UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL

INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

MICHELE MORAES DE MORAES

WORKING WITH SONGS BEYOND LISTENING PRACTICE – THE CREATION OF A LANGUAGE LEARNING TOOL

Porto Alegre

2017

MICHELE MORAES DE MORAES

WORKING WITH SONGS BEYOND LISTENING PRACTICE – THE CREATION OF A LANGUAGE LEARNING TOOL

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso de curso de graduação apresentado como requisito parcial para a obtenção de grau de Licenciatura em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Orientadora: Profª. Dra. Patrícia da Silva Campelo Costa Barcellos

Porto Alegre

2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After seven years at UFRGS, a journey longer than I expected, I would happily like to thank:

Firstly, my family and friends who encouraged me to do a second undergraduate course and make a dream come true.

My current students and all students I have had since I started my career as a teacher, who are certainly the reason for my constant search for knowledge and professional development. A special thanks to my student Everton Costa, who accepted to develop the online tool proposed in this work for his undergraduate thesis in Computer Science. Thank you very much for your cooperation, suggestions, patience, and so much time you have been spending to turn this project into something concrete.

All my remarkable professors at UFRGS, who contributed greatly to make me a better teacher.

My advisor, Patrícia Campelo, my most sincere thank you. Thank you for the discipline you taught me and I liked so much, which served as an inspiration for the theme of my undergraduate thesis. Thank you for accepting me as your advisee. Thank you for your kindness and patience with me. Thank you for your valuable guidance and assistance to make this work real. You are certainly a role model for me.

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as
you do not stop (CONFUCIUS).

ABSTRACT

The development of the World Wide Web and the consequent insertion of new technologies in people's lives have democratized information that once was learnt solely at schools and universities. This enabled people to search for learning objects according to their interests and needs. The aim of this paper is to propose the development of a free virtual language learning tool to work with songs. Because of the interdisciplinary focus of this endeavor, the close partnership with a student of Computer Science has been paramount. Songs are a source of authentic material that have been widely used as language practice since they provide many benefits and can be worked beyond listening practice. Following the Integrative CALL, this language learning tool integrates various skills as well as incorporates direct language learning strategies, essential for developing communicative competence. Moreover, it was not only planned for learners to practice the foreign language through music but also for teachers to create their own lessons. The tool will have a repository of lessons created by teachers and available for all learners who wish to do it. Each lesson of the proposed virtual tool is divided into six sections (vocabulary practice, listening practice, grammar practice, reading practice, pronunciation practice and writing practice), each one working with a different exercise or task related to the song. By combining exercises and tasks that comprises different language learning strategies, all learners could benefit from applying different ways to learn a foreign language, and the lesson focuses not only on context, meaning and communication, but also on comprehension and production problems.

Keywords: Learning Languages with Songs. CALL. Learning Objects. Language Learning Strategies. Exercises and Tasks.

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento da World Wide Web e a consequente inserção de novas tecnologias na vida das pessoas têm democratizado a informação, que era exclusivamente adquirida em escolas e universidades. Com isso, as pessoas passaram a buscar por objetos de aprendizagem de acordo com seus interesses e necessidades. O objetivo deste artigo é propor a criação de uma ferramenta virtual de aprendizagem de idiomas através de canções. Tendo em vista o foco interdisciplinar deste trabalho, a estreita parceria com um estudante de Ciências da Computação tem sido primordial. Canções são uma fonte de material autêntico e têm sido amplamente utilizadas na prática de idiomas, pois oferecem inúmeros benefícios, podendo ser trabalhadas além da compreensão oral. Inspirada no CALL Integrativo, esta ferramenta de aprendizagem de línguas integra várias habilidades, além de incorporar estratégias diretas de aprendizagem de línguas, essenciais para o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa. Além de ser projetada para que os alunos aprendam uma língua estrangeira através da música, a ferramenta também está sendo desenvolvida para que professores criem suas próprias lições. A ferramenta possui um repositório de lições criada por professores e disponível para todos os usuários da ferramenta. Cada lição da ferramenta virtual proposta é dividida em seis seções (prática de vocabulário, prática de compreensão oral, prática de gramática, prática de compreensão textual, prática de escrita), cada uma trabalhando com um exercício ou tarefa diferente relacionada à canção. Ao combinar exercícios e tarefas que compreendem diferentes estratégias de aprendizagem de idiomas, todos os alunos se beneficiam, e a lição além de se concentrar no contexto, significado e comunicação, também foca em problemas de compreensão e produção.

Palavras-chave: Aprendendo idiomas com músicas. CALL. Objetos de aprendizagem. Estratégias de aprendizagem de línguas. Exercícios e tarefas.

LIST OF FIGURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The digital culture in which we live allows us to determine what we want to learn, according to our interests and needs, when we want to learn and at our own pace. In the digital era, information and learning resources are not found exclusively at schools and universities. They have become democratized and available to anyone using a computer connected to the internet.

In the most recent years, with the increase of digital learning tools, learners also started using websites to practice language skills with music, for example. Songs have been widely used as listening practice since they provide playful and entertaining activities for all ages, and students tend to enjoy learning through music. *Lyrics Training* and *Lyrics Gaps*, and more recently *Linguician* are some of the most popular free tools specialized in language learning with music. However, *Lyrics Training* and *Lyrics Gaps* work solely with oral comprehension and they, including *Linguician,* fail to consider a wider linguistic and cultural significance of the song lyrics. A reason for that is the lack of programmers with linguistic knowledge and language teaching experiences who are responsible for creating these resources. They have the skills to develop an entertaining and user-friendly tool, yet they may not know how influential the tool can be for language learning, since multidisciplinary teams of production – comprised of linguists and teachers, for example – are not always available.

Taking all of this into consideration, I and a Computer Science student from Universidade Luterana do Brasil (ULBRA), Everton Costa, decided to do an interdisciplinary project to build a web language learning tool. We wrote our undergraduate theses individually; however, we gave each other the necessary support to make the best of our work and enhance the effectiveness of the tool. I contributed with my linguistic knowledge and professional experience as an English teacher since 2002, while he developed the tool using his knowledge about computer programming.

In order to work with a virtual tool, it is important to understand the concept of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Learning Objects in Language Teaching. CALL is a field of studies related to practices and research about the use of computers and language teaching (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998), whereas learning objects are considered any digital resource that can be used to support learning. A learning object must be a *small unit of learning* that presents specific features such as being *self-contained*, *reusable*, *aggregated*, and *tagged with metadata* (BECK, 2009). The characteristics of the proposed

language learning tool as a learning object and more information about CALL will be discussed later in this text.

The virtual tool we have been developing is divided into sections, each one proposing a different exercise or task[1]related to a song. The tool will provide for the learner the opportunity to practice language skills and other aspects of the language necessary for mastering a foreign language. The form-based and meaning-based activities are based on the direct language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990, 2002, 2003), useful for improving communicative competence[2].

In this paper, I propose the creation of a free virtual language learning tool to work with songs, a platform different from resources currently available on the web, since it does not work solely with listening practice. Following the Integrative CALL[3], I intend to show that songs can be worked beyond listening practice, a perspective on technology and language learning that seeks to integrate various language skills (listening, reading and writing) and other aspects of the language (vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar). Furthermore, the lessons for this tool were designed by incorporating different language learning strategies (OXFORD, 1990, 2002,2003), essential for the development of communicative competence. The virtual language learning tool was planned for learners to practice the foreign language through music, and also for teachers to choose a song and design their own lessons. The tool will have a lesson repository where each new lesson created by a teacher will be stored and available for all learners, not only for the teacher-who-designed-the-lesson's learners but also for any learner who wishes to do the lesson. This way, the lessons may be used as part of a syllabus in a classroom or as an assigned activity for online learning, in a regular course or for self-study practice.

---

[1] For more information on the difference between 'task' and 'exercise', see section 2.3 Exercises versus Tasks, on page 20.

[2] "Communicative competence is the knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also the knowledge of whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community. Communicative competence includes:
   a) Grammatical competence, that is the knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and semantics of a language.
   b) Sociolinguistic competence, that is, knowledge of the relationship between language and its nonlinguistic context, knowing how to use and respond appropriately to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations, knowing which address forms should be used with."(RICHARD; SCHMIDT, 2002, p.90)

[3] For more information on integrative CALL, see section 2.1 CALL - Computer-Assisted Language Learning, on page 13.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We are at a point in our history when society and, consequently, education are undergoing a process of transition and adaptation in which universities, schools, teachers, and students seek ways to adjust to new demands, as a result of the insertion of new technologies in various spheres of society (ALMEIDA, 2014). According to Rojo (2017), although the curriculum nowadays still remains strongly based on written and printed materials, technologies of mass culture (radio, cinema, press and TV), as well as media culture (DVD player, CD player, overhead projector and computer), became more and more present in the everyday lives of people in general and in the lives of students in particular.

Rojo (2017) claims that technologies of mass culture are directed one way, from one to many people, without a feedback cycle. The TV and the radio are good examples, since people watch or listen to them without choosing what is broadcast, much less interacting with them. On the other hand, media culture enabled people to choose what they wanted to watch or listen, according to their taste. This somewhat prepared society for the digital culture, in which people started to search for things according to their interest and interact with others online. Language data in multiple media also became the raw material for language learners to re-create the language for themselves, turning them into creators of language rather than passive recipients (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998).

It is important to mention that teacher roles have also changed with times. They are rarely the only source of information in these days of global interconnectedness. Teachers have become facilitators of learning rather than the masters of knowledge. Their new roles include finding, selecting and offering information students must learn in order to meet their needs (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998). Moreover, information and learning resources are not found exclusively at schools and universities. They have become democratized and available in the online world.

2.1 CALL – COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a field of studies related to the relationship between technology and language teaching. According to Hubbard (2016, p.1), CALL is used "to refer to any endeavor involving the computer in some significant way in

language teaching and learning". In the past, computer use was classified into two distinct functional roles of *tutor* or *tool* (LEVY, 1997). For instance, a word processor like Microsoft Word would represent a *tool*, where the computer has no teaching function. On the other hand, a set of online grammar exercises would represent a *tutor* use, with a teaching function. The use of the computer as a *tutor* was a situation of CALL.

Hubbard (2016) points out that although the two roles, *tutor* or *tool*, seemed to be opposing classifications, effective learning can include elements of both. In the past, most applications were tutorial and the computer was seen as "a machine for delivering interactive language learning and practice material – the computer as a *tutor*" (HUBBARD, 2016, p.1). Nowadays, with the development of the World Wide Web and increased access to the internet, the computer became "a means for learners to experience the authentic language and communication opportunities – computer as a *tool*" (HUBBARD, 2016, p.1). According to Hubbard (2016), it is possible to say that CALL is in a constant evolution, considering the computer as both *tutor* and *tool*.

According to Warschauer and Healey (1998) and Hubbard (2016), CALL began in the 1960s in the Technological Education with the era of the mainframe, especially the tutorial system Plato, which ran on its own hardware consisting of a central computer and terminals. This stage of CALL was called behavioristic and it featured repetitive language drills, grammatical explanations and translation tests (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998).

Hubbard (2016) argues that the behavioristic stage of CALL was an insignificant alternative for language learning until the spread of the microcomputer into educational settings in the early 1980s, when computer labs for language learning emerged. At that time, a new stage of CALL, the communicative CALL, arose when personal computers enabled greater opportunities for individual work (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998). Supporters of communicative CALL believed computer-based activities should focus more on teaching grammar implicitly rather than explicitly, encourage learners to produce authentic utterance, and use the foreign language predominantly. In this period, the popular CALL software included text reconstruction programs and discussion simulations, allowing students to work alone or in groups. In the early 1990s, the use of computer as a tool increased due to the reasonably-priced authoring programs available for PC and the price reduction of PCs outside the US. At that time, teachers started to use e-mail and word processors in writing classes, and

to build assignments around Multi-User Dungeon (MUD) and MUD Object-Oriented (MOO), types of enriched chat environments (HUBBARD, 2016).

Hubbard (2016) mentions that two major changes were fundamental to the popularization of CALL in the mid-1990s: the considerable increase in the use of CD-ROMs for language learning, as well as the development of the World Wide Web. This period corresponds to a shift in the uses of technologies in language learning, and the beginning of the integrative CALL.

> Many teachers were moving away from a cognitive view of communicative teaching to a more social or social-cognitive view, which placed greater emphasis on language use in authentic social contexts. Task-based, project-based, and content-based approaches, all sought to integrate learners in authentic environments, and also to integrate the various skills of language learning and use. (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998, p.58).

Nowadays, with the public access to the internet, CALL has become integrated in language learning both in and out of classes. The multimedia-networked computer provides the opportunity for much more integrated uses of technology (WARSCHAUER; HEALEY, 1998). Furthermore, as communication via computer has become an essential feature of the modern world, it allows learners to combine communication with the four essential skills of language learning: reading, listening, speaking and writing. As examples, the current trends of CALL are the learning applications for smartphones and the language learning in virtual worlds, both playing an increasingly important role in education.

CALL has been labeled by different names as followers came up with their own views about it, some of them with the attempt to distance the field from tutorial CALL. The table below (Table 1) represents some of the existing nomenclature with their own characteristics (HUBBARD, 2016).

Table 1 – Acronyms of CALL

CALL	Computer-assisted language learning, sometimes expanded as computer-aided language learning.
CELL	Computer-enhanced language learning: suggests the computer's role is to make learning better.
TELL	Technology-enhanced language learning: this accommodates more than just computers, often bringing in video and seeing the computer as just one part of a larger system.

TALL	Technology-assisted language learning: variant of CALL and TELL.
CALI	Computer-assisted language instruction: with "instruction" in it, it is more teaching oriented.
CBLT	Computer-based language training: views elements of language learning as "training" and tends to use an approach with definable, measurable objectives.
IT / ICT	Information Technology/Information and Communication Technologies: common acronyms outside of language teaching, particularly in Europe; sometimes this is presented as IT or ICT for LT (Language Teaching)
NBLT	Network-Based Language Teaching: focuses on computer-mediated communication and the web.
DLL	Digital Language Learning: encompasses computers and other digital devices.
MALL	Mobile Assisted Language Learning: learning with mobile devices like mobile phones and mp3 players.

Source: Hubbard (2016, p.2).

Observing the table above (table 1), DLL (Digital Language Learning) is more closely related to our virtual language learning tool, since it works with the computer and the internet for teaching and learning a foreign language.

According to Almeida (2014), CALL has been used to describe the increasing use of computers as integral part of language teaching. Almeida (2014) draws the attention to the focus of CALL, which is to discover how to develop alternatives to promote modifications in traditional pedagogical approaches in language teaching and language learning through the insertion of technological tools.

As CALL has undergone constant evolution since its inception, to keep up with the evolution of technology and its tools, the concept of Language Learning Objects (LOs) also underwent changes. Those alterations will be addressed in the next section.

2.2 LEARNING OBJECTS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

"A learning object is defined as any entity, digital or non-digital, that may be used for learning, education or training" (HODGINS, 2002). The term was credited to Wayne Hodgins

in 1989, who served as chair of the IEEE Learning Technology Standards Committee, and was responsible for defining the Learning Object Metadata Standard. He compared the learning object approach to the concept of building blocks such as *Lego*. *Lego* blocks are made of plastic and come in many shapes, sizes, forms and colors, so they can be fit together to form an infinite number and variety of structures. Like building blocks, learning objects are designed to be adaptable and flexible in any place of learning. They can fit one with another learning object in a wide range of possibilities, building courses in creative ways (WISCONSIN'S TECHNICAL COLLEGES, 2017).

Subsequently, Beck (2009) claimed that a digital entity should have some characteristics to be considered a learning object: be a *small unit of learning*, be *self-contained*, be *reusable*, be *aggregated*, and *tagged with metadata*. These aspects were taken into consideration in the construction of the virtual tool, focus of this paper.

The proposed language learning tool is *a small unit of learning* and the content can be covered in a short period of time, between two to ten minutes (BECK, 2009). In our language learning tool, each unit or lesson is divided into six sections, each one working with a different language skill or aspect of the language. There is not a fixed period of time to complete the whole lesson, but the learner is expected to spend two to ten minutes in each section of the lesson.

The tool is *self-contained*, constituting a complete and independent unit in itself (BECK, 2009). The learner can choose any lesson in accordance with his or her musical taste and level of proficiency. Each lesson is tagged with a level of proficiency by the teacher who designed the lesson, according to the difficulty of the proposed exercises and tasks. For our tool, three levels of proficiency are considered: elementary, intermediate and advanced. The classification of the level of proficiency should take into consideration the pace of the music and the kind of exercise or task proposed. Each lesson can be accessed independently, since they do not depend on other lessons or follow a sequence. The user will choose to do the song lesson of his or her interest, within the possibilities offered in his or her proficiency level.

Each created lesson is stored in a repository and might be accessed again, not only by the teacher who designed it, but by anyone who wishes to do the lesson. According to Leffa (2006), a learning object is not created only to be used; it is something made to be reused. The units of learning might be *reusable* for several reasons, financial or ecological, but usually as a matter of time saving. Building learning objects demands time and teachers do not have much

time to create a new learning object for a student or a group of students every time. Therefore, the lessons are usually reused with new students. Moreover, "a single learning object may be used in multiple contexts for multiple purposes" (WISCONSIN'S TECHNICAL COLLEGES, 2017). The lessons could also be *aggregated* to larger collections of content. In other words, teachers might combine the lessons with other learning objects, configuring larger sets of learning resources for a broader content (LEFFA, 2006). The lesson in the digital learning tool could be aggregated to other materials sharing the same theme of the song or language aspect contained in the lyrics, or even to another complementary exercise or task.

Finally, the language learning tool will be *tagged with metadata*, allowing it to be easily found by search engines on the web. Leffa (2006) explains that metadata works as a cataloging system, containing the information about the learning object regarding to its location, language, title, author, brief description, key-words, user, level of difficulty, type of activity, skill (speaking, listening, reading and writing), or theme. Search engines, such as Google and Explorer have a dynamic access to the metadata. In other words, according to the information about the learning object typed in the dialogue box, these search engines restructure after each access, feed the catalogue and update it.

Our learning object is an online tool for learning languages working solely with songs. Songs present a powerful tool for language learning, combining entertainment and language, as it will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 SONGS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Harmer (2001, p.242), "music is a powerful stimulus for student engagement precisely because it speaks directly to our emotions while still allowing us to use our brains to analyze it and its effects if so we wish". For this reason, using songs can be adequate when teaching a foreign language, since it blends entertainment and language.

There are other reasons to include music in teaching a foreign language not only in a traditional classroom, but also in digital language learning. Music enhances the culture of language learning for 21st century learners, and provides a stimulating learning platform and a change from traditional routines (BOOTHE; WEST, in press). Using songs in language teaching, especially songs which learners enjoy, builds a bridge connecting the foreign culture to the learners' culture, arousing interest from the learners to understand the lyrics of the songs

they are listening to or singing. This way, Boothe and West (in press) claim learners develop the skills that are necessary for learning a foreign language in a creative way, combining interest and motivation at the same time it positively impacts learning. Songs are not only an enjoyable and entertaining way to learn a foreign language; but they are also a source of authentic material that provides a rich cultural context of the foreign language, lowers the affective filters, increases motivation, improves vocabulary recall, and can be worked beyond just the listening practice.

Song lyrics are a source of authentic material rather than material designed purposefully for teaching. The pedagogical use of songs exposes the learners to real language and promotes the contact with real life situations and aspects of the language (MORETI; ALONSO, 2009). Moreover, the lyrics contain valuable information about the culture of the language whose society it represents. Candlin, the series editor of *Songs in Action* (GRIFFEE, 1992), mentions that songs "offer insights into the culture and especially the stories and myths of different societies, providing a window into the frames of reference and values of the peoples whose language we are learning.". Songs act as a cultural artifact, since they provide a historical and social cultural context of a particular society, being a strong tool and a valuable resource to teach a foreign language (ENGH, 2013).

Besides being a great pedagogical resource to increase the cultural competency in the culture of the foreign language, songs lower the affective filters and increase motivation. Some affective filters, such as fear, anxiety or boredom, interfere negatively in language learning, and songs have the characteristic of lowering these affective filters.

> These affective filters serve as a screen to block comprehensible input by preventing information about the second language from reaching the language areas of the mind. The incorporation of music leads to a positive attitude about learning and supports expanded and creative opportunities. By minimizing the affective filter and providing a relaxing atmosphere, stress is eliminated and motivation can increase (BOOTHE; WEST, in press, p.1).

Motivation involves the affective states and attitudes that influence the amount of effort a learner puts to acquire a foreign language (ENGH, 2013). A setting of low anxiety, self-confidence and high motivation promotes the most favorable learning (KRASHEN, 1982 apud ENGH, 2013).

In addition to increasing motivation, learning through songs also improves vocabulary recall. The echoing in our minds of a song we have heard, known as 'the song stuck in my head' phenomenon, emphasizes the idea that songs work on our short and long-term memory

(MURPHEY, 1990b). Moreover, repetition of words and longer utterances, typical of pop songs, combined with the use of rhythm, rhyme and distinctive intonation lead to a greater retention, enhancing the learning experience (ENGH, 2013). However, songs alone will not teach learners how to use language.

Only listening to music or singing songs will not make learners able to communicate in another language. We can take as an example people who sing in choirs and learn to sing songs in several languages, yet they do not speak or understand what they are singing. Taking this into consideration, it is necessary to make a connection between the pleasurable experience of listening to songs and the communicative use of the language. Anything that can be done with different text genres, for example, can also be done with song lyrics. Despite the fact that most songs use simple conversational language, sometimes they can be rather complex syntactically, lexically and poetically, and can be analyzed in the same way as other text genres. Studying grammar; practicing selective listening comprehension; reading, interpreting and discussing song lyrics; translating, practicing pronunciation, intonation, and stress; learning vocabulary, or simply having fun and breaking the routine, are some of the many things a language teacher can do with songs (MURPHEY, 1992a). The activities designed by the teacher, either the ones focused or form or focused on meaning, will enhance the learning experience.

2.4 EXERCISES VERSUS TASKS

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (RICHARD; SCHMIDT, 2010), in language teaching, 'activity' is defined as "a general term for any classroom procedure that requires students to use and practice their available language resources". Therefore, here, the term 'activity' will be included in the definitions of both 'exercise' and 'task', since they are both considered activities, yet distinguished from one another by specific characteristics that will be mentioned below.

Currently, 'tasks' hold a central place in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and also in language pedagogy (ELLIS, 2003). However, definitions of task differ among researchers. For Long (1985), the definition of 'task' includes both activities performed by using language, and activities performed without using language, i.e. asking for directions (oral language), writing a bank check (written language), or dressing a child (no use of language). For more narrow definitions, other researchers (BREEN, 1989; ELLIS, 2003; RICHARDS,

PLATT, and WEBER, 1985; NUNAN, 1989) argue that 'tasks' should only consider activities that necessarily involve the use of language.

For Ellis (2003), the main difference between 'tasks 'and 'exercises' is that 'exercises' focus on form, while 'tasks' focus on meaning. However, Widdowson (1998) argues that this definition cannot be as simple as that:

> What distinguishes an exercise from a task is not 'form' opposed to 'meaning'. Whereas a task is more concerned with 'pragmatic meaning', i.e. the use of language in context, an exercise is concerned with 'semantic meaning', i.e. the systemic meanings that specific forms can convey irrespective of context (WIDDOWSON, 1998).

Ellis (2003) also points out another main difference between 'exercise' and 'task'. In a 'task' the learners act primarily as 'language users´, communicating spontaneously as in the real world, whereas in an 'exercise' the learners function primarily as 'language learners' where learning occurs deliberately. In other words, in a 'task' the learning process may take place incidentally, whist in an 'exercise' the learning process should take place intentionally.

Nonetheless, message conveyance may be hindered by lack of accuracy, and for that reason focusing on meaning alone is insufficient to achieve linguistic competence (LONG, 1998). For instance, when performing a task, i.e. making an airline reservation, the learners will have to find the appropriate linguistic forms to explain all the details about the flight, such as destination, date and time, kind of ticket and seat, etc.

In order to deal with the limitations of pure focus on meaning while teaching a language, Long (1998) proposes a third alternative for language teaching, called *Focus on form*.

> *Focus on form* refers to how attentional resources are allocated, and involves briefly drawing student's attention to linguistic elements (words, collocations, grammatical structures, pragmatic patterns, and so on), in context, as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication, the temporary shifts in focal attention being triggered by students' comprehension or production problems (LONG, 1998, P.40)

This teaching approach proposed by Long (1998) meets the remark made by Widdowson (1998) when he says that 'form' cannot be seen as opposed to 'meaning'. In fact, the use of language requires the choice of linguistic elements to convey meaning. A teaching approach based on both 'form' and 'meaning' focuses on context, meaning and communication, but also shifts to comprehension or production issues when the learner has a communication problem. In other words, form-focused activities, as the ones contained in 'exercises' are embedded in a meaning-based lesson (LONG, 1998).

Our proposed language learning application is a student-centered tool using songs from the real world as authentic materials. The teachers, as designers of the lessons, act as facilitators in the learning process, guiding the learners for them to practice and improve communicative competence. Moreover, all the activities in each lesson are designed having a balance between 'form' and 'meaning'. The form-focused activities are the ones that arise according to the linguistic elements presented in the lyrics, helping to tackle comprehension or production problems that learners may have. The last activity is a forum of discussion, enabling learners to express their own opinion about what the song means. In this meaning-based activity, mistakes are secondary to communication. The focus of this activity is the opportunity for the learner to use the language in context, giving their opinion about the meaning of the song, and to communicate with other users of the tool agreeing or disagreeing with their interpretation. In the forum of discussion, the outcome is unpredictable.

In addition to the balance between form-based activities and meaning-based activities, our language learning tool also offers an opportunity for learners to practice different language learning strategies as discussed in the section below.

2.5 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Programmers lacking linguistic knowledge and language teaching experiences may create an entertaining and user-friendly virtual tool, yet inadequate for language learning. An adequate digital learning tool may require elements that influence the learning of a foreign language. For this reason, language learning strategies, defended by many experts in the field of language (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 1998; Rubin, 1981; Küpper and Russo, 1985), were incorporated into the design of the sections of our tool, as a means of helping learners to develop linguistic proficiency and improve communicative competence.

Learning strategies are "behaviors or thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (WEINSTEIN; MAYER, 1986, p.315). More precisely, learning strategies are "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (…); specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (OXFORD, 1990, p.8). According to Scarcely and Oxford (1992, p.63), learning strategies for language learners are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques, (…), used by students to enhance their own learning". Learning strategies are

employed not only by learners with little fluency but also by more fluent ones. They refer to both learning a foreign language and communicating it effectively (VILAÇA, 2011).

Oxford (1990) classifies language learning strategies into two groups: the direct strategies and the indirect ones. The criterion to classify a learning strategy into direct or indirect is related to the kind of influence the strategy exerts on learning and the use of language. On the one hand, indirect learning strategies are employed to manage the learning process overall (OXFORD, 2003), control learners' emotions and attitudes about learning (OXFORD, 1990), and interact with others seeking for help, and grasp the target culture as well as the language (OXFORD, 2003). On the other hand, direct learning strategies relate directly to the foreign language and require mental processing of it (OXFORD, 1990).

In this study, only the direct strategies will be considered for planning and designing the lessons since they are closely related to the tasks and exercises. They aim to enable or optimize learning through the acquisition, retention, and use of varied knowledge and skills, and are subdivided into three categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies.

Memory strategies, sometimes called mnemonics, are powerful mental tools. The brain can retain 100 trillion bits of information; however, only part of that capacity can be used, unless memory strategies come to the aid of the learner (OXFORD, 1990). Memory strategies help learners to connect one item or concept to another in the foreign language, without necessarily involving deep understanding; they are related to the storage and retrieval of memory information for communication. According to Oxford (1990, 2003), these strategies are better for memorizing vocabulary and structures at initial stages of language learning. "Learners need such strategies much less when their arsenal of vocabulary and structures has become larger" (OXFORD, 2003, p.13). Oxford (1990) also mentions the strategies must be clear and comprehensible to the learner:

> Memory strategies reflect very simple principles, such as arranging things in order, making associations, and retrieving. These principles all involve *meaning*. For the purpose of learning a new language, the arrangement and associations must be personally meaningful to the learner, and the material to be reviewed must have significance (OXFORD, 1990, p.39).

Memory strategies allow learners to create mental linkages by grouping words (into topics, synonyms, antonyms, part of speech, etc), associating new language information to concepts already in memory, relating one piece of information to another, or placing a word or

phrase in a meaningful sentence, conversation, or story in order to remember it (OXFORD, 1990). These strategies are possible via sounds, mental images, body movement, keywords, rhymes, pictures or objects, and location.

According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies are the most popular language learning strategies because they are essential for learning a foreign language. They "enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information, and practicing" (OXFORD, 2003, p.12). Practicing is considered the most important cognitive strategy, since it is important to reach proficiency in any foreign language. Being able to communicate in a foreign language requires numerous hours of practice, more or fewer hours depending on the difficulty of the language and the level of proficiency the learner wants to achieve. Therefore, the practicing strategies – including repeating by saying or listening to something over and over, practicing sounds and the writing system of the foreign language, recognizing and using routine formulas and patters, recombining known elements to produce a longer sentence, and practicing the new language in natural and realistic settings – take on special value as the learner may reach communicative competence (OXFORD, 1990).

Last but not least, compensation strategies "enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge" (OXFORD, 1990, p.47). They "help the learner make up for missing knowledge" (OXFORD, 2003, p.13). Compensation strategies involve guessing from the context in listening and reading, using synonyms or descriptions, using the mother tongue to guess new words, asking someone for help, using mime or gestures, avoiding communication partially or totally, selecting a topic in which the learner knows the vocabulary, altering the message by omitting some information or saying something slightly different, and making up new words. The compensation strategies are more often used by learners in their early levels of proficiency in the foreign language.

Each lesson of our proposed virtual language learning tool to work with songs is divided into six sections, each one proposing a different exercise or task related to the song. Each task or exercise covers a particular language skill or aspect of the language, and they are based on the direct language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990, 2002, 2003) to enhance students' learning.

An example of memory strategies that are applied to the lesson activities is the use of imagery and sound to help learners remember words and the pronunciation of new vocabulary

to create a meaningful sound-based association. Practicing, using skimming and scanning for reading and understanding the song lyrics, analyzing alternatives, applying general rules, and translation are examples of cognitive strategies that are employed. Finally, guessing intelligently using clues, altering the message by omitting some information and making up new words are examples of compensation strategies that are used in the activities and tasks of the lesson.

3 WEBSITES FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES WITH SONGS

There are a wide range of websites for learning languages with music. In this chapter four websites are described taking into consideration their popularity and the fact they are free of charge, so all of them could be tested and analyzed.

3.1 LYRICS TRAINING – www.lyricstraining.com

Lyrics Training is a free website created to improve language skills through music videos and lyrics. The site utilizes embedded *YouTube* music videos of popular songs and it currently displays songs in English, Spanish, German, French, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, Turkish, Japanese (Romaji), Polish, Finnish, and Dutch. After selecting the language, the learner can choose his or her favorite song among the wide range of video clips, by selecting any video available on the screen or typing in the search bar for specific lyrics or artists. The practice consists of filling in the gaps with missing words of the lyrics while watching and listening to the video clip. It offers four levels of difficulty, *beginner*, *intermediate*, *advanced*, and *expert*. The *beginner* level removes randomly 10% of the words of the lyrics, the *intermediate* level removes 25%, the *advanced* removes 50%, and the *expert* all the words.

Besides the opportunity to practice listening skills by recognizing what is said in the song, it also enables learners to listen to different accents and learn the spelling of words. After completing the task, the learner receives a score and can view his or her position in the ranking among users from all over the world, from his or her country, or just with friends. The whole experience is more game-like, and if the user waits too long to fill in the blanks, his or her 'life' will be lost and it will be necessary to start from the beginning again.

Another feature offered by this tool is the possibility for teachers to select the blanks to fill in a song, and share it with their students. The tool also offers the karaoke mode, in which the user reads and sings the synced lyrics displayed on the video clip. However, no points are gained in this mode.

Lyrics Training enables learners to remember words more easily. Songs help to trigger memory recall once they stick to the brain more easily than other texts, and it is an effective material for practicing memory strategies. However, this website works solely with listening skills, more focused on recognizing sounds, such as pronunciation and intonation, rather than

comprehension of meaning. The spelling of words is learned through mistakes and successes, in other words, by guessing. The website does not work with vocabulary nor language practice.

3.2 LYRICS GAPS– www.lyricsgaps.com

Lyrics Gaps is another free website targeted at language learning through music and lyrics. The site utilizes embedded *YouTube* music videos and it currently works with songs in Basque, Catalan, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, and Visayan. After selecting the language, the learner can choose his or her favorite song among available video clips, by clicking on any video on the screen or typing in the search bar for specific lyrics or artists. Each song is labeled in accordance with its level of difficulty: easy, medium, or hard. Once the song is chosen, the learner has to select the game mode: karaoke, beginner, intermediate, or expert. In the beginner mode, the practice consists of selecting the right word that fills in the gaps of the lyrics. Next to each gap there is an arrow in which, by clicking on it, a list of words is displayed. In the other levels of difficulty, the learner has to type the word in the gap while watching and listening to the video clip. At any time, the user can pause the video clip. After filling in all the gaps, the user can click on the 'score button' to check the answers. By clicking on any word, it is possible to obtain its meaning. Teachers can also create their own exercises, and share the link with their students.

Lyrics Gaps enables the learner to practice memory strategies. However, this website focuses solely on recognizing sounds, rather than comprehension of meaning, unless the user pauses the song and clicks on the word to gets its meaning. Another drawback is the fact the transactions on the website have a high response time, making it difficult to perform the activities. The website also displays too many advertisements that occupy almost the entire screen, making the use of the tool very frustrating.

3.3 LINGUICIAN – www.linguician.com

Linguician is a free platform that uses music streaming from *YouTube*, and licensed lyrics as language learning content. It offers songs in French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The user can learn new words while playing a selected song with its lyrics at the bottom of the video clip. Afterward, the user can do a multiple choice quiz,

checking the vocabulary of the song, while playing the song again. At the end of the quiz, the user gets the score and *LangoCoins* (virtual money) to 'buy' new songs. The platform collects data about the user and an intelligent learning system adjusts the vocabulary to the individual proficiency level of the user. The more the learner uses the tool, the more accurately the system determines the user's level of proficiency.

Linguician differs a little from the previous two websites, since it focuses more on the learning of new vocabulary than the recognition of sounds. However, it still works with memory strategies, which help learners not only to store in memory things they hear or read in the foreign language, but also to retrieve this vocabulary when they need to use it for comprehension, or written and oral production. This process is even more effective when the learner can both listen and read the new vocabulary simultaneously. Integrating lyrics in the language acquisition process enables people to unlock the associative power of music for learning new vocabulary. For this reason, people are more likely to remember vocabularies when they are learning with music.

3.4 PLAYPOSIT –www.playposit.com

PlayPosit is a digital tool which let teachers add interactivity to streaming video content uploaded from several sites such as *YouTube*, *TeacherTube*, *Vimeo*, *LearnZillion*, among others. It is not a virtual tool designed to work exclusively with songs; however, it is possible to upload video clips and create lessons, or video bulbs, about them. Teachers can crop the length of the video, build questions, assign them to students, and monitor their performance. It comes in two modalities, the basic free version and the premium paid one. The free version allows a storage limit of 0,1 GB, the creation of bulbs with limited question types, and monitoring of students' progress. The premium account includes 2 GB storage, unlimited question types, monitoring of progress, and all the features and activities described in the following paragraph.

PlayPosit is an interesting tool to learners because it enables teachers to create exercises and tasks beyond listening skills. It allows teachers to crop the video and embed questions, images, audio, and other media elements to the video bulb. The questions may be multiple choice, polling survey, presenting users with a series of options to choose from in response to a question. The first and second types are auto-graded and the latter has no right or wrong answer, and therefore is not graded. There is also an auto-graded fill-in-the-blank exercise in

which users complete a sentence that is missing one or more words. Questions can have multiple blanks and multiple correct answers. More open activities in which students express their opinion or understanding with a text response include a free-response question and a reflective-pause question. It is also possible to provide supplemental information to users by allowing them to explore another website without leaving the video lesson. *PlayPosit* offers a discussion forum for learners to post responses or reply to comments posted by other students. Undoubtedly, *PlayPosit* is an engaging experience and provides learners with a wide variety of activities.

Our virtual language learning tool works solely with songs and assumes music can increase pleasure in the learning process. Not only because it is entertaining, but also because music has the power of providing association of words with the context, rhythm and melody of the song. However, we are proposing a more complete learning experience than the resources mentioned previously. While *Lyrics Training, Lyrics Gaps* and *Linguician* work only with listening and vocabulary, our language learning tool works with different skills and practices, including a warm-up exercise, pronunciation, grammar, listening and reading comprehension exercises, and a more open task which involves the reflection and opinion of the learner about the lyrics of the songs. Although *PlayPosit* also offers many activities, they have to be built within the length of the video; i.e., all the questions are embedded in the video. The cropping of a video might not be advisable for a music video clip, since the learner may not profit from the benefits of listening to the entire song at once, and enhance the enjoyment and motivation so important in the learning process. Furthermore, our tool applies more learning strategies and activities than all the aforementioned tools, making the learning process even more effective.

4 DEVELOPING THE WEBSITE

Our language learning tool has the main purpose of promoting the learning of languages through music. The idea is to practice the language by not only improving the listening skills, but also the other skills necessary for mastering a foreign language, like reading and writing. The tool also focuses on other aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Having that in mind, each lesson of the tool is divided into six sections, each one proposing a different task or exercise related to the song, as well as using different language learning strategies, with the aim of profiting learners with different learning styles.

Learners have different learning styles. "For example, a person might be more extraverted than introverted, or more closure-oriented than open, or equally visual and auditory but with lesser kinesthetic and tactile involvement"(OXFORD, 2003. p.3) Considering learners have distinct sensory preferences, personality and biological differences, choosing only one learning strategy that satisfies all learners in a classroom or on an online resource is impracticable. By providing a range of tasks and exercises that comprises different learning strategies in a lesson, all learners benefit from applying different ways to learn a foreign language. Some strategies may be better for some learners, other strategies might be suitable for others, but on the whole, everyone may profit from the lesson. Besides the opportunity to practice other language skills and aspects of the language, rather than only listening, this tool is designed to work with different direct learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990).

As mentioned before, the proposed language tool is conceived mainly for learners to practice the foreign language through music. However, this language learning tool was also thought to be designed for teachers, since the idea is to have the teacher to create the lessons for the learners. In this way, the tool will have a lesson repository available for the learners in a shorter period of time than if only one teacher were in charge of designing the lessons. Moreover, the teacher will have the freedom to choose the song he or she wants, and to create a lesson suitable for the theme or the language aspect he or she wishes to work with his or her students. Therefore, the lessons might be used in many ways: as a part of a syllabus in a classroom, as an assigned homework for a class of students, or for self-study practice, in a classroom course or for online learning.

In our tool, music video clips are embedded from *YouTube* onto the web page, since it does not violate copyrights. We chose *YouTube* because it is the most popular video-sharing website and it offers a wide variety of music video clips. Other functionalities of the software

will be implemented according to the technical feasibility and demands determined by the developer of the tool, a student of Computer Science who is working on his undergraduate thesis. Therefore, the limitations of each functionality, as well as the reasons why these functionalities and not others are used, will not be discussed here. As this is an interdisciplinary work between a Letters student and a Computer Science student, for our undergraduate theses, many aspects of the tool had to be agreed between both parts, finding a common ground of cooperation.

4.1 CHOOSING A SONG

Musical taste is something very personal. However, there are multiple reasons to use popular music to teach a foreign language. "Popular music is a generic term for a wide variety of genres of music that appeal to the tastes of a large segment of the population" (ALLEN, 2004). This kind of music usually reflects the ideas and values of a generation, working as an instrument of empowerment, when it speaks through this segment of society. People of all ages seem to enjoy popular music, especially young people who seem to be very enthusiastic of the pop music artists, bands and songs. Besides reflecting the ideas and values of a segment of the society, the characteristics of popular music include motivational appeal, easy access to songs especially through digital media, popularity among radios and TV programs worldwide, hundreds of music awards worldwide, easily singable melodies, use of simple language, easy memorization because of the repetition of sections, and the ability to 'stick in the head' and become part of us.

However, popular songs come and go. What is in the top charts today and in the mouth and mind of millions of people today, can be completely forgotten or even unbearable to people's ears in the near future. Therefore, it is advisable for teachers to choose songs that never die, classic songs that everyone knows and survive generation after generation. These songs can become lessons that can be used at all times, pleasing the learners and saving the precious time teachers have to prepare new lessons.

As a sample for our language learning tool, I chose the song *Wish You Were Here*, by the English rock band Pink Floyd (Figure 1). This song is included in the ninth album of the band under the same name and it was released on 12 September, 1975 in the United Kingdom. The song refers to former Pink Floyd member Syd Barret and his breakdown. In 2011, *Wish You Were Here* was included on the Rolling Stone's list as No. 324 in the 500 Greatest Songs

of All Time, and it continues to be popular among many generations these days (WIKIPEDIA, 2017).

Figure 1 – Creating a new lesson

Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

## 4.2 SECTION ONE OF THE TOOL – FOCUS ON VOCABULARY PRACTICE

The objective of the first section is to introduce the language that may be new for the learner, working as a warm-up activity (Figure 2). Here the teacher uses a direct language learning strategy called *memory strategy*, in which the use of imagery helps the student to store and retrieve new information (OXFORD, 1990). The idea is to select the words from the song lyrics the teacher believes are new for the learner, or less frequent, or important for the lyrics interpretation. The images could be of any kind, but the suggestion is to use print screens of the official video clip of the song uploaded from *YouTube*. The point is to keep the learner engaged and interested in what is coming next.

The available functionalities for this section are the uploading of images from a computer file and the audio pronunciation of the selected words. By associating the image to its meaning and pronunciation in a matching activity the learner may be able to retrieve the new word more effectively. This exercise could benefit both language learners who are more visual, and others who are more sound-oriented. By working with print screens the learner will have a previous idea of what the video looks like and what the lyrics are about. Linking words with the visual is very useful to language learners for four reasons according to Oxford.

> First, the mind's storage capacity for visual information exceeds its capacity for verbal material. Second, the most efficiently packaged chunks of information are transferred to long-term memory through visual images. Third, visual images may be the most potent device to aid recall or verb material. Fourth, a large proportion of learners has a preference for visual learning (OXFORD, 1990, p.40).

The first section can activate the student's schemata, enabling them to recall previous knowledge of the images and vocabulary, creating the atmosphere and expectations for the video and song lyrics.

Figure 2 –Exercise for Vocabulary Practice
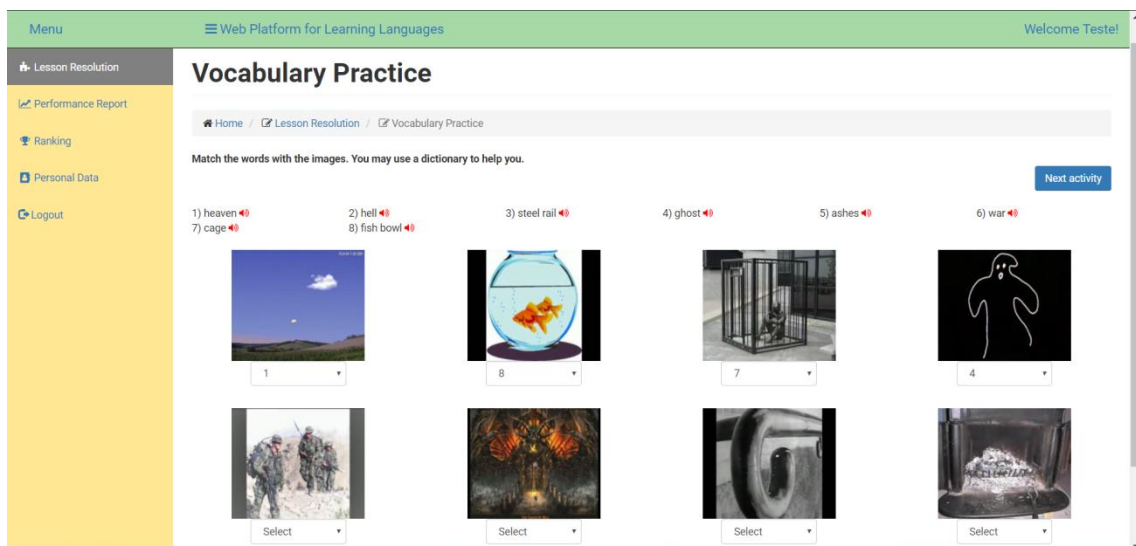
Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

4.3 SECTION TWO OF THE TOOL – FOCUS ON LISTENING PRACTICE

The second section of the lesson works with listening skills (Figure 3). Here, the teacher uses the direct language learning strategy called *cognitive strategies*, in which the formal practice of listening focuses on the perception of sounds, such as pronunciation and intonation, rather than on comprehension of meaning (OXFORD, 1990). This is the moment the learner watches and listens to the music video clip of the lesson and is asked to complete part of the lyrics, previously selected by the teacher who designed the lesson.

The functionality available for this section is a click and drag activity in which the learner is asked to arrange the lines of the song in the correct order. The teacher can select the chorus of the song lyrics or any other verse of it. For technical issues related to the size of the screen, the maximum number of selected lines is ten. The screen is divided into two columns. The left

column has the selected lines in alphabetical order; and the right column has the same number of lines without anything on it. The user should complete the exercise by clicking and dragging the lines in the correct order. For this activity, the learners can listen to the whole song as many times as they wish, making use of another *cognitive strategy* called repetition, necessary for the learner to achieve some degree of meaningful understanding in order to do the exercise.

Figure 3 – Exercise for Listening Practice
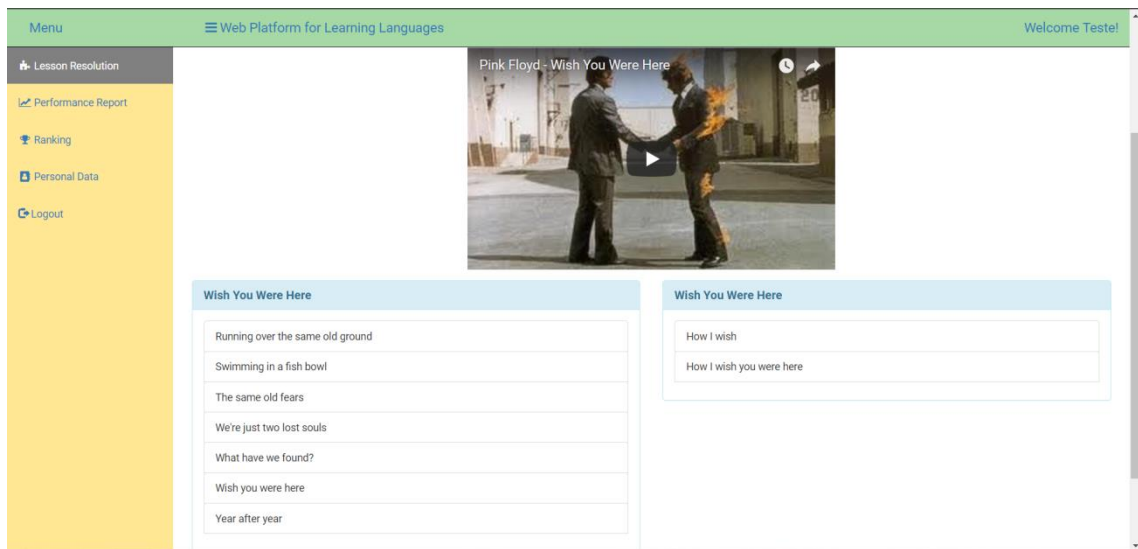
Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

4.4 SECTION THREE OF THE TOOL – FOCUS ON GRAMMAR PRACTICE

The third section of the lesson works with a language aspect that appears in the song lyrics (Figure 4). The exercise consists of modeling two language aspects in the form of an example so that the learner can understand and complete the proposed activity. Here, the learner is working with *cognitive strategies* concerning logical analysis, reasoning and translating (OXFORD, 1990). By modeling or using general rules, and applying them to a new target situation, the learner is able to compare elements and determine similarities and differences between different structures. The translating strategy uses the native language as the basis for comparing and understanding the foreign language.

In this section, the teacher will provide an example of the foreign language aspect, by giving the general rule or comparing it with another similar structure. An example is the use of the expression TELL FROM. The teacher could show the difference between the verb TELL and the expression TELL something or somebody FROM something or somebody, by

providing the definition of these two verbs and an example of each one, preferably taken from the song lyrics, as illustrated below:

A) TELL sth/sb FROM sth/sb: to distinguish one from another.

B) TELL: to say sth to sb such as a story, a lie, the truth, a secret, a joke, etc.

Then, in the exercise, the teacher may ask the learner to identify the use of the correct meaning of the verb TELL in several example sentences, some of which may be taken from the song lyrics, as shown below:

1) (   ) Can you tell heaven from hell?

2) (   ) Have you told her your grade in English?

Finally, the learner will complete the exercise by typing (A) or (B) inside the brackets, identifying the correct use of the verb TELL, as the following:

1) (A) Can you tell heaven from hell?

2) (B) Have you told her your grade in English?

Figure 4 – Exercise for Grammar Practice

Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

4.5 SECTION FOUR OF THE TOOL – READING PRACTICE

The fourth section of the lesson works with reading comprehension (Figure 5). Here, the song lyrics appear on the screen and they are used for lyrics interpretation. The idea here is

to think about what the song means, what message the song conveys in a more objective way so that the questions can have right and wrong answers. A more subjective activity in which the learner can express his or her opinion about the interpretation of the song lyrics will be worked in the section six of the lesson.

In this section the teacher will be able to ask questions about the lyrics and work with a multiple choice exercise of three alternatives (A, B, or C), in which only one will be correct. Here, the learner will also be working with *cognitive strategies*, not only translating, analyzing and reasoning, but also using techniques to extract the conveyed message, such as *skimming*, a technique used to determine the main idea of the text, or *scanning,* a technique used to find specific details of interest in the text. These strategies help learners understand rapidly what they read in the new language (OXFORD, 1990).

Figure 5 – Exercise for Reading Practice

Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

4.6 SECTION FIVE OF THE TOOL – FOCUS ON PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

Speaking with a virtual language learning tool in a self-study position, in which there is nobody else to interact but the machine in front of you, is somewhat difficult. However, with the emergence of new technologies and the improvement of the virtual tools, an exercise focusing on output for oral pronunciation becomes possible, yet with some limitations that will be discussed further on, in the final considerations. The proposed activity in this section is to work with the pronunciation of the vocabulary previously seen in the first section of the tool.

Once the learner supposedly mastered a number of selected words, he or she is asked to complete the gaps of sentences with one of these words by saying it aloud (Figure 6).

For instance, in the sentence 1) So you think you can tell _____ from _____, the learner is asked to click on the space and record the missing word that completes the sentence. A voice recognition functionality recognizes the spoken word and shows whether it is correct or not. The idea is to select lines from the song lyrics which contain the vocabulary covered in section one. Here the learner will be working with *memory strategies* in which he or she will be representing sounds in memory and remembering what they have heard by making auditory representations of sounds. Making associations involves linking the new word with familiar words or sounds from any language: the new language, one's own language, or any other (OXFORD, 1990). Furthermore, the learner may also be working with *cognitive strategies*, analyzing the question, using reasoning, and translating in order to determine logically which word best completes the sentence.

Figure 6 – Exercise for Pronunciation Practice

Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

4.7 SECTION SIX OF THE TOOL – WRITING PRACTICE

This is a task focused on meaning in which the learner is using language to communicate in situations where the meaning is unpredictable (LITTLEWOOD, 2004). It is an opportunity for authentic communication where the learner participates in a forum of discussion about the

meaning and interpretation of the song lyrics, where the learner gives his or her opinion (Figure 7).

Here, the learner will also be applying direct strategies. Besides the *memory* strategies and *cognitive strategies* already mentioned in the previous sections, the learner may also use *compensation strategies*. The learner may adjust or approximate the message by omitting or making the ideas simpler or less precise, or saying something slightly different that has similar meaning, by using synonyms, for example. Writers often resort to this strategy when they simply cannot come up with the most desirable expression (OXFORD, 1990). Another compensation strategy the learner may use to do this task is to coin words, or, in other words, make up new words to communicate a concept for which the learner does not have the right vocabulary (OXFORD, 1990).

Figure 7 – Task for Writing Practice

Source: Digital tool for learning language with songs under development by Everton Costa.

In summary, the idea is to make a language learning tool for self-study and also as a lesson assigned by a language teacher. The possibility for teachers to design the lesson gives freedom for them to choose the song, the vocabulary and the language aspect they wish to work with. Each lesson is divided into six sections which cover essential language skills for learning a second language, such as listening, reading, and writing, besides language aspects like vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. By combining form-based activities, in the exercises of the sections one to five, and meaning-based activities in the task of the section six of the lesson, the learners should enhance their communicative competence. Moreover, the opportunity to practice different learning strategies – *memory strategies, cognitive strategies*

and compensation strategies – benefits learners from applying different ways to learn a foreign language. The more varied the learning strategies, the more learners profit from the lesson.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that virtual language learning tools have become more and more popular, this free website for language learning through music videos will offer many benefits for learners.

It will be a distance learning opportunity to provide learners with the tool wherever and whenever they want, allowing them to work independently. The language learning tool will be free of charge, being accessible to everyone. Since songs combine entertainment and language, it will be an engaging and motivating approach to learning a foreign language. The tool working with songs will expose the learners to authentic listening material, preparing them not only to face real life using the language outside the learning environment but also enabling them to perceive accents and learn other aspects of the foreign language.

Furthermore, the use of songs will provide the learner not only with the opportunity to practice listening skills but also other areas essential for learning a language, such as reading and writing. The songlyrics will be worked as a text for reading comprehension exercises, vocabulary practice, and aspects of grammar and language. In addition, the interpretation of the lyrics will be performed through a writing task in a collaborative environment. Speaking itself will not be dealt with due to the constraints of the tool; however, there will be a section focused on oral production as an opportunity for learners to practice pronunciation. Moreover, the different sections for practicing the language in the virtual tool will enable learners to use different learning strategies to better perform the proposed exercises and tasks.

The greatest difference of this tool, when compared to other virtual tools working with music, such as *Lyrics Training*, *Lyrics Gaps*, and *Linguician* is that it will be a user-friendly tool for learners and for any teachers who wish to use the resource. Teachers may design the lessons for his or her students and this material will be part of the repository available for all learners. Thus, the teacher can have the freedom to choose the song he or she wants and to create a lesson suitable for the theme or the language aspect he or she wishes to work with his or her students. Finally, the lessons may be used as part of a syllabus in a class or for self-study practice

On the other hand, the language learning tool has some limitations. Some of them concern technical issues and the internet. As any web tools, it requires constant updating. "A

static website without updates of any kind may be viewed by users and search engines as a 'dead entity', with no life and nothing to offer" (ROY, 2016). The poor quality of the internet can also be a problem, making the system slow and unstable. According to Rojo (2017), for digital tools to be efficient, they need good wireless bandwidth, and our cities and public buildings are still a long way from being properly connected, due to insufficient investments in this area. In addition, we are heavily dependent on energy, so far mostly electrical, to the point where we feel incommunicable when there is power outrage.

Another question regarding technical problems has to do with the limitation of the voice recognition functionality. Words pronounced into the microphone of the computer sometimes might sound incomprehensible and not be recognized by the digital tool. This could happen in the section five of the tool in which the learner completes the missing words of the sentences by pronouncing them. Finally, computer security is another issue related to any computer systems that has to be considered. Cyber attacks can damage the software and steal information from its users; therefore, particular attention to the security of the system is necessary.

In addition to the limitations, this language learning tool restricts spontaneous language production, precluding the practice of speaking skills. As in most computer-assisted language learning applications, because of hardware capability, oral production is limited to voice-recognition. Furthermore, most activities are limited to certain types of exercises such as matching, click and drag, and multiple-choices, controlling the learners' practice of the language and preventing them from interacting with other learners. However, the task on writing in section six, focusing on authentic communication, allows the learner to communicate more freely and interact with other users, as well as it balances the use of form-based and meaning-based activities, improving language competence.

Despite the limitations already mentioned, the digital learning object, which might be used in a classroom, computer lab, assigned for homework, or for independent practice, was designed to have the purpose to work with songs in a greater scope. In other words, the proposed language learning tool was designed to allow the practice of language beyond listening practice, enabling learners to work with other skills and aspects of the language, as well as using different language learning strategies. We intend to keep the tool in constant updating, not only ensuring a secure and a user-friendly software, but also improving its functionalities in order to better attend its users.

This work has much to contribute to the area. At the university, it is not common to see interdisciplinary work between undergraduate students, and this is a great opportunity to encourage other students to do it. There are many limited language learning tools due to the lack of programmers with linguistic knowledge and experience in the language acquisition field. At the same time, many linguists, teachers and professors do not have the expertise to construct technological tools by themselves. By combining the computer programming skills of a Computer Science student and my linguistic knowledge, learned throughout my academic and professional life, I believe we created a much better resource than if one had not participated in each other's work. Hence, everyone benefits from the experience, especially the learners who will have a high quality language learning tool to use.

REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, P. V. Online Pedagogical tasks created by students of English Teaching Methodology in a Letters Course. **D.E.L.T.A**, Lavras, p. 23-53, 2014.

ALLEN, R. **Pocket Fowler's Modern English Usage**.2004.

BECK, R. J. What Are Learning Objects? **Center for International Education**. 2010. Available on: <http://www4.uwm.edu/cie/learning_objects.cfm?gid=56>. Retrieved on: Jul 8 2017.

BOOTHE, D.; WEST, J. English Language Learning through Music and Song Lyrics – The Performance of a Lifetime. **International Conference: The Future of Education.** Edition 8. In press.

COHEN, A.D. **Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language.** New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998.

ELLIS, R. **Task-based Language Learning and Teaching.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

ENGH, D. Why Use Music in English Language Learning? A Survey of the Literature. **English Language Teaching**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 113-127, 2013.

GRIFFEE, D. **Songs in Action: Classroom Techniques and Resources.** New York: Prentice Hall. 1992.

HARMER, J. **The Practice of English Language Teaching**. England: Pearson. 2005.

HSIAO, T.; OXFORD, R. Comparing Theories of Language Learning Strategies: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis. **The Modern Language Journal**, v.86, n.3, p.368-383,2002.

HUBBARD, P. **Mini-course: An Invitation to CALL. Foundations of Computer-Assisted Language Learning.** Unit 1: Introduction to Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Linguistics Department – Stanford University. 2016. Available on: <https://web.stanford.edu/~efs/callcourse2/CALL1.htm>. Retrieved on Nov 4, 2017

HODGINS, H. W. **IEEE Computer Society**. 2002. Available on: <https://www.computer.org/web/awards/karlsson-wayne-hodgins>. Retrieved on: Jul 10 2017.

LEFFA, V. J. Nem Tudo que Balança Cai: Objetos de Aprendizagem no Ensino de Línguas.**Revista Polifonia**, Cuiabá, v.12, n.2, p. 15-45, 2006.

LÉVY, P. **Cibercultura**, São Paulo: Editora 34, 1999. Available on: <https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4091443/mod_resource/content/1/Cibercultura%20%28LEVY%29.pdf>.Retrieved on: Nov 4, 2017.

LITTLEWOOD, W. The task-based approach: some questions and suggestions.**ELT Journal**, v.58, n.4, p. 319-326, 2004.

LONG, M. H. Focus on Form Task-based Language Teaching. **Working Papers in ESL**, Honolulu, v.16, n.2, p.35-49,1998.

MORETI, A; ALONSO, M. Dealing with Songs through the Four Skills. **Revista Científica de Letras**. Franca, São Paulo. v.5, n.5, p. 85-112,2009.

MURPHEY, T. **Music and Song.** Oxford. 1992a.

MURPHEY, T. The Discourse of Pop Songs. **TESOL Quarterly**, v.26, n.4. p.770-774, 1992b.

O´MALLEY, J.M.; CHAMOT, A.U. **Languages Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990.

OXFORD, R. L. **Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know.** USA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990.

OXFORD, R. L. Language Learning Styles and Strategies: an Overview. **Learning Styles & Strategies.** Oxford: Gala, p. 1-25, 2003.

RICHARDS, J.C; SCHMIDT, R. **Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.**3rd ed. New York: Pearson, 2002.

RICHARDS, J.C; SCHMIDT, R. **Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.** Routledge: 4th ed. New York: Pearson, 2010.

ROJO, R. Between Platforms ODAs and Prototypes: New multiliteracies in WEB2 times. **The ESPecialist: Descrição, Ensino e Aprendizagem**, v.38, n.1, p. 1-20, 2017.

ROY, J. 5 Reasons Why Fresh Content is Critical for Your Website and SEO, **SEO Site Checkup**. 2016. Available on:<https://seositecheckup.com/articles/5-reasons-why-fresh-content-is-critical-for-your-website-and-seo>. Retrieved on Sep 29, 2017.

RUBIN, J. Study of Cognitive Processes in Second Language Learning. **Applied Linguistics**, v.2, n.2, p.117-131, 1981.

SCARELLA, R.C.; OXFORD, R.L. **The Tapestry of Language Learning**: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom. Boston: Heile, 1992.

VILAÇA, M.L.C. Classificação de Estratégia de Aprendizagem de Línguas: Critérios, Abordagens e Contrapontos. **Revista Eletrônica do Instituto de Humanidades**. n.36, p.43-56, 2011.

WARSCHAUER, M.; HEALEY, D. Computers and Language Learning: an overview. **State of the art article**, United Kingdom, p. 57-71,1998. Available on:<http://hstrik.ruhosting.nl/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Warschauer-Healey-1998.pdf>. Retrieved on Nov 4, 2017

WEISTEIN, C. E.; MAYER, R.E. The Teaching of Learning Strategies. In: WITTROCK, M.(Ed.). **Handbook of Research on Teaching**. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, p. 315-327, 1986.

WIDDOWSON, H.G. Context, Community, and Authentic Language. **TESOL Quarterly**, v.32, n.4, p. 705-716. 1998.

WISCONSIN'S TECHNICAL COLLEGES. **Wisc-Online**. [2017?]. Available on:<https://www.wisc-online.com>. Retrieved on: Dec 1, 2017.

WIKIPEDIA. **Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd song)**. [2017]. Available on:<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wish_You_Were_Here_(Pink_Floyd_song)>. Retrieved on: Nov 19, 2017.