

Using Pop Songs to Teach English to Young Adults: Principles Derived from an Outreach Project

Throughout 2022, we carried out an outreach project called “Young Adults and Pop Songs in English: Exploring Connections for Post-Pandemic Teaching” at the National University of La Pampa in Argentina. The project consisted of a sequence of online and in-person workshops for young adults (YAs) between the ages of 14 and 18. The workshops were taught mostly by pre-service teachers enrolled in the English language teaching (ELT) program at the university. Those pre-service teachers selected a pop song for each session and designed a structured lesson based on the form and content of the song's lyrics. The lessons, 60 to 80 minutes long, were delivered mostly in English, except for the final discussions which, due to their relatively abstract nature, often combined English and Spanish. The main aim of the project was not merely to review the structures and lexicon of pop songs in English but also to open spaces for dialog around the problems experienced by YAs in the post-pandemic context.

In this article, we encourage educators to consider a series of principles derived from our practice when using pop songs to teach English to a YA population. Since this project was a spin-off from an earlier course we taught on literatures in English in the ELT program, we will occasionally make connections between teaching English through pop songs and the broader fields of the arts and cultural studies.

POP SONGS AND THE ARTS

As early as the 1990s, textbooks proposed the application of reading techniques to texts other than the literary ones, such as television

sitcoms, advertisements, and pop songs (see Montgomery et al. 2012). At that time, McRae (1991) advocated for a comeback of representational materials in ELT, following the deluge of referential materials such as news, editorials, and similar journalistic texts favored by the communicative approach that was in vogue at the time. Pop songs are representational of many students' emotional experiences to the extent that they “dramatize authentic feelings [and] express vividly the adolescent emotional dilemma” (Hall and Whannel 2009, 48). YAs listen to pop music almost nonstop, and that musical choice contributes to their sense of self. This makes pop songs a key source for the teaching of

**YAs listen to pop music almost nonstop,
and that musical choice contributes to their sense of self.
This makes pop songs a key source for the
teaching of English to that population.**

English to that population, and the unbounded cultural significance of the genre has even made it more central to the more-rigorous programs of English in higher education. At the University of Texas at Austin, for example, Professor Elizabeth Scala teaches a course based mainly on the tenets outlined by Bradley (2017) for pop songs to be read as poetry. In that course, she connects the lyrics written by Taylor Swift to some of the most outstanding literary works of all time (Scala 2022).

Music was also central to the “Community Arts Zone” research project through which Canadian educators tried to develop connections between literacy and the arts across Canada and the United States. Even though the project was not specifically focused on pop songs, Griffin et al. (2017) claimed that the arts frequently align more with the kinds of lived literacy practices that learners experience on a regular basis than do many activities specifically designed to teach English. This can be connected to the omnipresence of pop music in the YA world and the fact that pop songs are increasingly an unavoidable part of adolescents’ lives. Furthermore, music, as well as all the other arts, can “give students the freedom and space to experiment with modes that invite their own agency to flourish” (Griffin et al. 2017, 2), which in turn informs the development of the sense of self. Though this constructivist perspective is only partially related to our outreach project, it served as the basis of our proposal. We believed that exploring the world of English through a genre that YAs felt was their own would translate not only into further involvement and motivation but also a closeness between the contents of the songs and students’ everyday lives, which would lead to a more enthusiastic attitude to learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

POP SONGS IN ELT

The work of Murphey (1990) set the basis for an exploration of pop songs in the field of ELT by confirming the distinctive traits of pop songs that make them so suitable for teaching and learning English: (1) their composition relies mostly on high-frequency words, (2) those words and phrases are usually repeated throughout the lyrics, and (3) in most of them, there is an overwhelming presence of the first and second persons. The last trait had already been noticed by cultural theorists who affirmed that YAs “identify with these collective representations and . . . use them as guiding fictions” (Hall and Whannel 2009, 48). However, that personal and emotional involvement with the songs should not prevent YAs from examining “culture and diversity through authentic songs and other materials” (Mobbs and Cuyul 2018, 23). In that vein, an intercultural approach to ELT involves the adaptation of the concepts and techniques of literary, media, and cultural studies to the EFL classroom so that learners develop intercultural communicative competence, or “the ability to understand the language and behavior of the target community, and explain it to members of the ‘home’ community—and vice versa” (Corbett 2022, 2).

The frequent and repetitive quality of the structures and lexicon of pop songs is one of the central benefits of using music in the classroom, and the checklist proposed by Mobbs and Cuyul (2018, 23) offers a useful set of guidelines for choosing a song to teach. The list includes linguistic issues such as the content, clarity of speech, vocabulary, and grammar of the song lyrics, and it posits questions about the song’s popularity, its

The frequent and repetitive quality of the structures and lexicon of pop songs is one of the central benefits of using music in the classroom.

cultural sensitivity, and the chance that a song may be offensive for some of their listeners. In our case, it was of utmost importance, for example, that the pop songs we selected were popular enough for most students to have listened to them regularly and that the linguistic elements were not so complex as to discourage prospective learning.

As we underwent the process of putting our project into practice, we worked on setting principles for teaching pop songs to a YA population. We recorded the steps that would shape the basic guidelines emerging from the project as it progressed, keeping a teaching diary, writing our lesson plans, making notes on our observations of the actual classes, and assessing the outreach project through a series of surveys answered by the YAs attending the workshops. The principles we recommend below are not prescriptive and should be taken only as a set of ideas intended to continue the conversation about the worth and usefulness of pop songs in ELT. It should be noted that our discussion often turns to narrative, due to the ethnographic nature of the sources of data we collected as we carried out our tasks in the context of the project. We must also clarify that the songs mentioned in this article were chosen for a YA audience; not every song mentioned may be appropriate in every context. With that said, we encourage teachers to thoroughly review the lyrics and meanings behind the songs before sharing them with students.

We aimed for the project to foster collaborative learning among pre-service teachers, who formed pairs to train for the classes. Each pair brainstormed and led one or two activities related to the song selected weekly. Teaching in pairs alleviated some of the pressure of entering the classroom in the role of teacher for the first time. The eagerness and creativity of pre-service teachers brought enormous

benefits to teaching pop songs; the heightened energy in the workshops was contagious, and pre-service teachers often shared ideas that may not have been embraced in a conventional classroom setting. For example, after listening to and dissecting the song “Save Your Tears” by The Weeknd (2020), students made posters in English with pieces of advice for how someone may work through a romantic or platonic breakup, an idea originally suggested by the pre-service teachers and enthusiastically conducted by them in small groups and breakout rooms.

Meeting for a few minutes before both Zoom and in-person sessions to review the lesson plan helped the pre-service teachers feel comfortable entering the classroom. During these five-minute meetings, Professor Basabe (one of the authors of this article) distributed a road map that included each activity, the teachers leading it, and suggested time frames to keep students on track to finish the lesson. These road maps helped pre-service teachers focus on how to best deliver the content of the lesson and eliminated any potential confusion.

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING POP SONGS TO YOUNG ADULTS

Meaningfulness

Many English language teachers believe that for pop songs to be meaningful and therefore deserving to be taught, the songs must be serious. In cultural studies, seriousness is a concept that dates back to the mid-twentieth century, when renowned German theorist Theodor W. Adorno established a clear-cut distinction between classical music and popular music, by which the former stood as “serious” and against which the latter was described. Adorno (2009) deemed popular music highly standardized and formulaic—produced only to reach economic success—and promoting

Pop songs do not have to be necessarily serious to be meaningful.

passive listening. A similar opposition seems to be at work among teachers today when they search for pop songs to be used with YAs but select only those containing significant, generally abstract, themes or out of which serious discussions can be promoted. This attitude appears to have been inherited from traditional approaches to teaching literature, probably still endorsed by some ELT programs, expecting students to engage in seemingly intellectual debates about love and hate, life, and death— notions that, if taken just as abstractions, can be far from the everyday realities of contemporary young lives.

Pop songs do not have to be necessarily serious to be meaningful. In our experience, for instance, choosing “Where Is the Love?” by the Black Eyed Peas (2003) became a problem due to the gravity of the song. The thematic and linguistic complexity of its lyrics, the intricate paths in which its conflict is developed, and the specific references to racism in American history turned out to be obstacles for our population, and we felt forced to skip certain stanzas of the song and even encourage a light reading of it for the sake of maintaining the YA learners’ interest in it. On the other hand, the analysis and discussion of an apparently simple song like the summer hit “Watermelon Sugar” by Harry Styles (2019) proved quite productive when, after an initially lighthearted listening-comprehension activity, we proposed that our students study the somewhat suggestive innuendo of the metaphors in the lyrics and turn them into their local, more sensible, and affectively responsible versions through a creative-writing activity in English. Meaningfulness lies in our ability as teachers to make the content of pop songs significant to our students, and that can be achieved only if the tasks we suggest suit their age and interests, not ours. Thus, anything in the world of pop songs can be read seriously.

Here, we offer a sample lesson for teachers looking to incorporate pop songs into their own class. Each lesson began with a warm-up activity typically related to music, followed by tasks and games analyzing the chosen song’s content, both in small groups and with the entire class of 20 students. Each activity ran for ten to 20 minutes. In our class focused on “Watermelon Sugar,” we introduced the song by showing students sections of a photo of Styles. We gradually revealed more parts of the singer’s photo as students asked yes-or-no questions about his nationality, age, gender, etc. Then, students listened to “Watermelon Sugar” for the first time, watching the accompanying music video. Before listening a second time, they received a handout of the lyrics with certain words missing. After filling in the blanks individually, we reviewed the correct answers as a class and began to discuss the general meaning of the song, concentrating on its images and metaphors.

The second activity focused on content and vocabulary. Given that “Watermelon Sugar” is clearly a summer song, we encouraged students, in groups of three or four, to consider summer songs in their native language and make a list in English of the

Tastes like _____
On a _____ (Day or time of day)
And it sounds just like a _____
I want more _____
And that summer _____
It’s so _____ and _____

Figure 1. A sample template to prompt students to create their own summer song

topics usually mentioned in these songs. Examples included beaches, ice cream, and parties. Teachers helped translate more-complex Spanish words and phrases to English. The final activity focused on creative writing and production. Using the list of topics in English, students created their own song based on the structure of “Watermelon Sugar,” with the help of the template whose initial lines are shown in Figure 1.

Most noun phrases were removed from the lyrics and replaced with spaces for students to fill in with their own words. The sample of “Watermelon Sugar” shown in Figure 1 could be expanded to include more of the song as teachers choose what words or phrases to omit. Students could change the verbs as well or keep sections of the song as they were. To close the class, each group sang or read their song out loud, and noticed the different nuances each new version involved.

Focus on Language

For many English language teachers, including pop songs among other classroom materials equates to giving their students a form of free time. Often YA learners view the tasks in the same way, as they expect to go through predictable stages of listening to the songs for fun, then doing a reading-comprehension activity or directly translating the lyrics to their source language. However, activities

based on pop songs should combine “the five domains of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and communicative competence” (Lems 2018, 17), even if the central aim of the project is not totally linguistic per se. In our experience, we designed a set of tasks for each workshop involving the structures, lexicon, and content of the songs that the YA learners could complete in pairs or small groups. The tasks built on students’ previous knowledge of English while providing clear challenges in areas that they would be motivated to strengthen. There, in the communal development of linguistic abilities, was precisely where learning occurred.

Since we worked mostly with mixed-ability classes, the tasks in our workshops also sporadically included translation. Our students produced their own versions in Spanish of Ed Sheeran’s love song “Perfect” (2017), for example, but they did it with a twist: we required that the translation be parallel to the lyrics in English in terms of both their register (formal or informal) and poetic qualities (wording, rhyme, etc.). For YA learners, this turned out to be a fun experience because they played with words in both English and Spanish and used snippets of the local slang that they identified with. In addition, the discussion of issues of diversity in expressing feelings in their own language and culture in intercultural comparison with those in the target language made for a stimulating task, as suggested by Mobbs and Cuyul (2018).

Interestingly, according to the surveys completed by the YAs attending the workshops, the focus on language was one of the aspects that the participants valued the most, together with the creation of communities of knowledge. The learners appreciated the opportunities to review grammar and vocabulary through pop songs, and they predominantly treasured the genre, as they thought that it constituted a more familiar and learner-friendly linguistic environment than the referential ones in which they solved the heavily structured activities typically proposed to them in secondary education and schools of English.

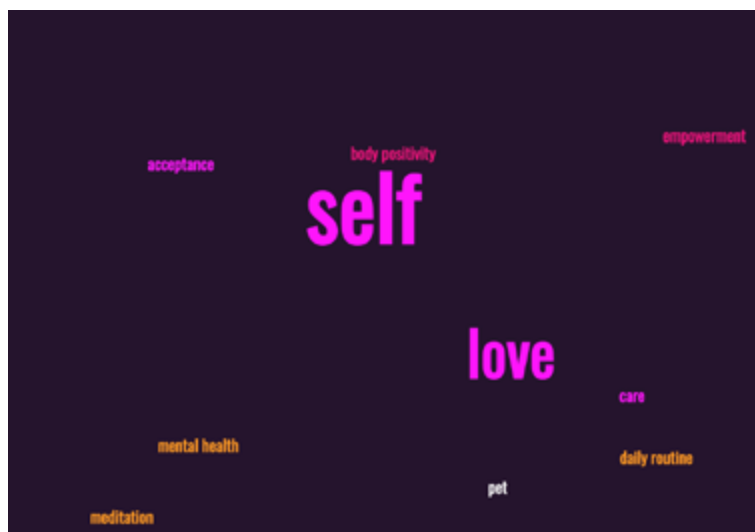


Figure 2. A word cloud created after a discussion of “All About That Bass”

**Due to the inherent challenges of young adulthood,
students are often critical of the realities around them.
Therefore, criticality should be fostered,
but it should be guided in a way that
results in constructive outcomes.**

While these workshops were designed for YA learners who had studied English for three to six years at state schools, teachers can adapt many of the activities for beginners. Given the advanced topics often discussed in our sessions, we chose to conduct certain conversations in Spanish while incorporating English by listing and grouping translations of certain key words and terms discussed. For example, in “All About That Bass” by Meghan Trainor (2014), students listed terms such as “self-love,” “mental health,” and “body positivity” as we discussed the general theme of the song. Students then participated in creating a word cloud with a visual representation of the conversation’s key terms, which they kept at the end of the class as a memento (see Figure 2). Teachers with beginner-level students can apply the same principles of creative inquiry, reflection, and production by choosing songs that best fit the age and level of the class and encourage additional engagement through discussion. In all cases, however, we highly encourage that English be used for the delivery of all instructions and for as much of the class as possible.

Criticality

Due to the inherent challenges of young adulthood, students are often critical of the realities around them. Therefore, criticality should be fostered, but it should be guided in a way that results in constructive outcomes. Criticality in ELT may refer to two distinct contexts: (1) critical thinking, or the ability to identify assumptions and evaluate evidence logically, and (2) critical pedagogy, or the attitude to relate the classroom to a wider social framework and seek transformation through education (Banegas and Villacañas de Castro 2016). In our workshops, we sometimes sought to develop a type of

criticality in the direction of critical pedagogy by having students explore new ways of reading the world outside of what is directly projected by the pop songs we studied, or by encouraging their own alternative positions towards both popular music and the phenomena surrounding it. This let them explore meanings using a practical version of critical discourse analysis adapted to the speed and style of an outreach project.

For example, when we listened to “Leave Before You Love Me” by Marshmello x Jonas Brothers (2021), we started our session with a brief discussion about the reasons why the success of boy bands is commonly stronger and lasts longer than that of girl bands, the conversation leading at once to issues of gender in the music industry. In addition, as a final instance of analysis of the lyrics, we posed a question to our students about whether the male singer’s storyline demonstrated emotional responsibility. While this stirred debate among our students, most agreed that the song displayed an awkward way of “caring” for a significant other, almost verging on neglect and inattention. Students suggested options in dealing with an affective relationship. A similar deliberation emerged from the interpretation of Sheeran’s “Perfect” (2017). This time the students argued that, to a certain extent, the lyrics promote gender imbalance because the singer evokes an idyllic love story set in the future, taking for granted the wishes of the girl to whom the song is addressed. Even though intended to endorse body positivity, Trainor’s “All About That Bass” (2014) proved equally controversial; the YAs disliked the light treatment of body dysmorphia in the video, and they rejected the derogatory terms used in reference to women with slim bodies. This

The development of criticality should not deter YAs from enjoying the pleasant experience of listening to pop songs.

encouragement of critical thinking created a classroom environment that brought relevance and depth to discourse in both the target and the source languages.

Active Consumption

The development of criticality should not deter YAs from enjoying the pleasant experience of listening to pop songs. Popular music has often been derided by cultural theorists on the grounds that it appears to promote only passive listening and that, due to its marketable intentions, it seems to possess only economic value. These could be the reasons why some teachers have discarded the use of pop songs in the classroom. However, even if the music industry may control the commercial aspects of popular music, it is the consumers who make its cultural value (Frith 1983). As we write this article, for instance, thousands of young people around the world are listening to Miley Cyrus's "Flowers" (2023) and "Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53" (2023), featuring Colombian singer Shakira and Argentina's Bizarrap. Many of these listeners are having heated arguments on social media about the personal contents of these songs, as if they were matters of utmost importance to their current lives! Thus, consumption becomes an active, creative, and productive process involving pleasure, identity, and the production of meaning.

Active consumption should be stimulated so that YAs do not think that, because of its roots in the working classes or because of its highly commercialized quality, popular music is less valuable or deserves less scholarly consideration than other forms of cultural expression. In our workshops, we showed our students that we were knowledgeable about popular culture and that we truly valued it, discussing our individual tastes in music as a class and exploring the reasons behind them. Throughout the sessions, we also played popular songs belonging to

different genres, including even Argentine rock and folklore performed in Spanish. Apart from creating a diverse and intercultural environment for our students, this was intended to have them appreciate various types of music and respect the many personal tastes around them, an attitude we highly encourage all teachers to develop.

We believe that in ELT we must acknowledge the centrality of popular music in the lives of YAs, revitalize the genre as an authentic source of language in use, and integrate it to the rest of their daily cultural practices. In our experience, we stressed that last notion by, for example, having groups create a TikTok video based on a viral sound containing excerpts from Dua Lipa's "Levitating" (2020), in which they listed the school subjects that they liked or disliked. Twice we also had them sing along with the lyrics of pop songs. Sung in karaoke fashion, "Bam Bam" by Camila Cabello and Ed Sheeran (2022) and "Leave Before You Love Me" by Marshmello x Jonas Brothers (2021) were appropriated by the students enrolled in the workshops, which became pleasurable moments of active and creative use of English.

Personal Growth

In the final chapter of a book on teaching literature for language learning, Naji, Subramaniam, and White (2019) foresaw that, as we moved into the twenty-first century, a personal-growth approach to literature would prevail over cultural or linguistic approaches. We think that this idea is equally applicable to using pop songs to teach English to YAs; a person-centered approach "enables learners to develop a strong sense of self-awareness as individuals who are valued and who can make useful contributions to society" (Naji, Subramaniam, and White 2019, 198). The closeness between the contents of pop songs and the issues of identity brought into question by their active consumption stands

as a powerful source for the growth of YAs and the voicing of the topics that trouble them in the safe environments we provided in our outreach project.

We kept those notions in mind when we created, as final prompts for each session in our workshops, open spaces for dialog around the problems experienced by YAs with the contents of the pop songs already studied, activating the students' reflection. So, to finish the discussion of Beyoncé's "If I Were a Boy" (2008), we asked our mostly female students to stand, as it were, in the feet of boys and list the typical girl behaviors that they would dislike. After we listened to Sheeran's "Perfect" (2017), students reflected on the fact that it was not always necessary to be in a romantic relationship to feel love, and they proposed other types of platonic relationships that prompt comparable feelings. This triggered not only contemplative responses concerning the love of family members, friends, pets, and even habits but also the writing of notes addressed to a classmate in which students were asked to declare three reasons why they like that person. As one of the pre-service teachers offering the workshops once stated, all these tasks sparked introspection because the YAs explored their feelings and found answers to their most genuine queries on their own.

The search for reflective responses to the themes of the songs can be accompanied by the practice of less intellectual, more-practical tasks leading YA learners in the direction of discovering their artistic abilities. Just as Lems (2018) had her students design a CD jacket or create their own music videos using images, within the limited possibilities of our project in terms of time and materials, we asked our students to design group cards and posters throughout the workshops as well as individual fanzines as a final digest and souvenir. While these were reflective actions, such hands-on activities let students experiment with their own potential for creative expression and the consequent expansion of self and agency, which undoubtedly results in personal growth.

Creating Communities of Knowledge

By "communities of knowledge" we mean relatively open spaces of learning to which every student brings knowledge that should be considered valid and legitimate by the rest of the class. YAs commonly feel that they are not children anymore, at times resulting in less reception to lessons delivered from a teacher-centered pedagogical approach. In this model, the teacher is considered the possessor of the knowledge that students are expected to study and absorb, seeing themselves as holding little agency in the topics they study. However, many YAs are predisposed to question what they are taught and even critique our methodologies or our teaching strategies. Consequently, the creation of communities of knowledge becomes crucial when studying pop songs with a YA population. This is especially true in our case, since our students are usually more familiar with the music genre at hand than we are, and they even understand the contexts of the songs or informal expressions we may not be acquainted with. This contextual, cultural understanding of the music we study may be as relevant as our knowledge of the foreign language we are teaching.

We found that incorporating YA areas of knowledge into classes increased engagement and confidence, which in turn fostered an even stronger and more positive learning environment. Students feel more relaxed and less reluctant to use English in the context of a collective approach to content and language learning than they usually do in a regular secondary-school lesson taught in a traditional fashion. Besides, thinking of our classes as communities of knowledge goes hand in hand with Corbett's (2022) idea of turning classes into small laboratories where texts in English are examined using the techniques of literary, media, and cultural studies adapted to the age and interests of the group. We offered some of those techniques when having our students notice certain key aspects of the audiovisual rendering of the pop songs under analysis or the poetic qualities of some of the lyrics we were studying. Thus, students feel that we, learners and teachers alike, are building knowledge together.

When YA learners feel that they are knowledgeable about a topic and that their knowledge is valued and respected, they similarly tend to feel eager to share their views with their teachers and classmates, which results in deeper involvement and presents more opportunities to use English.

When YA learners feel that they are knowledgeable about a topic and that their knowledge is valued and respected, they similarly tend to feel eager to share their views with their teachers and classmates, which results in deeper involvement and presents more opportunities to use English. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the workshops we taught online. Even though we encountered the challenge of creating dynamic communities through Zoom, over time students gradually turned on their cameras, spoke during breakout-room sessions, and shared their views through the chats in English. Building a relatively informal environment in which learners feel relaxed and able to banter back and forth with their teachers “the Argentine way”—straightforwardly and in a relatively casual manner—may have added to those confident responses. Nevertheless, the embodiment of the project as a primarily collaborative action through many of the critical and creative tasks already described was, in our opinion, one of the strongholds of its success. This was clearly reflected in the students’ responses to the final survey; many of them valued the positive discussions and interactions with other YAs. Without having previously known one another, they even suggested that from then onwards they would follow each other on Instagram, a social network we used to keep in touch with our classes and to build community throughout our workshops.

CONCLUSION

YAs listen to pop music almost constantly, and so pop songs constitute a powerful source to teach them English. To be beneficial and clearly integrated to language learning, using pop

songs in the EFL classroom should follow the principles of meaningfulness, focus on language, criticality, active consumption, and personal growth, and it should encourage the creation of communities of knowledge. Provided their contents are not offensive, almost all pop songs are meaningful because they are aligned with the regular literacy practices of a YA population. However, it is our task as teachers to decide which aspects of the language we want our students to explore and which meanings we expect them to discover in pop music. This exploration always entails the development of criticality and the encouragement of active consumption. Deeply intrinsic to the YA world, criticality can be fostered by teachers, or it will eventually arise from class discussions among YA learners. Nevertheless, a critical attitude should not prevent them from actively appropriating the meanings of the music they consume; at their age, it functions as collective representations and even guiding fictions of how life should or could be lived.

In view of the significance of pop songs to the sense of self of YAs, we should lastly think about our lessons framed around the genre as chances for our students’ personal growth, which more often than not happens in groupings planned beforehand as communities of knowledge. This will lead to YAs feeling both emotionally driven by the songs and ultimately deeply involved with their learning of English.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W. 2009. On popular music. In *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. 4th ed. Ed. J. Storey, 63–74. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Banegas, D. L., and L. S. Villacañas de Castro. 2016. Criticality. *ELT Journal* 70 (4): 455–457. <http://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccw048>

To be beneficial and clearly integrated to language learning, using pop songs in the EFL classroom should follow the principles of meaningfulness, focus on language, criticality, active consumption, and personal growth, and it should encourage the creation of communities of knowledge.

- Bradley, A. 2017. *The poetry of pop*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Corbett, J. 2022. *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. 2nd ed. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Frith, S. 1983. *Sound effects: Youth, leisure, and the politics of rock 'n' roll*. London: Constable.
- Griffin, S. M., J. Rowsell, K-L. Winters, P. Vietgen, D. McLauchlan, and G. McQueen-Fuentes. 2017. A reason to respond: Finding agency through the arts. *International Journal of Education & the Arts* 18 (25): 1–23.
- Hall, S., and P. Whannel. 2009. The young audience. In *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. 4th ed. Ed. J. Storey, 45–51. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Lems, K. 2018. New ideas for teaching English using songs and music. *English Teaching Forum* 56 (1): 14–21.
- McRae, J. 1991. *Literature with a small 'l': Developing thinking skills in language teaching and learning*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Mobbs, A., and M. Cuyul. 2018. Listen to the music: Using songs in listening and speaking classes. *English Teaching Forum* 56 (1): 22–29.
- Montgomery, M., A. Durant, T. Furniss, and S. Mills. 2012. *Ways of reading: Advanced reading skills for students of English literature*. 4th ed. New York: Routledge.
- Murphey, T. 1990. *Song and music in language learning: An analysis of pop song lyrics and the use of song and music in teaching English to speakers of other languages*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Naji, J., G., Subramaniam, and G. White. 2019. *New approaches to literature for language learning*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scala, E. 2022. Why I teach a course connecting Taylor Swift's songs to the works of Shakespeare, Hitchcock and Plath. *The Conversation*, November 18. <https://theconversation.com/why-i-teach-a-course-connecting-taylor-swifts-songs-to-the-works-of-shakespeare-hitchcock-and-plath-194120>
- Cabello, Camila, and Ed Sheeran. "Bam Bam." Track 4 on *Familia*. Epic, 2022.
- Cyrus, Miley. "Flowers." Track 1 on *Endless Summer Vacation*. Columbia, 2023.
- Dua Lipa. "Levitating." Track 5 on *Future Nostalgia*. Warner, 2020.
- Marshmello x Jonas Brothers. "Leave Before You Love Me." [No album.] Republic, 2021.
- Shakira and Bizarrap. "Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53." Track 11 on *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran*. Dale Play (single), Sony (album), 2023.
- Sheeran, Ed. "Perfect." Track 5 on *Divide*. Asylum, Atlantic, 2017.
- Styles, Harry. "Watermelon Sugar." Track 2 on *Fine Line*. Columbia, Erskine, 2019.
- The Weeknd. "Save Your Tears." Track 11 on *After Hours*. XO, Republic, 2020.
- Trainor, Meghan. "All About That Bass." Track 1 on the EP *Title*. Epic, 2014.

Enrique Alejandro Basabe is a lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages at the National University of La Pampa, Argentina. He holds an MA in ELT and British Cultural Studies and a PhD in Education. His main interests are teacher education and cultural issues in British, American, and Latin American contexts.

Mary Beringause is a PhD student in Spanish Literature at Georgetown University. After teaching English at a secondary school in Madrid, Spain, she completed a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship at the National University of La Pampa, Argentina, focusing on cultural exchange and second-language acquisition.

SONGS CITED

- Beyoncé. "If I Were a Boy." Track 1 on *I Am ... Sasha Fierce*. Columbia, Music World, 2008.
- Black Eyed Peas. "Where Is the Love?" Track 13 on *Elephunk*. A&M, Interscope, will.i.am, 2003.