



Promoting Cultural Awareness through R&B Songs in English in Remote Teaching.

Promovendo Consciência Cultural por meio de Músicas do Gênero R&B em Inglês no Ensino Remoto.

Promoción de la Conciencia Cultural a través de Canciones de R&B en Inglés en la Enseñanza Temota.

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RESUMO

Introdução: As músicas em geral desempenham um importante papel no processo de aprendizagem de outras línguas, conduzindo-nos a conhecer novas formas de pensar e interagir socialmente.

Objetivo: Investigar como as músicas R&B em inglês podem ser uma ferramenta com a finalidade de promover a interculturalidade e desenvolver a consciência cultural dos alunos sobre questões raciais no ensino a distância.

Métodos: Esta pesquisa caracteriza-se como qualitativa. Foram selecionados 20 alunos para participar do curso "Produção Oral: Conversação nível intermediário-avançado", realizado no programa Rede ANDIFES - Idiomas sem Fronteiras, da Universidade Federal do Piauí (UFPI). Foram desenvolvidas três atividades para os alunos, baseadas em canções e divididas de acordo com objetivos previamente estabelecidos. As percepções dos alunos foram analisadas no decorrer do curso ao compartilharem suas reflexões em cinco questões de resposta abertas.

Resultados: As canções R&B em inglês mostraram ser um recurso útil para os alunos aumentarem sua consciência cultural sobre certas questões raciais presentes em nossa sociedade, especialmente ao entrar em contato com mensagens relevantes abordadas neste gênero musical.

Conclusão: A análise de músicas do gênero R&B em inglês pode e deve ser usada como ferramenta de ensino-aprendizagem para promover consciência cultural e, assim, ampliar as percepções e tomada de ações frente a questões raciais.

Palavras-chave: Música; Canções R&B em Inglês; Interculturalidade; Consciência Cultural.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Songs in overall play an important role in the process of learning other languages, leading us to discover new ways of thinking and interacting socially.

Objective: Investigate how R&B English songs can be a tool to promote interculturality and to develop learners' cultural awareness on racial issues in remote teaching.

Methods: This research is characterized as qualitative. 20 students were selected to participate in the course "Oral Production: Conversation intermediate-advanced level" held in the ANDIFES Language without Borders Program Network, at the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI). Three song-based activities were developed for the students and divided corresponding to previously settled up goals. The perceptions of the participants were analyzed as the course happened by sharing their final thoughts in five open-response questions.

Results: R&B English songs showed to be a helpful resource for English students to enhance their cultural awareness on certain racial issues present in our society by getting in touch with relevant messages approached in this musical genre.

Conclusion: The analysis of R&B songs in English can and must be used as a teaching-learning tool to promote cultural awareness, thus expanding perceptions and taking actions in regards racial issues.

Keywords: Music; R&B English Songs; Interculturality; Cultural Awareness.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Las canciones en general juegan un papel importante en el proceso de aprendizaje de otros idiomas, llevándonos a descubrir nuevas formas de pensar e interactuar socialmente.

Objetivo: Investigar cómo las canciones de R&B en inglés pueden ser una herramienta para promover la interculturalidad y desarrollar la conciencia cultural de los estudiantes sobre cuestiones raciales en la enseñanza remota.

Métodos: Esta investigación se caracteriza como cualitativa. 20 estudiantes fueron seleccionados para participar del curso "Producción Oral: Conversación nivel intermedio-avanzado" realizado en la Red del Programa ANDIFES Lengua sin Fronteras, de la Universidad Federal de Piauí (UFPI). Se desarrollaron para los estudiantes tres actividades basadas en canciones y divididas según los objetivos previamente establecidos. Las percepciones de los participantes fueron analizadas a lo largo del curso compartiendo sus pensamientos finales en cinco preguntas de respuesta abierta.

Resultados: Las canciones de R&B en inglés demostraron ser un recurso útil para que los estudiantes de inglés mejoren su conciencia cultural sobre ciertas cuestiones raciales presentes en nuestra sociedad al entrar en contacto con mensajes relevantes abordados en este género musical.

Conclusión: El análisis de canciones de R&B en inglés puede y debe ser utilizado como una herramienta de enseñanza-aprendizaje para promover la conciencia cultural, ampliando percepciones y tomando acciones en torno a cuestiones raciales.

Palabras-clave: Música; Canciones en inglés de R&B; Interculturalidad; Conciencia cultural.

INTRODUCTION

Music has been part of everyone's life. It is present in almost all social and personal cultural expressions of the individuals since ancient times (MOREIRA; SANTOS; COELHO, 2014). Music is an organization of sounds that promotes distinct feelings and "nobody can deny how powerful music is or that it affects our feelings and energy levels" (ULATE, 2008, p. 95).

According to Barton (2018, p. 4) "music can tell us many things about a particular culture through its instruments, instrument makers, and its performance structures that encompass the interaction between performers, audience [...]" . Indeed, one of the factors behind a song can be its sense of interculturality, because the message intended to be transmitted by the song may be the same experienced by the listener.

In the present days, music from different parts of the planet is available for everyone. The internet has become a valuable tool in order to provide it, so intercultural resources are accessed by anyone who wants to know more about other countries, people and their cultures. Certainly, plenty of information throughout the lyrics can be acquired, as well as the language itself.

Based on that, music is an important resource to achieve this procedure because language and interculturality are interconnected, which helps to develop people's sociocultural competence, that is, according to Safina (2014, p. 82) "the possession of and the ability to apply a set of multicultural knowledge, skills and qualities in the process of intercultural communication".

Within this perspective, it stands out lyrics present in the Rhythm and Blues (R&B) songs, which is a genre of popular music coined from the African American communities in the 1940s. Palmer (1982, p. 146) explains that this term (R&B) was originally used by record companies to describe recordings marketed predominantly to urban African Americans and the musical genres sung by them, and also to represent the black youth culture.

With this topic in mind, this work aims to promote cultural awareness through English R&B songs in remote teaching.

In the next topic, we will present a theoretical background in order to provide the key concepts and the explanations for the theories approached in this work.

Music as an Intercultural Resource for the Acquisition of Languages

Music is a reliable resource to display cultural elements regarding any society that exists on the earth. According to Villodre (2012), music helps us to guarantee cultural and artistic competence, in which the development related to its creation is a key tool for the increase of the listeners' cultural awareness while listening to a song, as well as understanding the interculturality aspects present in it.

For Candau (2008), interculturality is considered the most appropriate aspect for the construction of democratic and inclusive societies, and also to articulate equality actions with identity policies. Therefore, by following these concepts, the interculturality benefits the interaction between people from different cultures and backgrounds while promoting the gaining of new perspectives and thoughts about one another's culture.

Considering this connection with interculturality, music is an artistic way of approaching people's feelings and minds, and it has a valuable role to introduce the enormous diversity of stories present all over the world. For Petrus (2012, p.127) "music has a social function because it is able to foster bonds between people and also to convey values".

The cultural aspects brought by the music throughout ages and decades are other points to highlight along with its melodies and rhythms that remind us about different periods in time. Kusnerek (2016) says that songs are like a capsule in which their histories and meaningful social information are spread, as well as the hopes and fears lived by people during a particular time.

Shayakhmetova *et al.*, (2017, p. 641) discuss that songs help us to look deeper into the cultural traditions of different societies. The importance of getting in touch with those elements provided by the songs have the keys to teach us the amount of exchanging tool information we need in order to know about histories we may have never thought about. Hence, it becomes better to understand the values of people whose language we learn.

Cultural Awareness through Songs

The use of songs in order to develop awareness on specific questions is evident when it relates culture and critical thinking. According to Petrus (2012), cultural awareness is referred to understanding someone else's culture, so music as an intercultural source means to transmit messages through the language by following the artist's intentions.

Karimboyevna (2020) states that cultural awareness is frequently seen as the fifth language skill side by side with writing, speaking, listening and reading, by helping the individuals to build their language background along with the raising of one's awareness about a certain culture. In addition, the listener will receive insights while listening to the song, reflecting on the lyrics presented in it.

The person who listens to the song will use their Critical Framing or Critical Literacy, which is, the capacity of the person to think critically in order to understand the message, what is the purpose of it and who benefits from it by gathering the information through careful proceeds, such as: observation, experience, reflection and reasoning (LAPP; MOSS; ROWSELLI, 2012; AKBARI; SEIFOORI; AHOUR, 2017).

Bolitho *et al.*, (2003, p. 254) says that "the result of the awareness-raising work will not just be a language improved use, but also a language use, which is more sensitive to issues of culture, identity, and equity". In turn, Shen (2009, p. 91) states that "although most students regard listening to as well as learning English songs as entertainment, they are also learning implicitly and unconsciously". For Petrus (2012), by making music, intercultural awareness is celebrated as a positive way to promote cultural understanding of different ideas.

Thus, cultural awareness is seen as a way of having respect and empathy for comprehending the problems and struggles faced by other people, because this understanding of someone else's culture is a path to see what is the real message behind the lyrics.

Cultural Awareness through R&B Songs

The R&B songs as manners of displaying the African American culture through their messages are considered important evidence of historical elements faced and achieved by the black American people throughout decades. Allen and Randolph (2020, p.3) say that "R&B can be political when it addresses issues of power and protest as well as when it addresses its stock-in-trade". For Jones (2016, p.1), "historical accounts on R&B music testify that the foundations of R&B were established during the Civil Rights Movement".

In this case, there is one connection between the R&B music and the civil rights movement, especially when it comes to the main point of this movement, an organized effort by black Americans to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights under the law.

Besides that, another idea regarding R&B is the representation of the struggles, the love and the hard times black women might go through during their motherhood. According to Chaney *et al.*, (2016), these mothers are the source of emotional comfort and support, as well as the children's strength and self confidence, and mostly the source of genuine love.

Therefore, the importance of the genre R&B for the black community is exceptionally relevant for bringing to the world the oppression and prejudice these people suffered throughout decades.

The Sociocultural Competence

Sociocultural competence is important for the communicative increase for both the native speakers and the language learners in order to improve their communication skills likewise the awareness on several questions, because a speaker getting familiarized with one single use of a language most likely will not achieve diversity coming from different social groups. However, Ramos (2001) states that intercultural communication might cause a few problems regarding different backgrounds, groups and sub-groups that a person belongs to, so it may affect the interaction amidst people.

The sociocultural competence also includes some rules to produce and comprehend the statements in a proper way in several sociocultural contexts, and this communication implies a set of thoughts, identities, images and perceptions, so the objective of the dialogue is achieved (VILLODRE, 2012). Therefore, sociocultural competence helps people to develop the necessary knowledge in order to

communicate with people from other cultures around the world, because of the variety of word sets related to the communication.

Moreira, Santos and Coelho (2014) claim that music can develop the human mind, promote balance and provide a pleasant state of well-being. Thus, besides learning the language structures and their features, the students might comprehend how crucial it is to have this contact with a language, aiming to understand the messages behind the songs.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the goals previously proposed, song-based activities were used in classes during the remote teaching as a way to develop the students' cultural awareness according to the messages in the lyrics. Moreover, one reflective open-response list with five questions in English was given to the students at the end of the course in order to check if these activities have contributed to the raise of their awareness in relation to the information approached in the R&B songs in English.

Those answers and perceptions provided by the students were used to understand their points of view after the course being held. The reflection focused on racial issues presented in the songs using the following question: "What are the impacts of using activities based on songs on the students' awareness regarding racial issues and sociocultural competence?"

This study was done based on the qualitative method, in which Neves (1996, p.1) states that "the researcher frequently tries to understand the phenomena, according to the participants' perspective of the studied topic". In addition, a case study was applied for the creation of hypotheses or the reformulation of the researched question.

In the following topics, the whole procedure and process are being explained in order to clarify the qualitative and theoretical approaches.

The Context: English Intermediate/Advanced Course

This research was conducted during the course Oral Production: Conversation intermediate/advanced level held by the Language without Borders Program on Fridays and Saturdays, from April 2021 to May 2021, in the remote teaching due to COVID-19.

The course: Oral Production: Conversation

The course aimed to provide students the opportunity to practice their speaking and listening skills while discussing specific themes, such as: pandemic, literature and reality shows. However, in this work only the music was explored, because it allowed the students to improve their language skills by interacting with each other using songs as the main resources.

The Participants

The course started with one group of twenty students from intermediate to advanced level at age from 20 to 30. Notwithstanding, as the course was happening some students decided to quit it due to different reasons. The course finished with nine students. However, only six students participated in all of the three song-based activities proposed during the course.

The Song-based Activities

The songs used in this research had the purpose of bringing the necessary information to make the students to think and discuss about the messages in them. The first activity was based on the song I'll always love my mama, released in 1973 by the American group The Intruders. This song is commonly played during the Mother's Day in the U.S., since it shows a story of a single mother who works hard to raise her family in a society with few opportunities for them.

The second activity was based on the song Glory by the American singers John Legend and Common. It is a soundtrack from the movie Selma released in 2014, and it portrays the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches and the fight for civil rights. This song also won one Oscar for best original song along with other awards.

The third and last activity was based on the song I can't breathe by the American singer H.E.R.

Released in 2020, this song won the Grammy for song of the year, and it was written in memory of George Floyd and the many Black Americans who died at the hands of police.

Table 1: Divided specific steps for the song-based activities.

Steps	Purposes
Warm-up	It aimed to establish an appropriate set in for the discussions
Pre-listening	It had the purpose of providing some vocabulary the students might have not known before present in the lyrics by doing some tasks
While-listening	The students listened to the song twice and could practice their listening in order to understand the main themes brought in it
After-listening	The students had to discuss the messages they understood from the lyrics and show their perspectives on them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Students' Perceptions gained through the Lyrics

The different responses¹ provided by the students regarding the same song were definitely essential to express their perceptions on discussing the themes promoted in the lyrics. Even though they presented similar opinions when it came to the messages in the song, they also wrote specific points that remind us about the issues within our society, especially the ones related to the racial causes.

In the question D from the song activity one, the students needed to put into words what they had understood from the lyrics as observed in the following frames, by answering the questions: "Now that you have listened to the song, write a short text about the song answering these two questions: what kind of feeling are the song narrators talking about? Why is it important for the narrators' background?"

Student 1: "The narrator feels a lot of repentance and gratitude at the same time. All the things his mother have done to him makes him feel happy because her unconditional love for him is obvious, and the maturite he probably got with time taught him that is something very rare, because he not only probably did never find anyone able to do the same for him, as also knows that he won't find someone like her. But, at the same time, he feels sad, because he knows he didn't repay all the sacrifices she made for him. We see a mother who struggled for years to raise her child in the best way, but probably due to external influences, due the fact her son most likely made friendships and had relationships with people who live on the outskirts (where they probably lived)".

The student one shows how important is the love of this mother for her son. However, her son does not demonstrate the same feelings to his mother the way he is supposed to. Besides, it is possible to notice the idea of stereotype because, as mentioned by the student, for the people who do not live in the same reality as the characters in the lyrics, the prejudice is present.

¹ The responses provided by the students in the song-based activities were not corrected or changed.

Student 2: "The strongest feeling the narrator shares with the listeners is gratitude. The song is about his memories, especially when he was becoming a man. He sings about the efforts of his mother to keep him safe and make a man of him. The lyrics tell us what he did and his mother advises and love. When we were listening to the song, that we figured it out when it was recorded, the context, the civil rights fight in the U.S., the police violence against black people that was even strong in the 70s, the gangs fight on subur, everything helps the listener to understand the worries of this woman and how hard she'd have to work to raise her kid".

The student number two also mentions the feelings this mother has for her son, and how hard it was for her to raise her child in a racist society. We can also see some elements regarding the issues and the struggles the black community faces brought in the lyrics. The idea of gathering information and reflecting on them leads us to use our critical thinking, which helps us to understand and discuss them.

Student 3: "The narrator is talking about feelings of gratification for everything his mother did for him, feelings that are undeniable by the lyrics written between the lines, which reflect past moments that were difficult to everyone. This becomes important because it builds memories based in the narrator's experiences. These experiences were inmemorial in the sense of preparing for the reality in which the narrator lived."

The student number three, just like the other two, also mentions the caring demonstrated by this mother as one of the main points in the song. In addition, the problems they had to deal with and the experiences they had to face as a black family living within one society who judges them just by the color of their skin.

Following it, in the answers provided by the students in relation to the lyrics of the song I'll always love my mama, we can see that these themes were perceived, since some key words and some information to complement their thoughts were written, such as: mother, gratitude, love, raise, efforts, civil rights, marginalization and poverty.

Therefore, this cultural awareness is noticed through students' perceptions, because the song talks about one racial issue very common in our society, which is the difficulty of being a single mother.

Question four: In this song-based activity the students had to do some research on the following topics present in the ensuing instruction: "4) Work in groups. For the next class each group will present about one of the historical elements (Rosa Parks, The city of Ferguson, The city of Selma, Jim Crow) brought by the narrators in the song by answering the following question: What do those elements represent to the history of racism in the U.S." (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Images of the slides used during the presentations made by the two groups.

In this task, the students had the chance to explore some historical elements present in the song "Glory", which are relevant for the history of the fight for civil rights in the U.S. So they could understand more about the history for racial rights in the U.S., since it is important for students to learn and to comprehend the culture related to the language they are learning, as well as to enrich their background knowledge to know how to express their ideas regarding it.

The Final Points of View

The students' points of view² produced at the end of the course were extremely important to comprehend even more how the messages brought in the lyrics in the three R&B English songs may have improved their sense of interculturality, cultural awareness and their way of expressing ideas on racial issues. In the first question, the students could express their opinions and to point out the similarities about the messages presented in the song and the Brazilian society.

Q1- In the first song activity, the lyrics of the song I'll always love my mama, the narrators talk about one black single mother who works hard to provide food for her son, and also to raise him in a racist society.

In the perspective of bringing the same theme to our society, what are the similarities this theme brings to Brazilian society?

Student 1: "The portrait of brazilian society is mostly reflected in single-parent families, where mainly black women have to go through this, dealing with a long working day and having to leave their children alone at home".

Student 2: "In our country, black people fight every day for their space in society. At the moment when they try to occupy such spaces, there is a huge romanticization of racism, that normally black people are warriors, fighters but they are just trying to survive in a racist society!"

Student 3: "Há muitas semelhanças com o contexto brasileiro atual, onde muitas mães negras precisam deixar seus filhos em casa, e ir cuidar de outras casas e outras crianças. Dessa maneira, é maior a chance de filhos de mulheres negras se tornarem adultos problemáticos ou de se envolverem em problemas no futuro".

Student 4: "In the Brazilian society there are a huge amount of families rule by black single mothers and as breadwinners they don't stay at home and need to raise their kids to deal with things outside their houses".

Student 5: "The theme of single parenthood is prominent in the United States as well as in Brazil. Our country currently has an estimate of about 20 million single mothers. Many times, even if the mother and father are still together it is common to have a void paternal presence most often found in poverty stricken areas".

In the five answers discussed by the students is seen this idea of interculturality, since both cultures have similar structures when it comes to the issue of being a single parent. However, in the case of the song the narrators talk about one black single mother who struggles to raise her son, and as written by the students these struggles are very much alike, because the racial issue approached in the song can be easily identified in both societies. Thus, the song as a hookup that attaches individuals from different backgrounds has this power to approximate societies by talking about similar situations, since it performs a social role that may touch identical wounds.

In the second question, the students show the importance of having historical elements in a song, as well as to have their awareness developed on the topics approached in the lyrics.

² The perceptions provided by the students in the five reflective open-response list were not corrected or changed.

Q2 - In the second song activity, the lyrics of the song Glory bring to the listener some historical elements about the racial fights for civil rights faced by the black society in the United States.

In your opinion, how do these elements may contribute to the development of cultural awareness of a listener?

Student 1: "Through glory we can understand more about some movements for equal rights, such as the civil right movement, and who Selma is. It is very important to learn about such events through music, as art usually makes the most impact."

Student 2: "understanding the historical events of the civil rights help others grasp the point of view of another culture. In previous and upcoming elections, we may be able to judge and form conclusions with sympathy and for many other black communities, with empathy."

Student 3: "It is always important to understand the bias from which our society came, in order to understand the present times. In this matter in particular, we should be aware of the limitations that people of color had in the past and what were their tools to change their reality"

Student 4: "I think that making these historical elements known, and remembered whenever possible, helps a lot to prevent things from going back to the way they were".

It is observed by the students' points of view that the civil rights movements along with other significant mobilizations and people were essential for this community to achieve their rights, and the lyrics faithfully bring these moments to the listeners.

R&B songs can be political when it approaches concerns and protests regarding specific topics. The civil rights movements and the R&B songs have one connection, since they have this role of spreading influential information, which is seen through the students' words, because these ideas of preventing the future from the mistakes made in the past are expressed by them.

Therefore, this intercultural awareness is important for the language learners to understand the message intended to be transmitted, and to have their language background built.

In the next question, the students express their points of view when it comes to the connection between the video clip and the lyrics.

Q3 - In the third song activity, the music video (I can't breathe) shows to the audience images from different places throughout the video, even though these images show people from different countries, they are following the same ideas.

In your opinion, why do these ideas present in the music video, as well as in the lyrics of the song link people from different cultures?

Student 1: "Yes, the video and the lyrics connect different cultures and show that besides economic, social or historical differences they can have the same social issues and they could work together to change this reality."

Student 2: "the line "will anyone fight for me" is significant to the imagery shown in the music video - A cry to be seen in a moment where George Floyd may have felt alone. The international unity demonstrated here let's the grieving know that they are not alone. No matter what walk of life they come from, they understand human decency."

Student 3: "because they talk about the prejudices suffered because of race, nationality, among others that many suffer when they leave their countries and just because of who they are, they are delegitimized. the video tries to convey this unity and this fight for equality."

Student 4: "In my opinion, the music show such imagery because racism in western societies came from the same root. The belief of white superiority originated a certain kind of phenomena that excludes other colors as people."

Student 5: "I think this is due to the fact that racism exists and has always existed in every country in the world. People saw the assassination of George Floyd as the ideal moment to express their discomfort with this problem that is so old and at the same time current."

Music has the power to reinforce personal and collective identities, because the lyrics may touch individuals from different parts of the world, but with similar issues and concerns. In this sense, the perceptions discussed by the students show us how alike are the messages presented in the song along with the music video to the reality lived by different societies, as well as with the causes of these racial issues.

During the next analysis, in question number four, the students could point out which themes approached in the songs touched them the most, which was a good example to see how music could affect people's minds and feelings.

Q4 - Among the themes present in the lyrics of the three songs discussed during the activities, which one of these themes called your attention the most? Justify your opinion.

Student 1: "As much as everyone is connected, the first one caught my attention, precisely because of this idea that black people are forced to be stronger, warriors, not by choice, but for the sake of surviving in a racist society".

Student 2: "I think that "I'll always love my mama". Probably because, we live in a society where is not just usual, but also considered normal that black mothers don't raise their children. I was raised in a house where black women used to work, but I had never thought about who were taking care of their houses and who were raising their children. Even when people discuss about feminism and women at the labor market, we usually remember that our grandmothers couldn't work outside home, and used to be explored, doing all the domestic work."

Student 3: "The second one, because, like said before, understanding our past is essential to understand our present times".

Student 4: "while each theme pulls on the heart strings of anyone who listens, I resonate most with the first theme of single parenthood because of the relationship I have with my mother and how hard I have seen her work through my childhood".

Student 5: "the last video, I can't breathe, because there is a strong message in the music and the singer gets it through in the vocals".

This question was important for the fact that it shows how the messages present in each song worked on the students' thoughts likewise to provoke interculturality, especially the song "I'll always love my mama".

As previously pointed out, music is an important resource to promote this conversation, since the set of information behind the creation of the music has the aim to encompass one interaction with the listeners. So, the students could give their opinions on these messages.

Besides, other themes present in the songs "Glory" and "I can't breathe" are also commented by the students, due to its importance to show to the audience the hard times faced by the black community in the past, and how it is still happening in the present times. Hence, the students could develop their awareness on these topics by interpreting what happened in the past to comprehend the present and change the future.

Lastly, in question number five, the students show how those messages discussed during the classes might have contributed to develop their cultural background and language vocabulary.

Q5: In your opinion, how do the messages present in the lyrics may affect the way you see the topics approached in the songs, such as: the importance of motherhood, fight for civil rights as a human being, as well as a language learner?

Student 1: "i believe i already had a strong opinion about this topic, so it didn't change a lot. The approached of use the songs of when the fight for civil rights was going on was special because we could see the tops on the eyes of the moment."

Student 2: "bringing a new point of view, that of those who live, the music serves precisely to pass on the message to more people".

Student 3: "Art is a very didactic way to learn a language and, of course, the culture and history of a society. As a language student, we must know that culture and language are closely linked, when that culture is shared by societies, it is even more important to understand it. Basically, all the minimum rights that minorities have achieved these days, was on the basis of a lot of struggle, blood, pain and death".

Student 4: "I think that music, like literature, for example, has the potential to work on our playful, cultural, emotional and communicative dimensions. By combining all these aspects at the same time, it is possible to learn English and increase our cultural background at the same time, and in a less stressful way".

Student 5: "It affects me in several manners. Firstly, as a citizen of the world, I can reflect upon the other realities of many people as well as their fights. Finally, as a language learner, I can develop a more accurate vocabulary, and at the same time get in touch with other people's cultures".

Student 6: "These songs give insight on a different perspective. Both positions, the war but also the peace. A position that may not often be portrayed in social media. As a language learner we attain a greater morphological view to new vocabulary as well as vocabulary learned over the years".

By reading the students' answers to this question, they tell us how relevant are the messages brought in the songs when it comes to sell one important point of view, as well as to show how societies lean to think about certain topics, in addition to other perceptions that music tends to give to the listeners in order to make them reflect on different subjects within their society or a different one.

Also, we notice that the ideas brought by the students are related to culture and language being connected to a language learning, which is true, considering that both work as a means to spread the information, structures and thoughts regarding the necessary background to express one's opinions and notions on different topics.

CONCLUSION

Songs are significant resources to use during the classes because they can promote a stimulating atmosphere, where the teacher and the students can discuss different topics presented in the lyrics. This research was challenging, since the tasks had to be adapted for the format of remote teaching. Moreover, it was necessary to think about captivating exercises, discussions and methods in order to engage the students to participate in those activities. These exercises provided ways of bringing to the participants the critical thinking and the awareness on relevant issues covered in the songs.

The data analysis showed interesting results on how relevant R&B English songs are in order to make the students think about the information given in the lyrics, since it was observed through the students' answers during the tasks done in classes and their perceptions shared at the end of the course. Other points to highlight were the opportunities for the students to practice the language and to express their ideas by using different language skills.

The personal developments, as well as the enhancement of how to use songs have benefited the methodologies that we will further work with, in order to bring the same environment to other classes. Thus, those outcomes were important to accomplish future researches in this field, as well as to take

in more information regarding it, since teachers are, after all, themselves students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors of this work appreciate all the help and efforts that every student put in order to make this work happen.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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