

# **“Music video: an amazing tool to improve students’ Listening and speaking skills”**

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## Abstract

This article is divided into three parts: the first one is related with the theoretical framework about music videos and the theoretical support for the use of music in the second or foreign English language classroom; the second part covers some pre-listening, while-listening, post-listening, and speaking activities and exercises as a way of practice with students; and the last part is focused on conclusions, especially, about students and professors' points of view about music videos .

**Key Words:** music, video, theoretical support, EFL, ESL, students, professors, listening, speaking, activities, exercises.

**Palabras Claves:** Música, video, soporte teórico, EFL, ESL, estudiantes, profesores, escucha, habla, actividades, ejercicios.

## Resumen

Este artículo se divide en tres partes: la primera se relaciona con el marco teórico sobre los videos musicales y el aporte teórico en el uso de la música en la Enseñanza del Inglés como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera. La segunda parte cubre algunas actividades de escucha (pre-listening, while-listening, post-listening, y algunos ejercicios de comunicación verbal como una forma de práctica con estudiantes. Finalmente, se presentan las conclusiones tanto desde el punto de vista de los estudiantes así como de los profesores relacionadas con la utilización del video musical.

## Part One:

### Introduction And Theoretical Framework Music Videos

Music video formats are popular among children and adolescents. When music lyrics are illustrated in music videos, their potential impact is magnified. Teenagers who may not "hear" or understand, especially, rock lyrics cannot avoid the often disturbing images that characterize a growing number of videos. In addition, music videos are self-reinforcing: if viewers hear a song after having seen the video version, they immediately "flash back" to the visual imagery in the video. Music videos may represent a relatively new art form, but it is one that often contains an excess of sexism, violence, substance abuse, suicides, and inappropriate sexual behavior. As with music lyrics, teenagers' ability to comprehend and interpret music videos may vary widely and may represent an important variable in their potential impact.

Singing and music have always played an important role in learning and the communication of culture. Children learn from the role models what they see and hear. For the past 35 years, some children's television has very effectively used the combination of words, music and fast-paced animation to achieve learning.

Most parents are concerned about what their young children see and hear, but as children grow older, parents pay less attention to the music and videos that hold their children's interest.

The sharing of musical tastes between generations in a family can be a pleasurable experience. Music also is often a major part of a teenager's separate world. It is quite common for teenagers to get pleasure from keeping adults out and causing adults some distress.

Music is frequently used by teachers to help second language learners acquire a second language. This is not surprising since the literature abounds with the positive statements regarding the efficacy of music as a vehicle for first and second language acquisition. It has been reported to help second language learners acquire vocabulary and grammar, improve spelling and develop the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (Jalongo and Bromley, 1984, McCarthey, 1985; Martin, 1983, Mitchell, 1983, Jolly, 1975). According to educators of second language learners, music is advantageous for still other reasons. First, for most students, singing songs and listening to music are enjoyable experiences. The experience is so pleasurable that it is not uncommon for students to "pester" their teacher so that they can sing again and again. Also, as students repeatedly sing songs, their confidence level rises. Furthermore, by engaging in a pleasurable experience, learners are relaxed and their inhibitions about acquiring a second language are lessened. Yet, while they are more relaxed, they are also more attentive than usual, and therefore, more receptive to learning. Through songs, students are exposed to "authentic" examples of the second language. Furthermore, target vocabulary, grammar, routines and patterns are modeled in context.

These are but a few of the benefits associated with music use in the second language classroom.

### **THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF MUSIC IN THE SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

There is theoretical support for its use in the second language classroom as well. In this section we will discuss two theories which are most directly related to music and second language learning. These come from the fields of linguistics and psychology respectively.

#### **Krashen's Second Language Hypotheses**

One linguistic theoretical orientation, "nativism" explains second language in purely biological terms. According to this perspective, human beings are biologically pre-wired to process and therefore acquire language, be it first or second language. Noam Chomsky (1965), most widely known nativist, claims that a learner's input from the environment is insufficient to account for the speed with which individuals acquire language. Instead, he posits that humans are born with knowledge which predisposes them to acquire language. This knowledge is what allows the learner to structure any language and acquire it.

Following in the nativist tradition is the work of Stephen Krashen (1982). Of Krashen's five hypotheses, the best known and frequently referred to are the "Input" and "Affective filter" hypotheses. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, new, unfamiliar vocabulary is acquired when its significance is made clear to the learner. Meaning is conveyed by providing extralinguistic support such as illustrations, actions, photos, and realia. This in turn results in what Krashen refers to as "comprehensible input" since the linguistic input is made comprehensible to the second language learner. Krashen further claims that the amount of comprehensible input is proportionate to the amount of vocabulary acquired. Thus,

according to Krashen (1989), vocabulary is incidentally acquired through stories because (1) familiar vocabulary and syntax contained in the stories provide meaning to less familiar vocabulary, and (2) picture illustrations clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words. There is evidence that picture illustrations succeed at supporting the reading process by clarifying the meaning of incoming verbal information (Hudson, 1982; Omaggio, 1979; Mueller, 1980; Bradsford and Johnson, 1972). In short, meaning is critical to the acquisition of second language vocabulary.

Music use in the second language classroom is consistent with both of Krashen's hypotheses. When second language learners hear "story songs" that is, stories which have been set to music, it is possible to similarly acquire vocabulary. As in the case of orally-read stories, story songs which are presented with picture illustrations, photos or gestures provide the necessary extralinguistic support which results in language acquisition. Furthermore, because of the positive effects which music has upon second language learners, story songs may motivate and captivate the attention of second language learners in ways that oral stories cannot.

Krashen's second hypothesis, the "Affective Filter hypothesis," is also tied to music use in the second language classroom. According to this hypothesis, the extent to which linguistic input is received from the environment depends largely upon the learner's "affect", that is his inner feelings and attitude. Negative emotions, functioning much like a filter, can prevent the learner from making total use of the linguistic input from his environment. Therefore, if he is anxious, unmotivated, or simply lacks confidence, language acquisition will be limited. It is therefore, in the interest of the second language teacher to provide an environment which evokes positive emotions. Music does precisely that. Whether learners simply listen to instrumental music, vocals in the target language, or sing in unison, it is a

pleasurable experience. Furthermore, as reported in the literature, singing songs in unison produces a sense of community and increases student confidence in the second language. Thus, music, however it is used in the classroom, evokes positive emotions which can lower the "affective filter" and bring about language acquisition.

### **Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Music use in the second language classroom is supported by the work of still another theorist, Howard Gardner (1993). According to this psychologist, there exist eight distinct intelligences; musical, spatial, logical, linguistic (verbal) logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic (movement), interpersonal (understanding others) and intrapersonal (understanding self) and naturalist (observing and understanding natural and human-made patterns and systems). Brain research supports the notion that these distinct abilities appear to be independent of one another. That is, patients experiencing difficulties in one location in the brain do not generally experience problems in other portions. To him, all humans are born with a propensity to excel in all of these areas, yet their ability to actualize these is largely dependent upon the influences of culture, motivation level and experiences (1998). As a result, most individuals tend to excel in only one or two of these areas.

There are several implications for educators. First, Gardner believes that it is the responsibility of educational institutions to cultivate these intelligences. Also, educators need to be reminded that historically schools have focused on the development of only two of these intelligences: linguistic and logical/mathematical skills. Such a perspective is narrow since humans possess a greater number of intelligences, according to Gardner. Given this, schools need to acknowledge and foster a broader range of intelligences. Therefore, teachers need to instruct in ways that tap a wide variety of intelligences. Although

it is impossible to tap all intelligences at all times, teachers need to incorporate a variety of strategies so that they reach and are successful with more students than they have been in the past (Campbell, Campbell & Dickinson, 1996).

Using music as a vehicle for second language learning is consistent with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Music can be used in any number of ways to instruct the second language to second language learners. Students may listen to instrumental background music while writing an essay. To elicit verbal responses, students may be asked to listen to classical or jazz music. In order to acquire new vocabulary, students may listen to a story song while the teacher points to picture illustrations of key vocabulary words. Or students may learn to sing songs with lyrics containing key target language structures. Clearly, there are numerous ways in which music can be used to instruct the second language. In so doing, students will cultivate the musical intelligence that Gardner speaks of. Furthermore, those students who are strongest in this musical intelligence will experience more successful instruction.

### **PART TWO**

#### **PRE-LISTENING, WHILE-LISTENING, POST-LISTENING, AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES. PRE-LISTENING**

**SPEAKING ACTIVITY:** Answer the following questions.

1. Have you ever heard about Bryan Adams?
2. What do you know about him?
3. Where is he from?
4. Have you ever listened to music by Bryan Adams?
5. Could you name one of his best famous songs?
6. Have you ever seen a movie called "Robin Hood: the Prince of Thieves"?
7. Did you like this film?
8. Tell us something about the movie...

## WHILE-LISTENING:

### LYRICS

Artist: Bryan Adams

Album: The Best Of Me

Song: Everything I Do - I Do It For You

Look into my eyes - you will see  
What you mean to me  
Search your heart - search your soul  
And when you find me there you'll search no more  
Don't tell me it's not worth tryin' for  
You can't tell me it's not worth dyin' for  
You know it's true  
Everything I do - I do it for you

Look into your heart - you will find  
There's nothin' there to hide  
Take me as I am - take my life  
I would give it all I would sacrifice  
Don't tell me it's not worth fightin' for  
I can't help it there's nothin' I want more  
Ya know it's true  
Everything I do - I do it for you

There's no love - like your love  
And no other - could give more love  
There's nowhere - unless you're there  
All the time- all the way

Oh, you can't tell me it's not worth tryin' for  
I can't help it there's nothin' I want more  
Yeah I would fight for you - I'd lie for you  
walk the wire for you - Yeah I'd die for you

Ya know it's true  
Everything I do - I do it for you

## LISTENING EXERCISES

Fill the blanks with the correct word:

**hard - can't - heart - true - it's - what - you'll - everything - it - can - eyes**

Look into my \_\_\_\_\_ - you will see  
\_\_\_\_\_ you mean to me  
Search your \_\_\_\_\_ - search your soul  
And when you find me there \_\_\_\_\_ search no more  
Don't tell me \_\_\_\_\_ not worth tryin' for  
You \_\_\_\_\_ tell me it's not worth dyin' for  
You know it's \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ I do - I do it for you

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Choose the correct verbs:

**Know - do - fightin' - sacrifice - find - life - want - hide**

Look into your heart - you will **found**  
There's nothin' there to **hidden**  
Take me as I am - take my **lied**  
I would give it all I would **sacrificed**  
Don't tell me it's not worth **flying'** for  
I can't help it there's nothin' I **wanted** more  
Ya **knew** it's true  
Everything I do - I **did** it for you

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Fill the blanks with the correct word:

**live - could - whey - die - tell - nothin' - lie - way - life - unless - under - like**

There's no love - \_\_\_\_\_ your love  
And no other - \_\_\_\_\_ give more love  
There's nowhere - \_\_\_\_\_ you're there  
All the time- all the \_\_\_\_\_  
Oh, you can't \_\_\_\_\_ me it's not worth tryin' for  
I can't help it there's \_\_\_\_\_ I want more  
Yeah I would fight for you - I'd \_\_\_\_\_ for you  
walk the wire for you - Yeah I'd \_\_\_\_\_ for you

## BRYAN ADAMS' BIOGRAPHY

Full name: Bryan Guy Adams

Date of birth: 5 November 1959

Hometown: Kingston, Ontario, Canada

The most popular mainstream Canadian artist of the late 80s and 90s.

Although he remains better known for several romantic ballads rather than his rock songs.

English parents.

His solo career commenced in 1978 (having previously worked with Sweeney Todd, who released one album, 1977's *If Wishes Were Horses*).

When he began writing songs with Jim Vallance, a former member of Prism, who was keen to retire from live work but not from songwriting.

In 1979, Adams signed a contract with A&M Records' Rondor Music.

Their debut single, "Let Me Take You Dancing".

A third album, *Cuts Like A Knife*, released in 1983, was Adams' breakthrough, reaching number 8 and going platinum in the USA.

"Princess Di Flirts With Canadian Rock Star".

Adams was introduced by actor Jack Nicholson at the July 1985 Live Aid concert in Philadelphia.

Helped to perform the Canadian benefit record for Ethiopia, "Tears Are Not Enough".

Informed by Adams' charity work and tours in support of Amnesty International.

The late 80s proved a comparatively tranquil time for the artist, as he took stock of his career and waited for a window in producer Mutt Lange's diary.

In 1988, he guested at the Nelson Mandela birthday party concert at Wembley Stadium in London, and in 1990 appeared with Roger Waters and others at the special Berlin performance of *The Wall*.

All this was eclipsed, however, by his contribution to the 1991 Kevin Costner movie, *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*. "(Everything I Do) I Do It For You" was a phenomenal chart success, topping the UK singles listings for an incredible 16 weeks, the longest run since Frankie Laine's 18-week domination with "I Believe" in 1953; it also sold three million copies and hit the number 1 position in the USA, becoming the bestselling single of that year.

"Please Forgive Me" extended Adam's run of UK/US Top 10 successes in late 1993. It was followed by "All For Love", a collaboration with Sting and Rod Stewart for the 1993 movie *The Three Musketeers*, which became another major hit on both sides of the Atlantic (US number 1, UK number 2). In 1994, he undertook a major tour of South-East Asia (in the process becoming the first Western hard rock artist to visit Vietnam since the end of the war) and bought a house in London.

Those who do subscribe to the fact that he is a "rocker" must have been perplexed by the Spanish tempo and lightweight Lange/Adams/Kamen song, "Have You Ever Really Loved A Woman?" (from the movie *Don Juan de Marco*), which topped a number of charts around the world in the summer of 1995.

On A Day Like Today and "When You're Gone", a high profile duet with Melanie C. from the Spice Girls that reached UK number 3 in December 1998 and spent 10 weeks in the Top 10, helped re-establish his commercial profile.

A recording hiatus followed, during which time Adams enjoyed success as a celebrity photographer. In 2002 he photographed Queen Elizabeth II for her Golden Jubilee.



## SPEAKING ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

1. A. Did you like the song?  
B. What do you think about the video? Did you like It?
2. Do you like romantic music?
3. Have you ever listened to music by Bryan Adams?
4. What is the real message of this song?
5. What do you think about love?
6. Have you ever been in love? Tell us the story...
7. What do you think about the music video?
8. Send a short message to your girl/boy friend. If you want, you can use the vocabulary from the song.
9. What do you think about this phrase: "It's necessary to show how much you love somebody"
10. Look for a partner and ask him/her about information of this music group.  
In example: name, nationality, kind of music, best songs, musicians' names, and so on...

## EVALUATION

Look (1)\_\_\_\_\_ my eyes - you will see  
What you (2)\_\_\_\_\_ to me  
Search your heart - search your (3)\_\_\_\_\_  
And when you find me there you'll (4)\_\_\_\_\_ no more  
Don't (5)\_\_\_\_\_ me it's not worth tryin' for  
You can't tell me it's not (6)\_\_\_\_\_ dyin' for  
You know it's (7)\_\_\_\_\_  
Everything I do - I do it for you

Look into your heart - you will (8)\_\_\_\_\_  
There's nothin' there to (9)\_\_\_\_\_  
Take me as I am - take my (10)\_\_\_\_\_  
I would give it all I would (11)\_\_\_\_\_  
Don't tell me it's not worth fightin' for  
I can't help it there's nothin' I (12)\_\_\_\_\_ more .  
Ya know it's true  
Everything I do - I do it for you

There's no love - like your (13)\_\_\_\_\_  
And no other - (14)\_\_\_\_\_ give more love  
There's (15)\_\_\_\_\_ - unless you're there  
All the (16)\_\_\_\_\_ - all the way

Oh, you can't tell me it's not worth (17)\_\_\_\_\_ for  
I can't help it there's nothin' I (18)\_\_\_\_\_ more  
Yeah I would fight for you - I'd (19)\_\_\_\_\_ for you  
(20)\_\_\_\_\_ the wire for you - Yeah I'd die for you

Ya know it's true  
Everything I do - I do it for you

## PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS

### From the student's point of view, music videos . . .

- Are FUN! Accessible! Relaxing! Emotive!
- Are analogous to "Adolescent Motherese" (Tim Murphey, 1992)\*\*. We remember the song lyrics of our youth throughout our lives.
- Promote cultural literacy. Popular songs seem to demystify a new culture by making its tenets more accessible to learners.
- Help second language students to participate in the culture—songs help them to "join the club" (Frank Smith)\*\* help learners feel they belong.
- Give practical force to seemingly impractical lessons: "People really do use these strange, boring structures".
- Reassure students they don't have to hear everything to understand the essence.
- Provide "real" listening tasks.
- Are highly memorable: Consider, for example, the "song-stuck-in-my-head" phenomenon (Murphey)-because we naturally replay songs in our minds we unconsciously practice the structures and vocabulary of the songs.

### From the teacher's point of view, songs and music . . .

- Help "punctuate" flow of lessons: songs aid in timing, emphasis, and segue.
- Help set up, close or switch topics.
- Help fill gaps in lessons and expand weak presentations.
- Are highly motivating: music relieves the "Friday afternoon syndrome".
- Provide painless rehearsal and reinforcement of structures, pronunciation, and vocabulary.
- Help establish rapport in mixed-level classes: students can be individually completing activities or tasks set for different levels of ability while listening to the same song.
- Are like an ESL teacher's Swiss Army Knife: songs are portable, multi-purpose, handy, easy-to-use, and really just FUN!

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