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When "grass was greener"*: Longplay Album Covers and Learning English. A Retrospection

A b s t r a c t

This paper brings together several important threads accounting for learning English as a foreign language, that is, language learning experience, material culture as an element of this experience as well as a component of the learning environment, motivation and music. Material culture has recently attracted the attention of researchers interested in foreign/second language learning and multilingualism because it provides a rich context for many multilingual practices. Longplay album covers are an excellent example of artefacts that combine the verbal with the material. Music and songs, pop songs in particular, are an important motivating factor in learning languages.

The aim of this paper is to share with the reader the author and her generation's encounters with pop music of the 1960s, focusing on language learning experience based on the material aspects of these encounters, that is, longplay record covers. The paper, then, is the author's personal reflection based on her own experience as well as on the multiple discussions she has had with friends and colleagues whose teenage years spanned the 1960s. Also connections between music and language learning are discussed along with suggestions of activities capitalizing on learners' interest in music in the teaching process.

Keywords: foreign language learning experience, material culture, longplay album covers, pop music, motivation

L2 Learning Experience and Material Culture

L2 learning experience is an important component of L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005), but it has been largely underresearched. It may

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* The quote comes from the song "High Hopes" from the Pink Floyd's album *Division Bell* (1994): "The grass was greener / The light was brighter / With friends surrounded / The nights of wonder" (http://www.pink-floyd-lyrics.com/html/high-hopes-lyrics-division-bell.html).

be conceptualized as language input and immediate learning environment (Dörnyei, 2009) but also, more broadly, as "situated classroom experiences as well as experiences beyond the classroom comprising cognitive and emotional processes" (Csizér & Kálmán, 2019, p. 227). Outside the classroom experiences with language input and use provide an intriguing source of information about the tangled pathways to foreign language proficiency. In addition, the experiences addressed in this paper are also related to material culture that has been an inseparable component of various learning environments and which has taken various forms.

Although material culture is a relatively recent research trend in the area of foreign/second language learning and multilingualism as it allows for many multilingual practices by providing "the physical, historical, and emotional background for communication" (Aronin, 2012, p. 180), it has been used in foreign/second language learning contexts for some time quite frequently. In Communicative Language Teaching, for example, the use of realia understood as "real objects, specimens or artifacts—not copies, models, or representations—from a particular culture" (Berwald, 1987, p. 3) is encouraged exactly for these reasons. Real objects along with authentic texts used in a foreign language classroom bring to the learners a taste of reality and let them personally experience real life situations for which realia have been designed and prepared (Berwald, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 170). They are also a rich and varied source of information related to the culture(s) of the target language community which they derive from.

The term "material culture" refers to a wide range of "artefacts and cultural landscapes" that "objectively represent a group's subjective vision of custom and order" (Marshall, 1981, p. 17). Societies and language communities produce and create large numbers of artefacts, many of which are relevant in multilingual contexts. The objects that are essential from the multilingual perspective "have inscriptions or language signs on them, and meaningfully relate to an individual's identity and surrounding social reality" (Aronin, 2012, p. 181), thus connecting the material and the verbal. Bringing out the importance of studies in material culture for multilingualism, Aronin (2012) argues that "such studies can help us to understand how materialities create and modify multilingual reality, being instrumental in shaping and reshaping identities of both individuals and communities" (p. 181). Songs and music, recorded on various media, not only allow for authentic interactions with the target language culture but also have a strong motivating power for learning the target language.

Music and songs, pop songs in particular, are an important motivating factor in learning languages. Listening to music has been identified as one of the main reasons for using the Internet (e.g., Piasecka, 2012; Szyszka, 2015). Music and songs, recorded on vinyl records, tapes, cassettes, CDs or mp3s, and thus given permanence, are a manifestation of material culture combining materiality and

language. The records have always come packaged in covers of various designs that have seduced people into buying them and finding pleasure in using them. However, what was easily available in some cultures, was an extravagance and a rarity in others. Longplay records with music and songs have been produced worldwide, but in the "golden sixties" the circulation of records with Western pop music was limited behind the Iron Curtain. In the 1960s and 1970s, for people living behind the Iron Curtain, access to Western music was neither simple nor cheap. Possessing a record of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, or another popular music band, was considered as a mark of identity—the owner was someone to make friends with if people wanted to listen to the records. Despite the difficulties, teenagers could listen to the music on the radio (Radio Luxemburg, for example) or, if there was such an opportunity, to original recordings of the most popular singers and music bands of the day.

The Post-Second World War Period

To understand the role of pop music in the lives of young people, it it necessary to consider the political, social and cultural climate of the post-Second World War period. The United States enjoyed "economic growth and affluence that were unprecedented in the history of the world" (Patterson, 1998, p. 164). The production of consumer goods made people's lives comfortable and easy. At the same time, expectations were high with respect to the quality of living as well as personal and civil rights. Though generally optimistic, the 1950s also wittnessed the Black Americans' protests against racial discrimination and segregation, especially in the South. Yet it was not until the mid-1960s when the laws abolishing discrimination and segregation in public and political life were passed (*Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and *Voting Rights Act* of 1965, Patterson, 1998).

The turbulent 1960s in the U.S. were also marked by American involvement in the Vietnam War. Since the U.S. was a supporter of a "democratic and non-communist world order" (Patterson, 1998, p. 164), the war was waged to protect these important values. Yet, the escalation of the war, the growing number of casualties, the information about the atrocities of the war and the senseless bloodshed resulted in a strong opposition to it. The society, misled by the Johnson administration about the military and political situation in Vietnam, responded with fierce anti-war protests and demonstrations. The anti-war protest was also associated with American counterculture and its music.

Not all the Americans were under the spell of the economic prosperity of the 1950s, and towards the end of the decade the representatives of the Beat Generation "were deliberately rejecting what they considered the crass materi-

alism and conformity of American society" (Patterson, 1998, p. 170). Women were no longer satisfied with ideal housewives' roles prescribed by the conservative society. A birth-control pill triggered the sexual revolution. College and university students voiced their dissatisfaction not only with curricula but also with rules that regulated female and male social relations. A well-established social order was crumbling.

While the post-war U.S. enjoyed economic prosperity and was a scene of social unrest, post-war Europe was gradually rising from the ashes and ruins. Divided by the Iron Curtain—"the political, military, and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II to seal off itself and its dependent eastern and central European allies from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas" (http://britannica.com)—into open and democratic West and communist-dominated Center and East, it took different routes of post-war reconstruction. The recovery of the West was supported by the Marshall Plan which was not accepted by the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Instead, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance was founded to provide for the reconstruction, to encourage co-operation among the countries and link them strongly to the Soviet model of economy. At the same time, by limiting the access of these countries to the technologies, products and markets of the West, it accounted for inefficient economic systems dependent on Soviet subsidies and growing disillusionment with the system. This discontent resulted in a number of upheavals in the Eastern block (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007). The upheavals were suppressed by friendly armies.

In Poland, the Poznań riots of June 1956 resulted in a change in leadership of the Communist Party and in some reforms that were implemented, though only temporarily. As a consequence, the 1960s "saw an actual diminution of political and cultural freedom; but […] even so, by 1965 it was still 'much ahead of most, if not all, of the members of the Soviet block in political liberalism'" (Brus, as cited in Fowkes, 2000, p. 65). Life behind the Iron Curtain in this decade was marked by a kind of stability but also by a shortage of many commodities.

The post-war period in Western Europe is also associated with the growing popularity of jazz and dance music, broadcast by American military radio stations. This music was characterised by freedom of expression both in the musical arrangement and song lyrics. Fretted by conservative society for its association with improper sexual behaviour, it was appreciated by the younger generation which rebelled against the established social system and was ready for changes in life style, reflected by fashion and music (Lipoński, 2004). In addition, the young generation became an important audience for pop music. So far, adults composed songs for adults but the presence of a teenage audience changed the sitation—teenagers not only listened to music but they also wrote it (Gołębiowski, 2004). These factors set the scene for the outburst of popular music in the 1960s. As Hayes (2002, p. 5) comments, "young people of the U.S.

and many Western Europen countries rebelled against the social convention of the time, adapting new ways of both thinking and living."

The "Golden Sixties"

The 1960s in Western Europe and the United States, then, witnessed dramatic changes in many spheres of life. People enjoyed relative prosperity, they could purchase more goods for the money they earned. Life became less formal and more casual, which affected people's attitudes to other people, politics, fashion, and music. New fashion trends emanated from Carnaby Street in London. Music in particular was important to young people worldwide, regardless of the political systems they lived in. The "golden sixties" was a decade of the rapid development of various music bands and genres of music that changed the understanding of popular music. That variety was represented by the "British Invasion," associated mostly with the American and worldwide success of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, but also such singers as Tom Jones. The Beatles' appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* attracted an enormous television audience of about 74 million viewers. It was "the first successful invasion of the United States since British troops burned Washington 150 years earlier" (Hall, 2014, p. 69). It evoked enthusiasm from teenagers and hatred from the establishment. The young felt the magic of the band while their parents were terrified by their children's response (Slon, 2014).

The popularity of the Beatles struck the British Isles like a storm and then impacted the rest of the world. Crowds of teenage fans accompanied the band wherever it appeared. The phenomenon, referred to as Beatlemania, started in 1963 and stopped by 1967. The fans were described as "hysterical teenagers of every class and colour, shouting uncontrollably […] Each of them emotinally, mentally, or sexually excited, foaming at the mouth, bursting into tears, hurling themselves like lemmings in the direction of the Beatles, or just simply fainting" (Davies, 1996, p. 176). While Davis perceives the teenagers' fascination with the Beatles as hysteria, Lahr (1981) argues that "Beatlemania" is a misnomer because the fans were not hysterical but spellbound by the Fab Four. Their "music was a form of sympathetic magic, and the Beatles were local divinities who could change the mood and the look of their times by a song, a style, a word" (p. 22) which they did. Analysing the phenomenon, Lynskey (2013) notes that the fans participated in some kind of a ritual, their screaming was an expression of themselves, their youth, freedom and power. Moreover, by screaming and losing control, teenage girls who were then supposed to be "paragons of purity," protested against "the sexual repressiveness, the rigid double standard

of female teen culture" (Ehrenreich, as cited in Lynskey, 2013). For Ehrenreich, this phenomenon "was the first and most dramatic uprising of women's sexual revolution" (Ehrenreich, as cited in Lynskey, 2013).

Though the Beatles were the kings on the stage of pop music, other musical forms also gained popularity. Rock music was represented by surf rock (e.g., the Beach Boys), psychedelic rock (e.g., Jimmi Hendrix), roots rock (e.g., Bob Dylan), hard rock (e.g., Deep Purple), folk rock and protest music (e.g., Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Simon and Garfunkel). Protest music was inspired by social disobedience and the anti-war movement and showed the artists' and their generation's reaction to social injustice, as well as their appreciation of freedom, love, and peace, a clear influence of the hippie movement. Also African-American bands and singers became popular and recognised. On the one hand, "black music" that had previously been performed by white musicians got back to the "legitimate" African-American performers. On the other hand, African-Americans helped to break down the barriers of racial segregation (http://www.thepeoplehistory.com). The generation of the 1960s spoke and sang in many voices.

The "time of progress and protest" (Hayes, 2002, p. 5) that had such a strong impact on the ways of thinking and living in Western societies, had also influenced the lives and culture of people behind the Iron Curtain. The youth living there were also fond of music and new bands, both local and foreign. While records of Polish bands, though not cheap, were relatively easy to buy, records of the bands from the West were hard to obtain and exorbitantly expensive. Yet, Western music came through the radio, on pirate sound postcards, and from family living abroad. Sometimes it was brought by people who travelled abroad. A person who had a geniune Beatles' record, for example, enjoyed a high status in a peer group and everybody wanted to make friends with him or her. This way the ones who did not have a record could listen to it and have a look at the cover. The appearance of tape recorders made access to the songs, but not covers, much easier.

Listening to pop songs in English, teenagers behind the Iron Curtain were determined to find out what they were about. They tried to write down the lyrics from what they heard and thus incidentally practiced listening comprehension along with sound and word discrimination. Although the product was often hilarious, incomprehensible and far from the original, they kept trying.

Looking at and touching a vinyl record cover was also a valuable experience. The covers had song titles that might have been used as clues to understanding the lyrics. They also contained pictures and graphics that told their stories.

The enormous popularity of the Beatles crossed the physical and ideological borders. Davis observes that "young Russians no longer perceived the Western

culture as decadent and hostile; they liked listening to the Beatles' songs as much as other youngsters" (1996, p. xi). Not only musical tastes of young people from the Eastern block were affected, but also a life style represented, among other things, by fashion. Miniskirts and minidresses, floral shirts, hippie furs, hair styles and make up showed the young generation's fascination with colour and freedom (Yapp, 2005). In the mid-1960s, Beatle-like shoes (Polish *bitelsówki*) for males became fashionable in Poland. State shoe factories did not produce them but the need for this kind of shoes was satisfied by private shoemakers. Not all of them made the shoes, but the ones who did, enjoyed a high status among artisans. Custom-made Beatle-like shoes were in high regard (Szewczyk & Szabłowska, 2013). This is another piece of evidence that shows how the music of the days shaped the material culture.

Stories Told by Longplay Album Covers

Album covers have several functions, that is, they protect the records, they advertise them, they accompany the music, and they are a commodity (Inglis, 2001, p. 84). The 1950s and early 1960s did not change the traditional design of album covers but evolved into the so-called personality covers showing an attractive image of the performer(s), their names and the title of the album (Thorgerson, 1989, p. 10). It was only with the release of the Beatles' album *Revolver*, released in August 1966 (https://www.thebeatles.com/revolver), designed by Klaus Voorman, which won the Grammy Award for Best Album Cover of 1966 (Inglis, 2008, p. 92), that a new thinking about possible designs of record covers emerged.

The cover of *Revolver* shows "a remarkable visual-musical correspondence" (Inglis, 2001, p. 87) implying that innovations in music are supported by innovations in the visual design of the cover. A combination of line drawings of the Beatles' heads and small photographs of them reflects "the varieties and innovations of the music" (Inglis, 2001, p. 87) on the record.

When the band started recording *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts' Club Band*, their intention was to have a cover that would be an integral element of the album. They wanted "to create a record whose musical impact would be complemented by its visual impact" (Inglis, 2008, p. 91). According to Paul McCartney,

This album was a big production, and we wanted the album sleeve to be really interesting. Everyone agreed. When we were kids, we'd take a half-hour bus ride […] to buy an album, and then we'd come back on the bus,

take it out of the brown paper bag and *read* it cover to cover […] you read them and you studied them. We liked the idea of reaching out to the record-buyer, because of our memories of spending our own hard-earned cash and really loving anyone who gave us value for money. (Inglis 2008, p. 91)

Peter Blake and Jann Haworth, the designers of the cover, took the challenge and successfully brought together fine art and popular culture (Inglis, 2001). The Beatles drew a list of characters who they liked and who influenced their lives. For the cover they chose movie stars, artists, sportsmen, comedians, gurus, singers, philosophers and scientists thus blowing up the traditional distinctions between "high" and "low" culture and contributing to "the shifting intellectual climate of the 1960s" (Inglis, 2008, p. 93). Cardboard figures that surround the Beatles wearing colourful satin uniforms and holding musical instruments in their hands (www.thebeatles.com/sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-0) represent people

who promote the ideas of other possible worlds or who offer literary or cinematic trips to exotic places […] the cover suggests that the Beatles to some extent live the past in the present, live in the shadows of their own as well as of other people's past accomplishments. (Poirier, 1969, pp. 178–179)

The cover tells an interesting story about the journey that the band had taken and how it affected their identities. They started as nice working class lads from Liverpool, "clean-shaven, look alike 'mop-tops'" (Inglis, 2008, p. 97) and achieved enormous popularity and commercial success but also became independent to follow their own artistic fascinations. They changed from musicians into magicians who have supernatural powers and who have multiple identities. Inglis (2008) writes that "in the world favoured by the Beatles, all of us have the ability to be magically transformed into whom-ever and whatever we may choose, whenever and wherever we may desire" (p. 94).

While the front cover showed the tableau-like image of a variety of char-acters who had some importance for the Beatles, the back cover was also in-novative—it had the printed lyrics of all the songs from the album. This feature was greatly appreciated by music lovers. Gross (http://manhattman.com/2012/it-was-45-years-ago-today) recalls:

[O]n that first Friday in June [1967], I ran down to my local music shop, anticipating the release of the new Beatles' album that day. […] WOW! What a cover! It was so different than anything I had ever seen at the time. I turned it over to discover *rows and rows of song lyrics* (italics mine). That was new too. I don't think it had ever been done before.

Song lyrics were presented as poetic texts and as such they could be studied, evaluated, and reflected on. Using song lyrics in this way, "the Beatles had shifted the function of popular music from music-as-entertainment to music-as-communication" (Inglis, 2008, p. 96).

Sgt Pepper's cover, like the cover of *Revolver* before, won the Grammy Award for Best Album Cover in 1967. It has also been recognised as one of the twenty masterpieces of British 20th century art and design (Inglis, 2001, p. 94).

The front cover was a challenge and a gift for learners of English as a foreign language. Not only did they listen to songs but they also tried to recognise as many famous people on the cover as possible (an interactive version of the *Sgt. Pepper* who's who can be found at https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/whos-who-on-the-beatles-sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-album-cover/), they could talk about them, they could follow the lyrics, develop their own interpretations of what they were listening to, and travel to imagined places they had never visited. In a way, their experience with the cover was much similar to that of Peter Saville, a graphic designer, who says: "When I was 15, in the North-west of England…. the record cover to me was like a picture window to another world" (http://www.gigwise.com/news/45430/designer-peter-saville-the-album-cover-is-dead). In fact, record covers were picture windows to many different worlds and they meant different things to different people. They took the teenagers from the familiar surroundings to the new lands of imagination and creativity. They developed and sharpened their aesthetic sensitivity, with respect to both music and visual arts. They ushered them into a certain system of values and developed the feeling of belonging. They also inspired thinking about one's own identity: Who am I? Where do I belong? What matters in life? What matters in my personal life?

Almost all album covers of the Beatles were exceptional, they

> have been seen as groundbreaking in their visual and aesthetic properties, have been congratulated for their innovative and imaginative designs, have been credited with providing an early impetus for the expansion of the graphic design industry into the imagery of popular music, and have been seen as largely responsible for allowing the connections between art and pop to be made explicit. (Inglis, 2001, p. 83)

Then more covers with records inside became available. There was Leonard Cohen with his poetic texts, Joan Baez with her protest songs, Simon and Garfunkel, Bob Dylan, The Doors, and so on. From "Some Notes on the Songs" (*The Best of Leonard Cohen*) one could learn that "Chelsea Hotel" was written "for an American singer who died a while ago. She used to stay at the Chelsea Hotel, too." The lives of people who used to live in the famous Chelsea Hotel

in the late 1960s and 1970s are referred to in an interesting memoir by Patti Smith (2010).

From the foreign language learner's perspective the covers—excellent examples of material culture and a telling evidence of the impact of pop culture on the lives of young people—aroused interest in art, music and, consequently, language. They were rich in cultural information and aesthetically stimulating. Very often they were designed by well-known artists. They came with the records inside and song lyrics on the back covers or inside. Song lyrics themselves were not only samples of authentic language use and varieties of native speaker pronunciation, but they also appealed to themes and problems that were important to youngsters of those days. As a matter of fact, many of them still appeal to young people. In addition, the combination of music and language made many language forms memorable. Many of the author's friends and collegues still remember the lyrics of the songs they once listened to, sang, and learned. Last but not least, they invited reflection on the contemporary world and evoked a wide range of emotions.

Connections Between Music and Foreign Language Learning

Music and language connections have been observed and discussed since ancient times and have been studied from various perspectives. Music and language represent special abilities of a human brain and both are "human universal[s] in which perceptually discrete elements are organized into hierarchically structured sequences according to syntactic principles" (Patel, 2003, p. 674). This implies that linguistic and musical processing overlap in the brain. Neuropsychologists have found out that musical structure is processed in the area of the brain that has been associated with the processing of spoken and sign language structure (Levitin & Menon, 2003).

Music has always played an important role in the development of children and the development of language. Chen-Hafteck (1997) observes that "music and language are the two ways that humans communicate and express themselves through sound. Since birth, babies start to listen and produce sound without distinguishing between music and language, singing and speech" (p. 85). In the early years of their life children learn to sing simple songs that integrate language and music. When words and songs share stress and accent patterns, they support comprehension of word stress and extend attention span. Children learn to anticipate new information and their memory is enhanced (Palmer & Kelly, 1992). When four- and five-year-old children were tested on music tasks, phonological awareness tasks, and early reading development tasks, it

appeared that musical ability and phonological awareness are strongly related. Music perception was found to be a predictor of reading ability (Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, & Levy, 2002). Also the recreational use of music with children helps them to develop their intellectual and memory abilities, expression of feelings and emotions, and social skill of getting along with others. Children enjoy the music and share this enjoyment with others (Campbell, 2003).

While the research briefly referred to above concerns the context of first language acquisition, similar effects have also been found in second/foreign language learning situations. Learners who can accurately analyse, discriminate, and remember musical stimuli have stronger L2 phonological skills. This means that musical ability is a predictor of L2 phonological ability at the receptive and productive levels (Sleve & Miyake, 2006, p. 679).

From the pedagogical perspective, music performs important functions in foreign language classrooms. It introduces a relaxed state of mind, so strongly recommended by Suggestopedia (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 102), and lowers the affective filter, thus reducing tension and negative emotions in learners and creating a friendly learning environment in which memory and attention are enhanced (Brewer & Campbell, 1991). The relaxing and creative nature of music is also stressed by Adkins (1997) who perceives it as the foundation of multi-sensory pedagogy. Moreover, music-based language learning activities provide an "acquisition-rich" environment in which learners can also rely on musical intelligence, a component of Multiple Intelligencies model (Gardner, 1983).

Music-based activities that create the learning environment may involve both high and pop culture. Learners become familiar with the culture(s) of the target language through its music and songs. Singing songs along with native singers is particularly useful for the development of foreign language skills. Learners imitate the sounds and the rhythm of the language, they also learn to speak quickly (Speh & Ahramjian, 2009). Setia et al. (2012) report that the use of English songs with primary school learners helps to increase their vocabulary and improve pronunciation. The learners are more interested in learning, enjoy the tasks, and report higher levels of confidence. All these enhance motivation for learning and using the foreign language which, thus, becomes less foreign.

Lake (2002–2003), a seasoned teacher of English as a second language, convincingly argues for the use of songs and music in language classrooms highlighting that they encourage whole brain and whole language learning, improve pronunciation and memory. Not only does he offer useful tips for using songs in the process of language teaching, but he also gives examples of songs that can be used, and shares his own teaching experiences with the readers. He sees English songs as a useful means of acculturation but they are also important as carriers of cultural information.

In a similar vein, Shayakhmetova et al. (2017) argue that songs can be successfully used for the development of intercultural competence. They carried

out a year-long experiment durning which EFL learners were studying eigh-
teen topics related to British culture and everyday life, using five to six songs
interwoven with other activities. After the experiment a test on the knowledge
of British life was carried out and it appeared that the experimental group
outperformed the control one and the difference was statistically significant.
Moreover, the researchers also administered a survey to teachers to find out
how English song lyrics are used in English teaching. This was accompanied
by a learners' questionnaire to identify their attitude to using songs in English
classes. The results reveal teachers' and students' positive attitude to the use
of songs. The teachers recognise linguistic benefits of using songs that are
manifested in the phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and communicative develop-
ment along with the development of socio-cultural competence and tolerance
of other cultures. Needless to say, also increased motivation for learning
English is underscored. Although such an important contribution of songs to
foreign language learning and teaching has been recognised, their use in the
classroom is "episodic" (Shayakhmetova et al., 2017, p. 644) and their po-
tential for the growth of linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge is definitely
unexplored.

Since pop music and song lyrics play such an important role in young
people's lives, they can be used to as a springboard for variuos language learn-
ing activities (Werner, 2019). Song lyrics include authentic language put in
a specific text genre that can enhance learning motivation and reduce language
anxiety. Although linguistic and socio-cultural gains from using pop song in
the process of learning EFL are indisputable, "pop lyrics still seem to be un-
derexploited" (Werner, 2019, p. 6). Werner (2019, p. 9) is particularly interested
in non-standard grammatical forms that can be found in song lyrics as a means
for developing EFL leaners' language awareness. A qualitative corpus study
of pop lyrics allowed Werner to idenfity the non-standard forms that can be
exploited in teaching to make EFL learners aware of register which accounts
for pragmatic and stylistic appropriateness. Apart from register variation, these
non-standard forms also show social and regional variation which are related
to identity and linguistic capital as well.

While Werner is concerned with the potential of pop lyrics for the develop-
ment of language awareness, Tegge (2017) focuses on the lexical knowledge
and the opportunities for language learning that song lyrics offer. Assuming
that both written and spoken text comprehension requires the lexical cover-
age of 95% to 98%, Tegge (2017) analysed two song corpora to find out how
many words learners of English need to know to understand song lyrics. It
appeared that to understand song lyrics taken from charts (the so-called chart
corpus including pop songs from the top 100 end-of-year U.S. billboard charts,
www.billboard.com), learners need to know "3,000 word families plus proper
nouns, transparent compounds and marginal words" (Tegge, 2017) for 95%

lexical coverage. However, to reach 98% coverage, the knowledge of 6,000 word families is necessary. The 95% coverage is within the vocabulary range of learners of English (cf. Laufer 1998, 2001). The analysis of the other corpus (the so-called pedagogical corpus including songs selected by teachers and materials writers to be used in class) revealed that the knowledge of 2,000 word families plus proper nouns, transparent compounds and marginal words is needed for 95% lexical coverage while 98% coverage requires the knowledge of 4,000 word families.

These findings have clear pedagogical implications. Song lyrics defined as "a special case of written-to-be-spoken (or, rather, written-to-be-sung) genre" (Kreyer & Mukherjee, 2007, p. 37) are authentic and similar to oral and written spoken genres but are less lexically demanding than other written texts to be comfortably comprehended. In addition, teacher-selected songs are usually shorter, involve high frequency words and their lexical demand is lower than that of chart songs. Even so, they still may be demanding for EFL learners. Yet, because of their shortness they may be used during lessons for repeated listening, reading-while-listening as well as for identifying familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary.

To sum up, music and language can be perceived as "supportive sisters" (Stansell, 2005, p. 3). Music and songs support the intellectual, social, and emotional development of children, stimulate memory, bring relaxation, enjoyment, comfort, confidence, and motivation. They positively affect pronunciation and contribute to the development of reading skills. They contribute to the development of language awareness, lexical and sociolinguistic sensitivity as well as to the intercultural competence. These correspondences between music and language may explain why people, including foreign language learners, have always shown such a strong liking of music.

Conclusions

Interest in music is one of the most authentic and natural interests of people, especially of the younger ones (cf. Piasecka, 2012, p. 9; Szyszka, 2015, p. 9). Many members of the author's generation were motivated to learn English by the pop music of the 1960s. Although original records of the most popular bands of that time from Western Europe and the United States were difficult to obtain behind the Iron Curtain, the ones that were available brought the music packaged in attractively designed covers. These covers carried the language and images which stimulated the listeners'-learners' imagination, inhabited their memory, and exposed them to a rich multimodal cultural context. They opened

windows to new experience, new sensitivity, and new perceptions of the world. Moreover, they were the witnesses of the times when young people around the globe were getting their own voice to speak about the critical problems of their generation.

Taking the perspective of learner autonomy it may be concluded that adolescents from the 1960s fully practised their independence—they listened to what they wanted to (and to what was available) and they used pop songs as a resource and a motivator for language learning. Most interesting—they did all these marvelous things outside the classroom, in their free time, and they enjoyed it immensely.

The vinyl records of the 1960s and 1970s were gradually replaced by cassettes, which were gradually replaced by CDs. Then music and songs became available in the form of mp3s and now they can be easily found in many channels on the Internet. This does not mean, however, that vinyl records have disappeared from the phonographic market. Hasted (2012) notes that "[t]he ongoing upswing in sales of vinyl records, as CD sales collapse, has been heartening for all who still value their warm analogue sound and substantial, striking packaging." As a matter of fact, quite a number of young people are interested in vinyl records, they purchase and collect them. The statistics concerning the sales of vinyl records show a steady increase in their sales. Caulfield (2018) reports that in 2017 vinyl LP sales accounted for 14 percent of all physical album sales with the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* as the top selling vinyl record.

English language teachers may capitalize on their learners' love of music and ask them to share their musical fascinations with other learners, which can be done in a variety of ways (cf. Lake 2002–2003). They can also use the potential of record covers by drawing their learners' attention to the design, the meaning of the design, and the possible connections that covers have with the music they advertise. Encourging the talk about visual art represented by the covers develops the learners' language skills along with their artistic sensitivity. The teachers may also invite learners to design their own covers for the records with their favourite musical pieces. The learners can model their own covers on the ones they appreciate. When they discover the story behind *Sgt Pepper's* cover, for example, they may be willing to make a list of characters who have influenced their lives so far and produce a tableau similar to *Sgt Pepper's* cover. Moreover, sharing the songs and music they like, learners build their own communities of practice, develop emotional sensitivity and—hopefully—reflectivity. Using record covers, music and language, the learners engage many senses, which supports memorisation and makes learning an interesting and engaging adventure.

Song lyrics—an underexploited genre in foreign language education—can be used to develop grammatical sensitivity, register awareness, the sense of

identity and the awareness of other cultures that the songs represent. Needless to say, song lyrics that represent authentic language have a great potential for language learners' lexical growth and sensitivity. Music matters if nothing else does. And so does language.

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Als „das Gras noch grüner war": Schallplattenhüllen und Englischlernen
Eine Retrospektive

Zusammenfassung

Das Erlernen des Englischen als Fremdsprache ist ein komplexer Prozess, der unter anderem solche Aspekte wie Lernerfahrung, Kultur und materielle Kultur als Bestandteil der Lernerfahrung bzw. des Lernumfelds sowie Motivation und Musik miteinbezieht. In der modernen Forschung wird das Augenmerk insbesondere auf die materielle Kultur im Kontext von Fremdsprachenerwerb und Mehrsprachigkeit gerichtet, weil sie eine reiche Fundgrube für verschiedene fremd- und mehrsprachige Aktivitäten ist. Schallplattenhüllen sind ein hervorragendes Beispiel für Artefakte, die das Verbale mit dem Materiellen verbinden. Musik und Lieder, insbesondere Popsongs, sind wichtige Motivatoren für das Fremdsprachenlernen. Im

vorliegenden Beitrag berichtet die Autorin über die Erfahrungen ihrer Generation mit der Popmusik in den 1960er Jahren. Der Fokus liegt dabei auf dem Fremdsprachenerwerb durch Kontakt mit materiellen Formen der Kultur, nämlich Schallplattenhüllen. In dieser Hinsicht stellt der Text eine persönliche Reflexion dar, die sich auf eigene Erfahrungen der Autorin sowie auf ihre zahlreichen Gespräche mit Freunden und Bekannten, welche in den 1960er Jahren Jugendliche waren, stützt. Darüber hinaus wird im Artikel auf das Verhältnis zwischen Musik und Fremdsprachenlernen eingegangen. Hingewiesen wird unter anderem auf die Rolle von Songtexten bei der Entwicklung von Sprachkenntnissen bzw. -bewusstsein und interkultureller Kompetenz. Es werden Vorschläge gemacht, wie das Musikinteresse der Schüler im Fremdsprachenunterricht gebraucht werden kann.

Schlüsselwörter: Fremdsprachenerwerb, materielle Kultur, Schallplattenhüllen, Popmusik, Motivation