

THE SONG: AN ENHANCING TEACHING APPROACH TO FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FFL)

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ABSTRACT

The present article is supposed to be an interrogation about the use of the song as a way to convey the written and oral knowledge. It is obvious that the song is connected with a ludic activity that is capable of further raising the interest of the learner to better simplify his linguistic needs. The interest which has our article for the teaching practice via the song is deciding since learning a language goes through a set of didactic tools. So, the song is a vector that might help in the success of an efficient learning. The song, as an authentic document, is a ludic and attractive way to teach French as a foreign language to our learners but also to make them understand the culture of this language we are talking about, for the learner, it is also how to look at the outside world within school and out-of school context. Thus, we are able to extract countless comprehension activities through the song in order to make easy the learning of the target language. With the advent of the action-oriented approach, the learner is placed deep inside the learning, he must be ready to handle any situation of communication, the song as an authentic and cultural document, might help to overcome the communication as things progressively improve, the learner acquires a language autonomy to speak and understand the language of the other.

Keywords: Song, learning, FFL, teaching, ludic activity.

INTRODUCTION

The song has lived in all human societies since ancient times. It is an acoustic practice which consists of arranging and putting sounds in order. We can define the song as a form of expressing human feelings, such a way to be together during a celebration, a chant or a dance and a symbol of a community. The song has a very important place in human life. We cannot imagine a life without songs. Everybody sings his way in the nature. Most often, the song is with us and takes part in the course of our life; the music becomes the most straightforward way to express one's sadness and happiness, the human emotions. Its practice, especially by kids, gives the opportunity to develop their intellectual capabilities. Also, the songs enable to express one's emotions. If you feel anything, you would normally feel like expressing them.

If we consider the song as an artistic form of expression, we can understand its connection with the literature. Without a doubt, in a physical and sensory way, there are important links between these two kinds of "perceptible", which the one and the other talk to the ear, and which the physical agents are the vibrations that only differ by the complexity of the period" (Souriau, 1969 :162). Since there is a close connection between these two forms of expression, we can find it in the domain of artistic creativity. Let's see now the song and its use for the teaching of a foreign language.

Initially, the song is not made to be practiced in classroom. Its main role is to entertain, to amuse, to delight, to tell a story, to denounce, to make dance, etc. It is without uncertainty

that for this logic very often the song has been unexplored in the teaching of foreign languages. It was not finely observed and deemed as very pointless and frivolous to be seriously cared of and studied. Most of the scientific studies published through online works concerned the poems set to music and especially the song called « poetic » of singer-songwriter. It is distinguished between the good song, that of Ferré, Brel, Brassens, and the song called « commercial », which we set apart and only take care of the text that we deal with as poetic text, while ignoring the link between lyrics, interpretation and music. However, acquiring a foreign language is to approach another way to discover the world, to see a linguistic and cultural universe that different from one's original culture.

To try out the song or the nursery rhyme during a language course is aimed at motivating the learners and giving them the drive to learn via a more ludic approach. As we have pointed out before, the song is not made to be practiced during a language course. Its main role in the society which makes it is to delight, to amuse and to make you dance. During the latest years, the teachers of FFL resort to songs in their teaching and endeavour to carry out tasks at the primary, middle and upper secondary levels. "The song is one of the authentic documents which are the richest with potentialities in the educational perspective, either we are talking about language (here we forget about this most known aspect) or of culture. A multi-aspects product of the contemporary society, it gives powerful revelations about it, and one of these days it might become an aware witness of it, often a critical one. Mostly, it is an extraordinary communication tool, at the confluence of arts, of media universe, of business..." (Pratx, 1999: 38).

METHODOLOGY

The didactic orientations we are going to carry out during the learning of a foreign language help to enrich the interactive uses class and to give the taught language its status of a living language. Furthermore, we can take advantage from the music as meeting point of the foreign language and the discovery of another culture. The teacher might grant the song a privileged place within his class. From now on, the song will be practiced and used as a support for written and oral expression, source of some class activities. Through pedagogical sequences, not exclusively, the song does not have a position as an element of award, of motivation or of entertainment, but also allows the development of the capabilities and competences of the learners, among which we can mention the cultural and linguistic competences, listening and attention capabilities along with the discovery of authentic documents of comprehension and of written and oral expression. Also, the song gives the learners the opportunity to be in touch with native speakers and to get used to the melody of the foreign language along with its pronunciation, its rhythm and its intonation. As we see, the song might play innumerable roles in the teaching of the target language according to the interests, the needs and the practical possibilities of the teachers and the learners.

The nursery rhymes are rather suitable for the learners of the primary school. Thus, the learners discover the drive to learn a target language. "the nursery rhymes are part of the childlike oral tradition; it affects the sensitivity by rimes which first are aimed at the ear and the memory. The learners adore it since they find in it the rhythms of their amusements and their gestures. The songs do not have the endless length of some poems often discouraging for the less motivated learners ... These small sentences, linked to the tones before being linked to the meaning, are the same as those found out by the child who learns to talk: while fiddling with sounds, he creates mysterious and incantatory words which he repeats as magic formulas" (Bonhomme, 1997 :124).

The song is a very large field; it consists of many sensitivities, tastes and kinds. It might be communication means. Also, there are other reasons for which we might encounter all kinds of songs like: songs about poverty, songs about love, and songs about romances or melancholies. So, selecting songs to listen to in the classroom becomes a very sensitive subject. As for the selection of songs or singers, it suitable to select the songs with didactic nature according to the levels of the learners, which provides an easier access to the song from a musical viewpoint and especially as regards the approached theme. If the majority of the learners select it, it will not cause difficulties.

SELECTION OF SONGS

The selection of the songs which are part of the topicality of the foreign language that is in perpetual change. The songs selected with the drive of the learners and the confirmation of their teacher might strengthen the harmony between this later and his learners about the learning project. We have to select the songs which have good chances to please the learners, first by their rhythm and then the lyrics. Even if some consider the song as entertainment means, we can make of it an object of a serious study. In a language class, selecting a song is a matter of innumerable criteria. The teacher might present the song where one of the learners of the majority decides which song pleases more. "The lyrics and the messages which are in the songs could be taken in by the power of the music and by the repetitions in the conscious or the subconscious. That's why, we must carefully select each lyric of the song and to meticulously realize the messages conveyed to children via the songs" (Kömürcü, 2007:585). It would be right to choose popular songs which are often broadcast in the TV or in the radio. The songs we listen to should be easily learned by heart. We could prefer the songs in which there repetitions and refrains that promote the learning of the target language. Especially, there should be no neglect regarding the listening habits of the learners. It is desirable to start with well expressed songs. The lyrics should be intelligible and well emphasized.

To try out a song in an FFL class might set up innumerable very improving and interesting activities for the learners who wish to learn the target language. In parallel, the song is a generous source of ideas for the teacher of the language. Nowadays, it is a matter of countless activities we can try out in an FFL class. The teacher can follow the instructions of the manuals programmed in his lesson so their interests and their expectation are to be taken into account. It is the reason for which the teacher practices the song activity so that the learners learn while getting entertained during the lesson of the target language.

These later often need an entertainment game in that case. The game becomes useful means for the teacher. "Huizinga defines the game as "a free action, perceived as « fictive » and placed outside the usual life, capable of completely absorbing the player; an action devoid of any material interest and of any use; which is achieved during a time and in a space, which are specifically limited, taking place in order as per the given rules and creates in life relationships of groups which willingly surround themselves with mystery" (Poslaniec, 1990: 69).

Listening to a song during class is used for introducing the learners to the cultural aspect of the foreign language. We take advantage of the song to study the vocabulary or to work on the lexicon, the sounds, the grammar in order to develop in the learner his linguistic skills such as the written and oral expression, the comprehension, as well the culture of the target language. At this level, the teacher makes his choice by taking the expectation of his learners into consideration.

ACTIVITIES AROUND THE SONG

The song in a class of an FFL language is generally practiced during a pleasant relaxing and motivating atmosphere. If a teacher of French tries out a song as a teaching support, he should follow a process so that the learners would acquire some knowledge about the foreign language. It is important not to forget that the song as an authentic document of language and of culture had not been designed for learning the target language. However, there is a lot to do with the song. Especially as we can easily associate to it a whole network of various, motivating and practical supports: specialized press, variety shows, zapping on the FM band, clips, internet sites, etc. The learner might explore in it, with an all new perspicacity, a universe he sometimes thinks better grasp than an adult; the teacher, him, finds there a way to get closer to the concerns of the learners. Between them, a new connection shall take place, with the advantageous consequences we might guess about for the practices of communicative skills and intercultural dynamism" (Pratx: 39).

At the moment of trying out the song in an FFL class, the teacher might make listening to a song without a text. He might request his learners to close their eyes and attempt to globally feel the song. Even if the pupils did not grasp, they might however get a small idea about the subject of the song. In this case we can talk about a communication between the song and the learner. The teacher might provide some clues in order to direct the listening and to ask the learners to pay attention to some elements of the song, namely: the rhythm, the voice, the refrains, the rimes, the instruments. In case of hidden things which persist among the learners, the teacher might mime the feeling and the pronounced actions, just to make them understand better. If the learners cannot understand yet, it is essential to encourage them to ask for precisions or possible questions which help understand the text of the song. As soon as we see that the learners have well understood the song in question, the teacher makes the class sing in chorus. This authentic support can make the class active and motivates it. Furthermore, it gives the learners the opportunity to imitate the foreign language. Therefore, these latter learn to correctly pronounce the lyrics of the song. From the second listening, the teacher shares the written text and makes them listen to it for second time. This time they sing together. This kind of work certainly would be an opportunity to discover and distinguish the learners who have talents of singing. Thus, we can bring about an atmosphere where everybody has fun and sings.

After many listening together, we can proceed to the study of a song. We review the text to examine the words that pose barriers for the comprehension of the text, then all the expressions and the grammar structures. Here, we might ask possible questions. Each teacher can study the song in a different way. We can use the questionnaire sample below according to the objectives set by the teacher.

1. Questions connected to the experience are necessary:
 - a. Where? Is it a matter of places? Where the action takes place? We ask the pupils to spot the names of these places, such as the countries, the towns? Who? Who performs that song?
Is it a woman? A man? A young? Who are the people in the song? When?
Can we say how and at which moment(s) the action took place? The month, the season, the day or the year? What?
 - b. Can you describe the actions? Is the action in the present, the past or the future?
What is the theme of the song? For whom it is aimed in the song? What is the general idea of the song? Explain the plan of the song? Is it dissected according the type "verse-chorus-verse"? Is it a matter of figures of style? Find another title for this

song? Does the music rime with the text? Can you find the technical specifications like rimes, tones, assonances? Search for the vocabulary that expresses the theme, names, adjectives, adverbs ... etc

Except these possible questions, can you perform activities like cloze test, auditory discrimination? The learners try to fill in the gaps with the words they have listened to. If there is spelling or grammar mistakes, we correct them with the help of the teacher. Like the second test, we analyze the auditory discrimination. The writes or make someone write the lyrics of the song on the blackboard. He erases some clue words and then he make them listen to two words where the sounds are similar. He asks the learners to find the appropriate word to fill in the cloze test. In case of mistakes, he corrects and makes them copy it on the copybook. If the learners cannot find the right answers, we allow a second listening to the song.

The improprieties are corrected by the teacher. When dealing with a song, we might work on the grids which have the possibility of consolidating the collusion between the teacher and the learners and to create a connection between the proposed document and the learners. From a linguistic standpoint, we can ask the learners to fill in and to Complete the verbs and their modes in the text. We ask the learners to find out, for example : the concrete words, abstract words, the adjectives and to search the synonyms or opposites for some targeted words or to find the related pronouns used in the song.

Another possible grid might refer to the expression of some very different feelings such as sadness, happiness, joy, fear ...etc. Each one answers one's way. But at the end of this activity, all the possible answers must be justified by the teacher. As for the thematic analysis, what we could suggest is to observe if the pupils have well understood the themes approached in the song. We suggest some possible themes among which we can show: life, immigration, poverty and nature. Then, we ask the pupils to tick the themes really approached. In order to check if the learners have well understood the whole text, we present another grid "true/false". We ask possible questions about the places, the time or the events which take place in the song in question. We give a list of affirmations which are based on the content and the content and the information. The learners try to tick the boxes which resemble to each other if the affirmation is false or true. Another additional task: it is to request the learners to imagine the scenario of an appropriate clip to the listened to song. Such experience of video clips is indisputably more instructive and educational since listening is mixed with watching. In the next stage, we compare this clip with the original one from a thematic and musical stand point. After reviewing the clip, the teacher can ask them if it is possible to stage it. It is feasible to increase various activities in a language class. Everything depends on the imagination and the creativity of the teacher and especially his desire to teach.

RESULTS

Also, we think that the use of the song in a language class has as an educational objective to motivate the learners, to arouse in them the desire to learn through a more ludic approach. The gives the chance to practice, within the framework of a motivating activity, the musicality of the tones of a target language which some are different from the dialectal Algerian Arabic. The experience carried out shows that the song and the nursery-rhymes make rich means which enables to improve the linguistic skills at the level of phonology.

The discovery of the authentic songs, most often through the presentation of lyrics under the form of cloze test such as the exercises of auditory discrimination and the learner gets used to the melody of the target language through a song, its rhythm and its musicality. The culture of songs has been the opportunity to expand their knowledge about target languages and hence, to improve their cultural and communication horizon and, the song might open a breach in the French language and in all what it conveys (a way of being, of feeling, of seeing oneself, of reacting to the outside world) in order to get access, in a certain way, to the world of the French-speaking countries of nowadays. This set of issues defines the subject of our research work. Finally, we had a lot of pleasure practicing the activities of the song while teaching. We have found out that the learners were curious and motivated by the song. A teaching involved in this discipline might hand over his passion for languages to these learners and to favor their involvement in order to develop their communication skills.

CONCLUSION

The song has become an educational tool of nowadays. But first, it is important to point out that it has an entertainment task rather than an educational one. It provides the learning of the target language with richness and diversity. The teachers give a large importance to the nursery-rhymes or songs during the course of the lesson, for the song brings about a more attractive lively atmosphere than any other text. Since the audio-visual presentation further attracts the attention of the learners. Thanks to a song of French expression, we provide the learners with a listening to diversity of pronunciations and of tones, and this strengthens the receptive capabilities of the learners. It is important to pay attention to the selection of the songs which are used for exercises of oral comprehension oral, of listening and of creativity. Besides, the learners should search within the song the information about which we discuss in the classroom. This communicative approach way leads the learners to boost and acquire language capabilities for there are learners who get into the oral communication with difficulty. The song is considered as direct link to the foreign language. It is here a matter of a progressive command of the intercultural skill necessary to the learning of the target language. Commanding this skill gives the opportunity to undertake by oneself a reflexion of better grasping one's own culture by getting inside the culture of the other. So, the song just like the language, are heirs of the culture. The use of the song in a language class allows to learn the FFL and to improve the skill of written and oral expression through the tasks that combine both learning and pleasure. We will try to prove that the use of the song in class progressively enables to learn the target language.

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