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Faculty of Education

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Thesis

Using Music as a Stimulus for Communication in EFL Classes

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I wrote this thesis myself and that I used only the stated resources.

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Abstract

The thesis focuses on specific qualities of songs that can represent an effective stimulus for communication among students and that can contribute to the development of students' speaking skills. The theoretical part of the paper introduces general advantages of songs in foreign language classes. The main aspects of different learning styles, communicative activities, as well as important rules that should be followed when song-based communicative activities are to be used during English language lessons are outlined in the chapter dealing with the dialog between theory and practice. The action research project of the paper includes the questionnaire and six detailed activity plans that demonstrate a variety of approaches to the use of songs. The lessons are described, analysed and reflected upon so that their effectiveness could be evaluated. The final evaluation of the action research project presents conclusions that support the validity of the thesis and suggests the conditions for further using song-based communicative activities in English classes.

Key words: song-based activities, communicative activities, information gap, interaction in groups/pairs

Anotace

Práce se zaměřuje na specifické hodnoty písní, které mohou představovat účinný podnět ke komunikaci mezi studenty a které také mohou přispět k rozvoji jejich mluveného projevu. Teoretická část této práce uvádí obecné výhody písní v hodinách cizího jazyka. Hlavní aspekty různých učebních stylů, komunikačních aktivit, stejně tak jako aspekty důležitých pravidel pro sestavení komunikačních aktivit založených na písních v hodinách anglického jazyka, jsou uvedeny v kapitole zaměřující se na dialog mezi teorií a praxí. Výzkumný projekt této práce zahrnuje dotazník a šest detailních plánů aktivit, které ukazují různé přístupy k využití písní. K hodnocení účinnosti aktivit přispěl popis hodin, jejich analýza a reflexe. Výsledky projektu se shodují s hypotézou a navrhuji podmínky pro další využití komunikačních aktivit založených na písních v hodinách anglického jazyka.

Klíčová slova: aktivity založené na písní, komunikační aktivity, informační diference, součinnost ve skupinách/párech

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1. Introduction

During my studies at university, music and songs were almost always introduced as just one of the means of bringing authentic material into a foreign language class. My own interest led me to find out more about the true nature of this material. When I began to play a musical instrument I soon realized, that I share my new interest in music with almost all the people around me. This experience was even more powerful when I took the first song based activity into my own lesson. Even today, I can spend hours talking about interests, attitudes or feelings about a particular piece of music with many of my friends, colleagues or students. Although the topic of using music in EFL classes has been discussed many times, I have often wondered why music, a great phenomenon present in people's everyday lives all over centuries, is always understood by foreign language teachers only as an additional material that is exploited as a 'warming-up activity' or a 'filler' of a lesson.

The school system in the Czech Republic demands that each school creates its own school education program. This fact put a great emphasis on teachers in terms of their own creativity and mainly flexibility to be ready to use different ways of teaching methods as well as different teaching materials. The usage of music can offer a great variety of exploiting language to students, a great variety of possible activities. Therefore, the general question that this thesis is trying to answer is closely connected to the defence of music as one of the possible ways how to make the lesson really purposeful, useful and interactive for both teachers and students. It also shows the way to create a positive and cooperative atmosphere that can finally lead to increasing motivation on the side of students.

What this thesis tries to answer more specifically is the question in what way music and songs can serve as incentives for communication among students. The core idea that stands for the basis of this work is that music and songs represent a secret language that is easy to transform into the spoken version and therefore to communication among students and their teachers. The point is that music and language are closely

related features that represent a form of expression and consequently a kind of communication among human beings. As Young Žáková further adds: “Music’s impact on learning English language was studied by many teachers and linguists. For example Sylvia C. Barreiro tried to prove that through music, with its rhythm and stress patterns, the learners will achieve a more natural production of their speech” [Barreiro (2005) in Young Žáková, 2011: 56].

The important purpose of this work is also to share its contents not only with teachers who focus on incorporating music to EFL classes but mainly with teachers who doubt that there could exist a way to take the teaching and learning process truly teacher and student friendly. Therefore, another goal of this thesis is to express my own belief that teachers should not be afraid of using music in their lessons since music can change an ordinary lesson to a really fruitful one. Although there might be teachers who doubt using music in EFL classes, I know from my own experience that music can directly improve English language acquisition.

The theoretical part of the present thesis covers several different perspectives of using music and songs in EFL classes. This part focuses not only on advantages but also on some possible problems and drawbacks that a teacher may come across when thinking of taking a song into a class. In this part, the basic principles of communication as well as the basic presumptions of connecting songs with communicative activities are pointed out. Moreover, the explanation of a possible way the learners perceive and analyse new information was taken into consideration in order to understand how a song may help to the whole process of learning. The findings in the theoretical part were derived mainly from the literature (Griffee, Trim, Murphey, etc.), selected online Internet articles (Orlova, Roe, Davanellos, etc.) as well as from the university lectures (Hofmannová, Bitljanová) and my own conclusions.

The practical part presents a concrete way of getting a song ready for a communicative activity. Therefore, the emphasis is put on the selection of a song as well as on some tips to be done when taking a song based communicative activity to a class. Some of the basic principles of grouping students are also mentioned. As the concrete action research into the problem of using songs in EFL classes with the special focus on song-based communicative activities, a questionnaire was conducted among the teachers

at several basic and secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The expectations and hypotheses of the research are listed, concluded and confronted with the final results of the questionnaire. The last subchapter of the practical part concerning the final summary and suggestions for further improvements of using music in EFL classes discusses some disputable facts that should be seriously taken into account when working with music as a stimulus for communication in EFL classes.

2. Music and songs in people's lives

For centuries, music and songs have been an inseparable part of people's lives. They have always surrounded people in whatever age of their lives. From their childhood, people listen to various ding-dongs, rhymes, and different types of music. In early childhood, they are mostly parents and grandparents who sing various nursery rhymes to their children to calm them down, to provide them relaxed atmosphere. It is generally known that music and songs also positively influence emotions in the childhood. Rosová claims that music can serve as a factor "that reduces the signs of nervousness of a child" [Rosová, 2007: 8]. Music and songs also stimulate children's thought processes since it is proved that songs, especially in early childhood, can influence intellectual development of children. Songs accompany people's lives even in their later life despite of the fact that dingdongs are substituted by a wide-ranging type of different musical genres. As people grow up, the role of songs in their lives is suddenly changing into more complex one. In the following lines, basic aspects of songs will be specified and at the same time the significant relation between songs and their roles in people's lives will be outlined.

Music and songs are like 'guides' that accompany people not only at home but also at their work, in the streets, in shops. We encounter them also on the Internet, on TV, in the radio. The point is that people are exposed to music and songs during their whole lives, in whatever situations. As Lexová points out: "Music can be heard everywhere around us ... it accompanies happy and pleasurable moments ... but on the other hand, music can be also connected with unhappy occasions as funerals" [Lexová, 2007: 3]. Thus, songs have become an unseparable, natural part part of life.

In most cases, people listen to songs during their free time while they relax, many people even listen when falling asleep. On the other hand, people sometimes listen to songs in order to stimulate their physical condition or even the will to work. No matter where and when we listen to music, music has always had a great impact on our actions, feelings and emotions. Roe states that it is "generally acknowledged that the primary appeal is to emotions" [Roe, 1999]. The reasons why people listen to songs can vary but songs always directly contribute to our senses and therefore evoke great variety of feelings. Roe [1999] for example declares that this primary 'emotional appeal' can be

found in national anthems, love songs or political protest songs. The ‘emotional appeal’ is like the message from the inner world of a song that is sent to our senses to bring to mind for example the feeling of happiness, relaxed atmosphere or the will to keep working. When listening to a song, in addition to melody, we also occasionally realize that just the lyrics can touch our emotions. The reason why lyrics are so impressive is that they tell us the stories about our own life, about the lives of others, about the whole world we live in. “While music touches our hearts, lyrics and their words flow into our minds and so they draw us into their world” [Rosová, 2007: 3].

Music and songs also create a specific branch of culture. Murphey claims that “music in its many forms constitutes a powerful subculture with its own mythology, its own rituals, and its own priesthood” [Murphey, 1992: 4]. The point is that music itself can be regarded as the ‘subculture of society’ since every generation has its own culture which is among other things also created by specific trends in music. The role of music as subculture is significant for people in whatever age. People express themselves through music and take it as a part of their identity and a way of living. Roe, for example, explains: “In the second half of the 1950’s, as American rock ‘n’ roll began to assume its hegemony over the airwaves ... this new form of popular music began to be perceived primarily as a phenomenon of youth” [Roe, 1999]. The point is that particular music (modern Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, Hip Hop, Ska, etc.) and the way it is sung and represented by its artists is a powerful subculture and therefore a powerful model for a lot of people.

Whatever the role of music and songs in people’s lives might be, we can undoubtedly say that this role is indispensable. Songs can be viewed in many facets but not for one person will this facet be always the same. Whether we like songs or not, whether we are children or adult persons, songs always touch our inner feelings and contribute to our senses. Moreover, songs are like a ‘guide’ that accompanies our every day life and helps us express our feelings, emotions or identity. The power of this ‘guide’ can be nevertheless very helpful not only in our everyday life but also in education. The principal goal of the following chapter will be therefore the description of songs as a very useful prompt in EFL classes.

3. Music and songs in EFL classes

Looking back at my student days at basic school, I note two crucial memories: my schoolmates, and the teachers and the way they taught us. Now I am at the beginning of my own teaching career and I can reflect not only on what it is that helps students learn the language but also what strategies help the teacher to fulfil his/her aims in the teaching process. As a teacher, I use a lot of techniques to motivate children and to challenge them to learn. I also share with my students their interest in songs and I found out that songs can be seen as a powerful means of teaching. The use of songs in EFL classes offers one of the ways of intensifying the teaching and learning process, the one that is usually accepted by both parties. Songs can help students to learn the language in an indirect way and at the same time, the use of songs can help teachers fulfil their aims in a relaxed yet working atmosphere. In the following chapter, the basic advantages of the use of songs in EFL classes will be described.

3.1. Classroom atmosphere and students' motivation

Teaching any foreign language can represent a 'struggle' between the class and the teacher. This can happen when the teacher is not capable of creating rapport, a positive relationship between him/herself and the students, or when the theme of the lesson does not address the learners. However, using songs can evoke friendly and co-operate atmosphere and thus can help not only the teacher but also the students in the whole process of learning. Songs can be used to relax the students, to provide an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and to boost the students' enthusiasm to work. It does not matter at all whether the song is blues, pop or classical; each genre can stimulate a very positive association to the study of a language that otherwise might only be perceived by the students as a set of frustrating tasks which require a lot of correction. Griffie explains: "Songs, but especially instrumental music, give us the external cover we need to feel more secure while at the same time providing the internal support to carry on with the task" [Griffie, 1992: 4]. Murphey goes on to say that "songs encourage harmony within oneself and within a group" [Murphey, 1992: 8]. The positive effects of music described by Griffie and Murphey are also closely related to one of the humanistic methods,

Suggestopaedia, developed originally by a Bulgarian psychiatrist Lozanov. We will take a closer look at this method in the following text.

3.2. The use of songs

Unfortunately, the current use of songs in EFL classes seems to be reduced only to some 'cloze exercises', like filling the gaps, or tasks where the students are supposed to complete the lyrics during the listening activities. Although such use of songs is definitely one of the most frequent (and certainly effective) ways to enhance students' listening skills, songs are a good means of practising all kinds of other skills of a more varied nature.

3.2.1. Integrating skills and subskills

According to a curriculum of the *Common European Framework of Reference* that guided the development of education of foreign languages the term skills is now referred to as a set of communicative language activities and strategies. These activities and strategies (speaking, writing, listening and reading) are first analyzed in isolation, and then linked together in the process of communicative interaction which is further described as a complex of:

- Productive skills: oral production (speaking), written production (writing)
- Receptive skills: aural reception (listening), visual reception (reading), audio-visual reception
- Interactive skills: oral interaction, written interaction
- Mediating skills [Trim, 2005: 9-10]

The term subskills has been defined as a group that consists of competences of the language system. The division of these competences is as follows:

- Lexical competence
- Grammatical competence

- Semantic competence
- Phonological competence [Trim, 2005: 13]

Songs provide many opportunities of practising a foreign language with special focus on fostering all skills and subskills. According to Orlova, and the recent EFL literature on the problem of integrating skills and subskills through songs (Davanellos, Murphey, Griffee, Rampton, Jedynek, etc.), it is possible to name the following:

- a) Practising pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation patterns of the English language. These language elements are stressed when teaching young learners, in particular. Songs represent an excellent way for both presenting and practising the sonic forms of the language.
- b) Teaching vocabulary, especially in the vocabulary reinforcement stage. In this case, as Murphey adds, songs simply “stick in the head”. He further explains the reason of this aspect and he says that “songs create a state of relaxed receptivity [...] without loss of motivation” [Murphey, 1992: 3-5].
- c) Teaching grammar. In this respect, songs are especially favoured by teachers when they want to present or practise the use of different tenses. Students with the support of rhythm, tune, and through constant repetition of lyrics can easily understand and memorize, for instance, a sentence pattern or other aspects of language items.
- d) Teaching listening comprehension. Fostering listening skills through songs is considered to be very common and often the only one way that is taken advantage of when songs are used in EFL. Apart from phonetics aspects, during listening comprehension tasks, the students are also trained to understand the given text.
- e) Developing writing skills. An ideal phase in a listening task can be using a song for practising some writing skills, for example considering a possible topic for further thinking about a song in an essay or writing a letter to the main character in the song, in a follow-up stage.
- f) Practising reading skills both for practising the skill of correct reading and the skills of reading comprehension. For this purpose, mainly lyrics of a song can be used.

- g) Teaching speaking. In this case, songs are used as a stimulus for either simple speaking tasks or more complex communicative activities expanded further, possibly to whole class discussions.

[Orlova, 2003]

3.2.2. Cultural significance

Songs also symbolize a unique approach to raising the students' awareness of another culture. The point is that songs differ in a variety of musical genres which can be moreover connected to different historical or present-day events. Therefore, songs signify a 'mirror' of different cultures or habits. Griffiee explains: "Bringing a song into the classroom entails bringing the culture of the song in with it", and continues that songs "are a part of what makes a generation a generation and the current generation is a global generation rather than a parochial one. The world is evolving a common culture and pop songs are its backbone. By using pop songs in your classroom, you and your students are participating in the emerging world culture" [Griffiee, 2002: 5]. An important part of working with a song in EFL classes is the understanding the context of the song. This understanding, which can be done through a discussion about the song, is an inevitable step to explaining the cultural message that the song is conveying.

3.2.3. Drawbacks of using songs

Using songs in EFL classes can be really useful for different aims and objectives in the whole learning process. However, songs have also their drawbacks. These drawbacks might be the reason why some teachers still hesitate to use songs in the classroom. According to Davanellos, the most crucial drawbacks are:

- language of poor quality
- songs are not serious, it is just waste of time
- students just want to listen, not to work
- songs are too noisy
- it is time demanding to find an appropriate song

- teachers do not have the right equipment
- teachers cannot sing [Davanellos, 1999: 15]

These are some of the things that the teachers should be aware of. Not all songs can be taken to the class since their language is sometimes hard to understand even for the teacher. On the other hand, even though a song contains some slang language or informal speech (not obscene language!), it can represent a possible way to expose the students to the use of particular part of the language that is common among certain social groups of people.

The statement that songs are not serious is, in my opinion, misleading as there are many reasons why to take them in the classroom. Even the songs that do not present real situations and are rooted in fantasy can be taken in the class. The teacher can even utilize the unimportance of a song and change it into an advantageous element that can boost the learners' thinking and imagination. The song can be used for lots of purposes that can transform song whose content does not seem to be serious enough into a very important task.

Sometimes, when listening to a song, it may happen that the students concentrate on the tune of the song too much. Even this can be turned into an advantage since it is known that remembering language items can be fostered by music and students often unintentionally remember words and phrases just thanks to the tune that accompanies them.

The argument that playing a song is too noisy might be true; however, the teacher does not necessarily have to play the song with the highest volume since this is not the main aim of using songs in EFL classes. On the other hand, even the noise itself might be meaningful. Davanellos explains that "certain level of noise has to be acceptable in a language class" [Davanellos, 1999: 14].

Teachers often find it time consuming to choose a song which would be appropriate for their classes and therefore they think it is not worth their effort. A good solution may be to ask the students to bring their favourite pieces of music to the class. Then the teacher can select the song that would be appropriate for his/her teaching aims.

To use a song in EFL classes does not necessarily mean to sing. “Using a song does not require a teacher to be a music specialist or pop singer. While an interest in songs and music and willingness to sing along with the cassette is desirable, students are often happy to do the singing. [...] There are many ways of presenting songs which do not require a teacher to sing and which leave the teacher ‘free’ to focus on students” [Davanellos, 1999: 15].

There are other possible drawbacks as regards the use of songs in EFL classes; however, benefits that were mentioned above outweigh all of these possible problems. Finally, it is important to remember the golden rule of using songs in EFL classes:

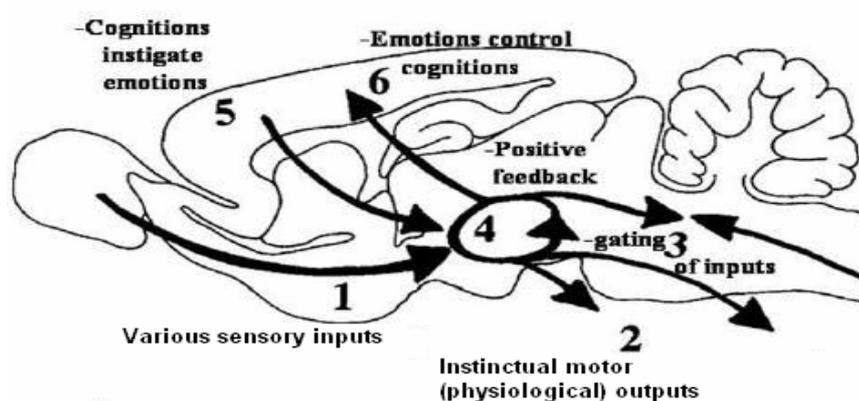
“Don’t overdo it! Once you have experienced all the benefits and joys of using songs in a class, it is too easy to use them again and again. Remember to vary your students’ language-learning so that they retain their enthusiasm” [Davanellos, 1999: 15].

4. Dialogues between theory and practice

Delving deeper into the reasons of using music and songs in EFL classes brings us to understanding the relationship between theory and practice. In our first chapters we investigated some of the emotional aspects of the studied issue in the environment of the EFL classroom. In order to explain the students' acquisition of language, or the way they learn it, as well as the way a song may fit to the acquisition and learning processes, we will now take a closer look at the cognitive aspects of the learning process from the theoretical perspective. The use of music and songs in EFL classes is the strategy that addresses all students, i.e. all their different learning styles and “their learning abilities and strengths” [Whitla, 2006].

4.1. Emotion and cognition are inseparable

Some interpretations of neuropsychology, the scientific discipline dealing mainly with relationships between the nervous system and the specific behavioral process, prove that emotions within the emotional process in human brains can influence the cognitive process and therefore the whole way people think and finally react. Neuropsychological data on this process are shown and explained in the figure and the commentary below.



[Panksepp, 2004]

Panksepp tries to explain “the various neural interactions defining characteristics of all major emotional systems of the brain: (1) various sensory stimuli can unconditionally access emotional systems; (2) emotional systems can generate instinctual

motor outputs, as well as (3) modulate sensory inputs, promoting incentive salience. (4) Emotional systems have positive feedback components which can sustain emotional arousal after precipitating events have passed, and (5) these systems can be modulated by cognitive inputs, and (6) these systems can modify and channel cognitive activities, again modulating incentive salience. Also, the important criterion that emotional systems create affective states is not included, but it is assumed that arousal of the whole executive circuit for each emotion is essential for getting feelings going within the brain, perhaps by interacting with other brain circuits for self-representation that may arise from midbrain systems” [Panksepp, 2004].

The same author further claims that emotion and cognition should not be distinguished as separate entities that occur independently or are separated physiologically. Cognition, therefore, cannot be independent from emotion. As Welch further adds, “Technological advances in brain imaging over the past decade have provided valuable insights into the neural basis for a variety of cognitive and affective functions, including those related to music. Hemispheric asymmetries are often evidenced, as relative biases towards particular neural locations, depending on the type of musical behaviour under consideration” [Welch, 2005].

4.1.1. Learning style

The problem of learning styles, mainly their classification and differentiation, has been the subject of never ending theoretical and methodological discussions. The fact is that people differ from each other very much. They have different interests, different habits, different ways of thinking, etc. It is this ‘difference’ that is the main characteristic feature when describing and defining individual learning styles. Learning styles are basically classified according to different aspects that are taken as the most distinctive in each classification. Before putting down some basic characteristics of learning styles, it should be mentioned that the term learning style could be defined as “different approaches or ways of learning” [Šabatová, 2008:17]. To define the term learning styles in other words, it can be said that learning styles express “the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains and retrieves information” [Felder and Henriques in Šabatová (1995) 2008: 18]. There are, of course, many other definitions describing what learning styles are. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the teacher should always see

his/her students on some point on a continuum. As Chudobová explains: “Learning styles are points along a scale that help us to discover the different forms of mental representations; however, they are not good characterizations of what people are or are not like. We should not divide the population into a set of categories (i.e. visual, auditory, ... learners). What these various instruments attempt to do is to allocate a person on some point on a continuum (similar to measuring height or weight). In other words, we should not pigeonhole people as we are all capable of learning under almost any style, no matter what our preference is” [Šabatová, 2008:18].

Although the issue of defining learning styles was debated many times, at least some of the approaches to this topic should be mentioned in this chapter. Some of these different learning styles models are:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

“Whatever circumstances of your life, the understanding of type can make your perceptions clearer, your judgments sounder, and your life closer to your heart’s desire” [Myers, The Myers & Brigs Foundation web pages].

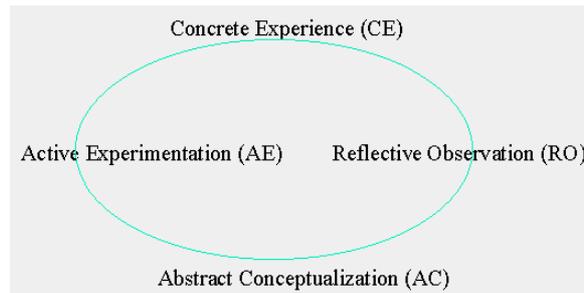
This type of the learning style is based on the findings of Carl Gustav Jung. Therefore, this style can be generally identified through so called “dichotomies” in different personality types. As for the example, following types of learners (or different combinations of them) may occur:

- Extroverts or Introverts
- Sensors or Intuitors
- Thinkers or Feelers
- Judgers or Perceivers

[Myers and Brigs, The Myers & Brigs Foundation web pages]

- Kolb Inventory Model

Kolb’s theory of learning styles is closely connected to four-stage learning style circle that can be displayed as follows:



[Groh and Shipman, 1999]

What this theory tries to explain is that there exist four stages of learning, four types of learning that represent the best ways to learn for specific learners. These ways are realized through:

- Concrete Experience (CE): These types of learners learn best from feelings and personal involvements.
- Reflective Observation (RO): These learners best understand info by watching and listening.
- Abstract Conceptualization (AC): Learning by thinking is the best way of learning for these learners.
- Active Experimentation (AE): This type of learners needs to “learn by doing”. [Groh and Shipman, 1999].

- Felder-Silverman Model

Richard Felder and Linda Silverman based their theory of learning styles on the findings that there exist five learning dimensions of students. These dimensions are the following ones:

- “sensing learners (concrete, practical, oriented toward facts and procedures) or intuitive learners (conceptual, innovative, oriented toward theories and meanings)
- visual learners (prefer visual representations of presented material-- pictures, diagrams, flow charts) or verbal learners (prefer written and spoken explanations)
- active learners (learn by trying things out, working with others) or reflective learners (learn by thinking things through, working alone)

- sequential learners (linear, orderly, learn in small incremental steps) or global learners (holistic, systems thinkers, learn in large leaps)” [Felder & Spurlin (2005) in Šabatová, 2008]

Apart from Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Model, Kolb Inventory Model, Felder-Silverman and others, the most common classification is Sensory Learning Style Inventory that is also known as the VAK typology (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) [Bitljanová, 2007]. This typology classifies learners in the following four learning styles:

The first one is the visual learning style that is preferred by students who perceive new information through eyes. Visual style learners learn better when they can see, for example, some actions of the teacher, pictures, symbols, real objects or a text. Students who listen to a song in EFL classes usually work with the text, read the lyrics, see the pictures of the singer or a band, and therefore take information in a way that is favourable for their learning.

The second one is the auditory learning style that is typical of learners who prefer to perceive new information through ears. These students learn best from hearing the teacher, through discussion and listening tasks. With regard to the benefits of the usage of songs in English classes, it can be expected that learners will usually remember and memorize new words or new language items if they can hear the sound and the lyrics of a song.

The third type is the kinesthetic learning style. Kinesthetic learners prefer learning through movement. This type of learning usually happens through performing actions, moving around the classroom, dancing, clapping, etc. These are actions that are obviously supported by a song. Thus, kinesthetic learners learn through experiencing and doing things and therefore remember the language items by going back in their minds to what their body was doing.

The last, more recently added type is called the tactile learning style. This type is sometimes considered to be the same as the kinesthetic type since it is also related to movement. For these learners touching a variety of things means the most effective way of learning since they take in information through the sense of touch and feeling. They

like, for example, connecting new words in the lyrics with real objects, playing games or collecting some materials that may relate to the theme of a song.

Since music and a song is a medium that can be listened to, worked with or performed, all these ways of learning can be supported by their use. Moreover, the implementation of music and songs can stand for a multisensory approach to learning that can encourage multisensory stimulation and thus support natural and at the same time optimal learning. This optimal learning connected to multisensory stimulation plays the crucial role in the whole process of learning and teaching as it provides not only great conditions for students to learn but also an approach which can help a teacher to set a friendly atmosphere in class. To explain this, there are always students who differ from each other, who differ in the way they learn the best. The fact is that some students prefer kinesthetic experience, some of them like visuals, some auditory support. Combining various teaching methods is, as many methodologist experts declare, important for developing all students' skills. As Nedomová points out, "We want our pupils to read, speak, and actually think in English. Therefore we should use the multisensory approach which leads to the development of all their skills." [Nedomová, 2007: 26] Although it may not seem obvious from the first point of view, there is another reason why to take advantage of this multisensory approach. Nedomová informs that one of the reasons why students behave sometimes in an inappropriate way during a lesson is that a teacher is not familiar with the fact that there exist a particular suitable way to stimulate students' attention to learning and therefore keep their concentration. Nedomová adds that the results of such situations are obvious since "such children do not remember much information we try to present to them, it is a difficult task for them to understand and be able to use in practice the particular subject matter", which basically means that "it is absolutely crucial and unavoidable to combine more methods and stimulate all the senses" [Nedomová, 2007: 26-27].

4.1.2. Cognitive Style

The term cognitive style has been widely used in the literature on education, however, many authors have used the terms learning and cognitive styles interchangeably. Some educators explain the term cognitive style as “a person’s typical way of thinking, which should be seen as a continuum” [Hofmannová, 2010]. Some authors, on the other side, describe a cognitive style as “a psychological term which refers to variations among individuals in preferred ways of perceiving, organizing, analyzing, or recalling information and experience” [Sewall (1988) in Heineman web pages, 2000]. Cross adds that “cognitive styles as the characteristic ways of using the mind and is frequently considered as one element among other elements comprising learning style” [Cross (1976) in Heineman web pages, 2000].

As regards the specific description of the term cognitive style, one of the main distinctions has been made between so called ‘field dependence’ and ‘field independence’ theory of cognitive style. The ‘field dependence (FD)’ and ‘field independence (FI)’ theory is one of the approaches to cognitive learning that is based on the central feature of “extent of autonomous functioning” [Witkin, Gooddenough and Otman (1979) in Town, 2003]. This basically means that the distinction relies on the fact “whether an individual characteristically relies on the external environment as a given, in contrast to working on it...” [Willing (1979) in Town, 2003]. As the term ‘FD’ suggests, we can then define this type of learners as “those who tend to accept or rely upon the external environment” while, on the others side, the term ‘FI’ refers to “those who tend to work on it” [ibid.]. Witkin further explains that: Field-dependent people tended to rely upon visual information from the outside world (hence the term field-dependent) whereas field-independent people relied almost exclusively on internal cues such as muscle tension or sensations from the vestibular system in the ear and ignored external evidence to the contrary” [Witkin (1969) in Town, 2003]. The reason of providing the information about the ‘FD’ and ‘FI’ type of learners is worth mentioning as a song can represent a clue to setting teaching conditions for the ‘FD’ and ‘FI’ type of learners. Some students can work on the lyrics he/she is given (thus he/she can rely on an external aid) and other students can work on the tune, rhythm, tempo, etc., as with the stimulus that affects students’ inner vestibular system and internal sensations.

According to Entwistle, a British educational psychologist known for identifying the relationships of genetic factors and approaches to learning, there is great evidence that “one gene determines the dominant hemisphere of the developing brain, while another relates to “handedness” [Entwistle (1988) in Town, 2003]. The fact of the influence of genetic factors is, according to brain research, crucial for providing the evidence that “the left cerebral hemisphere is specialised for logical, analytical, linear information processing, and the right hemisphere is specialised for synthetic, holistic, imagistic information processing. This evidence seems to parallel research on dual cognitive style models such as field independent/field dependent ..., analytical/rational ..., serialist/holist ... and sequential-successive/parallel-simultaneous ” [Willing (1988) in Town, 2003].

As Heineman (2000) and other authors show, there are several views on the problem of the term cognitive style. However, this term plays an irreplaceable role of the key elements when describing a learner’s way of thinking. It is important to mention the fact that the problem of the usage of music and songs in ELT is closely connected to the way a learner perceives, organizes and finally thinks about any new information he/she is exposed to. Therefore, the brief explanation of the term cognitive style was crucial in order to understand the way music and songs can become a real prompt for students.

4.2. Humanism in TEFL methodology

4.2.1. Humanistic features

The major approaches in language teaching have changed many times. While the 19th century was well known for the teacher-centred approach focusing rather on grammar-translation and similar methods (since the purpose was to help “students read and appreciate foreign language literature”[Larsen-Freeman, 20011]), the 20th century might be generally described as the century of development of learner-centred principles based on humanistic approaches in EFL classes.

This means that the teacher-centred approaches (where the teacher stands for the basic point of the whole process of teaching and learning) has changed to learner-centred

as Bertrand further explains: "...personalistic theories which are also called humanistic, non-directive, organic, free or open are grounded mostly on concept of human self, freedom and autonomy. The person who is in the process of learning has to have a power over the education, the person has to manage the learning and use his/her inner energy" [Bertrand (1998) in Chudobová, 2006:11]. The principles of humanistic approaches in ELT and learning could be briefly summarized as principles that reflect the primacy of affective and emotional factors while emphasizing that:

- "Learners are encouraged to adopt the right attitudes (towards the teacher, other learners, target language and culture), interests and motivation.
- Methods should be based more on psychology than on linguistic, the teacher should consider affective factors, treat the learners as 'whole persons'.
- Learning should occur in the learning environment, which minimizes anxiety. Success depends on the extent to which the teacher caters to the learner's affective domain.
- Teaching should be subordinated to learning (learner-centred view of language development)" [Hofmannová, 2010].

Humanistic approaches are also inspired by personalistic psychology, which, as Bertrand suggests, "promotes creative problem solving, self-evaluation" [Bertrand (1998) in Chudobová 2006:12]. Bertrand also mentions that the specific feature of humanistic approach is that learners participate on creating curriculum and that these learners should work in harmony with their interests and state aims attractive for them. Bertrand finally sums up that the learners are guided to responsibility for their choice [Bertrand (1998) in Chudobová 2006:11-13].

The next main principle that goes hand in hand with humanistic approaches is that the teachers should focus in their practices on a variety of ways in order to help students

to learn. To be specific, the realization of these principles can be put into practice by, for example:

- “Enabling multisensory perception (e.g. visual aids, colours, music, movement, rhythm, manipulating objects, i.e. learning by doing).
- Personalising the subject matter.
- Teaching the learning strategies, study skills, exam skills” [Hofmannová, 2010].

Methods that follow the humanistic principles are e.g. *The Silent Way* that was developed by Caleb Gatego in 1972, then the method developed by Charles Curran in 1976 called *Community Language Learning* and finally the method of *Suggestopedia* developed in the late seventies and inspired by the work of Georgi Lozanov [Hofmannová, 2010].

The reason why the following chapter is devoted to *Suggestopedia* is that the method is closely related to the use of music in EFL classes. Understanding of *Suggestopedia* can therefore help explain the way music can contribute to stimulating students’ communication, which is the core idea of this thesis.

4.2.2. Suggestopedia

Let us now investigate the language learning/acquisition process from a more practical standpoint relying mainly on affective aspects, i.e. through one of the humanistic approaches to teaching English as a foreign language, *Suggestopedia*. Apart from creating a non-threatening atmosphere as well as possibilities for integrating different learning styles and bringing a culture to a lesson, the method of *Suggestopedia* introduces music as an important means to present and practise the foreign language. The method was developed in the second half of the 20th century. It belongs to the group of humanistic methods that adopted learner-centered approach, special focus being on the students’ feelings.

Suggestopedia is rooted in the theory based upon the idea of creating an atmosphere in which students could learn more effectively. Lozanov, the originator of this method, provides basic explanations of its core idea: “We (i.e. students) fear that we will be unable to perform, that we will be limited in our ability to learn, that we will fail. One result is that we do not use the full mental powers that we have. We may be using only five to ten percent of our mental capacity. In order to make better use of our reserved capacity, the limitations we think we have, need to be ‘desuggested’.” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:73). Therefore, breaking psychological barriers as well as psychological limitations of our learners to their language learning is one of the main ideas of the method.

The question that may arise is how it should happen that the teacher helps ‘desuggest’ limitations to learning. One of the ways to overcome the barriers and to use mental reserves is “through the integration of fine arts” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:73). In Suggestopedia it is music which is widely used as the most significant relaxing factor that should make the students feel secure in their learning process. It should be pointed out that in most countries, classical music is usually used for this purpose. It is exploited as an accompanying element that serves as an incentive during so called ‘two planes’. These should not be seen as just language presentation and practice. Larsen-Freeman adds that “on one (plane) the linguistic message is encoded; and on the other are factors which influence the linguistic message. On the conscious plane, the learner attends to the language; on the subconscious plane, the music suggests that learning is easy and pleasant.” [2000:79]. To be more concrete, during the ‘first plane’ (sometimes also called as the ‘active concert’) the music is used as an accompaniment to the teacher’s voice, when he/she matches his/her voice to the rhythm and intonation of the music. ‘Other planes’, sometimes called as subconscious or passive concerts, are provided through the actions when the teacher does not match his/her voice to the music but just uses the music as a background factor initiating the feeling of relaxed and stimulating atmosphere to the process of learning.

Another key element of this method is that the whole process of teaching and learning must take place in a friendly and positive atmosphere where the relationship between the teacher and students stands on the basis of trust.

To sum up, the method of Suggestopedia takes advantage of music as a means for making the students feel more emotionally relaxed and secure during the learning process. Music therefore represents the non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere that is necessary for fostering good relations between the teacher and the students, and for facilitating the whole process of learning.

4.3. Communication in ELT

Necessity to communicate

Communication is said to be a process that can be generally regarded not only as an exchange of thoughts or information but also as mutual interaction within the subjects. Being able to communicate is the skill that people learn from their “early childhood, because they want to express their feelings, needs” [Portíková, 1997: 10)]. The question why people need to develop the ability to communicate even in their later age is that they need to understand others and, more importantly, that they need to be understood by others. Communication is, therefore, considered to be as “the main means of understanding people” [Portíková, 1997: 10)].

People today communicate among themselves through various ways. They can communicate directly through face-to-face communication or indirectly through text messages, the Internet, letters, etc. Whatever way people use to communicate, they always use their language or some body language in order to express their thoughts or to gain some information. Expressing thoughts and gaining information is also one of the main reasons why people learn foreign languages. Nowadays, the communicative ability in a foreign language is very important since more and more people, for example, go abroad to study or work in foreign institutions.

Therefore, the ability to communicate in a foreign language has been regarded as a main goal when learning any foreign language. As Richards declares: “The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second or foreign language learners. Learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the

effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how well they feel improved in their spoken language proficiency” [Richards, 2005: 1-2]. The point is that although developing grammatical competence definitely plays an irreplaceable role when learning a foreign language, the importance of being able to communicate in the target language is nowadays generally regarded as the most essential goal in the teaching and learning process.

However, the fact is that developing grammatical competence at basic schools sometimes prevails and it happens very often that students are not able to express their thoughts properly; they struggle when they are required to communicate and often they give up and resort to their mother tongue. To be able to communicate is often taken as a natural skill that people learn (naturally) indirectly just as they learn their mother tongue. Therefore, it is more important to teach students the grammatical items of a foreign language and make them use the language correctly at expense of fluency. Bygate states: “Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill. Perhaps this is because we can almost all speak, and so take the skill too much for granted” [Bygate in Portíková (1987) 1997: 12].

In the following passage, the focus will be put on describing the communication and its important role in EFL classes. Firstly, however, it is important to distinguish between speaking and communication.

4.3.1. Speaking versus communication

Although the terms ‘speaking’ and ‘communication’ are both parts of general term ‘spoken interaction’, it is necessary to distinguish between these two terms. The term ‘speaking’ itself is rather connected to producing one’s performance in terms of, for example, public speech in front of an audience. It is supposed to be rather a monologue that is produced by someone who wants to say something. Some other examples of ‘speaking’ are, according to Richards, for example “giving a class report about a school trip, conducting a class debate, giving lecture or giving a speech of welcome” and therefore it is a kind of speech that “is often evaluated according to its effectiveness or impact on the listener” [Richards, 2005: 5]. It is also necessary to mention that when

giving a speech, the emphasis is put on the accuracy of expressions and the appropriateness of the whole performance.

As regards communication, this term is mainly linked with exchanging information among people. It is an interaction among people where each person takes some part. When comparing communication with 'speaking', there is a big difference since: "Communication is a two-way process between the speaker and the listener..., transmitting information from one person to another, involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding" [Byrne, 1976: 8-9]. In addition to this, it is worth mentioning that the main aim for teaching and communicative activities is, in contrast to teaching speaking, not in giving priority to accuracy of expressions "as long as information is successfully communicated or understood" [Richards, 2005: 4].

4.3.2. Communicative activities in EFL classes

In most schools, there is still a tendency to put great emphasis on grammatical knowledge of a foreign language rather than on developing students' communicative skills. It seems obvious that all students need to have some grammatical knowledge to be able to speak; however, it very often happens that this focus on grammar prevails even if the students are not beginners. When the teacher focuses just on developing grammatical competence of the students, it may possibly happen that the students 'accumulate' rather the passive knowledge of a language. Scrivener [2005: 147] describes this problem as 'up-in-the-head' mode and he further claims that it is very difficult to make these learners communicate since they cannot use the language actively. The lack of communicative activities in EFL classes can have also another negative impact on students. They may have problems with expressing their thoughts and feelings in a fluent way. What is more, the learners may end up with rather passive knowledge of a language. It is very important to realize that the process of 'transformation' of this passive knowledge into the active one may, in many cases, mean a very long process with the goals that are sometimes hard to achieve.

The lack of communicative activities has its reason not only in giving priority to developing grammar competence of learners. According to Nováková, one of other reasons is that it is difficult to make students talk about something because:

- It happens very often that students find the topic rather boring or ridiculous to talk about.
- Students feel shy and embarrassed when they are to perform a speech.
- Students do not have sufficient vocabulary related to the topic.
- They are afraid of making mistakes, which may possibly hold them 'back' in front of the teacher and the whole class. [Nováková, 2004: 8-10]

These decisive factors are the most frequent reasons for the lack of communication in EFL classes. In order for the teachers to change this situation, it is necessary to understand what makes an activity a communicative one. Therefore, some basic features crucial for arising communication among learners will be pointed out.

4.3.3. Basic features of communicative activities

The first thing to mention is that students should have a communicative purpose that is considered as one the most important factor when making students to communicate about something. Gower declares: "The most important point to remember is that the students must have a reason for speaking in order for the activity to be truly communicative; there must be a 'gap' between the speakers to be filled" [Gower, 1995: 101]. Scrivener [2005: 152] adds that this 'gap' is typical for communication since people communicate in cases when somebody has a piece of information that is unknown for others. This 'gap' might be, according to Gower, "either:

- an opinion gap (*I don't know what to think about this topic*) and/or
- an information gap (*You have some information I need to know*) "[Gower, 1995: 101].

Klippel [2005: 6] also agrees with the presence of these two kinds of 'gaps' in communicative activities and further suggests that the content of 'gaps' should be really worth talking about since students mostly do not like to discuss trivia.

Communication cannot take place if students are not actively involved in this task. As in every lesson, during every activity done in an EFL class, it is very important to activate students. In a communicative activity, the importance of being active is crucial since these activities are mainly student-centered, which means that students are in the centre of the whole teaching and learning process. Student-centered activities are based on activating students while focusing on students' needs, accepting their learning styles, interests and abilities. Being active during a communicative activity is also closely linked with the feeling of security. Klippel [2005: 7] adds that telling somebody his/her opinion is not always easy even for the most extrovert person and therefore friendly and cooperative atmosphere, not only within a class but also within a group, is essential.

Another basic aspect of communicative activities is the motivation of students. Motivation is a driving force that makes them communicate. Motivation might be generally divided into two major categories, intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is derived from an external stimulus when students are motivated, for example, due to a need for getting a job, going abroad or, generally spoken, due to their future life as such. The intrinsic motivation is a driving force that is derived from the 'inner' interest of students in the target language, which means that students take the learning of the language as their hobby that they do with their own pleasure. As regards this kind of motivation, it is important for the teacher to put emphasis on the right selection of methods, strategies and activities. The question of motivation is generally considered by teachers as the most difficult thing to realize in a class, however, motivation is the key factor for starting any activity in EFL classes.

An important point to remember is that "success is also based on students' willingness to learn to speak a foreign language, which may be influenced by the teacher's methods used in teaching communication and, above all, his or her personality. Considering these, teachers should realize how important role they play in encouraging the students to learn to speak a foreign language" [Temerová, 2007: 8-9].

Finally, the basic presumption for every communicative activity is that students are prepared to talk about something. Students therefore have to know some language items as vocabulary, structures, phrases, etc. Students also have to be prepared thematically, so they have to know something about a topic to be discussed. The whole preparation for a communicative activity is therefore essential and hardly any of communicative activities can be done successfully without it.

These basic considerations represent the main characteristics of communicative activities in general. The question is, whether there exists a way through which these requirements could be taken into practice. The following chapter therefore discusses possible ways to fulfil all these requirements of effective communicative activities in EFL classes.

4.3.4. Songs and communication

The main concern of this thesis is to stimulate students' communication while taking advantage of music and songs. Therefore, attention is now being paid to those aspects of songs that can conform with all the above mentioned requirements for setting a communicative activity in EFL classes.

Songs and the presence of a 'gap'

As already mentioned, one of the basic features of communicative activities is the presence of 'information' or 'opinion gap'. Cranmer and Laroy [1992, 2-4] even claim that songs can offer more than these two 'gaps'. They state that there is also a 'curiosity gap' that "goes a great deal further than the 'information gap' or 'opinion gap'. Songs represent "...an instant talking point ... as soon as there are two or more listeners ... For no two people will hear a piece of music in quite the same way, not only because they are different people but because their moods and even physical states may be different" [Cranmer, Laroy, 1992: 2-4].

Songs as a prompt for communication

Songs are unique for their complexity as they represent a great variety of language items used in a context. Songs provide a great range of vocabulary and more importantly, a great range of a 'speaking discourse' such as, for example, fixed phrases, fillers, conjoined short phrases, clauses or repetition. A song, due to its unique atmosphere, melody, rhythm, and repetition may provide students a great possibility to hear, remember and even apply a great range of language items. Orlova also declares that songs help students to develop their 'esthetic appreciation' because songs "help students to shape their artistic tastes in formulating a critical evaluation of the songs they listen to and discuss" [Orlova, 2003]. However, the most important aspect is that songs can represent a starting point for a discussion. Students can discuss themes of songs, genres, or lyrics. Students can exchange their opinions about lyrics, about main ideas of songs, about contexts of songs.

As regards types of communicative activities based on songs, textbooks for basic schools usually offer communicative activities that deal mostly only with lyrics with the aim to practise variety of reading or listening skills. However, both melodies and lyrics of songs can provide many different opportunities to practise communication. Based on my own experience and some suggestions taken from the literature (Murphey, Orlova, Griffee, Clarke...), communication among students can be, for example, based on:

- the interpretation of the song as a whole
- the interpretation of the tune as well as the rhythm and tempo of the song
- the analysis of tonality of the song and the way tonality affects students' thinking and imagination
- the analysis of the lyrics/melody and the reactions to possible questions about it

As far as the interpretation and the analysis of the song are concerned, it should be mentioned that these communicative activities can give students opportunities to become more skilled in their communicative ability since the students are told to:

- express themselves and share their own ideas and thoughts about the given song

- explore their creativity not only in terms of their imagination but also in their critical way of thinking; they are to keep an open mind, take risks and recognize that there is (mostly) no one right answer
- make challenging assumptions in terms of their answers as well as the questions which they might give to their colleagues
- work together collaboratively and supportively; as many of arts events could not take place without developing leadership skills, supporting each other and taking personal responsibility for their role in the group is essential

[Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, 2003]

Apart from the improvement of the students' communicative skills, building their individual way of expressing themselves, working with a song can enable learners become familiar with another level of culture and English outside the class.

Songs and attitudes

Songs may not only stimulate the positive approach to learning, but mainly, according to Orlova [2003], inspire through this positive approach students' emotions. This emotional influence can inspire students to "express his/her attitude towards what he/she has heard" [Orlova, 2003]. It is very important to mention the fact that songs can really make students talk since students spend a lot of time with songs. They listen to them, some of them produce music, they talk about current trends, etc. The point to remember is that if students participate during the selection of a song for a possible discussion in EFL classes, then it is very likely that they will talk about something that might be very close to them.

Although the idea of using songs for the purpose of raising communication in EFL classes may sound interesting, the whole process of preparing an activity based on a song for such a purpose is not easy. The aim of the following practical part will be therefore to present basic methodological principles of the use of a song in EFL classes to trigger communication.

4.4. Selection of songs for communicative activities

Using songs in the language lessons has its essential purpose not only for the language itself but also for creating a positive atmosphere that influences both teaching and learning processes. It is important, however, to set some basic methodological principles that are necessary to follow when taking songs to a class and use them effectively.

When the teacher wants to use music and songs as a stimulus for communication among students, it is important to consider several aspects. The first important aspect to consider is a question of choosing the song so that it can become a real contribution to the lesson. The teacher can choose from a variety of songs that might be useful since their melody is catchy, their lyrics are interesting or they are simply popular. Nevertheless, not every song that is on the top of the music chart is necessarily the right one.

Based on my own experience with the use of a variety of songs for different teaching aims, and conclusions based on literature (e.g. Scrivener, Orlova, Cranmer and Laroy), these basic principles can be considered as crucial ones:

4.4.1. A song the teacher knows

Before taking songs to a class, the teacher should primarily think of the songs he/she knows. Choosing a song the teacher knows is very important since the teacher has to believe in the value of the material. The point is that the students are very attentive and curious in everything the teacher does and if they can see that the teacher knows the song and really wants to share it with them, then they may be more motivated and willing to cooperate. Although choosing the song the teacher knows may seem obvious, the reason why many activities with songs do not work is the fact that the teacher chooses the song just by chance without knowing, for example, the lyrics or basic information about the origin of the song. As Orlova confirms “When I use musical material for the first time, I always choose the songs I know and love myself. This enables me to be more emotionally persuasive as I expose my students to the songs and their interpretation of them” [Orlova,

2003]. Cranmer and Laroy [1992: 5] add that there is no such thing as a song which is simply right or wrong, but what matters is that the teacher should have the confidence to work with the song since this is a basic precondition for being successful when using songs in EFL classes. What is more, according to my own experience, the teacher should always be ready for the moment that may come after the first listening of the song. The point is that students may reflect on the music and react to the song, according to their inner feelings, in many different ways. Unless we wish the students to work with their personal attitudes, then it is very important to tell them before the first listening that they should concentrate rather on the given tasks and not to get misled by their personal feelings. To explain this, some song based activities can become completely useless as students may be influenced by the fact that they do not like the song in general. However, if this situation occurs, the teachers should be advised to tell the students to express their negative attitudes towards the song in at least several sentences. This task may turn into a good starting point for student-student or student-teacher discussion in class.

4.4.2. A song with appropriate lyrics

There are general aspects of the lyrics of the songs that have to be considered every time when choosing songs for whatever purpose in EFL classes. Therefore, the teacher should always ask him/herself:

- “Are the lyrics of the song clearly audible?
- Is the level of difficulty appropriate for my class?
- Does the song include a lexical field which fits well in the course?” [Hancock, 1998: 7]

The question of the appropriate lyrics plays a very important role. If the students do not understand the lyrics then it is very likely that they will not understand the message of the whole song and therefore it would be very difficult for them to develop discussion. On the other hand, some authors (e.g. Cranmer and Laroy) even argue that the lyrics can be distracting when the teacher wants to use the tune of music in order to stimulate the students and therefore, in their opinion, it is better to use classical music with no lyrics. Some music with lyrics may, according to Cranmer and Laroy [1992: 7-8], hold students

back from the whole message of the song. Cranmer and Laroy further explain: “What we have found, though, is that for the purpose of stimulating in the inner eye, pop and rock music tend not to work well. Words are distracting and the range of images stimulated is much more limited” [Cranmer, Laroy, 1992: 8].

Sometimes it may happen, when the teacher wants to stimulate the students through the song with the lyrics, that the lyrics may confuse them. This, in my opinion, happens when they do not know the vocabulary in the lyrics, the lyrics are not appropriate to the students’ ages and the level of thinking, the theme of the song is not ‘up-to-date’, etc. However, if the students know the vocabulary and thus they can understand at least the gist of the song, then the lyrics play a very important role.

Griffiee [1992: 8-9] points out that many songs are ‘socially questionable’ due to their lyrics. This aspect was already mentioned as one of the possible drawbacks of using songs and mainly their lyrics in EFL classes. The recommendation is either not to use them (in cases that songs contain some obscene language) or explain the lyrics as a language of a particular group. Needless to say that the teacher has to be very careful when choosing the songs in which the lyrics are above the students’ cognitive level. If the teacher still hesitates to use the song with some questionable lyrics then it is recommended to ask a colleague about his/her opinion about the song or rather not to use this song.

4.4.3. Student interest

One possibility to motivate the students is to let them choose the song they like. Involving the students in the selection of the song means exploiting the possibility that they will have a natural desire and motivation to communicate about things that are close to them. Nevertheless, the teacher cannot involve the students in the process of choosing the song on the spot without any proper preparation. It is very important that they are first told about some basic rules that they should follow. Such rules were already mentioned above and now they can be extended by a few more:

- “The song must be an example of a particular musical trend.

- There shouldn't be any form of violence in it.
- The song should contain a certain artistic image” [Orlova, 2003].

4.4.4. A song with a ‘message’ to talk about

If a song should serve as an incentive for raising communication among students, then it is necessary to choose the song that conveys an issue that is worth talking about. This message of the song does not have to be necessarily a theme of ‘love’, although it is definitely the most frequent theme that songs are about, but it might be, for example, the themes of some cultural trends, relationships among people, or social problems in general. Hancock [1998: 7] adds that if the song contains some clear characters or a plot in the lyrics (characters or a plot is in this case a ‘message’) then the whole song can stand for the theme-based activity. In addition to this, the presence of the ‘message’ in the song can be also seen in the melody of the song that is an inseparable part of it. The melody might serve, besides the lyrics, also as a good starting point for a discussion.

4.4.5. Purpose and appropriateness

Finally, the teacher has to consider for what purpose he/she wants to use the song. Therefore, the teacher has to thoroughly consider the aims and objectives and judge how the song could accommodate these goals. The teacher should consider whether to use the song for the purpose of teaching new vocabulary, new language items, pronunciation, or for example, the purpose of provoking communication. Another point to consider is whether the song fits in the whole lesson theme, organisation or focus. As Griffiee [1992: 6-7] claims: “The best situation is when the song you select is a direct complement to your lesson”.

All the aspects mentioned in this chapter play an essential role when the teacher wants to choose the right song for raising communication in EFL classes. The next section will focus on other important methodological principles that concern pair or group work.

4.5. The need for pair and group work

One of the key presumptions for making students communicate is to allow them to work in pairs or groups. Larsen-Freeman proposes that it is important “to facilitate small group and paired activities in which students have opportunities to interact. The activities themselves often engage students in communicative tasks such as filling information gaps using authentic materials” [Larsen-Freeman in Hiep (2000) 2005: 3]. To allow students to work with their partners means to provide them conditions promoting possible communication in which they can meaningfully express their ideas.

Organizing a class in pairs or groups provides a lot of opportunities for students to practise the language. When practising communication, organizing a class in pairs or groups is very important for students since:

- It effectively reduces anxiety among L2 students [Tsui in McCafferty et al. (1994) 2006: 27].
- It provides supportive environment which increases motivation among learners [Long and Porter in McCafferty et al. (1985) 2006: 27].
- It offers a high degree of students’ autonomy since pair/group work provides them a possibility to explore their own interests with freedom [McCafferty et al. 2006: 27].

The main aim of organizing a class in pairs/groups for a communicative activity is to create an atmosphere which is friendly and co-operative. Based on my own experience as the student and the teacher, students are rather likely to express their ideas when they can work with their colleagues. As Foralová confirms, “In addition, most students, as students themselves report, are more ‘eager’ to share their ideas and impressions with a few closer classmates than with the whole class or the teacher. This may help to increase students’ motivation to embark upon the task at all and also to complete it” [Foralová, 2007: 71].

Another point to remember is that pair/group work provides students an opportunity to think about their ideas in a 'safe atmosphere'. This is also a big advantage of pair/group work which helps reduce possible fear of being 'called on' immediately after setting some questions from the teacher. Foralová declares that "what students may perceive as advantageous is that they are given time to think of what to say and the opportunity to rehearse their speech in a 'low-risk' situation before they are called on" [Foralová, 2007: 71].

4.5.1. Basic principles of pair/group work

In order to make the use of the terminology easier, the term pair/group work is used for the purpose of this diploma thesis. However, it might be useful to divide these forms of learning and defines them briefly. According to Vilímc [2006: 25], some experts do not distinguish between these two organizational forms (for example Byrne) and talk about these terms generally as about 'small group work', some authors define basic principles for each of them separately. Doff presents the following principles of pair work:

"In pair work, the teacher divides the whole class into pairs. Every student works with his or her partner, and all the pairs work at the same time (it is sometimes called 'simultaneous pair work') ... this is not the same as 'public' or 'open' pair work, with pairs of students speaking in turn in front of the class " [Doff in Vilímc (1991) 2006: 25].

Group work is, on the other hand, described usually as an organizational form with more than two students. As Doff explains, "In group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group). As in pair work, all the groups work at the same time" [Doff in Vilímc (1991) 2006: 23].

No matter whether students work in pairs or groups, it is very important for the teacher to divide the students into groups, so that the communication is facilitated by this organizational form. The thing is that the basic presumption for raising communication in a class is that the students work with their peers in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere. The teacher needs to get familiar with the students in order to find the right way of

forming a group and observe not only their language performance but also their behaviour within a group of the class. Klippel [2005: 5] adds that although the teacher gets familiar with students, it may happen that a student feels some kind of embarrassment or shyness when expressing his/her ideas to others. Therefore, as Klippel [ibid.] suggests, the teacher has to be very sensitive and open to this kind of situations and possibly give permission to students who do not want to answer some personal questions or refuse to cooperate with some mates.

If the teacher has to make a decision how to group students, he/she can decide according to the common strategies:

a) giving students the choice

This type of grouping gives students an opportunity to work with somebody they like. Therefore, in this case, it is very likely that students will work in a friendly atmosphere and furthermore that they will be willing to communicate among themselves. On the other hand, Budden informs that letting students choose their partner may lead to the same formation of groups all the time and it “won’t benefit the group as a whole in the long run” since “friends may not necessarily always work well together” [Budden, 2008]. Harmer adds that this type of organization may also “exclude less popular students altogether so that they find themselves standing on their own when the pairs or groups are formed” [Harmer, 2001: 120].

b) random grouping

This way of grouping is mostly seen as fair to all students. This grouping is arbitrary so everybody has the same chances to choose the partner according to teacher’s random selection of groups. There are several ways of organizing this type of grouping. Budden [2008], for example, suggests using coloured cards that are distributed randomly to students. Then students who get the same colour sit together and make pairs or groups. Based on my own experience, this way of grouping is always interesting for students as they are curious who they will work with. Of course, it might happen that a student refuses to work with a partner he/she does not like. In this case, it is necessary to mention that if the teacher observes such a problem then he/she can change the members in a group or can become a member of that group for some time. By doing this, the teacher can try

to involve all the members of the group in the discussion and try to set a cooperative atmosphere again.

c) selecting the groups

The teacher can also decide that he/she divides students himself/herself. This enables the teacher to put some stronger and weaker students together so that the stronger ones can help the weaker students. This, of course, requires observing students several times. Harmer [2001: 121] also suggests that it is possible to divide students according to their level to do some different tasks. Dividing students into groups according to their levels provides an opportunity for the teacher “to go to a group of weaker students and give them the special help they need but which stronger students might find irksome” [Harmer, 2001: 121].

4.5.2. The teacher’s role in pair/group work

The role of the teacher in pair/group work is very important. In the following section, therefore, some basic aspects of the role of the teacher during pair/group as a very decisive factor during communicative activities will be pointed out.

Temerová [2007: 16] describes specific roles that the teacher has to perform. She describes the teacher as a manager who sets up activities that should be communicative, then as a consultant who offers students advice and help, a conductor and monitor who checks whether students understand and do a task effectively, and finally as an organizer who should be skillful in teaching these activities. All these roles are crucial for accomplishing all the aims of a communicative activity. Apart from these crucial roles, Klippel [2005: 8] also mentions other two points that should not be neglected:

- The moment of joining the activity

The teacher has to consider when to join the discussion and when to let the discussion just ‘flow’ and stay in the background. According to Klippel [2005: 8], the moment when the teacher joins the discussion can help to reduce “the psychological distance between the teacher and students ... of course, the teacher has to refrain from continually correcting students or using her greater skill in the foreign language...” The point is that students are

curious about the teacher's opinion and therefore sometimes the teacher's idea can be a good starting point for a discussion. However, students have to feel that the teacher is like another member of the group and not somebody who just wants to hear their opinion in order to correct them. On the other hand, an advantage of non-participation in a communicative activity is that the teacher can discreetly observe the class (or just some students) and "note common mistakes for revision at a later stage" [Klippel, 2005: 8].

- Principles of correction

The basic aim of communicative activities is to make students talk as much as possible. Thus, the teacher should realize that too much of interrupting students can destroy the positive 'flow' of communication. According to Klippel [2008: 8], students should be helped only when they want help; whether students feel lost when expressing their ideas, the teacher should try to encourage them to find an alternative way to what they want to say (a list of possible speech acts that might help students to express themselves is in appendix 1). Budden [2008] adds that too much of correcting students can also lead to their loss of motivation; however, "the other extreme is to let the conversation flow and not correct any mistakes". Budden goes on to say that correcting students should always have the 'positive effect' on them regardless the way the teacher decides to correct. One of the possible ways to realize this 'positive effect' is, according to Budden [ibid.], giving students the opportunity to participate on setting some correcting rules, which can moreover make the relation between students and the teacher very positive.

The next chapter of this thesis is concerned with the Action Research Project. This chapter intends to introduce the basic steps for the final realization of the lesson plans that were based not only on the theoretical conclusions but also on my own teaching experience. Therefore, in the following sections, the aims of the project are outlined and the research methods including i.e. the questionnaire are described in more detail.

5. ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

This chapter describes the conditions, steps and finally the realization of the action research project. All these elements described in this chapter became a basis for designing the lesson plans with their final evaluation. In the theoretical part of this thesis, the essential factors that make songs in EFL classes useful and effective were outlined. The overview of these essential factors is provided below.

- songs are highly motivating for students
- positive and friendly atmosphere can be created by songs
- songs have cultural value
- song based activities can be adapted to different learning styles of students
- integration of skills/subskills to various song activities

All these factors support the idea that songs stand for an effective tool for teaching English. Considering these advantages alongside with features of songs as a valuable tool for provoking a discussion among students, the major factors of communicative activities are pointed out. The main assumption of this thesis is that songs can become a stimulus for communication among students. The theoretical research discusses principles of pair/group work as well as the principles of choosing the right song for a possible discussion.

5.1. Aims of the action research project

The main aim of the research project is to verify the hypothesis which claims that songs, if appropriately chosen, can stand for an effective stimulus when practising communication among students. Therefore, these are the crucial questions to be proved:

Can songs stimulate students' willingness to express their ideas?

Can songs stand for a good starting point to communication?

Can songs provide opportunities for creating information (opinion) gap?

These three main research questions also include several sub-questions which were the part of the field research provided in the questionnaire. The sub-questions to be discussed are:

1) How is music used in EFL classes?

- How often is music used in EFL lessons?
- In what ways is music used?
- What skills does the use of music aim to practise?
- What subskills does the use of music aim to practise?
- What are the most common advantages of using music in EFL lessons?
- What problems may arise when music is used in EFL lessons?

2) What are the teachers' opinions on using music as a stimulus for communication?

- According to their experience, have they ever exchanged their feelings about a song with their colleagues or friends?
- In their opinion, do they agree with the statement that music can break barriers in communication and therefore help students to improve their communicative ability?
- Have they ever worked with a communicative activity that primarily aimed to practise students' communication?
- In their opinion, do they agree that music can associate various imaginations and thoughts that can serve as an incentive for following communicative activity?
- In their opinion, what might be a problem when using a song for a communicative activity among students? Would that be the selection of a song, the selection of tasks, quality of a sound system, the problem of setting a song to School Education Programme, etc.
- In their opinion, does the choice of the genre of live music (in the case the teacher plays a song on his/her own) affect students' willingness to cooperate in a following activity? In other words, is the choice of the music genre important when the teacher plays live?
- In their opinion, which part of songs (lyrics, melodies, rhythms...) would stand for a basic point of a song-based communicative activity?

- Would it be possible to create a song based communicative activity based on a Czech song with Czech lyrics?

5.2. Research methods

This section deals with the collection of data necessary for the design of the project. Some of the research data were, apart from the theory, collected during my teaching practice at primary (basic) school in Chotěboř. The structured questionnaire was conducted a couple of years after, during my fulltime job as a teacher at secondary Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod.

First, apart from the theoretical analysis, the research consists of the interviews with three teachers and the analysis of the course books that I used in my EFL classes.

Interviews with teachers

The aim of the interviews with three teachers was to find out their experience with using music in EFL classes. The interviews were carried out at primary school during my teaching practice in Chotěboř and I asked the interviewees three crucial questions.

- What is your experience with using music in EFL lessons?
- Have you ever tackled any problems with using music in your lessons?
- What was the song used for? Was the song used, for example, for teaching vocabulary, pronunciation, some language structures or practising communication?

To begin with, all three teachers told me that they had some experience with music in their lessons. They added that this experience was mostly positive. All the teachers used songs that were integrated in their course books as follow-up activities. They told me that the aim of those songs was mainly to practise some new vocabulary or language structures. They all agreed that the students mostly enjoyed every song in their course books despite the fact that some of the songs were rather old-fashioned. As for the

example, in the course book *Project 2* there was a song written by the Beatles and one teacher expected students to refuse working with it. However, the students enjoyed this song and participated quite well.

When I asked these teachers whether they ever had to tackle any problems about using music in their lessons one of them told me that she still hesitates to use other songs than the ones presented in her course books since she finds it difficult to choose a really appropriate song which would fit in her lessons. She told me that the songs which she likes are, in her opinion, completely de-motivating for students and therefore she refuses to use them. All three teachers agreed that they find it difficult to choose songs that would have appropriate lyrics. They claimed that the songs they would finally take to their classes would be either too difficult or not interesting for their students.

Although all the teachers said that they mostly use songs for practicing new vocabulary or language structures, they find using songs as a possible stimulus for communication among students as a good idea. Two teachers claimed that it sounds as a great idea as most of students talk about music, have their favourite singers. However, these teachers claimed that searching for the song that would stimulate students to talk would be very difficult and time consuming. They also mentioned that the song as a possible theme for a discussion would be a great idea rather for the eighth or ninth graders who have higher language proficiency than the younger students. These teachers also added that using songs as a stimulus for communication would be a good idea rather for some after-school activities when students have more time to think about the songs. On the other hand, one teacher told me that she would rather still use songs for practicing pronunciation or vocabulary since songs are, in her opinion, accepted by students very individually and therefore using them as a topic to be discussed should not work for every student.

After these short interviews, I realized several crucial aspects which I had not considered before. Some of those aspects were:

- How to prepare the students for the activity they have not done before?
- Will the students react positively if they are to express their ideas about a song?

- Should I use a song as a stimulus for discussion rather for the older (aged 13-15) students? Is it possible to use a song as a stimulus for communication even with the younger students?

After reconsidering these aspects, several reasons made me change my mind and involve rather the older students in the activities. The main reason was that there were not so many opportunities to prepare especially the younger students for communicative activities within the scope of the teaching practice. These communicative activities required appropriate level of English that would facilitate rather than hinder the students' imagination and thinking. Therefore, I decided to work with the older students (aged 13-15) who were supposed to be more skilled in English. In order to increase the motivation of the students, I decided to play some of the songs on my own so that the students felt that I was also the part of the group and that I am interested in music.

Questionnaire

As written in the chapter dealing with the aims of the present thesis (see chapter 5.1.), the questionnaire aimed to answer the questions about teachers' opinion on using music in EFL classes, especially about their opinion on using music as a stimulus for communication among students. As the interviews with three teachers carried out during my teaching practice did not provide more in-depth knowledge of the problem of using a song as a stimulus for communication, a questionnaire suited the purposes of this study better.

Being aware of many factors that can always influence the results of a questionnaire (respondents may not be motivated to answer, problems with the 'halo effect' when thinking positively of a topic, being reluctant when answering negatively to questions, choosing any answer in order to avoid 'too long' questionnaire, etc.), the structure of this questionnaire was set out in order to avoid these problems as much as possible. Therefore, the questionnaire was first piloted at one primary (basic) school in Chotěboř and then, after several recommendations of my teacher-colleagues, was distributed via the Internet to several primary (basic) and secondary schools in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, there is still a possibility that the respondents perceived the

questions incorrectly or answered some of them dishonestly. Therefore, being aware of possible problems, the results cannot be generalized and taken as valid for the whole Czech Republic.

The questionnaire is four pages long and it is divided into several sections. The first one is related to the personal data of the respondents, the second part concentrates on the use of music in EFL classes, the third one on the teachers' opinion on using music as a stimulus for communication among students. The first section includes five questions: the gender of the respondents, the age of the respondents, their teaching experience, the type of school they teach at and finally the number of English lessons a week. In this section the respondents answer on a Multiple-choice scale with one single answer.

The second section of the questionnaire is devoted to the teacher's experience with using music in EFL classes. This section consists of six questions and the respondents answer on a Multiple-choice scale with one or several answers. They may also add their own answer if there is not any adequate response for them. Apart from this optional answer, a Likert-type scale from 1 to 4 (1=agree, 2=partly agree, 3=do not know, 4 partly disagree, 5=disagree) is used for answering when the respondents are to express their agreement or disagreement to advantages and disadvantages of using music in EFL classes.

As regards the third part of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to express their opinions on several questions concerning using music as a possible stimulus for communication. This part includes eight questions and the respondents mainly answer on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 4 (1=agree, 2=partly agree, 3=do not know, 4 partly disagree, 5=disagree) and a Multiple-choice scale with one or several answers. As some of the questions in this part of the questionnaire (e.g. the question concerning the live music in EFL classes, the question about using a Czech song in EFL classes) might have seemed for the teachers difficult to answer, the respondents were asked to add their personal opinion in order to make their answer as clear as possible.

All in all, the questionnaire is structured in nineteen questions. All the questions are closed, mostly formulated in a form of multiple-choice questions. For getting possible further information, some of the questions also contain a possibility to express oneself in

an optional commentary which can make the answer of the respondent more accurate and therefore better understandable.

Respondents

In order to find as many respondents as possible and to provide the respondents with the easiest way to fill in the questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed via the Internet on the web page *www.kwiksurveys.com*. The authors of this site offer a possibility to set out, in an easy way, different types of questionnaires on-line for non-commercial purposes with no limit of number of questions and possible respondents. The fact that there was no limit of possible respondents finally led to number of 130 respondents who filled in the on-line questionnaire. I chose the respondents randomly from different types of schools from the whole Czech Republic. The address of the questionnaire web site was sent to 185 respondents from more than 30 towns in the Czech Republic. The response rate was quite high, about 70.3 %. Four respondents did not fill in the whole questionnaire and therefore their possible results were not included to the evaluation of the questionnaire. The web site address was sent via e-mails with an introductory cover letter that provided a respondent with a polite request to fill in the questionnaire as well as with basic information about the purpose of the questionnaire. In the following chapter dealing with the questionnaire evaluation specific information about the respondents will be pointed out.

Questionnaire evaluation

A. Background information on the respondents

As written in the introductory paragraphs about the structure of the questionnaire, the first part of the questionnaire contained multiple-choice questions to retain some basic information about the respondents. The questions concerned their sex, age, teaching experience as well as the type of school and the number of English lessons per week. The results of these questions are showed in figure 1 on the next page.

Figure 1.
Background information on the respondents (presented in percent - % and numbers - No. of respondents)

| | | Female | Male | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Gender | % | 78.5 | 21.5 | | | | |
| | N | 102 | 28 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | <30 years | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60 or> | |
| Age | % | 30 | 30 | 23.1 | 15.4 | 1.5 | |
| | N | 39 | 39 | 30 | 20 | 2 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | <5 years | 5-9 | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40or> |
| Teaching experience | % | 29.2 | 16.2 | 30.8 | 17.7 | 6.1 | 0 |
| | N | 38 | 21 | 40 | 23 | 8 | 0 |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | Primary (Basic) | Grammar | Other * secondary | | | |
| School | % | 27.7 | 38.5 | 33.8 | | | |
| | N | 36 | 50 | 44 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | <5 lessons | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20 or> | |
| English lessons per week | % | 14.6 | 9.2 | 10 | 16.2 | 50 | |
| | N | 19 | 12 | 13 | 21 | 65 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | Hobby | Listens very often | Listens occasionally | Listens rarely | Not interested | |
| Own interest in music | % | 20 | 57.7 | 20.8 | 1.5 | 0 | |
| | N | 26 | 75 | 27 | 2 | 0 | |

*to be specified in the commentary below (see figure 2, page 55)

The figure above shows that the majority of the participants – 78.5 % – were women and 21.5 % were men. The percentage of the participants under 30 years of age was 30 %, the same percentage – 30 % – were 30-39 years old, 23.1 % were 40-49 years old, 15.4 % were 50-59 years old and 1.5 % were 60 years or older.

As regards the teaching experience of the respondents, 29.2 % had less than five years of the teaching experience, 16.2 % of the respondents had 5-9 years of the experience, almost one third of the respondents – 30.8 % – had 10-19 years of the experience, 18.7 % had 20-29 years of the experience, 6.1 % had 30-39 years of the experience and none of the respondents had 40 or more years of the teaching experience.

To summarize the types of schools of the respondents was a bit difficult as the system of education in the Czech Republic is different from other countries in the world. Therefore, the respondents had a choice to specify their type of school they were teaching at. As the questionnaire was sent to the whole range of teachers, in order to gain as much opinions on using music in EFL classes as possible, the questionnaire was sent to primary (basic) school teachers as well as to different types of secondary school teachers. To make it clear, the following figure 2 specifies the number, the percentage and finally the types of school the respondents were teaching at.

Figure 2.
Types of schools of the respondents
(presented in percent - % and numbers – No. of respondents)

| Type of School | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Primary (Basic) School; 6-9 grade; students aged 11-15 | % | 27.7 |
| | N | 36 |
| Secondary Grammar (Gymnazium) School; students aged 15-19 | % | 38.5 |
| | N | 50 |
| | | |
| Other Types of Secondary Schools; students aged 15-19 | % | 33.8 |
| | N | 44 |
| Business (Academy) School | N | 16 |
| Secondary School for Health Workers | N | 8 |
| Secondary Technical School | N | 10 |

As the figure above shows, 27.7 % of the respondents were the teachers from Primary (Basic) Schools. 38.5 % of the teachers had their teaching experience at Secondary Grammar School, while 33.8 % of the respondents are teachers with their teaching experience at the other types of secondary schools. These types of specialized

secondary schools were Business Academy Schools (16 teachers), Secondary Schools for Health Workers (8 teachers) and finally Secondary Technical Schools (10 teachers).

The next information on the background of the respondents was their number of English lessons per a week. On the average 14.6 % of the participants had less than five lessons per a week, 9.2 % of the participants had 5-9 lessons per a week, 10 % had 10-14 lessons per a week, 16.2 % had 15-19 lessons per a week. The majority of the respondents, which means 50 % on average, had 20 or more English lessons per a week.

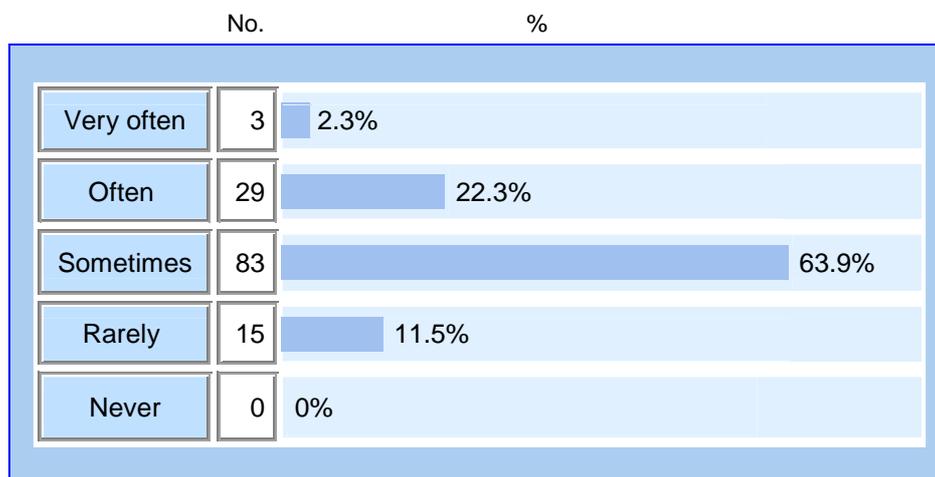
The last task in the first part of the questionnaire was to find out the participants' own interest in music. 20 % of the participants considered music as their hobby. More than one half of the participants, which means 57.7 %, listen to music very often. 20.8 % of the participants listen to music occasionally, 1.5 % listens to music rarely and, finally, there was not anybody who would not have been interested in music.

B. The use of music EFL classes

The aim of the second part of the questionnaire was to find out the way the respondents use music in their EFL classes. Therefore, the respondents were asked with Likert-type questions whether they use music in their lessons and with multiple-choice questions what language skills and subskills they usually practise with the help of music. In addition to this, as the use of music might have seemed for the teachers as sometimes problematic, the respondents were asked not only to think about some positive aspects of using music in EFL classes but also to think about some possible problems they can find on using music in EFL classes. As the question about stating advantages and disadvantages on using music in EFL classes might have seemed difficult to be answered in just one word, the respondents were given an opportunity to add any further commentary beside the given Likert-type scale questions if necessary.

B1. Frequency of using music in EFL classes

Figure 3.
How often the teachers use music in their lessons
(presented in percent - % and numbers –No. of respondents)



The chart above shows the frequency of using music in the lessons of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (63.9 %) use music sometimes in their lessons.

22.3 % of the respondents use music often and 2.3 % use music very often. 11.5 % of the respondents use music rarely and not a single respondents never use music in his/her classes, which supports the idea that music plays its part in EFL classes and therefore may help teachers in their way of teaching. The next Figure 4 is focused on the way the teachers use music in their lessons, on the fact which skills the teachers practise through music.

Figure 4.
What language skills the teachers usually practise through music*

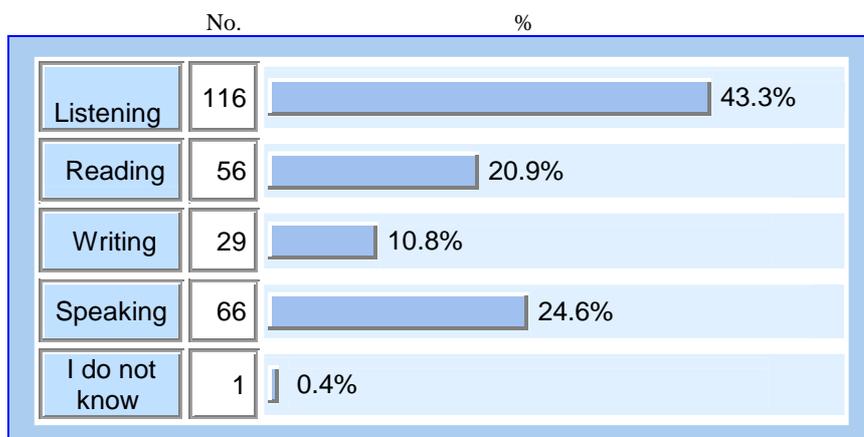
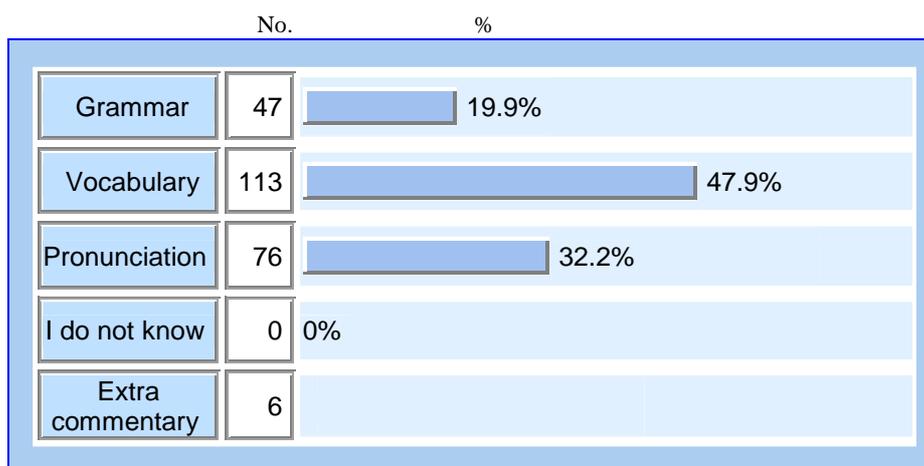


Figure 4 revealed that most of the teachers use music mainly for practising students' listening skills (43.3 %). Then, 24.6 % of the respondents answered that they use music for practising students' speaking skills, 20.9 % of the respondents use music for practising reading skills and finally 10.8 % of the respondents practise writing skills through music. One of the participants did not know which of the skills he/she practises. The next figure is focused on the fact what subskills the teachers usually practise through music.

Figure 5.
What language subskills the teachers usually practise through music



* I am aware that the Common European Framework of Reference uses different terminology to speak about language skills and subskills. Nevertheless, I decided to base the following questions on the above terms since they are well known and clearly understandable in the teaching public.

Generally, from my personal experience as a student, any song what was taken to our English lesson was mainly based on practising new vocabulary connected to the lyrics of the song. Even today as a teacher, when I take a song to a class, some of the activities connected to a song are based on explaining new vocabulary connected to lyrics. As figure 5 shows, taking advantage of music in terms of practising new vocabulary still remains (47.9 % of the respondents) the most practised subskill with the help of music. 32.2 % of the respondents practise pronunciation through music and 19.9 % of the respondents practise grammar with the help of music in their classes.

In the extra space for possible commentaries some of the teachers stated that they practise spelling, slang, collocations and idioms, speaking, special grammar phrases (one teacher even mentioned his own activity, that was met with great success, based on the artist Beyoncé and her song 'If I were a boy' for practising the second conditionals) through songs. As stated in the theoretical part of this thesis, songs can bring various advantages into the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, the respondents were in the following question asked to think about some possible advantages of using songs in EFL classes.

Figure 6.
What might be possible advantages of using songs in EFL classes

| Possible advantages of using songs in EFL classes | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | I agree | I partly agree | I do not know | I partly disagree | I do not agree |
| Songs bring cultural aspect to class | % N | 61.5 80 | 33.8 44 | 3.1 4 | 0.8 1 | 0.8 1 |
| | | | | | | |
| Songs are relaxing, constitute a more restful part of a lesson | % N | 47.7 62 | 40.7 53 | 2.3 3 | 6.2 8 | 3.1 4 |
| | | | | | | |
| Various language aspects (grammar, vocabulary, listening...) can be practised through songs | % N | 77.7 101 | 22.3 29 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Students like song based activities | % N | 63.1 82 | 31.5 41 | 4.6 6 | 0.8 1 | 0 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Songs are motivating for students | % N | 55.4 72 | 33.8 44 | 8.5 11 | 2.3 3 | |
| Extra Commentary | N | 5 | | | | |

Figure 6 summed up the respondents' opinions on some advantages of songs in EFL classes. With the statement that songs can bring cultural aspect to classes agreed the majority of the respondents - 61.5 %. More than one third of the participants (33.8 %) partly agreed with this statement, 3.1 % of them did not know and 0.8 % of the respondents partly disagreed. There was only one person (0.8 %) who disagreed with the fact that a song can bring some cultural aspect to classes.

Almost half of the respondents – 47.7 % agreed with the statement that songs are relaxing and constitute a more restful part of the lesson. Then, about 40.7 % of them partly agreed, 2.3 % did not know, 6.2 % partly disagreed and 3.1 % of the respondents did not agree.

The next statement that through songs various language aspects (grammar, vocabulary, listening...) can be practised was supported by 77.7 % of the respondents. The rest of the respondents, which means 22.3 %, partly agreed with this statement. There was not a single respondent who disagreed.

Most of the respondents (63.1 %) agreed with the question concerning the fact whether students like song based activities. Almost one third of them (31.5 %) partly agreed and 4.6 % of the respondents did not know. Only 0.8 % of the respondents partly disagreed and not a single of them disagreed.

The last possible advantage to agree or disagree in this figure was the question about the statement that songs are motivating for students. More than a half of the respondents -55.4 % - agreed. One third of the respondents (33.8 %) partly agreed and 8.5 % of the respondents did not know. 2.3 % of the respondents partly disagreed with this statement and none of the respondents disagreed that songs are motivating for students.

In addition to the question of motivation of songs in EFL classes, some of the respondents mentioned that using songs means working with native speakers and the natural English as such. Two respondents agreed on the fact that songs motivate students to learn more about English language. One respondent mentioned the fact that a teacher can learn more about his/her students if he/she let students to choose a song they like. One of the respondents even added an interesting opinion that students usually do not complain about the fact that a song might be too fast and therefore not understandable in terms of the lyrics, which seems weird as students usually complain that a listening activity in their workbook is too fast to listen.

Figure 7.
What might be possible problems of using songs in EFL classes

| Possible problems of using songs in EFL classes | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | I agree | I partly agree | I do not know | I partly disagree | I do not agree |
| It is difficult to find an appropriate song-based activity | % N | 27.7 36 | 36.9 48 | 1.5 2 | 20 26 | 13.9 18 |
| | | | | | | |
| To set a song-based activity that would fit a lesson is difficult | % N | 16.2 21 | 42.3 55 | 2.3 3 | 30.8 40 | 8.4 11 |
| | | | | | | |
| Using songs in EFL classes means extra work for teachers | % N | 55.4 72 | 29.2 38 | 2.3 3 | 9.2 12 | 3.9 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| Students will not work with prepared song-based activity | % N | 3.1 4 | 3.9 5 | 6.9 9 | 49.2 64 | 36.9 82 |
| | | | | | | |
| Extra Commentary | N | 6 | | | | |

The questions dealing with some possible problems of using songs in EFL were chosen mainly from my personal experience when I was discussing some possible problems with my colleagues. During this discussion, I realized that there are many possible problems. Therefore, I picked up just those problems that were mentioned very often. The respondents were again given a place to add their comments on whatever problem they found really serious or simply worth mentioning. The following lines summarize the results of possible problems of using songs in EFL classes.

27.7 % of the respondents agreed with the statement that it is difficult to find an appropriate song-based activity, and 36.9 % of them agreed partly. 20 % of the respondents partly disagreed and 13.9 % of them did not agree. 1.8 % of the participants did not know. The results concerning this problem, as well as the results of the second

question dealing with the fact that setting a song-based activity that would fit a lesson is difficult, were very close because the divergence between the statement of ‘agree’ (plus ‘partly agree’) and ‘do not agree’ (plus ‘partly disagree’) was sometimes only about 13 people (10 %).

When questioning the respondents about their opinion about the fact, that it is difficult to set a song-based activity that would fit a lesson, 16.2 % of them agreed and 42.3 % of them partly agreed. On the other hand, almost one third of the participants – 30.8 % – partly disagreed and 8.4 % of the respondents did not agree. 2.3 % of the respondents did not know.

The main possible problem of using songs in EFL classes that most of the respondents agreed on was that using songs requires extra work from teachers (55.4 %). Then, 29.2 % of the respondents partly agreed. 9.2 % of the respondents partly disagreed with this statement and 3.9 % of the respondents did not agree. 2.3 % of them did not know.

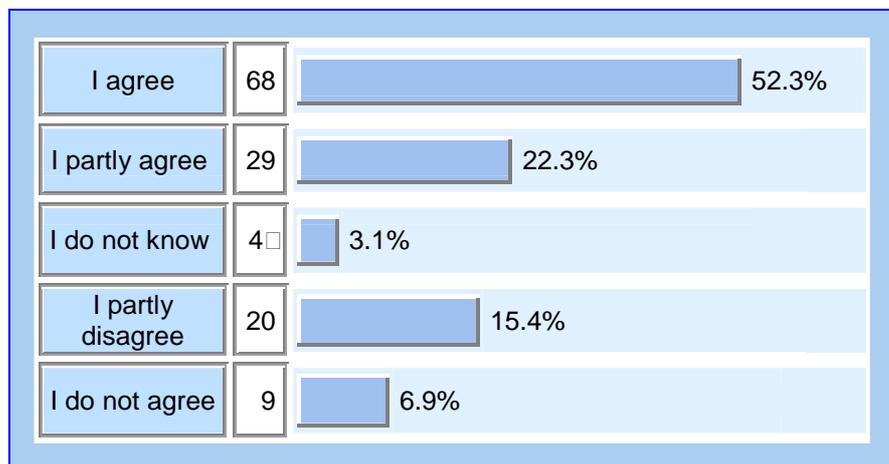
The last possible problem that the teachers could choose from the list was the fact that students would not work with the prepared song-based activity. Only 3.1 % of the respondents agreed with this suggested opinion and 3.9 % of the respondents partly agreed. On the other hand, almost one half of the respondents partly disagreed (49.2 %) and 36.9 % of them did not agree. 6.9 % of the participants did not state their opinion.

As regards extra commentaries of the respondents, one of them mentioned that it is very time consuming to set a good song-based activity. One respondent mentioned the fact that it is difficult to choose a song that would fit the aim of the lesson and the same time would be attractive to students. Some of the respondents mentioned a bad quality of a CD-player and therefore bad quality of the whole possible activity connected to a song. Two of the respondents complained about the students who always argued that a song was not modern and therefore the students lost their motivation. One teacher, however, stated that he had never come across a song-based activity that his students would ignore.

B2. Using songs as a stimulus for communication in EFL classes

Figure 8.

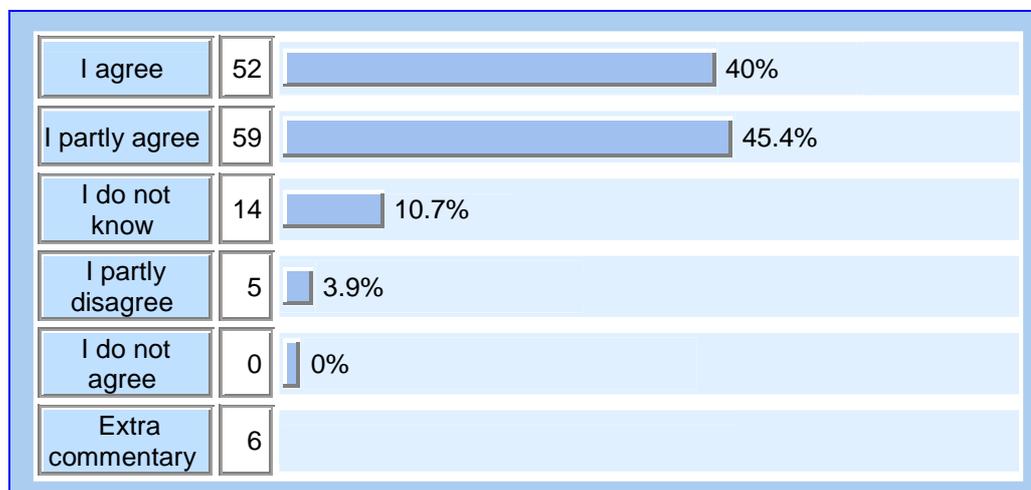
Have the teachers ever exchanged their personal feelings of a song with colleagues or friends



In this section the respondents were asked more specifically in order to express their opinion on using music as a stimulus to communication. To begin more generally, the respondents were asked whether they have ever exchanged their personal feelings of a song with their colleagues or friends. The results are that majority of the respondents agreed (52.3 %) and 22.3 % of them partly agreed. These results contributed to the fact that talking about songs is in the rows of teachers quite common.

Figure 9.

It is said that music can break language barriers. Could music break language barriers of students and therefore contribute to the development of their communicative skills?

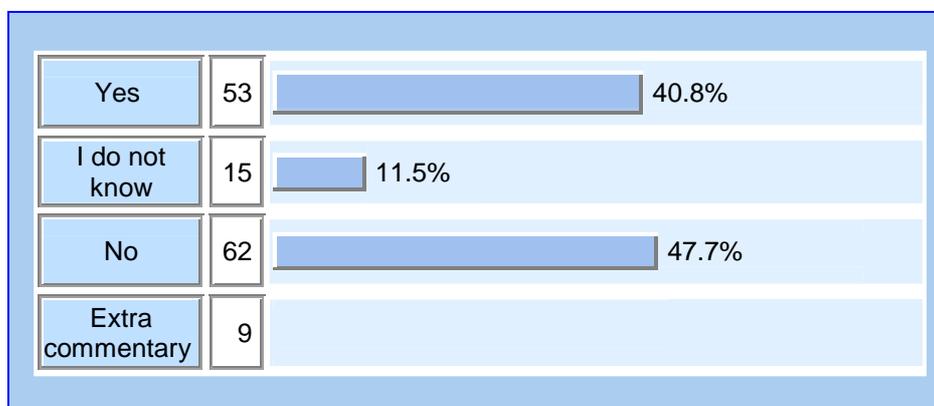


In the next question the respondents were asked whether music could contribute to the development of the students' communicative skills since it is said that music can break communicative barriers among people when they hesitate to communicate in the foreign language. 40 % of the respondents agreed with this fact of development communicative skills through music and 45.4 % of them partly agreed. 3.9 % of the respondents partly disagreed and 3.9 % of the respondents did not know. It is worth mentioning that none of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

As to the extra commentaries, one of the respondents claimed that the most important thing that can contribute to the students' development of communication skills is simply that fact that the student is communicative and not afraid of speaking. This respondent added her suggestion that music cannot be stimulating if a student is afraid of mistakes in his/her speech. However, one respondent claimed that students are really willing to communicate if a teacher sings a song with his/her students. Some respondents mentioned that other language barriers might be broken (with the help of music) even if a teacher wants to practise some writing skills or doing drama activities. Some of the respondents agreed with the help of music as a stimulus and added that students must practise their language skills mainly in their free time as this is one of the best ways to learn language from the real world.

Figure 10.

Have you ever worked with a song that primarily led to the development of communication among students?

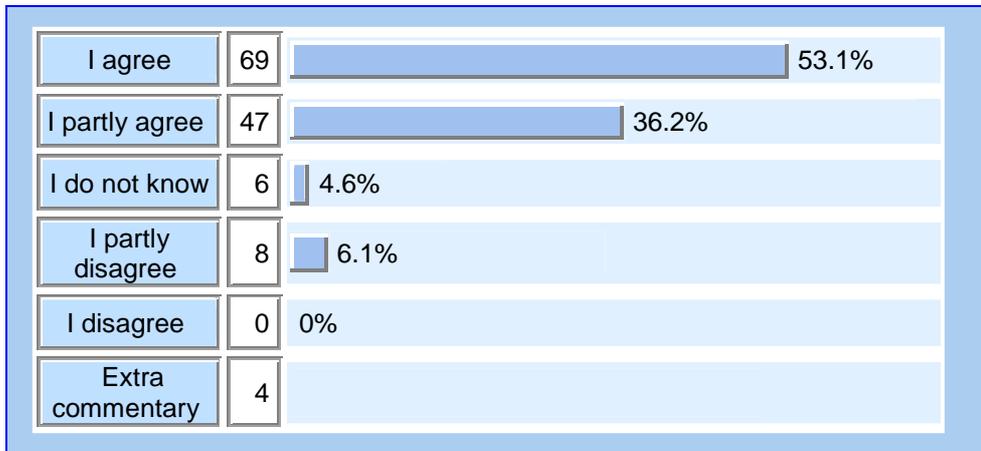


As regards the question dealing with the fact whether the participants have ever worked with a song that primarily led to the development of communication among students, 40.8 % of the respondents agreed that they had tried it. Nevertheless, almost a half of the participants – 47.7 % – had never used a song that aimed to practise communication among students and 11.5 % of them did not now.

It was interesting for me to read the participants' suggestions since eight of the participants explained their experience with songs as very positive and really valuable for their further teaching. Three of the respondents mentioned that they had positive experience with some songs from the magazines 'Grammar Singing and Bridge' and the book 'Jazz Chants' by Carolyn Graham. Four respondents mentioned their experience with the Internet (web pages *www.youtube.com* and *www.britishcouncil.org*) where they found an interesting song based activity and they added that their students liked it since it was something different from song activities in their course books. As regards the web pages *www.britishcouncil.org*, one of the respondents added that she could find there a song about environmental science and that even the song with this theme stimulated students in follow-up discussion where the students were able to put themselves in the role of the singer, which was very surprising.

One of the respondents, on the other hand, mentioned that her experiences were bit conflicting as the students reacted to some songs from their course book (Headway for Elementary Students) sometimes positively and sometimes simply refused to say a word about those songs.

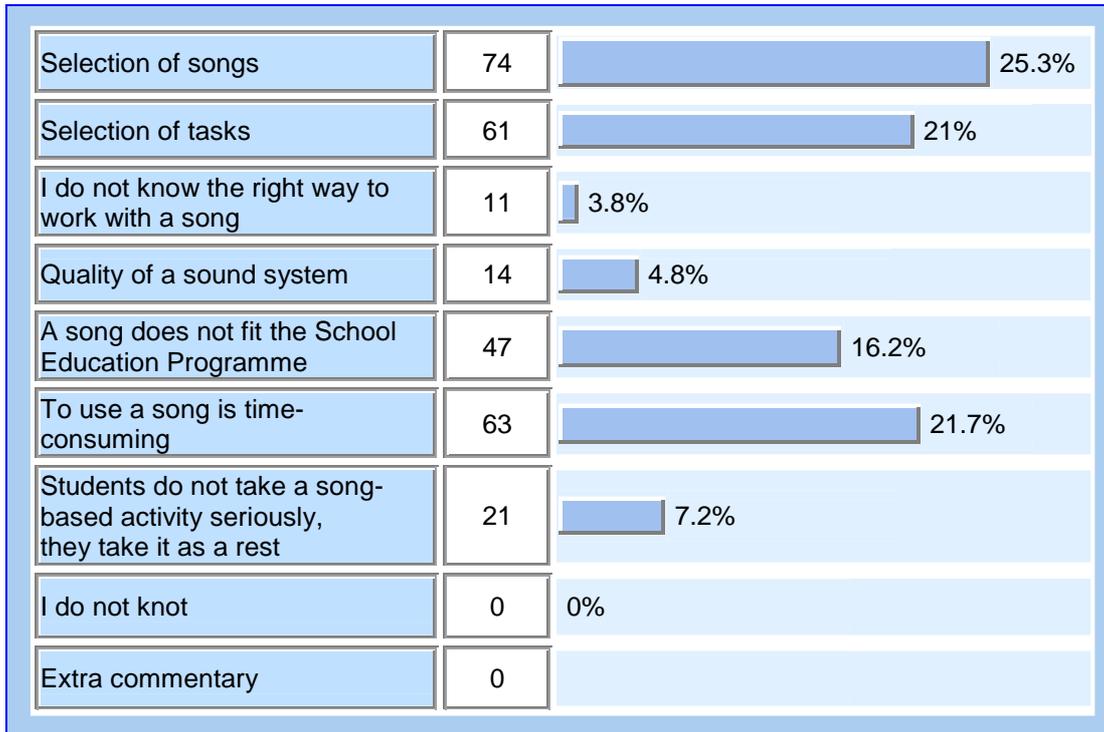
Figure 11.
Could music associate various imaginations and thoughts that could serve as an incentive for further communicative activities?



First of all, none of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Only 6.1 % of the respondents partly disagreed. Majority of the respondents (53.1 %), however, agreed that music could serve as an incentive for communication among students and 36.2 % of the respondents partly agreed. 4.6 % of the participants did not know.

Some respondents, who provided extra commentary, stated the fact that thinking about a song as a possible stimulus for communication is not a bad idea but it always depends on the level of English of students as students should have some level of English to be able to communicate about a song. Two respondents added their suggestion that a communicative activity based on songs is a very good idea for the students who have at least intermediate level of English. One of the respondents mentioned that she did not think about such an activity based on songs since she took songs to her classes just for the beginning of a lesson to warm-up her students.

Figure 12.
Possible problems when thinking about a communicative song-based activity



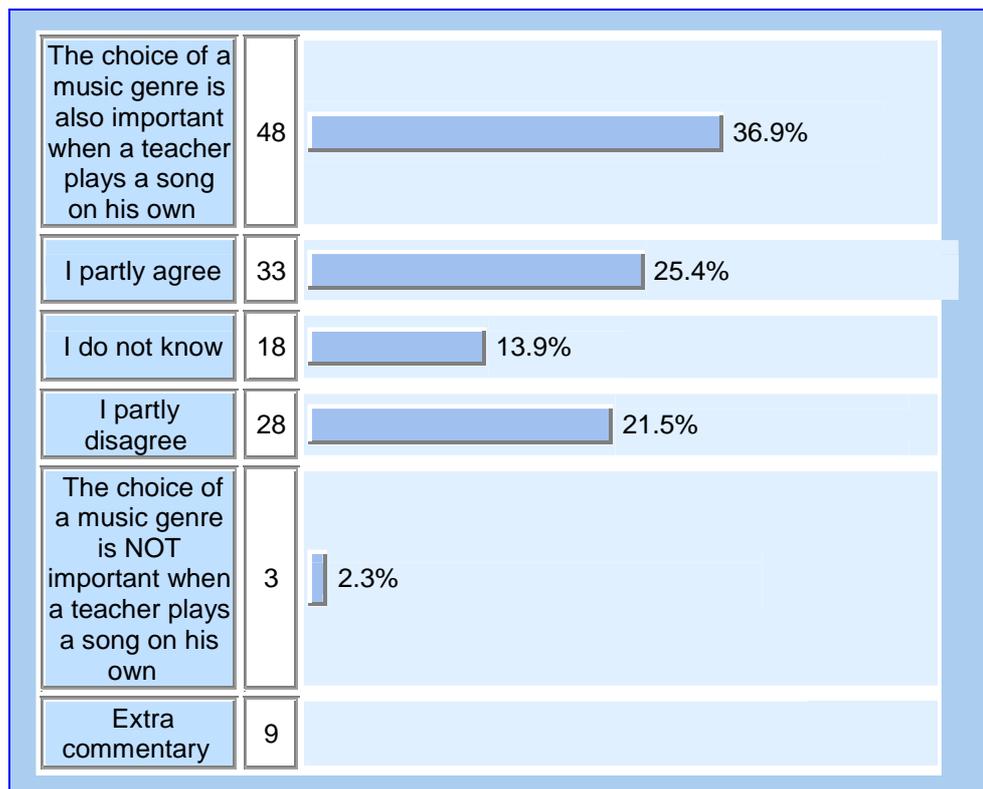
In Figure 12 the results of the question concerning possible problems when thinking about a communicative song-based activity are summarized. Majority of the participants – 25.3% – agreed with a problem connected to the selection of a song. 21.7% of the participants agreed that using a song is time consuming for them. The selection of tasks of a communicative song-based activity was a possible problem for 21 % of the participants. 16.2 % of the participants agreed with the possible problem that a song does not fit the School Education Programme. 7.2 % of the respondents agreed with a problem that students do not take a song activity seriously and take it as the rest from teaching. 4.8 % agreed with the problem connected to a quality of a sound system and 3.8 % of them stated that they did not know the right way to work with a song.

In the place for an extra commentary some of the respondents stated that even teachers do not take a song-based communicative activity seriously. Two of the respondents strongly agreed with the fact that it is really time-consuming to a set such a communicative song-based activity. Two participants mentioned that there were not enough suitable songs that would students like. One participant added her suggestion that

it is always difficult to choose a genre of a song since students' musical tastes might be really different.

Figure 13.

It may happen that the students are not willing to cooperate since they do not like the music genre of a song. What would happen if a teacher plays a song on his own? Is the selection of the music genre important in case the teacher plays the song on his own?



To begin with, this question was complicated for some of the respondents since they mentioned that they had never met a teacher who would play a song in his/her class. However, most of the respondents agreed that the choice of a musical genre is important when the teacher wants to play a song on his/her own – 36.9 %. More than one quarter of the respondents (25.4 %) partly agreed with the importance of the selection of a music genre. 21.5 % of the respondents partly disagreed that in the case of live music, when a teacher plays a song on his/her own, a music genre plays an important role and 2.3 % of them disagreed. 13.9 % of the respondents did not know and in the extra commentary they stated that they simply had not come across such a situation.

Some of the respondents provided extra commentaries to this issue. One of them stated the idea that the selection of a genre of a song is not too important unless the

teacher would want to play some kind of acoustic death metal. In their suggestions, three respondents recommended that a music genre is not important but the teacher should rather choose songs that belong to some kind of ‘mainstream’ of popular music. One respondent added that the lyrics of a song were sometimes rather more important than a music genre. Three respondents finally added their opinion concerning the fact that the magic of live music is so precious that whatever the teacher plays is always met with students’ willingness to cooperate in the follow-up activity.

Figure 14.
On which part of songs (lyrics, melody, rhythm...) would you base a possible communicative activity?

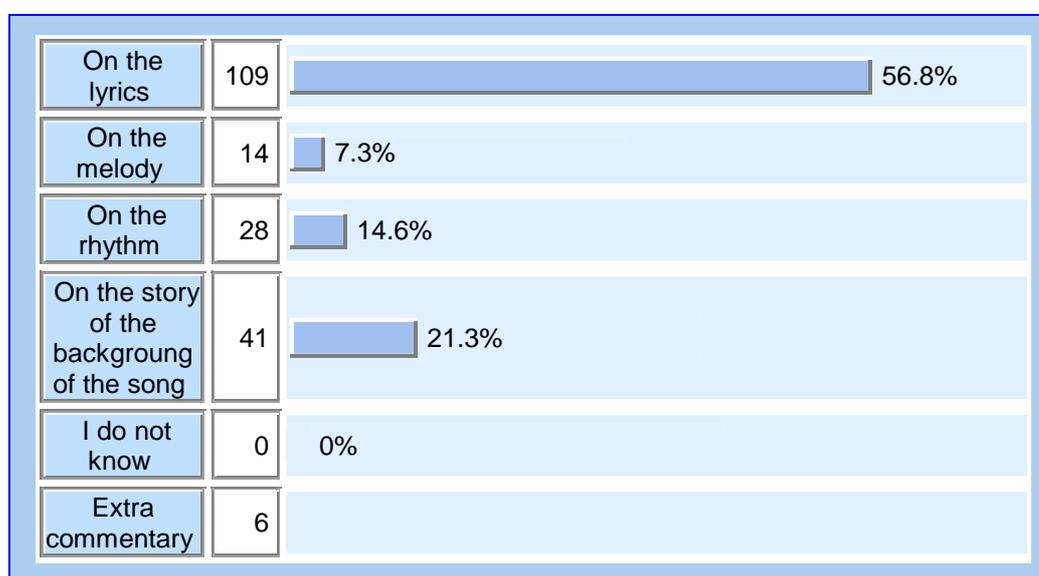


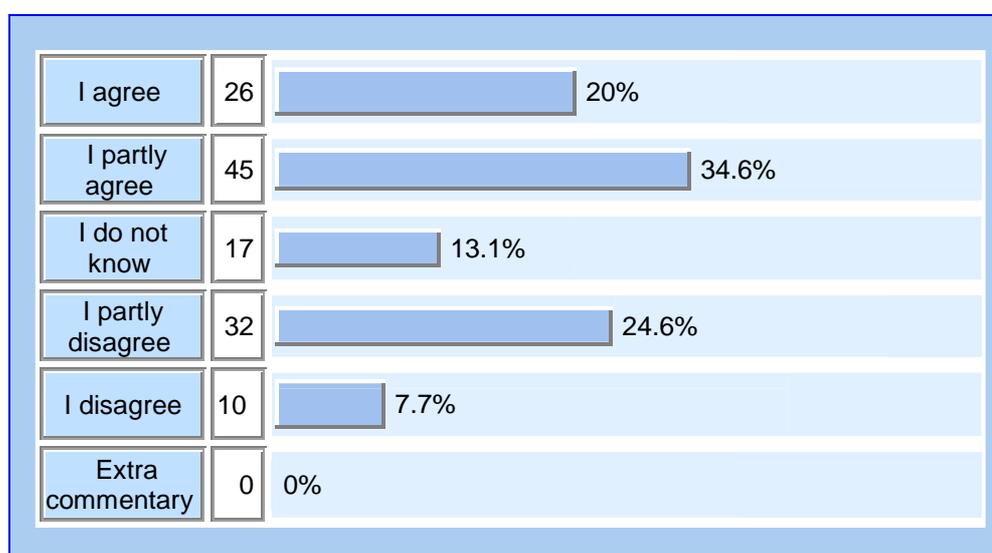
Figure 14 summarizes the respondents’ suggestions on the question concerning the setting a possible communicative song-based activity for students. The respondents were asked on which part of a song they would base the communicative activity. More than a half of the participants mentioned that they would base such an activity on the lyrics of the song – 56.8 %. Then, 21.3 % of the respondents would base their activity on the story of the background of the song. Not many respondents (14.6 %) would base their communicative activity on the rhythm of the song and only 7.3 % of them would base their activity on the melody of the song.

Some respondents finally mentioned that they would not take a song for a communicative activity as they would rather choose a different theme for possible

discussion. Three respondents added that they had some positive experience with talking about the authors of songs, sometimes also about concrete singers. Some respondents claimed that such a communicative song-based activity could be based on the combination of the mentioned aspects of a song, which means the lyrics, the melody, the background and finally the rhythm.

Figure 15.

Could a song-based communicative activity be based on a Czech song with Czech lyrics?



The final question of the questionnaire was bit controversial as the extra commentaries of the respondents were somewhat conflicting. The main reason for the great scale of the participants' extra answers was probably the idea of taking a Czech song to EFL classes as some of the respondents could not imagine this. However, 20 % of the respondents agreed with the idea of taking a Czech song to EFL classes. More than third of the respondents – 34.6 % – partly agreed with this idea. On the other hand, 7.7 % of the respondents disagreed and 24.6 % of them partly disagreed with the idea of taking a Czech song to EFL classes. 13.1 % of the respondents did not know.

As stated above, there were many respondents who could not imagine taking a Czech song to EFL classes. They strongly disagreed and argued that it would only be an experiment with teaching but nothing more. Nevertheless, two of these respondents added

that if somebody would give them some instructions to work with a Czech song then they would try it. Some respondents claimed that such an activity would make the students talk in Czech language but not in English. Some respondents, however, thought about this idea as about interesting motivation for students and suggested possible tasks as the translation of the Czech lyrics into English or thinking about possible lyrics when listening to a melody of a Czech song.

C. Final commentaries of the respondents

As a final optional task, the respondents were asked to include their concluding commentary on the questionnaire. Here are their suggestions stated in Czech (in their native language) and the English version is provided in the brackets:

- Děkuji také, dotazník mě bavil toto ráno a naladil do nové práce :-) S přáním všeho nejlepšího, učitel, Prostějov
(Thank you as well, I have enjoyed the questionnaire at this morning time and it has tuned me up to new work! Best wishes, a teacher from Prostějov)
- Děkuji! I když dotazník mi přišel někdy spíše obecný. Možná by bylo lepší ho rozdělit na více částí (instrumentální hudba, pop...sugestopedie :-)
(Thank you! Even though the questionnaire seemed to me sometimes rather general. It might have been better to structure it into more parts (instrumental music, pop music...Suggestopedia :-))
- Dotazník jsem vyplnila, ale nejsem učitelem Aj, nýbrž Nj. Myslím, že to na věci nic nemění! Jsem ráda, že jsem mohla tento dotazník vyplnit, protože hudbu používám ve výuce velice ráda. Zároveň mám radost, že začínající učitelé berou své poslání k učení natolik vážně, že se ještě ve volném čase věnují průzkumům! S přáním všeho dobrého T.Z., učitelka.
(I have filled in the questionnaire but I am not a teacher of English but of German. But I think it does not matter! I am glad that I could fill in this questionnaire since I like using music in my lessons very much. At the same time I am happy that

beginning teachers take their jobs seriously and do research in their free time! Best wishes T.Z., a teacher.)

- Pane Šimone, byla bych ráda, kdybyste mi poslal 2 plány hodin s písněmi (1x gram., 1x slovní zásoba). Hodně nápadů přeje JF!

(Mr. Šimon, I would be happy if you could send me two lesson plans with song activities (1x grammar activity, 1x vocabulary activity). I wish you have many ideas in your job! J.F.!)

- Na výsledky dotazníku jsem moc zvědavá. Krom toho musím říci, že písně jsou při výuce angličtiny VELMI VÝZNAMNÝM prvkem! Vzpomínám si na to, jak některé písně stále zůstávají v mé mysli, když je dnes slyším v rádiu! Skvělý vzpomínky, skvělý učitel aj...Byla jsem úplně u vytržení, když náš učitel aj použil v hodině song mé oblíbené skupiny! Fakt mě to motivovalo! Našla jsme si pak text a dokonce i víc o této skupině...

Hodně štěstí při vyučování a dalších hudebních výzkumech!:-)

(I am very interested in the results of this questionnaire. Besides this, I have to say that songs in EFL classes play a very important part! I remember how some songs still remain in my mind when I listen to them on the radio! Great memories, our great English teacher...I was completely blown away when she used a song written by my favourite group! How motivating! It made me look for the lyrics, study more about that group...

Good luck in your teaching and future research :-)

D. Summary of the findings

To begin with, the first question revealed that all the respondents use music in their lessons, while the majority of them use music sometimes. When it comes to practising different language skills, music was very often used for practising listening skills, then for practising speaking, reading and finally music was rarely used for practising writing skills. As regards practising different kinds of subskills, it was very common to use music for practising vocabulary, then pronunciation and finally grammar. Some of the respondents also use music for practising spelling, collocations and idioms.

As to the possible advantages of music in EFL classes, practising different language aspects (listening skills, grammar, vocabulary...), cultural aspects, the fact that students like songs in their lesson and take them as a kind of motivation were the most important advantages for the teachers since more than a half of them chose these options. On the other hand, less than a half of the teachers agreed with the fact that music represents a resting part of the lesson. In addition to these advantages, some teachers mentioned other possible advantages, such as working with native speakers and with the natural English language. Some of the respondents reminded the fact that students take songs as motivation and therefore learn more about the English language.

When summarizing the possible disadvantages of using music in EFL classes, the teachers mainly claimed that using songs in their lessons requires extra work for them. The respondents also mentioned that it is difficult to find a suitable song for a certain activity and at the same time they mentioned that to set such an activity that would fit their lesson is also very difficult. The teachers rather disagreed with the possible disadvantage that their students would refuse to work with a song-based activity. Other possible problems that the teachers thought about were the complaints about the fact that it is very time consuming to set a good song-based activity, that it is difficult to choose a song that would fit the aim of the lesson and the same time be attractive to students, a bad quality of a CD-player and therefore bad quality of the whole possible activity connected to a song. There were also some arguments about the fact that songs are sometimes even demotivating.

When questioning the teachers whether they had ever discussed their personal feelings of a song with their colleagues or friends, most of the teachers agreed. Majority of the respondents also agreed that music could break possible language barriers among students and, in addition to this, such music could contribute to the development of students' communicative skills. The teachers also added several interesting commentaries concerning 'breaking possible language barriers with the help of music' as that the most important thing that can contribute to the students' development of communication skills is simply that fact that the student himself/herself is communicative and not afraid of speaking. One respondent stated the fact that the students are really willing to communicate if a teacher sings a song with them. Some respondents mentioned that other

language barriers might be broken (with the help of music) even if a teacher wants to practise some writing skills or do drama activities. Some of the respondents agreed with the help of music as a stimulus and added that students must practise their language skills mainly in their free time as this is one of the best ways to learn real language.

When asking whether the teachers ever have worked with a song-based activity that would primarily aimed to develop communication among students, the results were quite close but many of the respondents (47%) had not tried it. Still, some teachers left their commentary and further added that their experience with this type of activity was mostly positive. Some of the teachers even mentioned their source of such activities – either the Internet sources or titles of song books or magazines.

The teachers' opinion on the suggestion that music can associate various imaginations, thoughts, that could serve as an incentive for further communicative activity was very satisfactory as the majority of the teachers agreed. None of the respondents disagreed. Some teachers added the statement that it always depends on the level of English as the students should have at least intermediate level of English to be able to communicate about a song.

When asking about anticipated problems connected to setting a communicative song-based activity, the respondents felt that the biggest problem would be the selection of songs and the fact that such an activity is time-consuming. Many teachers also mentioned the fact concerning the problem that a song usually does not fit School Education Programmes.

The question dealing with the idea of the live music, concerning the idea whether the selection of the music genre is important when a teacher plays a song on his/her own, was difficult to answer for many teachers as they claimed that they had never come across such a situation. However, most of the teachers agreed and stated that even in this case the selection of the possible genre is important. However, in their commentaries, some teachers stated the fact that this type of live music has its power and if the genre is chosen appropriately ('mainstream' music – not too old, not death metal music) then there should not be any problem with motivating the students to cooperate.

As to the question on which part of a song the teachers would set their possible song-based communicative activity, the teachers chose the lyrics mostly, then the background of a song, then the rhythm and only a few of them chose the melody of a song.

The results of the final questions dealing with the idea of setting a communicative song-based activity on a Czech song with the Czech lyrics in EFL classes were a bit conflicting. Although there were mostly teachers who expressed their disagreement with this idea, some of the teachers added in their commentaries that possible discussion about a Czech song sounds interesting. Some of the teachers, moreover, suggested some possible tasks as translation of the Czech lyrics into English or simply thinking about completely new English lyrics for a Czech song.

5.3. Analysis of course books

The brief survey of course books was done in order to find out the approach towards using music in terms of developing speaking skills in EFL used in these textbooks. Another aim of the survey was to discover a possible way the song-based activities could have been designed in this project. The following course books, which I used in the classes at basic school in Chotěboř and in the classes at secondary Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod, were chosen:

- 1) *English for Life*, Pre–intermediate, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.
- 2) *Project English 3*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.
- 3) *New Project English 3*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.
- 4) *New Headway Pre-Intermediate THIRD edition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009.

The course book *English for Life* by Tom Hutchinson was published in 2008 and therefore was relatively new comparing it to all the course books I had come over during my teaching practice. The reason why I decided to analyse briefly this new course book was that I wanted to find out what types of song-based activities it provides. Firstly, this

course book looks very attractive, as there are many modern photos that are taken from people's everyday life. The syllabus of the course book is rather topic-based oriented and deals with the themes that are close to people's lives such as life events, home life, routines, etc. This book provides many opportunities to practise the speaking skills, which might not seem from the first point of view. Each topic includes some speaking activities that aim to help students to express their own opinions or to discuss certain ideas with their partners. As regards exploitation of songs in this course book, they are not incorporated at all except for the topic 'The father of Soul Music' and one activity dealing with a student's opinion on his/her favourite band.

The basic difference between the course books *Project English 3* and *English for Life* is that *Project English 3* does not provide so many up-to-date topics as the course book *English for Life*. On the other hand, which is signifying, the *Project English 3* provides more opportunities for practising the language through songs. Each chapter includes a song that deals not only with practising, for example, new vocabulary or language structures but also with developing a possible discussion among students. The song activities in several tasks require from students to be involved emotionally, to react to the lyrics as well as to work with them. During my teaching practice in Liberec and Chotěboř, this book was the course book of English language lessons and I had the opportunity to try some of these song activities which always were accepted by the students positively.

The course book *New Project English 3* was, as well as the course books described above, written by Tom Hutchinson. This new edition addresses more up-to-date issues than the 'older' version of the *Project*. Contrary to the 'older' version of the *Project*, this new course book provides the teacher with better orientation in each chapter as the format of the texts is better organized and not over-filled with many additional exercises. The new *Project*, as well as the course book *English for Life*, has an extra DVD attached which serves for students as a supplement material for practising, in a friendly way at home, their English. As well as the 'older' version of the *Project*, this new one offers several songs for students to practise some language items, such as new vocabulary through activity as gap filling. The point to mention is that both the 'old' and new *Project 3* include several authentic songs with clearly audible lyrics.

During my fulltime job as a teacher at Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod, the main course book of my lessons was *New Headway Pre-Intermediate THIRD edition* written by John and Liz Soars. First of all, this third edition offers new and up-to date topics from the real world, which is motivating for students. Besides this, this edition is well structured which means that there are not too many additional exercises, which gives students more time to think deeply about new grammar units and not to be confused and bored with a lot of new information. The fact is that students usually understand e.g. new grammar units better if these are clearly written and moreover if they are clearly stated in the text, which does not occur in every EFL course book. On the other hand, somebody can argue (and many of my colleagues do) that the series of Headway course books still remain the same and thus that these course books are not challenging for students and for teachers either. As far as I am concerned, this course book can serve as a good starting point mainly for fresh students at secondary schools. As regards the content of this course book, there are 12 units of work that cover language, vocabulary, everyday English, reading, listening, speaking and writing sections. Especially everyday English sections might be very useful for students. Each level of Headway books has an iTools computer interactive CD-ROM, which a teacher can use if he/she has an opportunity to work with an interactive board. As to the presence of songs in this course book, there are only two authentic songs. The tasks connected to the first song aim to develop a possible discussion among students (there are three questions to be discussed in the connection to the lyrics of the song), however, the second song is based just on filling in the gaps with no additional questions. In this sense, this course book does not differ from the second edition, which is disappointing.

To conclude, all the course books except *English for Life* and *New Headway Pre-Intermediate THIRD edition* (except two songs in the whole course book) include songs that aim to practise to some extent speaking skills. However, in my opinion, it would be possible to add to these books several song-based activities that would make these books more attractive and motivating for students. Therefore, I tried to prepare activities that would represent a variety of approaches to songs with the main focus on communicative activities. Some of the activities were prepared on my own, some of them with suggestions taken from the literature (Klippel, Orlova, Murphey and Cranmer and Laroy).

5.4. Activities design

The design of the activities described in the lesson plans (see chapter 6. – Lesson plans and reflections) was adjusted in accord with several important factors. The first important factor required that the activities had to correspond with the syllabus of the English language for the students. Moreover, the aim of the activity had to be in concord with the aim of the regular lessons and another important factor was that the difficulty of the activity had to correspond with the actual language level and cognitive maturity of the learners so that the students could actively participate in the activities.

Special attention was centred on the selection of the songs. As was already mentioned in the methodological part of this paper, the basic principles concerned these rules are:

- The teacher has to know the song.
- The song must have a ‘message’ to talk about.
- If working with the lyrics, they must be appropriate (clearly audible and understandable for students with no violence in it...).

Another important criterion was that the song called for the need to create a meaningful task that offered a communicative (opinion) ‘gap’ with a chance to work with its theme in a follow-up communicative activity. The main emphasis when preparing a communicative activity was also put on setting a meaningful task with the presence of a communicative (opinion, curiosity) ‘gap’ so that the students were motivated to discuss. The design of the communicative activities also included carefully chosen supplementary material such as printed lyrics with tasks for a discussion, a list of possible expressions and cues available to help when the students got lost. Each of the activities was also structured from more controlled tasks to freer ones so that the students could smoothly develop their fluency when speaking. The most of the activities were adapted from the books written by Friederike Klippel *Keep Talking*, Tim Murphey *Music and Songs* and Cranmer and Laroy *Musical Openings*.

5.5. Evaluation of the action research project

The evaluation of the efficiency of the whole project consisted of two basic strategies. The first one was critical reflections on the activities and the second was the final evaluation of the project.

Reflections and evaluations of the lessons

The reflections mainly focused on the analysis of the criteria set for the activity design. The main emphasis was put on the fact whether these activities were effective and really led to communication among the students. Another important factor was whether the students were motivated and whether they participated in the song-based communicative activities. As regards the motivation of the students and their participation in the song-based communicative activities, one of my teacher-colleagues helped me to observe the students' reactions in some of the lessons.

Final evaluation

The outcomes that finally marked the success or failure of this research project were based on the final semi-structure interview with the students. The students were allowed to express their feelings about the song-based activities. During this informal discussion, everybody had a chance to tell me what he/she thought about the song-based communicative activities. The students were asked what they liked or disliked about song-based activities, whether they enjoyed working in groups/pairs and whether the songs motivated them to communicate. The debate was also completely open to any new suggestions that would in whatever way improve the song-based communicative activities. The students were also allowed, if they did not want to express their opinions in the debate, to write their comments anonymously in small sheets of papers (see chapter 7.1. – Results of the debate). The debate was done in Czech so that the students could express their thoughts easily.

5.6. Teaching conditions

The action research project was conducted at the lower secondary school Smetanova in Chotěboř and at the upper secondary level of the Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod. The Smetanova school is the biggest one in Chotěboř and is attended by approximately 500 students. The students at this school start learning English already at the age of seven. These young learners attend two lessons a week and then at the age of nine or ten (fourth form) they have three lessons a week till the school leave at the ninth form. The school has awarded the 'Scio Certificate' which attests to the school participation in improving the quality of Czech education. The school offers good teaching conditions especially for the foreign language teacher as there is modern equipment in almost each of the language classrooms. The factor of modern equipment was also important for this project as the students could listen to a quality sound system provided by the means of an interactive board.

I had the opportunity to come back to this school where I had spent nine years of studying. I became the part-time teacher of English and History at this school at the beginning of the school year 2008-2009. The important fact to mention is that the most of the students involved in this project were the students whom I taught during or after my teaching practice. Therefore, the students knew my way of teaching and, of course, I could consequently easily adopt the activities to their level of English.

I was given the opportunity to teach at the secondary level of Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod at the beginning of the school year 2009-2010. After several months I became a fulltime teacher at this school but at the same time remained a part-time teacher in Chotěboř. The Business Academy presently educates almost 600 pupils. The students at this school start learning English in their first class, which means at the age of 15. The students in their first year of studying are divided into two groups. Advanced learners attend the first group and beginners attend the second group. All the students in their first year have four English lessons a week. The school provides wide educational opportunities focused on economy, gastronomy, business and entrepreneurial activities. The lessons take place in modern classrooms – multimedia, language, IT and classrooms for science and gastronomic subjects. As well as the school in Chotěboř, the school in

Havlíčkův Brod offers good teaching conditions for foreign language teachers. I really appreciate that the teachers at this school have an opportunity to work with interactive boards with the quality sound system, which makes the lessons more enjoyable for both the students and the teachers.

Finally, the lessons were taught in three classes, in VIII.B and IX.C (both the classes of primary school in Chotěboř) and A1.B (the first class of the learners of Business Academy in Havlíčkův Brod). The students attending these classes had, according to the interviews with my teacher-colleagues, only little experience with using songs in EFL lessons, so it was completely new experience for both them and me. The next chapter describes the class profiles in more details.

Class profiles

VIII.B

There were altogether eighteen students, six boys and twelve girls, in this class. As I had taught in this class several times, I could observe some interesting factors. The first was that I had never taught a class that would be as disciplined as this one. The point was that the teacher who had taught these students created the atmosphere which positively influenced the whole class management and led to discipline. The authority I had in this class was almost unbelievable. The VIII.B was not disruptive at all and if I wanted to keep my authority, I just raised my voice. As regards the level of English of these students, this class could be compared to IX.C. Their results in English were, according to my opinion, very good and even better than in IX.C. When I observed this class, I could notice, however, that several students lacked self-confidence. The problem occurred when these students were to, for example, express their opinions about something or sit for some exams. What happened was that I could see their hands shaking a little bit when writing a test and during some speaking activities their voice began to tremble and then they stopped talking. Despite of some problems with their self-confidence, all these students were willing to learn English and were able to cooperate among themselves, which was very important for developing the friendly atmosphere in this class.

IX.C

This class had seventeen students, eight boys and nine girls. Unlike VIII.B, this class had very individual differences in the actual level of English language. Four boys regularly got the worst marks and moreover, they completely refused to cooperate. They seemed not to care about their marks. On the other hand, they were not disturbing the lessons in terms of misbehaviour or regular disruption. The overall results of this class were average, only very few students were excellent. In comparison with VIII.B, these students did not have positive attitudes towards learning English. It was difficult to make them cooperate as this class worked rather individually and not as a group.

A1.B

The class A1.B had fourteen students, twelve girls and two boys. This school year was their first year of studying at secondary school and although they were put into the group of advanced learners of English, their level of English was very poor (this was shown in the results of their placement test at the beginning of the school year). First, the whole climate in this class was strongly influenced by the girls-students, which means that the boys usually did not say a single word when they were to express their ideas about something. It cannot be said that the students would not be willing to cooperate; nevertheless, sometimes it was difficult to set a friendly communicative atmosphere in this class. It seemed to me, as if these boys would stand aside. However, on the other hand, it was obvious that the girls respected the boys when cooperating with them. As to the overall results of this class, two girl-students got regularly the best marks and the rest of the class was rather average in terms of their results.

6. LESSON PLANS AND REFLECTIONS

6.1. Activity No.1 – Who are you? What do you like?

(adapted from: Friederike Klippel, 2005; David Norman et al., 1986)

Class: VIII.B

Number of the students: 18

Age of the students: 13

Goal: getting to know each other
raising awareness in the class
interviewing a colleague

Learning objectives: The students will be able to describe their colleagues' likes/dislikes.

The students will be able to make questions about their colleagues' opinions.

The students will be able to make questions about personal data.

The students will be able to exchange their opinions about music.

Purpose/Rationale: As this is the first lesson, the aim of the activities is to develop the teacher-student and the student-student 'interaction, communication and familiarization' within the whole class. The pre-activity is supposed to set a friendly and cooperative atmosphere so that the students can easily adapt to the next activity which is meant to make the students talk in pairs about their musical interests.

Lesson fit: This activity introduces the whole lesson and serves also as a kind of warming-up activity. In the next stages of the lesson, the students continue to work on exercises from their textbook. The language item they focus on is the revision of the present simple continuous.

Anticipated problem: As this is the first lesson, the students might be shy to cooperate and might make some minor grammar mistakes when interviewing their partners.

Thesis focus: The aim of the first lesson was to find out something about the students' interests in music, to make the students cooperate and talk about their interests.

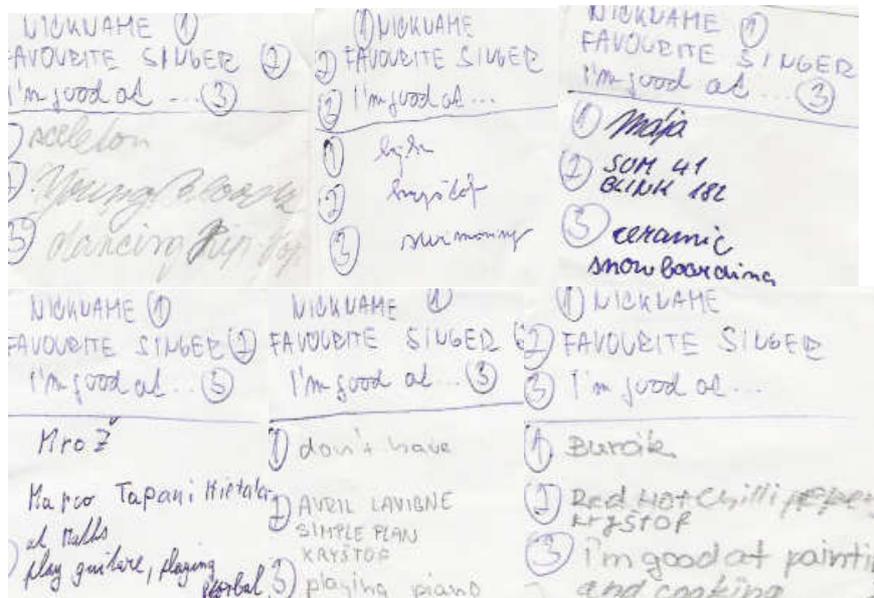
Materials: two types of 'identity cards - ID cards' (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.2)

Time: 25 minutes

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher introduces himself by telling the students some basic information about himself. Then, the students are encouraged to write their personal data on small ID cards. Three minutes later, the teacher collects these cards and invites somebody to read one of these cards aloud. The girl/boy then tells the class whose card it might be. Each of the students should get a chance to read one ID card so that everybody is involved in the activity. This activity is the important preparation for the next activity.

Some original copies of the students' ID cards



The teacher says: *Hello! My name is Oldřich Šimon and I am twenty-four years old. My hobbies are football, table tennis and playing the guitar. I have one sister, her name is Irena...And now, my nickname is...my favourite singer is...and I am good at...*

All right, and now, I want you to write something about you! Here is an ID card and you are to write down your nickname, your favourite singer/band and finally what you are good at. You have three minutes to do this...

OK! Thank you! (the teacher collects the cards). So, for instance, Peter, take one card and read aloud the information about a girl/boy, then try to guess whose card it is...

Aim: getting familiar with the students, raising awareness in the class, preparation for pair-work

Stage 2: The teacher asks the whole class some questions concerning listening to music. Then, he writes on the board a chart dealing with his opinions about music and explains to the students that they are to fill in the first part of the brief survey card with their musical interests. When they are finished, they are to ask their partner about his/her opinions about music and then they will record this information into the second part of the survey card. The teacher can finally ask one pair to tell the whole class about their outcomes of the interview (depends on time and willingness of the students...)

An original copy of the students' ID card

Firstly, fill in with your opinions (put a to show what kind of music you usually like, or usually do not like) then ask your colleague: Do you usually like...

| I | | Colleague | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| like | don't like | likes | doesn't like |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Do you like listening rather to Czech or English songs? Ask your colleague!

I like rather English songs but some Czech. My colleague likes listening English songs

The teacher says: *Very well, now, tell me: Who likes listening to music?*

Do you play any musical instrument?

How long?...

OK. Thank you! Now, let me tell you something about my interests in music. I usually do not like classical music (the teacher writes a tick next to the statement about 'classical music' in the chart on the board) but I usually like listening to pop, rock and blues music...Now, please, pass these small ID cards about your interests in music. You are to complete this ID card and then, after 3 minutes, your partner you are sitting next to you will ask you about your interests and writes the answers into the next part of this card – so, as for the example, you will ask your colleague:

Do you usually like classical music?

...

Do you like Czech singers? Which one? Which one not?

The teacher writes two/or three possible questions on the blackboard.

Aim: practising making questions, exchanging information about the students' musical interests (what the students like/dislike)

Reflection: As this was my first lesson in this class, I did not expect that the activities would 'flow' so easily. However, the main aim was to set a friendly and cooperative atmosphere in the whole class. Therefore, the first pre-activity was important for several reasons. Firstly, this activity helped to reduce my and the students' nervousness as I could see on the students' faces a smile when they were to guess whose ID card it was. The fact that the students enjoyed the activity helped me to gain self-confidence. The first activity also helped me to keep the students' attention from the very beginning since not only I but also my teacher-colleague could see that when somebody was reading an ID card then everybody turned him/herself towards the speaker. The students were, according to my colleague, very curious about their colleagues' ID cards and mainly about their nicknames that were sometimes very funny for all the students. Another important factor was that everybody was involved in the activity, and that the class worked as one group listening to each other; moreover, everybody mentioned his/her favourite singer/band. This pre-activity made the students feel relaxed and motivated for the following pair-work communicative activity. The students were working with their partners sitting next to

them. The teacher of this class also agreed with this form of grouping. She stated that the students mostly sat next to their friends so it was very likely that the activity would work well. The students were to fill in other ID cards that investigated briefly their musical interests. Then, they were to ask their colleague about his/her interests and complete this ID card. As I was monitoring the class, I could see that everybody was working on completing his/her card. Just a few students (three or four students) switched into L1 when they were to ask their partners about their interests. I was wondering why they asked their colleagues in Czech since the instructions had been clearly demonstrated before and even in the card, the structure of the questions needed for interviewing their colleagues was quite clear to ask. In my opinion, there could be two reasons for this. Firstly, it was the last lesson for those students that day and therefore they wanted to do the task quickly. The second reason could be that they were eager to find out the answer. Nevertheless, I tried to encourage these students to speak in English, so I told them my answer in English and immediately asked a new question. As I could observe the class, a lot of students interviewed his/her colleague in English and even continued to talk about their favourite band little further (even though partly in Czech). I really appreciated these moments when the students kept talking about their favourite bands. These moments made me feel that the theme was motivating and familiar for the students and that they wanted to discuss it. Finally, this activity also showed another interesting factor. I deliberately included in this activity a question about the students' interests in Czech music. The point was that I expected that these students would rarely listen to Czech bands. However, even in the first activity the students (at least seven students) mentioned one Czech pop group – Kryštof. That these students are partly interested in Czech music made me think about including an activity based on a Czech songs in some of the following lessons.

Conclusion: The kinds of communicative activities when students are talking about their interests via ID cards or when they need to find out their colleague's opinion always include a kind of a 'gap' and therefore students have the purpose to communicate. The fact is that the activities I decided to choose did not lead to freer communication among the students but it was not the aim. The aim was to approach smoothly towards expressing one's ideas about something through controlled activities. These activities also showed that these students are interested in music, have their favourite singers/bands and that music, generally, may represent a worth topic to be discussed in the next lessons. The first

lesson also contributed to create a friendly yet working atmosphere that helped to reduce nervousness between the teacher and the students.

6.2. Activity No.2 – “*Tak nějak málo tančím*” by Kryštof

Class: VIII.B

Number of the students: 18

Age of the students: 13

Goal: to make the students feel relaxed

to revise some vocabulary needed for the song

to inspire the students to discuss in groups their musical interests

Learning objectives: The students will be able to use the revised words in a group discussion.

The students will be able to express their ideas about musical interest.

Purpose/Rationale: As many of these students mentioned in some of the previous lessons that they are also interested in Czech music (although they preferred mostly English songs), the purpose of this activity is to find out whether they would accept a Czech song in EFL classes and moreover, whether this type of songs can make the students be motivated.

Lesson fit: This is the last activity of the lesson. As the activities before were aimed to practise reading skills, the song is aimed to relax the students and change the task from reading to speaking.

Anticipated problem: As this is the first lesson when the students will be exposed to the Czech song, the reactions of the students might be very different.

Thesis focus: A variety of songs may represent a motivating tool in EFL classes. Therefore, for this purpose, the students will be exposed to the Czech song that is supposed to be close to them.

Materials: worksheets with the gapped song lyrics (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.3), a list of possible speech acts (see appendix No.1), pictures with musical instruments (see appendix No.8), a guitar, stickers

Time: 20 min

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher tells the students that they will work in groups and their tasks will be to think about several questions concerning the Czech band Kryštof. Then, the teacher divides the students into several groups.

The teacher says: *All right! Now, close your textbooks, you will need just your heads. You will work in groups and you will discuss one song. You will get the lyrics of the song with some tasks to discuss. There will be one person in each group who will record (write down) all your ideas and opinions. This person will firstly read the question aloud and then all of you will think about the answer. You don't have to write, for example, that Lucka said that the song was boring but just write 'boring'.*

Please, try to communicate in English. If you do not know the vocabulary, try to ask your colleagues in your group or me when I am near. Remember, that there are no grammar mistakes when you communicate, just say what you think! There is also the list of speech acts you can use when you do not know how to say something.

(This list of possible speech acts is already known for the students. The students got familiar with it in previous lessons when the teacher explained the acts in Czech and the students wrote the translation down to the list. The teacher can ask the students for some expressions from the list at the beginning of any communicative activity – this is for practising the speech acts. Everybody got their own copy; however the teacher may distribute these lists again if necessary.)

OK! Each of you will get a picture with a musical instrument on it. You are to make groups according to these musical instruments. So, if you get the guitar, your partners have to have the guitars too (the teacher distributes randomly the pictures). Then, when you make groups, sit together. So, go for it and try to make groups!

...

Now, decide, who will write down all your ideas (the teacher waits for one or two minutes). Very well! Here is the worksheet with the lyrics of the song we will discuss (the teacher distributes the lyrics, at least two per a group). Now, look at the paper. The questions are divided into several parts. Try to think about the first part, write down your opinions. You have five minutes to discuss the first part!

(the teacher monitors the class, provides help if needed, encourages the students to communicate in English...)

Aim: to get familiar with the song, pre-listening tasks to discuss

Stage 2: The students are to listen to the song (the teacher plays and sings the song), do and complete while listening and then post listening tasks. Finally, the students stick the papers with their results of the debate on the board. The students are at the end of the lesson allowed to come to the board and read their colleagues' suggestions.

The teacher says: *Fine! Thank you for your ideas! Now, you will be listening to the song by Kryštof. Your first task is to complete the lyrics with English translation of the missing words – so, if there is missing 'tančím' you will translate it as...(the teacher asks somebody in the class to demonstrate the task). Then, you find at least five key words that best characterize this song – so, it can be, for example, 'to dance, to kiss, a man who is over thirty...'. Then, you will try to discuss the questions:*

Do you prefer recorded or live music?

Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

When you are finished, try to stick the paper with your results of the debate on the board! Try to write just some key words of your debate in that paper. I will help you to express your ideas if you are lost...

Aim: practising translation, working with the lyrics, talking about the live music, exchanging opinions, getting feedback from the group work

Kryštof - Tak nějak málo tančím

1)
Všem strunám řeky toužím být šon ^{tone}
všem okapovým loužím jejich břeh,
signálu antén sklon slisich ^{from}
a pustit uzdu kormidlům ^{boats}

2)
Aspoň potápěčem v houfu se stát, ^{best}
chytit svoji vlnku s ní prad
s krabičky mýdla mít vor
a sjíždět vanu bez závor. ^{basin?}

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, libám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti more than fluffy +30

3)
A v umyvadle tůni chci mít, ^{basin}
v solničkách zas vůni majáků,
ze starých školních pijáků
postavit záchranný člun.

4)
A velrybu ladně v dlani skrýt
a hloubku moře na dně talířů,
ve skafandru s halířů
vyrazit v ten spuštěný směr ^{RIGHT!}

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, libám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti přes třicet.

5)
Tak nějak málo tančím ^{dance}
Tak nějak málo libám ^{love}
Tak nějak málo brečím ^{cry}
Tak nějak málo zpívám ^{sing}

1) What do you know about the Czech band "KRYŠTOF" (How many members? Any front man? The musical genre?..)

FRONT MAN IS RICHARD ^{KRYŠTOF}
more than 5 members
pop
TAKAKY - 3 slow song
for girls but some are good

2 a) Try to agree on five key words of the lyrics!

We think song is about
KATEP (basin, boat)
+ KORMIDLON
kormidl - boat
pop

b) Try to tell your colleagues why...

Do you prefer recorded or live music?

Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

everybody likes
LIVE MUSIC
↳ meaning LIVE

Every teacher in
lesson must
should sing :) - :)
We liked it!!!!

Reflection: This activity was a completely new experience for all the students. It was not new in its content but in the way the activity was realized. It was quite surprising for the students to find out that they would finally do a task which is connected to the Czech song. This was something they were not accustomed to. From the first moment I came to this class with the guitar, the students were wondering expectantly what was going to happen and kept asking me from the beginning of the lesson what they would be doing. However, not all the students were excited at the beginning that they were going to talk about the Czech band Kryštof, so they did not firstly cooperate in the group (they said boringly that they do not like the front man of this group). However, despite the fact that some of the students were not happy with this band, I appreciated that they told their opinions to their colleagues. I expected that not everybody would be a fan of this band; however, I finally realized that it was not the point since the students got a chance to tell their opinions and therefore this activity had a kind of a ‘curiosity gap’. On the other hand, I expected some problems when the students were to make groups, however, there was not a single student who had made a complaint. The second stage of the activity was quite interesting to observe. According to the colleague, the students liked their teacher playing the guitar and therefore it helped to create non-threatening atmosphere that contributed to the fact that the students were motivated to work in their groups. As regards the whole communication within the groups, it varied a lot. Sometimes the questions I set led to further communication among the students, especially when I asked them if they liked me singing. One group even agreed that in every lesson a teacher should sing, which made the most of the students laugh when they read it during the final stage of the activity on the board. Nevertheless, the debate in one group was quite short and I think the reason was that some of the students just said ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and that was the end of the whole communication and they were not eager to talk anymore. However, the song itself, the task (missing information) and the questions required from the students a kind of communication. The last stage of the activity was quite interesting for everybody since the students could see what their colleagues were thinking about. Everybody read at least one paper of another group. It was a pity that we couldn’t reflect on those final results of the debate little further since there was no time to do it.

Therefore, I decided to leave those papers in the class and stick them on the wall so that each of the students could read them.

Conclusion: Not only foreign language songs can be used in EFL classes in order to motivate students. This lesson indicated that even songs in the students' native language can represent an interesting starting point for a following work. Nevertheless, any song can bring a great diversity of reactions because each of us has different musical taste. This diversity of reactions, which songs provide, can represent a kind of 'curiosity gap', which might be a reason and a stimulus for a discussion among students. However, it proved that the task must be meaningful for the students and thus can lead to expressing one's opinion.

6.3. Activity No. 3 – “*Elizabethan Serenade*” by Ronald Binge

(questions for discussion adapted from: David Cranmer and Clement Laroy, 1986)

Class: IX.C

Number of the students: 17

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to relax the students

to provide cross-curricular overlap through a song

to encourage the students to talk about moods and states of mind

to help the students to know each other better

Learning objectives: The students will be able to describe in key words the Elizabethan era.

The students will be able to ask for their partner’s opinions.

The students will be able to exchange their opinions about music.

Purpose/Rationale: Although most of the students do not like classical music, (they expressed their dislikes in some of the previous lessons) the students may at least accept classical music as one of the factor that is connected with history and therefore is worth talking about.

Lesson fit: This is the last activity of the lesson. As the activities before aimed to practise cultural awareness (‘Heroes and heroines in Britain’), the song is aimed to continue with a similar theme in a relaxed way and focus on expressing the students’ opinions about classical music. This activity is also a partial follow-up to a history lesson the students had last week.

Anticipated problem: The students might be hesitating when discussing their feelings about classical music.

Thesis focus: This musical composition was not only used as a stimulus for expressing the students' states of minds but also for better understanding the cultural value of Great Britain.

Materials: the interactive board (or an overhead projector with a CD player), the CD with the *Elizabethan serenade*, a list of speech acts (see appendix No.1), stickers, worksheets with the silhouette of a woman and with the tasks to be discussed (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.4)

Time: 20 min

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The students are to close their textbooks and recall as many aspects of the Elizabethan era as possible. As they had already talked about this topic during their history lessons, they are expected to elicit quite many aspects of this era. The students are encouraged to express their ideas in English but if they do not know, they are allowed to tell their ideas in Czech. The teacher writes their suggestions on the board (the teacher can translate some Czech suggestions into English since the students are not expected to know the right vocabulary). Then, the teacher displays on the board the vocabulary and some speech acts (see appendix No.1) which can be used by the students when describing the mood evoked by a song (this list is already known to the students, this is for practising the speech acts).

The teacher says: *Fine! Close your books! Now, we will try to make the rest of the lesson a bit different. Tell me anything you can remember of the Elizabethan era! Try to express your ideas in English! Try to say it with the words you know! If you do not know, you can say it in Czech!*

(the teacher helps the students to recall some aspects of the Elizabethan era by the following questions)

Why do we call it also the Shakespearian era?

Who was Shakespeare? What was his profession? In which century was he born?

Who was the queen in this era? Was she famous?

...

What kind of music, do you think, was typical for this period? Was it hip-hop music?

Would you like to listen to music typical for that period? Why? Why not?

...

All right! Thank you! Now, imagine you are listening to the song you like. What feelings do you have? Tell me! If you do not know the vocabulary, tell me in Czech! (the teacher possibly helps the students and writes on the board: feelings of: nostalgia, sorrow, melancholy, joy, happiness...)

All right! Here are some useful vocabulary you already know! (the teacher displays the list of possible speech acts on the board).

Aim: tuning the students in, recalling some information about Shakespeare and his era, preparation for communication about classical music

Stage 2: The teacher tells the students that they will listen in groups to a piece of classical music. The teacher then explains that this song was written for Queen Elizabeth the First and that this music is celebrating not only her but also her era in general. The task for the students will be to describe this music and to draw a possible picture of the woman for whom this music was composed (it is not necessary to draw a picture, the students can describe the person by some key words). Then, the teacher puts the students into groups and lets them decide who the secretary in each of the group will be. The secretary will write down the student's suggestions. Finally, the teacher displays on the board the silhouette of a woman and the list of possible speech acts (the students have the silhouette and the list of the speech acts also in each of the groups).

The teacher says: *Now, you will be listening to some classical piece of music. This song was composed for Queen Elizabeth the First who lived in the sixteenth century... "Now, you will be working in groups, so as you sit, turn to your colleague sitting behind you and you make groups of four* (this way of grouping depends on the teacher's decision; as there are seventeen students, a group of three is possible). *So, in each of the groups there will one secretary who will read the questions after the listening and then will write down your opinions about the song. There are two questions to discuss:*

What feelings or words come to your mind when you are listening to this song?

Do you find this classical music boring?

When you write down some of your ideas, all the members of the group will try to draw a picture. As you can see, there is one silhouette on the board (the teacher displays the silhouette of a woman) and you are to draw a real picture of this woman – so use your pens, pencils and try to colour the picture of this woman. You can also describe this woman! –She is tall, old... When you are finished, stick your picture on the board! And finally, try to talk in English as much as possible! You can take a look on the board, or into the list of speech acts. If you do your best and still do not know the vocabulary, say it in Czech!

Aim: stimulating the students' suggestions about classical music, cooperation among the students in groups, make the students speak about their ideas

An original copy of the students' paper

Elizabethan serenade by Ronald Binge

What feelings or words come to your mind when you are listening to this song?

HAPPINESS
TRIUMPH
RELAXING
good song

WOOD
SEA
TRIANGLE (musical instrument)

Do you find this classical music boring?

WE FIND THIS CLASSICAL MUSIC RELAXING
(tomáš → not sure half boring)
Petter than BACH (originality)

Try to draw the picture of the woman this song is about!

Stage 3: At this stage, all the students are invited to come to the board and stick the paper with their suggestions on the board. The teacher finally invites all the students to look at their colleagues' suggestions.

The teacher says: *OK! Thank you very much for all your ideas! Now, try to come to the board and stick your papers on it!*

...

Now, everybody, come to the board and look at your colleagues' suggestions! (the teacher possibly invites the students to read especially some suggestions – depends on the situation and time).

Aim: providing feedback for the students and the teacher, evaluation of the activity

Reflection: Despite the fact that I am not a fan of classical music, I decided to take this type of music in the lesson. The main reason why I decided to do that was that it was a good opportunity to connect this music with the topic of a regular English lesson. Although it was obvious that the students were not surprised when they noticed that they would be listening to a piece of classical music during their English lesson, I was convinced that especially in this case the *Elizabethan serenade* would fit quite well. I began the activity with asking the students what they can remember from the Elizabethan era. The fact was that this was mainly about translation some English vocabulary into Czech since the students were not able (or rather were not motivated) to translate their suggestions into English. They could remember who Shakespeare was, but when I asked them what they know about the Elizabethan era then just one or two students were able to answer. It might have been rather too complicated general question for them. Therefore, I tried to help them with concrete questions and then the students were able to come up with some ideas. The way that the students made groups (just by turning back to their colleagues) was quite fast and I did not notice (nor the colleague did) that the students made a complaint against the colleagues they had to cooperate with. I think this was mainly due to the fact that the students were sitting close to their friends and especially, that all the boys were sitting at one row so they appreciated that they would work together. It was obvious for me that some boys would not do the task and would do just anything else. Therefore, I had told them that I would be pleased if they at least tried to communicate about the song in Czech since it would be better than doing nothing. To my

surprise, these boys tried to do their best and answered all the tasks in English. During the listening to the *Elizabethan serenade*, the students looked quite interested and some of them, as they were discussing their feelings after the song, even said that this piece of music is quite nice and that they did not find it boring since its melody is relaxing. I appreciated that some of the students used the list of speech acts when they were to express their feelings. Although the students rather enjoyed drawing a possible picture of the woman, I think, that this piece of activity helped the students to work as a group. As regards the last stage when the students were to come to the board and see what their colleagues did, the students mostly enjoyed all those drawings which became very funny for them.

Evaluation: This lesson showed that even classical music can stand as a useful prompt to communication in EFL classes. The teacher has to, however, choose the music very carefully as the theme of the classical music has to be simple to understand. There are many pieces of classical music when a listener, if he/she is not a professional musician, gets lost in a variety of different parts of the music. The *Elizabethan serenade* is the piece of classical music that has quite a simple theme which is repeated from the beginning till the end of the song. Moreover, the whole serenade is not so long (it is about four minutes long) and its melody is quite catchy. All these factors contributed to the fact that this kind of classical music can stand as a possible stimulus for communication among the students.

6.4. Activity No.4 – “Tears in Heaven” by Eric Clapton

Class: IX. C

Number of the students: 17

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to revise the grammatical construction would – if
to stimulate communication in pair-work
to help the students to understand the way the lyrics carry meaning
to develop intensive listening skills

Learning objectives: The students will be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics.
The students will be able to express their ideas to their colleagues.
The students will be able to use grammatical construction would-if.

Purpose/Rationale: As this lesson should be devoted to working mainly with the impression of a song and developing the students’ ability to describe their feelings, I decided to choose the song that carries the impressive lyrics. This song with its story should therefore be quite an interesting topic for a possible discussion among the students.

Lesson fit: The preceding activities were aimed to develop writing skills as the students were describing their cities. Therefore, this song is aimed mainly to change the task from writing to speaking.

Anticipated problem: The students may not understand the lyrics, problems with timing.

Thesis focus: Main attention will be paid on the melody of the song which accompanies the lyrics. Together with the lyrics, the melody stands for an interesting theme for a communicative activity in EFL classes.

Materials: worksheets with the song *Tears in Heaven* (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.5), the CD

Time: 25 minutes

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The students are asked whether they prefer lyrics or melodies when listening to songs. The students are divided into pairs, they are given the lyrics of the song *Tears in Heaven* with an either/or choice for certain words in the lyrics. The students are asked to choose which word is more suitable for each of the gaps. If the students do not know the vocabulary, they are allowed to ask the teacher. Then, the students listen to the song for the first time. The whole class checking follows.

The teacher says: *Now, tell me, when you are listening to songs, do you prefer lyrics or melodies? Which song has more interesting melody than the lyrics for you?...*

Now, let's think about one song. As you sit, make pairs with your colleague sitting next to you. Pass these handouts with the lyrics of the song and try to think with your partner which word fits better in those lines (the teacher can demonstrate the task by giving one example). When you are finished, we will listen to this song just once and then we'll check your suggestions...

Aim: to familiarize the students with the song, tuning in the activity

Stage 2: The students are to read in pairs the whole lyrics with the right words and then answer the question who they think the song is about. Then, they are to think about another strophe (at least two lines) with the use of construction 'would – if'. The students after several minutes are asked for suggested answers (or the teacher can just monitor the class and write some of those suggestions on the board).

The teacher says: *All right! Now, you will read the lyrics again, with the right words. When you are finished, I would like you to think about the question: Who the song is about? Is it about animals, or...? And the second task is to think about another brief*

strophe with 'would – if' construction. So, before you start, can you translate the first two lines? (the teacher asks randomly in order to make sure that the students understand this construction which should not be new for them) So, as for the example, look at the board. My strophe is "would you stay with me if I saw you in heaven"...Now, read the lyrics again and then try to think about the tasks with your partner! I will be near to help you! (The teacher can write some of the students' suggestions on the board and translate them)

Aim: to practice would–if construction, to give the students an opportunity to express themselves in pairs

Stage 3: The teacher tells the students a brief story about the musician who wrote this song. Then, the teacher writes some key words of the story on the board. The teacher asks the students to listen to the song for the last time and to think about the passages in the lyrics which can be connected with the key words of the musician life. The students can also describe their feelings during the song; this is deliberately done after the second listening when the students already know the story about the author. Finally, the students are asked to think about any similar song to this or about the song which carries similar impressive story.

The teacher says: *Well! Now, listen to the story of one musician. He was born in 1939 as a child who did not know his mother. He was brought up by his granny and grandpa. When he was ten years old, he got his first guitar and soon he was quite good at playing it. He soon became very famous. But soon, his life began to go down slowly. He started to take drugs that he was not able to control himself...In 1991, when he wanted to visit his only son Connor, something terrible happened. His only son was killed in a fall... (the teacher writes on the board some key words as: drugs, a son, death, grief, hard life...)*

Now, you will listen to the song once again and after that you will work with your partner. Your task is 3a and 3b, so, firstly, you connect the words 'a son', 'hard life', 'grief' to the words or lines in the lyrics. So, write, for example, the word 'grief' next the line you think is somehow connected to 'grief'. Then, try to describe this song and try to think about the song which is similar to this one or which is impressive/powerful for you. Work with your partner and discuss these tasks! Try to use the expressions from the list of speech acts when you are describing the song. I will be near to help you...

Aim: to show how the lyrics carry the meaning, to inspire the students to discuss

An original copy of the students' paper

| <u>Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton</u> | <u>Discuss with your partner!</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Would/Will</u> you know my name <i>A SON</i> If I saw you in heaven? Would it be the <u>same/sin</u> If I saw you in heaven? I must be <u>strong/wrong</u> and carry on 'Cause I know I don't belong <i>HARD LIFE</i> Here in heaven | 1) Which word fits better (Would or Will? Same or sin?...) |
| Would you hold my <u>had/hand</u> If I saw you in heaven? Would you help me <u>stand/pray</u> If I saw you in heaven? I'll find my <u>home/way</u> through night and day 'Cause I know I just can't stay Here in heaven | 2a) Who the song is about (Do you think that the song is about e.g. animals? Or about any people? Or...?) |
| Time can bring you down <i>GRIEF</i> Time can bend your knee Time can break your <u>hand/heart</u> Have you begging please Begging please | b) Try to think about another strophe with would/if construction! |
| (instrumental bridge) | 3a) Try to connect the following words to any part in the lyrics!(a son, hard life, grief) |
| Beyond the door There's peace I'm sure And I know there'll be no more Tears in heaven | b) Do you know any song which has the powerful lyrics/story for you? |
| ... | <i>2a) WE THINK THIS SONG IS ABOUT PEOPLE NOT ABOUT ANIMALS</i> |
| | <i>2b) WOULD YOU BE MY SON AGAIN IF I SAW YOU IN HEAVEN...</i> |
| | <i>3a) APRIL LAVIGNE</i> |
| | <i>ENRIQUE IGLESIAS-HERO</i> |
| | <i>ATOMIC KITTENS-CLOSE YOUR EYES</i> ☺ |

Reflection: To begin with, this was the activity I had thought about many times before I realized it. I knew that there existed several activity books dealing with this song in many ways; however, it was used mainly for practising the grammatical construction 'would – if'. It is important to mention, that especially this song can be used in EFL classes in several different ways. It can be worked just with the melody of the song, nevertheless it would had been very time demanding and rather appropriate for some after-lesson activities. Therefore, I decided to work mainly with the circumstances under which the song was written and I think that the students got the point. The either/or choice activity,

which is not new when dealing with the lyrics in EFL classes, was done at the beginning of the whole activity and I think it helped the students to understand the core idea of the lyrics. However, I wanted everybody to understand the idea of the song and therefore I decided, before the second stage of the activity, to translate the lyrics since there were students who seemed to be a bit confused with the lyrics. On the other hand, the translation of the lyrics was quite useful since it helped some students to think more deeply about the question who the song was written for. As I was observing the class, all the students had some suggestions, even those students who were weaker in English. That these students at least tried to think about this question made me feel that this activity was worth doing it. As regards the task dealing with ‘would-if’ construction, some students created quite good constructions as “Would you be my son again if I saw you in heaven” or “Would you come back home with me if you had a chance to do it”. The last activity showed that most of the students thought about this song seriously as most of them were able to explain which line, for example, went with the word ‘grief’ or ‘hard life’. Especially during this stage, I asked my colleague to go around the class with me and observe the cooperation of the students. The truth was that a half of them were discussing in Czech, however, some students used expressions as “I think it goes with” or “In my opinion...”. I was happy that the students tried to describe their feelings about the song and that most of them came up with some names of songs which have impressive lyrics or melodies for them. In this case, the students exchanged their opinions about some songs.

Conclusion: The song *Tears in Heaven* is mostly used in EFL classes for teaching the grammatical construction ‘would-if’. However, the song can be worked with in many different ways. This lesson indicated not only some other ways the song can be used in EFL classes but also some useful suggestions when the teacher wants to use this song. The first suggestion is that it would be useful to deal with the song for the whole lesson since 25 minutes is quite a short time and some of the students needed to have more time to express their thoughts and think of the song more deeply. Moreover, if the teacher wants the students to understand the ‘message’ of the song, to complete the tasks and to discuss the song, then it is very important to prepare the students for it. Another important aspect to remember is that the teacher should be always aware of the fact whether all the students understand the lyrics. If some of the students do not understand the lyrics, then they can easily lose their concentration and become de-motivated for the rest of the lesson. As the students in this lesson understood the meaning of the lyrics, they could

easily associate this meaning with the melody of the song. Therefore, the students could understand the whole 'message' of the song, which contributed to the fact that they were able to express their feelings and ideas to their colleagues.

6.5. Activity No.5 – “*Nobody Knows You*” by Eric Clapton (originally by Bessie Smith)

Class: XIII. B

Number of the students: 16

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to revise the usage of the past simple
to relax the students
to develop the student’s listening skills
to motivate the students through the live song in a follow-up pair-work discussion

Learning objectives: The students will be able to use the past simple construction.

The students will be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics.

The students will be inspired to express their ideas about the song.

Purpose/Rationale: The purpose of this activity is mainly to motivate the students (through the live song played by the teacher), to revise the usage of the past simple and to talk about the song in a further discussion in pairs.

Lesson fit: The previous activities dealt with the revision of the past simple and practising reading skills. Therefore, as a lesson closure, the students will listen to the teacher who will end up the lesson with the song played on his own in order to make them use the past simple in a relaxed way.

Anticipated problem: The students may react differently as this is the blues song, they may also refuse to cooperate.

Materials: A guitar, worksheets with the gapped lyrics of the song *Nobody Knows You* (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.6; the lyrics were modified as the original version was longer and more complicated for the 8th form students),

the pictures with musical instruments to group the students (see appendix No.8)

Time: 20 min

Thesis focus: The song was used in order to revise some grammatical patterns and as a follow-up topic for a discussion.

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher tells the students some information about the author.

The teacher says: *All right! Now, I will play a song for you, but before I will do it, let me tell you something about the author of this song. The author is a man who was born in 1939. He was brought up by his grandmother and grandfather. He began to play the guitar and soon he became very famous. However, then he started to drink too much of alcohol...* (during this speech the teacher writes some key words of the story on the board - a guitarist, famous, alcohol...then, the teacher checks whether everybody understands these words by asking the students for translation)

Aim: pre-listening activity, getting familiar with the singer

Stage 2: The students listen to the song and fill in the gaps the missing words in the past simple. The teacher plays the song by himself for the first time. The whole class checking follows.

The teacher says: *Well, now, pass these lyrics. You are to listen to the song and just fill in the gaps. The missing words are verbs in the past simple.*

...

OK! Thank you for the listening! Now, read the first line... (the teacher asks randomly the whole class, the teacher can write the verbs on the board)

Aim: filling in the gaps with the verbs in the past tense, getting familiar with the song

Stage 3: The students are divided into pairs. Each pair is given some questions to be discussed. The teacher asks somebody to read the questions and somebody to translate them. Then, the teacher tells the students that they are to listen again to the same song and then that they are to answer the questions. Finally, the teacher possibly writes some of the students' suggestions on the board (depends on time).

The teacher says: *Well done! Now, each of you will get either the picture of a guitar or the picture of drums, a piano, a violin, a harp, a banjo, a clarinet, a trumpet. So, find somebody, who shares the same picture as you!*

...

Thank you! Now, you will listen to me once again. I want you to listen carefully and when the song is over, you will discuss with your partner the following questions:

Do you think that Eric had a really hard life? Why?

Why did Eric lose all his friends?

Did you like the song?

What is the musical genre of the song? (pop, country, jazz...)

Imagine that you have a million pounds. What will you buy?

So, now, listen carefully, you can close your eyes, listen to the melody of the song, listen to the refrain... Well, let's start...

(The teacher plays the song, then the teacher monitors the class, provides any help, possibly encourages the students to talk by telling them his suggestions. As the final conclusion the teacher can write some of the students' suggestions on the board.)

Aim: post-listening discussion among the students

Reflection: Firstly, as the whole lesson was from the beginning based on the revision of the past simple, the students appreciated that another activity was a bit different. I could see on the students' faces the moment of surprise as I told them that it would be me who would play a song for them. It was the aim to include in this lesson a song-based activity. I expected the students to appreciate this, and I was right. I decided to choose the song which I knew very well and which seemed to be quite easy as regards the theme and the difficultness of the lyrics. The first stage of this activity indicated that the students

became hooked in as all of them were looking at me and listening to the story of the singer (I used the same procedure as in IX.C; see activity No.4). It was useful that I wrote some of the key words of this brief story on the board, since this helped to keep the students' attention and, in my opinion, it made them be involved deeply in the story. When I asked the students to make pairs, the whole class became a bit chaotic. The point was that some of the boys were quite confused that they had to cooperate with the girls. I think that this is the main disadvantage of making pairs just by chance with the help of some cards or, as in this case, with the help of the pictures of the musical instruments. However, this way of grouping was the part of the plan, so I encouraged these students to work together since it would be useful for them if they helped each other. The fact was that after my first playing, these students calmed down and they seemed to be concentrated on the activity. The students did not have any serious problems with filling in the gaps with the verbs in the past simple (it was not aimed to be difficult). As regards the follow-up activity, when the students were to discuss, all of them cooperated quite well and I did not observe (nor my colleague did) any students who would have refused to talk to his/her colleague. This was a very positive moment of the activity. I was wondering whether the students would accept this blues song since their musical tastes are quite different. However, I was delighted and bit surprised by their reactions as none of them was pulling his/his face during listening to the song. I think that the students were hooked in the live song. After the activity, I was told by my colleague that the students are not used to seeing a teacher playing any song during a regular English lesson and therefore it is always quite pleasant and interesting for everybody in the class. The question is how much that live playing contributed to the students' enthusiasm to take a part in the following discussion with their colleagues. I believe that it (at least a bit) contributed to the fact that the students got relaxed. I can evaluate the follow-up discussion among pairs as successful since the students, according to my observation, tried to express their opinions; however, in most cases their debate ended in saying just one or two words. The reason for this could be that the students would have had the same problems even in Czech because this was about thinking. Despite the fact that the students expressed their ideas mostly in one word, I managed to write some of those ideas on the board. Then, I chose one answer, for example the statement of a boy who agreed that the author of the song had a really hard life, and I asked another girl if she agreed with his statement. Finally, I also told the students my opinions about the song and I think this

whole agreeing or disagreeing, which had not been planned, helped to conclude the whole lesson in a useful way for everybody.

Conclusion: The teacher can make any song very fruitful for EFL classes. This was proved in this lesson since the students were motivated to talk. They were stimulated to talk through the live music. This music helped the students feel relaxed and therefore self-confidently to tell their opinions to their colleagues. The students answered all the tasks and really tried to express their opinions in English. This lesson showed one important aspect which indicates the big advantage of live music in EFL classes. Therefore, the teacher who can play the guitar should try to take this instrument to the lesson since this is something that can make the atmosphere in the class very friendly. Finally, it was proved that when preparing the students for the following work with the song, it is very useful to tell the students some interesting facts about the author or the song as it helps them to get into the song more deeply and therefore to understand the meaning of the song better.

6.6. Activity No.6 – “*The Last Emperor of China*”

Class: A1.B

Number of the students: 14

Age of the students: 15

Goal: to revise adjective forms
to relax the students
to stimulate the students through the song in a follow-up pair-work discussion

Learning objectives: The students will be able to describe the song in several adjectives.
The students will be able to interpret their feelings and imaginations that arise from the melody of the song.
The students will be inspired to express their ideas about the song.

Purpose/Rationale: The purpose of this activity is mainly to motivate the students (through the instrumental song), to revise the usage of forming adjectives and to talk about the song in a further discussion in pairs.

Lesson fit: As a lesson closure, after several exercises practising making adjectives, the students will listen to the instrumental piece of music in order to change from practising grammar activities to developing the students’ communicative skills.

Anticipated problem: The students may react differently as this is the instrumental song with no lyrics, they may also refuse to cooperate.

Materials: a CD player (or an overhead projector with a CD player), the CD with the instrumental song *The Last Emperor*, worksheets with the tasks to be discussed (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.7)

Thesis focus: The song was used in order to revise some grammatical patterns and as a follow-up topic for a discussion.

Time: 20 min

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher tells the students some information about the activity.

The teacher says: *Well, as for the conclusion of our lesson, try to work with your partner sitting next to you. Firstly, I would like you to look at this piece of paper where you can find the tasks for you (during this the teacher distributes the students worksheets – see appendix no.7) Very well, let's go through the tasks. The first one is:*

- 1) *Can a song represent someone's life? Do you know any song that would tell you a life story of someone's life? Write down the name of the song and try to think about the story that lies behind this song! Tell it to your partner!*

The teacher says: *Well, now, try to think about the first task! Let's have a minute or two to put down your ideas and then tell your ideas to your partner!*

Aim: pre-listening activity, tuning in the students, grouping the students

Stage 2: The students listen to the song and fill in the second task.

The teacher says: *Now, thank you for your ideas! Let's move to the second task. You will be listening to a piece of instrumental music that was written for a film and after the listening, I would like you to think about the second question:*

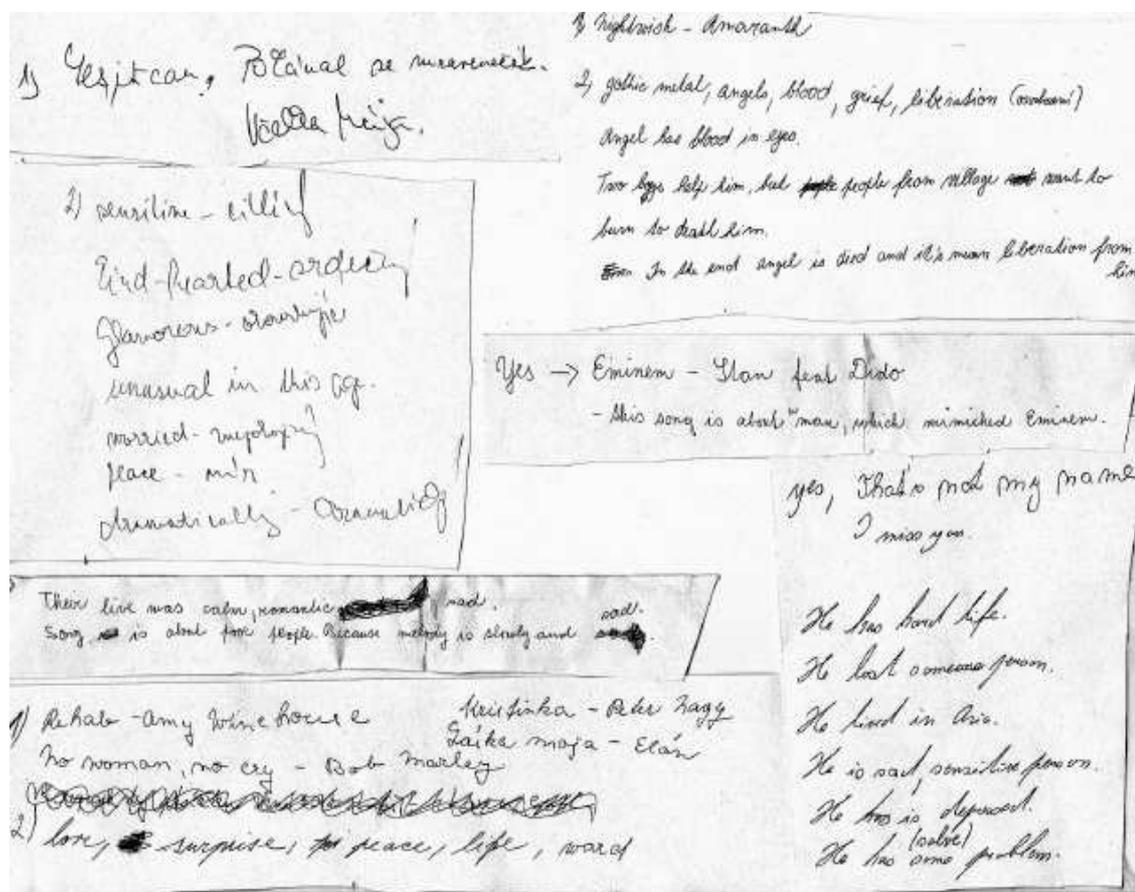
- 2) *How would describe the life of the person in this song? Try to listen to the melody, the rhythm and try to think about the person this song was written about. You can describe it in several adjectives, sentences, symbols that come to your mind...*

The teacher says: *All right! And again, when you are finished, tell your ideas to your partner! Now, let's listen to the song...*

Finally, after the listening, the teacher monitors the class, provides some help if necessary and as feedback (depends on time) the teacher possibly writes some of the students' suggestions on the board. It is important to mention that this activity is focused on the students' imagination; therefore, their suggestions might be different since they can come up with various different ideas. The teacher can also read the true story of the Last Emperor of China (the song is reflecting his life; see appendix no.7) or the students can find the story of this song on the Internet.

Aim: post-listening discussion among the students, making adjectives

An original copy of the students' paper



Reflection: To begin with, this activity was based on my own ideas in order to try to work with only the melody and the rhythm of the song. As the students practised the whole lesson making adjectives, I was sure that they would appreciate that another activity was a bit different. Again, which was quite similar to all those activities I had

done in the same way at the end of my lessons, I could see on the students' faces that they were happy to do something different. It was the aim to include in this lesson a song-based activity, however, I was a bit worried since the song had no lyrics and, what was more, it was instrumental. I was sure that the students of this class had different music tastes as they previously mentioned, when I asked them for their hobbies, that most of them listened to some pop or hip-hop music. Nevertheless, I strongly believed that this activity they had never done before and I was right because the class-teacher of these students told me, a few days after, that the students told her that this activity was very interesting and new for them, which was very motivating and encouraging for me. When reflecting the stages of this activity, even the first stage indicated that the students knew exactly what they were asked. They suggested several songs (or music groups) that had in the lyrics some stories. I was quite surprised since when the students were to tell their suggestions to their colleagues, everybody could think about at least one of a possible song. It is important to mention that almost each of the students, as I could observe this, in some words tried to retell the story of their song. This fact was very crucial for me since even though these were the students of the first year of secondary school, their level of English could be compared to the 8th graders of primary school. I randomly stopped at each of the students and asked them to tell me what songs they suggested and I have to say that everybody told me in several sentences their ideas. As the students worked in pairs, with the person sitting next, there were not any problems with groupings since the students knew their colleagues very well. The next activity was connected to the listening and although I had expected some problems (the students would not be willing to work with instrumental music, it would not be motivating for them...) I was completely mistaken. Almost all the students looked seriously when listening and I could feel that they really try to think about a possible story that lied behind this song. It is important to add that this song smoothly flows from the first part that is quite calm to more complicated parts that are also faster and a bit louder. All these changes in this song I could see in the students' faces. The students sometimes looked as they would have been taken inside the song and really lived the life of the person the song was about. These moments made me feel that the follow-up activity should be successful and it really was. The students came up with their suggestions of the possible life of the person the song was about and what was more almost all of them were completely correct. There were some students who precisely described the life of the person the song was about, which was amazing. However, I was delighted that even the weaker students from this class

suggested their ideas and share them with their partners (even these students suggested adjectives as sensitive, depressed, hard, loyal, likeable, moody, etc). I felt that these weaker students were not ashamed when expressing their suggestions to their colleagues, which was very important and it contributed to evoking a really communicative atmosphere. It was a pity that there was not more time to tell the students more about the background of the song (so I told them to find the true story of this song on the Internet as for their homework) but at least I managed to tell them that their suggestions were absolutely correct. The students correctly suggested that this song comes from China and that the song was about the person who had really good times as well as bad times at the end of his life.

Conclusion: As well as working with *Elizabethan Serenade*, which was also the piece of instrumental music, the students did not refuse to cooperate, which confirms the theory that if a song is appropriately chosen then there is a high possibility that the aim of such an activity will be met with success. Moreover, this activity showed that a song could associate various feelings and imaginations that can stand for a possible communication among students. What remains the question is that this kind of song-based communicative activity is very time consuming and therefore it would require more time in order to provide better feedback to students.

7. Evaluation of the Action Research Project

As the thesis of this Action Research Project was based upon the idea that songs can stand for an effective incentive to encourage communication among students and therefore contribute to the development of students' speaking skills, the Action Research Project was conducted to validate the rightness of this thesis and to answer the following questions:

Can songs stimulate students' willingness to express their ideas?

Can songs stand for a good starting point to communication?

Can songs provide opportunities for creating information (opinion) gaps?

To obtain the results that would validate the hypothesis and help to answer the above stated questions, the conclusions mentioned in the reflections will be discussed in light with the theory and compared with the conclusions drawn from the debate with the students and from the results of the questionnaire with the teachers.

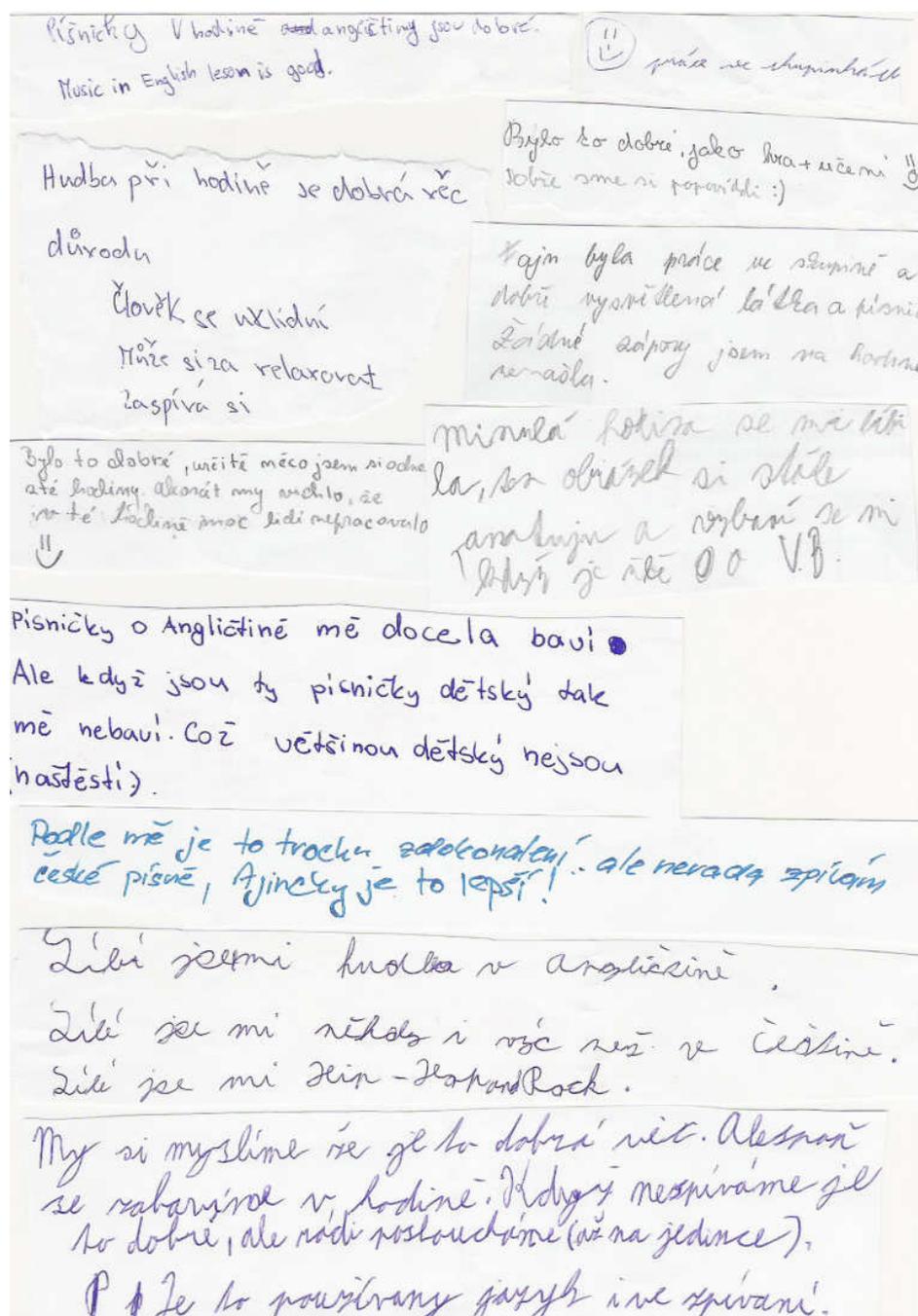
7.1. Results of the debate

“Songs ... give us the external cover we need to feel more secure while at the same time providing the internal support to carry on with the task” [Griffie, 1992: 4].

The debate with the students was based on the semi-structured interview. The aim was to prove or disprove the fact that songs can stand as an effective tool to motivate students. The interview with the students also helped to evaluate the final effect of the project. As the results of the debates in the classes did not differ too much from each other, the following chapter will discuss all the outcomes together. The students were asked what they liked or disliked about the song-based activities, whether they enjoyed working in groups/pairs and whether the songs motivated them to communicate. The students were also invited to come up with any suggestions about song-based communicative activities. The debate was about twenty minutes in each of the classes and

everybody got a chance, if he/she did not want to participate in the discussion, to express his/her opinions anonymously in small sheets of paper.

Some of the students' opinions



When I asked the students if they liked incorporating the songs to their regular English lessons, all the students answered that they liked this idea. What is more, the students agreed that they liked the variety of songs and mainly the possibility to work also

with the Czech song, which was completely a new experience for them. Some of them even said that the activities were like ‘playing’ and ‘learning’. When I asked the students which of those songs they did not like, there was not a single student who had a complaint. This fact was a bit confusing since during the lessons some of the students expressed their dislikes towards some of the songs. When I asked them, what happened and why they changed their minds, the students told me that those songs were not so bad and that they finally liked the activities connected to the songs (those songs were *Tak nějak málo tančím* and the *Elizabethan serenade*). All the students agreed that it was nice that I played some songs for them since it was an exciting moment in the lessons. They added that it would be nice to involve, at least once a week, a song in a regular English lesson. These findings accord with literature that considers songs as excellent means of motivation, relaxed atmosphere and mainly friendly way of teaching and learning. When I asked the students if they enjoyed working in groups/pairs, the answers varied. Some of the students stated that not all the members in groups wanted to communicate with others and that it would have been better to organize the communicative song-based activities rather as a pair-work since the students prefer working in pairs than in groups. However, some of the students claimed that they had a great fun during group work and that they could talk about their musical tastes. Although the students’ opinions on working in pairs/groups varied, the students told me that they found talking about music motivating and useful for them and that the music represents a topic they would like to talk about more often. As Foralová confirms: “In addition, most students, as students themselves report, are more ‘eager’ to share their ideas and impressions with a few closer classmates than with the whole class or the teacher. This may help to increase students’ motivation to embark upon the task at all and also to complete it” [Foralová, 2007: 71].

7.2. Reflections upon the components of song-based communicative activities

The following passage deals with the conclusions mentioned in the reflections compared to the theory of using songs in EFL classes.

Selection of songs

The question of an appropriate selection of songs represents the first crucial step in order to succeed when thinking about integrating songs to English lessons. The Action Research Project proved what Cranmer and Laroy, Orlova and other methodologists stated and that was the fact that the teacher has to believe in the power of the song he/she is taking to a class. This basic presumption that was stated in the methodological part of this paper helped to maintain the students' attention when the teacher was introducing the songs. For example, in the songs *Nobody Knows You* or *Tears in Heaven*, I showed the students that I know the song very well, that I can explain the origins of the songs and that I can even play one of these songs for them. This contributed to the fact that the students were interested in the activity, they could realize the purpose and therefore they were willing to cooperate in a following work. Nevertheless, to believe in the song is not enough. The teacher has to bear in mind whether the song fits in the lesson. This meant that the activities were logically linked and aimed to change the task, for example from reading to listening or speaking, or that the activities were aimed to relax the students. Moreover, sometimes the song-based activity was aimed to practise and revise some grammatical patterns in a relaxed way through the songs. As for the example, the students were to listen to the live song *Nobody Knows You* and fill in the gaps the verbs in the past simple. All the songs were chosen according to the students' age, according to the appropriate lyrics and according to the presence of the 'message', etc. All these factors proved to play a very important role. As a consequence of this preparation, the students were able to understand the song and therefore they were able to do the activities. Moreover, if I wanted the students understand the 'message' of the song, then the lyrics were not aimed to be difficult and as regards the melody, it always had to express some emotions. That the students could understand the 'message' and were able to feel these emotions was indicated by their ability to express and exchange their ideas about the songs. That the song indicates some feelings and emotions that affect our imagination and

thinking was shown in the activity connected to the song from the film *The Last Emperor* of China. In this activity the students were able to describe (although in a few simple adjectives and sentences) the life of the person the song was about, which was surprising since none of the students claimed to see the film before.

Role of motivation

“Songs can help the teacher with the initial motivation because the fact itself that they are so pleasurable to listen to is motivational enough...” [Rosová, 2008: 38].

The role of motivation is very important if the teacher wants to involve students in the teaching process. Although songs are regarded generally as a really motivating prompt to a variety of activities and tasks in EFL classes, the teacher has to vary the context under which songs are worked with. The real impulse that made the students be motivated and looked forward to the song-based activities was that I involved several different strategies when working with the songs. Therefore, the planned activities involved different organizational forms, a variety of tasks as well as incorporating the live music that helped to create the unique atmosphere in each of the classes. The students enjoyed the live music and, that was even more important, they were eager to participate in the follow-up communicative activities. In this case, the students were motivated through the intrinsic kind of motivation that was derived from their ‘inner’ interests in the live music, in the lyrics of a song, in a popular group. Intrinsically motivated students are compelled to do much better in classroom activities, because they are willing and eager to learn new material. The fact that the activities contained the tasks and the students could express their opinions contributed to the students’ willingness and motivation to talk during the following pair/group work. All the factors mentioned above supported the idea that songs, if carefully prepared, can motivate the students to communicate among themselves.

Conditions for communication

When preparing a task to be discussed in pairs/groups, it is always important to be aware of the presence of 'gaps'. The song-based communicative activities contained the tasks that were deliberately set in order to provide the 'gaps'. The 'information gap' presented in the first activity was in the missing information that the students had to find out. In the next activities, the presence of 'opinion-curiosity gaps' was in the difference of the students' opinions on the songs. As for the example, the students expressed their opinions on the song "*Tak nějak málo tančím*" when they were talking with their colleagues about the author of this song and about the 'message' of the song. Both types of the 'gaps' were crucial for the basis of the students' communication. Another aspect that contributed to the development of the students' communication was that the students could build their opinions on the list of possible speech acts. As the students needed to be prepared to talk, this list meant a basic preparation for discussions. The students were encouraged to remember this list and to evoke some expressions at the beginning of the activities when I asked the students for some general questions concerning a following topic. However, not only these basic factors can stand for justifying the fact that students will talk to each other. Another basic condition for raising communication among the students was the fact, according to my observations, that the activities took place in a relaxed yet working atmosphere when the students felt safe because they had supportive material (handouts), they were properly prepared and mainly that they discussed the topics that were close to them. The students expressed their opinions, listened to their colleagues and sometimes even developed their chat little further.

Although these 'chats' were mostly about exchanging a few opinions and did not lead to a long conversation among the students (there was no extra time to practise their speaking skills, therefore the difficultness of their conversation was limited to their actual knowledge of English), it was verified that there was a kind of stimulus based on the songs which made them to talk.

7.3. Final summary and suggestions for further improvements

This Action Research Project tried to prove that incorporating songs to English lessons can stimulate students to communicate among themselves. All the planned activities verified that the songs could motivate the students positively towards learning English. As regards the whole communication among the students (although some of the students expressed their opinions only in several words), they were willing to communicate about the songs. The question whether the songs could stand for a good starting point for a discussion was also confirmed since the students were stimulated to talk and therefore they exchanged their opinions and shared their ideas with their colleagues. The last question to answer is whether the tasks for the discussions were appropriate so that the tasks could represent the 'information/opinion gaps'. Basically, due to the fact that the students' musical tastes were different and not all of the students had the same opinions, the songs in general contained these 'gaps'. The possibility for the students to talk about something that was close to them, the possibility to talk to their colleagues in a friendly atmosphere supported the idea that songs could stand for a topic worth talking about. Moreover, giving the students opportunity to talk about music, about the topic that they were familiar with, enhanced the students' self-confidence to express their thoughts, which was necessary for further development of their communication skills. The idea that still remains unknown in relation to using music is incorporating a Czech song in EFL classes. The fact is that a Czech song in EFL classes is rather a kind of rarity that, whatever it may seem controversial, can bring to English lessons a new impulse in terms of motivation students.

However, there may arise many questions connected to this thesis and the problem of using music as a stimulus for communication. The following ideas are, therefore, important to mention and should be taken into consideration to improve song-based communicative activities:

- **Continuous and systematic work**

As with the description of pictures, when the students learn to follow some steps to describe a picture, the students should be given a guideline to describe a song. This means that through this systematic procedure with

guidelines the students could become more self-confident and skillful when talking about a song. From my personal experience I have to admit that there are students who need to follow some steps every time so that they could become more and more self-confident. Therefore, when working with songs, the teachers should repeat the same tasks with different songs and then, when the teacher feels that the students answer the tasks without any big problems, the teacher should carefully add tasks that are more difficult.

- **Working with musical clips**

As stated in the theoretical part of this thesis, the teachers should not use music all the time. Although I believe that songs are inseparable in EFL classes, the teachers should not take a song to all their lessons. This is the same situation as if a teacher would use only one course book during his/her lessons. On the other hand, as a pleasant change, I strongly recommend to try to work with some musical clips that can put completely new light on song-based communicative activities. The teachers can do with musical clips a great variety of activities that can be based on different scenes in clips connected to different parts of the lyrics in clips, different melodies and rhythms, etc. The last but not least thing to mention is that musical clips represent a great prompt to teach different cultural aspects in EFL classes.

- **Live music and further tips**

Another factor that should not be forgotten is that live music in EFL classes has its power and should not be taken just as something extraordinary in order to make fun and rest during lessons. During my short teaching experience, I have tried at least ten songs from different authors in my lessons. The songs I have modified so that I was able to play them on my own (as I am an amateur player), just with my guitar, in my lessons. I have to confirm that these song-based activities always motivated the students to work in the follow-up activities. Moreover, the students appreciated that they could work with something different from listening exercises in their course books. Therefore, teachers who can play

a musical instrument should not be afraid to play a song for their students. Although I sometimes catch myself thinking that playing a live song in EFL classes is still a question of an experiment, the truth is that live music can really lead to very fruitful work and should be taken seriously. One of the last things to mention is that it would be very useful to compile a list of suitable songs that could teachers use for different purposes in their EFL lessons. This list should include some tips on how to use songs (as well as some tips to use live music in EFL classes), concrete procedures, solutions to possible problems, etc.

To sum up, songs can represent an effective stimulus that evokes feelings of excitement and enthusiasm. If students can share these feelings with the teacher and vice versa, then the process of learning and teaching is something that really pays off.

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Appendix No. 1

The list of possible speech acts (partly adapted from Klippel 2005, Laroy – Cranmer 1992)

✂-----

expressing one's opinion

I think...
I feel that...
In my opinion...

some feelings that a song may evoke:

joy, happiness, excitement,
triumph

asking for someone's opinion

Do you think that...?
What do you feel/think about...?
Are you sure that...?

calmness, peacefulness,

regret, melancholy, nostalgia,
longing

asking for reasons

Why?
Why do you think that?
What makes you feel that?

grief, sadness, pain, sorrow,

fear, anxiety, foreboding

agreeing

Yes, that's right.
That's what I feel, too.
I think so, too.
Exactly.
I agree with you.
I feel that X is right.

some reactions to music:

boring, exciting, relaxing,
restful

disagreeing

I don't agree.
I don't think so.
You can't say that.
That's not the point/question/problem...

expressing certainty and uncertainty, probability and possibility

I'm absolutely certain that.../I'm not...
I'm sure that.../I'm not sure that...
There is definitely...
There may be...
Perhaps...
I don't think that...
...is not possible.

expressing likes and dislikes

I love/like...
...is great/very good/fun/fantastic.
I enjoy...
What I like best is...
I hate/dislike...
What I don't like about ...is...
I'm not at all keen on

Appendix No. 2

(adapted from Klippel 2005, Norman 1986)

a)

| |
|------------------------|
| 1) my nickname |
| 2) my favourite singer |
| 3) I am good at... |
| 1) |
| 2) |
| 3) |

b)

Firstly, fill in with your opinions (put a to show what kind of music you usually like, or usually do not like) then ask your colleague: Do you usually like...

I

Colleague

| like | don't like | | | likes | doesn't like |
|------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|--------------|
| | | classical music | | | |
| | | pop music | | | |
| | | jazz/blues | | | |
| | | hip hop / ska | | | |
| | | | Czech singers/bands? | | |
| | | | ↖ for example: ↗ | | |
| | | | ↙ ↘ | | |

Do you like listening rather to Czech or English songs? Ask your colleague!

Appendix No. 3

(key: 1) a tone, roofs 2) to have a fight, a bath R) over thirty 3) a basin 4) the right direction
5) to dance, kiss, cry, sing

Kryštof - Tak nějak málo tančím

1)
Všem strunám řeky toužím být _____
všem okapovým loužím jejich břeh,
signálu antén sklon _____
a pustit uzdu kormidlům.

2)
Aspoň potápěčem v houfu se stát,
chytit svojí vlnku s ní _____
s krabičky mýdla mít vor
a sjíždět _____ bez závor.

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti _____ .

3)
A v _____ tůni chci mít,
v solničkách zas vůni majáků,
ze starých školních pijáků
postavit záchranný člun.

4)
A velrybu ladně v dlani skrýt
a hloubku moře na dně talířů,
ve skafandru s halířů
vyrazit v ten _____

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti přes třicet.

5)
Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____

1) What do you know about the Czech band "KRYŠTOF" (How many members? Any front man? The musical genre?...)

2 a) Try to agree on five key words of the lyrics!

b) Try to tell your colleagues why...

Do you prefer recorded or live music?

Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

Appendix No. 4

(questions adapted from Cranmer and Laroy, 1992)

Elizabethan serenade by Ronald Binge

What feelings or words come to your mind when you are listening to this song?

Do you find this classical music boring?

Try to draw the picture of the woman this song is about!



Appendix No. 5

(key: 1: would, same, strong, hand, stand, way)



Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton

Would/Will you know my name
If I saw you in heaven?
Would it be the **same/sin**
If I saw you in heaven?
I must be **strong/wrong**, and carry on
'Cause I know I don't belong
Here in heaven

Would you hold my **had/hand**
If I saw you in heaven?
Would you help me **stand/pray**
If I saw you in heaven?
I'll find my **home/way**, through night and day
'Cause I know I just can't stay
Here in heaven

Time can bring you down
Time can bend your knee
Time can break your **hand/heart**
Have you begging please
Begging please

(instrumental bridge)

Beyond the door
There's peace I'm sure
And I know there'll be no more
Tears in heaven

...

Discuss with your partner!

1) Which word fits better!

(Would or Will? Same or sin?...)

2a) Who the song is about?

(Do you think that the song is about e.g. animals?
Or about any people? Or...?)

b) Try to think about another strophe with would/if construction!

3a) Try to connect the following words with any part in the lyrics!(a son, hard life, grief)

b) Do you know any song which has the powerful lyrics/story for you?

Appendix No. 6

(key: lived, spent, took, bought, began, lost, did)

Fill in the verbs in the PAST SIMPLE!

☺ Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out ☹ by Eric Clapton

Once I _____ the life of a millionaire,
I _____ all my money, I just did not care.
I _____ all my friends out for good time,
I _____ a bottle of whiskey, champagne and wine.

Ref. But no, nobody knows you
In your pocket, not one penny,
And as for friends, you don't have any.

Then I _____ to fall so low,
I _____ all my good friends, I _____ not have where to go.
But if I put my hands on a dollar again,
Everybody wants to be my friend again

Discuss with your partner!

Do you think that Eric had a really hard life? Why?

Why did Eric lose all his friends?

Did you like the song?

What is the musical genre of the song? (pop, country, jazz...)

Imagine that you have a million pounds. What would you buy?

Appendix No. 7

(The teacher can use the following story with the pictures of the Last Emperor below. The teacher can also play the trailer to this film that is freely distributed on the Internet.)

Tasks to be discussed...

- 1) *Can a song represent someone's life? Do you know any song that would tell you a life story of someone's life? Write down the name of the song and try to think about the story that lies behind this song! Tell it to your partner!*
- 2) *How would describe the life of the person in this song? Try to listen to the melody, the rhythm and try to think about the person this song was written about. You can describe it in several adjectives, sentences, symbols that come to your mind.*

The Short Story of the Last Emperor of China

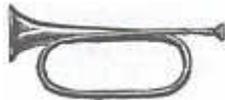
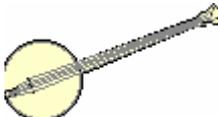
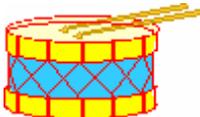
This song was written for the film *The Last Emperor*. This film won nine Academy Awards.

The Last Emperor of China - Pu Yi - was put on the throne at the age of three. Since this time he had to live behind the walls of the Forbidden City (then called Beijing). There he became a prisoner and a hollow symbol of an older monarchy. When the new government of China was established, the Emperor had to leave his palace. He was lucky to leave but not certain about his future. He was hunted and therefore he was given a chance by Japanese government to work for them. The Japanese gave him a possibility to become an Emperor again. However, after the Second World War, Pu Yi was put into a jail and he was treated as a Japanese collaborator. He was completely down. Finally, as an old, tired, exhausted and totally beaten person, he left the prison and became a gardener until the end of his life...



(Pictures taken from the film the Last Emperor of China directed by Bernarndo Bertolucci;
taken from <http://www.csfd.cz/film/753-posledni-cisar/galerie/>)

Appendix No. 8



Appendix No. 9

Cover Letter for the Questionnaire

Píseň jako stimul ke komunikaci mezi studenty

Dobrý den,

jmenuji se Oldřich Šimon a jsem učitelem angličtiny na střední škole v Havlíčkově Brodě a na základní škole v Chotěboři. Ve své práci se zabývám problematikou využití písně v hodinách angličtiny, především pak k navození komunikace mezi studenty.

Touto cestou Vás - učitele angličtiny - prosím o spolupráci vyplněním následujícího dotazníku. Zároveň bych Vás rád požádal o případné přeposlání adresy tohoto dotazníku i Vaším přátelům či známým, pokud jsou rovněž učitelé angličtiny, za účelem získání většího vzorku, a tudíž i přesnějších výsledků.

Dotazník je anonymní, budou vyžadovány jen základní demografické charakteristiky. Vámi poskytnuté údaje pak budou zpracovány a získané výsledky publikovány v práci, která by měla napomoci lepšímu porozumění problematice využití písní v hodinách angličtiny.

Děkuji za Vaši vstřícnost, spolupráci a čas, který věnujete elektronickému vyplnění dotazníku a upřímnému zodpovězení otázek. V případě výběru z několika možností, označte, prosím, hodící se odpovědi jejich zvýrazněním. Pokud Vám nebude vyhovovat žádná z nabízených možností, ve většině otázek budete mít možnost vyjádření se vlastními slovy.

Závěrem pak, dotazník je rozdělen na čtyři sekce (4 pages). V první sekci (Page 1) se právě nacházíte, druhá sekce (Page 2) obsahuje informace o Vás, třetí sekce (Page 3) se pak týká využití písní v hodinách angličtiny obecně a poslední sekce (Page 4) se pak týká Vašich názorů na využití písní v komunikativních aktivitách v hodinách angličtiny.

Děkuji Vám...

Oldřich Šimon

Appendix No. 10

The Questionnaire for the English Teachers

1. Pohlaví

- Žena
- Muž

2. Věk

- méně než 30 let
- 30 až 39 let
- 40 až 49 let
- 50 až 59 let
- 60 a více let

3. Učitelská praxe

- méně než 5 let
- 5 až 9 let
- 10 až 19 let
- 20 až 29 let
- 30 až 39 let
- 40 let a více

4. Učím angličtinu na

- Základní škole
- Gymnáziu
- Střední škole

(prosím, upřesněte)

5. Počet vyučovaných hodin angličtiny týdně

- méně než 5 hodin
- 5 až 9 hodin
- 10 až 14 hodin

- 15 až 19 hodin
- 20 a více hodin

6. Záliba v hudbě:

- Hudba je mým koníčkem
- Hudbu poslouchám často
- Hudbu poslouchám příležitostně
- Hudbu poslouchám zřídka
- O hudbu se nezajímám

7. Používáte ve svých hodinách písničkové aktivity?

- velmi často
- často
- někdy
- zřídka
- nikdy

8. Pokud pracujete s písničkovou aktivitou, jaké jazykové dovednosti procvičujete?

- poslech
- čtení
- psaní
- mluvení
- nevím

9. Pokud pracujete s písničkovou aktivitou, jaké jazykové prostředky (slovní zásoba, gramatika, výslovnost...) obvykle procvičujete?

- gramatika
- slovní zásoba
- výslovnost
- intonace, důraz

Jiné (prosím, upřesněte)

10. Dokázali byste z následující nabídky vybrat nějaké výhody použití písň v hodinách angličtiny?

| | souhlasím | spíše souhlasím | nevím | spíše nesouhlasím | nesouhlasím |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Píseň přináší "kulturní aspekt" do třídy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Píseň je odpočinkem od procesu učení | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Písničková aktivita může sloužit k procvičení různých jazykových aspektů (gramatika, slovíčka, poslech...) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Studenti mají rádi písničkové aktivity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Písně jsou motivující pro studenty | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jiné (prosím, upřesněte) | <input type="text"/> | | | | |

11. Jaká úskalí shledáváte při používání písni v hodinách angličtiny?

| | souhlasím | spíše souhlasím | nevím | spíše nesouhlasím | nesouhlasím |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Je obtížné najít vhodnou píseň pro určitou aktivitu | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vymyslet písničkovou aktivitu, která by se hodila do hodiny, je obtížné | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Použití písň v hodinách angličtiny vyžaduje od učitele práci navíc | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Studenti nebudou spolupracovat s připravenou písničkovou aktivitou | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jiná úskalí (prosím, upřesněte) | <input type="text"/> | | | | |

12. Stalo se Vám někdy, že jste si sdělovali se svými přáteli či kolegy pocity z nějaké písň?

- ano
- spíše ano
- nevím
- spíše ne
- ne

13. Říká se, že hudba dokáže prolomit jazykové bariéry. Myslíte si, že by hudba dokázala prolomit jazykové bariéry u studentů a tudíž dokázala přispět k rozvoji jejich komunikačních dovedností?

- souhlasím

- spíše souhlasím
- nevím
- spíše nesouhlasím
- nesouhlasím

Váš případný komentář

14. Už jste někdy pracovala/l s písničkovou aktivitou, která sloužila primárně k rozvoji komunikace mezi studenty?

- ano
- nevím
- ne

Pokud ano, z jakého zdroje (učebnice, vlastní zdroj) jste píseň brali? Jaká byla Vaše zkušenost s touto aktivitou?

15. Myslíte si, že hudba dokáže asociovat představy a myšlenky, které by mohly sloužit jako podnět k následné komunikativní aktivitě?

- souhlasím
- spíše souhlasím
- nevím
- spíše nesouhlasím
- nesouhlasím

Váš komentář

16. Která z následujících úskalí považujete za opravdu problematická při použití písně jako komunikační aktivity mezi studenty?

- Výběr písně
- Výběr otázek (úkolů) k aktivitě

- Nevím, jak přesně pracovat s písní
- Kvalita zvukového systému
- Vhodné zasazení do hodiny (soulad s ŠVP, s tématickými plány)
- Časová náročnost
- Studenti neberou písničkovou aktivitu vážně, aktivita odrazuje od učení
- Nevím

Jiná úskalí (prosím, upřesněte)

17. Stává se, že se studentům nemusí líbit hudební žánr písně a tudíž nejsou ochotni spolupracovat. Co ale když učitel zahraje živě? Je při ŽIVÉ hudbě (když učitel hraje na hudební nástroj) důležitý výběr hudebního žánru?

- Ano, určitě i při živé hudbě je důležitý hudební žánr
- Spíše ano
- Nevím
- Spíše ne
- Nesouhlasím, u živé hudby nezáleží na hudebním žánru

Váš názor

18. Když byste měli sestavit komunikační aktivitu na nějaké písni, na které části písně byste aktivitu pravděpodobně založili?

- Na textu
- Na melodii
- Na rytmu, tempu
- Na pozadí vzniku písně (vyprávění o vzniku písně)
- Nevím

Jiné (prosím, upřesněte)

19. Myslíte si, že by komunikativní aktivita v hodinách angličtiny mohla být založena i na české písni s českým textem?

- Určitě ano

- Spíše ano
- Nevím
- Spíše ne
- Určitě ne, do hodiny angličtiny nepatří česká píseň

Váš komentář



20.

Děkuji Vám za Váš čas, vstřícnost i upřímnost při vyplňování dotazníku!

Pokud Vám v dotazníku něco chybělo, jestliže byste chtěli dodat nějakou poznámku či názor, prosím, napište dolů do rámečku.

Jestliže budete chtít znát celkové výsledky, prosím, napište na: simon@oahshb.cz

Milý den!

Oldřich Šimon

