



Music in Professional Language Training

Pascal Archimede

Your English Project (France)

Abstract

This book aims to be a reflection on how to stimulate the learner and to incite them to learn English as a foreign language. The book consists of three chapters.

*In the **introduction**, the author notices the importance of a foreign language in a globalized economy of which the European Union is a member. Multilingualism is essential to facilitate cultural exchanges, develop occupational mobility and open up new prospects in terms of employment. As the European citizen's level of motivation to learn languages is quite low, the author wonders about the importance to stimulate learners' interest through innovative approaches.*

***Chapter I** begins with a discussion about the difference between mother tongue and foreign languages learning among children and adults. It is then followed by a detailed description of five methods set up in foreign languages teaching and learning: Traditional, Direct, Audiolingual, Audiovisual and Communicative. This approach aims to use a song by the trainees' favorite artist and to design activities regarding it, in order to develop and strengthen the four linguistic skills (reading/listening/writing and speaking) while adding a cultural touch which is for some linguists, the fifth language skill. The chapter ends with a presentation of both training institutions within which the training sequence was experimented.*

***Chapter II** proposes an analysis of the training program from a pedagogical engineering approach which comprises five stages: Diagnosis, Design, Development, Management and Evaluation. Not only does the Diagnosis part focus on the objectives, the participants and their motivation to learn English, but it also stresses the resources and constraints of the project.*

The author goes on with the Design stage which deals with the educational objectives, the choice of the training sequence and the educational means. Music, assertions about its effect on learners and the links between music and memory are also defined. The Development stage focuses on the pedagogical progress. In the Management stage, the author presents Music as a tool which minimizes the intellectual tension in an educational situation and helps to boost trainees' language learning. Finally, the Evaluation stage enables one to assess the training action in terms of pedagogical productivity.

The author shows that this method has successfully been experimented with a 90% success rate and a 100% satisfaction rate.

***Chapter III** presents proposals to improve this training sequence. Furthermore, he thinks of developing a CD-ROM based on this sequence to encourage self-training among learners. The economic and social environment, productivity and cost optimization along with the trainers' precarious situations make language training complex in France.*

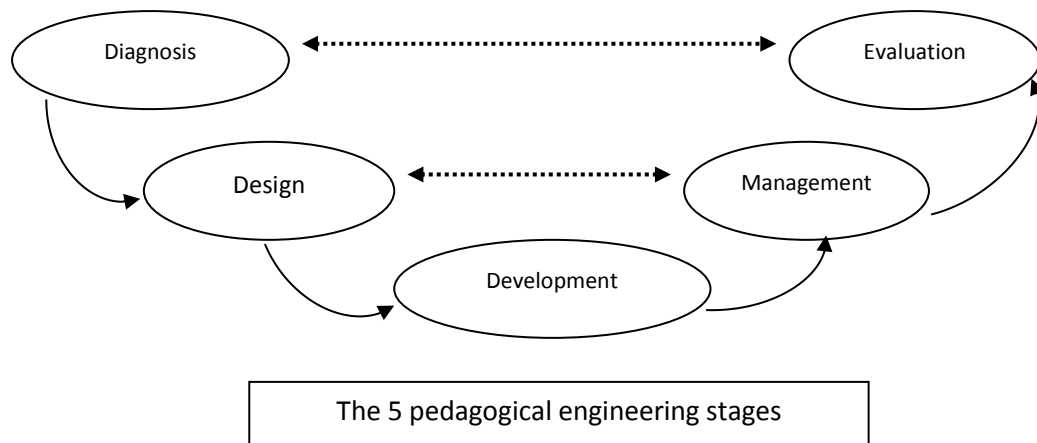
*In the **conclusion**, the author asserts that trainers have to be experts in educational engineering and that the resources of music as an educational tool are still not fully exploited.*

My name is Pascal Archimede and I am both an ESL (English as a Second Language) trainer and a pedagogical engineer.

I have implemented a training sequence within which Music is the main educational tool.

This approach, that I am using as part of my professional practice, has been the subject of a book published in French in 2014 (*Musique en formation linguistique professionnelle. Une approche innovante*), then in English in 2015 (*Music in professional language training. An innovative approach*).

The training sequence is analyzed from a pedagogical engineering approach which comprises five stages, Diagnosis, Design, Development, Management and Evaluation, proposed in "*Traité des sciences et des techniques de la Formation*." [1] written by Mr Carré and Mr Caspar.



The Diagnosis stage focusses on the objectives, the participants and their motivation to learn English and also stresses the resources and constraints of the project.

The Design stage deals with the educational objectives, the choice of the training sequence and the educational means. Music, assertions about its impact on learners and the links between music and memory are also defined.

The Development stage focuses on the pedagogical progress.

In the Management stage, Music is presented as a tool which minimizes the intellectual tension in an educational situation and helps to boost trainees' language learning process.

Finally, the Evaluation stage enables one to assess the training action in terms of pedagogical productivity.

The starting point of this research was this quote by Lems (1996):

"Music can be used in the adult English as a second language (ESL) classroom to create a learning environment, to build listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills, to increase vocabulary, and to expand cultural knowledge."[2]

I have noticed that the more we advance within the school system, the less Music is used in languages teaching.

I took a particular interest in the effect of music on learners. [3] Here are the main characteristics:

- Music restores harmony between both brain hemispheres: The learner is more receptive and assimilates more easily.
- Music relaxes and lowers the stress level which inhibits the learning process.
- It has a powerful impact on memorization. I have in mind how easy it is for some people to remember songs, turns of phrase or vocabulary thanks to Music.
- Music educates the Ear from a linguistic standpoint. Indeed, the Ear forms to the psycho-acoustic system (sounds) of our mother tongue up to the age of 12. After, all the sounds which are not relevant are not heard. Music is therefore used to overcome this "*pathological deafness*".

To put theory into practice, I suggest to give a concrete example: I implemented this training sequence with a group of 5 job seekers.

This module extended over two 4 hour training sessions. I will present the first session which was part of a language training program described as follows:

- Present tenses and daily routine (habits).
- Past tenses and socio-professional experiences.
- Future tenses and socio-professional projects.

The training sequence was implemented in the last part of this program.

To get the trainees involved in their learning process, I work on songs by their favourite artists. The goal is to match the song content, the trainees' linguistic level and of course the educational objectives.

In this case, Sade, an English speaking singer, was chosen. In her discography [4], I picked the song "*When am I going to make a living*" from the album "*Diamond Life*" released in 1984.



The description of this sequence goes with a few references to Suggestopedia, which is a teaching method based on a modern understanding of how the human brain works and how we learn most effectively.

Some of the key elements of Suggestopedia include a rich sensory learning environment (pictures, colour, music, etc.), a positive expectation of success and the use of a varied range of methods: dramatic texts, music, active participation in songs and games, etc.

The first session took place on a Monday morning at 9:00 am. It was important to take into account the fact that the trainees were coming back from the week-end. Thus, I was aware that from a biological perspective, the return to English learning would not be obvious for all.

For the first day, two activities were scheduled:

- I. Study of the song "*When am I going to make a living?*"
- II. Analysis of the biography of the singer (Sade).

I- The song

- a) They listened to the song twice in order to discover it. At this point, they were not given any documents. The target was to greet them with music at the beginning of the day, to make them discover the song, encourage them to listen carefully, to interest them and to prepare them for the following exercises. In suggestopedia, this stage is called *passive listening* or *passive concert session*. During this activity, learners sit in a relaxed way and breathe calmly. They hear, listen and discover a piece of music. The aim is to familiarize them with this song. Starting the session with *passive listening* enables trainees to reach a state of relaxation, conducive to learning.

According to professor D. Lemay [5] who specialized in the study of music in languages teaching, during this *passive listening* phase, music should regulate the activity within the learners' conscious and unconscious faculties, resulting in internal balance and the formation of attractive images within students. This minimizes the intellectual strain that is specific to any other educational situations.

After both listenings, the trainees did not seem motivated by the song telling me that they did not comprehend the lyrics and that the artist was singing too fast. On the whole, they had recognized some words.

- b) The second phase happened through the delivery of the song transcription in the form of a "*Fill in the blanks*" activity. In this text, there were 30 gaps. It was an opportunity for the learners to self-assess their listening comprehension.

The song was then repeated 2 additional times.

In suggestopedia, this phase is called the *active concert session*, during which the participants are invited to listen to score excerpts while working on the task of the day.

Active listening is regarded as a genuine learning process because trainees listen to the music by absorbing rhythm and discovering the lyrics in order to reproduce this vocal work later.

I am convinced that the rhythm impregnation, which stresses syllables, actually facilitates the memorization of some sentences. In addition, the musical accompaniment along with the native speaker's voice, makes the assimilation of pronunciation, intonation and stressing easier.

- c) Then, the trainees were asked what they had understood. It was an informal placement test to check their listening comprehension abilities as well as their written retranscription ones.

- d) Then, we discovered the text collectively by translating it. This represented a genuine team work. Students translated each line of the song. Then, I intervened to help one to clarify some notions regarding vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Translation is enhanced in suggestopedia. Indeed, translation exercises are accompanied with grammatical and lexical analyses, peculiarities, similarities and differences between native languages and the taught ones. Such an activity aids the comparison between both languages.

- e) Once this exercise ended, the trainees listened to the song again. Some confessed that after translating the song, they were approaching this activity differently, indicating that understanding the lyrics may have had a motivating effect.

- f) They were then asked the following question: *What would you do to make a living?* A discussion around the main theme of the text followed. This exchange was an opportunity to speak about themselves and thus to get personally involved in this task. The song was played throughout the activity in the background.

- g) Summary documents were handed over to the trainees:
- Grammar lessons, exercises with answers to favour self-assessment.



- Vocabulary connected to the text and to the question "*what would you do to make a living?*" I did not want to give them those documents during the activity for fear of reducing their interest in the activity.

It is important to note that the theme of the song is meant to be positive and the last sentence is "*We're gonna win*". Suggestopedic texts reflect an essentially positive conception of Man. One of the trainees confessed to the group that she particularly appreciated the end of the text and that the general topic made her want to "*keep on fighting to find a job*". Then, they were given a 15 minute break.

II- Biography of Sade

- Before starting part 2 activities, I played them the song once again in order to get them back into the "linguistic bath".
- The biography was individually handed to the trainees. They were given 10 minutes to discover the text and to discuss it with each other.
- The following required the trainees to rephrase what they had understood about the biography. It involved the question: "*What did you understand?*" It was an opportunity for me to write down the trainees' suggestions on the paper board.
- Then, each trainee was asked to read a passage aloud.
- At the end of the reading, I corrected their pronunciation errors.
- The next activity was the translation of the text altogether. It was the opportunity to discuss grammar and vocabulary notions linked to this text.
- Once this exercise ended, they were handed over documents which summarized the linguistic notions seen in the previous activity.
- Then, as homework, the trainees were asked to write down a few lines about themselves on the basis of the biography of Sade.
- A group debriefing session followed to gain their feedback regarding the work done.

The second part was shorter. The trainees' biological functioning was taken into account: more receptive at the beginning of the session, I noted that with the duration of time, the trainees' attention reduced.

During the whole second part, the album "*Diamond Life*" from which the song "*When am I going to make a living?*" is taken from, was used as background music. I noticed that all the trainees were relaxed.

The week after the implementation of the sequence, they were taking the DCL exam (Diplôme de Compétences en Langues), which is a professional test in English. 4 of them passed it, the fifth one did not turn up.

So far, I have had a 90% success rate (90 % of the trainees have reached the targets set at the beginning of the language training) and a 100% satisfaction rate (100% of the trainees have been satisfied with this "Musical" approach).

As far as Music is concerned, I think that all its capacities as a pedagogical tool are not fully exploited in language training.

Regarding the training sequence, the impressions gleaned from the training institutions and the learners encourage me to develop and improve it. Their sense of satisfaction and its relatively low implementation costs certify the potential efficiency of this approach.

Through this presentation, I am aiming to make my contribution to this "*still in progress*" building, which is language teaching and learning today.

My project is to label this work and to make it a "turnkey training sequence".

As far as the book is concerned, it was originally written in French, now it is available in English. I definitely hope that it will be translated into many other languages.

References

- [1] CARRÉ, P., CASPAR, P. (dir.) (2004) **Traité des sciences et des techniques de la Formation**, 2^e. éd., Dunod.
- [2] LEMS, K. (1996) **For a song : Music across the ESL curriculum**. Paper presented at the annual convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Chicago. (ED No.396 524)
- [3] DUBE, Sylvie, CEDEP. **La musique, un extraordinaire support à l'apprentissage**. Workshop presented during the « Cerveau, et apprentissage, Intelligences multiple » conference. 8, 9, 10 November 2001, Rimouski.
- [4] www.sade.com



[5] Mentioned by GAUQUELIN, F. (1979) *Développer sa mémoire*, Paris : Retz.

De nos jours, la mondialisation et l'ouverture à l'Union européenne sont des facteurs déterminants qui expliquent le souhait grandissant des entreprises françaises de former leurs salariés aux langues étrangères. Or, malgré la large panoplie de méthodologies qui existent dans ce domaine, les professionnels de la formation linguistique s'interrogent toujours sur LA façon de stimuler l'apprenant et de l'inciter à apprendre. C'est dans ce contexte que nous nous proposons de présenter et d'analyser un dispositif au sein duquel la musique occupe une place centrale. L'objectif de cette recherche est de mener un questionnement sur l'efficacité potentielle de cette approche vue sous l'angle de la démarche d'ingénierie pédagogique. Cette étude met en valeur l'aspect motivant que peut revêtir la musique en formation d'Anglais langues étrangères.



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Pascal ARCHIMEDE, formateur indépendant en Anglais est titulaire d'un Master II en "Sciences de l'Education". Sa spécialité en "Développement des Compétences en Formation d'Adultes", lui a permis de mettre en place des séances de formation basées sur des méthodes interactives, motivantes et innovantes.



978-3-8417-3613-0

Musique en Formation Linguistique

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Pascal Archimède

Musique en formation linguistique professionnelle

Une approche innovante

Nowadays, due to globalisation and the opening of European frontiers, French companies are more and more interested in having their employees trained in foreign languages. However, despite the array of methodologies that exist in this field, trainers are still trying to find THE way to motivate the trainee and to incite him to become fully engaged in the language learning process. It is in this context that we introduce an innovative training sequence in which music plays a central role. The aim of this research is to conduct an inquiry into the potential efficiency of such an approach from a pedagogical systems design perspective. This study shows the motivating aspect that music can get in English as a foreign language training. Translated from French by Pascal ARCHIMEDE.



Pascal ARCHIMEDE is a self-employed ESL (English as a Second Language) trainer. He has a Professional Masters 2 Degree in Educational Sciences. His expertise in "Skills Development in adult training" along with considerable field experience have enabled him to implement interactive training sessions based on innovative methods.



978-3-659-69785-2

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Music in professional language training

An innovative approach

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