has been found in favour of the abilities corresponding to these two different areas working as two separate skills, which allows them to function together and provide each other with feedback and help when it comes to learning a new language. This is what Jackendoff (2006) has come to call *parallel architecture*.

This separation of music and linguistic cognitive gears has been argued to be due to the fact that “there would be no possibility for cooperation” otherwise (Steinke et al., 1997: 316). Different experiments have been carried in order to investigate this relationship. The conclusions that have been withdrawn from these investigations argue that these mechanisms “are handled separately, yet

in harmony by a musical-linguistic collaboration” (Zatorre et al., 1996: 848) and that linguistic and musical procedures are under the control of different mechanisms for their processing (Peretz, 2002), corroborating this posture.

On the other hand, more recent information suggests that there is a mixture of the processing elements between music and language, specially in Broca's area and other zones of our brain, specifically in the right-hemisphere, that serve to the comprehension of linguistic input, “indicating that these regions process syntactic information that is less language-specific than previously believed” (Maess et al., 2001: 540). This would mean that musical and linguistic information is processed by human brains by too much the same means (Salcedo, 2010).

As a consequence, other positions working as intermediates arose. This position defends that musical and linguistic processing cross over at a certain moment, but they convey different structures. This means that they share certain analysis procedures being analysed as different kinds of entities (Slevc et al., 2008).

Despite the different positions concerning how music can be processed and its relationship with language as a whole, the common point in this perspective, as it has been posed in this section, is that there is a close relationship that facilitates language learning, from which some advantage could be taken in our classrooms.

3.4. Linguistic Perspective

Music and songs have been historically used throughout different methods of language teaching. For instance, it worked as a resource against the boredom implied in the drills used in the design of the Audiolingual Method. Some decades after that classical music was also proposed by the Suggestopedia's principles as a means to lead students to a more relaxed stance so that learning could be achieved. Related to this proposal by Suggestopedia theory, it was confirmed that this use of musical resources provokes in the student “brain stimulation and activates subconscious resources all necessary for acquisition and greater retention of vocabulary and language structures (Salcedo, 2010:

20). This method would result in United States learners reducing their required learning time by one-third of the usual numbers.

Despite this historical-linguistic baggage that music has had for a certain time, Engh (2013) states that it is the current Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and in the Task-Based Learning (TBL) that music has really been a subject of massive demand. As a consequence, different theories have been designed establishing links between the use of music specifically in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and other variables that have been more widely discussed in the field. One example of that is the relationship between this tool and the motivational factor. It has been argued that using music in the SLA classrooms may increase in a great deal the motivation of learners (Cook, 1997; Ndububa & Ajibade, 2006; King, 2010). It has been established that this improvement in motivation in relation to the use of musical input is due to the fact that it is a feature of real activities granted by students. This also has to do with the fact that it is a task carried out by native speakers of the FL (Mishan, 2005).

This view has been backed up by others studies. For instance, the one carried out by the Dana Foundation (2008, as cited in Rodríguez-Bonces, 2017), which corroborates that different factors, like memory, linguistic skills or motivation, are improved when studying an object of artistic nature.

The use of music has also been considered from the perspective of the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). This hypothesis argues that learning is easier and more profitable when being in the correct emotional state, with a low filter, since students will feel more confident and they will be, therefore, more open to the input that they are presented with. Music has been proven to help in lowering the mentioned filter, so that students achieve a more relaxed mental state and become more given to the learning task (Wilcox, 1995). Lake (2003) has also reasoned that this effect on learners' state of mind might be a consequence of music reducing the feelings of discomfort or lack of satisfaction that learning a new language might bring about a learner at certain occasions. This is also related to the proven effect of music on our limbic system augmenting the quantity of endorphins that are released (Creutzfeldt et al., 1989; as cited in Fonseca & Gant, 2016).

In other studies music has also been related to other individual variables, like learning strategies. These studies have been structured on the basis of the theory of the multiple intelligences and in relation with the following definition of *intelligence*: “a biopsychosocial potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (Gardner, 1999: 33).

This led to a great discussion around the notions that this theory proposed, but for the purposes of this dissertation attention should be focused on the following statement:

“One of the main implications for teaching of this theory was that students should not only be taught to increase their verbal, spatial, and numerical intelligences, but also to nurture their musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences.” (Fonseca, 2000: 146)

Thus, music is given a specially remarked presence in the considerations of this specific theory. This importance has been backed up by scholars’ research, like Jones (2008), who assures that the presence of music impacts the functioning of both cognitive processes and metacognitive learning strategies, or Lam & Wong (2000), who reaffirm the reality of the input and of the interaction that the use of music ignites in a FL classroom. In fact, concerning the interaction that music provides our classrooms with, it has been suggested that a musical training in the language classrooms might enhance students’ skills concerning the phonemic aspects of language and their ability to discriminate both sounds and rhythms concerning language.

This variation in the use of music through different methodologies of Language Teaching proves once again that music is a rather useful and resourceful tool for learning. This also gives an idea of the different ways in which we can use music in our classrooms.

3.5. Potential Problems for the Implementation of Music

When discussing the troubles that this specific methodology might mean concerning its implementation, we have to take in mind not only its corresponding problems, but also the issues that arise from Language Teaching in general.

One example of this is what Skehan (1998, as cited in Toscano-Fuentes & Fonseca, 2012: 199) has defined as a triarchy composed of “the auditive skill, the linguistic skill and the memory skill”. These three elements can be expected to affect the whole process of learning a language, although we cannot deny other factors, like the impact of the contextual conditions. Thus, all these elements are to be taken into account when dealing with the implementation of this or any other teaching methodology.

As a consequence of the mentioned triarchy, it was also concluded that those learners with an originally lower level of proficiency are in possession of a less developed auditive skill and, therefore, their reception of the target language will be harder to control. This arises both as an important issue for this methodology and, at the same time, as a reason for its implementation since it will provide these students with a significant chance to improve their abilities.

Some other problems of this methodology can be inferred from the differences existing between language and music, despite their many similarities (Toscano-Fuentes & Fonseca, 2012: 201). Possibly the main problem in this area would be that translating music from one language into another makes no sense; this could pose a great cognitive difficulty for those students who are used to dealing with the FL through their mother tongue, since there might be misunderstandings, negative transfers from one language into another or wrong inferences about the functioning of the FL.

Other potential problems have been granted to the fact that music can take some liberties in order to communicate certain information, avoiding some grammatical rules that are necessary in everyday, real language. A deeper dimension is added to this when the gaps existing among the different musical styles are taken into account, as an extra source of linguistic variation.

Another problem arises in relation to this factor. That is the central role of emotional expression in songs or poetry, which is not always to be found in our communication. Other functions of language should be addressed so that this void of information can be filled.

However, this last argument has been somewhat controversial due to the stance that any grammatical structure is possible to be found in musical texts, as some scholars defend (Falioni, 1993). Concerning this debate, it has been argued that it is easy to find songs that are not really complex and that are

repetitive regarding the grammatical structures that they used, so that every grammatical point can be explained and properly represented through the use of music. It has also been commented on the fact that teachers are free to modify any musical piece so that it may fit into the pedagogical purposes of each occasion (Duarte et al., 2012).

Then, it has also been argued, of course, that there are different kinds of students with different kinds of needs that must be addressed if teachers are to provoke any improvement in their competences. This problem would arise no matter the discussed methodology, but it is important, in this case, to make an assertion of students' needs not only because teachers must be aware of their individual differences, but also because this search can lead them to finding new, interesting materials and resources, or to deduce innovative ways in which they can be implemented (Rodríguez-Bonces, 2017).

Engh (2013) argues that there have been two main issues when it comes to the implementation of songs in the classroom environment. The first of them was that, despite the quantity of teachers that stand with the use of music in their classrooms, there has actually been little work with them in the real lessons, in the practice; in second place, it has been proved that a great deal of teachers are not truly aware of the theoretical aspects of the matter. This second view is supported by other scholars like Salcedo (2010) who defends that the research about this methodology loses in comparison to others. The latter becomes a more significant problem when these teachers have to deal with students whose attention is centred on traditional exams or have certain areas of interest for learning the language. Falioni (1993) reasons that this problem is mainly due to the fact that music is only granted the position of an entertainment medium, despite its proven efficiency.

A fundamentally important, basic problem that has been recognised as far as teachers are concerned is that there is a lack of instruction and preparation concerning this kind of methodology. This necessity must be urgently covered in order for teachers, and also students, to be able to take the biggest possible advantage from the input that music can offer them. As Rodríguez-Bonces (2017: 205) puts it, "familiarity with the work of other researchers in the field of music - and drama-based English teaching is essential".

If we deal with the different postures concerning this issue, we may find that another important problem is the fact that there is a lack of consensus. Torras-Vila (2021) argues that the source of this constant disagreement might be the lack of a fully understanding and comprehension of the relationship existing between the processing of music and the one of language. Despite the fact that we know that there are certain skills or abilities that are common to the two of them, and that they facilitate language and musical learning, we cannot truly make a real, detailed acquaintance of how they really function.

Due to this reason, it is necessary to keep on with the investigations that are already being carried out so that a common posture may be achieved, with the goal in mind of starting building anew from that position.

When it comes to the specific language skill of speaking, Leong & Ahmadi (2017: 36) listed the possible problems as the four following: “inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and mother-tongue use”.

The first one of them, inhibition, and the third one, low participation, might be rather present in every classroom of English as a FL, mainly due to the fear that learners may have when having to face new challenges. However, this is deeply provoked and affected by motivation and learners’ attitudes, so the use of music as a motivating learning methodology could be an effective way to face these issues. It is also evident that anxiety concerning language learning is closely related to it, but Boonkit (2010, as cited in Leong & Ahmadi, 2017: 38) stated that “the use of appropriate activities for speaking skill can be a good strategy to decrease speakers’ anxiety (...) the freedom of topic choice urged the participants to feel comfortable”. In this case, music and songs would become a very useful tool, for it fits into both conditions proposed as a means to reduce speakers’ anxiety.

On the other hand, the second problem, a lack of topical knowledge, might be a bit more complicated, since we cannot expect learners to express themselves if they do not have the necessary knowledge to do so. Because of this, as an attempt to try to solve this basic problem, there are prior activities to speaking by means of which vocabulary, grammar, or any similar basic linguistic knowledge is granted to them. After that, speaking activities with musical input can be proposed as a way to automatise and practise this new knowledge that they have been introduced to.

Consequently, the fourth problem of the mentioned ones, the use of mother-tongue, may be solved by itself alone. In case that the learner has been presented with enough linguistic information and has been able to acquire it through its repetition, mother-tongue should become progressively less necessary, until it is no longer a necessary means for learners' effective communication. So, in the end, it should be replaced by the target language, in this case that would be English.

All these problems should be considered when trying to implement music in our classrooms and some of them are possibly handled with a good design; others might be solved through curricular adaptation, and others, like the lack of time, can be a bit more complicated to face.

4. STATE OF THE ART

The quantity of research works that have evaluated the role of music in class has been growing during the recent years, confirming that it does indeed help in the FL acquisition, and it has been argued that this is due to different reasons.

Firstly, for example, singing, as a FL learner, helps you in the process of remembering lexical items and promotes the quality of speaker's fluency (Koponen & Riggenbach, 2000). This fluency has been divided into different categories: *perceived fluency*, *cognitive fluency* and *utterance fluency* (Segalowitz, 2010). The first one refers to "the inference listeners make about speaker's ability to produce speech"; the second one deals with "the ability to translate thoughts into speech"; and the third one with "the ability to produce speech without hesitations, repetitions, and repairs" (Heikkola & Alisaari, 2020: 1).

In order to measure these specific abilities, Götz (2013) proposed taking into account the *temporal variables*, which refer to how long a speaker can produce speech, their pauses, etc., how frequently formulaic language is used, and other acts related to performance, like hesitating or self-repairing.

The presence of rhythms and musical patterns have also been observed to make a positive impact on the learning task. Purnell-Webb & Speelman (2008) confirmed its usefulness when it comes to presenting new materials concerning language itself; it would also be reassured a decade later as an important resource in a more active way by means of reciting (Heikkola & Alisaari, 2020).

These same melodies and rhythms have been proven to make great achievements concerning memory and recalling of sentences word by word (Ludke et al., 2014), and for specific words too (Sammler et al., 2010). This particular effect achieves a greater effect when music is accompanied by visual cues. These improvements spread over the field of written fluency as well (Heikkola & Alisaari, 2020).

The relationship existing between human memory and songs has been investigated as a consequence of realising about these improvements when music is involved. This has been noted to happen both with young and adult learners. Different explanations have been provided, according to Torras-Vila (2021), like the deeper integration that we make mentally when dealing with

music, a better management of the information as a consequence of obtaining it from a song, the strengthening of the connection existing between words when singing them, or the features that are specific to the musical organisation of songs.

It has also been stated that, despite the fact that musical input might be profitable for all the age groups, some specific designs might be especially useful with some specific age ranges. For instance, children may benefit more from the integration of music and actions than adult learners. This is to be taken into account when programming a FL lesson for a specific group of learners.

However, for these improvements to be achieved in language learning, students need to be able to listen to the musical input to which they are exposed in an analytical manner, being mentally active so that they can actually process the mentioned input (Horn, 2007).

This idea of implementing visual support for the reading and understanding of texts' meaning has found some back up in other studies as well. For instance, Medina (2002) experimented with its inclusion, combining different activities like reciting or singing with texts that were accompanied by a variable quantity of illustrative support. After creating different series of combinations with these elements, it was proven that visual cues provide students with a rather productive reinforcement that upgrades musical input in its effect in the development of a communicative competence, the recall of linguistic information and structures for revising contents and the memorisation and understanding of new lexical items.

These different discoveries and research have led to the hypothesis that singing might be able to develop a fundamental role concerning the development of a correct oral fluency.

In fact, according to the results obtained by Lowe (2002), learners show themselves more capable for communicative purposes when they have been exposed to musical input. This stance was continued with more research which proved the established relationship between developing musical attitudes and communicative competence. They showed that the latter was greatly influenced by the former (Milovanov et al., 2008),

Toscano-Fuentes & Fonseca (2012) lead an investigation in a classroom where students listen to or sing a song everyday. This was implemented as a

tool for different purposes, like revising vocabulary or grammatical points, working pronunciation and intonation or improving their listening skills. One of their conclusions was the already mentioned relationship existing between auditive skills and improvement in their language learning. They also concluded that this methodology has significantly reduced the problems that were present in the classroom. Once the research was done, students had allegedly further developed their communicative competence. Thus, it has been recommended for the improvement of the previously noted areas, like pronunciation or grammatical structures. Additionally, they argued that musical input is of great help in order to balance the triarchy of components that affect language learning, which was discussed some paragraphs before. This is of fundamental importance if we want to promote the language learning of our students.

Heikkola & Alisaari (2020) studied how three different work methods with music could mean improvements in FL students, these being reciting, singing and listening. A totally realistic appreciation of the improvements in the groups' performance is not possible due to the fact that there were differences in their level since the beginning of the course, but there were significant improvements in the three groups. Nevertheless, this improvement was most notable in the reciting group, that is the most advanced one at the beginning of the course itself; then the second group; and finally the singing one with the lowest improvement. As we mentioned, these differences were attributed to the original proficiency level of the different groups. Concerning fluency, the reciting group proved the hypothesis that musical elements like rhythm are beneficial for recalling linguistic elements, affecting productive skills (Purnell-Webb & Speelman, 2008; Holme, 2009).

They concluded that original proficiency levels are going to be profoundly determinant to the development of fluency, although the different exercises and methods posed for the teaching task showed themselves to be greatly profitable in the classroom. In addition, they encouraged teachers to use these three methods with which they experimented, especially the reciting of music lyrics or poetry.

For any real comprehension of the present state of this methodology, both theoretically and pragmatically speaking, it is necessary to discuss the project named as *European Music Portfolio: A Creative Way into Languages* (Ludke &

Weinmann, 2012). By means of this project it is intended to instruct primary schools language teachers in the implementation of musical elements in their lessons. This is not an exclusively linguistic project since it is aimed at learning about both music and language, but some of its goals is the mentioned achievement of a communicative competence, an intercultural setting for learning and an opportunity for the cognitive development of students by means of their contact with musical input. This project must be granted the importance that it deserves as a potential solution for one of the deepest problems that have been previously noted, that being teachers not having enough instruction about the advantages of using music in the classroom, or not being oriented towards a proper instrumentalisation of these kinds of resources so that they are able to take advantage from them.

However, to be able to learn and progress in the FL classroom, students need to feel confident about their participation in class. Some musical activities, like singing, might become a bit overwhelming for some of them. It has been observed that this is frequent at the beginning of the projects especially, but it can be solved when implementing teamwork, preferentially with their peers, with whom they feel more comfortable (Duarte et al., 2012).

Concerning this shyness factor, Duarte et al. (2012) noticed that it is only consistent at the beginning of the task. The passing of time really serves as an extenuating element. Once the necessary vocabulary is introduced, by means of different methods or resources, and properly explained students feel more confident in order to face the music input and what is expected of them. This moment will be another challenge for them since they face for the first time this input that might feel complicated, but both peerwork and the presence of the teacher helps them overcome it.

Duarte et al. (2012) found that the vast majority of pupils were happy and satisfied with the development of the project. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that some students will remain somehow unhappy or maybe uncomfortable with it. At the end of the research, the already commented improvements were observed once again in different areas, like remembering more vocabulary, a more meaningful use of it, or an improvement in their grammar, which was shown in a better communicative competence.

Despite the fact that the musical instruction is not the main consideration of this dissertation, it must be noted that this is a posture that has been having some considerable repercussions recently and, consequently, has spread around the linguistic research field¹. The following excerpt from MEN (2011) should be considered an illustrative one about the current state of the mentioned discussion, in which even some countries' governments have entered for politics and regulative reasons:

“Artistic education, through interaction with other areas of knowledge, contributes to the strengthening of basic competences, while also benefiting the development of the competences proper to artistic practices” (Fonseca & Gant, 2016).²

Some scholars have positioned themselves in favour of the interdisciplinary nature of this methodology as a basic requirement for language learning to be achieved (Ramírez & Correa, 2013; as cited in Almeida & Zambrano, 2020: 36). In spite of the quantity of people that advocates for this posture, we should remain attentive to using music, in this case, as a means and not as a final goal in itself.

It is in this perspective, using music as a tool for other ends, that some discoveries about the benefits of music might go beyond linguistic features. As we have already commented on, music is rather beneficial for learning languages, their grammar, their vocabulary, their syntax, etc., but it is also beneficial in terms of affective and physical factors (García & Juan, 2015).

Concerning the former, apart from the already discussed motivational enhancement, music also serves to develop students' self-concept, their relation with their own cultural identity and with other people's one, which also impacts language learning. The, when it comes to physical factors, we have already seen that music helps with relaxation and stress, but it also helps in learning how to deal with our own voice and body language when communicating with other people, which would greatly affect our communicative competence in the FL in question.

¹ We should distinguish between musicologists, who are interested in the relation that music has with language, and educationalists, who seek an understanding of how music could serve as a way to overcome language learning difficulties (Fonseca & Gant, 2016).

²Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2011). *Lineamientos Curriculares para la Educación Artística*. Bogotá.

In relation to all these listed benefits that may arise as a consequence of using musical input in the classrooms of FL, it has been proven, amazing as it can be, that it remains effective in the whole variety of age ranges that might be found among the learners. Because of that, music is argued to be a relevant learning factor for any age group (Torras-Vila, 2021).

As a consequence of these confirmed benefits, Torras-Vila (2021: 41) proposed a program called MOVIC, “an English teaching program that aims to help children (...) learn English through meaningful and contextualised musical activities”. This program shows itself in a similar position to the previously mentioned mixture of music instruction and language instruction, though it reckons that its main objective is teaching the language rather than music. It can be concluded that music would work at the same time as a tool and a secondary goal. In addition, it is based on “teaching strategies such as interactional language scaffolding, the use of corrective feedback, language support, provision of abundant comprehensible input (...) and encouragement of output production” (Torras-Vila, 2021: 41). This basis of its foundations remarks the priority that this program concedes to the linguistic and communicative aspects.

5. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

5.1. Justification

The most-recent educational law in Spain, LOMLOE (2020), recognises the importance of the oral skills and, for the sake of this paper, of the oral production skill, as a basic and fundamental ability to be taken into account in the development of any language learning; in this specific case, in the development of English learning.

This is firstly mentioned concerning communication in every possible aspect, as a way to defend the democratic concerns in general, and the educational and multicultural ones specifically:

“As stated by the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, in nowadays societies, culturally diverse, democratic procedures require intercultural dialogue. Therefore, communication in different languages is key to the development of that democratic culture” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 130).

This significance was also acknowledged in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning (2020: 60), though it has been reframed since the four skills model was modified. It is now covered under the term *production*.

Consequently, the training and instruction in oral production has been highly supported when it comes to the legal and research fields. However, it is a type of skill that is complicated to train our students in, since it takes a lot of time and, also, it often requires individual attention that might not be possible in many of the cases in which teachers find themselves.

Another problem that might even be a bit more complicated is the fact that pupils do not tend to find the materials brought into the class interesting. One of the ideas of this pedagogic proposal is to try to solve that issue, both by means of taking music that is fashionable for them or that they might relate to, and by letting them choose their own songs to work with.

Regarding why the chosen songs need to be about problems in personal relationships and the importance of them being healthy, the reason is contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Three of the goals of these SDGs are gender equality, quality education and reduced inequalities. By

means of implementing songs like these, students can reflect upon aspects of their personal lives related to these three objectives, thus promoting their personal growth for the sake of their interpersonal relationships.

With the before-mentioned elements, this didactic proposal aims at improving students' oral production skills concerning different aspects like fluency, rhythm or intonational patterns by means of a Task-Based story with a final product as a goal. This final product will be a part of the final evaluation, altogether with other tools like questionnaires, but evaluation will be present through the entire project. This way, teachers will be able to consider the students' progress through their learning process and will be able to modify the project in case of need as well.

5.2. Participants

This project has been designed for a specific, ideal group of students. That is, students belonging to the 4th Grade of Secondary Education. This group has been chosen due to different factors.

In the first place, students at this level should have already developed a high enough English competence to be able to face the quantity of input that this project's design proposes. However, in case that this is not the case, teachers can adapt it easily by means of changing the chosen songs.

In the second place, as a consequence of the first factor, in the case that students already control the basic aspects of the language, it is important that they approach other more complicated aspects that tend to be left behind. That is the case of oral production and the suprasegmental features, which might be a bit too complex for lower level students.

In the third place, LOMLOE (2020) requires a rather specific profile from students that have reached this level. It is compulsory for them to fit into it to finish their instruction in Secondary Education, so that may give teachers a specific route to follow concerning evaluation, making it a bit easier for the teacher.

In the fourth place, this design, these specific songs and themes, might be really profitable for students' development as individuals, since they might be

entering the world of romantic relationships and it should be interesting for them to learn about its healthy management.

5.3. Timing

This project will be developed through three different weeks. Each one will consist of four sessions. These sessions will always be fifty minutes long, in accordance to the reality that is to be found in the actual classrooms in High Schools. Each activity has been designed with an ideal timing, although it may vary depending on factors like students' motivation or their actual productivity or working of the activity. The range of duration of the activities is wide: there are some activities that will only take five minutes and others that may extend upon half an hour.

5.4. Objectives

The specific objectives of this didactic proposal are the following ones:

1. Improving the oral production skills of the students, as it is requested in the present educational law.
2. There are some goals linked to the methodology with which these activities will be implemented, the Communicative Approach specifically. This has been decided as a response to the requirements made by LOMLOE (2020), according to which students must develop the ability to interact with each other and also mediation skills
3. Help students to overcome any possible issue of learning anxiety that may arise concerning English as a FL. This is the reason why music that should be well-known and amusing to them is proposed for teaching.
4. Provide an input enhancement by means of songs for students to be able to realise about the importance of suprasegmental features in oral production, at the same time that they realise about their own current state in the language learning process.
5. Provide enough opportunities for students to practise their oral productive skills by means of the different games and activities that are proposed.

6. Also concerning the use of music, another goal of this didactic proposal is to achieve a greater level of commitment and motivation in students.

7. Being able to engage in conversations among them that arise in a natural way about an everyday topic like music, making them capable of expressing their personal opinions, tastes and preferences without feeling any fear of being judged.

8. Strengthening the social bonds that articulate social relationships within the classroom, and trying to lay the path for friendship development in it, by means of finding similarities and ideas in common concerning the topic of music.

5.5. Methodology

The methodological basis for the proposed project is the Communicative Approach. That means, it is aimed at students learning and improving their oral production skills by means of communicating and trying to get their meaning across to their peers.

This proposal will also follow the Task-Based Language-Learning model in combination with the Communicative Processes-Based Model of activity sequencing. This way, students will have to complete different tasks as steps to reach a final product, following a storification at the same time in order to try to reach their motivation and commitment with the lessons.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the Flipped Classroom methodology will also be implemented in this didactic proposal. By means of this methodology, time in class will be saved for practice only, or for doubts resolution, instead of devoting it to explanations and hoping to have some time for practice. To this end, students will be given as homework handouts containing the theoretical explanations, examples or exercises to practise the aspect in question.

5.6. Competences

The competences that are to be covered through this unit are several. In the first place, concerning the Specific Competences, the next competence is the main one:

“2. Producing original texts, of an average length, simple and clearly organised, using strategies such as planification, compensation or self-repair, to express relevant messages and answer to specific communicative goals in a creative, adequate and coherent way.

Production covers both oral expression and written and multimodal” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 133).

Then, this Specific Competence is further developed as follows:

“2.1. Express orally brief, simple, structured, comprehensible and adequate to communicative situations texts about everyday and frequent matters, of significance for students, with the goal to describe, narrate and inform about specific topics, by different means, using in a guided way verbal and non-verbal resources, as well as planification and production control strategies” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 135).

“3.1. Planning and participating in brief and simple interactive situations about everyday topics, or of a personal significance and close to students’ experience, by means of different means, resorting to resources such as repetition, paused rhythm or non-verbal language, and showing empathy and respect towards linguistic courtesy, as well as the different needs, ideas, concerns, initiatives and motivations of the interlocutors” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 135-136).

“3.2. Selecting, organising and using, in a guided way and in near environments, adequate strategies to initiate, keep and close communication; taking and giving turns to speak; and asking for and formulating explanations” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 136).

Moving on to Key Competences, there are two of them present through this project, those being the Linguistic Communication Competence and the Plurilingual Competence.

All these competences, both Specific and Key Competences, are directly linked to the objectives that have been established in the previous section.

5.7. Contents

The design of this didactic proposal would cover several of the contents that are required by LOMLOE (2020) as Basic Knowledge (Royal Decree 217/2022: 140). Those are:

- “Self-confidence and initiative. Mistakes as an integrative part of learning process”
- “Strategies for planification, execution, control and repair of comprehension, production and coproduction of oral texts”
- “Knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow to carry out mediation activities in common situations”
- “Common-use linguistic units and the meaning associated to them, like entity expression and its properties, spatial and time relationships, affirmation, negation, interrogation and exclamation”
- “Common-use lexicon, interesting for students, related to personal identification, interpersonal relationships, (...) everyday life (...)”
- “Sound, accentual, rhythmic and intonational patterns, and meaning and communicative intentions associated to them”
- “Conversational strategies to initiate, maintain and end communication, reformulate, explain, compare, contrast, summarise, collaborate, debate.”

5.8. Activities

This project will consist of three weeks, each of them divided into four sessions. As it has been mentioned before, several songs have been chosen for students’ oral production skills development. These songs are the following ones:

1. I Want to Break Free (Queen, 1984).
2. Old Money (Lana del Rey, 2014).
3. Sweet Child o’Mine (Guns’N Roses, 1987).
4. Love the Way You Lie (Rihanna & Eminem, 2010).
5. We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together (Swift, 2012).
6. Friday, I’m in Love (The Cure, 1992).
7. Creep (Radiohead, 1993).
8. I’d Rather Go Blind (James, 1968).

Each of these songs will be used with a specific goal throughout the different sessions, although there will be times at which all of them will be used. For instance, for the final project, in which all of them will be sorted out among students.

This selection has been made on the basis of the taste of teenagers of this educational level which was observed through the practice period in a high school. Another factor that has been considered for this selection is the different perspectives that these songs may offer about the chosen topic and how they may help students in their personal growth. However, the most important factor that was taken into account for its selection was achieving a variety of input, with different linguistic and poetic styles, combined with different cultural backgrounds, so that students can be exposed to the greatest diversity possible, both concerning language use and cultural factors.

5.8.1. 1st Week: Getting to know the music

The goal of this first week is getting into touch with the theoretical aspects of music. In addition, another goal will be to take advantage of the social aspect of music to try to join the students into a unified group. This will be done by getting them to express their opinions and tastes, igniting debates around celebrities related to music, maybe discovering expectations in them concerning music... This first week will also be used to introduce theoretical aspects about rhythm and intonation in English before getting practise with it through the songs. This way, they will have a first, easier approximation to it , and, then, they will be able to apply this new knowledge to the specific cases of the songs.

5.8.1.1. 1st Session

Every lesson will begin with the playing of a song that will contribute to the creation of an environment in which students feel more comfortable, another world apart from the academic, grades-concerned one that they are used to. To this end, a song selection made by students might be really useful since it will contribute to this goal at the same time as making them feel listened to and

appreciated. This should take around the first five or ten minutes of each session. The first session will begin with this step.

Once the music's over, the teacher will explain to them the objective of this project, that is, being able to record their own cover of a song, altogether with the different phases that the project has and how they have been organised. This way, students will know what their efforts are directed at and maybe, as a consequence of it, their motivation will increase to achieve that final goal. This explanation will only take around 10 minutes, 15 in case there are doubts or understanding problems.

A good way to introduce music to students might be through a bit of History of Music. To that end, a well-known game will be used: *Who am I?*. Only this time the only people that are to be written in the cards are musicians. Also, artists from different cultural, religious, gender, and any other variant should be present to cover multiculturalism in the classroom. To get students involved in this game as well, the teacher will allow them to complement a list made by him or her with other artists that students might consider relevant, not only because of their personal taste, but because of the artist's contribution. They will play this game by asking only yes/no questions. They will be required to make it with no prior preparation and orally directly, so they will have to be fluent and precise to get their meaning across. This activity is intended to last around 20 minutes. This activity could be done with some music playing in the background, to create an atmosphere that feels different and more relaxed than the one in other subject's lessons.

As a continuation to this, students will be sorted out in 4 or 5 groups, depending on the number of students, so that they can reflect upon the different artists that were included: that may include their personal tastes, what they know about them, any personal experiences with their music, to make a ranking of them or their styles... This will take the remaining time of the first session and will be apparently unconcluded until the next one. This way, they will have more time to think about it.

Then, by means of the Flipped Classroom methodology, they will be given a handout that explains theoretical aspects of suprasegmental features. By means of it, they will have an initial approximation to the topic, and will be able to reflect upon it with the recent experience of a completely oral English lesson.

5.8.1.2. 2nd session

The second session will begin with another song being listened to, so that, once again, students may enter the atmosphere of the project as a whole, and, also, as a way for them to forget about the previous lessons of other subjects. This will take only five minutes.

After that has been done, they will get back to the group discussion they were maintaining during the end of the previous English session. This will serve them to remember their ideas, and maybe take new perspectives after considering them a bit more. This will take around five minutes as well.

Having done this, they will have to communicate their discussion to their classmates. To do this, and as a way to be sure that they listened to each other and paid attention, students won't be able to use anything that they wrote down during the group discussion: they will have to remember their peers' ideas. An important point in this part of the activity is that they can interrupt each other in order to make it a discussion instead of a presentation, always respecting each other's turn to speak of course. However, every group will have to try to make an interesting or not-repeated contribution when their turn comes. This is expected to take around twenty minutes, but it would depend on the participation that can be achieved.

Then, as a way to check the results of learning through the Flipped Classroom that was implemented in the previous session, a Kahoot is to be used containing questions concerning the theoretical aspects that students were introduced to. This would take no longer than ten minutes. However, depending on the results, some more time might be necessary to explain any aspect that might have been difficult for them.

At the end of the session, each student will have to write one or two songs on a sheet of paper. These songs will be used to create a playlist that will be used in different activities as a way to make students feel involved once again. These songs could also be played at a low volume during the realisation of other activities or phases of the task, as Suggestopedia proposes.

5.8.1.3. 3rd Session

As usual in this proposal, this third session will begin, once again, with another song being played. However, in order to try to raise students' commitment and motivation, this time the song played will be chosen from the playlist that they created at the end of the previous session. As usual as well, this part will take around five minutes.

To begin this session, and to try to ignite some discussion, some polemic issues about music can be brought up as a way to make students practise their oral skills. These issues could concern the relation between best-selling music and quality, the advertisement choices, artists that may be over or underrated... Topics or questions for discussion could also be drawn from the lyrics of the students' playlist, supposing that they like those specific songs for the topics that they deal with. This should take around twenty minutes, from which approximately five would be devoted to individual considering of the proposed questions, and the fifteen remaining to the group discussion. However, it is possible that the level of participation achieved may vary the expected duration of this part.

Then, once that the previous activity has been done, and with the time remaining, students will have to get back to work individually in order to revise the opinions and considerations that they had written down concerning the questions, as a way to reconsider it. They can make any modification in their written answers, and they will have to hand it to the teacher once they are done.

5.8.1.4. 4th Session

The session will begin with another song from the students' playlist being played. Again, this will only take around five minutes.

Then, for the next activity, students will form, again, 4 or 5 groups. These groups will be given an audio device which will play one specific song, or the link to that song so that they can play it on their own mobile phones instead. Each group will have to listen to it so that, in front of the rest of the groups, they may comment something about it, especially concerning the already explained suprasegmental features, sing a fragment from it, and give their personal opinion about it, or any other contribution that they feel like making. However,

no group will be given the chance to just repeat everything that the rest of groups have already said, so that everybody can contribute with something more or less original. This is expected to take at least thirty minutes, taking into account any possible variation depending on the number of students and on the level of productivity and participation. The proposed songs for this activity are *Sweet Child O'Mine* (Guns'N Roses, 1987), *I Want to Break Free* (Queen, 1984), *Love the Way you Lie* (Rihanna & Eminem, 2010), *I'd Rather Go Blind* (James, 1968) and *Old Money* (Lana del Rey, 2014). The selection for this activity has been done as to try to cover very different rhythms in oral production, and some different intonations due to factors like the time at which they were recorded or the cultural origins of the artists. Also, the different genres of the songs may serve students to realise about the relationship between suprasegmental features and communicative intentions.

To end this first week, students, being still organised in the groups created for the previous activity, will be given the chance to choose one of the list of songs that has been compiled at the beginning of the proposal. As final product, they will have to create a cover for this song, by means of getting to know it and understand it through the following phases of the project, but that will be done during the next two weeks. These remaining minutes will be dedicated to the distribution of the songs and the first playing of them so that each group can get in touch with it.

To end the programming of this session, Flipped Classroom will be implemented again in a similar way to the previous time: a handout containing theoretical explanations and examples will be given to them. This time it will contain information about the intonation in English, so that they get some instruction prior to the next week, in which they will need it.

5.8.2. 2nd Week: *Rhyme, intonation and rhythm*

The second week will be dedicated to the suprasegmental features indicated in the title of this subsection, due to their importance for a proper oral production. To do this, as mentioned at the end of the previous week's programming, students will already be working with their selected song, apart from other songs that have been considered useful.

Before beginning with this week's activities, the teacher will recommend students to begin applying the activities carried out during the lessons to the song that they are to work with for their final project. This way, students will be prepared enough when the third week arrives and, hopefully, not too much time will be wasted with things that they should have brought already prepared to the classroom.

5.8.2.1. 1st Session

In this week's development, we will continue playing songs to begin our sessions. This is an important aspect to keep for all the contributions that it makes to our classroom, as argued in the Theoretical Framework and State of the Art sections. This part, as usual, will only take five minutes of in-class time, and the song to be played will be chosen from the student's playlist.

Students will be given a list of popular children's songs, from which they will have to choose only one song to work out this activity. They will be doing it several times, so in case of disagreement they can choose several songs. The idea is that students begin to sing to leave their feeling of embarrassment aside, that is why children's songs are proposed instead of the more complicated songs that they have to work with for the final project. They will be singing it at the same time that the song is being played, but it will get a lower volume consistently until only students are heard. It will also be paused sometimes to check that students are being able to adapt to the song's rhythm. This first part of the activity should take between twenty and thirty minutes.

In case that participation and motivation are high, we can introduce the proposed songs in this activity, as a way to raise the level of difficulty and necessary effort a bit. The songs that are proposed for this case are *Creep* (Radiohead, 1993), *Friday, I'm in Love* (The Cure, 1992) and *We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together* (Swift, 2012). This selection has been made on the basis that they are slower, more repetitive and simpler concerning vocabulary.

After this, the most confident students and those who volunteer for it can step forward and sing it for their peers to write down the lyrics, as a kind of dictation for students to practise their oral skills. This second part should not take more

than ten minutes, although it would depend on the levels of participation and initiative that students show.

Finally, to end this season, Kahoot will be used again to check student's learning through the Flipped Classroom that was implemented during the previous session.

5.8.2.2. 2nd Session

This session will begin once again with a song being played. It is important to remember that a song from students' playlist should be chosen for this part to raise student's motivation and commitment. This should take around five minutes only.

Then, there should be between ten and fifteen minutes booked for any possible explanation that students may need depending on the observed results of the learning checking through Kahoot at the end of the previous session.

Next, for the following activity students will have to replicate the played song's original rhythm and intonation with other lyrics of their own. By means of this, they will be able to see how English pronunciation's rhythm and intonation can vary depending on the specific sentence and its components, and how not every construction can fit into the same patterns since it would depend on things like intentionality, or the number of syllables that the construction contains and where they are accentuated. To do this simple enough, the songs could be once again the popular children's songs that were used during the previous session; however, to make it a bit more interesting and motivating, we can begin to introduce more complicated songs, although the ones that they are to use for their final project must be kept aside since those will be used during the following week. This should take the rest of in-class time so that students can get deep into it and develop a greater understanding of these notions. For this specific activity no specific selection has been done since it would depend on the songs that students choose. However, there are some of them that would be particularly fit for it: *Friday, I'm in Love* (The Cure, 1992), *We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together* (Swift, 2012), *I Want to Break Free* (Queen, 1984) or *Sweet Child O'Mine* (Guns'N Roses, 1987). These songs are proposed because they have a rather clear rhythm, not very complicated, so no difficulty

should arise from the song's complexity. This way, students will be able to fit more of their own creations into it.

5.8.2.3. 3rd Session

This session, once again, should begin with another song being played, preferably from the students' playlist. As usual, this should take no more than five minutes.

Then, in relation to the previous session, and to create a sense of continuity in students' learning, it would be a good idea to dedicate between ten and fifteen minutes of in-class time to the sharing of the lyrics created during the last lesson. In addition, this could reinforce the sense of community within the classroom through their amusement. What's more, it could also help to reduce learning anxiety concerning these aspects of oral production.

For this session's core activity, it is necessary to divide the students in the mentioned 4 or 5 groups for the final project. Then, all of them are going to sing a fragment of the different songs that were used during the previous session, with their original lyrics, so every group gets to experiment every song's suprasegmental features. To do that, every lyric will be given to them and they will choose which fragment they want to work on. When their turn comes, they will have to sing said fragments and, in the case that they have any problem, it will be other groups who will have to try to explain what they are doing wrong and which is the correct way. This way, they will have the opportunity to practise their oral skills and their mediation abilities. This may be a greatly time-consuming activity so it could take the remaining in-class time, but it should also be fun for students. It should be an important chance for them to put their social skills into practice as well.

Finally, we will implement Flipped Classroom again to support this practice with some theoretical and exemplified knowledge. This time, the handout given to students will be about English accentuation: about it being a time-stressed language, how that works, what that implies, what they should bear in mind when speaking English, some practise tips for their improvement...

5.8.2.4. 4th Session

This last session of the second week is also to begin with another song being played. Let's remember that the song should be picked up from the students' playlist as a way to raise motivation and commitment in them.

Then, to check how learning has worked through the Flipped Classroom we will use Kahoot once again with some questions concerning the information that students were provided regarding accentuation. This should take about ten minutes at maximum, but more time should be booked for it in case there is any doubt and some extra explanations are necessary.

The next activity, as a way to make the end of the week a bit more relaxed, will be an amusing activity, with not too much weight on learning, although it will help students in their progress during the next week. Resorting to the groups already created for the final project, students will have to pick up two songs from the ones that they had been working with during the previous sessions. What they will have to do is step in front of their peers and sing it. However, to add a bit of fun to it, not all of them will be singing it; there will be those who will be performing the actions that the lyrics are representing. Thus, for all the members of the group to do both parts of the activity, they will divide the lyrics among them so that they sing some of the verses and, then, they represent the rest of them. This activity can be done with any song from the proposed list that students feel like, since all of them are rather theatrical and tell a story in a clear way. This way, they will reinforce the idea that lyrics and suprasegmental features in oral production obey an intentional factor, but in a way in which they will expectedly have a lot of fun.

5.8.3. 3rd Week: Working on the Cover

This final week will be exclusively devoted to working with the songs that students have been provided for their final project, that is, the cover. It presupposes that students have followed the recommendation that was made to them during the second week, and that they have indeed begun to work with the song as they did with children's songs during the lessons.

5.8.3.1. 1st Session

Once again, this session will begin with a song being played for students to begin the lesson leaving behind stress and other kinds of anxiety. Also, to raise their motivation and sense of belonging, this song will belong to the playlist that they created. This should take no more than five minutes.

To continue the session, students will be played an audio explaining the idea of making a cover of a song. This audio was actually a blog article converted into audio, which is possible through different tools like Oddcast TTS, the one used for this activity. The audio will be played a couple of times, thrice if necessary, and then they will compete in another Kahoot test to check students' oral comprehension.

Then a longer and deeper activity will begin: students will work in their final project groups and with their corresponding song's lyrics, which will be printed and given to them by the teacher or sent to their electronic devices in case that they have any.

This activity will be divided into two phases. The first phase will be a group work in which they will have to analyse English stress in pronunciation through the lyrics of their song and the audio recording of it; the second part of the activity, presenting the analysis to their mates, will be done during the following session.

During this first stage, they will have to say which words are stressed and why, what happens to the rest of them, why they are not stressed, whether there is any anomaly concerning stress rules... It is not necessary that they analyse the whole text, since time would not be enough for that, but they will be given time at home if they feel like doing it. For this part, they will also count upon the theoretical handouts that they were given during the two previous weeks. This first phase will take the remaining in-class time.

5.8.3.2. 2nd Session

To begin this session another song from students' playlist will be played again, in an attempt to turn their focus towards the project and to raise their motivation and interest. This will take no more than five minutes.

Then, they will move onto the second part of the activity which began in the previous session, which will only consist in presenting the analysis and conclusions which they have arrived at. This can be done with any analogue or digital tool that they feel like using, but it should be simple enough for them to have it ready and crystal-clear for their peers within just the twenty minutes that they had for the analysis part. This second part should take approximately twenty minutes of the in-class time.

Then, with relation to the final project of making a cover, it is an important part to know and understand a song, if you want to create a cover for it, is understanding the person who wrote it. That would be an important step for students and that is what the next activity will be about. In order to do this, students, working in their final project groups, will have to carry out a fast, not too deep research about the author/s. Once they feel that they have managed to control this information, they will have to write a script of an interview in which one of them will play the artist and the rest of them will play the role of journalists. The idea is that they ask him/her about his/her music, but for students' motivation and fun sake they will be allowed to also ask about any gossip they feel like; students playing the role of the singer should try to copy some suprasegmental features in the artists' production, noticeable through the songs. This part of research and writing the interview should take the remaining time of the session.

The role-play will take place during the next session. This means that they have time to go over the text again, think about it, and relate it to how they want to make the cover, whether they want the song to remain like it is or they want to change the style, maybe about some changes in suprasegmental features of the song...

5.8.3.3. 3rd Session

This session will begin again with another song from students' playlist being played, so that they can change into the mood that this project requires at the same time that they feel motivated and committed. This should take no more than five minutes.

Then, to continue with the activity that began in the previous session, there will be one twist in the role-play part. That is, the students that play a singer/artist will be assigned to another group of journalists. That means that both journalists and artists' roles will have a prepared script in their minds to serve them as a support, but they will have to adapt it to the situation by arranging changes in their oral production with fluency and enough accuracy to make the interview work. This will also require their mediation skills, since they will have some ideas from the scripted questions that they will have to try and get them across to their new activity partners. This second part of the activity will take around twenty-five minutes of in-class time.

Then, to end this session, and as a way to check that students have done a proper research for their understanding of the lyrics, an activity that was done in the previous week will be repeated. They will have to take turns once again in their singing-performing the song, so that it is clear for them, and for everybody else, that they have managed to master the meaning and intentions behind the song that they have to make a cover of. This will take the rest of in-class time.

5.8.3.4. 4th Session

This final session will be dedicated to the presentation of the final projects and the reflection upon the development of the mentioned project.

For that reason, this will be the only session that will not begin with any song from the playlist being played, since it will begin with the covers made by students being played. This way, all of them can share their work with their peers, and see that all of them were implicated in the activity. This first part of the session should take between fifteen and twenty minutes approximately.

Then, having witnessed their peers work, students will have to fill in an assessment questionnaire about their classmates results, concerning aspects like innovation and originality, the quality of the presentation, whether their peers seem to have become less anxious in their oral production, and other factors like these which, of course, are not about the musical competence of students, but about the level of competence that they show concerning language and the visible effort in their project. Another questionnaire will be given to them so that they can analyse these same factors concerning

themselves this time, as a way for them to realise their linguistic, and maybe also personal, growth through the project. The last one should be related to the theme chosen for the songs, as a way to reflect upon whether they have learned anything about romantic relationships, or whether they have got a new perspective. This should take more or less another fifteen minutes.

Finally, another questionnaire will be given to them. This time, it will concern the labour of the teacher, the organisation and implementation of this didactic proposal, the learning results that they have achieved, etc. This would take the rest of the in-class time.

5.9. Assessment

Evaluation is that it will be present from the very first moment of the project's development: the first week has been designed aiming at compiling evidence of students' competence in oral production. This has been decided in relation to the requirements made by LOMLOE (2020): "Evaluation of Secondary Education students' learning process will be continuous, formative and integrative" (Royal Decree 217/2022: 12).

This way, the teacher will be able to have a wider point of view of the improvements that students have achieved at the end of the project, and he or she will also be able to know from the beginning whether it is necessary to adapt the activities for a lower level, also as required by LOMLOE (2020):

"In the process of continuous evaluation, when a student's progress is not adequate, measures of educational reinforcement will be implemented. These measures will be adopted at any time of the school year, as soon as difficulties are detected, with special concern regarding the situation of those students with special educational needs, and they will be aimed at guaranteeing the necessary competence acquisition to continue the educational process, with the support that any of them may need" (Royal Decree 217/2022: 12).

However, grades would only be granted at the end of the project so that they are consistent with the final achievements and progress of the students: "In the evaluation process of students' learning, the achievement of established objectives and the acquisition of competences should be taken into account as the final point of reference" (Royal Decree 217/2022: 12).

Concerning the evaluation tools, the teacher will use an evaluation rubric that will serve to evaluate both in-class work and the final project itself and some questionnaires that will be used for peer evaluation and self-evaluation (see Annex 2).

Regarding the first of them, the rubric, three main sources have been considered for its creation. The first of them is the present Educational law, from which the following evaluation criteria have been picked up:

- “2.1. Expressing orally simple, structured, comprehensible, coherent and communicatively-adequate texts about everyday topics, or of personal significance and public interest close to students’ experience, with the objective to describe, narrate, contend and inform, through different tools, using verbal and non-verbal resources, as well as planification, control, compensation and cooperation strategies” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 138).
- “3.1. Planning, participating and actively collaborating, through different tools, to interactive situations about everyday topics, of personal significance or public interest, close to students’ experience, showing initiative, empathy and respect, as well as respecting the interlocutor’s different needs, ideas, concerns, initiatives and motivation” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 138).
- “3.2. Selecting, organising and using adequate strategies to initiate, maintain and end communication, take and give the word turn, asking for and formulating clarifications and explanations, reformulating, comparing and contrasting, summarising, collaborating, debating, solving problems and managing complicated situations” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 138).

In addition, taking into account that this pedagogic proposal has been designed for the 4th Secondary Education level, we should also consider the Exit Profile for the design of the evaluation rubric, since “it constitutes the final referent for the competence development” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 11).

To that goal, the operational descriptors concerning Key Competences that should be relevant for the evaluation in this proposal are the following:

- LLC1:

“The student expresses himself/herself orally, written, signally or multimodally with coherence, correction and adequation, and participates in communicative interactions cooperatively and respectfully” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 27).

- LLC2:

“The student understands, interprets and values critically oral, written, signalled or multimodal texts in the personal, social, educational and professional areas” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 27).

- CP1:

“The student efficiently uses one or more languages, apart from familiar languages, to answer to communicative needs, in an appropriate and adequate way for his/her development and interests” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 27).

- CP2:

“On the basis of his/her experience, the student makes transferences between different languages as a strategy to communicate and widen his/her linguistic repertoire” (Royal Decree 217/2022: 28).

Other criteria have been included belonging to the CEFR Levels, specifically concerning the following aspects of the use of oral language³: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence. These criteria are categorised according to their own levels, so they have been adapted to be able to use them in consonance with LOMLOE (2020), which does not refer to the same levels.

Thus, the final rubric to be used, leaving aside any possible modification for context and learning inclusivity, would look at the coherence and adequation of the production, the participation of students, the conversational management skills, the level of control of suprasegmental features in their production, the lexical range, and the commitment and motivation that students show.

5.10. Materials

For the implementation of this didactic proposal, the most vital materials are the songs used in the classroom, of course. That is, both a compendium of popular, simple songs, and other more complicated songs that, in this case, for

³ Council of Europe. (N.D.). *Qualitative Aspects of Spoken Language Use - Table 3 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels*. Retrieved on 08/06/2023 from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-3-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-qualitative-aspects-of-spoken-language-use>.

the sake of the thematic aspect, should deal with the correct and healthy management of romantic relationships.

Concerning the first ones, it should be easy to find a great corpus of them considering they are wide-spread, and their selection maybe would depend on the particular taste of the teacher or the area the teacher or students are from.

Then, we would also need the article that is made into an audio file to use it for oral comprehension. The article proposed is *What is a Cover Song? A Brief History of Cover Songs* (Masterclass, 2021). This post can be turned into an audio file by means of different tools, but, for this proposal, Oddcast TTS is the one that was used.

Other important materials for this unit are the handouts containing theoretical explanations and examples that students are given to work with at home, following the Flipped Classroom methodology. These handouts were written by means of ChatGPT, being revised, expanded and corrected if necessary at some point.

It is necessary to design as well the different Kahoots that are to be used as learning checking. These could be adapted to the different aspects that the teacher considers to be more important and necessary for their students' learning, or, maybe, those that he/she can foresee being the most difficult for them to grasp, bearing in mind their actual competence in English and their learning styles and abilities.

Finally, it is also necessary to design the questionnaires that are to be used for self-evaluation, peer evaluation and the evaluation of the teacher and of the didactic proposal. There are a lot of different tools that could make it potentially easier to design such questionnaires. TypeForm could be a rather good option.

5.11. Curricular Adaptation

One of the advantages of the proposed project is that it offers wide opportunities for its adaptation, both in materials and in the designed exercises.

Thus, in case that students are not able to face the challenges that they are being posed, the difficulty of the songs can be lowered, or they can be played slower, or they can be given more opportunities to listen to them... So it is rather wide the manner in which we can adapt those materials, although they

must always be present so that improvements are possible through input enhancement.

Concerning the activities, they should be simple enough, but, in case of difficulties, the expectations could be lowered for the creative activities, and the materials can be made easier for those in which students have to put their theoretical knowledge into practice.

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of this proposed project is to help students develop their oral productive skills. To that end, a variety of activities has been proposed, framed within a final project through which they move by means of a story, to be able to discover and face the different aspects of suprasegmental features of which oral production in English is composed.

That path has been possible thanks to the implementation of Flipped Classroom methodology, by means of which much in-class time is saved for students' practice of the theoretical aspects that are seen through Flipped Classroom. However, it is also true that there could be problems for the proposed programming in case that students would not show commitment and would not go over the handouts that they are given. That would mean a significant quantity of in-class time having to be devoted to explanations instead of the activities that have been designed for students to practise and to move on with their instruction.

Despite that, the discussed project is considered to be adaptable enough for those cases in which last-hour changes should be made to the programming, with a minimal impact on the final project and on the main goals that structure the programming.

In any case, time would always be a variable to be considered when trying to implement this project, even more if we take into account how dependent it is on students' motivation and commitment.

However, for that sake, the present project tries to involve students in it, by means of making them choose part of the materials that are going to be used for input enhancement, or considering their personal taste for the materials that are going to be used for the development of the final project. That is added to the fact that they are all supposed to like some of the proposed materials that they are given, so they have already a favourable position towards the working of this project.

Concerning the mentioned position of students throughout the whole project, this proposal would be able to make an important impact in the social aspect of the classroom, and would expectedly bring students together by means of something that all of them tend to like, that is, music. This project would make

them realise about the similarities that they have and also about the less important differences that might confront them.

To that end, students would have to maintain a great deal of interaction and conversation through this project, at the same time that they would feel a bit of embarrassment towards some of these activities. This sharing of a feeling would make them come closer, but it would not be too intense so that they do not block or move away from their peers.

That is an aspect that should be under control and to which great attention should be paid. If the unit is perceived by them as too personally compromising, potentially because of feeling embarrassed, it is possible that they would not be open to participate in it. However, that should be an easy task provided that the teacher shows himself or herself easy-going and shares with them the feeling that the idea of the project is for them to learn at the same time that they do something creative and amusing.

Nevertheless, it is true that, speaking of difficulties or issues that this project may suffer from, it would be dependent on the owning of playing devices for its implementation. This issue should be considered as such, but not as a significant one after the period of practice, in which almost all students seemed to have their own mobile phone, or the high school provided them with some kind of tablet or any other devices to follow some lessons, apart from the teacher's computer. This last option would make the project move slower, since the ideal scenario would be for each group of students to have their own device, but it would be possible still. All things considered, this should be taken into account when thinking about implementing a didactic proposal like the present one.

Apart from this issue, and the other general problems that the instruction in oral production has, this pedagogic proposal does not show any other major problems that are specific to its design.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This didactic proposal covers an aspect that, despite its significance and vital importance for the correct development of a linguistic competence, has been neglected through the year: that is the oral production.

As it was stated throughout the previous sections, many scholars have devoted themselves to the study of this situation and how it can be solved. It has been due to a varied quantity of problems, and to the mindset with which language teaching has been approached at times; but it has been mainly due to the problems that the lack of time or of a previous basic knowledge about it, among others, may provoke. And this didactic proposal has answered to some of these different problems, proposing solutions for some of them without disregarding the fact that others may still be present, for its difficulty to solve. These other issues that remain unsolved or unapproached may open the way for a deeper insight into the working of this innovation proposal.

However, the presented proposal has also offered a well-developed didactic program to cover some aspects of oral production that are hardly ever covered at the discussed educational levels, at the same time that it is framed within a topic that may attract students' attention.

What's more, the one thing that might be utterly beneficial of this proposal is that the topic of the already discussed materials can be changed or manipulated in the way that is most convenient to the particular didactic unit or project that the teacher has in mind. Because of this, this didactic proposal stands as a rather resourceful and situationally adaptable for any linguistic contents or integrated learning that the teacher is interested in.

In addition, since the learning is adaptable, so is the evaluation, which is present from the very beginning of the work with this unit, and centres around the competence that students show. This means that the teacher would be able to compare the competence that students have at the beginning of the project and the one that they show when it is coming to its end. Once again, this adaptability, though respecting its basic foundations, would allow this unit to be implemented in a number of different levels.

In the case of this didactic innovation proposal, the main objective is that students are able to improve in their oral production by means of understanding,

noticing and being able to reproduce the suprasegmental features of English. That is widely covered through the entire unit, at the same time that the thematic aspect is put forward in a more subtle way, without explicit activities about the topic. This means that students have more freedom to ponder the questions that the selected materials may arise in them. By means of this, the main linguistics goal should be covered by the end of the unit, all together with a thematic goal that should also be profitable for students' personal growth and personal life.

Concerning the implementation of digital tools, this didactic proposal shows that it is not really necessary to implement many of them to achieve our goals, although some of them are present for students to learn a bit about them, like those which allow, in this case, to experiment with audio files or to present information to their peers. However, as an advantage of this proposal, not many of them are necessary to try this project in your classrooms, apart from a basic playing device so that they are able to experiment with the input enhancement that the music can bring into our classrooms.

To sum up, this project offers a didactic proposal based upon the input enhancement and creative and technical skills in order to promote and improve oral production through learning and practising its suprasegmental features. And, although it has some disadvantages or problems, like potential lack of time at some points, it also has other advantages and a potential utility for our classrooms of every level, since it is adaptable despite it being designed for 4th Grade. That's to say, it could be used to improve a great range of Grades' oral production.

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