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Diplomová práce

Using song lyrics in teaching of English
Využití písňových textů ve výuce
anglického jazyka

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Poděkování

Rád bych zde poděkoval doc. PhDr. Lucii Betákové, MA, Ph.D. za vedení a pomoc při vypracování této diplomové práce. Zejména jsem jí vděčný za její ochotu, trpělivost a čas, který mi poskytla v průběhu konzultací. Vedle toho bych ji také rád poděkoval za lidský přístup v průběhu celé práce.

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se soustředí na využití písňových textů ve výuce anglického jazyka. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. V první části je pozornost věnována pojmům jako jsou píseň a hudební text a jejich typickým rysům a využití. Dále jsou v této části popsány možnosti práce s písněmi a jejich texty ve výuce anglického jazyka ve vztahu k rozvoji jazykových dovedností.

V praktické části prezentuji několik vlastních příprav na hodinu anglického jazyka s využitím vybraných písňových textů. Tyto přípravy jsou v souladu s RVP konkrétního stupně vybrané školy a ŠVP konkrétní školy a většina z nich také vychází z práce s konkrétní učebnicí a tématy určenými pro daný ročník dané školy. Důraz je zde z větší části kladen na řečové dovednosti, které mají být jednotlivými aktivitami rozvíjeny.

Abstract

This diploma thesis focuses on the utilization of song lyrics and their interpretation in English language teaching. The paper is divided into a theoretical and a practical part. In the first part attention is paid to concepts such as song and lyrics and their typical features. Subsequently, I will describe the options for the utilization of songs and their lyrics in English language teaching in relation to the development of language skills.

In the practical part I will present several English lesson plans of my own utilizing selected song lyrics. These plans are in accordance with The Educational Framework of the particular school level and in accordance with The School Education Programme of the particular school. Most of the plans also correspond with the specific textbooks and topics of the particular grade of the school. The plans mostly put the emphasis on language skills and subskills developed by the individual activities.

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1 Introduction

It appears to me that songs have gradually found their way into use in schools as a helpful tool in teaching English. They are usually part of various textbooks and there are even publications dealing with the use of songs in teaching foreign languages such as ‘The Use of Pop Songs in the EFL Classroom written by Lenka Ornerová’, for example. However, from my experience the songs were often used by my teachers at lower secondary school and grammar school just as a reward for students’ work or at the end of lessons without any more profound intention to exploit the song’s potential as a teaching tool. The only activities done with the songs were gap-filling exercises or the translation of the lyrics. I personally think that songs and their lyrics provide more opportunities than only that and they could be utilized more in classes. It is why I have chosen to focus on the topic of using song lyrics in the teaching of English and how to incorporate them more into the process of language learning.

This paper consists of theoretical and practical parts. At the beginning of the theoretical part I will give some definitions of song and try to explain what it actually means. Subsequently I will describe the role and influence of songs in everyday life and illustrate their meaning and impact in the language learning process. In relation to that I will also focus on the influence of songs on motivation, memory and their potential impact on the early development of language of children. Besides that, attention is also paid to the cultural impact of songs and their possible connection to poetry.

Apart from songs, the theoretical part also deals with lyrics. Similarly to songs, this section starts with the definitions of lyrics. In addition to this, I will outline the historical view of the term ‘lyrics’ and its development from their origin until the twentieth century. This is followed by subchapters that focus on typical features of lyrics and the similarities and relationship between lyrics and poetry. The last piece of the theoretical part pays attention to the ways song lyrics can be used in developing language skills. Apart from that, in the theoretical part is also mentioned

that songs can have a cultural impact and thus can be exploited in teaching the culture and history of the English speaking countries, for example.

The goal of the paper is to find out the connection between song lyrics and English language teaching. I would like to show that songs and their lyrics can have an impact on the learning of the English language and why they could be exploited in classes more.

The aim of the practical part is to provide my own lesson plans using selected song lyrics. These plans may help readers of this thesis as a manual of how to work with songs in classes in teaching English and help learners to better acquire the target language. All of the plans were also supposed to be taught in lower secondary school and these classes should have been reflected in the practical part as well. However, when I intended to apply these plans all the schools in the Czech Republic were closed due to the covid-19 epidemic situation. As a result, there is no review of the lesson plans so I cannot be sure how much they would contribute to the improvement of students' language skills.

2 Songs

This chapter deals with various concepts that are somehow connected with songs. At first it pays attention to definitions of the word ‘song’, subsequently it deals with the place of songs and music in peoples’ lives in general, and after that there are sections concerning the question of why to use songs in the process of foreign language learning and their possible effect on students’ motivation and memory. In addition to this, there are short subchapters dealing with the possible cultural impact of songs, with the resemblance between songs and poetry and with the influence of songs on the development of language during our early years of life.

2.1 Definition of a song

Since this thesis deals with songs alongside the lyrics throughout the whole work, it seems appropriate to look at what the term ‘song’ actually means. Dictionaries usually define the song in a similar way but sometimes there are slight differences in their descriptions. I have chosen the following definitions from the Cambridge and Merriam-Webster dictionaries. The Cambridge dictionary depicts the meaning of a song as *“a usually short piece of music with words that are sung”* or *“the act of singing, or singing when considered generally”*¹. The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives more definitions such as *“the act or art of singing”*, *“poetical composition”*, *“a short musical composition of words and music”*, *“a poem easily set to music”*².

Based on these definitions, it is evident that the meaning of the term ‘song’ does not always have to be clear and can be described a little bit differently by various dictionaries. We can see that the Cambridge dictionary, in contrast to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, disregards any relationship between poems and songs in its definitions, but on the other hand they both mention that song is a mixture of music and words. The blending of these two notions is crucial in terms of this paper as well.

The words of a song are called lyrics and they are undoubtedly one of the fundamental elements of songs. They are, in spite of other things, also significant

¹<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/song>

²<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/song>

because of their ability to carry a particular message that can be transmitted to the listener. Of course, as Grünert says “*a song is a lot more than just words on paper*” and he adds that “*constructively turned: the text is not supposed to have a meaning but rather a meaning potential with enough wiggle room for the recipient’s personal interpretation*” (Grünert 2009:8). I will pay more attention to lyrics, their development, characteristics, and potential connection to poetry later in the work.

Another interesting definition of a song is provided by Zimmermann who says that “*a song is more than a text and a melody which can be recorded or printed, examined and criticized. It is a result of a communal state of mind and it depends on the conjunction of an inspired singer, a receptive audience, and various circumstances creating a favourable mood*” (Zimmermann in Murphey 1990:16).

So, we can see that there are various opinions and understandings of the term ‘song’. To be sure that the reader comprehends what I mean when I work with the word ‘song’ in this paper I have decided to use it in a very similar way to Griffiee in his book ‘Songs in Action’. According to him, “*“songs’ refer to pieces of music that have words, especially popular songs such as those one hears on the radio*” (Griffiee 1992:3). It is important to know that every time I refer to a ‘song’ I mean the connection between music and words, not the music without words or vice versa.

2.2 Songs in everyday life

Griffiee claims that “*no one knows exactly why songs are powerful, but everyone knows from a personal point of view that they are*” (Griffiee 1992:4). If we thought about this statement for a while we would find out that there is some truth in it. For some reason, songs have the power to evoke various feelings or emotions within human beings and we do not usually even realize how that has happened.

The proof that songs are powerful and important in people’s lives is what they have actually become for us over time. They have gradually become an inseparable part of our lives. We are accompanied and surrounded by them nearly every day and almost in every place we go or stay. We can unintentionally encounter music in supermarkets, cafés, theatres, restaurants, sport events, public transport and so on. A great deal of people just listen to songs while jogging, cycling, working, studying,

driving a car, walking home from work and vice versa, or when they just want to relax.

Besides that, the availability of any kind of music is almost unlimited today. People can exploit various instruments when they want to listen to their favourite songs such as MP3 players or cell phones for example; they have the possibilities to listen to them on websites, on the radio or on television. In addition, music is also considered to be a widespread topic of conversation; people often talk about their favourite songs, bands, songwriters and about any news from the music industry.

As it was already mentioned songs themselves consist of two parts and these are music and lyrics. We could say that music speaks to our heart whereas the lyrics stream to our mind and attempt to drag us into their own realm. I personally agree with the opinion of Holmes and Moulton that song “*grasps our imagination, emotions, and intellect with equal force regardless of our language backgrounds*” (Holmes and Moulton 2001:2).

People can use songs for various purposes. Murphey even made a list which enumerates what is possible for people to do with songs. I will present some examples from the list here. According to him, people can “*talk about the lyrics; talk about the music; use songs and music to set or change an atmosphere or mood, as ‘background furnishing’; use songs and music to make a social environment, form a feeling of community, dance, make friends and lovers; or use music and song to make internal associations with the people, places, and times in our lives, so they become the personal soundtrack of our lives*” (Murphey 1992:9).

From all of these mentioned examples above, it is obvious that people could hardly live without music and songs. We have gradually got accustomed to songs in the way that even imagining our world without them seems a little bit ridiculous and I fully agree with the statement of Maley who says that “*there is no human society without its poetry. There is no human society without its music*” (Maley in Murphey 1992:3).

2.3 Songs in the language learning process

Most contemporary song lyrics are composed in the English language. There are even songwriters and bands who do not come from English speaking countries

but who sing their songs in English. Besides that, *“the number of English language speakers and the demand for English Language Learning is growing at an exponential rate”* (Boothe, West 2015:248). With this knowledge in mind Murphey (1992) finds it surprising that there is one place where music and songs are slowly catching on and that is school. The purpose of not using songs in the teaching process more than is now the case might be because most people connect music with fun, relaxation, spare time and not with learning. However, there are many benefits connected with songs which can contribute to the better acquiring of the target language.

In contrast to Murphey Grünert (2009) thinks that songs have been utilized as a tool for teaching and learning foreign languages for a long time. This can mostly be put down to the fact that songs which come from English speaking countries have become a prevailing global cultural fact. You could say that English happens to be the ‘lingua franca’ due to the great effect that this kind of music has had on cultures around the world. He adds that with the number of songs that focus their attention on young people, it is evident that this kind of material can be appropriately, efficiently and usefully included in the classroom as a help in developing students’ language skills.

Although the use of songs in teaching English can be a helpful source and device to make learning of the language for students more pleasant and available, Murphey (1992) states that songs on their own cannot teach anyone how to utilize the language. According to him, merely singing and listening to songs does not enable students to improve their communication in the target language. This shows that it is important to know what songs can actually offer and how to work with them during the language learning process in order to teach students what is intended.

Modern teaching may have many reasons to integrate music and songs in the English language learning process. Hancock (2008) is of the opinion that pupils may benefit from the part of a song as lyrics because they can be more easily remembered than other components of the song such as melody and rhythm. The utilization of songs during the teaching of English can contribute to the improvement of various students’ skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as it can help

to expand their vocabulary. Apart from this, lyrics can usually be analysed and interpreted, which enables students to improve their comprehension skills.

Songs can help learners to acquire better pronunciation and even aid them to realize that there are more varieties of pronunciation and accents around the world, because English songs are performed by musicians from various parts of the world. It is also proof that authentic language, which is mostly used in songs, is not always pronounced in the same way.

Besides that, learning should lead to the better adoption of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Fantini depicts this phenomenon (ICC) as “*a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself*” (Fantini 2007:9)

Gower thinks that studying of a language “*is not only concerned with acquiring knowledge (about grammar and pronunciation systems, for example) – it is not just something we learn about. Rather, it is a skill, or a set of skills – something we learn to do, like riding a bike. So, students need meaningful, interactive practise in the skills in order to learn to use the language*” (Gower et al. 1995:85).

The development of the skills mentioned should be done in an interrelated way, which means not separately from one another because language works as a blend of skills that are connected together. Songs are actually a good source which can help us to acquire these interconnected abilities, skills, and an amount of other knowledge.

Moreover, there can be a connection between speech and music because they both have a particular pitch and rhythm. Therefore, songs are actually certain devices used for communication and the teacher may exploit them as a source for language practice because they can be helpful in reaching better communicative competence which is comprised of various skills that should be fulfilled and improved during the learning process. “*Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user’s grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the*

like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately."³

This is also one of the competences mentioned in The Educational Framework and in The School Education Programme which are parts of the System of Curricular documents. This System consists of the National Education Programme (NEP), Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) and School Education Programmes (SEPs). *"Whereas the NEP formulates the requirements for education which are applicable in initial education as a whole, the FEPs define the binding scope of education for its individual stages (for preschool, elementary and secondary education). The school level is represented by SEPs, on the basis of which education is implemented in individual schools. The SEP is created by each school according to the principles prescribed in the respective FEP."*⁴

Besides all that, the exploitation of songs makes a pleasant change for students from the usual studying routines, provides a lot of opportunities to improve their capabilities, learn the crucial constituents of language and it may motivate pupils to dedicate more time to studying English.

As was mentioned above, a great advantage of songs is their availability in the contemporary digital era. Online websites provide teachers with options to look up and use the majority of existing lyrics along with various supportive materials and activities connected to songs that can be utilized as a help for teachers during their English teaching.

2.4 Cultural impact of songs

Speaking of advantages, we cannot forget the cultural benefits of songs, because the majority of songs mirror the time and conditions in which they were composed. Chase considers pop songs to be *"the sum of all the patterns of behaviour"* and from this viewpoint they express *"commonly held values"* (Chase in Frith 1996:161). Music and song lyrics are quite dependent on cultural background or settings, and Levine says that lyrical differences are connected with intentions as well as conventions (Levine in Frith 1996).

³<https://www.definitions.net/definition/communicative+competence>

⁴http://www.vuppraha.rvp.cz/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/RVP_ZV_EN_final.pdf

It is known that there are plenty of protest and political songs which were composed in different periods and they can also serve as a reflection of selected political situations in history. An interesting opinion in terms of songs as holders of political message is presented by Frith who believes that sometimes they do not serve to express “*ideas or arguments but slogans*” and he sees the absurdity in that the political strength of popular song, “*as a slogan*” does not have to bear any connection to the planned message at all (Frith1996:165).

He uses Bruce Springsteen’s song “Born in the USA” as an example to clarify his viewpoint. With its lyrics “Born in the USA” can be counted among protest songs because it describes the shipment of men to the Vietnam War and then their returning to nothing in the USA. The song is connected with some kind of truth linked with the experience of war veterans and political reality. However, the chorus line “Born in the USA” sounds more celebratory than critical. So it is not the intended sarcasm or irony that this line imparts to recipients but rather pride and assertiveness (Frith 1996).

According to Griffiee (1992) songs give us an option to learn about the culture of various societies or about the values of the people that speak the target language. Moreover, they can provide us with an insight into the historical and social background of a particular language. This ability of songs to transmit these messages can be as well utilized during the work with songs as they can provide students with extra information about culture, history, society and other themes that can be helpful for them in other school subjects as well as contributing to the students’ general knowledge.

2.5 Songs and poetry

There are some components of songs that are identical to elements of speech and poetry. In terms of song and speech we can find that they both have melody, linguistic meaning and are produced by the voice. In the second case the connection between song and poetry is that they are normally put down on paper before they are published, they utilize words to express meaning, they may be accompanied with music and they can both be heard by a listener.

Although there are some above mentioned similarities, a song has its own uniqueness and does not function the same way as speech or poetry. According to Griffie (1992), we can name at least three song characteristics that are in contrast to poetry and they are: 1. The quantity of the expressed message is lower in a song compared to poetry and whereas poems can be listened to, we normally read them which in consequence allows poetry to be longer and carry more intricate information. 2. Poems are not as superfluous as songs. This superfluity of songs is accomplished by means of borrowings from proverbs, alliteration and other typical devices from other songs, but the consequence of this superfluity is that songs, particularly in comparison to poetry's intricacy and finesse, sound simpler. However, it would be misleading to think that this simplicity is a weakness of song, because the features such as shortness, simplicity and superfluity may aid our comprehension. 3. Another quite interesting feature of song is its private aspect which may make the listener think that the song is being performed personally for him.

Regarding the possible connection or relation between song lyrics and poetry I will deal with this issue later in the work.

2.6 Songs and motivation

One of the most important aspects when we want to learn something is motivation. The Cambridge dictionary defines motivation as "*the need or reason for doing something*" or "*willingness to do something, or something that causes such willingness.*"⁵ The free dictionary, besides other definitions, also mentions that motivation is "*the process that arouses sustains and regulates human and animal behaviour.*"⁶ So, motivation is something inside the person that pushes him or her to behave in the way to get, achieve or acquire some things or in other words reasons why we do or learn something.

It is often a difficult task to find out how to motivate students, since every learner usually has a different motivation. There are also various differences in adult's and children's motivating factors. For instance, adults normally learn a foreign language because they need it for their work or to get a better job or to be

⁵<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/motivation>

⁶<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/motivation>

able to speak with other people abroad, for example, on their holidays and so on. On the other hand, young pupils learn the language because it is one of their subjects in school and it is their duty, but it is possible that no student would choose to study the language deliberately if they had the choice. However, the pupils' motivation is affected by many other aspects, mainly by parents, teachers, class atmosphere, but perhaps most significantly by their degree of success. For the majority of them the biggest motivation at school is to get the best grades and satisfy themselves as well as their parents.

In contrast to adults, there are usually situations in school classrooms when some students are not motivated enough to learn anyway. It should be the teachers' responsibility to try to prompt a learner to be more curious and to participate in the particular subject, despite the student's first lack of interest in it. It might be done by the selection of a theme, activity or language content which could revive the learner's interest. Another important role in a student's motivation is played by the teacher's attitudes, care, sense of humour, strictness etc. (Harmer 2007).

House (1997) claims that the motivation of students should occur individually as well as socially in the company of other learners, and that it is important to incorporate the component of motivation in each class of learning. All of these mentioned aspects may have a significant impact on the learners' perception of the subject, their interest and their involvement. Harmer (2007) claims that students with motivation usually achieve better results than the learners who are not motivated at all. So based on all the above mentioned arguments, it is obvious that motivation ranks amongst the most important elements of the language learning process.

Songs belong amongst the tools that give students another option of how to approach English and besides that they can provide them with a possible motivation for the language learning. Maley says that "*music is highly memorable*" and that "*it is highly motivating, especially for children, adolescents and young adult learners*" (Maley in Murphey, 1992:3). Murphey (1992) also presents some aspects connected with motivational side of songs. For instance, a lot of songs have a typically simple construction of language that may influence the recipient's emotions. This textual structure makes songs ideal sources that can be exploited during the lesson. In addition to this, it is not complicated to sympathize or identify with songs, since they

normally do not refer to a particular situation or person. At the end he also stresses that songs have the ability to contribute to a person's or group's better harmony. This calming or relaxing influence of music and songs may also be efficiently used within the learning process in the classroom.

Krashen talks about the motivating impact of songs as well. He came up with the so called "*natural approach*" theory which says that "*language acquisition occurs in only one way: by understanding messages*" (Krashen in Grünert 2009:8). The meaning of this theory is that we comprehend messages better when we are interested in the form in which they are delivered and this interest usually increases when the words are presented to us accompanied by music.

Boothe and West (2015:249) think that songs may as well be helpful in decreasing the so called "*affective filter*" which has an impact on the input of language information to the student's brain based on emotions, motives or attitudes. Our learning is influenced by various feelings such as fear, anxiety and so on and these 'filters' act as a wall that obstructs understandable reception by preventing the knowledge about the foreign language from reaching the language parts of a brain. According to them the integration of songs to the learning process can decrease students' negative feelings and evoke positive attitudes about studying as well as it can lower learners' stress and support their motivation, which leads to better language acquisition.

2.7 Songs and memory

There are opinions and theories dealing with the question that songs can influence brain and memory. Gardner claims that *all normal (non-brain-damaged) people possess some musical intelligence* (Gardner in Salcedo 2002:43). Salcedo (2002) follows this idea and even thinks that if teachers of foreign languages utilize the musical intelligence and musical interests of their pupils proficiency of language abilities and skills can be accomplished and thus songs can be exploited as a teaching device in a class.

Many authors consider the use of songs in learning quite helpful because it engages both hemispheres. Whereas a right brain learner reacts well to illustrated directions and depends on images in memorization, the left hemisphere predominant

student is rather focused on verbal presentation (Grünert 2009). Asher thinks that “*no genuine learning can happen until there is a switch from the left to the right brain*” (in Grünert 2009:9). Grünert continues with the opinion that music achieves this demand of combining hemispheres and that it may be a stronger learning device if it is linked to visual representation. With the help of current rich website sources, this verbal and visual combination can be quite easily utilized during English language learning, for instance, by using a video in a class.

For example, Guglielmino mentions that “*songs bridge the [brain’s] hemispheres, strengthening retention through a complementary function as the right hemisphere learns the melody, the left, the words*” (in Salcedo 2002:20). This linking bridge is mentioned in a work by Claer and Gargan (in Salcedo 2002) as well. However, according to them, music can act as a natural connection existing between native and foreign languages, which may motivate students to dedicate more time to language practice. Anton (in Salcedo 2002) has an opinion which resembles Guglielmino’s one in terms of the role of hemispheres, he thinks that employing both right and left hemispheres at the same time in a single activity is the best condition for efficient learning, because the participation of the right hemisphere’s abilities like emotions, actions, and music helps to improve creativity, memory and imitation technique which is an important strategy in the process of language education.

Additional proof that music can be helpful to our memory was given by Wallace (in Salcedo 2002) who found out during his comparison of recall ability that from melodic, rhyming and spoken texts the easiest text to recall was the melodic one and on the other hand the most difficult to recollect was the spoken one.

2.8 The song stuck in my head phenomenon

Now I would like to shortly explain an interesting concept that is related to listening, songs, and to our short and long-term memories. Everybody has without doubt experienced a moment when they heard a song and could not get rid of it for a while or even for a long time. Muphey names this situation ‘the song stuck in my head phenomenon’ and describes it as “*the echoing in our minds of the last song we heard after leaving our car, a restaurant, etc., and which can be both enjoyable and sometimes unnerving*” (Muphey 1992:7) and he adds that songs may have an impact

on our long-term and short-term memory (Murphey 1992). Barsom dealt with this phenomenon as well. His intention was to find out if there are any connections that cause this state of mind. Although he names some elements such as familiarity, the cultural link between songs and the recipient or repetition he does not come up with any pattern or logical explanation for this phenomenon.⁷

2.9 The meaning of songs in the early development of the language of children

This short section describes the importance that songs have in the development of our language when we are little and that this influence of songs on us perhaps stays with us even when we are much older.

Murphey (1992) mentions that students are able to learn songs pretty fast and that the songs are actually the only thing that they can recall from the class. According to him the prime reason is because singing is not as difficult as speaking. This is connected with one intriguing concept which is based on a thought that language is less difficult to verbalize in songs than in speech. Dakin comes up with an idea which resembles Murphey's one when he says that "*singing or reciting a rhyme is much easier than talking*" (Dakin 1993:5). The whole concept is apparently connected with the beginning of our life because songs probably precede and help in the evolution of young child's language.

The studies imply that a child's babbling, prattling or muttering is significant in the development of language. The first children's noises include humming or whooping, which are closer to the sound of singing than speaking. Murphey states that "*the singing of songs resembles what Piaget (1923) described as egocentric language, in which children talk, with little concern for an addressee. They simply enjoy hearing themselves repeat. It could be that the need for egocentric language never really leaves us and is fulfilled partly through song*" (Murphey 1992:7).

⁷<https://phys.org/news/2006-06-probing-song-catchy.html>

3 Lyrics

Another important term emerging in this work many times is ‘lyric’ or ‘lyrics’. Lyrics are next to music an inseparable part of songs. While music is often considered to be an ‘influencer’ of people’s mood, lyrics on the other hand usually convey some messages from the artist to his/her audience. The meaning of lyrics seems to me to be a little bit difficult to explain and so I will deal with this term a little bit more deeply. At first, as I also did when I dealt with the term ‘song’, I provide some definitions and clarifications of what lyrics are. After that I will look at the origin and historical perception of this term, its features, and its possible connections with poetry.

3.1 Definition of lyrics

Today when we talk about the expression ‘lyrics’ we usually have in mind the words of a song. According to most dictionaries there is normally more than only one explanation of this term. For instance, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines lyric as a noun which means “*a lyric composition specifically a lyric poem*” or “*the words of a song – often used in plural*” and as an adjective which means “*suitable for singing to the lyre or for being set to music and sung*” or “*expressing direct usually intense personal emotion especially in a manner suggestive of song.*”⁸ The Cambridge dictionary on the other hand distinguishes the terms lyric and lyrics. It mentions that lyric is a noun that means “*a short poem that expresses the personal thoughts and feelings of the person who wrote it*” or it is an adjective that is “*expressing personal thoughts and feelings (especially of poetry and songs)*”⁹ but the term lyrics is defined by the dictionary only as a noun with meaning “*the words of a song, especially a pop song.*”¹⁰

So, according to these dictionaries’ definitions, lyric as a noun can be depicted firstly as a poem which expresses emotions and thoughts of an individual or secondly as an arrangement which is created for singing. Whereas the first description of lyric put an emphasis on an individual’s state of mind, emotions,

⁸<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lyric>

⁹<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lyric>

¹⁰<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lyrics>

feelings, and thoughts expressed, for example, through a short poem, one of the significant characteristics of the second description is its connection with music.

However, the sharing of one's emotions is typical for both definitions. Brewster states that *"the notion of the lyric poet or the singer-songwriter sharing her or his deepest, most private sentiments has become predominant in modern culture. There are certain consistent features in definitions of lyric: it is characterised by brevity, deploys a first-person speaker or persona, involves performance, and is an outlet for personal emotion"* (Brewster 2009:1).

I would like to say now that in this work I will use both 'lyric' and 'lyrics' in the same sense and that is 'words of a song'.

3.2 Origin and development of lyrics through history

This section deals with the historical development of the word 'lyric' and how society perceived this term during the history. As with many other terms it is good to know the evolution of this word as well, because the connections between lyrics, poetry and music and possible associations between our and older perceptions of the word 'lyric' can be seen there.

Brewster (2009) says that while the first mentioned sense of lyric in the previous chapter (a poem which expresses emotions and thoughts of an individual) is an idea that came into existence in the late eighteenth century, which saw lyric as a moment of elevated consciousness in terms of emotions and feelings, the second meaning (an arrangement which is created for singing) goes to the etymological roots of Ancient Greece where the term was understood as a text sung or recited with the help of a lyre, which shows the connection between words and music.

Johnson (1982) claims that in Ancient Greece words played the main role and music existed as an accompaniment of them. The presentation and clarity of the song's words mattered the most and music strengthened the words instead of decorating them. In addition to this, performers in Ancient Greece usually exploited lyrics to express some kind of request or address to the audience. This link between words and performance has stayed crucial to the comprehension of lyric despite the fact that the connection between music and poetry has slowly decreased since the Renaissance (Brewster 2009).

Brewster (2009) speaks about the tradition of bards that lasted mainly in oral cultures to the Early Middle Ages in England, and even stayed an important characteristic of cultures like the Celtic one in Scotland, Ireland and Wales to the modern period. The medieval bard could be accompanied or unaccompanied by a musical instrument during his performance. The usual instruments used by poets were lute and harp, or there could be another musician joining the singer. We may say that these minstrels or troubadours were, in modern speech, singer-songwriters. They could get constant patronage if they were members of courts or noble households, whereas others had to make journeys between the courts.

According to Dronke (1968), one of the main roles of medieval lyric was to be sung to accompany dancing and dance music was part of sacred and secular festivals. The capability of lyric to work for noble and popular culture at the same time in The Middle Ages and in the early modern period was reflected by musical creation. There was a repeated worry extending to the modern period about the decay of religious music to the sacrilege of popular song. But on a practical level the religious and secular music were intermingled, and early popular music easily lent melodies to sacred songs.

The important moment in the history of lyric that changed the relation between music and poetry was the invention of printing press around 1440 and the subsequent evolution of print culture, because from this moment onwards the connection grew continuously more residual (Brewster 2009). From this time, lyrics started to be recorded on paper and it is certain that lyrics which are composed straight for singing or reciting have different effects than the “personal” reading of poems on the paper.

The Elizabethan era is considered by some authors to be the peak of ‘melodic’ lyrics. For example, Sedgwick (in Brewster 2009) compares the lyric of this period to the originality of lyric produced in Ancient Greece and adds that these are the authentic lyrics, authentic songs. It was a period when oral exhibition, rhetorical abilities and presentation were principal thus poetry and music happened to be complementary. Although poets or lyricists of that time could compose popular lyrics anonymously, the supremacy of noble lyric caused the majority of musical compositions to embrace a more enunciated “literary” nature (Brewster 2009). After

the Elizabethan period music and songs that accompanied dancing also became part of courtly culture, particularly at the Jacobean and Caroline courts (Corns 1998).

Stevens (1979), however, is of the opinion that the inherent and essential connection between poetry and music disappeared in the fourteenth century. He states that musical compositions made for temporal and religious intentions more and more tried to copy normal speech. As a proof Stevens presents Tudor song-books from the turn of the fifteenth century which according to him “*copied not only the duration of speech syllables, but also the intonation of speech in musical melody*” (Stevens 1979:102). Therefore music functions as the assistance and embellishment for words. Brewster (2009) says that this change is mainly emphasized in the seventeenth century.

The eighteenth century brought the connection between lyric and music back to life. According to Davie’s description, the lyric of this century was “*a poem composed either to match an existing piece of music, or in the expectation and hope of a musical setting being contrived for it*” (Davie 1974:4). Although this time is mainly rich in the hymns, lyric was greatly popular and politicised as well. Hymns, beside other things, concerned warlike topics that reacted to the events of that time. These themes were popular among people as well as they were performed in theatres. Lyric aimed its concerns at patriotic and national stories (Brewster 2009). The mentioned hymns and lyric were usually created to celebrate or commemorate some significant national occasions. In contrast to this celebratory and commemorative poetry, there were also ‘public’ lyrics that demonstrated political disagreement. One of the themes, for instance, that was sometimes condemned in the lyrics of the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century was slavery. For example, the poem ‘The Negro’s Complaint’, written by English poet William Cowper, was an attack on slavery.

Lindley (1985) discovered a significant change in the understanding of the connection between music and lyric at the end of the eighteenth century. It was in Germany where aesthetic tradition raised music over poems as an eloquent art. It was from this moment that lyrics started to work in comparable manners to music, and music happened to be the way of depicting the purpose of poetry. It had an important effect on lyric because instead of poetry that rules and constitutes language in a way

that can be adapted to music, lyric happened to be language so disposed that it basically copies music.

Brewster (2009) mentions that although the meaning of lyric as song-like has receded in poetry during the last two centuries, the continuing link between music and lyrics has persisted in the scope of genres like folk, blues or rap songs. He adds that the connection between poetry and pop song may be found out in various directions. For instance, the production of the Beat generation in the 1950s and 1960s of the twentieth century was also mixed with pop music and performance.

Additionally, some of the distinctive characteristics connected with lyric may be seen in the work of songwriters like Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan or Joni Mitchell. Their cautiously constructed songs precisely focus on rhythm and stress, and tell a story or event within a firm time limit. The critics probably pay most attention to Bob Dylan who has been connected with the conventions of troubadours or poets like Blake, Ginsberg or Burroughs, and it is obvious that his lyrics are appropriate for use in a literary context. He knows the traditions of the lyric which are connected with music and his songs make broad utilization of literary allusion (Brewster 2009). For example, Ricks or Corcoran proved that Dylan's songs are possible to study as poetry (Corcoran, Ricks in Brewster 2009). Bob Dylan's special impact on the history of lyric is in the general link with pop culture, repeated associations with political disagreement, and his technique of performance that emphasise spontaneity, alteration and disrupted temporality (Brewster 2009).

The discussions about the literary advantages of lyrics have become rather shallow in the modern period, but Ross warns about the interpretation of lyrics that can be formalistic and says that: *"In many cases, we mishear the lyrics of pop songs, and when we do hear them correctly, we usually listen selectively, since our attention is more engaged with the 'sound' of the lyrics, interacting with the music, rather than with the meaning of the words themselves."* (Ross 1991:98)

In conclusion, the historical development of lyrics can be shortly expressed by the words of Brewster; *"the enduring links between lyric and music can be traced through, for example, the Provencal troubadour tradition, popular ballads, the rich combination of music and text in the Elizabethan period, the hymn tradition from the seventeenth century onwards, the folk songs of Woody Guthrie, Pete and Peggy*

Seeger, Ewan MacColl and Bob Dylan, and in the resurgence of performance poetry that is tied to various musical traditions in the later twentieth century” (Brewster 2009:143).

3.3 Features of lyrics

Generally, lyrics are words of songs, but they are different from ordinary texts in the point that lyrics display a particular construction, as they are formed in verses and choruses (Mayer et al. 2008). Moreover, they have some typical features as any other literary forms and this subchapter presents and explains probably the most important characteristics of lyrics. The first feature I will deal with in this section, and which is also distinctive to poetry, is rhyme.

3.3.1 Rhyme

Rhyme belongs among the stylistic tools which help to improve phonological responsiveness in poetry and song lyrics. The essential feature of rhyme is the repetition of analogous or identical sounds of last word syllables or the entire words that are usually positioned at the end of a line. According to Butler and Newman (2008), rhyme is a situation when there are two or more lines in poems or songs that end with a similar sound, which helps performers and recipients to remember the words better. Mayer’s description is that a rhyme is a linguistic mode when two or more syllables of a word, positioned at the end of a line, have a very similar sound (Mayer et al. 2008).

It is significant to point out that correspondence or resemblance of syllables’ sounds is not automatically connected with the lexical endings of words, but it is associated with the similarity of phonemes. For instance, the words ‘cry’ and ‘die’ both have identical phoneme at the end which is /ai/.

Rhyme is an impressive tool which contributes to the pleasure of listening to songs; it can attract the audience’s interest more, and make the lyrics more colourful and interesting. As a consequence of these functions, rhyme may contribute to form lyrics that might be easier to remember. Therefore, methodical research has been carried out to uncover how the constructional characteristics of rhyme influence the artistic and emotional processing of lyrics.

Rhyme which is normally part of poetry or lyrics has its own pattern called ‘rhyme scheme’. Various kinds of this scheme are exploited in poems or lyrics and they can be classified in two classes – regular and complex rhymes. The regular scheme practically means that each line utilizes identical patterns like for example AA, BB... The complex scheme, as its name indicates, uses more intricate patterns, for instance ABA, CBC... Additionally, there is also so called ‘internal rhyme’ which means that there is a word inside the line that rhymes with the word at the end of the same or different line.

Although there are various kinds of rhyme, according to Griffiths (2003) three types of repeated rhyme are usually used in popular songs. He names *full* rhyme, *near* rhyme and *non-rhyme* types and states that the majority of songs employ full and near rhyme. Full rhyme means that there are two words which are identical in the last vowel and all following sounds for example ‘flight’ and ‘fight’, ‘chain’ and ‘brain’, ‘soul’ and ‘pole’ and so on. Near rhyme is a kind of rhyme made by words that have similar but not the same sounds. It usually works in the way that either the consonants or the vowels are identical, these are, for instance, words like ‘eyes’, ‘light’; ‘years’, ‘yours’ etc. The last of the three rhymes is the non-rhyme type; here it is obvious from its name that there is no rhyming connection between the words. Another part of numerous songs which usually stands alongside the rhyme, but can also be in its opposition, is alliteration. Alliteration is the existence of the identical letters at the beginning of adjoining or nearby occurring words, for example "*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*".¹¹

3.3.2 Repetition

Repetition pervades our lives, arts like music and literature or other different subjects such as linguistics, history, poetry and many more. It is necessary in daily communication because we need to say particular words over again and again in order to produce comprehensible expressions and meaningful sentences. Among these words belong the function words (such as determiners, pronouns, conjunctions and so on) which are certainly repeated more often than the content words (such as nouns, verbs or adjectives). Kylesdal supports this statement when she says that "*In*

¹¹<https://allnurseryrhymes.com/peter-piper/>

coherent text, the repetition of content words is necessary for the text to make sense at all. They may not be repeated as frequently as function words, but they are special in that one does not necessarily find the specific words in all texts. Thus, the repeated content words have special significance to that exact text” (Kyllesdal 2012:7).

When the words repeat themselves in a paragraph or section of a text quite often, we should decode and comprehend the meaning of this recurrence because it is very likely that the author has some motive for using the repetition in his/her work. According to Kyllesdal (2012), words and expressions which appear more often can be significant for the subject or theme of discussions or texts, besides that, she is of the opinion that we do not usually realize that we use particular words repeatedly and that this repetition might mirror subconscious activity.

Davison (2008) clarifies that repetition can have many diverse literary roles. It can be used to make the thought of the text more understandable and easier to remember. It gives the key to the reading, comprehending or deciphering of works of literature. It is usually exploited in poems or songs to produce rhythm and focus concentration on the main thought of the composition. It stresses its importance throughout the whole text.

So, as it is indicated above, one of the most important characteristics of song lyrics is undoubtedly the exploitation of repetition. Repetition obviously belongs among the basic constituents of pop songs and as a scheme is actually relevant to most music. According to Kivy (1993), the repetition is not a significant but is even a defining feature of music. Repetition is usually used in lyrics to form an emotion and feeling or to stress the meaning and significance of particular words.

According to Baker (2015) lyrics are dependent on repetition because it contributes to making more sense to the recipient. Therefore, repetition is a fundamental attribute of lyrics. There is probably no song that does not utilize any repetition in its text at all. This recurrence of words over and over again can imbue a thought into the listener’s brain and the more words repeat themselves in lyrics, the more listeners may incline to like it.

In the structure of song, repetition does not only function as a reappearance of identical tones and words, but in addition to that it is exploited as a rhetorical tool which emphasizes various ideas or particular messages, for instance, highlights firm

suggestions or requests. Additionally, repetition is one of the methods enabling us to recognize the theme. Ryan and Bernard (2003) consider the recurrence of words to be the retelling of a theme. So the repetition of words contributes to forming topics within the texts, which indicates the fundamental function that repetition and theme have in the process of recognizing the thoughts, intentions and meanings of texts. Repetition may modify, spread, and intensify a theme.

According to Beasley and Chuang (2008) songs use repetition to emphasize the most important words. Repetition is usually positioned in the chorus part of lyrics and this part is regarded as a lyrical ‘hook’ since listeners often remember this passage, therefore ‘hooking’ them onto lyrics or song.

3.3.3 Theme

Theme can be described as the central point or subject matter of something, for example, some literary work. However, theme itself can be rather tricky because it may be expressed implicitly or explicitly. It is the idea or thought of the writer that he attempts to express and convey to his recipients. Theme repeats, permeates, and governs the main idea of various pieces of art such as literature and music as well. Besides the main theme, there can also be a minor theme which is, in contrast to major theme, less significant and does not usually last that long during the work (Bremond, Landy and Pavel 1995). Themes can describe some essential topics, try to provide messages or give, for instance, moral lessons from which people might or might not learn something.

Bremond, Landy and Pavel (1995) are of the opinion that theme belongs among literary constituents. However, it is not a phrase, expression, or clause, it is not any element of linguistic structure and there is no component in any work to which we can refer to as a theme and moreover, there are no particular features that control the creation or making of a theme. So whereas the idea or the theme of a text can be expressed directly, it normally appears indirectly in the work without any particular reference in the sentences or paragraphs. The theme is what the texts or any other literary pieces are about as a whole and it is not normally openly conveyed in sentences or other parts of the work.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) claim that the least difficult method of recognizing a theme is by finding the words that are repeated. Searching for words recurrence is significant to comprehend what our conversations are about. Words that appear and repeat more often may be prominent in the brain of the recipients. It is an easy method of searching for the themes. Moreover, repetition is quite easy to identify, particularly in songs and their lyrics. Ryan and Bernard (2003) say that if the particular word or topic appears more often in a work than others it is very possible that this word or expression is the theme of the text.

The range of various themes is quite extensive so I present the same as Saleem (2014) and these are: *“relationship, hope, happiness, patience, death, depression, freedom, marriage, destiny, worship, wealth, holiday, jealousy, optimism, loyalty, crime, faith, dream, peace, friendship, passion, regretful, sympathy, anger, family”* (Saleem 2014:73) and of course a number of others.

3.3.4 Figurative language

Pettijohn and Sacco say that *“lyrics tell stories and communicate with audiences in a manner similar to how people have conversations with each other (...) when accompanied with words, songs allow us to communicate emotions, tell stories, and even express our opinions and attitudes”* (Pettijohn and Sacco in Ashtiani 2015:297). Ashtiani (2015) follows this statement and says that this world of stories, beliefs, critics and more might be conveyed to listeners by means of special features belonging to the figurative language.

Figurative language ranks among the significant elements in our communication as well as among the important and efficient literary devices. *“Figurative language is any figure of speech which depends on a non-literal meaning of some or all of the words used”*¹² and *“the definition of figurative language is opposite to that of literal language, which involves only the ‘proper’ or dictionary definitions of words.”*¹³ According to Perrine (1992:61) figures of speech are *“any way of saying something other than the ordinary way.”* It means that when we say that words are literal they are used in their dictionary meanings whereas the

¹²<http://www.literarydevices.com/figurative-language/>

¹³<http://www.literarydevices.com/figurative-language/>

utilization of words as figures of speech is a non-literal way of speaking which we need to interpret to understand it.

Figurative language usually functions as an embellishment of our words and it can make our conversations and communication more attractive and intriguing. It transforms everyday and regular language into a more fascinating and interesting one with which we can express our intended meaning. A shared feature of different descriptions of figurative language is the non-traditional and indirect way of conveying emotions, intentions, views or beliefs (Ashtiani 2015).

Literature usually exploits these figures of speech a lot because they often add multiple colours or shades to the writings and without these means, literature would not be as fascinating and interesting as it is. With very similar intentions, figurative language is usually used by lyricists or poets when they want to express something in an uncommon and interesting way.

In this chapter I will describe some figures of speech because the analysis of song lyrics is sometimes a complex task and the interpretation of these literary devices is often necessary in order to understand the meaning of the lyrics. In addition to this, there is clearly more than only one way to analyse a song and knowledge of these figures can make it easier for students. Besides that, it opens a new world of how to express certain ideas to them.

3.3.5 Figures of speech

“A figure of speech is a phrase or word having different meanings than its literal meanings. It conveys meaning by identifying or comparing one thing to another, which has connotation or meaning familiar to the audience. That is why it is helpful in creating vivid rhetorical effect.”¹⁴ There are actually many stylistic devices and expressions that we can consider to be figures of speech. Various authors dealing with this topic present their classifications of these literary tools and as a help I will use here the same one that is used by Perrine. He classifies figurative language into these usual categories: Metaphor, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, allegory, metonymy, paradox, simile, symbol, hyperbole, irony and understatement (Perrine 1992).

¹⁴<https://literarydevices.net/figure-of-speech/>

3.3.5.1 A Simile

A simile functions as a comparison of objects or entities which are fundamentally dissimilar. There are usually words like ‘as’, ‘than’, ‘seem’, ‘like’, and many more which express the relation in a simile (Perrine 1992). “*It shows similarities between two different things.*”¹⁵ In addition to this, a simile sometimes begins with phrases like ‘as’, ‘like’, ‘so’, which indicate some kind of resemblance, for instance, as blue as, as hot as, as dark as etc.

Similes are quite common in daily communication, anywhere in literature as well as in song lyrics. Similes may be mistaken for metaphor, but in contrast to metaphor, similes emphasise the resemblance of two things through the help of already mentioned words like “as” and “like”. A metaphor on the other hand makes implicit comparisons.

For example, be “*as busy as bee*” is a simile and it means that someone is hardworking and is compared to bees because they are known to be busy.

3.3.5.2 A Metaphor

A Metaphor is connecting things which are fundamentally dissimilar (Perrine 1992). Metaphors indicate a relation or correlation between two different items which, however, have some similarities. It is an analogy which occurs when an utterance conveys one thing but actually means another. This relation incorporates two essentially dissimilar entities. “*It equates those two things not because they actually are the same, but for the sake of comparison or symbolism.*”¹⁶ Thus the literal understanding of metaphor would be probably quite strange and confusing. As it was already mentioned above, metaphor includes an implied comparison and it is also another figure of speech which is usually used every day in spoken or written language.

For example, the expression “*he has the heart of a lion*” means that the particular person is courageous and strong as a lion. If we thought about this metaphor literally it would mean that there is a lion’s, instead of human’s, heart inside the person and that would make no sense at all.

¹⁵<https://literarydevices.net>

¹⁶<https://www.grammarly.com>

3.3.5.3 Personification

*“Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing – an idea or an animal – is given human attributes.”*¹⁷ In other words, non-human entities are described as if capable of behaving and acting like humans. According to Perrine, personification provides common characteristics of people and other creatures, objects or concepts (Perrine 1992). Personification can sometimes also be called impersonation or incarnation.

For example, the sentence “The sky is crying” does not mean that the sky is able to weep which is normally a capability of humans. Therefore, it is possible to say that this sentence is a personification and that the sky has been personified.

3.3.5.4 An Apostrophe

An apostrophe is a figure of speech that conveys messages to somebody, who has passed away or is missing or is not a human being, in a way like the person or entity would be among living creatures or present and be able to respond to what was told to them (Perrine 1992). According to ‘literarydevices.net’ it means that *“a writer or speaker, using apostrophe, speaks directly to someone who is not present or is dead, or speaks to an inanimate object.”*¹⁸ The words are designed in such a way as if they would talk to someone or something that exists and can share and comprehend feelings.

This figure of speech is usually typical for literature, especially for poetry and I will use as an example an apostrophe from the sonnet with the same name as the apostrophe written by John Donne *“Death Be Not Proud”*. Here the author talks to death as if it was a human who is able to understand its states of mind or feelings.

3.3.5.5 Synecdoche

This figure is expressing the whole by actually saying only a part. It means that one designation is replaced by a different designation whose sense or meaning is somehow less related or connected to the first designation. The synecdoche is usually applied when we want to describe the whole by expressing a part. *“Synecdoche may also use larger groups to refer to smaller groups, or vice versa. It may also call a*

¹⁷<https://literarydevices.net/personification/>

¹⁸<https://literarydevices.net/apostrophe/>

thing by the name of the material it is made of, or it may refer to a thing in a container or packaging by the name of that container or packing."¹⁹

For example, when we say 'Chicago won the game' we actually mean that a sport team which has in its name 'Chicago' won the game not Chicago as a city, for instance the ice-hockey club Chicago Blackhawks won the game.

3.3.5.6 Metonymy

According to Perrine (1992), metonymy occurs when we utilize something that is somehow connected with the thing we mean. "*Metonymy is a figure of speech that replaces the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated.*"²⁰ We usually apply metonymy in the situation when we want to exchange one thing with a different thing that is actually related to the first thing. The best explanation is probably to give an example.

"Ireland decided to close all the schools". By the word 'Ireland' is really meant the government of Ireland. So, this metonymy means that the Irish government decided to close the schools not Ireland as a country or population or anything else.

There are, of course, a number of other figures of speech in the language; I have just presented the figures which I think are mostly a component of the song lyrics.

3.4 Similar and different characteristics of song lyrics and poetry

The printing press, one of the most important inventions in human history, had a significant impact on the proliferation of literature, and poetry was not an exception either. Before this discovery, poetry was spread among people in spoken word form, but then, it started to be mostly delivered to the eye, whereas lyrics are primarily transmitted to the ear. This seemingly simple reality is followed by numerous results.

One of them is that a poet can rely on the reader's ability to stop reading and return later or looking up words he/she does not understand during the reading. A lyricist can hardly depend on this. "*Since readers can pause and continue reading at*

¹⁹<https://literarydevices.net/synecdoche/>

²⁰<https://literarydevices.net/metonymy/>

their own pace, the poet can use quite complex language: less familiar words, ambiguity, multiple meanings, intricate metaphor” (Pence 2012:128). On the other hand, the style of a lyric may be less complex and more direct. Pattison says that “*the more complicated a lyric’s language, the more it limits its audience to those who understand complicated language easily. Not a majority*” (Pattison in Pence 2012:129). From my experience I know that there are not many people around me, the people that understand English obviously, who would care about lyrics much. They are usually captured by a song for other reasons than words such as a great singer, guitarist and so on.

Cone (in Frith 1996) is of the opinion that when poetry is delivered to the eye of the recipient it is more “open” to them with regard to both tone and pace while it is delivered to the ear because the readers themselves decide about “speed, emphasis, tone, accent and inflection.” Additionally, he mentions that during the reading the reader attempts to find the meaning of the poem, study it, reconsider the poem once more, read it again and again. The reading is the analysis and interpretation which is influenced both by the implicit sense of words as well as the words themselves. However, a performed poem does not make space for this adaptability because when it is connected with music we just cannot stop and think about the selected passages, we have to listen from the start to the end and grasp any information we can but on the other hand music may help the words to be more colourful.

It is, of course, up to every listener to decide how complex and deep the lyrics should be in order to satisfy them. In most cases it works as a trade-off. “*If the lyric is dense, the music is simple, and conversely*” (Pence 2012:129). For example, Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan, (two very successful and prominent songwriters, sometimes considered songwriters “poets”) usually utilize direct melodies, but their lyrics are deep and complex. As Pattison claims “*usually, something’s gotta give: if everything is dense, nothing much is clear and there’s limited communication – or at least, communication to a narrower audience*” (Pattison in Pence 2012:130).

Some lyrics can be written in a more complex language than some poems and on the other hand there can be some poems written in a more straightforward language than some lyrics. However, it is good to have in mind that lyrics possess additional modifiers that enrich the words whereas poems only exist on their own.

Another difference is the ending of individual lines in poems and songs. According to Pattison “*since the end of a line in poetry is a visual cue, a poet can end a line, yet let the grammatical meaning continue on the next line, creating tension, but not confusion*” (Pattison in Pence 2012:130). In terms of songs Pattison talks about something called sonic cue meaning the end of a melodic phrase. He then explains: “*because the song is aimed at the ear, if a lyricist tries to carry a thought into the next melodic phrase, it usually creates confusion, since there is a disconnection between the melodic roadmap and grammatical structure*” (Pattison in Pence 2012:130).

There are surely divergent strategies in compositions of poems and lyrics. Most poems usually depict some kind of journeys or stories, moving from thought to thought to the very end and in most cases the poetic compositions do not repeat their content. However, this does not apply to lyrics which rely deeply on repetition that we often encounter in the forms of a chorus or refrain.

Another difference is the option or space that a songwriter or poet can work with. “*Normal commercial songs, lasting from two and a half minutes to three and a half minutes, limit space dramatically*” (Pence 2012:132). A lyricist is usually, in contrast to a poet, constrained by this time and they have to adjust the length of the song lyrics, they should not be too short or too long. There are obviously exceptions among musicians who write some of their lyrics much longer; these are for example Bob Dylan, Nick Cave, and Don McLean and so on. The question of length is not usually problematic for poems; they can normally be as long as needed.

Contrary to poems, words of songs rely much more on regular rhythm, because they are connected to music rhythm. *Because a poem stands on its own ground, making its own rhythm and music, setting great poetry to music is about as futile and pointless as writing a lyric to a Beethoven piano concerto* (Pence 2012:138).

So in this section I have outlined some of the main differences and similarities that can exist between song lyrics and poetry. The language or style of song might look like poetry because the lyrics utilize some stylistic devices such as personification, metaphor etc. which both poems and lyrics have in common. However, distinctive rhythm, rhyme and sound organization of poetry are features

that make it characteristic, it means that great poems can exist on their own because of this full utilization of language. We could say that this complex and elevated use of these features is the music of poetry.

Lyrics mostly do not possess the mentioned constituents on their own, but they rely on music and its rhythm and melody. There are notes that give an additional colour to the words, associate with other notes and embody the rhythm of a song, which means that lyrics have a lot of extra help. “*A great poem, like a great symphony, stands its own ground. It contains everything it needs. So does a great song. But a great lyric, by itself, doesn't*” (Pence 2012:138). However, in contrast to this statement, I personally believe that there are lyrics which can be considered to be poems and therefore be a part of or be like poetry although they were intentionally composed to accompany music and thus be an element of a song. The reason, why I think it is possible for some lyrics to be understood as poems is indicated in the next chapter.

3.5 Relation between poetry and song lyrics

The composition of lyrics and the utilization of current verse beg the question as to if there is any relation between lyrics and poetry, a question that some prominent experts have been dealing with. For instance, Frith (1996) strictly does not consider lyrics to be poetry and he says that there is no further reason to examine them if we separate them from the performed conditions. According to him, fine lyrics do not have the components which form fine poetry, because if we extract them from their performed circumstances, it appears that the lyrics do not have any musical characteristics or on the other hand they carry such evident ones that they are absurd.

Rosselson (in Frith 1996) has similar opinion on lyrics as Frith and thinks that lyrics give us the opportunity to see songs as stories because every song is an implied narrative; it has a main character which is the performer who is in some kind of situation, with a particular attitude, and speaks to somebody. According to him, this is why songs should not be considered to be poems; because the only option how songs could be introspective is when “the ‘I’ in the song is a fiction,” and poems are about introspection while songs, in this regard, are “theatre”. He states that “*the*

language of song, like the language of drama, is not a literary language; it embraces the idioms and rhythms of everyday speech while looking for ways of enriching that language ... Song, like drama, is about invention of characters and stories; people – not issues, arguments, slogans abstractions or soul-reaching – are at its centre. And because people do not live in a vacuum, song, like drama, is at home in the public arena” (Rossleson in Frith 1996:170).

Griffith (2003) says that although sociologists may have some complex motives for distrust and evasion of the words of songs they at least try to approach lyrics in some way but musicologists, on the other hand, consider lyrics to be a foreign area, because according to Griffith they already struggle to persuade other colleagues to take pop music at least little seriously. However, he says that even more interesting is the neglect of literary criticism, where the acceptance of pop music words is rather negative.

I will now try to clarify why this literary omission might be the case. Frith (1996) diligently determined the complicated issue of the ‘poetry of pop’, as he calls it, to a specific time in the history of popular music. According to him the combination of the poetry of the beat generation and protest song which was brought by Bob Dylan and his subsequent career progression whereby he connected words, music and performance as a singer-songwriter had an impact on other musicians because then there appeared a seemingly infinite series of ‘song-poets’ such as Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, Paul Simon and many more.

Although there were several songwriters who admit themselves that Dylan has an influence on them and their creativity like Joni Mitchell (Hoskyns in Moore 2003:41) or Van Morrison who even considers Dylan to be the greatest living poet (Griffith 2003), not everyone shared this positive opinion, for example John Lennon hated any idea of this ‘poetry of pop’. Russell and Tyson present his quote that *“Dylan got away with murder. I thought, well, I can write this crap too. You know, you just stick a few images together, and you call it poetry”* (Russell and Tyson in Moore 2003:41).

In terms of the connection between song lyrics and poetry, it could be helpful to find out where the borders are between these two notions and if these borders can be blurred or not. Since the sixties many lyrics have been published alongside the

records and there are songwriters whose words of songs have come out in books such as Shane MacGowan, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Nick Cave or we can count among them Patti Smith and Leonard Cohen who started at first as poets and then became songwriters.

So, if we have in mind that poetry is usually read and delivered to the eye of the reader whereas lyrics are composed in the way that they can cooperate with music, the published books of song lyrics indicate that the border between song lyrics and poems is not as straight as it can appear at first sight. This publishing of books of lyrics suggests that many texts of songs can exist even without music and therefore they can be considered poems. It means that the borders between song lyrics and poetry are not always straightforward and can be sometimes blurred. This opinion is supported by Astor and Negus who say that “*Many collections of printed lyrics disregard strict boundaries between a song and a poem, echoing the roots of lyric poetry itself*” (Astor and Negus 2015:10).

Besides these above-mentioned unclear boundaries between the genres, Negus and Astor (2015) also state that poems and lyrics are blurred by the experience of the authors as well as the recipients and mention that many of songwriters and lyricists tried to write poetry as children or teenagers, which formed their foundations for their future. There are many interviews with various songwriters talking about skills and methods incorporated in composing songs and poems. I present here an interview made with singer and song-writer PJ Harvey who says this about writing lyrics:

“I work at words quite separately from music. I feel for myself that I can produce better words in that way, putting all of my concentration into making them work alone, without the support of music to begin with. So, in some respects working on them as poetry, although I don’t have the strengths that the poet does. But, even working towards them as poetry will produce a stronger set of words that I might take into a song. (...) Nothing fascinates me more than putting words together and seeing how a collection of words can produce quite a profound effect (Harvey in Astor and Negus 2015:11).

There are undoubtedly many songs with shallow lyrics that would not make any sense if the music was taken from them, and in this case there can hardly be any

comparison of lyrics and poems. This might be the reason why literary or poetry criticism does not focus on words of songs more because if there are lyrics that can exist without music and at the same time there are lyrics which are dependent on music it would probably be difficult to undertake any classification of them at all. Griffith (2003) comes with an interesting idea when he thinks that it is important to stop considering lyrics of popular songs as poems but rather think of them to be somehow poetic.

4 Songs' lyrics as a tool for improving the four language skills

Song lyrics have a great potential to be utilized as a helpful device in the language learning process. They can be used as a rich source of how to learn new vocabulary or various grammatical structures which are significant for language understanding and since almost all song lyrics have themes that are conveyed to listeners, they can also be used for students' discussions of these topics in a class. Besides that, the exploitation of song lyrics enables learners to practice and improve all four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The first of the skills to which I will pay more attention is listening.

4.1 Listening

Using song lyrics in classes is obviously associated with listening and thus it is important to focus on this topic a little bit more. Listening is necessary for students to acquire the language in a natural way in order to be able to communicate in English more fluently. It is significant to know about various listening techniques which can assist us to select suitable methods that may be helpful during the teaching of listening.

The Cambridge dictionary defines the term 'listen' as *"to give attention to someone or something in order to hear him, her, or it."*²¹ A similar description is given by Underwood who says that it is *"the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear"* (Underwood 1989:1). Thornbury (2006) thinks about it more as a teaching tool and considers listening to be the ability to comprehend verbal language and says that the word 'listening' is usually utilized as a designation of learning exercises which are constructed to help students to improve the mentioned skill. The practice of listening in classrooms is important because its goal is to prepare students to be able to understand the English language in life out of the school.

In terms of the already mentioned four language skills, listening and reading are usually regarded as passive skills, while speaking and writing are described as

²¹<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/listen>

active skills. However, not everyone sees the listening this way, according to Thornbury, listening “*is a goal-oriented activity involving not only processing of the incoming speech signals but also the use of prior knowledge, contextual clues, and expectations in order to create meaning* (Thornbury 2006:123). From his opinion it is apparent that he does not perceive listening as a passive skill. His idea is similar to the one that is brought by Broughton et al. (2003:65) who say that “*at first sight it appears that listening is a passive skill, and speaking is an active one. This is not really true, since the decoding of a message (i.e. listening) calls for active participation in the communication between the participants.*”

The process of teaching and learning these skills is not really passive so the skills are also called receptive and productive. “*The productive skills are speaking and writing, because learners doing these need to produce language*”²² and “*the receptive skills are listening and reading, because learners do not need to produce language to do these, they receive and understand it.*”²³

Facing the spoken language by students is one of the essential reasons why learners are exposed to particular listening exercises. Other reasons can be, for example, the presentation of various grammatical structures, new words, presenting genuine language or providing different themes for conversations.

4.1.1 The importance of listening

Although many people may normally think that speaking is the most significant part of language to acquire, they do not usually realize that before we learn to speak we have to be able to listen in order to respond or even react to others. It is almost impossible to form and say something appropriately without hearing it before. For instance, Chastain (1988) thinks that listening is a crucial ability and is even more significant than speaking in all kinds of verbal activities.

Listening is obviously not only about the comprehension of individual words but it is also important to be able to understand speakers of foreign languages in terms of what they actually intend to say by using certain words in certain contexts and at particular moments. So it is apparent that without an appropriate mastering of

²²<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/productive-skills>

²³<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/receptive-skills>

listening, learners will not be able to properly communicate or comprehend English speakers.

Another significance of listening is presented by Harmer who says that “*one of the main reasons for getting students to listen to spoken English is to let them hear different varieties and accents – rather than just the voice of their teacher with its own idiosyncrasies. In today’s world, they need to be exposed not only to one variety of English (British English for example) but also to varieties such as American English, Caribbean English, Indian English or West-African English* (Harmer 2007:97). This statement should be a convincing reason for the integration of listening to song lyrics in English lessons, because they are an almost endless source of various kinds of English. Besides that, the basic need for anyone who would like to study English is direct exposure to the language, and usage of proper songs for listening can provide it.

This is related to what Harmer names as “*authenticity*” (Harmer 2007:204) and explains that although the structure of an authentic text is not meant to be used for teaching, these kinds of texts are highly significant, because they elevate learners’ consideration and creativity and because the comprehension of such a text requires some knowledge about the topic that is introduced in the listening activity. Griffiee (1992) agrees with this opinion when he says that authentic song lyrics provide chances to bring authentic language into the lessons and they can serve as a substitute for the artificial language that can sometimes be found in course books.

Song lyrics which are not explicit and give students the option to interpret them in various ways are the most appropriate songs for the teaching process. Additionally, due to the common appearance of metaphors in lyrics, songs are means which contribute to sharing individual experiences and therefore they may support peoples’ conversations (Grünert 2009). Using authentic songs is also an aid for teachers because they can incorporate students into the teaching process by letting them choose and bring their favourite songs into the lesson and thus make the teachers’ preparation less difficult.

A problem that can emerge for teachers in using the songs in a class could be the lack of interest of the learners in the theme of the song. In this situation it is important for teachers to manage to present the selected topic, clarify the reasons for

particular exercises connected with the lyrics and to try to encourage learners that the theme of the song may provide them with, for instance, useful knowledge for other classes.

4.1.2 Stages of listening

There may be situations during the teaching process when listening can be too difficult or overwhelming for learners. It is the teacher's task to make sufficient preparations in order to make listening easier for students. There are usually three stages of listening which can be helpful for students to better understand what they hear. The stages are pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening and all of them will be characterized in more detail in subsequent subchapters.

4.1.2.1 Pre-listening

This phase functions as an opening to the listening and can be considered as an introductory part to the whole activity of listening. At this stage of listening the teacher should provide instructions to the students and be certain that learners know how to work during listening because the situation would look weird if the pupils did not get any further information from their teacher about what to do with the assignments related to the listening activity. According to Rixon (1986) it is significant for students to have a look at the tasks related to the while-listening stage and teacher should be sure that the learners comprehend the reason for doing these exercises. However, she also emphasizes the importance of not revealing too much information about the listening because it could influence or even ruin the subsequent exercises.

Another goal of the pre-listening activities is to attempt to motivate students for the listening. Motivating students perhaps belongs, particularly in terms of song lyrics, among the very important aims of this stage of listening because the learners should also be concerned with the text of a song and interested in its theme. Richards and Renandya confirm this when they say that two major goals of the pre-listening stage are to motivate and *“to provide sufficient context to match what would be available in real life”* (Richards and Renandya 2002:243).

There are various exercises that can be utilized during the pre-listening stage. I present here the examples listed by Underwood in her book called ‘Teaching

Listening'. The exercises can incorporate *“the teacher giving background information; the students reading something relevant; the students looking at pictures; discussion of the topic/situation; a question and answer session; written exercises; following the instructions for the while-listening activity; consideration of how the while-listening activity will be done”* (Underwood 1989:31). She adds that the mentioned activities can be helpful in focusing learners' minds on the theme and in stimulating previously acquired students' knowledge about the topic. There is also a possibility that during these activities, learners will utilize words which may appear in the listening itself.

4.1.2.2 While-listening

This is the stage when students deal with assignments and exercises during the listening itself. According to Underwood (1989) the primary purpose of the tasks of this stage is to extend students' abilities in extracting expressions from speech. However, Rixon (1986) says that it is not important to understand all the words but to get the general message of the listening and to obtain enough information which enables students to fulfil their assignments.

This stage of listening can be introduced, for example, by some questions associated with the topic or by teaching new words before the activity itself. However, the vocabulary can also be taught during the listening because the words are presented in the text and students can try to find out their meaning from the context.

It is important to select the activities for the while-listening phase carefully because as Underwood (1989) claims the exercises should not be too easy and boring for students and they should pay attention to more intricate tasks than just circling the true or false answers. According to her opinion it is not appropriate to compel the students to write too much because it would probably be difficult for them to write and listen simultaneously and that three words are normally enough to write during the listening. Rixon (1986) adds to this that the central attention is supposed to be paid to the comprehension of the listening and not to care too much about other language skills.

We can classify while-listening activities into two classes and these are listening for a specific part of the text or listening for the meaning or the essence of the message.

The first type is listening in which students have to pay attention to the details of what they hear. Learners usually have to focus on specific words, expressions, or linguistic structures. Perhaps the most utilized task concerning this kind of listening is gap-filling when learners fill the gaps in a text with particular words that they are able to hear.

In terms of the second type of listening, this means that students pay attention to the point of the talk like, for instance, to the theme of the listening, how many speakers there are or who is currently talking and so on. The aim of this kind of listening is to get the general meaning, it is a situation when learners do not have to catch all the words in order to fulfil their task and understand the central message.

4.1.2.3 Post-listening

Post-listening stage deals with the tasks that follow after the while-listening activities are done. According to Underwood (1989) exercises incorporated in the post-listening stage can be connected with already finished tasks from previous stages or on the other hand they do not have to be associated much with the listening. Rixon (1986) says that the information from listening is utilized by learners for various purposes at the moment when they are able to deal with supplementary work which is somehow connected with the listening.

These are the exercises whose goal is to exploit the acquired information from the listening and then work with it further in the activities like speaking where the learners can express their ideas and thoughts related to the theme of the listening. According to Rixon (1986) the extension of the specific topic of the listening should be part of this post-listening stage. It can happen that students will be interested in the particular theme and want to know more about it (Underwood 1989). Additionally these activities give students the opportunity to revise and exercise new words and grammar that appear in the text they heard. This stage of listening normally improves other language skills than listening.

4.2 Reading

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, reading belongs, along with listening, among the receptive skills. However, similarly to listening we cannot think of reading as a purely passive skill. Harmer points out that “*reading and listening also demand considerable language activation on the part of the reader or listener*” (Harmer 2007:265) and he adds that the comprehension of any text is impossible without completely employing our minds and without exploiting all of our language knowledge.

According to Thornbury (2006) people usually read to get some knowledge or information and to please themselves through the simple joy of reading. I think that in terms of the teaching process, students often only read to acquire knowledge, which enables them to answer teachers’ questions related to the particular text and the enjoyment of reading is overlooked which is probably a pity because the students could be more motivated to read for pleasure than for information. It is certain that motivation varies from learner to learner but in my opinion the use of song lyrics may be a good way of increasing students’ interest in reading a little, especially in their free time when they can, for instance, translate their favourite song lyrics. Besides that, I think that song lyrics can be utilized in developing and improving reading skills in a similar way to poems, articles, short stories or other similar kinds of texts.

The purpose of reading in class is usually associated with searching for the right answers and to get to know some information. In the case of song lyrics there is often an opportunity for us to learn something about meaning, linguistic constructions, pronunciation, and the written form of the language.

Besides the practice with lyrics at school, learners can also work on them at home as preparation for a lesson, especially in terms of the meaning of the song. They can spend more time thinking about what the lyrics mean on their own and bring their ideas and interpretations to the class where they can be possibly used as conversation topics.

In terms of reading and meaning, it is very probable that learners will not manage to read and get the meaning at the same time because they usually

concentrate on correct pronunciation more than the actual meaning of the text. Teachers could give students more time to practice both activities but it is probably better when they precisely choose what the point of the reading should be and plan the tasks correspondingly.

We usually distinguish extensive and intensive reading. I will describe these two kinds of reading in detail in subsequent subchapters.

4.2.1 Extensive reading

According to the Longman dictionary “*extensive reading means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read*” (Richards et al. 1992:133). This type of reading is usual in everyday life when we read books, magazines or generally long texts and we do not focus on particular details but on overall comprehension. Scrivener (2005) thinks that extensive reading influences language learning a lot. According to him reading often helps to enlarge language knowledge which apparently improves the general linguistic confidence that then enhances and has an impact on the abilities and skills in other linguistic spheres. However, he adds that this probably works when the texts are self-chosen and at the same time appropriate and interesting for the reader.

Although song lyrics do not belong among long texts and their meaning is not always important, in my opinion it is possible for learners to apply extensive reading to lyrics too (mainly in their free time). Most of the students enjoy listening to music and it is easy for them to find the lyrics of their favourite songs which they can (or do not have to) read during the listening, for example. If the difficulty of the lyrics corresponds to the learners’ achieved level of English, they can learn, by using this type of reading, the general ideas or messages of the songs they enjoy and that can motivate them to pay attention to other lyrics and thus they spend more time learning English.

4.2.2 Intensive reading

Unlike extensive reading, Longman dictionary says that “*intensive reading is generally at a slower speed, and requires a higher degree of understanding than extensive reading*” (Richards 1992:133). According to Harmer (2007) intensive reading is made to help learners improve their particular receptive skills in reading

which he calls “*reading for gist*” (skimming), “*reading for specific information*” (scanning), “*reading for comprehension*” and “*reading for inference (what is ‘behind’ the words)*” (Harmer 2007:283). He also claims that “*to get maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading*” (Harmer 2007:283).

A number of exercises which have been created to improve reading skills and speed are based on two already mentioned concepts by Harmer called skimming and scanning. I will describe these two concepts more in subsequent subchapters.

4.2.2.1 Skimming

According to definition skimming is “*a type of rapid reading which is used when the reader wants to get the main idea or ideas from a passage*” (Richards 1992, p. 322). Scrivener claims that skimming means “*read quickly and get the gist of a passage*” (Scrivener 2005:185). The example of skimming could, for instance, look like this: a teacher at school can ask learners a question like ‘Is this article about music or movies?’ and the students’ job would be to try to discover the correct answer fast; they could just look at some parts of the text to find out the answer without reading the whole passage. Scrivener (2005) also mentions that the idea of skimming deals primarily with searching for key topics and the main ideas of texts. In my opinion this type of reading can work with song lyrics as well. Students could quickly read the lyrics before the listening just to get an idea what the song will be about.

4.2.2.2 Scanning

Scanning, on the other hand, is described as a “*technique which is used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of a text or passage*” (Richards 1992:322). For instance, the teacher’s question could be ‘Who did Tom meet last night?’ and the learners’ task would be to find the specific person that Tom met in the text. Contrary to skimming, during the process of scanning students usually have to go quickly through the whole text looking for the most important words and indications which would help them to concentrate on smaller parts of the passage where they could possibly obtain the right answer. This kind of reading is possible to utilize during the work with song lyrics by

asking students to find some specific words that could be important to the meaning of the song.

Scrivener (2005:185) summarizes that “*skimming is a fast reading for key topics, main ideas, overall theme, basic structure, etc.*” and that “*scanning is a fast reading for specific individual pieces of information (e.g. names, addresses, facts, prices, numbers, dates, etc.).*”

4.3 Speaking

Besides the fact that speaking belongs among the most common means of people’s communication, Locke (2013) also regards the spoken language to be the most significant ability which learners need for learning at school. She says that it enables students “*to think and learn, understand and communicate, read and write, ask and answer questions, negotiate, reason and problem-solve, express their feelings, establish friendships, co-operate with others, and manage their own behaviour*” (Locke 2013:2).

It is obvious that both teaching and learning require speaking because during the language teaching process the teacher tries to convey something to students or vice versa. Moreover, as Locke (2013) suggests above, speaking also has an impact on our thinking. She thinks that speaking helps to make our thoughts clear by looking for the correct words when we want to express our ideas. Another important feature of speaking is its social character because students establish various kinds of relations with each other and with other people by means of spoken language.

Harmer (2007) talks about diverse aspects of speaking as well. He mentions that it is possible to make a distinction between the *transactional* and *interpersonal* role of spoken language. The transactional function is usually used in situations when people demand or provide some services or information, for instance during the trading of goods etc., while the interpersonal role of speaking is used in establishing and keeping relationships among people. In real life, most of our communication is interpersonal. Therefore, according to Richards (2013:208) “*language instructors should provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communicative behaviour about relevant topics by using learner-learner interaction as the key to teaching language for communication because communication derives essentially from*

interaction.” He adds that a potential method of motivating students to speak and interact more is to expose the learners to authentic language with the help of auditory and visual stimuli and with opportunities to use the language.

Harmer (2007) also makes a distinction between *interactive* and *non-interactive* conversation and besides that he additionally differentiates *planned* and *unplanned* types of speaking. Briefly explained, conversation between two people is an interactive conversation but writing a note with a message for someone is a non-interactive conversation. Planned speaking can be a prepared speech in front of an audience, whereas unplanned speech is for example a face-to-face encounter with someone in a restaurant.

In the process of planning activities it is important for teachers to think about each skill and their connections and interactions because in the class, just like in everyday life, nearly all assignments of any difficulty require the utilization of more than one skill. Richards (2013:209) claims that the activities should “*be based on authentic or naturalistic source materials; enable learners to manipulate and practice specific features of language; allow learners to rehearse, in class, communicative skills they need in the real world; and activate the psycholinguistic process of learning.*”

Baker and Westrup (2003) also name two other characteristics of speaking and these are accuracy and fluency. Teachers usually concentrate on learners’ mistakes and try to correct students as much as they can especially in terms of the wrong usage of grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. I think that frequent corrections of students’ spoken errors by a teacher can have a bad effect on their speaking fluency and maybe on their confidence to speak at all.

According to Harmer (2007) it is not very effective when a teacher interferes with the learners’ communication and speaking activities to warn them about mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation because it can discontinue the interaction and the activities may be moved back into the learning of linguistic structure or accurate meaning. Lynch’s opinion is that “*the best answer to the question of when to intervene in learner talk is: as late as possible*” (Lynch in Harmer 2007:143).

4.4 Writing

Richards (2013) considers writing to certainly be the hardest of all four skills to learn and says that besides the problem of production and systematization the thoughts, the ideas also have to be translated and transcribed onto a text that makes sense and can be read. Furthermore, the complexity of writing is also to be found in *“lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on”* (Richards 2013:303). Because of these given facts writing is not only hard to learn but it is also a difficult task for teachers to select appropriate methods of teaching writing.

In contrast to other language skills writing requires various different intellectual methods. Learners usually have more time for their preparation, reflection, and thinking as well as they can search for various options and solutions. According to Scrivener (2005) writing can quieten down a potentially loud classroom and it can transform the spirit and tempo of a lesson. It might be asked if there are effective tasks that can be helpful in teaching writing in class. Scrivener (2005) presents some stages that could be useful for learners within the process of improving their writing abilities. According to him learners can enhance their skills in writing when they are motivated and get help during the carrying out of preparatory phases prior to the final production of writing. He presents the idea that teachers can provide assistance to students to: *“choose a topic; choose a genre; get ideas; discuss ideas with others to get new perspectives; select between ideas, sequence ideas; make notes, diagrams, etc. to help organise ideas; find grammar and lexis suitable for the text”* (Scrivener 2005:194) and many more.

Seow presents a so called *“process approach”* that can be used in teaching writing. This approach consists of steps as planning, drafting, revising, and editing with the possibility of the insertion of stages like responding, evaluation, and post-writing (Seow in Richards 2013). All these mentioned steps are comprised of various activities that help students in learning particular writing abilities. However, Harmer (2007) mentions the disadvantages of focusing learners on a process approach to writing. The most serious drawback, according to him, is time because there needs to be time *“to brainstorm ideas or collect them in some other way; time to draft a piece of writing and then, with the teacher’s help, perhaps, review it and edit it in various*

ways before, perhaps, changing the focus, generating more ideas, re-drafting, re-editing, and so on” (Harmer 2007:326). Additionally, these steps can be supplemented with discussion among learners and their teacher. It is obvious that all of this is impossible to do for example in ten or fifteen minutes.

Richards (2013) mentions that it is significant during the process of teaching writing for teachers to make questions to themselves like for example what kind of writing they will actually teach or what they assume that the learners will do with what they learn.

As Scrivener (2005) points out the function of writing today is different than in the past and it is important during the selection of the tasks for learners to be sure that it has a beneficial effect. He adds that it is much more effective if the teacher chooses a topic concerning everyday situations for the students or alternatively their personal lives because it enables them to produce more creative writing than, for instance, writing a fictitious story. Writings inspired by normal life situations can be for example letters, reviews, advertisements, some kind of applications etc.

Harmer (2007) also makes a distinction between writing that is used for learning something and writing that is actually used when students are supposed to write a longer text. He names these types ‘writing-for-learning’ and ‘writing-for-writing’. The point of the first kind of writing is to give learners a task like for example ‘to write a few sentences in the present continues tense’, the goal of this type of writing is not to teach writing itself but to practice the present continues tense. On the other hand, when teachers want learners to write for example a story, letter or generally a longer text where they will use various language skills this is called writing-for-writing.

Writing practice that is connected with song lyrics is usually a hard task for learners because it often takes a lot of time and at the same moment it needs a lot of thinking from students. Although it can be an intricate work, the text of the lyrics may be utilized by students as a helpful tool during the writing. Songs often have some topics expressed by the words and in the case that the learners’ job is to write for instance a summary of the lyrics they can exploit already given words of the song to write it. Of course, this is not applicable only to a summary; students can also write a story based on the lyrics with the aid of the words of the song or they could

create a narration of the topic using, for example, different tenses to practice past, present, and future and so on.

Although writing is normally an individual matter, it may be a benefit in a classroom that learners can work and cooperate together, in groups for example, to create writing. It is possible that students would be able to think and suggest more ideas in cooperation with others than they would in working on their own. According to Harmer this is called cooperative writing and he says that “*writing in groups, whether as part of a long process or as part of a short game-like communicative activity, can be greatly motivating for students, including as it does, not only writing, but research, discussion, peer evaluation and group pride in a group accomplishment* (Harmer 2007:329).

5 Introduction to practical part

The practical part of this work consists of my own lesson plans which may serve the recipients of this thesis as a practical manual giving examples of using songs in lessons. The work with songs and their lyrics provides rich opportunities in teaching various areas of language which is presented in the subsequent pages. All the plans were made in accordance with the goals of The Educational Framework and they should also correspond with the students' achieved level of English.

The songs used in the thesis were chosen with the intention of helping students in acquiring the target language. The plans could be particularly exploited in teaching English in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades of lower secondary schools. They may also be used in the first two terms of high schools and grammar schools because the difficulty of these plans is somewhere between A1 and B1 levels of English, which corresponds with the standards in most of these schools.

Another intention of this work is to provide teachers with topics through songs for speaking activities and give them a possible methodology how to enhance students' reading literacy through discussing the meanings of the chosen lyrics. Besides that, the learners may find listening to songs more motivating for two reasons. First, songs evoke feelings and provide listeners with the rhythm and rhyme, two components which may help the students to remember and get language structures easier into their minds. Second, lyrics primarily written for broad English-speaking audience may become the first students' encounter with the real English text that is not modified for learning purposes. So, the students may find it encouraging getting through the lyrics that were not made primarily for schooling.

My general objective was also to find out to what extent my choice of song lyrics fits to the classes from the seventh to ninth grades and how helpful it is in the development of the students' knowledge of the language. For this reason, I was going to put my lesson plans into practice at lower secondary school Vodňanská in Prachatic. Unfortunately, at the time I intended to carry out my teaching research, all schools in the Czech Republic were closed because of the epidemic situation of COVID-19.

6 Lesson plans

6.1 Introduction

This section shows the specific lesson plans which focus on exploiting song lyrics as a useful tool in teaching the English language at school. The goal of the plans is to attempt to apply particular activities which are somehow connected with the song lyrics and to develop students' skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides the four basic language skills the lessons concentrate on practising and possibly improving subskills such as grammar and vocabulary.

However, the training of the linguistic components is not the only content of the plans. Since most textbooks for lower secondary schools include topics of various fields as a part of the English language teaching the lessons attempt to incorporate this cross-curricular aspect into the class as well. The intention of this inter-subject connection is to show that song lyrics can be a valuable source of cultural, historical and social information for students. This connection between various subjects is in accordance with The Educational Framework as well.

Each lesson plan contains the reasons why the particular lyrics are chosen for teaching in the classes and what constituents of the language are practised by these activities. I give clear instructions associated to the individual tasks how learners and teachers should proceed with their work. I tried to prepare all of these classes in a way that they concurred with the aims of The Educational Framework.

Most of the lesson plan time schedules are spent on the pre-listening and post-listening stages. The first mentioned stage of listening enables learners to find out what the class is going to be about and at the same time it provides students with possible beneficial motivation. In the case of the second phase of the listening, I see its significance in the possibility to share the students' current feelings about the lyrics, what they think about them as well as the opportunity to discuss their ideas with each other.

All of the worksheets used in this work were made by me and they can be seen in appendices at the end of the work. The song lyrics appearing in this work were taken from the website lyricsfreak.com. I also used some pictures in a couple of lesson plans to help students carry out the specific tasks. Besides that, I think that the

visual support may better introduce the topic to the class. The sources of these pictures can be found at the end of this work. All the songs used in this thesis can as well be found on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

6.2 Lesson 1 – Suzanne Vega – Luka

Introduction:

This lesson is intended for seventh grade students but it can certainly be used with higher classes as well. The song has been chosen for this class because one of the units of their textbook deals with the topic called ‘Problems’. The recommended vocabulary in the thematic plan of this grade is related to this theme as well. The lyrics of the chosen song concern child abuse problems thus this subject fits into the above mentioned lesson unit. The text of the song can possibly provide learners with additional vocabulary related to the topic.

Language aims:

All of the language goals of the lesson correspond with the curriculum and expected outcomes for seventh grade according to The School Education Programme. The lesson focuses primarily on the development of students’ listening and speaking skills. The plan also pays attention to the practice of the subskills such as pronunciation and spelling. It helps to practise listening comprehension followed by a discussion to check how learners understand the given text. The aim of the last activity is to practise their speaking skills as well as their ability to work in a group.

Apart from the above mentioned language aims the lesson should also stimulate communicative and learning competences in accordance with The Educational Framework. The plan aspires to develop students’ creativity and logical thinking as well as their ability to solve problems related to the assigned work tasks. Additionally, the activities should lead to more spontaneous conversation between the students.

Cultural note:

The song Luka was written by an American singer and songwriter Suzanne Vega. She started her career in the eighties of the twentieth century and she still produces music today. The song Luka was recorded in 1987 and it has become her biggest hit and at the same time it reached the highest position in the various music charts compared to the other songs that she has written.²⁴ As it was mentioned above

²⁴[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luka_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luka_(song))

the lyrics are focused on the issue of child abuse. The author herself said this about the song in 1987:

“A few years ago, I used to see this group of children playing in front of my building, and there was one of them, whose name was Luka, who seemed a little bit distinctive from the other children. I always remembered his name, and I always remembered his face, and I didn’t know much about him, but he just seemed set apart from these other children that I would see playing. And his character is what I based the song ‘Luka’ on. In the song, the boy Luka is an abused child – In real life I don’t think he was. I think he was just different.”²⁵

Pre-listening activities:

Time: 20 minutes

Goal: to learn the pronunciation of homophones, i.e. words different in spelling but with identical pronunciation

1. The teacher writes the words “wait”, “weight”, “rain”, “reign” on the board and they explain the similarity of the pronunciation and at the same time they describe the difference in the meaning and spelling of these words to the class.

Then they give students these instructions:

- *T: Work in pairs. Think of words with similar features as the ones on the board. Write the words down in your exercise book.*
2. Students will try to come up with and write down as many words as they can with comparable attributes to the ones they can see on the board. Then they are asked:
 - *T: Let’s check out your answers. What words did you write down?*
 - *S: Son – Sun*
 3. The learners reveal their answers to the rest of the class. The teacher corrects the wrong answers. Subsequently students will get the song lyrics that are cut into pieces which comprise verses where the last words rhyme and the learners’ job will be to put the rhyming verses together. Instructions:
 - *T: You have pieces of paper with some lines. Put the pieces in order so that the last words of the lines will rhyme together.*

²⁵<https://www.songfacts.com/facts/suzanne-vega/luka>

- *S: Put together the lines according to the instructions. For example “...I live on the second **floor**” and “...I think you’ve seen me **before**”*
- Possible problems: Although I do not expect students to have much trouble finding the rhymes in a text that is not linguistically complex, some of them may need more time to do it. The teacher can ask stronger students to help them and tell the students there is no need to work out the order of the lines of the song. It is going to be the subject of the listening activity itself.

Through this activity learners practise both their pronunciation ability when they have to look up the words that rhyme and at the same time they train their reading skills because they need to read individual verses and compose them into rhymes that might make sense.

While-listening activity:

Time: 10 minutes

Goal: practice of listening and reading skills

1. The teacher will play the whole song and the learners will try to put the pieces of paper of the song together. The song will be played twice.

Instructions:

- *T: Now I will play the song. You will hear it twice. Your task is to put the pieces of paper in the order that you will hear during the listening.*
2. When the students have finished they will read it aloud. The parts of the song that may not be fully understood by some learners should be explained.

Instructions:

- *T: Let’s read the lyrics to check if you put them in the correct order.*
- Possible problems: When reading unknown text students may have some pronunciation problems. So, it is worth listening to crucial parts of the song again. The teacher can let weaker students read those parts where they make pronunciation mistakes and consequently play the particular part and ask them to repeat it.

Post-listening activity:

Time: 15 minutes

Goal: speaking practice, text comprehension

1. Students will get the worksheet with three pictures. During the distribution of the worksheets the teacher writes on the board the words “abuse”, “violence”, “domestic violence”, “bullying” or “social network bullying”. Students get instructions:
 - *T: Look at the pictures and think about them for a minute. Student X please describe picture A. What do you see in the picture?*
 - *Student X describes the picture.*
2. After the description of all pictures by students they are asked:
 - *T: Look at the board and try to match the words with the appropriate picture.*
 - *S: Matching the pictures with the words. For example, picture A with social network bullying.*
 - *T: Correct. Does anyone know what social network bullying mean?*
 - *S: Give a translation of the term*
 - Possible problems: Students might not know how to describe the pictures correctly so the teacher may tell them to use the phrase there is/there are and the present continuous tense.
3. In case that nobody knows the meaning of the words on the board the teacher can translate them. Subsequently learners are instructed to form groups and look back at their worksheets. Instructions:
 - *T: Make groups of four. Look at the worksheet. There are questions related to the song lyrics. Think of these questions, discuss them together and try to answer them. Use the lyrics as a help.*
4. When the groups are finished, they share their ideas with each other and the teacher can ask other complementary questions connected with the topic. Instructions:
 - *T: Let’s check your answers to the questions. Group 1. Who is the song told by?*
 - *Group 1: answers.*

- Possible problems: Some students may find some of the questions on the worksheet rather difficult to discuss at the beginning of the activity and they will perhaps need a little help with conversation. Teacher can go around the groups and ask the students some of the questions during their work to prompt them to speak. They can provide guided questions to aid students to find out the right answer.

The point of these goal directed questions is to make students think about and work out how the victims of violence feel and why. One of the educational outcomes of this activity is to tell students in a thoughtful way of the importance of confiding in somebody when they find themselves in seemingly hopeless situations or not to blame themselves if they happen to become an object of targeted violence.

6.3 Lesson 2 – Bob Dylan – Forever Young

Introduction:

Another song that I have selected to work with in classes is called “Forever Young” written by Bob Dylan. The song is suitable for the students of the ninth grade. During my practice at lower secondary school I found out that one of the chapters in their English textbook called “Be careful what you wish for” paid little attention to the wish sentences. Based on this I made a decision to follow up this topic with the use of this song.

Language aims:

As I mentioned above the song used for this plan was selected with regards to particular grammar. However the plan does not focus only on that. I chose to use this song to show students that it is possible to express a wish for someone using the modal verb ‘may’ as well. However, since the expression of wish with the help of the verb may is not used as often as a wish clause in everyday communication, I want students to simply passively know this expression. So, one of the lesson aims is to train the expressions with the utilization of a wish clause and to acquaint students with the possibility of expressing a wish with the verb may.

Another goal is vocabulary, word order and parts of speech practice. These linguistic components are crucial in acquiring the ability to properly communicate in the target language. Additionally, the plan focuses on practising listening and

speaking skills. The aim is that the learners will comprehend the content of the lyrics as authentic material at the end of the lesson. The expected outcomes are that the students will understand the given authentic text and that they will be able to use the words and sentences related to the topic in communication. These outcomes also correspond with the demands of The Educational Framework.

Besides the language goals the lesson attempts to develop students' key competences as well. It pays attention to improving learners' learning and communicative competences in accordance with The School Education Programme.

Although it is not part of this lesson, the lyrics may also be used for pedagogical purposes because the lyrics contain words like righteousness, justice, kindness, courage, honesty or love which are usually considered to be good human characteristics, which is a positive side effect of the activity.

Cultural note:

Bob Dylan is a renowned American singer song-writer, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2016, and one of the most influencing figures in the music of the twentieth century. Many of his song lyrics include some social, political or literary messages and hints. His name is closely connected with American culture. The song 'Forever Young' was written in 1973 and it is a track from Dylan's 'Planet Waves' album. He mentions in the notes connected to this album that he was thinking about his son when he was composing this song and his intention was not to be sentimental.²⁶

Pre-listening activity:

10 minutes

Goal: to practice a wish clause

1. The teacher writes on board a title "make a wish" and structures "*I wish I did...*" "*I wish I had...*" "*I wish I were...*" underneath the title and instructs:
 - *Write down your three wishes using the structure that you can see on the board and then tell them to your friend. You can tell them why you want the wishes to be fulfilled.*

Selected students are then asked to say what their friends' wishes are. For example:

²⁶[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forever_Young_\(Bob_Dylan_song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forever_Young_(Bob_Dylan_song))

- *T: Student X what are your friend's wishes? What does he/she wish?*
- *S: He/she wishes he/she had a new computer. He/she wishes he/she had good grades in English etc.*

Students should already know how to use a wish clause from previous classes. The activity above deals with this grammar as a revision of prior lessons which were concerned with this topic because the learners will work with the wish clause further in this lesson plan. In case students are not sure how to use this grammar, the teacher will explain it to them before the activity mentioned above. After that, students carry out exercise number one.

While-listening activity:

15 minutes

Goal: practice of parts of speech, word order, listening and reading skills

1. Students get a worksheet with the words from the song and a chart with three columns. Each of these columns will have the designation of selected part of speech, particularly “nouns”, “verbs” and “adjectives”. The learners’ task will be to put the given words into the correct columns.
 - *T: Put the words from the box into the right column according to what part of speech they are.*

The exercise is subsequently checked by calling out each student to say one word from the box and say what part of speech it is. Additionally they also translate the word into Czech so the teacher knows that the students understand the meaning.

- *T: Student X what part of speech is truth?*
- *S: Truth is a noun*
- *T: Correct. What does it mean in Czech*
- *S: Pravda*
- Possible problems: The learners might not be sure which parts of speech “noun”, “verb” and “adjective” are so it can be helpful to translate these terms into Czech. It is probable that not all the students will know the meaning of each word but it is not so important because at the end of this activity all the words will be translated. However, if the teacher wishes they can instruct the learners to use the given dictionaries to carry out their task.

2. Students are subsequently divided into groups. They work with the lyrics on the same worksheet. Their task is to decide what part of speech should be in the gaps in the lyrics according to their knowledge of word order.

- *T: Make groups of four. Look at the lyrics on the worksheet. There are some gaps in the text. In the groups decide what part of speech fits each gap according to the word order. Mark the gaps with coloured pencil according to the part of speech. Do not write anything in the gaps yet. Just mark them with a coloured pencil.*
- Possible problems: The students are divided into groups because this activity would be probably difficult for individuals. However, it could happen that the learners will have problems anyway so the teacher should go around the class and help the students when choosing the particular parts of speech and their correct position in the lyrics.

After finishing this exercise the groups are asked for answers and the teacher corrects them if necessary.

3. The song is played and students fill in the gaps with words that they heard during the listening. If the learners do not complete the lyrics in the first listening the song can be played once again.

- *T: You will listen to the song 'Forever Young'. Fill in the gaps in the lyrics with the words that you will hear. All needed words are in the box next to the lyrics.*

The checking of the completion of the lyrics is done after listening through reading the text aloud so the students can practice their pronunciation.

Post-listening activity:

20 minutes

Goal: practice of the wish clause, passive knowledge of expressing a wish with the verb 'may', speaking practice

1. The students are told to look at the lines of the lyrics where the verb may is used. All these sentences express a wish using the verb 'may'. The learners' task is to form sentences from these lines in which they will use the verb 'wish'. This activity should help students to practise a wish clause and at the

same time they learn that it is possible to express a wish by a different way than only with the help of a wish clause.

- *T: Look at the lyrics of the song. There are lines containing the verb may. Transform these lines into sentences using a wish clause. It is the clause that you used at the beginning of this class.*
- *S: Form the sentences using a wish clause.*

After some time, the students from various groups are asked to reveal their answers.

- *T: Student X, read the first line from the lyrics using the verb may and tell me how you transformed it into the sentence with the wish clause.*
 - *S: May God bless and keep you always. I wish God always blessed and kept you.*
 - *T: Yes, that is correct. Student Y, please do the same with another line in the lyrics.*
2. The students stay in the groups during this stage of the lesson. Their assignment is to try to give the answers to the given questions by discussing their ideas together.

- *T: Look at the last exercise on your worksheet. There are some questions connected with the song. In groups, answer the questions. Discuss your ideas together.*
- These are the questions concerning the song:
 - How old do you think the songwriter is?
 - Do you like the song? Why? Why not?
 - What is the song about? Does it have any message?
 - Who do you think the singer is talking to?
 - What does the singer mean by the expression “Forever Young” in this song?

Although I think that the lyrics are not difficult, I hold the view that many learners would have problems to work out the answers alone so the students should talk about the song in groups. It should be easier for them to come up with some opinions when they cooperate together than working individually.

After some time the groups will express what they think and during this conversation the teacher may ask further questions according to what the learners say and try to help them if they have problems in answering any of the above mentioned questions.

6.4 Lesson 3 – The Beatles – In My Life

Introduction:

For this lesson I have decided to choose the song “In My Life” by The Beatles. This song can be taught in the seventh grade of the lower secondary school. There are several reasons for this selection. The first one is the theme of the lesson which is in accordance with the topics determined for this class by the thematic plan. The Project 3 textbook, intended for seventh grade, contains topics like, ‘places’, and ‘experiences’ and my aim is to somehow combine these topics into one lesson with the help of the lyrics of this song. Additionally, I also plan to add ‘travelling’ topic to these themes because I believe that it is closely connected with them. At the same time this theme corresponds with The School Education Programme for lower secondary school pupils.

Language aims:

In terms of the language goals it focuses mainly on the practising listening, speaking and writing skills of the students. Besides that attention is also paid to grammatical structures, in particular to the selected tenses. Students should already know the tenses and the activity serves as a short practice and revision of these tenses. Additionally the lesson provides an option for learners to learn and recall some new vocabulary from the lyrics.

The activities taking place in this plan also contribute to the developing of various key competencies defined by The Educational Framework. One of them is problem-solving competency when the students have to apply their language experience, knowledge and skills to put the song lyrics into the correct order to complete the particular activity. Besides this, the learners get an opportunity to convey their thoughts both in speaking and writing, listen to others’ opinions, and respond to them in discussion which helps them to improve their communication competency.

Cultural note:

As it was mentioned above the song ‘In My Life’ was written by The Beatles. It was recorded in 1965 and it is a part of the Rubber Soul album which was produced in the same year.²⁷ The Beatles are regarded by a lot of people as the most famous band in history and they have become an inseparable part of British culture.

Pre-listening activity:**15 minutes****Goal:** practice of speaking skills

1. The lesson starts by telling the learners the theme of the lesson. It will be travelling, places and experience. The teachers can reveal some of their own experiences and places they really like. For example:

- *T: Today’ lesson topic is travelling, places and experiences. I personally like travelling. I have been to different cities in Europe. My favourite place that I have visited is Paris. I was there with my friends in summer two years ago. I like it because there are many galleries that I have visited. Beside that I saw some historical sights. I was there for a week and I had a really great time.*

2. The Students subsequently get a worksheet with questions connected with the travelling. The learners work in pairs. They practise their speaking skills by talking about travelling with the help of the given questions. The teacher instructs:

- *T: Now you will work in pairs. Look at the worksheets you get. There are some questions related to travelling. Ask and answer these questions with each other. You can write notes so you will not forget your friend’s answers*

The teacher then asks the students for the replies of their friend:

- *T: Student X tell me your friend’s travelling experience. Does he/she like travelling? How often does he/she travel? What countries has he/she visited?*

²⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_My_Life

- *S: He/she likes travelling. He/she often travels in summer. He/she likes travelling with parents. He/she has been to Germany, Austria and Slovakia.*
- *T: Ok, well done.*
- Possible problems: It may happen that not every student will understand all the questions so it is good to let the selected learners read and translate them to Czech before the activity itself. It is recommended that the teachers form the pairs themselves because if there are two weaker students together they might struggle with the activity and their conversation could stagnate.

While-listening activity:

15 minutes

Goal: practice of listening and reading skills

1. The students work with the already handed out worksheets. They work in pairs. There are jumbled lines of the lyrics. Their task is to put the verses of the song in the correct order during the listening.
 - *T: Look at your worksheet. There are song lyrics but their lines are not in the correct order. Quickly, read the text for yourselves.*
 - *T: Work in pairs. I will play the song and you put the lines in the correct order. You will hear the right order during the listening. Number the lines 1, 2, 3 etc. according to the listening. I will play the song more than once so you have enough time to finish it.*
2. After the listening each student is asked to read and translate one line of the lyrics into Czech. The translation is done to know that the students understand the lyrics. At the same time the words that the learners do not know are translated and the students write them into their vocabulary books. This activity also checks the correctness of the previous exercise, learners' listening skills and at the same time it practises learners' reading ability. During the reading the teacher also checks and corrects the students' pronunciation.
 - *T: Now we will check the order of the lines in the lyrics together. Student X please read the first line.*
 - *S: Reads the correct line.*

- *T: Well done. Student Y, read another line.*
- Possible problems: Students might not be sure how to work with the text of the song when putting the verses into the right order. The teacher tells them to number the lines 1, 2, 3 etc. according to what they hear in the song. Since the learners work in pairs the teacher may recommend them that each of them can concentrate on selected stanzas.

Post-listening activity:

rest of the lesson and homework

Goal: practice of tenses, writing practice

1. Since there are various tenses in the song lyrics students are asked to identify the verses where any tense is used. They are also instructed to explain why the particular tense is used.

- *T: Various tenses are used in the lyrics. Find and underline the lines where any tense is used. Try to identify what tense it is. After that, describe why the tense is used.*

After a while the selected students read the lines with the tenses that they found.

- *T: Student X. Please read any of the lines where a tense is used, tell me what tense it is and explain why it is used.*
- *S: In my life, I've loved them all. It is present perfect. It means that the singer started to love them in the past and he still loves them now. Something that started in the past and it still continues.*
- *T: Yes, that is correct*

2. Students are afterwards asked to come up with sentences using each of the tenses that were in the song.

- *T: Now open your exercise books. Write down one sentence for every tense that we have just identified. It means for example: I have been to China (Present perfect), I am learning English right now (present continuous), I will get better at English (future tense, promise) etc.*

Students are subsequently asked to read their sentences.

- *T: Student X. Please read your sentences.*

- *S: I am reading a book. I will never leave you. I have lived in Prague all my life. I left school three years ago.*
 - *T: Great. Well done.*
 - Possible problems: It may happen that this activity will be difficult for some weaker students. In that case the teacher may tell the students that they can cooperate in pairs and come up with some sentences together. It should not be hard to carry out this task for two learners working together.
3. Students are told to think of a place (experience and people or feelings connected with it) from past or present and write down a short story. The goal of this task is to practise students' writing skills and creativity. The teacher can provide questions which may help students during their writing. The learners can also use some of the structures from the song lyrics like "*There are places I'll remember...*" or "*I still can recall...*" and so on.
- *T: Open your exercise book. Write down a short story related to some place, people and your experience. The text should have between five to eight sentences. If you want you can use these questions as a help:*
 - What is your favourite place?
 - Why do you like this place?
 - Is that place related to your past or present?
 - When was the last time you visited this place?
 - Do you usually visit this place with your friends or parents?
 - Can you describe this place?

It is very probable that not all the learners will manage to complete the last task until the end of the lesson so they can finish it as homework. However it would be good to collect all the writings after some oral presentation and correct the students' spelling.

6.5 Lesson 4 – The City of Chicago

Introduction:

For the next lesson I have chosen the song called ‘The City of Chicago’ written by an Irish singer-songwriter called Christy Moore. This lesson is intended for students of the ninth grade of lower secondary school. It tries to link two subject areas, English and history. This cross-curricular issue corresponds with The School Education Programme of lower secondary school. Besides that the Project textbook, usually used at these types of schools, has at least one chapter dealing with some historical events in the part called ‘English across the curriculum’. In terms of this aspect the topic of the song achieves the interconnection between the subjects of English and history.

Language aims:

The plan has various language aims. It focuses on practising language skills such as listening, reading and speaking and it is arranged to provide new vocabulary. Another goal is to practice irregular verbs which may be a problematic part of the language to acquire for some students. All these skills and subskills correspond with the goals of The Educational Framework as well as with the thematic plan of the lower secondary school for the ninth grade.

In addition to the above mentioned goals the lesson also intends to develop selected key competencies in accordance with The Educational Framework. The class concentrates on improving the learners’ communication competency. The students will have to understand a particular type of English lyrics and then reflect on the meaning of the text in a speaking activity. This is also connected to social and personal competency because the learners will have to cooperate in groups and with the teacher as well.

Cultural note:

Christy Moore, the author of ‘The City of Chicago’, is a folk musician who started his career in the second half of the twentieth century and he has remained dedicated to the music until now. His compositions are often influenced by traditional Irish songs. The story of the song ‘The City of Chicago’ refers to the mid nineteenth century in Ireland when a lot of Irish people emigrated to the United

States of America because of the so called Great Famine which happened between 1845 and 1849.

Pre-listening activity:

20 minutes

Goal: improving of vocabulary and speaking skills

1. The lesson begins by giving students a worksheet. At first the learners are given a minute to take a look at the pictures on the worksheet and they subsequently describe them. While the learners are examining the pictures the teacher writes on the board words “famine” and “migration”.
 - *T: There are two pictures in your worksheets. Look at these pictures and think of what you can see in them for a minute.*
 - *T: Now, student X, please describe the first picture.*
 - *S: There are some people. They are very thin.*
 - *T: Ok, great. Why do you think they are thin?*
 - *S: They probably do not have any food to eat.*
 - *T: Yes that is correct.*

The teacher can continue to ask further questions related to the picture. The second picture is subsequently described in a similar way by the selected learner. Afterwards the students try to match the words on the board with the correct picture

- *T: Please, look at the board there are words “famine” and “migration”. Student X, can you match the words with the pictures on your worksheet?*
 - *S: Famine is the first picture and migration is the second one.*
 - *T: Yes, well done. Can someone translate these two words into Czech?*
 - *S: Famine means hladomor and migration means migrace.*
2. In the next activity, students will work in groups. There are some definitions of words in the worksheet. The learners will try to find out together and write down what words are described with the help of dictionaries (the given definitions were taken from the Cambridge Dictionary). Instructions can be like this:

- *T: Make groups of four. Look at exercise two. There are definitions of some words. Think of these descriptions and try to come up with ideas what words these definitions describe. You can use dictionaries as a help.*
 - *T: Group one. What word do you think is described by the first definition?*
 - *S: It might be an emigrant?*
 - Possible problems: This activity may take longer because it is not easy to come up with the right words according to their definitions. The teacher can help the students by going round the class and giving them some words from which they can choose. In case the task is too difficult the teacher can write the words on the board and let the students match the words with the descriptions on the worksheet (the correct words are immigrant, emigrant, exile, fugitive, hunger, famine).
3. When this activity is finished and checked students are asked to look at the questions in exercise three, think of them and discuss the possible answers. Subsequently the groups are called on by the teacher to reveal their answers.
- *T: Look at the questions in exercise three. You will have five minutes to think of the possible answers together. You can write them down to remember them. You can also use the words from exercise two as well as your dictionaries.*
 - *T: All right. Anyone from group 3, please read the question and tell me your answer.*
 - *S: Why do you think that people usually leave their country and home today? We think that people leave the country to get a better job or because they have a family abroad. They can leave the country because they do not like the political situation as well.*
 - *T: Yes great job. Does anyone have any other ideas?...*

While-listening activity:**15 minutes****Goal:** irregular verbs, vocabulary, practice of listening skill

1. During the while-listening stage students will work individually again. Their first activity will be to put the given verbs into the correct form of the past tense.
 - *T: Look at the verbs in the box on your worksheet. Write the past simple forms of these verbs. For example come – came or have – had....*
 - *T: What is the past form of the verb 'begin'?*
 - *S: Began*
 - *T: Yes correct and what is the past form of bring?...*
 - Possible problems: If the teacher sees that the learners have difficulties in these verb transformations he/she can revise the most frequent irregular verbs. In addition to this they can come up with verbs which are not in the worksheet and ask the students to give the correct forms of these verbs as a quick exercise.
2. Another activity for students is to match some words from the song with the given definitions. Afterwards the learners' answers are checked.
 - *T: Now you can see that there are some highlighted words in the song and there are some descriptions of them next to the lyrics. Try to match these words with the correct definition next to the song.*
 - *T: What definition did you match with the word shadow?*
 - *S: An area of darkness, caused by light being blocked by something.*
 - *T: Yes well done and what definition...*
 - Possible problems: If students have problems with understanding the words and the definitions they can exploit their dictionaries to help them. They may translate the words and find the matching descriptions next to the lyrics. This will also help them to develop their ability to use dictionaries.

Both of these activities are done quickly just right before the listening itself so the students can better understand the lyrics.

3. The teacher will play the song and learners will fill the gaps of the lyrics with the verbs in the past simple forms from the previous exercise. After the listening, the lyrics are read and translated by students to check the activity and understanding of the lyrics.
 - *T: Now you will listen to the song called The City of Chicago. You can see the lyrics of this song on your worksheet. There are some gaps in the text. Fill in these gaps with the words you will hear in the song. All of these words are the past forms of the verbs from the previous exercise.*
 - *T: Okay, now you will read and translate each line one by one. Student X, start reading please.*
 - *S: In the City of Chicago – Ve městě Chicagu*
 - *T: Correct, next one...*

Post-listening activity:

10 minutes

Goal: practice of speaking skill, comprehension of the song lyrics

1. During this activity students will work in groups. In the worksheet there are questions dealing with the meaning of the song. The learners discuss them and cooperate in order to find out the answers to these questions. Then they present their ideas.
 - *T: Please make groups of four again. Look at the last exercise on your worksheets. There are questions related to the song lyrics. Cooperate and speak together in the group and try to answer the questions. You have five minutes.*
 - *T: Now student X from group four, read the first question and tell me your answer.*
 - *S: Read the question and present the group's answer.*
 - Possible problems: In case that the learners have problems to discuss the given questions the teacher can go around the individual groups and help them by asking some questions related to the theme.

During this activity the teacher can provide further information about the circumstances of the historical situation in Ireland. At the same time he asks further questions and tries to develop and continue the discussion on the given topic.

6.6 Lesson 5 – Tom Waits – Shiver Me Timbers

Introduction:

I mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis that songs provide various opportunities in English language lessons. One of them gives teachers the possibility to exploit song lyrics for poetic and literary purposes. In this lesson I want to give an example how to work with a song which has poetic features. That is why I decided to choose a song called “Shiver Me Timbers” written by American singer-songwriter Tom Waits.

To support my thoughts I am going to present some features that the given song may have in common with poetry but it does not mean that the song should be perceived as a pure poem.

The figurative language which appears in this song is usually characteristic of texts that aspire to be considered as poetic. Although it is not an obligatory aspect, rhymes often occur in many poems and these lyrics as well contain some rhyming passages. Just like poetry opens the door to more than only one interpretation, the “Shiver Me Timbers” surely provides a chance to be analysed and comprehended in more than only one way. The main information or the message of the song is rather implicit in some sections so people or students in our case can play with various interpretations. Another reason why to work with this song is its obvious link to literature itself and it opens the door to the rich world of reading classics which is a bit alien to many students nowadays. This may be a way to push it inconspicuously closer to them.

This song can be taught in the ninth grade of lower secondary school. It is certainly too difficult for lower classes. However, it might be slightly difficult for the students of the ninth grade as well but I believe that with the teacher’s help the learners can manage to carry out all the activities which help them to develop better comprehension of the written text.

Language aims:

In terms of language aims, this class focuses mainly on developing students’ basic skills such as speaking, reading and listening. The lesson also attempts to develop students’ communication competency in accordance with The Educational

Framework. The activities connected with this plan enable the learners to express their thoughts, listen to other ideas and reply to them in a suitable way and encourage them to take part in debate. Furthermore the tasks try to work on the learners' ability to comprehend a literary type of text and utilize its understanding in communication. Contrary to previous lesson plans this one does not attempt to improve any students' subskill. It emphasises the cross-curricular aspect which gives the learners an opportunity to learn something new about the subject of literature.

Cultural note:

As was mentioned above the song "Shiver Me Timbers" was written by American songwriter Tom Waits. This song is a part of the album *The Heart of Saturday Night* released in 1974.²⁸ It is not just the song itself that can draw the attention of students to literature and poetry but the author of the song himself. Tom Waits is an outstanding and slightly eccentric songwriter, actor, play writer, jazz musician or singer and the short introduction to his work and life may increase the student's interest.

Homework before the lesson itself:

1. Students need to do some preparation at home before the class itself so they are able to carry out the subsequent activities. The teacher divides the class into two teams and tells the first team to find out information about the book *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville. The second team do the same with the book *Martin Eden* by Jack London. Besides that both teams will have to look for the short definitions of the selected figures of speech like metaphor, simile, alliteration or hyperbole. It is important to give the learners enough time to do this homework, for example several days.

- *T: Now you will get homework for the next week. You have seven days to do it. Make two teams. The first one will find out information about the plot and the main characters of the book Moby Dick by Herman Melville and the second one will do the same with the book Martin Eden by Jack London. Furthermore, both teams will search for*

²⁸https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Heart_of_Saturday_Night#Track_listing

definitions of the figures of speech like metaphor, simile, alliteration and hyperbole and give their examples in the sentences.

- *S: Where do we find all the information?*
- *T: You can use some websites or you can find it in books as well. It is up to you where you want to look for it. Volunteers can also find out what other books these two authors wrote.*

Pre-listening activity:

15 minutes

Goal: practice of speaking skills

1. In this activity the students work in groups. They bring together information they found about the books and figures of speech. They do this via cooperation and discussion over their homework. Students can also mention other works by the authors. As an aid for students the teacher can provide them with the given worksheet. There are clues which help them to organize their answers. However, the students have to transform these clues into complete questions before they can use them as a helpful tool. Additionally, the teacher can give students dictionaries to make the task a little bit easier for them. After the learners' discussion the teacher invites them to share their ideas to check this activity. He/she can ask complementary questions related to the topic. They can also ask students the questions from the worksheet.
 - *T: Prepare your homework. Make groups of four and share and discuss your homework with other students in the group. It means that you tell each other what you found about the particular books and their authors. As a help I will give you these worksheets with some questions about the books and their authors. At first you have to complete the questions and then you can answer them. Moreover, here you have dictionaries which you can use during your task as well.*
 - *S: Discuss their homework and possibly fill in the worksheets.*
 - *T: Ok, now let's check your homework and your answers. Group number one tell me something about the book Moby Dick. For example, who are the main characters of this book?*
 - *S: The main characters are Captain Ahab and Ishmael.*

- *T: Yes, well done. What do you know about these characters?*

While-listening activity:

15 minutes

Goal: practice of listening skill

1. In this activity the students listen to the song. Their task is to fill in the gaps in the lyrics in the order that they will hear in the song. The lyrics are on the given worksheet. It is recommended to play the song twice because it might be difficult for the learners to carry out this activity for the first time.

- *T: Now you will get worksheets with the song lyrics. There are some gaps in the text. Your task is to fill in these gaps with the words from the song that you will now hear. I will play the song twice.*

2. Correct answers are checked by reading the lines of the lyrics by the learners one by one. There are probably some words in the song which the students will not understand. These words should be translated to be sure that the class understand them because the post-listening stage concentrates on the work with the meaning of the lyrics.

- *T: Now we will read the whole song lyrics. Student X, start reading the first line please.*
- *S: Reads the line.*
- *T: Ok, good. Can you translate this line?*
- *S: Translates the line.*

Post-listening activity:

15 minutes

Goal: practice of speaking skill and comprehension of the text

1. Students are divided into groups for this activity again. There are questions connected with the song lyrics on their worksheet. These questions should help the learners to comprehend the meaning of the song. Students cooperate together in groups and try to answer as many questions as possible. It is rather difficult for individuals so the learners need to discuss various ideas with one another in order to finish this exercise.

- *T: Make groups of four again and take your worksheets with you. There are some questions in your worksheets connected to the text of the song. Work together and try to come up with the answers. The*

answers can vary. So do not worry too much about the correctness of your answer. It depends on your interpretation of the lyrics.

The point of this activity is to try to work on learners' reading and comprehension skills. Besides that, students also train their speaking ability when they collaborate during the group activity.

7 Conclusion

This thesis focused mainly on the issue of song lyrics and their utilization in the process of English language teaching. The theoretical part of the work looked into topics such as the importance, meaning, features etc. of songs and their lyrics and tried to provide more profound knowledge about these fields. Besides that, it also brought information about the relationship of songs and lyrics to areas such as culture, history or poetry. This was the subject matter of the theoretical part whose aim was to support the assumptions that songs and lyrics can be helpful in acquiring knowledge that is not only connected with the language itself. It also served as a support to the lesson plans in the practical part which, besides other things, refer to these topics as well.

The theories and opinions that appeared in the work have proved that songs have become an important part of human life from its beginning and that music generally accompanies us almost everywhere we go. We could say that songs possess a certain capability which is able to influence our feelings, mood, motivation or even the development of language at the early stage of our life. Additionally, a number of experts dealing with English language teaching, and whose ideas were mentioned in the work, share the opinion that songs are a valuable resource that can be used in classes as a teaching tool.

I intended to contribute to these assumptions by using my own lesson plans at a lower secondary school and by reflecting how helpful these plans would be for students in acquiring various language skills and knowledge from other areas. I was optimistic about the outcomes of such research in schools because I believe that learning through songs can make learners more relaxed and motivated. However, I did not manage to teach my lessons during my practice because all schools in the Czech Republic were closed due to the Covid-19 epidemic situation. I have therefore not provided any reflection on my lessons and I cannot be sure how effective my plans would be if at all and to what extent they would contribute to students' better acquisition of the target language. Besides that, I also wanted to find out if the activities in this thesis would be entertaining for students and possibly would motivate them to dedicate more time to learning English with the help of song lyrics.

All the songs used in the work are originals and they have not been artificially adapted for educational purposes because I think that it is useful when students are exposed to authentic English. In terms of lyrics they are used in some lesson plans in their full form or they are arranged as a gap-filling exercise.

All the plans contain information about the goals of the lessons and what skills and subskills they tend to improve. Usually one plan is not arranged to develop only one skill or subskill because they are often interconnected. The plans were made with respect to students' levels of English and in accordance with the aims of the thematic plans of particular grades of Vodňanská lower secondary school in Prachatice. The worksheets used in all five lesson plans were made by me and they were mostly arranged to be in connection with the theme or grammar that students of the particular grades were supposed to learn.

I think that if my plans were used in the lesson there would not be many problems for students and teachers to accomplish the activities. There might be a problem with the time because some activities may last a little bit longer than I expect. Because of this reason most of the exercises are made to be carried out in groups so learners can cooperate together and it is easier for them to complete the activities.

I prepared all of my plans in accordance with both The Educational Framework and The School Education Programme for lower secondary school Vodňanská in Prachatice. Most of my lessons therefore correspond to competencies and cross-curricular topics mentioned in these programmes. The plans try to develop students' communication, problem-solving or social and personal competencies. In terms of cross-curricular topics attention is, for example, paid to education towards thinking in European and global contexts using a song that deals with the subject of the history of Ireland to teach a little bit of European history.

I hope that all the plans and activities included in this thesis have accomplished the goal of the thesis which was to demonstrate that it is possible to utilize song lyrics as a tool in English language classes for different purposes and that various skills and subskills can be developed with the help of songs.

8 Resumé

Předkládaná diplomová práce se zaměřuje na využívání anglických písňových textů v rámci výuky anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základní školy. Samotný text práce je rozdělen na teoretickou a praktickou část a zahrnuje informace vycházející z předpokladu, že písňové texty mohou být užitečné v rozvoji jazykových dovedností a znalostí týkající se anglického jazyka. Dílčí kapitoly věnují pozornost prvkům, jež jsou z různých hledisek spojeny s hudebními texty. Většina těchto oddílů je dále rozdělena na podkapitoly, které hlouběji rozvíjí konkrétní téma.

První část práce se zabývá vymezením pojmů jako jsou píseň či hudební text a jejich využití při rozvoji jazykových schopností. Na základě prostudování odborné literatury jsem se snažil podat vysvětlení těchto rozličných témat a s nimi souvisejících pojmů. Pozornost je nejprve věnována písni, její definici, jak je píseň obecně vnímána v životě či ve výuce cizího jazyka. Dále je zde zmíněn kulturní význam písní a jejich asociace s pojmy jako jsou například paměť či motivace. Zjištěné informace naznačují, že písně a hudba obecně hrají v životě lidí značnou roli a jejich využívání při výuce anglického jazyka poskytuje řadu výhod ať už z pohledu rozvoje jazyka nebo chápání kultury.

Následující kapitola se zabývá hudebními texty. Nejprve jsou dána různá vysvětlení tohoto konceptu a jeho pojetí v rámci historického vývoje. Následně je pozornost věnována typickým znakům těchto textů a oddíl je zakončen vysvětlením vztahu mezi hudebními texty a poezií. Na rozdíl od písní, hudebním textům není v odborné literatuře většinou věnována taková pozornost, a tak pro mě bylo vyhledávání informací na toto téma obtížnější. Avšak myslím, že zásadní teoretické poznatky týkající se hudebních textů se mi podařilo vcelku poskytnout.

Poslední kapitola teoretické části je zaměřena na téma využití textů jako nástroje, který může být prospěšný v rozvoji základních řečových dovedností, jako jsou poslech, čtení, mluvení a psaní. Zde jsou zpracovány teoretické poznatky týkající se didaktické stránky využití písní a jejich textů. Tato kapitola také slouží jako teoretický základ pro následující praktickou část.

Praktická část této práce se skládá z pěti vyučovacích příprav na vyučovací hodiny, které využívají mnou vybrané hudební texty a aktivity s nimi spojené. Cílem

těchto plánů je ukázat, jak mohou být anglické hudební texty využity jako pomocný prostředek k výuce anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol, popřípadě na středních školách. Tyto přípravy se soustředí na rozvoj řečových dovedností studentů a zároveň předkládají možná témata pro diskuzi ve třídě. Tyto diskuze mohou žákům poskytnout šanci zlepšit své řečové dovednosti v daném jazyce a zároveň rozvíjet různé kompetence a rozšiřovat své znalosti i v dalších mimojazykových oblastech. Tyto přípravy jsem měl v plánu také odučit na vybrané základní škole a poskytnout jejich reflexi, ale vzhledem k uzavření všech škol v republice z důvodu epidemie Covid-19 nebyl tento cíl naplněn. Až na tento problém se však domnívám, že práce svůj předpokládaný cíl, tedy možnosti využití hudebních textů v hodinách angličtiny, splnila.

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10 Appendices

Appendix 1

Lesson plan 1 – Suzanne Vega, Luka worksheet:

Lyrics of the song Luka that will be separated, the lines indicate where to cut with scissors:

My name is Luka
I live on the second floor

I live upstairs from you
Yes I think you've seen me before

If you hear something late at night

Some kind of trouble, some kind of fight

Just don't ask me what it was (3x)

I think it's because I'm clumsy
I try not to talk too loud

Maybe it's because I'm crazy
I try not to act too proud

They only hit until you cry

After that you don't ask why

You just don't argue anymore (3x)

Yes, I think I'm okay
I walked into the door again

If you ask that's what I'll say And it's not your business anyway
I guess I'd like to be alone

With nothing broken, nothing thrown

Just don't ask me how I am (3x)

My name is Luka
I live on the second floor

I live upstairs from you
Yes I think you've seen me before

If you hear something late at night

Some kind of trouble, some kind of fight
Just don't ask me what it was (3x)

And they only hit until you cry

After that, you don't ask why
You just don't argue anymore (3x)

Describe the following pictures.

A.



B.



C.



Look at the questions connected with the song Luka. Work with your partners and answer these questions.

Who is the song told by?

Who is Luka speaking to?

Is she speaking to us or to the author or both?

Who is Luka? Who is "you"? What is their relationship?

Are they friends, neighbours...? Why do you think that?

What do you think that happens to Luka at nights?

Do you think that she has any problems?

What is her behaviour?

Who is she referring to by the word "they"?

What is Luka's attitude to the singer?

What is your opinion about the topic of the song?

What would you do if you knew someone who was abused?

Have you ever met someone who was a victim of some kind of violence?

Appendix 2

Lesson plan 2 – Bob Dylan, Forever Young worksheet

Bob Dylan – Forever Young

May God and keep you always
 May your all come true
 May you always for others
 And others do for you
 May you a to the stars
 And on every
 May you stay forever young
 Forever young, forever young
 May you stay forever young.

May you to be
 May you to be
 May you always the
 And see the surrounding you
 May you always be
 Stand and be
 May you stay forever young
 Forever young, forever young
 May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be
 May your feet always be
 May you a strong
 When the of changes
 May your always be
 And may your always be sung
 May you stay forever young
 Forever young, forever young
 May you stay forever young.

Categorize the words into the right columns.

Bless, wishes, let, build, ladder, climb, rung, grow up ,
 righteous, truth, light, courageous, upright, strong,
 busy, swift, foundation, wind, shift, joyful, have

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives

Answer the following questions:

- How old do you think the songwriter is?
- Do you like the song? Why? Why not?
- What is the song about?
- Does the song have any message?
- Who do you think the singer is talking to?
- What does the singer mean by the expression Forever Young in this song?

Appendix 3

Lesson plan 2 – The Beatles, In My Life worksheet

Listen to the song and put the lines in the correct order

The Beatles – In My Life

Some forever, not for better
With lovers and friends, I still can recall
All my life, though some have changed
Some have gone, and some remain
In my life, I've loved them all
There are places I'll remember
Some are dead, and some are living
All these places had their moments

And these memories lose their meaning
There is no one compares with you
But of all these friends and lovers
When I think of love as something new

In my life, I love you more
For people and things that went before
Though I know I'll never lose affection
I know I'll often stop and think about them

In my life I love you more
For people and things that went before
Though I know I'll never lose affection
I know I'll often stop and think about them

In my life I love you more

Answer the following questions in pairs:

Do you like travelling?

What is your favourite means of transport when travelling?

How often do you travel?

Do you prefer travelling in summer or or winter?

Where would you like to travel in future?

What do you usually do during your travels?

Which countries have you visited?

Do you prefer travelling with your friends or parents?

Appendix 4

Lesson plan 4 – Christy Moore, The City of Chicago worksheet

1. Describe the given pictures.



2. Look at the following descriptions and write who or what they describe
 - Someone who leaves their country in order to live permanently in another country.
 - A person who is running away or hiding from the police or a dangerous situation.
 - The condition of someone being sent or kept away from their own country, village, etc., especially for political reasons.
 - The feeling you have when you need to eat.
 - A person who has come to a different country in order to live there permanently.
 - A situation in which there is not enough food for a great number of people, causing illness and death, or a particular period when this happens.
3. Answer and talk about these questions in groups.
 - Why do you think that people usually leave their country and home today?
 - Many people left Europe in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century; do you have any idea why and where from?
 - What troubles did the people have to face during their journey
 - Would you ever think of emigrating? Why? Why not?
 - Are there any areas of the world where people do not have enough food? Why?

1. Make past simple of these verbs

Christy Moore – The City of Chicago

In the City of Chicago
As the evening **shadows** fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal

1847 the year it all
Deadly **pains** of hunger a million from the land
They journeyed not for glory
Their motive**greed**

A voyage of **survival** across the stormy sea

To the City of Chicago
As the evening **shadows** fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal

Some of them fortune
Some of them Fame
More of them **Hardship**
And upon the plain
They throughout the nation
They the **railroad** cars
..... their songs and music to ease their lonely hearts

To the City of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal

3. Work in groups. Answer these questions according to the information in the song lyrics.

Donegal is a part of Ireland. Who are the people that are dreaming about the hills in this county? Where do they live now? Why are they dreaming about the hills?

Why do they not live in Ireland anymore? What were the reasons and motives that they left?

How many people travelled from Ireland according to the song?

What difficulties do you think they had to overcome? Do they only live in Chicago?

Did everyone manage to get to Chicago? If not what happened to them?

Begin, drive, be, die, know (3x), ride, spread, bring, be not

2. Match the words with the definitions

1. An area of darkness, caused by light being blocked by something.
2. A feeling of physical suffering caused by injury or illness.
3. A very strong wish to continuously get more of something, especially food or money.
4. The state of continuing to live or exist.
5. A condition that causes difficulty or suffering.
6. The metal tracks on which trains run.

Appendix 5

Lesson plan 5 – Tom Waits, Shiver Me Timbers worksheet

Group A

Form questions from the following words:

Who/ author of Moby Dick

What else/ the author/ write

How many/ books/ write

Name/ any of the titles

When/ write

What/ nationality/ author

What/ kind of story

Who/main character of Moby Dick

Who/ other characters/ the book

When/ where/ story/ take place

What/ the captain/ want

Why/ the captain/ want to do it

Get/ what the main character/ want

How/ the story/ end

Group B

Form questions from the following words:

Who/ author of Martin Eden

What else/ the author/ write

How many/ books/ write

Name/ any of the titles

When/ write

What/ nationality/ author

What/ kind of story

Who/ main character of the book

Who/ other characters

When/ where/ story/ take place

What/ the main character/ want

Why/ he/ want to do it

Get/ what the main character/ want

How/ the story/ end

Shiver Me Timbers:

I'm leavin' my family----- Why is he leaving? Is he really leaving?

And leavin' my friends

My 's at home----- What does "My body's at home" mean?

But my heart's in the wind----- What is the heart a symbol of? What can wind symbolize?

Where the..... are like headlines-- Where do we find headlines and pages?

On a new front page sky

My are salt water----- Why tears? How does he feel? Where can we find salt water?

And the moon's full and high

And I Martin Eden's----- Do you remember who Martin Eden is?

Gonna be proud of me

And many me

Who've been called by the sea----- What do M. E. and the sea have in common?

To be up in the crow's nest

And ' my say

Shiver me Timbers----- What does Shiver me timbers mean?

I'm a-sailin' away

The 's liftin'----- What does the author describe? Have you ever observed the sand on the beach?

And the sand's shiftin'-----

And I'm ' on out

And Ol' Captain Ahab----- What do Ahab and M. E. have in common?

Ain't got nothin' on me

So come on and me, don't follow me- What does he want to say when he is not really travelling?

I travel alone-----

Blue water's my----- What can "Blue water" mean?

And I'm gonna skippin' like a stone

And please..... my missus----- Does he feel sorry? Why?

Tell her not to cry-----

My good bye is written

By the in the sky----- How can the moon write goodbye? What time of day can it be?

And knows me

I can't fathom my stayin'----- Where could he wish to escape?

And shiver me timbers

I'm a-sailin' away