

Master in Advanced English Studies

Teaching English Through Songs



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Introduction

These days, intercultural communication has become a daily matter in our society. Speaking, before any technological inventions, could only take place face-to-face. This meant that the receiver was always physically present. Today, on account of technology, interaction can be displaced and the receiver can be any distance away but at least, the voice has to be present. But we live in a complex world with many different tongues and discourses, a few of them privileged over many others. [...] The English language was once exported as the voice of the empire, the key to success, the promise and the premise of the learned (Beltrán, 1999:163). Most of the media today is produced in English and as we live in the era of new technologies and global information, learning English has become these days a very important issue.

Everyday language learners face the task of acquiring new vocabulary, grammar knowledge and new phonology patterns, but what is more important, they face the problem of understanding and being understood by other language users. Learning how to interact with other language users is one of the most difficult tasks when acquiring a second or foreign language. Understanding and being understood not only means producing grammatically and syntactically well formed sentences, but also giving them the right intonation, using adequate vocabulary for the situation and having the cultural background in the foreign language so as not to be misinterpreted.

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview and an analysis of the importance of including authentic material when learning a second or foreign language. The use of authentic material in the EFL teaching process proves to be essential for teachers to help create an atmosphere of linguistic immersion and make students ready to learn not only new vocabulary and grammar, but also new useful socio-cultural information to be understood by native language users.

Even with the most communicative approaches, the second language classroom is limited in its ability to develop learners' communicative competence in the target language. This is due to the restricted number of contact hours with the language; minimal opportunities for interacting with native speakers; and limited exposure to the variety of functions, genres, speech events, and discourse types that occur outside the classroom. Given the limited time available for students to practice the target language, teachers should maximize opportunities for student participation (Demo, 2001). But learners are accustomed to the passive role in class and distrust the idea that they should set learning targets, select learning materials and activities, and evaluate learning outcomes (Little, 2007:17). What students do not realize is that learning a language usually depends on interaction with other people.

If we never use what we learn we will probably forget it. However, if we use that knowledge for our own purposes, we begin to incorporate it into our view of the world, and to use parts of it to cope with the exigencies of living (Barnes, 1976). Group work is essential for this task because by working in small groups learners can engage in intensive interactive use of the target language, and that language produced interactively gradually becomes part of the individual learner's internalised mental resources (Swain, 2000; Thomsen, 2003).

As mentioned above, without knowledge of socio-cultural patterns of the target language, second language learners are likely to rely on the strategies and expectations acquired as part of their first language development, which may be inappropriate for the second language setting and may lead to communication difficulties and misunderstandings. Students need to investigate the systematicity of language at all linguistic levels (Demo, 2001). Here is where discourse analysis, semantics, grammar and syllabus design gain relevance.

Although it is important to encourage students' autonomy in acquiring the target language, the use of a metalanguage is not strictly necessary. Exposure to authentic discourse can allow students to explore the aforementioned systematicity of language even when they might not be completely aware that they are doing it. As the analysis of discourse is the analysis of language in use (Brown and Yule 1983:1), students would be able to identify language variation at grammatical, semantic and pragmatic levels using authentic texts and some teacher's guidance. Thus, improving their awareness of the nature of language, students will become more autonomous.

Chapter 1: Discourse Analysis in English

The main objective in this chapter is to present how classroom activities and games can be successfully implemented in EFL teaching using authentic materials. If students deal with language at work in real life and are given the opportunity to interact in the foreign language within real contexts, they will be better prepared to achieve their desired language competence.

Discourse analysis provides excellent tools to stimulate students' language awareness and to motivate them to play a more active role in the acquisition of their target language. When learners enjoy working with authentic materials, they get used to the target language in real situations and it is then when the process of natural language acquisition begins to settle in.

1. Target Group

Since our target group is located in a country from the European Union, we will categorize it using as reference the Council of Europe and its Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is a very useful tool to categorize the abilities and skills expected for each level as it provides a detailed description applied to each type of language user:

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework

also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. (CEFR)

Although nowadays we live in a multicultural and multilingual society and classrooms are made of students from different linguistic backgrounds, the target group is formed mainly by Spanish speaking students. The text selected can be used to teach English to students of many different ages, from children to aged adults. What is more important is their level of proficiency in the foreign language and, according to the CEFR, the level of our students would be A2 (Waystage), where students:

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. (CEFR)

The CEFR describes A2 students regarding different skills, but we will only consider listening (and reading to some extent) as we are using a song to teach a foreign language. Thus, A2 students would:

Listening

Reading

Understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). Students can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.

Read very short, simple texts. Students can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and students can understand short simple personal letters.

(CEFR)

2. The Text

Creative art is an essential part of human civilisation. There is no human society on earth without music. There is no human society without poetry. Together they are a powerful means of communication. We can say that music is a world language. Words and music form an essential part of the “human experience”. In this sense, music has never changed. A basic understanding and appreciation of it, broadens our character and helps to deepen the understanding between ourselves and those around us (Tierney, 2002:3). We see and hear very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation... From this standpoint we may think of language as the *symbolic guide to culture* (Sapir, originally published in 1929; quoted in Lucy 1992:22), and musicians all over the world are influenced by what they hear and what they see. As Bob Dylan said “Open up your mind and ears and you are influenced” (Tierney, 2002:5).

The choice of a song as a means to teach English derives from the belief that employing music in the language classroom creates a relaxed, non-threatening learning environment and foster students’ motivation when learning a foreign language. Music is a part of English speakers’ everyday social interaction.

The song chosen for our target group is *I say a little prayer*, written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David for Dione Warwick in 1967. The song became a hit, peaking at #10 on the *Billboard Magazine* Hot 100, when Aretha Franklin recorded it in 1968 as part of her album *Aretha Now*, which reached #1 into the Black Albums list.

In the late ‘60s, Franklin became one of the biggest international recording stars in all of pop. Many also saw Franklin as a symbol of Black America itself, reflecting the increased confidence and pride of African-Americans in the decade of the civil rights movements and other triumphs for the Black community (Franklin, 2009).

Black America has made an enormous contribution to world culture. Different types of music such as blues, jazz, soul, funk, etc. have gospel origins. In Gospel music we can find the story of people taken to a foreign country. In a hostile country they found religion; in religion they found hope. In church their music provided something good during bad times. (Tierney, 2002:39).

The song deals with topics which are familiar to students, part of their linguistic knowledge – everyday routines (wake up, make up, etc), love, etc. The students have already well formed mental schemata of these subjects, thus they can easily draw from previous experience in order to make sense of the content being presented to them.

Below is the full transcription of the song:

I say a little prayer

The moment I wake up
before I put on my makeup
I say a little prayer for you.
While combing my hair now,
and wondering what dress to wear now,
I say a little prayer for you.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.
To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

I run for the bus, dear,
While riding I think of us, dear,
I say a little prayer for you.
At work I just take time
and all through my coffee break-time,
I say a little prayer for you.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever we never will part
Oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.

To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.

Forever, and ever we never will part
Oh, how I love you.

Together, forever, that's how it must be.

To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

My darling believe me,
for me there is no one but you!

Please love me too.

And I'm in love with you.

Answer my prayer now babe.

Say you love me too.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.

Forever, and ever we never will part

Oh, how I love you.

Together, forever, that's how it must be.

To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

3. Pedagogical Applications

The song can be used for teaching grammar, listening comprehension, conversation, vocabulary, pronunciation (also different dialectal pronunciation if using Diana King's version), etc. Below it is specified what aspects of grammar and vocabulary could be taught with this particular song:

Grammar	Vocabulary
Present Simple	Vocabulary about relationships (also friendship to see the difference)
Present Continuous	
Future tense	Vocabulary about love (love, heart, heartbreak, babe, etc.)
Imperatives	Vocabulary about jobs

3.1. Possible Exercises

Many possible exercises can be done with this song and with students of many different ages, including warm-up exercises, fill-in-the-blanks, debates, writing personal experiences, theatre plays related with the topic, interpreting the song with movements, etc.

Activities for oral comprehension may prove easier and more motivating if:

- We provide information about the context. (In real life situations the listener knows the context)
- We provide questions that will help them understand the main ideas (signpost or guiding questions).
- We include pauses that will help them to reflect on what they have heard and retain information.

✦ We give them worksheets to fill out while they are listening.

In this way they will be better able to retain the information they will need to answer the comprehension questions at the end of the listening activity. (González, 1999:197)

Possible exercises are shown below.

3.1.1. Warm-up Exercises

The teacher can developed several warm-up exercises to attract students' attention and get them ready to work. Different exercises can be done depending on the student's age.

- ✓ **Warm-up 1: *Reading about the artist.*** Before listening to the song, students can read about the artist and the musical genre that the song belongs to. That will help them understand the musical background of the song and its possible interpretations.
- ✓ **Warm-up 2: *Word grab.*** This game is very useful to wake the class up a little. The teacher chooses 10-15 pieces of vocabulary from the song and writes them on separate pieces of paper (with lower level groups it is useful to pronounce the words with the students first). Then stick each word to the board. Put the students into 2 teams, each one in a line before the board. Play the song. When the 2 students at the front of their line hear a word in the song that is on the board, they must race each other to grab (or touch) that word from the board. They then go to the back of the line and it's up to the next pair. The team with the most words wins. To make it more difficult red herrings can be put up. The song is played until the students get all the words.²

² A variant of this game, called "The mosquito game", can be found in the attachments.

3.1.2. Follow-up Exercises

Once finished with warm-up exercises, several follow-up activities are possible:

- ✓ **Follow-up 1: *Fill-in-the-blanks*.**³ The teacher provides students with a copy of the lyrics with some blanks on it. It is useful to take out grammatical structures or vocabulary related to the main topic of the song. Students will have to recognize those structures or vocabulary already taught in class, therefore it will be easier to complete the song and remember the aforesaid structures.
- ✓ **Follow-up 2: *Feelings and reaction of students*.** After having played the song, the teacher can ask students about their reaction and feelings when listening to it – joy, nostalgia, anger, etc.
- ✓ **Follow-up 3: *Brainstorming*.** The teacher writes on the board the word “love” or “falling in love” and asks students what makes them think of. Afterwards, students can talk about different kinds of love – love at first sight, platonic love, mother love, cupboard love, etc., - they can also talk about the symbols that represent love – heart, a ring, a red rose, Cupid, Valentine’s Day, etc.
- ✓ **Follow-up 4: *Debate*.** The teacher divides students into several groups. They have some minutes to prepare some of the following questions: do you believe in love at first sight? Why/why not?, do you think that love can be found on the internet? Why/why not?, do you think that true love exists? Why/why not?. Many other questions can be arisen depending on the willingness to participate of the students and also having in mind their speech level in the foreign language.
- ✓ **Follow-up 5: *Writing a love letter*.** Students can write a love letter to a famous character – singers, actors, politicians, the King or Queen, etc. A similar exercise

³ See attachments for hand out sheet.

can be done with students interpreting a play: a student chooses a role (a famous character) and the other one has to make him/her fall in love.

- ✓ **Follow-up 6: *Acting and singing.*** Students can illustrate with movements (dancing) the actions carried out in the song. It is useful to show them some pictures related to the actions so they can imitate them and remember them more easily.

These kind of interactive activities are especially helpful to set the tone and working style of the class, they relieve students' initial anxieties, and give them confidence and motivation to engage in more speaking activities. Many other activities can be done and some of them can be also given as homework; teachers only have to be imaginative and creative to fulfil students' needs and taste to make them more participative and active learners.

4. Language Complexity

The text does not present any particular complex vocabulary or grammatical forms that could act as a serious obstacle to students' comprehension. Unknown vocabulary can be handled by giving synonyms or explaining its meaning, but effective language users, when encountering an unfamiliar word in a text, are capable of using the word's syntactic position and morphological ending to interpret the unfamiliar lexical item (Celce-Murcia, 2000:15).

Our main objective should help students to develop Communicative Competence in English as it becomes the chief means of communication between nations, so it is crucial to ensure that it is taught accurately and efficiently (Crystal, 1997:3). This consists of not only grammatical, but also sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Assuming their new role as speakers of English as an international language, our students engage in social interaction by accomplishing discourse in social situations and by actively constructing and displaying their social and cultural role (Van Dijk, 1997:3).

Chapter 2: Semantics, Discourse and its

Methodological Applications

Text and discourse semantics provides excellent tools for learning about meaning in human communication in all its complexity, including its cognitive and contextual components. According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1980, 1981), the text is “a unit of communication produced by a speaker/writer at a given time, in a real situation on context with a certain aim or goal, with a clear beginning and a clear ending”. One of the key features of a text is that it is not just a concatenation of words and sentences. Instead, there is a structure in the text that glues the various text components together (Louwse, McCarthy, McNamara and Graesser, 2004). The stability of the text as a system is upheld via a continuity of occurrences. This continuity is based on the supposition that the various occurrences in the text and its situation of utilization are related to each other (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Coherence and Cohesion help uphold the different parts of a text together. Both are text-centred notions, designating operations directed at the text materials and although it is difficult to separate the two, we can think of coherence as the text making sense as a whole at an ideas level, and cohesion as rather more mechanical links at a language level. It is perfectly possible for a piece of writing to contain plenty of cohesion yet little coherence. Therefore an awareness of cohesion and coherence in all texts is a very important skill for students to develop.

We will now deal with cohesion and coherence separately to describe their characteristics in more detail and to analyze which features are present in our text of study, the song “I say a little prayer”.

1. Coherence

Coherence concerns the ways in which the components of the text, i.e., the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant. It can be envisioned as the outcome of combining concepts and relations into a network composed of knowledge centred around main topics (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

A concept can be defined as a configuration of knowledge that can be recovered or activated with more or less consistency and. This definition is based on the fact that language users, when employing or being confronted with a particular expression, tend to activate roughly the same chunk of knowledge. Human beings tend to infer meanings and add their own knowledge to bring a text together and understand it. But variations among different language users do not seem to be substantial enough to occasion disturbances very often (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

When analyzing the meaning of a word it is necessary to analyze the context, as when we think of a word, we do not think of the formal definition found in the dictionary (e.g. heart: *the hollow muscular organ located behind the sternum and between the lungs; its rhythmic contractions pump blood through the body*⁴), but we think about a red heart which usually represents love, happiness, lovers, Cupid, etc. That is, we do not only think about one word, but also about other elements related to it. Thus, the meaning of a concept is the sum of its possible uses (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). So the context of a word is essential to assign it a certain meaning. That is, we will not think or picture in our minds the same kind of heart and the same related elements if we are talking to a doctor in a hospital than talking to a friend about the person you are in love with, as knowledge and meaning are extremely sensitive to the

⁴ Encyclo – Online Encyclopedia <<http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Heart>>

contexts where they are utilized. We can consider coherence as the outcome of actualizing meanings in order to make “sense” (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Carrel and Eisterhold (1983) consider language background knowledge an important factor in comprehending a text: “efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one’s own knowledge. Comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than just relying on one’s linguistic knowledge”. We can say that a vast number of social, cultural, and situational factors affect language use and its features. A text does not make sense by itself, but rather by the interaction of text-presented knowledge with people’s stored knowledge of the world (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). Different users might set up slightly different senses but, as it has been mentioned before, slightly variations among different language users do not seem to be substantial enough to occasion disturbances when comprehending and interpreting a text.

In Fig. 1 we can see the communicative process and its components. Notice that “context” and “shared knowledge” are a very important part of the process of communication, since they determine text production and text reception.

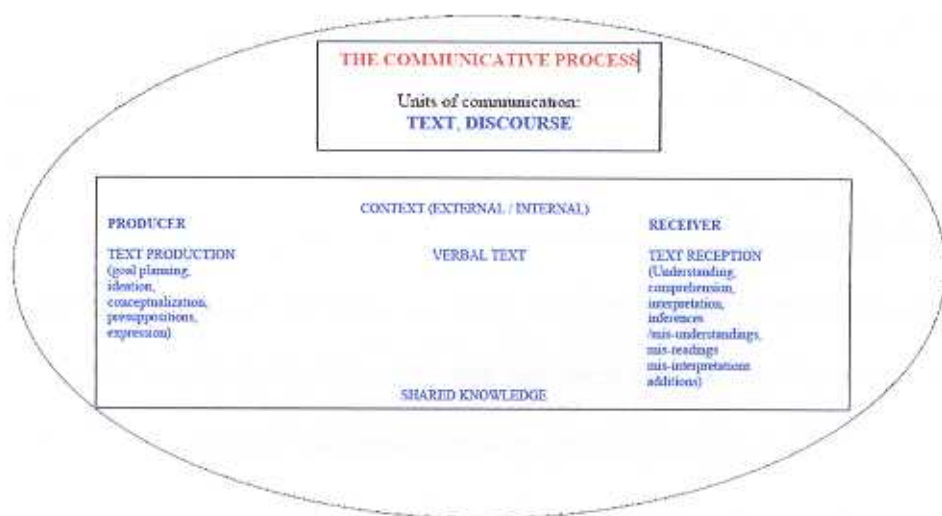


Fig. 1⁵

⁵ Alonso, P. Teaching Semantics skills: The EFL Classroom: A Discourse Semantics Approach. Master en Estudios Ingleses Avanzados. Universidad de Salamanca.

If we change the context in Fig. 1, we will have a very different discourse, as when some item of knowledge is activated, other items closely associated with it in mental storage also become active. This principle is called “spreading activation” and mediates between the explicitly activated concepts or relations and the detailed richness which a textual world can assume. Text processing requires inferences for establishing coherence between successive sentences. Spreading activation makes it possible to form elaborate associations, to create predictions and hypotheses far beyond what is actually made explicit in the surface text (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

If “meaning” is used to designate the potential of a language expression for representing and conveying knowledge, then we can use “sense” to designate the knowledge that actually is conveyed by expressions occurring in a text. Many expressions have several virtual meanings, but under normal conditions, only one sense in a text (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Words, and therefore objects and reality, are not associated with abstract symbols, but with the mental image of language users. Thus, depending on the speaker’s own background and context, words can have many different meanings and realizations. Songs are usually interpreted in many ways by people with many different background knowledge and experiences who are in different contexts, as we make sense of experience.

When we talk, we combine several sentences to make a text or speech, but as mentioned before, we do not combine sentences randomly, we follow certain rules, something that we, of course, do automatic and unconsciously. A text “makes sense” because there is a continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text. We would define this continuity of senses as the foundation of coherence (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). In normal circumstances, an arbitrary

disposition of the information may result in lack of coherence and will require more effort on the part of the text receiver during the comprehension process. But, although coherence is not formally marked, there are always clues in the text that signal coherence. The human brain analyzes those "clues" and establishes the network of semantic relations that convert the text into a communicative unit.

We understand newspapers, novels, songs, etc. because they follow an internal order, although sometimes it seems they do not. That internal order is maintained through several rules dealing with coherence and cohesion.

According to Van Dijk (1977, 1980) the relations which support the creation of coherence are mainly:

- a) **Proposition:** Meaning of each sentence that make up a text.
- b) **Microstructure:** The sequential connectivity of the sentences in a text or discourse. It is made up of the related meaning of the units of language: words, phrases, sentences, etc.
- c) **Macroproposition:** It deals with partial portions of meaning.
- d) **Episode:** A fairly independent semantic unit within the totality of a text: like the topics of paragraphs.
- e) **Macrostructure:** It provides a representation of the global semantic content of discourse, i.e. the global meaning of a text or discourse.

Sentences have propositional meaning that put together form a microstructure of a text, within the microstructure, there are the micro-interrelated propositions that form the macropropositions that combined form episodes, and the whole form the macrostructure of a text, i.e. the global meaning.

At the level of local coherence, we may distinguish different types of meaning relations which connect the different propositions contained in the discourse. The

ordering of sentences and expressions in a text usually follows criteria such as general-particular, known-unknown, cause-effect, explanation, past-present (chronological order), etc.

In addition to these basic patterns of information organization, Van Dijk (1977) also developed other important features concerning with semantic relations for the establishment and maintenance of coherence. These semantic relations are:

- a) **Relations of identity:** They guarantee conceptual continuity.
- b) **Relations of difference and change:** They help update the information by introducing new concepts. For the coherence to be maintained there must be some connection between the changes introduced in the discourse and the already existing information.

After having described the rules dealing with coherence, I will now analyze the song "I say a little prayer" to show which rules are present in it.

The title contains the most repeated phrase in the song, what partly represents the macrostructure of the text. The song presents 22 different propositions, which are organized into 7 different macropropositions. Those seven macropropositions are at the same time seven different episodes, which organize the information around topics. Four of these episodes include the exact same information, since they are the "chorus", or said in linguistic terms, the "key macroproposition" of the text.

I say a little prayer (Aretha Franklin)

Episodes

1. <i>Getting ready in the morning</i>	The moment I wake up before I put on my makeup I say a little prayer for you.	} →	Proposition
	While combing my hair now, and wondering what dress to wear now, I say a little prayer for you.		Proposition
2. <i>Declaration of being in love</i>	Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart and I will love you.	} →	Proposition
	Forever, and ever, we never will part		Proposition
	Oh, how I love you.		Proposition
	Together, forever, that's how it must be. To live without you		Proposition
	would only mean heartbreak for me.		Proposition
3. <i>Work time: going to work and working</i>	I run for the bus, dear, While riding I think of us, dear, I say a little prayer for you.	} →	Proposition
	At work I just take time and all through my coffee break-time, I say a little prayer for you.		Proposition
4. <i>Declaration of being in love</i>	Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart and I will love you.	} →	Proposition
	Forever, and ever we never will part		Proposition
	Oh, how I love you.		Proposition
	Together, forever, that's how it must be.		Proposition
	To live without you would only mean heartbreak for me.		Proposition
5. <i>Declaration of being in love</i>	Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart and I will love you.	} →	Proposition
	Forever, and ever we never will part		Proposition
	Oh, how I love you.		Proposition
	Together, forever, that's how it must be.		Proposition
	To live without you would only mean heartbreak for me.		Proposition
6. <i>Asking to be loved in return</i>	My darling believe me, for me there is no one but you!	} →	Proposition
	Please love me too.		Proposition
7. <i>Declaration of being in love</i>	And I'm in love with you. Answer my prayer now babe. Say you love me too.	} →	Proposition
	Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart and I will love you.		Proposition
	Forever, and ever we never will part		Proposition
	Oh, how I love you.		Proposition
	Together, forever, that's how it must be. To live without you would only mean heartbreak for me.		Proposition

Each stanza forms a **Macroproposition**

Key Phrase: It is repeated to give stability and continuity to the song.

Key Macroproposition: It is repeated to establish a link between the different macropropositions found in the song.

Stanza one and three follow a **chronological order:** waking-up → getting ready → going to work → working

The key macroproposition, in this case, the chorus, establishes a **relation of identity** all through the song. Stanzas one, three and six introduce new information, that is, they follow the **relation of difference and change** to update information in the song.

The **macrostructure** of the text is the whole song, including all 22 propositions.

2. Cohesion

As we have mentioned before, texts have internal connections that make them a unit. Although texts are movable and flexible, sequences of English cannot be radically rearranged without causing disturbances, they have to follow certain rules or patterns to keep their cohesion and coherence. All of the functions which can be used to signal relations among surface elements are included under the notion of cohesion. Cohesion concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text, i.e. the actual words we hear or see, are mutually connected within a sequence (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), by providing continuity to the text, cohesion enables the reader or listener to supply all the components of the picture to its interpretation. To them a text is a semantic unit whose parts are linked together by explicit cohesive ties. A cohesive tie "is a semantic relation between an element in a text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it". Cohesion is then decisive with regard to an individual's comprehension of a passage (Parvaz and Salmani-Nodoushan, 2006). For Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion depends upon lexical and grammatical relationships that allow sentence sequences to be understood as connected discourse rather than as autonomous sentences. Even though within-sentence cohesive ties do occur, the cohesive ties across sentence boundaries are those which allow sequences of sentences to be understood as a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) recognize five types of cohesive ties in English to show internal connections in a text. They are:

- a) **Reference:** two linguistic elements are related in what they refer to. It can be done by means of a personal deictic, a demonstrative or a comparative.

E.g.: *Jan lives near the park. He often goes there.*

b) **Substitution:** a linguistic element is not repeated but is replaced by a substitution item.

E.g.: Dan loves strawberry *ice-creams*. He has *one* every day.

c) **Ellipsis:** one of the identical linguistic elements is omitted.

E.g.: All the children had an *ice-cream* today. Eva chose strawberry.

d) **Conjunction:** a semantic relation is explicitly marked.

E.g.: He spoke with Daniel. *And* he fell asleep.

e) **Lexical cohesion:** two elements share a lexical field. Lexical cohesion includes reiteration and collocation. Reiteration can appear by using repetition, a synonym, an antonym, a superordinate, hyponyms, meronyms or a general word.

E.g.: It was *hot*. Dan was lining up for an *ice-cream*.

Reference, substitution, and ellipsis are grammatical; lexical cohesion is, obviously, lexical and conjunction stands on the border line between the two categories, that is, it is mainly grammatical but sometimes involves lexical selection.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) consider the above cohesive ties “endophoric”, as they refer to something within the text or discourse. Reference to items outside the text is called “exophoric” because no antecedent is recoverable within the text, i.e. it refers to the information which is understood in the context. Exophoric reference is crucial to appreciate the role of context in spoken language, both to the speaker in producing meaning and to the listener in determining it, as exophoric references often help link a text to its situational context. Real world communication requires exophoric referencing to completely understand a discourse.

Below we can find an analysis of both endophoric and exophoric cohesive ties found in the song “I say a little prayer”.

I say a little prayer (Aretha Franklin)

The moment I wake up
before I put on my makeup
I say a little prayer for you.
While combing my hair now,
and wondering what dress to wear now,
I say a little prayer for you.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever, we never will part
oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.
To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

I run for the bus, dear,
while riding I think of us, dear,
I say a little prayer for you.
At work I just take time
and all through my coffee break-time,
I say a little prayer for you.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever, we never will part
oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.
To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.
To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

My darling believe me,
for me there is no one but you!
Please love me too.
And I'm in love with you.
Answer my prayer now babe.
Say you love me too.

Forever, and ever, you'll stay in my heart
and I will love you.
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I love you.
Together, forever, that's how it must be.
To live without you
would only mean heartbreak for me.

Personal Reference → It is exophoric reference; there is nothing in the text that says who that "I" or "you" can be. Those two personal pronouns are repeated all through the song to maintain cohesion.

Conjunction → It links one sentence with the previous one.

Reiteration:

By repetition → The "chorus" is repeated completely to give continuity to the song. Some words as "love" and "dear" are also repeated to keep the topic of the song, as it is the phrase "I say a little prayer".

An arrow has been included to signal the first element of each repeated element.

By synonym → It gives cohesion to the text by introducing a new word, but at the same time, keeping the sense of it.

Reiteration is one of the most common cohesive ties found in the song, for it is usual in a song to have a stanza or "chorus" which is repeated all through it.

Collocation → It gives cohesion to the song including words that are likely to appear in the same text since they belong to the same semantic field.

3. Pedagogical Applications

Both cohesion and coherence, traditionally connected with the reading process, have become an important tool in order to teach students how to write a text. Teachers should help students to understand the use of cohesive links in the texts, paying special attention to logical patterns which could help them organize the text in order to fulfil coherent and cohesive principles.

The study of the semantic relations held in the text can help students to cope with real listening situations. As songs are present in the students' everyday lives, using them in the English classroom is a very good way to motivate them and help them understand how coherence and cohesion work and why it is important to learn them, since they are very important to produce a text or discourse by using appropriate links, different synonyms, collocations, etc.

Some possible exercises can be done to teach coherence and cohesion using the song "I say a little prayer". For example, summary writing is a key exercise in language learning. In second language acquisition, its practice is used as a way to test the student's correct understanding of the passage read. Knowledge of the cohesive devices and the coherent structure of the text is a priority for that activity (Alonso, 1995). Cutting texts up and asking learners to order them is a good way of drawing attention to the way that they are linked. Identifying cohesive ties in texts - that is, repetitions, synonyms, hyponyms, and collocations - is also a useful way of making learners aware of the key role that cohesion has in binding a text together⁶.

Helping students to understand the way in which intersentential relations are built in English and identifying the main entities and markers would be a very good exercise to make learners aware of the cohesive features of a text.

⁶ An exercise for this specific task has been developed in the section of "Syllabus Design".

Chapter 3: Grammar, Discourse and Methodological

Applications

When we talk or write, we do not think specifically in terms of words, phrases and sentences, but of meanings. Grammar is there because it makes meaning possible. For communication to be successful, messages need to be structured according to the conventions of the language being used. We refer to the structural and organizing principles of language as grammar. Grammar and meaning interrelate in many ways; in fact, the function of grammar in language is to give shape to meaning and, on the other hand, meaning conditions our choice of grammatical structures (Gómez, 2008)

When we study grammar, we are concerned with the way in which the different grammatical units are combined to produce sentences. We have to think of language as a system – a set of linguistic units with their own grammatical and semantic characteristic working together in a regular relation. We study how to construct sentences, and what is more important, how to manipulate the parts of a sentence in order to give satisfactory expression to whatever meaning we have in mind.

There has been a lot of controversy about whether grammar should be taught to students or not. Grammar is not taught for its own sake, it is always integrated into the teaching of language skills (writing, reading, speaking and listening). Wu (2005) and many other researchers claim that it is of great importance for teachers to teach grammar to their students. The question now is how it should be taught. There are many theoretical approaches that have been developed to promote the students' success in learning new information. In this paper we will review inductive and deductive approaches to teach English as a foreign or second language.

1. Inductive vs. Deductive Approach

There are two main theoretical approaches for the presentation of new English grammar structures or functions to ESL/EFL students: inductive approach and deductive approach. The more traditional of the two theories, is the deductive approach, while the emerging and more modern theory is the inductive approach (ITTO, 2009).

- a) The **deductive approach** represents a more traditional style of teaching in that the grammatical structures or rules are dictated to the students first (Rivers and Temperley, 1978). Thus, the students learn the rule and apply it only after they have been introduced to the rule. In this approach, the teacher is the centre of the class and is responsible for all of the presentation and explanation of the new material (ITTO, 2009).
- b) The **inductive approach** presents new grammatical structures or rules to the students in a real language context (Goner, Phillips and Walters, 1995). The students learn the use of the structure through practice of the language in context, and later realize the rules from the practical examples (ITTO, 2009). With this approach, the teacher's role is to provide meaningful contexts to encourage demonstration of the rule, while the students evolve the rules from the examples of its use and continued practice (Rivers and Temperley, 1978).

The deductive approach can be effective with students of a higher level who already know the basic structures of the language, or with students who are accustomed to a very traditional style of learning and expect grammatical presentations (Goner, Philips, and Walters, 1995). However, it is less suitable for lower level language students, for presenting grammatical structures that are complex in both form and meaning, and for classrooms that contain younger learners (Goner, Philips, and Walters,

1995). The inductive approach promotes increased student participation and practice of the target language in the classroom in meaningful contexts. Sometimes this approach is difficult for students who expect a more traditional style of teaching (ITTO, 2009).

The exercises proposed in the deductive approach are often decontextualized and the terminology is never used except in the exercises. Students find grammar most interesting when they apply it to authentic texts. It is a good idea to use texts of different kinds, such as magazines, songs, films, etc., as sources for grammar examples and exercises. This approach, the inductive one, helps make grammar relevant. It also avoids the artificiality of studying sentences in isolation, since in real texts, students can see how sentences connect and contrast to each other through their grammar (Wu, 2008).

2. Pedagogical Applications

Learners need to understand the concepts expressed and the functions performed by a particular grammatical element (Harmer, 1987; Littlewood, 1984; Widdowson, 1999). Studies have shown that a combination of formal instruction and meaning in context is more effective than mere “formal presentation of grammatical rules” (Doughty, 1991). In the practices of grammar instruction, teachers should adopt a suitable teaching approach with rich resources and design activities which are communicative or contextualized to enhance the effectiveness of learning outcome and facilitate the effectiveness of language learners (Wu, 2008).

In the song “I say a little prayer” we can find examples of the following grammatical structures:

Grammatical Structure	Example
Present Simple	I say a little prayer for you
Present Continuous	(I'm) combing my hair now (I'm) wondering what dress to wear now
Future tense	You'll stay in my heart I will love you
Imperatives	Believe me Love me

Those grammatical structures cannot be taught in one lesson all together, so the teacher has to choose which is best suitable for a particular lesson. In this paper, we will deal with some of the structures noted above as example of the possible exercises to teach a particular grammatical point.

2.1. Activities

We can help student become familiar with the song and, at the same time, teach them some verbal tenses and vocabulary from the song. An easy way is doing “picture dictation”. First of all, decide on a representative picture of the song (or of one part of it). Then, dictate the information about that picture to the students, who will draw (not write) their interpretation (Scrivener, 2005). With this simple exercise, the song should be not too difficult to follow when played for the first time.

As we have already mentioned, there are several verbal tenses which appear in the song. **Present simple**, for example, is a frequently taught item on the first lessons. Most teachers will just explain the structure of this verbal tense and then provide exercises and examples in isolation to practice it.

However, using our song and following the inductive approach, we can guide students to grab out its structure and common uses, and then, instead of providing repetitive and anodyne exercises, we can, for example, lead a short discussion about Soap Operas or series and its classic character types (e.g. teenage rebel, bad-tempered barmaid, etc.) and typical storylines (Scrivener, 2005). Following this exercise, the students will choose a character from a Soap Opera, teenage series or a film⁷ for themselves (it is more entertaining if they choose a character as different from themselves as possible: change sex, age, interests, behaviour, etc), and talk or write about their daily lives.

If students enjoy this kind of exercise, they can bring their characters to live. Divide the classroom into different locations (e.g. coffee bar, market, etc) and get the students to meet up and chat to find out who the other people are and what they do (e.g.

⁷ “My best friend’s wedding”, which include the song “I say a little prayer” has been added to the enclosed DVD.

lifestyle, habits, routines, interests, jobs, etc.). Afterwards, they can provide feedback about what they discovered.

Another good technique to practice the Present Simple is using riddles. For example, tell or write a number of mystery lifestyle descriptions for some unlikely objects, e.g. "I live in the open air. I stand in a line with others. I switch on at night. I make people's life brighter. (a streetlight)". Students will discuss the possible answers in pairs (Scrivener, 2005). It will be more encouraging if it is done as a competition. Afterwards learners can write some riddles and share them with the rest of the class.

By creating activities that include information gaps, we can provide activities that mimic the reason for communication, i.e. telling someone something s/he does not know. This may be more motivating and useful to learners than speaking without any real reason for doing so (Scrivener, 2005). Information gap activities help students to practice different verbal tenses, not for the sake of practicing, but with an aim: provide unknown information to someone. A useful exercise is "At the beach!"; with this activity, students can practice two verbal tenses: Present Simple⁸ and **Present Continuous**, as they have to provide, on the one hand, descriptions of the place and signs and, on the other hand, describe what is happening on the beach. Previous to the activity, draw or show a picture of a beach full of people and ask student's opinions about beach holidays, whether they like beaches, etc. Meanwhile, write on the board the words students provide and, if necessary, add new vocabulary to the list. Then, the teacher asks the students to copy the drawing with the vocabulary labels on it. Once done this, learners will have the essential vocabulary to accomplish the information gap activity. Then ask learners to form pairs and hand out a drawing of the beach⁹ to each

⁸ An extra exercise – "The block of flats" - has been included in the attachments.

⁹ See attachments for printable sheet.

student (one student has picture A and their partner has B). By describing the pictures, they will try to discover fifteen differences between the two of them (Scrivener, 2005). When they have finished the activity, ask them what was easy or difficult and help them with complicated expressions or vocabulary.

Alternatively, to practice the Present Continuous more thoroughly, tell the students to imagine themselves “inside” the picture and ask them to describe their day at the beach to a partner (e.g. “I am playing football with my cousin”).

We have already dealt with the Present Simple and Present Continuous; now we will deal with the **Imperative** form. Teachers usually try to inculcate Spanish students with the use of subject pronouns in sentences, since they tend to forget them as interference from their mother tongue. When they try to understand the formation of the Imperative, the first thing they usually get confused about is in the absence of such pronouns. In the song we have chosen, the speaker asks the lover to believe and love him/her, and s/he does it using the Imperative verb tense. We can introduce the subject of the Imperative in our lesson using the song and paying special attention to one specific paragraph where this kind of structure is present:

My darling believe me, (believe me)

For me there is no one but you!

Please love me too

And I'm in love with you (answer my pray)

Answer my prayer now babe (answer my pray)

Say you love me too (answer my pray)

Once we have focused on the structures found in the song, we can practice the Imperative form with an entertaining and simple exercise. Working in pairs, students

will order their partners to perform several actions (set a limit to avoid humiliation among the students)¹⁰ as if they were their Masters/Mistresses.

Every student would like to control their teachers, and with the game “Living Tape Recorder” their dream can come true. With this game, students will practice the Imperative form as well as any other verb tense or grammatical structure the teacher dictates. For this game, draw some tape or video recorder controls on the board (e.g. play, rewind, stop buttons...). Then introduce yourself as a “living tape recorder”. Get some students (two will be a good number) to stand near the board to control the “tape recorder” while you read the dictation (here, we can include, for example, any topic or grammatical structure we are going to deal in the following lesson). Learners can call out to ask the “controllers” to “press” the buttons. In this way, the teacher will read the dictation, rewinding, replaying, rewinding, and so on until the students are happy with what they understood and copied (Scrivener, 2005).

When teaching grammatical structures, teachers must try to highlight in the student’s consciousness those forms that are correct and explicitly draw attention to incorrect forms so that the difference can be noticed. Positive evidence helps students develop a stronger sense of what ‘feels correct’. Likewise, making students more aware of incorrect forms, (negative evidence) can help them develop a better sense of what ‘doesn’t sound right’. Negative evidence is a useful point of reference, because students try to improve their grammatical accuracy by recognizing and eliminating specific errors from their own speech and writing (Diego Amado, 2008).

All these tasks are based on getting the students to speak and exchange information and ideas, that is, using language to communicate. Therefore, they will focus more on fluency than on accuracy. Teachers should not interrupt them to correct

¹⁰ A sample order of actions has been enclosed in the attachments.

any grammatical mistake (unless it severely impedes communication); it is more useful to write down any mistake the students may have and deal with them at the end of the activity or the lesson.

Chapter 4: Syllabus Design, Production and

Evaluation of Methodological Material

In "Aspects of Syllabus Design", Widdowson (1987) suggests that a syllabus is the "specification of a teaching programme or pedagogic agenda which defines a particular subject for a particular group of learners". Therefore, a language teaching syllabus involves the integration of subject matter, i.e. what to talk about, and linguistic matter, that is, how to talk about it (Reilly, 1988). The choice of a syllabus is an important decision in language teaching, and we need as much information as possible about our target group to choose adequately. Student's age, level of proficiency, cultural background, etc. are all factors that need to be considered as part of developing a challenging and appropriate syllabus.

There has been much controversy about what content is possible to include in language teaching syllabuses and whether the differences are in syllabus or methods. Deciding what content to include in our syllabus is a major issue, therefore it is necessary first to know what kind of syllabus is appropriate for the needs of our target group.

1. Language teaching syllabuses

Several distinct types of language teaching syllabus exist, and these different types may be implemented in various teaching situations (Reilly, 1988). We shall now define the characteristics of each type of syllabus:

1. **Product-oriented syllabuses:** This kind of syllabuses focuses the product of language learning.

a. **Structural or formal syllabus.** The content of language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures, usually grammatical, of the language being taught. Examples include nouns, verbs, questions, subordinate clauses, etc.

b. **Functional-notional syllabus.** The content is a collection of the functions and notions that are performed when language is used. Examples of functions include informing, agreeing, apologizing, requesting; examples of notions include size, age, colour, comparison, time, and so on.

c. **Situational syllabus.** It presents a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language is used. Examples of situations include: seeing the dentist, buying a book at the book store, meeting a new student, going shopping, etc.

2. **Process-oriented syllabuses:** They do not focus on what the student will have accomplished on completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that he will undertake during the course.

a. **Skill-based syllabus.** The content of the language teaching is a collection of specific abilities that may play a part in real language. It groups linguistic competencies (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar,

and discourse) together into generalized types of behaviour, such as listening to spoken language for the main idea, writing well-formed paragraphs, giving effective oral presentations, etc.

- b. **Task-based syllabus.** The content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students want or need to perform with the language they are learning. Language learning is subordinate to task performance. Tasks integrate language (and other) skills in specific settings of language use. Possible tasks are: applying for a job, talking with a social worker, getting housing information over the telephone, and so on.
- c. **Content-based syllabus.** The purpose is to teach some content using the language that the students are also learning. The subject matter (for example, Mathematics, Geography,...) is primary, and language learning occurs incidentally to the content learning. An example of this kind of syllabus is a science class taught in the language the students need or want to learn.

Both structural and functional-notional syllabuses are limited as they are created for particular situations and a particular group of learners, who may not be able to transfer their linguistic knowledge to new or real situations. On the other hand, more process-oriented syllabuses would engage learners in problem-solving tasks as purposeful activities and involve a conscious and repeated reference to the formal properties of the language as a necessary resource for the achievement of communicative outcomes (Widdowson, 1987). Process-oriented syllabuses encourage students to participate more actively in class avoiding teacher-centred lessons.

All this kind of syllabuses rarely occurs independently of each other. Language teaching syllabuses are usually combined, with one type as the basis around which the others are arranged and related.

Prabhu (1980) introduces another type of syllabus, the **procedural syllabus**, where students have to solve problems or tasks through reasoning and self-reliance. He provides three main task types:

1. *Information-gap activities*. It involves a transfer of given information from one person to another.
2. *Reasoning-gap activities*. It involves deriving some new information from given information.
3. *Opinion-gap activities*. It involves identifying and articulating personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation.

According to Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) the principles underlying procedural and task-based syllabuses are very similar; both share a concern with the classroom processes which stimulate learning. They are syllabuses which are organized around tasks, rather in terms of grammar and vocabulary, and they provide a purpose for the use and learning of a language other than simply learning language items for their own sake (Nunan, 1988). In *Second language pedagogy*, Prabhu states that "while the conscious mind is working out some of the meaning-content, a subconscious part of the mind perceives, abstracts, or acquires some of the linguistic structuring embodied in those entities".

Krashen and Terrell (1983) described another approach for syllabus designing. They called it the **natural approach**. It was designed to develop basic personal communication skills. They claimed that most learning goals can be divided into one of two categories: basic personal communication skills and academic learning skills, and

that both can be subdivided into oral and written modes (Nunan, 1988). The principles which support this approach are:

- The goal is communication skills
- Comprehension precedes production
- Production emerges, that is, learners are not forced to respond.
- Activities which promote subconscious acquisition rather than conscious learning are central.
- The affective filter is lowered

(Krashen and Terrell, 1983:58)

2. Deciding Syllabus Design

There are many points to consider when designing and implementing a syllabus. Although all types of syllabus presented here have been examined and defined as if they were in isolated contexts, it is not common to utilize just one type of syllabus in actual teaching. As it has been mentioned above, syllabuses are frequently combined in more or less integrated ways with one type as the organizing starting point around which the others are arranged and connected. To put it another way, in arguing about syllabus choice and design, it should be kept in mind that the question is not which type to choose but which types and how to connect them with each other (Mohseni Far, 2008). As Hutchinson and Waters (1987:51) state “it is wise to take an eclectic approach, taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher”.

As we have already mentioned in Chapter 1: Discourse Analysis in English, even with the most communicative approaches, the second language classroom is limited in its ability to develop learners’ communicative competence in the target language. Learners are accustomed to the passive role in class and distrust the idea that they should set learning targets, select learning materials and activities, and evaluate learning outcomes. That is why the main approach followed when planning the activities included this paper has been the natural approach, as the song and some activities promote subconscious acquisition rather than conscious learning. It is also designed to develop basic personal communication skills – both oral and written (Nunan, 1988).

Although the natural approach has been taken as the primary theory, procedural and task-based syllabuses have been also taken into account when developing the activities in this paper, as they focus on the process of learning instead on the final

product. However, if and when grammatical, functional, and notional elements are considered, this happens as a second-order activity.

2.1. Grading Tasks

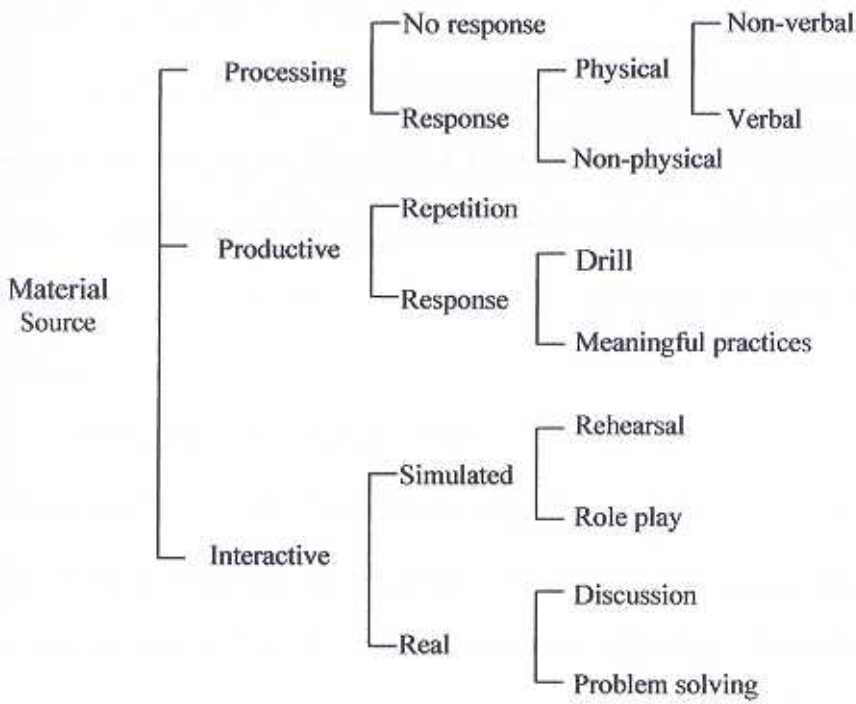
As we have chosen syllabuses which focus on process rather than product, we need to grade the elements in those process syllabuses.

One of the most comprehensive treatments of listening task difficulty is that offered by Anderson and Lynch (1988). They identify the factors which influence difficulty:

- The sequence in which information is presented.
- The familiarity of the listener with the topic.
- The explicitness of the information contained in the text.
- The type of input.
- The type and scope of the task to be carried out.
- The amount of support provided to the listener.

We believe that our text does not present any particular complex vocabulary or grammatical forms that could act as a serious obstacle to students' comprehension. Also, the topic – love - of the song is quite familiar to students, and the activities designed are challenging, but not so complicated as to impede the completion of them.

We will follow the classification made by Nunan (1985), in which difficulty is determined by the cognitive and performance demands made upon the learner, i.e. activity type is categorized according to type of learner response (Nunan, 1988).



(Nunan, 1985)

Using this typology, it is possible to take a text and exploit it by devising activities at different levels of difficulty. At basic level, learners might be required to respond by raising their hand (non-verbal). Using the same text with more advance learners, the task might be to discuss a topic (Nunan, 1988).

3. Pedagogical Applications

As it has already been mentioned before, the text does not present any particular complex vocabulary or grammatical forms that could act as a serious obstacle to students' comprehension having in mind their level of proficiency¹¹. Songs can help students to cope with real listening situations since they are present in the students' everyday lives.

In the chapter "Discourse Analysis in English" we already included several possible exercises to develop with the song "I say a little prayer". In this chapter, we have included extra activities designed according the type of syllabus we have chosen from the ones described above. The different activities have been classified into three groups: pre-listening/warm-up exercises, follow-up and post-listening exercises.

A. Warm-up/Pre-listening Activities

Warm-up and pre-listening activities are a good tool to catch students' attention and get them ready to work. They help learners to better understand the listening activity as they become familiar with its topic and difficult vocabulary and expressions. Depending on the complexity of the task, we have designed several activities to use as pre-listening or warm-up.

- ✓ **Pre-listening 1: *Give us a clue*.** This activity will involve physical, non-verbal response from the student, which makes it a very good activity to start a session. With this activity students will become familiar with the vocabulary and expressions found in the song. The teacher will prepare several cards with words from the song. It is useful to include a picture¹² of the action or concept in order to facilitate the comprehension of the chosen

¹¹ For students' level of proficiency see Section 1: Target group in Chapter 1 – Discourse Analysis.

¹² Possible cards of concepts and actions have been included in the attachments.

card. The class is divided into groups; then, a student of a group picks up a card and mimes the word written on it. If the member of his/her group correctly guess the word within a limited time – for example, thirty seconds – they win two points. If not, a different group could win a point if they find out the word mimed. Each group plays in turn and the group with the highest score wins (Corchado Pascasio, Birtwistle (*et al.*), 1992).

- ✓ **Pre-listening 2: *Scrambled Sentences*.** This is a good exercise to practice coherence and cohesion and will help student getting familiar with the song. After the short explanation of the song, the teacher divides the class into groups and gives out each group a handout containing one part of the song lyrics, the lines of which are scrambled, but this is exactly the goal of the activity: to improve the students' skills of logic and thinking (Naumoska, 2009). Each group receives a different part of the song, and by putting the lines in the correct order, each group's part of the song should achieve coherence. What the teacher does next is play the song, while they listen carefully in order to conclude whether they did well, as well as to see how the other parts of the song and the chorus go. It is assumed that by following this order, students get the gist of the whole song since they employed the communicative method (speaking to the rest of the class about their own part, listening to the others and connecting both). Each group is then given a copy of the whole song, which is followed by listening to the song for a second time and singing in a chorus.

B. Follow-up/During Listening Activities

Once finished with warm-up exercises, several follow-up or during listening activities are possible:

- ✓ **During Listening 1: *Tick the box*.** Students will have a non-physical, non-verbal response when completing this exercise. Once we have listened to the song and dealt with some vocabulary items from it, the teacher will play the song again, but this time, students will have to tick the appropriate box every time they hear the words included on the list¹³. A variant of this exercise can be done with students raising their hand whenever they listen to specific words.

C. Post-Listening Activities

Post-listening activities will help student remember vocabulary and structures seen in the song more easily. We have included two famous games, so as to improve students' learning while they enjoy playing the game.

- ✓ **Post-Listening 1: *Pencils Down*.** This activity is included into the category of meaningful practice, since it requires a productive response from students. It is an effective activity to expand the vocabulary seen on the song. To prepare this activity, the teacher will need a dice with the letters of the alphabet on it or if it is not available, a series of cards with a letter of the alphabet on each one. Each student will need a sheet of paper and a pencil. The students will divide their sheets into columns according to the number of lexical areas used in the game, plus a final column for the score¹⁴. Each column is given a heading indicating the lexical area (e.g. means of

¹³ See attachments for sample list.

¹⁴ A sample board game has been included in the attachments.

transport, clothes, parts of the body, food, drinks, etc.). A letter will be chosen at random using the dice or the cards. The students have a limited time – for example, one minute – to fill in as many headings as possible with a word beginning with the chosen letter. When the time is up, each student will tell the class the words s/he has written down and the teacher will verify the spelling of them (if a word is not correctly written, will not be included when assessing the points). Score will be: 20 points for the student who manages to find a word for a particular column which all the others have left completely blank; 10 points for any word that no one else has thought of; and 5 points for those words written down by more than one person

- ✓ **Post-Listening 2: Battleships.** This popular game will provide the students with an opportunity to practice “yes/no” questions as well as to consolidate the vocabulary seen in the text. This is a good activity for pair work. Students will also practice the Present Continuous verbal tense, which will help them remember one of its use without consciously studying it and will promote assimilation of the same. The teacher draws a grid of 8x8 squares (or any other length) in a sheet of paper and hands out a photocopy of it to each student. Eight (or the number of squares chosen) jobs are written on the right-hand column and eight different activities are written below the bottom row of squares¹⁵. A boat, a destroyer, a submarine and an aircraft carrier are hidden in the grid, each occupying one, two, three and four squares respectively; they can be placed horizontally or vertically in the grid. The students have to guess where they are in order to sink them all and win the game. They have to make a “yes/no” question using the jobs and the verbs of

¹⁵ See sample grid on attachments.

the activity, for example, “Is the painter wondering what dress to wear?” If one of the ships occupies that square, the other student will answer “yes”; if this happens, the ship will be hit or sunk (depending on the length). The player can ask another question after hitting or sinking a ship. The aim of the game is to sink all the opponent’s ships.

Employing songs in the EL classroom has proved to be a valuable asset which offers both teachers and students the opportunity of making the learning process memorable, as listening represents an important skill. After the song ends, the teacher might ask the students what the relationship between these people is. Thus, the questions on this topic are endless, and furthermore the approaches are unlimited.

As I have included several exercises for this song, the teacher can choose one exercise from each part – warm-up, follow-up and post listening activities – and use them in a lesson of approximately one hour.

4. Intercultural Dimension

According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), “the ‘intercultural dimension’ in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity”.

Learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Therefore, our main objective should be helping students to develop Communicative Competence in English as it becomes the chief means of communication between nations. This consists of not only grammatical, but also sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) state that “intercultural communication is communication on the basis of respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction”.

The Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference emphasizes the importance of ‘intercultural awareness’, ‘intercultural skills’, and ‘existential competence’. The essence of ‘Intercultural Dimension’ is “to help language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors”. It is the hope that language learners who thus become ‘intercultural speakers’ will be successful not only in communicating information but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002).

The activities proposed in this paper try to promote intercultural communication by giving the students the opportunity to interact with their classmates and with a musical genre which emerged in a different social and cultural background from the Spanish one.

Final Remarks

The use of songs and games encourage students to take a more active role in the lessons and motivate them more than a textbook. Interactive activities motivate students to play a more active role in the acquisition of their target language.

To help the students cope with the language they are about to learn, teachers can brain-storm some of the learning strategies that will be introduced so as to make complicated language forms actually appear easy. The students can be taught to focus on certain elements and to take them apart and re-build them in ways that will help them use the language more efficiently. Interactive and challenging activities will help them feel more comfortable with the language in use, as well as positive reinforcement will encourage progress and outline appropriate classroom and study behaviour.

Attachments

1. *Fill-in-the-blanks - I say a little prayer*

The moment I _____
Before I put on my _____
I say a little _____ for you
While _____ my _____ now,
And wondering what dress to wear now,
I say a little prayer for you

Forever, forever, you'll stay _____
and I will _____
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I love you
Together, _____, that's how it must be.
To live without you
Would only mean _____ for me.

I run for the _____, dear,
While riding I think of us, dear,
I say a little _____ for you.
At _____ I just take time
And all through my _____-break time,
I say a little prayer for you.

Forever, forever, you'll stay _____
and I will _____
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I _____
Together, _____, that's how it must be.
To live without you
Would only mean _____ for me.

Forever, forever, you'll stay _____
and I _____ love you
Forever, and ever, we never will part
Oh, how I love you
Together, _____, that's how it must be.
To live without you
Would only mean _____ for me.

My _____ believe me, (believe me)
For me there is no one but you!
Please _____ too
And I'm in love with you (answer my prayer)
Answer _____ now babe (answer my prayer)
Say you love me too (answer my prayer)

Forever, forever, you'll stay _____
and I will love you
Forever, _____, we never will part
Oh, how I love you
Together, _____, that's how it must be.
To live without you
Would only mean _____ for me.

My darling _____, (believe me)
For me there is no one but you!
Please love me too
This is my prayer
Answer my prayer now babe (answer my prayer)
This is my prayer
Answer it right now babe
Say you love me too
This is my prayer babe

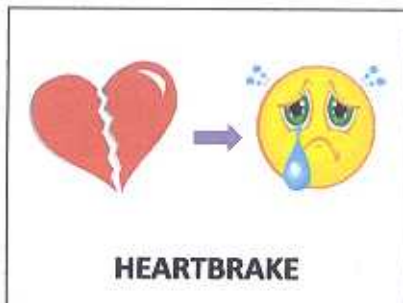
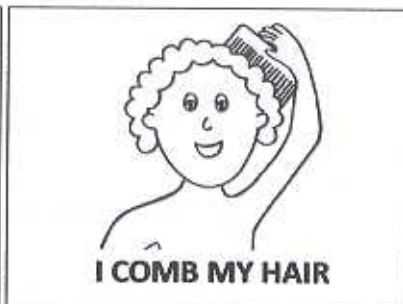
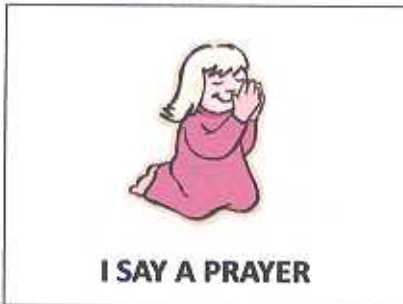
2. *The Mosquito Game*

This game is very useful to wake the class up a little. The teacher chooses 10-15 pieces of vocabulary from the song and writes them on separate pieces of paper (with lower level groups it is useful to pronounce the words with the students first). Then stick each word to the board.

The teacher asks for a volunteer and that student becomes the “*mosquito killer*”. Afterwards, the teacher plays the song and stops it at a certain point then the “*mosquito killer*” has to “squash” that word from the board he/she heard last from the song and that it is on the cards. The rest of the students will produce a sibilant mosquito-like sound while the mosquito-killer-student finds the right card. If the student squashes the correct card, then the students making the mosquito noise must stop it; if the mosquito-killer chooses the wrong card the rest of the students have to keep doing the sound until he/she hits the correct one.

To make the game more interesting, red herrings can be put up on the board. It is a good idea to divide the class into groups so the competitive feeling will make them pay more attention to the words heard. It is useful to write down the words that the pictures illustrate to make lower level students easier to find the words and memorize them.

3. Give us a clue



4. *Tick the box*

Prayer	
Love	
Bus	
Dear	
Dress	
Hair	
Heartbreak	
Coffee	

5. Pencils Down

Means of transport	Jobs	Clothes	Parts of the body	Drinks	Food	Points
Bus	Teacher	Dress	Hair	Coffee	Doughnut	

6. Battleship

Plumber

Painter

Teacher

Doctor

Policeman

Dentist

Laywer

Politician

Wonder what dress
to wear

Make up

Work

Have coffee

Say a prayer

Comb his/her hair

Run for the bus

Write a letter



Boat



Destroyer

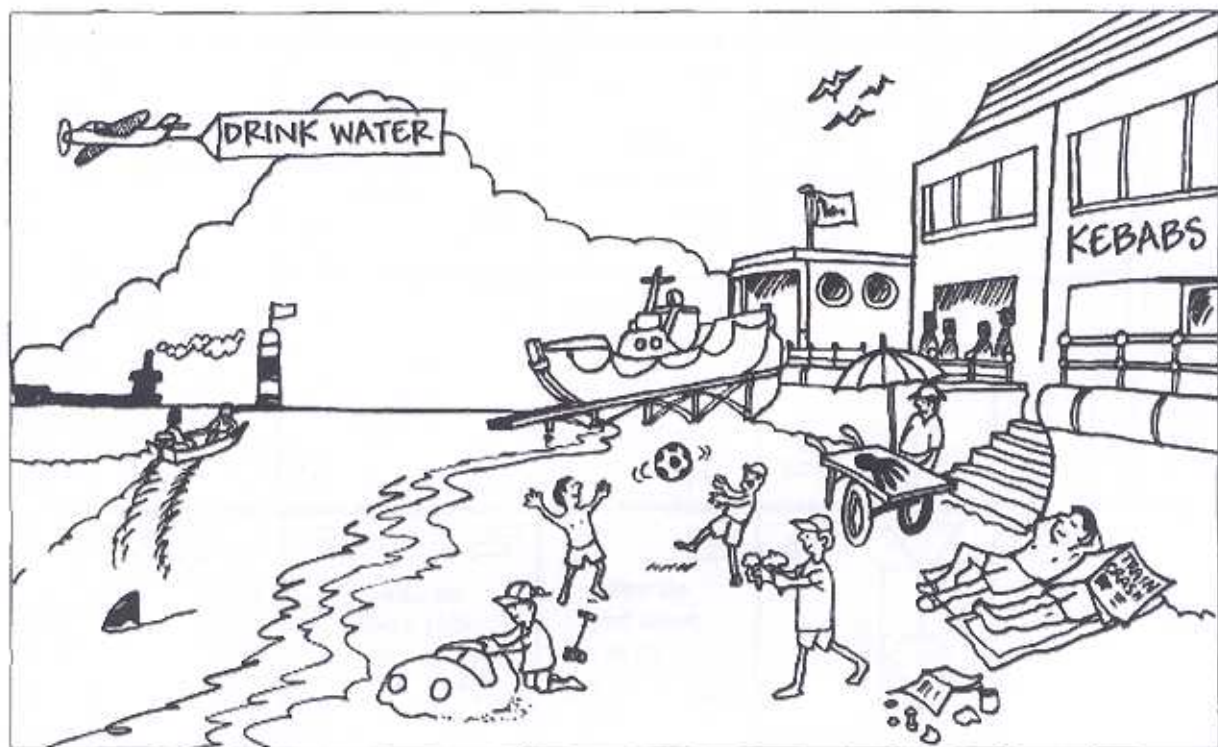
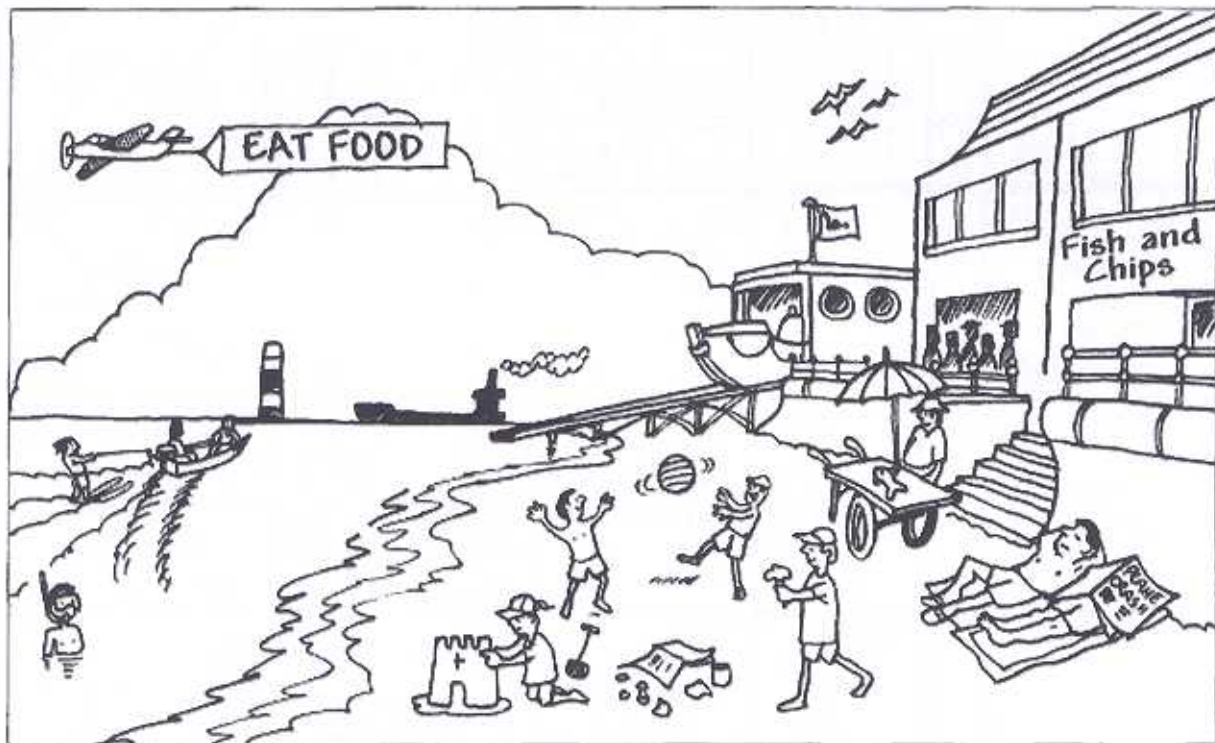


Submarine










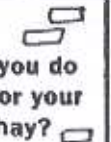
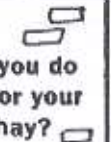
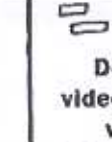


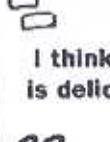

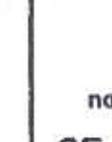

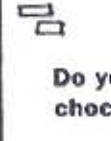
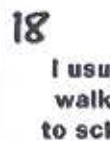

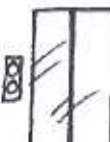

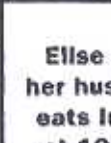
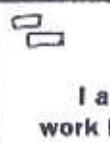



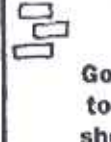
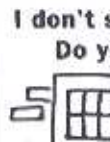



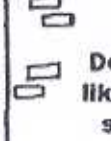
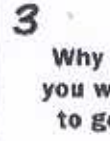
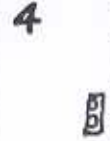
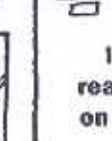
Aircraft Destroyer

7. At the Beach! - Present Simple / Continuous



(Scrivener, 2005)

8. The Block of Flats – Present Simple

<p>31</p> <p>My brother he's a doctor.</p> 	<p>32</p> 	<p>33</p> <p>Are you agree?</p> 	<p>34</p> 	<p>35</p> 
<p>30</p> <p>The TV in our hotel room isn't work.</p> 	<p>29</p> <p>You live here, don't you?</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>What you do want for your birthay?</p> 	<p>27</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Does the video recorder works?</p> 
<p>21</p> <p>What do you at the weekend?</p> 	<p>22</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>I think this is delicious.</p> 	<p>24</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>I eat not meat.</p> 
<p>20</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Do you like chocolate?</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>I usually walking to school.</p> 	<p>17</p> 	<p>16</p> 
<p>11</p> <p>What do you do?</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Elise and her husband eats lunch at 12.00.</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>I am work here.</p> 	<p>14</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>I get up at 7.30.</p> 
<p>10</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Go you to the shops?</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>I don't smoke. Do you?</p> 	<p>7</p> 	<p>6</p> 
<p>1</p> <p>START</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Does he likes this song?</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Why do you want to go?</p> 	<p>4</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>I usually reads a book on the train.</p> 

To play this game we need a dice and counters. Make teams of 4 students, each with a counter. The aim is to go from the front door to the penthouse flat. Players can go up or down several floors (bearing in mind the arrows) when they land on a lift square. When a player lands on a sentence, s/he must decide if it is correct or not (it is useful to set a time – for example, 20-30 seconds). When the player has decided, the others say if they agree or not. If they agree, the player remains there; if not, s/he goes back to the square that came from. Advice students to write down any doubt or disagreement for the end of the game. The teacher will then solve all the doubts about any problematic structure.

9. *Master / Mistress - Imperative*

- Wake up in the morning.
- Get up.
- Stretch.
- Put on your clothes.
- Walk slowly to the bathroom.
- Brush your teeth.
- Walk to the kitchen.
- Make some coffee.
- Look for bread.
- Complain – there isn't any!
- Find an apple.
- Bite the apple – mmm!
- Put on your coat.
- Finish the apple.
- Throw the core into the waste bin.
- Ah – you missed!
- Open the front door.
- Go out.
- Close the door.

(Scrivener, 2005)

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Master's Thesis

Master in Advanced English Studies:

Languages and Cultures in Contact

Student's Signature



Sandra Gómez Sánchez

Tutor's Signature

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