

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**MUSICAL EXPERIENCES
IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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Musiikki on osa ennen kaikkea arkipäivän elämää, mutta käytössä toisinaan myös kielten oppitunneilla. Kielen oppimisen tutkimuksessa musiikkiin ei kuitenkaan toistaiseksi ole kiinnitetty paljonkaan huomiota. Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää millaisia kokemuksia ja ajatuksia englannin oppijoilla on kielen oppimisesta musiikin kautta ja siten tarjota näkökulmia musiikin roolista vieraan kielen oppimisessa. Materiaali koostuu neljän suomalaisen nuoren aikuisen haastatteluista. Tutkielmassa vastataan kysymyksiin: 1) Miten musiikki on ollut läsnä haastateltavien englannin oppimisen historiassa? 2) Millaisia kokemuksia oppijoilla on vieraan kielen, erityisesti englannin, oppimisesta musiikin kautta? 3) Mitä oppijat ajattelevat musiikin roolista kielen oppimisessa? 4) Millaisia mielipiteitä ja ajatuksia oppijoilla on oppimiskontekstin merkityksestä asiassa? Kaikkiin kysymyksiin sisältyvät sekä koulun että vapaa-ajan ympäristöt. Tutkimuskysymysten luonteen vuoksi tutkielma on pääosin kuvaileva.

Tutkielman metodologinen viitekehys on narratiivinen tutkimus. Haastattelut toteutettiin narratiivisina tutkimushaastatteluina ja näin kerätty aineisto, oppijoiden narratiivit, analysoitiin temaattisen analyysin avulla. Tutkielman teoreettinen osuus pohjautuu kokemuksellisen oppimisen teoriaan, jonka lisäksi lähtökohtana ovat kielen ja musiikin yhteydet sekä musiikin käyttö kieltenopetuksen työvälineenä.

Haastateltavien oppimishistorian aikana musiikkia on käytetty englannin oppitunneilla etenkin oppilaiden ollessa lapsia. Kielten tunneilla käytetty musiikki on ollut peräisin lähinnä oppikirjoista ja oppijan rooli musiikillisissa aktiviteeteissa yleensä passiivinen. Haastateltavien vapaa-ajalla englanninkielinen musiikki on merkittäväällä sijalla. Aineistossa kuvatut oppimiskokemukset liittyvät kuullunymmärtämisen, ääntämisen, sanaston, kieliopin ja kulttuurin oppimiseen. Usein musiikki liittyy kielen oppimiseen muistamisen apuvälineenä, kielenkäytön mallina tai motivaation lähteenä. Kielenoppiminen musiikin avulla on luonteeltaan pääosin alitajuista ja lisäksi iällä, motivaatiolla ja muilla yksilöllisillä piirteillä on merkitystä musiikin rooliin oppimisprosessissa. Haastateltavat suhtautuvat musiikkiin kielen opetuksen ja oppimisen välineenä erittäin positiivisesti sekä koulussa että vapaa-ajalla, mutta kritisoivat jonkin verran tapoja hyödyntää sitä koulun opetuksessa.

Tutkielma tarjoaa kieltenopettajille ja oppimateriaalien tekijöille ajatuksia tavoista hyödyntää musiikkia opetuksen ja oppimisen välineenä, oppijoille näkökulmia oman kielenoppimisen pohtimiseen sekä tutkijoille lähtökohtia aiheeseen liittyvälle jatkotutkimukselle.

Asiasanat: experiential learning, narrative inquiry, foreign language learning, music and foreign language learning, music and foreign language teaching

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1 INTRODUCTION

There is a song that I learned over fifteen years ago. The lyrics of the song are simple, they go like this:

“What's your name? - My name is Ken.
What's your name? - My name is Tom.
What's your name? - My name is Jeff, my name is Jeff Jerry Jackson.”

The place where I heard the song was my English classroom at elementary school. We were supposed to learn to ask other people's names and tell our own in English. I cannot recall any other activities we did to practice this, but I can still hear the song we listened to on the tape in my mind. Even though I am not a particularly auditory learner and the musical experience was not supernaturally overwhelming, I can easily remember the melody, the words and what the voices of Ken, Tom and Jeff sounded like. And this is just one example of how music has helped me to learn English.

All of this in mind, I have often noted the lack of information concerning the role of music in language learning and teaching when reading literature in the field. There are theories of foreign language learning that emphasize the various ways in which language can be learned. They mention activating senses, paying attention to multiple intelligences and different learning styles, promoting whole-person learning, pointing out the significance of offering memorable experiences and speaking for various learning environments. Music, then, is mentioned every now and then in this context. However, it hardly ever becomes the focus of attention.

The goal of the present study is to gain useful insights into this thus far neglected topic. The focus is on what I believe to be the starting point of learning: the learner him/herself. Since information about music as a tool for

language learning is needed, I believe it is profitable to go straight to the core of learning. Hearing what learners have to say about the topic is a good basis for developing the overall understanding of how music and language learning go together. Hopefully the information about the learners' experience will for its part point to new directions in further research.

In any case, especially teachers and other professionals in education are likely to benefit from understanding learners more comprehensively. Obviously, it is the learners and their experience that should be at the center of attention when materials, curricula and single lessons are planned. The knowledge about learners' experiences offer educators ideas about the role of music in language learning and the lives of learners in general. Additionally, it challenges professionals to assess their attitudes to music and experiences in their work and to evaluate the methods of teaching from a new perspective. Besides teachers, all language learners are encouraged to reflect on themselves as learners and think about their learning experiences in a new light, hopefully resulting in greater understanding of oneself as a learner.

However, school and formal education are not the only context of the present study. As can be seen in everyday life, music in its various forms is present almost everywhere. Because of this, it is essential to pay attention to informal learning settings as well. Thus, the experiences of music and language learning dealt with in this study relate to both educational and everyday contexts.

The first three sections of the present study introduce the theoretical framework of the study: experiential learning, music and language, and narratives in exploring experience. After that, the phases of and methods applied in the research process are reported in section 5. In sections 6 and 7, the findings of the study are presented and discussed. In the concluding section 8, the goals and findings of this study are summarized along with reflecting on the methodological choices and suggesting ideas for the future research in the field.

2 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The learning theory that the present study is based on is that of experiential learning. As the two words in the name of the theory indicate, experiential learning is about experience and learning. Thus, the notion of *experience* is briefly introduced first. Second, the focus moves on to the relationship between experiences and learning, namely *experiential learning*. After that, some aspects of one form of experiential learning, namely informal learning, are discussed and the learning context of the present study is presented. Finally, the criticism that experiential learning has received is discussed.

2.1 Experience

Experiences are something that we all know. They are an essential part of our daily life. Besides our lay characterizations of what an experience is like, there are some definitions that constitute a more profound picture of its features.

Trying to capture the nature of experience is not a new phenomenon. Already several decades ago, Dewey (1938: 33-50), who has written extensively about experience, pondered over this philosophical issue and as a result gave a fundamental definition of experience. He set two criteria for it: the principles of *continuity* and *interaction*. The experiential continuum refers to the effect of an experience: every experience lives on in subsequent experiences. Something from earlier experiences is always carried over to the succeeding ones. The principle of interaction suggests the idea that both internal and objective, external factors are part of an experience. Together these two form a *situation*. (Dewey 1938: 27-28, 42, 44.) As Dewey (1938: 43-44) describes:

An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment. (...) The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had.

Dewey's views have had a strong influence on the following generations. For example Beard and Wilson's (2006: 16, 21) definition of experience resembles that of Dewey: the principles of continuity and interaction are present in his thinking as well. First, he calls experience meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge, which itself is built from experience, to bring new meanings to an interaction. Second, he also highlights the subjectivity of experience: even when two people experience the same event, its impacts would be different for both.

Another classic in the field experience, Maslow, has examined particularly what he names *peak experiences* (1970: 163). These are the experiences that are the most wonderful and ecstatic experiences that one can have. What combines all peak experiences is that they change the person and his/her perception of the world in some way. To put it simply, peak experience is between the person and the world. Again, the idea that experience is transaction between the individual and the environment comes up, as in Dewey's notion of the principle of interaction. Maslow also created the concepts of *nadir experiences* and *plateau experiences*. Nadir experiences are the opposite of peak experiences: they are significant negative experiences. Plateau experiences are "positive experiences that are of longer duration and lower intensity than peak experiences". (Transpersonal Psychology 2009.) In addition, Maslow (1970: 71) highlights the importance of aesthetic experiences in human life: although not much is known about it, aesthetic experiences should be considered a central type of experiences.

In sum, Dewey's criteria offer an extensive conception of experience. His principle of interaction seems to capture the essence of experience: it is something that connects individual and his/her environment. The principle on

continuity, the fact that experiences are built on one another, is widely approved and acquired, as will become evident in the next section dealing with experience and learning.

2.2 Experience and learning

The content of this section can be expressed in a nutshell with only one sentence: experience is crucial in learning. Although the basic idea of experiential learning is rather simple, it appears that experiential learning is nowadays a flexible, loose framework that can be applied within diverse approaches to learning and education. Hence, giving a clear-cut definition of the theory of experiential learning is an impossible task. Instead, it is more practical to look at what these approaches have in common. Consequently, this section starts with exploring the roots and key definitions of experiential learning. After that, the features of experiences crucial for learning are considered.

2.2.1 Background and definitions of experiential learning

First of all, different experiential learning approaches share the same origin. The roots of experiential learning lie in the work of three scholars: John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget (Kohonen 2001: 24; Kolb 1984: 4-25). Dewey (1938) built his ideas about experiential learning on the need for new education and thus challenged the whole traditional approach to formal education. Strikingly, his thoughts that date back to several decades are current still today. He criticizes the traditional scheme for imposing adult standards, subject matter and methods that the previous experience of young learners cannot reach and for doing this from above and from outside (Dewey 1938: 18-19). To bring change to this state of things, Dewey (1938: 20, 22) suggested a philosophy that is based

on a more intimate relationship between the processes of experience and education and emphasizes the freedom of the learner. In essence, he proclaimed that “education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience – which is always the actual life-experience of some individual” (Dewey 1938: 89).

Kohonen (2001: 24-25) discusses Lewin and Piaget’s views on learning. He points out that in Lewin’s (1951) basic model of experiential learning, personal experience is the focal point for learning. Learning is based on immediate, concrete experience that is followed by reflective observation, then the formation of abstract concepts and finally testing the implications in new situations. Jean Piaget’s work on developmental cognitive psychology, then, has shown how intelligence is gradually shaped by experience. When a child explores and learns to cope with his immediate environment, experience turns into a model of the world.

One of the most famous theories of experiential learning is the one developed by Kolb (1984), who combines and builds on the work of the three scholars mentioned above. Kolb’s model (Figure 1) consists of four cyclic elements that are the adaptive modes of learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The transactions among these modes form the structural bases of learning. In addition, there are two crucial dimensions of learning: (1) the prehension dimension and (2) the transformation dimension. The prehension dimension concerns the concrete/abstract dialectic, whereas the transformation dimension is related to the active/reflective dialectic. The prehension dimension, which deals with grasping experience, consists of two different modes: apprehension and comprehension. As Kohonen (2001: 28) aptly paraphrases Kolb’s views:

(...) *apprehension* is instant, intuitive and tacit knowledge without a need for rational inquiry or analytical confirmation (...) *comprehension*, on the other hand, emphasises the role of the conscious learning, whereby comprehension introduces order and predictability to the flow of unconscious sensations.

The transformation dimension, then, refers to the process of transforming experiences through reflective observation and active experimentation. Transformation includes the processes of extension and intention. Extension means transforming experience via extensional action or active experimentation, whereas intention refers to transforming it via intentional and internal reflection.

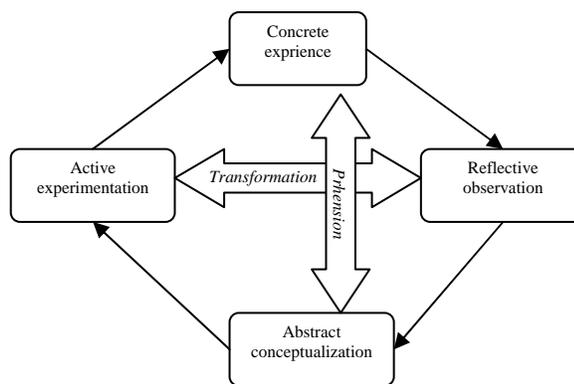


Figure 1. Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning.

Kolb concludes that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb 1984: 38). Kolb's model of learning, as typical of experiential learning approaches, emphasizes the process of adaptation and learning instead of content and outcomes, and knowledge as a transformation process as opposed to an independent entity that is acquired or transmitted. In addition, he states that when learning is conceived as a holistic process of adaptation, it creates links between different life situations and takes into account all human functioning: thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving. (Kolb 1984: 31-38.)

Another more contemporary view of experiential learning is offered by Beard and Wilson (2006). First of all, they see experiential learning as

the sense-making process of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment. Experiential learning is, in essence, the underpinning process to all forms of learning since it represents the transformation of most new and significant experiences and incorporates them within a broader conceptual framework (Beard & Wilson 2006: 19).

Furthermore, they define experiential learning more specifically as “the insight gained through the conscious or unconscious internalization of our own or observed experiences, which builds upon our past experiences or knowledge” (Beard & Wilson 2006: 43). They go on to suggest that the theory of experiential learning offers a philosophy that can connect distinct learning theories with each other (Beard & Wilson 2006: 16). This shows that today experiential learning is more a general way of thinking than a separate, uniform learning theory.

Hence, in the present study experiential learning is understood as a way of approaching learning from a holistic, individual-centered point of view. More specifically, experiential learning means a learning process that is initiated by an experience related to all or some aspects of human functioning (thinking, feeling, perceiving, behaving). It can take place in both formal and informal settings and in different life situations. The process will result in learning, either on an unconscious or a conscious level: a clear, complete “learning product” may not be generated, but the experience affects the learner in some way.

2.2.2 Which experiences count?

If people learned from every experience they have, we would all be very wise. Obviously, this is rather unrealistic to happen. Are there differences between

experiences in terms of learning, then? What kinds of experiences elicit learning?

Firstly, one needs to ask where experiencing becomes learning. For instance, in Beard and Wilson's (2006: 20-22) view, simply perceiving a stimulus, external or internal, can be regarded as a form of learning from experience. On the other hand, experience does not always result in learning. To achieve learning, reflection upon the experience is fundamental: one has to think about what happened, how it happened and why. Consequently, reflection plays a crucial role in experiential learning. Kohonen (2001: 32) describes reflection in learning as the process of extracting personal meanings from experience. Without reflection, the learning potential of experiences is not made use of: experiences come and go. Thus, Beard and Wilson's idea that perceiving a stimulus is itself a form of learning requires reconsideration. For example, perceiving a stimulus could be seen as a potential basis for learning, which, however, does not become learning without reflection, at least on a conscious level.

Secondly, the character of the experience is worth paying attention to: experiences that result in learning may be positive or negative, but the two different types are likely to have dissimilar consequences. This view is supported by Beard and Wilson (2006: 25), who point out that not all experiences that elicit learning are enjoyable. Besides positive learning experiences, there can be negative ones that may even have a significant influence on one's attitude and reactions to life, interaction with others and one's own experiences, and to new learning experiences (Beard & Wilson 2006: 190). Dewey (1938: 25, 37), on his behalf, calls experiences that arrest or distort the growth of further experience mis-educative: they affect the experiential continuum negatively. Taking this into account, it is important to pay attention to the nature of learning experiences and their consequences. For example, if a learner's experiences in formal settings are negative, it may lead to decreasing

motivation and negative attitudes to learning and to school in general. Thus, learner experiences are valuable information to everyone interested in enhancing learning. This view is supported also by Beard and Wilson (2006: 27), who strongly argue that “the process of formal learning can negatively affect a person”, and Dewey (1938: 27) who believes that also people in what he calls traditional schools have experiences – but experiences of wrong character. In essence, it is the quality of the experience that counts.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that learning from experience is an individual phenomenon. Similarly to all other personal experiences, also learning experiences are unique. Silkelä (1997: 179-180) shows that the features of personally significant learning experiences vary in terms of content, quality, duration or continuity, and interest. People learn from different kind of situations in a different way, at different times and for various reasons or motives. What personally significant learning experiences have in common is that they are valuable, authentic, significant and meaningful for those who experience them: they may even become a part of one’s identity. Personally significant learning experiences often include a social aspect (learning from an important person or group), gaining insight and, most of all, powerful emotions.

2.3 Experiential learning and the context of learning

From the experiential learning point of view, learning is a comprehensive process in which experiences connect the individual with his/her environment. Since experiences are constantly present in human life, also learning may occur in any kind of setting. In this section, perspectives on the contexts of learning that are relevant in terms of the present study are discussed. First, informal

learning becomes the focus of attention. Second, the role of English in Finland is explored.

2.3.1 Informal learning

When learning is viewed holistically, the learning situations that take place outside the formal educational settings step in. The concept of *informal learning* becomes relevant. This is another major factor that experiential learning approaches have in common: the role of the world outside the classroom is considered important. For example, Kohonen (2001: 22) states that experiential learning approaches typically integrate formal learning with informal learning and practical work. Similarly, Kolb (1984: 4) sees his experiential learning model as a framework that merges the classroom and the world outside it.

It is generally recognized that learning a foreign language in informal and formal contexts are two different, but not necessarily completely separate, phenomena. Besides the terms informal and formal learning, there are various names and terms that are used to distinguish the types of language learning processes, depending on the context in which it takes place. For example, terms such as *naturalistic* or *instructed learning* (e.g. Ellis 1994: 12; Ellis 1985: 215), *spontaneous* or *guided learning* (e.g. Klein 1986: 15-21) and *subconscious* or *conscious learning* (e.g. Littlewood 1984: 76) are familiar from the literature in the field. In addition, Krashen's (e.g. 1976) concepts of *acquiring* and *learning* refer to similar ideas.

What exactly is the difference between informal and formal learning, then? First of all, the idea of informal learning is traditionally defined by saying what it is not (Jeffs and Smith 1999: 16). Usually connotations such as choice, freedom and empowerment are attached to informal education, whereas formal education has opposite associations such as compulsion, order and

indoctrination. Similarly, Nikula and Pitkänen-Huhta (2008: 171) note that, according to Tusting (2003), informal learning is often regarded as the opposite of formal learning: it is learning that does not take place in institutional settings. Also Eraut (2000: 12) depicts informal learning by presenting what formal learning is like. According to him, formal learning situations share the following factors: a prescribed framework, an organized learning event or package, the presence of a designated teacher or trainer, the award of a qualification or credit, and the external specification of outcomes. Informal learning, on its behalf, does not include these factors. Correspondingly, Ellis (1994: 12) explains that learning naturally, or in informal contexts, refers to learning a language through communication in naturally occurring social situations, whereas instructed learning, which takes place in formal settings, is related to studying and involves the help of guidance from books or classroom instruction. In essence, it seems that the terms informal and formal learning refer to the type of context in which certain, different factors are present.

Second, the actual learning processes of informal and formal learning can be compared with each other. For example, Littlewood (1984: 73-78) presents a following model (Figure 2):

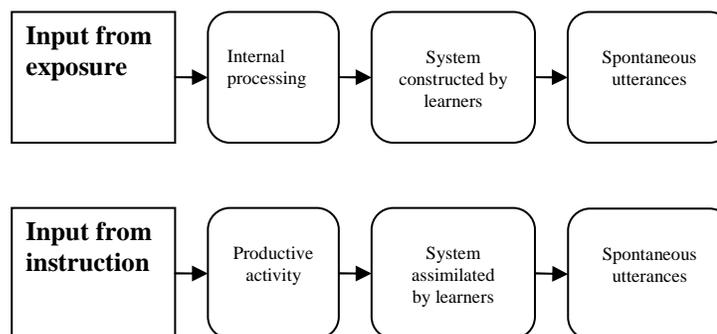


Figure 2. The processes of informal and formal language learning (Littlewood 1984)

According to his model, it is assumed that the goal and results of informal and formal learning are similar, even though the route is different. Informal learning occurs spontaneously and subconsciously, while the learner elaborates his/her internal system whose individual parts are integrated with each other from the outset. Littlewood calls this *creative construction*: the learner creatively constructs knowledge about the language. Formal learning, on the other hand, is based on step-by-step assimilation of individual parts of the language system that eventually become integrated with one another. This process includes guidance and training: producing predetermined pieces of language (productive activity) helps the learner to internalize the language system. Littlewood labels this kind of process as *skill learning* and argues that it is the model underlying most teaching.

Looking at the process of informal learning in more detail, then, Eraut (2000: 12-13) distinguishes three modes of learning. First, *implicit learning* means learning which, at the moment it occurs, is unintentional and unconscious. Second, in contrast with implicit learning, there is *deliberative learning*: learning is planned, reflective and conscious. Third, somewhere between these two extremes, there is *reactive learning*. On the one hand, its near-spontaneous and unplanned nature resembles implicit learning. On the other hand, the learner may well be aware of it.

At this point, it is useful to keep in mind that seeing informal and formal learning as extreme opposites of one another has its risks. It is justified to ask if the boundary between the two is that clear. Teaching methods that highly resemble informal activities can be applied in the classroom, and the social situations in the classroom are as real as outside the school, even if they are of certain type. Obviously, the ways in which a foreign language is taught in the classroom depends on the underlying views and models of learning and teaching. The students may also apply the same learning strategies despite the context. Moreover, the outcome of the learning process can be similar in both

informal and formal language learning processes, as Littlewood's model suggests.

It is also crucial to discuss how the concepts of informal and formal learning are understood in the present study. It has become clear that the two words may mean the type of the learning process. On the other hand, they may also refer to the setting in which learning takes place: the formal school context or the various contexts outside the classroom. In the present study, informal and formal learning mean the latter. The two words indicate, first of all, the settings. However, the nature of the learning processes in both informal and formal learning contexts is also a matter of interest here. The terms informal and formal, nonetheless, are not used to refer to the learning process and its characteristics, but they are described with other words.

In brief, the view and definition of informal learning applied in this study is one formulated by Nikula and Pitkänen-Huhta (2008: 171). They aptly use the term to refer to "contacts with the language in everyday settings that arise from the needs and interests of the language users." This definition covers all the various language situations that the learners encounter in their everyday life. Moreover, the types of these situations are not described specifically but the emphasis is put on the fact that the language users' needs and interests lead to certain kinds of situations. In other words, the learners face informal settings that are relevant and interesting to them.

The problem in the field of informal learning is that so far the focus has mostly been on adult and workplace learning. Not much information is available on other groups of people or other settings. From the perspective of the present study, it is worthwhile to ask what the role of informal learning is when foreign language learning is concerned. After all, the learners may well be in touch with the target language outside language classrooms and, on the other hand, classroom language learning may sometimes be far away from the needs of real life language use and the interests of language learners. The role of

informal learning is particularly crucial in terms of learning English, since the learners often encounter the language outside their English classrooms, as becomes evident in the next section.

2.3.2 English in Finland

It is realistic to say that English is a global language in the modern world. As a result of particularly two factors, the expansion of British colonial power and the economic power of the USA in the 1900s, English has gained a special position worldwide (Crystal 2003: 59). In Finland, too, one can sometimes hear English being called Finland's third domestic language (besides Finnish and Swedish). This shows that English is recognized as an important language also in Finland, where it does not have any special official status.

The position of English in Finland is typical of many other countries in which English is spoken and taught as a foreign language. In Kachru's (1988, as presented by Crystal 2003: 60-61) model of the spread of English, Finland, among others, belongs to the *expanding circle* (Figure 3). Expanding circle includes countries that recognize English as an international language, even though they do not have a history of colonization and have not given English an official status. In these countries English is considered a foreign language. Crystal (2003: 60) points out that the term *expanding* reflects the situation in the 1980s when it was first presented: nowadays it might be more appropriate to use the word *expanded*. The other two circles in Kachru's model are the *inner and outer circles*. First, the inner circle involves the countries where English is the primary language, in other words the traditional bases of the language: the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Second, the outer circle refers to non-native countries where English is a second language: English has become a part of country's institutions and multilingual settings. For example

India, Singapore and Malawi, among over fifty other territories, belong to this circle. In essence, Kachru's model represents how English has spread first from the inner circle areas to outer circle territories, and now continues to spread around other countries as well. Interestingly, the number of English speakers is the biggest in the expanding circle countries, even if an estimation of only those who can communicate on a medium level is taken into account. According to Crystal's account (2003: 67-68), there were approximately 400 million L1 speakers, 430 million L2 speakers, and 750 million EFL speakers in the world in the early 2000s. The number of EFL speakers, however, depends on the language skills criteria based on which people are labeled as speakers of English.

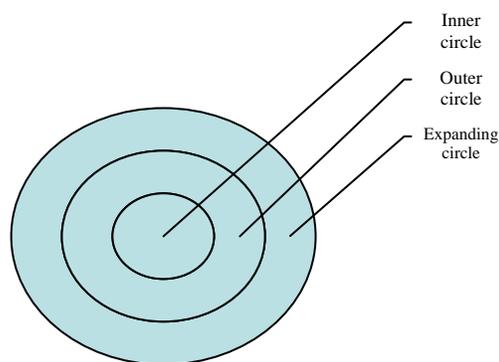


Figure 3. Kachru's three circles of English.

As the spread of English has reached Finland, the English language has become more and more meaningful in many aspects of Finnish people's lives. One of these aspects is education. English arrived in Finnish schools in the beginning of 1900s (Leppänen & Nikula 2008: 16-17). In 2008, virtually all (99 %) students who graduated from high school in Finland had studied English as a foreign language (Central Statistical Office of Finland 2009). Most students learn English as their first foreign language. This means they begin their English

studies usually on the third grade, at the age of 8 or 9. Thus, it can be stated that English is a priority in foreign language teaching in Finland. This is not exceptional: English is the most widely taught foreign language in the world of today, including over 100 countries where it is the chief foreign language in schools (Crystal 2003: 5). In addition to being the target of learning at school, English can also be the language of teaching and learning other subjects, as, for instance, in CLIL (content and language integrated learning) classrooms. All in all, Nikula and Leppänen (2008: 426) mark that the use of English and exploiting the resources it provides access to have become a part of the everyday life for many Finns: in some contexts, English has even become a second language rather than a foreign one. Thus, they conclude that it is worth considering how this affects the language education policies: the goals of formal language education should be reconsidered and updated now that English is efficiently learned outside the school.

Indeed, English is the dominant foreign language also in informal learning contexts. Even the Finns who do not have international contacts are exposed to the English language on a daily basis through the mass media and different forms of entertainment (e.g. Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003). Its position in music and popular culture, for example, is notable. In fact, popular music is one of the cultural factors that have contributed to the process of English becoming the global language. Crystal (2003: 100-102) points out that the birth of recording industry and the main technical developments in the field took place in the USA. Consequently, the major recording companies in popular music have English-language origins. Also the rapid growth in the broadcasting business resulted in reaching massive international audiences: it became possible to hear English music around the world. What is more, the modern popular music has been almost entirely an English scene from its beginning, starting from Elvis Presley, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones and others, to

the present day when the undoubtedly dominant language of international popular music is English (Crystal 2003: 102-103).

In Finland, the influence of English started to show within popular culture already in years 1920-1940 (Battarbee 2002, as cited in Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 17-18). Furthermore, Kallioniemi (2000, as quoted in Leppänen & Nikula 2008: 17-18), notes that particularly from the mid-1900s on, Anglo-American rock and pop music made English more visible in Finland. The remarkable role of English in the fields of popular culture and music has only strengthened since then. Hyytiä (2008), who explored Finnish elementary school students' contacts with English in their free time, reports that listening to English music is the most common way of being in touch with the English language outside the school among the students. Moreover, the majority of the participants said they had learned "a lot" or "quite a lot" about the language by listening to music performed in English. These findings are similar to earlier research dealing with Finnish teenagers (Bonnet 2002, as cited by Hyytiä 2008: 58). Evidently, the notable exposure to English music shows in the processes of learning the language.

In sum, although for the majority of Finnish people English is still a foreign, not yet a first or second, language, its significance in Finland is considerable. The role of English is also particularly notable in the contexts of this study: school and free time. During their formal education, practically all Finns learn English. This is the case specifically among the younger generations. Also, especially due to popular culture, music and the English language is a combination that one is likely to encounter everywhere in Finland. The exposure to music performed in English is likely to have some kind of influence on the learning of the language as well.

2.4 Criticism

As one may predict, experiential learning theories are regularly criticized for their subjectivity. The principles of experiential learning cannot be widely applicable because they are dependent on individual, personal experiences (Beard & Wilson 2006: 39). Similarly, the debate on the benefits and usefulness of subjective research methods is chronic. In essence, both positive and negative sides can be found in studying phenomena from a subjective perspective as well as the possibility of doing objective academic research at all can be questioned. Thus, it is reasonable to evaluate the usefulness of a theory or a method from the inside: does it work validly in this context and for these purposes? (See also section 4.3.)

Experiential learning has also received criticism on the practical level. Some find that experiential learning may also lead to undesirable teaching practices. Jeffs and Smith (1999: 55) point out that it could happen that some educators end up thinking that all they need to do is “to provide an opportunity for experience which is then followed by time for reflection and theory making”. They highlight that learning also includes giving information: endless exploration may not fulfill the expectations and needs of the learners. Also Beard and Wilson (2006: 38-43) find that experiential learning is criticized because of its emphasis on learner-centeredness, creativity and freedom. The critics see that this might lead to a situation where students are allowed to design their curriculum (for example, see Wildemeersch 1989). However, that would be an extreme outcome. Giving the students freedom at certain times does not mean they are in the position of deciding all educational issues.

The idea of steps and stages in thinking that are used in experiential learning have been criticized as well. Jeffs and Smith (1999: 55) argue that the danger in gradual models is that people try to achieve the 'end' (see for example Kolb's experiential learning model in Kolb 1984). They claim that instead of

proceeding gradually, different stages of thinking overlap and interconnect, the order changes, and so on. Additionally, pushing learners to the area where new knowledge is generated is often harmful – learning and recognition require time.

However, the aspects of learning that experiential learning theories promote fit the educational paradigm of today's world. The turn away from traditional education, which Dewey criticized already many years ago, has been slow. At present, nonetheless, there are signs that indicate that some kind of change has taken place. New kinds of theories of language learning have gained more ground: individual learners, the connections between what is taught at school and what goes on in the real world, among others, are considered important educational perspectives.

3 MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

Music is a language everybody understands. A language may sometimes sound like music. These expressions, which the most of us have probably heard sometime, capture something essential about the relationship between music and language. This relationship is also the topic of this section. First, the focus is exclusively on music and the effects it can have on humans. In other words, the characteristics of music as a source of experience are discussed. Second, the similarities and differences between music and language are explored. Third, some perspectives on the role of music in foreign language learning and teaching are presented.

3.1 The power of music

The phrase “the power of music” is familiar to all of us. Besides mundane experiences that prove the existence of this power, a lot of research has been done to find out what it is about. To start with, music consists of certain elements. The basic components of music are pitch (melody), rhythm and timbre (the characteristic qualities of tone) (see for example Gardner 1993: 105). These aspects of music have an effect on people both in physiological and in mental or emotional ways.

The idea that music has physiological influences on people dates back to Greek philosophy and has been empirically studied through a long period of time (Bartlett 1996, as quoted by Scherer & Zentner 2001: 374). Indeed, it has repeatedly been shown that music has effects on the vegetative system, as Rauhala (1973: 87, 108-110) points out. For example, music may cause variation in pulse, circulation, blood sugar, respiratory frequency and heart functions.

Furthermore, whether the music heard is familiar or new has an influence on the physical response to it. The vegetative reactions of the individual, however, are more or less dependent on his/her emotional state of mind.

Finding out how music is experienced in other than physical ways is a challenging task. The major problem is the lack of suitable theories and methodology (Juslin & Sloboda 2001a: 5; Rauhala 1973: 88). Still, also the affective aspects of music are central: the relationship between music and feelings is a strong one. As Gardner (1993: 124) says: "Music can serve as a way of capturing feelings, knowledge about feelings, or knowledge about the forms of feeling, communicating them from the performer or the creator to the attentive listener." Sloboda (2005a: 334) writes about the same issue. He refers to his earlier research (Sloboda 1992) and states that besides the fact that music is naturally pleasurable to the majority of people, it can be used also for therapeutic purposes. This shows that music can have a powerful effect also on the human mind and emotions.

Although the affective effects of music are a demanding topic, they are studied more and more widely. For example Juslin and Sloboda (2001b) have worked extensively on music and emotion. Naming the challenges in the field, they first bring up the difficulty of defining *emotion*. There are plenty of suggested psychological definitions of it, but there still is not a definitive answer to question, "What is an emotion?" Nevertheless, it could be said that emotion is something that is present in all aspects of human behavior: action, perception, memory, learning, and decision-making. (Juslin & Sloboda 2001b: 73.) According to Juslin & Sloboda (2005b: 81-82), musical emotions, then, go into two categories. Firstly, there are emotions that are related to the aesthetical value of music. Secondly, there are emotions that are induced or expressed by the music. In other words, in the first case the source of the emotions is in the person, although music elicits certain feelings. In the second case, the person begins to experience the same feelings that are already present in the music.

Furthermore, Sloboda and O'Neill (2001: 416-417) take notice of the problems with studying everyday musical experience. Firstly, since the experiences occur in a variety of settings, it is virtually impossible to observe or record experience in all of them. Secondly, the richness and diversity of musical experience are difficult to capture through retrospective studies, such as interviews, because the more ordinary and mundane experiences are forgotten or filtered out.

Despite these practical difficulties, for example Sloboda and O'Neill (2001) have studied the everyday musical experience and confirmed the common observation that music is present practically everywhere in everyday life. They (Sloboda and O'Neill 2001: 417-418) have found that there is a 44 per cent likelihood that music is experienced in any two-hour period. However, the attentive focusing on music appears to be a remarkably untypical activity for most listeners. Instead of concentrating on music itself, it is common to experience situations of which music is a part in personal, leisure and work contexts. As far as the power of music is concerned, it is a significant piece of information that experiencing music makes participants more positive, alert and focused in the present: in general, it makes people feel better.

What about the settings of the present study, then? Does it make any difference whether music is experienced in free time or at school? Sloboda and O'Neill (2001: 425-426) report about Sloboda's study (1989) which deals with the emotional responses to music in terms of content and context: in other words, how the social context relates to a person's emotional reaction to the content of music and its associations. The study shows that the role of context in musical experiences is crucial. It was found that it is rare to react to the actual musical content negatively. In contrast, there are more negative responses to the context in which the musical experience takes place. It was concluded that positive emotions related to contacts with musical materials are likely to emerge only in contexts that are emotionally positive or, at least, neutral. These kinds of

contexts turned out to be for example home, church, and the concert hall, along with listening to music alone or with friends and family. The contexts that aroused negative reactions were lessons at school, or situations in the direct presence of a teacher. The reasons for this, according to the study, could be the emphasis on achievement, success and failure, and the threats to self-esteem or self-worth that follow, which is typical of the formal educational settings. Consequently, people may express their most personal relationships with music only in private and hide them at school. These findings offer an interesting aspect with regard to the present study: do musical experiences tend to be negative if lived at school and positive if experienced in other surroundings?

3.2 Music and language

One can often hear how people talk about music as a language. One can speak the language of music. Music is a language that does not need words. Music is a language that everybody understands even if they do not really speak the same language. Also language can sometimes sound like music. But are there any true correlations or links between music and language?

It seems that no clear evidence for direct biological congruency between music and language has been found. Gardner (1993: 117-119) states, pointing to research by Deutsch (no reference given by Gardner), that although many kind of analogies could be drawn between language and music, it is shown that the processes and mechanisms contributing to these two areas are distinct from each other. Apparently linguistic and musical abilities are substantially lateralized to different hemispheres. On the other hand, with musically trained individuals there are also musical effects increasingly in the left hemisphere, the side where linguistics activities, on average, take place. However, this phenomenon is not highly significant to a greater extent.

In any case, what music and language do have in common is that they both rely on the oral-auditory system, even though that happens in neurologically different ways (Gardner 1993: 122). Similarly, Sloboda (2005b: 176) notes that the primary medium of both music and language is sound. Some further comparisons can be made between music and language, for example within categories such as phonology, syntax and semantics. Some analogies can be found, but they are rarely direct or completely congruent. For example, semantics in music and language differ notably from one another. (Gardner 1993: 125; Sloboda 2005b: 177-181.) Moreover, Pasanen (1992: 85) cites Ervin's (1981) observations about the similarities between music and language. For example, both subjects serve as media for cultural communication, have a sign system, and share some basic qualities such as rhythm, timbre, duration and intonation. Additionally, if non-verbal language is considered, music and bodily or gestural language are closely bonded, as Gardner (1993: 123) notes. Especially for young children it is natural to relate music and body movement. Combining voice, hand and body is also an effective method for teaching music.

Keeping this in mind, and not forgetting that music often includes language in the form of lyrics, it is evident that music constitutes a tool worth trying for learning and teaching foreign languages. The next section will focus on this perspective.

3.3 Music and language learning

As discussed above, music and language do share some features although they are considered two clearly distinct phenomena. What is more, the power of music is real and effective, according to both everyday experiences and scientific research. How can music be used in language learning and teaching, then?

Pasanen (1992: 96-108) lists several practical ways in which music can be applied in language teaching. First, it can be used for recreation, for example as background or pause music and for orientation. Second, music can be employed as a method for teaching. It can be applied in practicing all of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, listening comprehension can be practiced by discussing the message of the song or filling in missing words and so on. Third, in terms of pronunciation, singing is a useful tool for learning. Besides actively practicing sound production by singing, one also receives models of pronunciation through music and thus trains one's ear. Fourth, oral communication skills can be practiced through music. For instance, dialogues, which are a common tool for working with communication skills, can be performed in musical form. Fifth, music can be used in teaching grammar and vocabulary by using various kinds of exercises. In essence, lyrics of a music piece provide models of how a certain grammatical structure is formed and used, and they can serve as a material that helps to extend the learner's vocabulary. In addition, it suits well for learning about culture and creativity: through music the teacher can approach themes such as the literature and music culture of the target language areas, creative expression and performing. Finally, music works as a tool for revision and enriches language lessons in general.

In contrast with the findings of Sloboda's (1989) study mentioned above, it is often assumed that students like to have music in classrooms. A small-scale study by Marttala and Minkkinen (2008) examined how Finnish elementary school children experience the use of music in English lessons. They applied Pasanen's methods for using music in language lessons (described above) and carried out a teaching experiment, which included using music in some form during each English lesson for two weeks. According to Marttala and Minkkinen (2008: 7-8), the majority of the participants thought that using music brings variety to language lessons and that music belongs to English lessons.

Almost half of the students liked musical exercises in general, and particularly background music was popular. Students, who had music as a hobby, had slightly, but not remarkably, more positive attitudes to musical exercises than those who did not have any particular hobbies related to music. It also came up that the majority of students would like to have an impact on the music choices in the classroom.

Most significantly, a clear majority of students in Marttala and Minkkinen's study (2008: 8) said that music is important to them. This is worth considering: music is something that most students are fond of and thus it may well stimulate positive learning experiences. As Marttala and Minkkinen (2008: 9) conclude, attitudes to music in language classroom are positive, although the types of exercises, the ways in which it is used and the style of music may affect the experience. In general, they feel that bringing music to language classrooms is natural, since it is the part of the culture of English-speaking areas that is familiar to students beforehand and, especially in the case of the English language, materials are easily available in the world of today (Marttala & Minkkinen 2008: 4).

Besides that it is generally liked, music is also considered holistic and comprehensive in nature. Despite the biological differences between music and language presented in the previous section, Lake (2002: 102-103) offers an interesting thought on music and foreign language learning. He notes that music with words uses both hemispheres. This is what Lake calls *whole brain learning*. According to him, language and emotion are one in a song, which makes music a powerful learning tool. Lake also refers to *whole language learning*, which means learning language in context. Using songs is a practical way to apply this strategy in foreign language teaching.

The idea of wholeness is essential in the experiential learning theory. Thus, it is striking that not much attention has been paid to music in the field so far. For example, Kohonen (2001: 23) lists some examples of techniques that can

be used in teaching based on experiential learning. To name a few, methods such as personal journals and reflections, portfolios, role plays, drama activities, games, personal stories, visualizations, theory construction, and cooperative group activities are mentioned. In general, experiential learning techniques are interactive and should offer the participants opportunities to learn from each others' experiences as well. What stands out when reading the list of techniques, nevertheless, is the absence of music. As shown above, music affects humans in powerful ways and hence leads us to many kinds of experiences. At its best music can also be a highly interactive element in the classroom. In essence, music is an excellent tool for experiential learning.

Music has not gained much ground in the field of informal learning either. Since music is almost constantly present in many people's lives, most often in informal settings, one may predict that music plays a noteworthy role also in informal language learning. If we now go back to the definition of informal learning applied in this study, the importance of music becomes evident. When informal learning is understood as "the contacts with the language in everyday settings that arise from the needs and interests of the language users" (Nikula and Pitkänen-Huhta 2008: 171), it is obvious that with several language learners these contacts include music. Thus, the present study aims at discovering more about the ways that language is learned informally, in this case specifically in contact with music.

4 NARRATIVES AND EXPLORING EXPERIENCE

The methodological framework of the present study is built on a qualitative approach known as *narrative inquiry*. In this section, the reasons for choosing narrative inquiry as the method of the study are discussed along with issues of validity related to it. First, however, it is essential to deal with the broad term of *narrative* itself.

4.1 What is 'narrative'?

It is necessary to start by defining the meaning of *narrative*, since the word is used in various ways in different fields and contexts. In fact, there is a continuum of its definitions, as Riessman (2008: 5) points out. On one end, narrative refers, restrictively, to a separate unit of discourse. On the other end, narrative can refer to an entire life story. Although narrative has a wide range of meanings, some of them are, nevertheless, fixed definitions.

First, narrative can refer to the practice of storytelling (Riessmann 2008: 6). Within this category, Chase (2008: 58) gives narrative three different meanings. According to her, a narrative may be (1) a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters, (2) an extended story about a significant aspect of one's life, or (3) a narrative of one's entire life. Also Erkkilä (2006: 201) points out that the narrative approach can be attached to biographical studies. The different episodes in life are linked with each other through narrative means. Thus one's whole life story can become one narrative. Since the words story and narrative often appear in the same contexts, it should be pointed out that the contemporary tendency is to use these two words practically

synonymously instead of considering story simply as one kind of narrative (Riessman 2008: 6).

Second, narrative can refer to scientific data collection and analysis. In the phase of data collection, the narrative approach requires that informants tell freely about their lives. In data analysis, one can distinguish analyzing narratives and narrative analysis. The first one refers to analysis that categorizes narratives. The latter is a way of analyzing data that aims at finding the plot of the story, hearing and preserving the voice of the speaker, analyzing speaker and researcher's cooperation in producing the narrative and analyzing different ways of narration and context. (Erkkilä 2006: 200; Riessmann 2008: 6.)

In addition, Erkkilä (2006: 199-200) notes that narrative also refers to the way of knowing and the nature of knowledge. Constructing knowledge narratively means that one aims at understanding entities by integrating them from smaller fragments. Narrative knowledge is a part of everyday life and social relationships. People understand their own lives and the lives of others narratively, which makes narrative knowledge a useful tool for the researcher.

Nowadays many kinds of sources can be regarded as narratives. Riessman (2008: 4) cites Bakthin's (1981) view that, for example, spoken, written and visual materials can be viewed narratively and goes on to expand the list with diverse sources, such as memoir, biography, diaries, photographs, folk ballads and other art work and so on. However, Riessman (2008: 4-5) emphasizes that it is important to hold on to some boundaries around the concept: not all text and talk are narrative. Narratives should include a sequenced storyline, specific characters and particulars of a setting. Similar ideas are presented by Thornborrow and Coates (2005: 3), who note that "to count as a narrative, there has to be a sequence of narrative clauses (...) whose order matches the real time order of the events described in those clauses." In addition, they point out that the traditional Aristotelian definition is another appropriate criterion for a narrative: it should have a beginning, a middle and

an end. Nevertheless, Thornborrow and Coates (2005: 6) also highlight that drawing the line between narrative and non-narrative discourse is not always simple, since the formal description of narrative does not necessarily cover all the features of the various kinds of discourses described as narrative: the data used in narrative inquiry includes many different story forms, all the way from minimal narrative units to narratives constructed in natural interaction.

In the present study, then, the different aspects of narrative are understood in the following way. First of all, narrative in this context means a short topical story about a particular event and specific character, according to one of Chase's (2008: 58) definitions. This is because the data of the study consists of narratives of this type, and not, for example, of life stories. Furthermore, the narratives analyzed in the present study are *elicited narratives*. Threadgold (2005: 262) calls eliciting narratives a method to produce and a theory to investigate a particular area of social reality or practice. During the interviews in which these narratives emerge, the interviewee and the interviewer co-produce the narratives, which then become the object of narrative analysis. Furthermore, Thornborrow and Coates (2005: 4) note that when collecting narrative data through interviews, the narratives are unavoidably elicited. Naturally, in interviews the stories are invited by another participant.

Secondly, in terms of data collection and analysis, narrative here refers to ways of conducting the study. The data collection is narrative in the sense that the goal was to collect stories, one type of narrative, from learners of English about the experiences related to music and foreign language learning. The focus of narrative analysis in the present context, then, is on analyzing narratives. Finally, the idea of narrative knowledge is present in the sense that the study aims at understanding the role of music in foreign language learning by exploring single learners' experiences about it: in other words, gaining insight into entities by looking at smaller fragments.

4.2 Why narrative inquiry?

Narrative inquiry was chosen as the method for the present study because it is an appropriate tool for exploring human experience. The methodological framework here is based on the idea that narratives provide the most suitable access to experiences. This section illustrates the connections between the nature of narrative inquiry and the topic and aims of this study. First, the relationship between narrative inquiry and experience is explored. Second, the focus is shifted on narrative inquiry and learning.

4.2.1 Narrative inquiry and experience

The present study explores human experiences. Thus, the aim is to get as close to these experiences as possible. Narrative inquiry is an advantageous method when studying experience, since the two – experience and narrative – are closely intertwined.

The well-known scholars in the field of narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 18-19), argue for the use of narrative inquiry when experience is studied. According to them, "experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it." They go on to state that experience happens narratively and that narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Because of this, they conclude that educational experience should be studied narratively. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 20) also call narrative inquiry a way of understanding experience. They describe it as "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus." Clandinin and Connelly's are not alone with their views. The idea that people's stories are a window into their experiences and that narratives allow the researcher to approach experience holistically,

preserving its complexity and richness is the basis of the narrative inquirer's work (e.g. Bell 2002: 209; Webster & Mertova 2007: 2; Erkkilä 2006: 201; Karlsson 2008: 85).

However, studying experience is problematic in some parts. First of all, the nature of experience must be addressed. In studies such as the present one, experiences that are under examination are not taking place in real time. The information received is retrospective and describes past events. Consequently, it is important to consider how the essence of experience is conceived. For example, Erkkilä (2006: 201) thinks that in narrative inquiry experience should be regarded as something that is variable and dynamic. Thus, if only the not static and fixed nature of what is studied is understood, the retrospective perspective does not become a major dilemma.

Secondly, the information one receives about others' experiences always contains interpretations. Again, awareness of the nature of experience helps to deal with the problem. After all, the goal of narrative research is not to be objective in the traditional scientific sense, and experience itself is bound to interpretation by its nature. Hence, the problem of interpretation mainly concerns the fact that the information about experience is always two intermediaries away: first it is interpreted by the person who lives the experience and then by the researcher. This leads to rethink the role of the researcher. Erkkilä (2006: 201-202) sees narrative researcher as someone who aspires to depict the various dimensions of experience and to understand how experience is enclosed in the narratives told. Thus the narrator's reflections are welcome, not avoidable.

4.2.2 Narrative inquiry and learning

Since the present study deals with learning experiences, it is relevant to have a look at the connections between narrative inquiry and learning, in this case particularly foreign language learning.

Pavlenko (2007: 164) reports that narrative inquiry first appeared in the field of second language acquisition at the turn of 1970s and 1980s, about ten years after the so-called narrative turn in the humanities and social sciences. Nowadays narrative research is increasingly popular in the field, while autobiographic narratives, for example, offer insights into people's personal views of the processes of language learning, attrition and use, and serve as a starting point for future research by enlightening the connections between various learning processes and phenomena. However, the focus in studying foreign language learning narratively has mainly been on teacher's perspectives and teacher education (Bell 2002: 208). Justly, in recent years also the learners have begun to attract attention. For example Kalaja et al (2008) present a wide range of narrative studies that explore learning English as a foreign language in multiple ways. It is shown that language learners' narratives that capture their experiences are a rich resource for studying and understanding foreign language learning. What is more, various kinds of data may provide access to these experiences. For example, the studies presented in Kalaja et al (2008) exploit written and oral narratives along with self-narratives and multimodal narratives, such as photographs, drawings and multimedia narratives.

Shifting the focus also on the learner is important. As the contemporary tendency in many approaches to learning and methods of teaching is to give the learner the head role in the learning process, it is reasonable to take this into account in research as well. Particularly the views of experiential learning applied also in the present study are highly learner-centered. Narratives, then, are suitable data for research when aspiring for knowledge about the learners,

because they provide information about learner experiences. As Pavlenko (2002: 214) points out, through narratives “researchers can gain rare insights into learners’ motivations, investments, struggles, losses, and gains as well as into language ideologies.” Furthermore, Webster and Mertova (2007: 21-22) see narrative inquiry as learner-centered because it situates itself in practice. They also argue that the stories of learning reveal the need for different strategies at different times of learning. In the present study this is a relevant point of view, since the stories deal with experiences in different contexts, inside and outside the school as well as at different ages.

In general, learner narratives provide the researchers with several perspectives on learning. The individual, holistic process can be appropriately examined through narratives, since, as Webster and Mertova (2007: 20) put it, “stories allow us to watch what an experience can do to people who are living that experience.” Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that language learners’ narratives do not provide factual statements, since they are discursive constructions that contain sociocultural, sociohistorical and rhetorical influences (Pavlenko 2002: 216-217).

4.3 Assessing narrative inquiry: Issues of validity

Since narrative inquiry as a method is often criticized for its unscientific nature, it is appropriate to discuss the aspects of validity and reliability. The method of narrative inquiry challenges, as has been pointed out on earlier pages, many traditional ideas on academic research. The concept of *validity* makes no exception: as far as narrative research is concerned, it cannot be used in a similar way as with traditional empirical methods.

Generally, the view of Riessmann (2008: 185-186) on the nature of truth is shared in the present study. She believes that research truths are always

situated, as is the research work itself: they take place within particular research contexts. Thus, the validity of a certain study, in this case narrative inquiry, should be assessed from inside the situated perspective. In consequence, it is important to understand the validity issues related specifically to narrative inquiry.

Webster and Mertova (2007: 4) explain that the goal of narrative research is not to produce conclusions of certainty, but its findings should be well grounded and supportable. They also find that the academic community widely accepts the fact that narrative research should not be judged by traditional validity criteria: instead of generalizable and repeatable events it is individual truths that are concerned (Webster & Mertova 2007: 89). Thus, Webster and Mertova (2007: 93-94), building on the work of Huberman (1995), present some rethought aspects on validity and reliability. In essence, they emphasize the sense of honesty and plausibility as the basis of validity.

First, Webster & Mertova (2007: 94, 99-101) point out that readers of the study ought to have access to the cultural context of the participants and to the process of construction of knowledge between them and the researcher. In addition, the research notes, transcripts and data on which the findings are based on should be available to the audience. The readers should also evaluate if the research and its reporting is realistic and thus plausible: in short, whether the narratives are true or not. In order to achieve this, the researcher needs to give enough information that convinces the reader that the story is told in a serious and honest way. Finally, the research ought to consider the aspect of transferability: he/she needs to provide a sufficient base for others so that it is possible to carry out an application in another setting.

Riessmann (2008: 184, 189-193) views the validity issues from two levels: the informant's story and the validity of the analysis, and the researcher's story. She mentions three features that are worth attention when thinking about the validity on both of these levels. The first one of these is *coherence*. One may ask,

for example, the following questions: Do episodes of the narrative hang together? Are there notable gaps and inconsistencies? Are theoretical arguments linked with one another? Secondly, there is the aspect of *persuasion*. A successful study persuades readers: the researcher presents his/her narrative data in ways that show that the data are genuine and that the analytic interpretations made are plausible and convincing. Thirdly, *presentation* may also affect the validity of a study. To some extent, this is connected with persuasion: an appropriately selected form of presenting a narrative inquiry can influence its reception positively and increase its persuasiveness. Similarly with a piece of art, the study does not merely depict a reality but creates one. Finally, one may ask an ultimate, pragmatic question: does the study become a basis for others' work? This is a relevant question, since validity in the academic world often means pragmatic usefulness.

Narrative inquiry is often criticized for its subjectivity and is sometimes called soft science. Is there any use for research that investigates experiences and thoughts of some individuals? Also, one may want to ask why some stories are taken into account while some others are disregarded, as Webster and Mertova (2007: 20) note.

To start with the question of generalizing, Riessmann (2008: 13) states that also the results given by research based on individual cases can be generalized. As she puts it: "Case-centered models of research can generate knowledge that, over time, becomes the basis for others' work – the ultimate test" (Riessmann 2008: 13). As an example of this, Riessmann (2008: 12) cites Mishler (1986), who has pointed out that several theories of great significance were based on the study on individual cases: for example the psychological theories by Freud, Piaget, Lewin, Erikson and Skinner.

According to Chase (2008: 79), the contemporary view is that any narrative is significant because "it embodies – and gives us insight to – what is possible and intelligible within a special social context". This means that, as well

as all possible phenomena and things in the world, every story is potential data for research. The question of which stories end up being heard and which do not is a matter of researcher's resources, as is the case in other fields of research as well. There are practical and logical reasons that affect data collection. Using power by intentionally excluding or including certain stories, then, is more a question of the researcher's ethics.

5 THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the goals and research questions of the study are presented. In addition, it is reported how the study was carried out: the phase of data collection and analysis are explained. The actual findings are introduced and discussed in sections 6 and 7.

5.1 The research questions

The goal of the present study is to gain insight into the role of music in foreign language learning and learners' understanding and thoughts about it. The study focuses on learning particularly the English language. The first and second research questions concentrate on the presence and role of music in learning English, whereas the emphasis in questions three and four is on the learners' perceptions, ideas and feelings about music as a tool for foreign language learning. Since the study aims also at exploring the topic comprehensively, the contexts of both formal and informal learning are included in all the research questions. The research questions are the following:

1. How has music been present during the participants' history as English learners
 - a) at school?
 - b) in the free time?

2. What kind of experiences do the learners have about learning a foreign language, particularly English, through music
 - a) at school?
 - b) in the free time?

3. How do the learners' perceive the role of music in their language learning?
4. What are the learners' opinions on and thoughts about the use of music as a tool for foreign language learning
 - a) at school?
 - b) in the free time?

Next, how the research based on these questions was designed and completed is reported.

5.2 Collecting data: Narrative interview

The data for the present study was collected by interviewing four Finnish learners of English. As it has become evident that narrative inquiry differs in many parts from traditional research, it is essential to have a look at some general features of narrative interview. After that, the practicalities of data collection are introduced.

5.2.1 The principles of narrative interview

Narrative interview can be described as a loose framework for collecting narratives that, on their behalf, offer possibilities for exploring experiences (Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi 2005: 191). The interview strategies, however, differ from traditional ones. The major change is, as Riessman (2008: 23) points out, founding her view on Mishler (1986), that the traditional standardized interview protocol, where interviewer asks questions and interviewee gives answers, gives way to conversation where interviewees can develop narrative

accounts. In other words, the old model is replaced by collaborative conversation, where two active participants jointly construct narrative and meaning. Narrative interview aims at generating detailed descriptions instead of brief answers or general statements: if one wants to learn about complex experiences, details count (Riessmann 2008: 23).

A shift in the roles of the interviewee and interviewer is not a minor issue. Chase (2008: 69) sees that in narrative research the interviewee should become narrator and the interviewer listener. This means that the interviewee's role is to tell stories that will constitute the empirical material for the research and to do this with his/her own voice, instead of answering the researcher's fixed questions. When the interviewer is transformed into a listener, the primary aspects of his/her work are also reshaped. For instance, the researcher needs to pay attention to emotional attentiveness, engagement and reciprocity in conversation rather than focus on specific formulation of questions (Riessmann 2008: 24). Riessmann (2008: 24) also remarks that the power may shift in interviews: the researcher needs to give up control if he/she wants to create possibilities for extended narration. In this approach, the interviewer's task is to invite stories, not to lead interviewees to predetermined answers or themes (Chase 2008: 70). What this means in practice, according to Riessmann (2008: 24-25), is that the interviewer should ask questions that open up topics and leave the interviewee space to construct meaningful answers. Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi (2005: 191) have a similar view on the role and task of the researcher: he/she asks for stories, gives space for storytelling and presents questions that are likely to elicit narratives as a response.

The practical interviewing procedures, then, may vary depending on the goal of the study. Hyvärinen & Löyttyniemi (2005: 194-197) note that an extreme narrative interview can consist of only one question. Asking a single question may also be seen as the first phase of narrative interview: the narrator has a chance to tell his/her story as freely as possible, without any interruptions.

During this phase the interviewer should nonverbally express encouragement, indicate that he/she is listening and avoid commenting on the story. These kinds of procedures are typical mostly of life story research. In the second phase of the interview, the researcher may present questions which are based on what the narrator has already told and which elicit further narrating. These questions can begin to direct narratives to the themes that the researcher is interested in more specifically. Only in the third phase, the interviewer may ask questions that are directly linked to the research interests.

In essence, narrative interview can be viewed as conversation. As a consequence, rules of everyday conversation, such as turn taking and entrance and exit talk (where a speaker steps into and returns from the past time story world), will apply when conducting a narrative interview (Riessmann 2008: 24). Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 108-112), however, deal with conversation and interview as separate, but of the same kind, methods of collecting data. Conversations include listening and equality among participants. If there is mutual trust and listening and caring for the experience described by the other exist, conversation may result in a deeper probe than would be achieved in an interview. Furthermore, the researchers who have a personal relationship with the participant typically find it difficult to prevent interviews becoming conversations. In contrast, interviews usually contain inequality: the interviewer, as mentioned, normally governs the direction and topics of the interview earlier.

5.2.3 The course of data collection

The data for the present study was collected in February and March 2009. I interviewed the four participants individually in a meeting that lasted from half an hour to one hour, depending on how much talk about the topic there was

with each participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed based on these recordings.

Evidently, there are no standard or fixed methods of transcribing narratives: the research designs, analytical perspectives and the approach to the research topic shape the transcribing techniques applied (Thornborrow & Coates 2005: 13-14; Pavlenko 2007: 173). In the present study, the focus is on the content of the narratives. Thus, the most relevant part to transcribe was what the interviewees say. Besides the actual speech, only the features of communication that might significantly affect the interpretation were marked, such as long pauses and laughter. The speech, then, is in the original spoken form: the text is not edited into standard form. This is obviously crucial in terms of hearing the interviewee's own voice.

The plan for the interviews was based on Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi's (2005: 194-197) three-phase presentation of narrative interview introduced above. In the first phase of the interview, the researcher gives the interviewee an opportunity to tell his/her story freely, without interrupting or leading the conversation to a certain direction. In the second phase, the researcher asks questions that are based on what the interviewee has already told in the first phase. These questions can begin to direct narratives to the themes that the researcher is interested in more specifically. Finally, in the third phase, the interviewer may ask questions that are directly linked to the research interests.

The duration of each interview phase varied with the participants. At the beginning of the interview, the structure of the interview was explained to the interviewee so that he/she was aware of what is happening. In general, the second phase was the most fruitful with regard to free narration. In this phase, the topics brought up by the interviewees were discussed in more detail and thus provided relevant information for the researcher. Furthermore, at this point of the interview the narrators came up with new perspectives and the conversation became more fluent and rich. The first phase, however, was

important as well: it made it possible to use the interviewee's own life experiences as the basis for the conversation, according to the principles of narrative inquiry. It was essential that the researcher did not lead the conversation into certain topics from the beginning. The third phase, on its behalf, was useful if there were topics relevant to the study that were not discussed yet. However, most of the themes related to the research questions were brought up already in the first two phases.

The interviews resembled normal conversations, since I was acquainted with all the participants. In my experience, that we were not strangers made the interviewing situation comfortable and fluent. Significantly, the topic was neutral enough in the sense that our acquaintance was a benefit instead of affecting the research negatively: it helped us to talk to each other freely but, because the topic was not too personal, is not likely to have prevented the interviewees to share certain experiences. Furthermore, knowing the person in question was helpful also in the phase of interpretation and analysis. Referring to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000: 109-110) views discussed right above, the mutual trust and conversation-like approach in the interviews had a positive impact on the results. Nevertheless, having a personal relationship with the interviewees did not lead to the interview becoming purely conversation, as Cladinin and Connelly (2000: 109-110) speculate may happen. Even though our communication was relatively similar to the communication in the everyday life, it was clearly set in the context of an interview situation. I was prepared to allow the interviewees take the head role, but it happened only momentarily when they were talking more lengthily about their experiences and thoughts. It may be because of the interview practices that people are accustomed to: the interviewer asks and the interviewee answers. These deep-rooted practices are difficult to change. Nevertheless, the structure of the interview guaranteed that the interviews had a narrative nature: there was space for the interviewees to talk about their experiences related to the topic without limitations.

5.3 Working with data: Narrative analysis

Once the data were collected, the research process moved on to the analysis phase. The starting point for the analysis was, again, the narrative approach. First, it is useful to look at some general characteristics of narrative analysis. After that, the process of analysis and the specific method applied here, thematic analysis, are discussed.

5.3.1 The principles of narrative analysis

At this point it is probably not surprising that also the term *narrative analysis* can refer to various kinds of ways of working with narrative data. As Riessmann (2008: 11) simply states it: "Narrative analysis refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form." The focus of analysis may be, for example, on language, form, social context and audience (Riessmann 2008: 11). Pavlenko (2007: 165) makes a following distinction between three main foci of attention: subject reality (how the respondents experience things), life reality (how things are or were) and text reality (how the respondents narrate things). In other words, the focus can be on three aspects: analyzing content, context and form (Pavlenko 2007: 174-180). Analyzing content means analyzing what is said in the narratives. Analyzing context refers to scrutinizing the macro-level (historic, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of narrative production) or micro-level (the context of the interview) influences on the content or form of the narratives. Analyzing form is the close examination of the ways in which the narratives are expressed and structured and of the reasons for that. Naturally, the choice of focus depends on the goals and nature of the study in question.

Completing an analysis can be seen as a process. For example, Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 131-132) talk about the interpretive and analytic work of

narrative inquirers as a process that leads from field texts to research texts. At the beginning of the process, there are the field texts, which are not created with reflective intent but tend to be descriptive, close to experience and built around certain events. At the end, there are the research texts that the consideration of the questions of meaning and significance has resulted. In fact, they highlight that the most crucial questions of narrative analysis are exactly those of meaning and social significance. Another factor that shapes the outcome of the researcher's work is the research questions.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 131-132) go on to give practical advice to narrative researchers. They say it is sensible to begin the interpretive and analytic work with the data by carefully learning the material. In other words, before being able to decide what to do with all the field texts, one needs to know what there is. This initial analysis involves coding (notation of dates, contexts for the composition of the field text, etc.). Gradually the inquirer moves on to coding the field texts narratively. This means looking at matters such as character, place, scene, context, and story lines that interweave and interconnect, to name a few. As a consequence, also the relationships between different field texts may begin to become visible. While working with narrative analysis, it is important to keep in mind that the journey from field texts to research texts is not a process where one moves forward step by step. Rather, it should be a process which includes moving back and forth, revising, re-searching the texts, and so on.

Since the researcher plays a visible role already in the interviews, it is important to become aware of what happens to this role in the analysis phase. Chase (2008: 74-77) has created a typology that illustrates the diversity of narrative researchers' voices in the interpretive work. She presents three exemplary ways in which the researcher may choose to use his/her voice: 1. authoritative voice, 2. supportive voice, and 3. interactive voice. The *authoritative voice* speaks interpretatively and differently, yet respectively from,

the narrator's voice, often due to the researcher's specific goals. By taking up the *supportive voice*, the researcher pushes the narrator's voice into the center of attention: the researcher's aim is to present an authentic narrator's voice. Nevertheless, the researcher uses a supportive voice: he/she makes decisions about how to transcribe and translate the story, which parts of the story are included and how the final product is organized and edited. The *interactive voice* shows the complex interaction between the researchers' and narrators' voices. The researchers include discussions about themselves, their emotions, thoughts, research relationships and their interpretive decisions. Often when the interactive voice is chosen, a key objective is to challenge the myth of the invisible omniscient author (Tierney 2002; Tierney & Lincoln 1997, as cited by Chase 2008: 77).

All in all, when the researcher selects narrative analysis as his/her tool for working with data, it is essential to clearly define the focus of the analysis as well as to become aware of the role of the analyst in the work. Choosing the focus is particularly important, since the field of narrative analysis is broad and mixed. The role of the researcher, then, is worth paying attention to, while narrative inquiry challenges many of the features of traditional research. In the next section, the choices related to the focus of analysis and the role of the research in the present study are discussed along with other aspects of the practical work of analysis.

5.3.2 The narrative analysis in the present study: Thematic analysis

As pointed out earlier, the narrative analysis in the present study refers to analyzing narratives. The method for analyzing the narratives is thematic narrative analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of analysis because of its focus. Due to its goals, the present study is primarily interested in

the content, in what is said in the narratives. In thematic analysis, then, the content is the exclusive focus (Riessman 2008: 53).

From the theoretical point of view, the focus of the present analysis is on both subject and life reality, as characterized above by Pavlenko (2007: 165-168). The main emphasis is on subject reality, since the goal is to examine the learners' experiences, thoughts and opinions, that is, their subjective reality (see research questions 2-4). On the other hand, also life reality is concerned when how things have been or are is explored (see research question 1). Textual and structural form of the narratives is not analyzed because it is not considered relevant with regard to the aims of the study. Similarly, the context is not the target of close analysis. Nevertheless, it can be said that some information about both the macro and micro level contexts is received while reading the participants' narratives. In other words, the historic, political, economic and cultural circumstances of narrative production are present in the narratives: they describe the educational settings and matters, the attitudes to certain languages and the cultural aspects of languages and music, to name a few macro-level perspectives. Also, the fact that the narratives are produced in the micro-level context of an interview has influenced their content and form. For instance, simply the elicited nature and form of the narratives is due to the situation. Correspondingly, the predefined topic of the interview has undoubtedly affected the content of the narratives. Evidently, the context and all aspects of narratives are intertwined. However, I have chosen not to inspect the contextual features, or the form, in more detail in the present analysis. This is for practical reasons: the analysis would have become too broad for the present purposes and needs.

Considering the role of the researcher, then, is crucial in narrative inquiry. Referring to Chase's (2008: 74-77) ideas about how the researcher may use his/her voice introduced in the section above, the goal in the present study is to take on *supportive voice*. This means that the researcher aims at presenting

an authentic narrator's voice and using a supportive voice him/herself. In practice, I, as the researcher, have decided how to transcribe and translate the story, which parts of the story to include and how to organize and edit the final product. The narrators' voices are kept as original and real as possible and are present in the final product, here in the form of interview excerpts in original language and not transformed into standard written form. I, the researcher, have classified their narratives according to the themes occurring and am thus responsible for the analytic interpretations. It is worth pointing out that the interviews have consisted of mutual conversation and, consequently, the narratives are developed together in a sense. In the interview excerpts included here, however, it is only the narrators' voices that are visibly present. This is also due to practical reasons, such as the suitable and affordable length of excerpts, and the focus of analysis, which is on the content of what the narrators say and not on the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee.

From the practical point of view, the analysis phase proceeded in the following way. Before moving on to work with actual thematic analysis, the data was examined several times in order to get a clear overall view on the contents. The starting point for the analysis, then, was the research questions, which, on their behalf, were designed based on the demand for insights on the topic. The research questions were a significant factor already in the phase of data collection: they had an impact on the content of the data, since they were the basis for the interview plan. Thus, there were some preliminary thematic categories in the data. These themes, in other words the topic of each research question, became what I call *theme categories* in the analysis. The four categories are: 1. the presence of music in the English classroom or in the free time, 2. experiences about learning language through music, 3. thoughts and conceptions about one's own learning of English and the role of music in it, and 4. thoughts about the role of context in learning English through music. In the

first phase of the classification, each participant's stories were categorized according to the topic they were related to.

In the second phase, after the narratives were classified in terms of theme categories, each story was analyzed in order to find and name possible *subthemes*. Hence, each theme category consisted of several subthemes. For example, narratives about the presence of music in the English classroom and in the free time contained stories about the ways in which music was exploited in the classroom and descriptions about what kind of part music has in one's free time. Narratives about learning experiences were divided into categories based on what was learned. Thus, subthemes of learning listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and culture were recognized. When the interviewees talked about their views on the learning process, subthemes such as the age of the learner, motivation and the nature of music as a tool for learning were found. Finally, narratives dealing with the role of context in learning included themes such as attitudes to the use of music at school and the materials used there. It is worth noticing that in this phase the subthemes emerged freely: they were created by the participants in the phase of data collection. So, whereas the theme categories were affected by the research interests and research questions, the subthemes related to them arised from the participants' personal experiences and stories.

In the third phase, the focus shifted from analyzing each participant's stories separately on working on the broader picture. It turned out that the participants brought up mostly similar subthemes. Thus, it was rational to bring all the interviewees' narratives together in the final analysis, rather than deal with them as separate cases. The comprehensive view on and analysis of the participants' stories consists of themes that most often were discussed by more than one participant. In addition, also themes that were brought up only by one of the participants but that were dealt with extensively, are included in the final analysis. In general, all of the narratives occurring in the data were rather easy

to place in a certain category. The participants talked about somewhat surprisingly similar experiences, which shows in the number of stories that belong to the group of the same subthemes. All in all, there were only a couple of stories related to music and foreign language that were left out from the analysis because their content was not relevant in terms of the present study.

In section 6, the findings of the analysis are presented. Before that, however, it is useful to introduce the participants and their background in order to understand their stories more properly.

5.4 The participants and their background

The data of the present study was collected from altogether four participants. One of the criteria for selection was age: all the participants are over twenty years old. This was necessary in order to gain a wide retrospective view on their personal history as English learners. As grown-ups they have perspective on the English education on all levels of formal education and, furthermore, have more variable experiences about learning in the free time than younger learners are likely to have. However, the participants are all members of the same generation, of the same age group. Thus, they have grown up in a similar schooling system and lived in a similar macro-level context in which English has had a certain position as a foreign language in Finland. In practice, English has been the major foreign language that is learned at school and played a significant role in the field of music, particularly within popular culture. From this perspective, the sampling in the present study is homogeneous. Additionally, one of the objectives in selecting the participants was to find people whose experience is typical in terms of the research focus. In practice, this means that, as mentioned above, all the participants' background as formal

learners' of English is similar. Hence, the sampling applied can be considered as *typical sampling*. According to Dörnyei (2007: 128), this means the following:

This strategy assumes that we have a profile of the targeted attributes possessed by an 'average' learner. Although we cannot generalize from the results because we cannot claim that everybody will have the same experience, we can list the typical or normal features of the experience.

However, there are factors that make each participant's history, and consequently also their experiences, different. All the participants come from different parts of Finland, which guarantees that their experiences about formal language education are based on various situations. In terms of gender, two of the participants are females and two males. Also, as far as their relationship and background with English language and music are concerned, there are individual differences. Furthermore, it is worth noting that three of the four participants have studied pedagogy. Evidently, this affects their views and ideas about learning and teaching as well as their musical background has an influence on their stance to musical activities related to language learning. The background of the participants is discussed in the sections below together with other relevant information about them. In order to protect the privacy of the interviewees, their names have been changed.

5.4.1 Kaarina

Kaarina is a 26-year-old woman, who studies German, English and music education at the university level. Her history as an English learner has been twofold. On the one hand, she has always been successful at school and got good grades in English. On the other hand, she has often regarded English lessons as boring and not motivating, particularly in upper secondary school and university. However, she has been actively engaged in using the English language in the free time. For example, in her youth she had several foreign pen

pals and later as a university exchange student she has learned a lot about English language in practice during the times spent abroad.

Kaarina has a strong musical background. Music has been an important and time-consuming hobby in her life since early childhood. The first stage of her musical education was going to a music and play school as a child. At the age of four, she began to learn to play the violin. Later the piano became her major instrument. She has studied playing the piano also professionally at a university of applied sciences and at the moment of the interview Kaarina was completing her music education studies in order to become a qualified music teacher. Besides her formal musical education, she has actively been making music with her friends in her free time. Kaarina says music means a lot to her, although she is not extremely passionate about it. It has always been a part of her life and she finds it difficult to imagine life without music.

5.4.2 Anna

Anna is a 25-year-old woman and a future teacher of English and Finnish. Before deciding to become a teacher, she studied translation for one year, also at the university level. All in all, it has always been clear to her that she wants an occupation that is related to the English language. Already before starting to study English on the third grade at school, she was keen on the language and used to learn for example words while her older brother was doing his English homework. Also, her first English teacher was an inspiring role model: on the third grade Anna decided to become an English teacher as well. During her school times and growing up, her interest in English has stayed the same and her language skills have developed steadily, although there have been times when Anna has not found the formal learning context motivating at all. In

essence, Anna's relationship with English is a highly close one: she says that English is the best language in the world.

Anna's relationship with music, then, is also a positive one. She does not have playing an instrument or singing as a hobby, but she listens to various kinds of music. It is present in her life virtually continuously, since she prefers music to silence. She has usually music on at home and listens to it also on her way to the university. Although she does not produce music herself, she likes the idea of being capable of doing that.

5.4.3 Juho

Juho is a 23-year-old man, who will become a teacher. He studies at university, majoring in education. Juho began to learn English on the third grade at the age of eight. Since then his formal English studies have consisted of primary school, secondary school and high school studies along with one obligatory academic English course at the university. At school, Juho has been more into technical than linguistic subjects. However, he has been a good or satisfactory level language student. As a learner of English, Juho has often felt himself insufficient: he was usually a top student in all other subjects but English. However, he considers English the most interesting foreign language because it is useful and necessary to know the language in the world of today. Juho thinks that all aspects of language are equally challenging in terms of learning. Nonetheless, he finds that speaking is his weakest point, since it has not been practiced much at school and he wishes to express his message correctly. As his strength in language learning Juho regards the use of appropriate vocabulary learning strategies.

Music plays an important part in Juho's life. At the moment, music is the most important hobby and also a part-time job for him. Juho began to play the

guitar and sing at the age of 15. As a future teacher, he is specialized in teaching music: he has training in music and music education. The focus in the field of music in Juho's life is on making his own music. He writes music and is a performing musician. In addition, two years ago he started a small business that offers concerts and PA system services.

5.4.4 Elias

Elias is a 27-year-old man, who at the moment works for the state. His educational background is versatile. After finishing basic and high school, Elias did some university studies in computing. Finally, he graduated from the National Police School.

Elias started his English studies on the third grade in the primary school. Since then he learned the language in secondary and high school. Additionally, he has taken the obligatory English courses in the Police School. Elias has always regarded learning English as easy and he has a positive attitude to the language. Particularly he enjoyed studying English during his professional training. His motivation to learn the language arises specifically from the fact the English is useful all around the world today: the language is used for example on the Internet and on television. He finds that his strength with the language is understanding and comprehension. Grammar and pronunciation, on the other hand, are the most challenging aspects of language for him.

As far as music is concerned, Elias says that he does not consider himself a musically gifted person and that music is not at the center of his life. Nonetheless, music is a refreshing element in his everyday life. Elias listens to many kind of music, usually at the background when doing something else. Most of the music he listens to is in English, since that is the music one most commonly comes across with. Elias started taking piano lessons as a child but fairly soon gave up the hobby. Unfortunately, Elias has negative experiences

about music education at school which have made him, for example, avoid singing in public ever since.

6 FINDINGS

Keeping the research questions in mind, this chapter is divided into four main sections. First, the presence of music both in the English lessons at school and in the participants' free time is explored. Second, the interviewees' experiences about learning English through music are under examination. Third, the focus is on the learners' own thoughts about their learning of English and the role of music in it. Finally, their opinions on themes related to the contexts in which music and language encounter are scrutinized. Each section begins with a general overview on the theme in question. In order to guarantee that it is possible also for the reader to hear the original learner stories, multiple quotes and examples from the data are included. At the end of the section, there is a summary that provides the answer to the current research question in a nutshell.

6.1 Music in the English classroom and in the free time

Before exploring the participants' actual learning experiences, it is relevant to know how the combination of music and English has been present both in English lessons at school and in the free time during their history as English learners. After all, it is evident that the ways in which music has been present in the two contexts have not only affected the learning experiences they have had, but have also shaped their attitudes to, opinions on and perceptions about the role of music in the foreign language process in general. First, what kind of music has been present in the settings of formal education, along with how and why, is examined. Second, the ways in which the participants come across music and English in their free time are scrutinized.

6.1.1 Music and English at school

Chronologically thinking, it seems that the use of music in English lessons decreases as students become older. In the elementary school music appears to be an effective and natural way of learning and being in touch with the English language. Strikingly, three of four participants brought up the songs learned in the elementary school English lessons first when they began to talk about their musical experiences related to English learning. All of these memories were about certain songs that they could still recall.

Kaarina remembers clearly the first two songs in the third grade English textbook:

- (1) Joo no sen mä muistan ainaki ensimmäisenä tota englannin kielen tunneilta että, että tota sen, **"What's your name my name is Ken what's your name my name is Tom, what's your name, my name is Jeff, my name is Jeff Jerry Jackson"**, muistan kyllä sen vielä sen melodiankin mutta en nyt viitti ruveta tässä laulaan ja sitten **"I like coffee I like tea I like you do you like me"** sen mää muistan ja sitte että ne on ollu semmoset syöpyny vaan päähän oli niitä muitakin lauluja mutta niitä mää en muista, mut noi tais olla ihan aika ensimmäisiä mitä oli siinä kolmosluokan kirjassa. (Kaarina, p. 2)

Also Anna talks about the songs as the practically only form of activity she can remember from the elementary school English lessons:

- (2) (...) meillä ala-asteella oli just aika paljon musiikkia englannin tunneilla niinku varmaan yleensäkin et ihan **siinä kirjasarjassa oli tosi paljon kaikkia lauluja** just sellasia mitä niinku muistaa vieläki ne pyörii päässä ihan siis muutamia sellasia lauluja **vaikka oikeestaan ei mitään muuta muistakaan sieltä ala-asteen englannin tunneilta ni sit kuitenkin muistaa ne laulut** (...) (Anna, p. 2)

The fact that her teacher and the atmosphere in the class was inspiring has probably made the experience so effective:

- (3) (...) muistan et meillä se toimi vielä tosi hyvin et se opettaja laulo hirveesti mukana se oli tosi innostunu ja se eläyty siihen sillee sillä oli kaikkia liikkeitä ja tälleen ja sit tietysti kaikki muutkin laulo mukana ku se oli niin innostunu siitä et

kyllähän se ala-asteella toimii ihan mukavasti ku kaikki vielä uskaltaa laulaa ja siinä ei tarvinnu mitenkään hävetä mitään (...) (Anna, p. 2)

Juho, on his behalf, mentions two songs as well. The songs are simple pedagogic songs, one of which is about irregular verb forms and the other one consists of the names of months:

- (4) (...) tietysti oli muuta- muutamia näitä rallatuksia sitten soitettiin esimerkiks näitä **verbilauluja missä oli sitten että "mennä, go went, lähettää, send sent" ja sitten aina säkeistön lopussa tuli jopa perfektimuoto että "ride, rode, ridden"** (laulavalla äänellä), ja nehän soi päässä sitten aina viikon tai kaks ne oli just semmosia todella ärsyttäviä rallatuksia, ehkä ne oli silloin ihan hauskoja ja mukaviakin (...) (Juho, p. 2)
- (5) (...) varmaan vieläkin muistan kaikki melodiatkin että **"January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, aaa December"** (laulaa), että on kai niistä jotain sillee opittu että en mä tiä ees miten usein niitä sitten on kuunneltu ei pysty muistamaan sitä että onko niitä soitettu ees kolmee neljää kahta kolmee kertaa enempää mutta, joka tapauksessa niin tuolleen se melodia meni ja sanatkin tulivat vielä oikein, että koulussa ainakin, ainakin on oppinu. (Juho, p. 2)

Interestingly, Kaarina, Anna and Juho all say it is easy to remember these songs and that they have been extremely catchy - a fact that is probably the reason why they are the first topic that comes to mind when thinking about learning English through music.

Looking back at the times spent in the secondary school and high school, there are notably fewer memories that include music. For example, Kaarina, who otherwise has a rich account of musical experiences that relate to foreign language learning, does not recall any particular experiences or events related to music and English during her time in secondary school or high school. She only mentions one song, called "Wild world", which they listened to in a high school English lesson and which she remembers because it was musically good:

- (6) No ku me oltiin siinä tosi koleessa pikku luokassa siellä lukiossa ja sitte se jäi ehkä sen takia mieleen että se kuulosti mun mielestä hyvältä biisiltä tai et se oli

musiikillisesti hyvä, tai semmoinen tarttuva. Nii, se oli vaan et tykkäsin siitä biisistä. (Kaarina, p. 4)

Elias, then, figures that the language education in his schools has been rather traditional and reasons that this idea is based on either his personal interests or the fact that there really was not much music at school:

- (7) Mullon ollu ehkä vähän semmoinen kieltämättä hieman tylsä englannin opetus että se on ollu semmosta semmosta normaalimpaa että siinä ei niin tätä musiikkista aspektia kyllä oo tuotu mitenkään esiin, varsinaisesti, jos nyt puhutaan ihan siitä mitä opettajat tai muut on opettanu niin. (Elias, p. 2)
- (8) (...) ei mulla ne musii- musiikki siellä koulussa oo mitenkään vahvana jääny mieleen en tiä johtuuko se sitten omasta persoonasta vai siitä että sitä ei oo vaan ollu siellä niin kauheesti (...) kun tosissaan miettii taaksepäin niin ei mulla ihan hirveesti niitä muistoja siitä musiikista oo (...) (Elias, p. 9)

If music has still been exploited on upper educational levels, the approach has been different from the one in the elementary school, as Anna points out. There was no more singing along and listening to music was rare, an activity that offered a break between other tasks:

- (9) (...) yläasteella se vaihtu se musiikin osuus tavallaan sillee et **ei enää laulettu mukana** eli se ei enää niinku liittyny siihen öö opeteltavaan asiaan tavallaan se laulu et sit **ne oli tosiaankin vaan semmosia välipaloja tosi harvoin** (...) et se tavallaan vaihtu ihan erilaiseks ja sit oikeestaan **lukiossa en tiä oisko ollu ollenkaan sit enää musiikkia**, et se varmaan loppu siihen. (Anna, p. 2)

The musical material applied in the language classroom has been mainly from textbooks. All the participants state that the textbooks were definitely the major source of music, but each of them also give examples of the use of authentic music at least in some foreign language lessons: teachers have brought their own recordings and favorites into the class or the songs in the textbook have no longer been music composed for pedagogic purposes.

- (10) No suurimmassa osassa se on ollu niistä oppikirjoista koska se on aina se helppo ratkasu, ja joskus ihan hyväkin mut joo että ei hirveesti oo käytetty mun mielestä,

ranskan tunneilla on sen mä muistan **opettaja toi omia levyjään** ja sit kuunneltiin niitä. (Kaarina, p. 15)

- (11) (...) [yläasteella] ne oli autenttista materiaalia eli **ne oli oikeita lauluja** ihan ja sit ne vaan kuunneltiin ei mitään muuta yleensä et ehkä katottiin joku pari sanaa et mitä ne nyt tarkoittaa, mut **en muista et ois ala-asteen jälkeen niinku ollu mitään tällasia ihan niinku sitä kirjaa varten tehtyjä lauluja** (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (12) Joo no ainakin ruotsin tunneilla ihan hirveesti näitä mikäköhän se nyt tää naapurimaan suuri tähti [Tomas Ledin] sitten on jonka kappaleita me kuunneltiin ihan älyttömästi (...) **sitä me kuunneltiin ainakin poliisikoulussa se oli ruotsin opettajan suosikki tai sitten sillä oli vaan se yks cd** mutta sitä kyllä kuunneltiin, "Sommaren är kort" ja niin päin pois. (Elias, p. 5)

The issue of authenticity is a complex one, however. On the one hand, it could be argued that all music that is played in the classroom surroundings becomes inauthentic because of the context: its nature turns into pedagogic and educational one. On the other hand, a line can be drawn between explicitly pedagogic music, for example musical material made particularly for teaching purposes, and music that is written other than educational goals in mind. However, the basic problem still remains even if the latter approach is accepted: does music originally made for non-pedagogic purposes become inauthentic when it is presented in a school textbook?

The ways of applying music in the language classroom can be various, but, based on the experiences of the participants, it can be stated that they almost exclusively put the learner in the position of receiver rather than the performer. Only Anna mentions that they used to sing along when listening to songs, when describing how music was present in her elementary school English lessons. Nevertheless, this can be considered natural since virtually all people are familiar with listening to music, but not everyone is able to or comfortable with producing music by themselves.

In addition to the role of students, it is common in all of the participants' experience that music has been a rather separate element in their language lessons. In other words, there has not usually been particular activities related to

the music listened to. However, there are certain functions that music has had in the classroom that the interviewees' narratives reveal. Firstly, music has been used in order to fill up the extra time in lessons.

- (13) (...) se oli hyvin tämmöstä, **tunnin täytettä**. (Elias, p. 2)
- (14) (...) en muista et me oltas niinku alettu jotenkin analysoimaan niitä lyriikoita vaikka tai tarkemmin miettimään niiden merkityksiä tai jotain sellasta kieliopillista katottu niistä tai, et ehkä ne jäi vähän irrallisiks sitten, et **se oli sitten varmaan sieltä opettajan puolelta vähän sellanen täyte** siihen että nyt on pari minuuttia tuntia et mitäs tehään ni kuunnellaan nyt vaikka toi. (Anna, p. 2)

Secondly, music has been the tool for creating a peaceful atmosphere and calming down the students. This has been done either by playing music at a certain point of the lesson or playing background music. Elias says that this has been the main function of using music during his history in English lessons:

- (15) (...) päällimmäisenä tulee just mieleen se että opettaja mietti nyt **rauhotetaan tää luokka** ja pistetääs joku parin minuutin kappale tähän niin hiljentyvät kuuntelemaan sitä ja sen jälkeen saa ite puhheenvuoron tai niin niin se on enemmänkin tuommonen se miun mielikuva niistä musiikeista (...) (Elias, p. 9)

As Elias and Juho's comments show, it has been fruitful to choose music as a means for creating a peaceful atmosphere:

- (16) **Siis silleensä rauhotti ja se että kun ei oo ketään voi vaan keskittyä siihen sen musiikin kuuntelemiseen**, ja siellä tietysti tuli keskityttyä vielä vähän tarkemmin että ei siinä (epäselvää) jahkailem- pohtimaan mitään kotona jos kuuntelee musiikkia ni sitte touhuta kuitenkin siinä jotakin muuta, ja siinä oli vähän niinku pakko keskittyä **se rauhotti kivasti tilannetta**. (Elias, p. 3)
- (17) (...) yliopistossa meillä oli silleen että meillä soi usein semmonen vähän sanotaanko että popahtava klassinen musiikki ni taustalla kun me tultiin demolle, ku ihmisiä valu sinne tietysti sen kymmenen minuutin vartin aikana ni, se oli kyllä koin sen kiinnitin siihen huomiota ja **koin sen silleen aika rauhoittavana** sillee että jaa tännehän oli mukava tulla et soi tämmönen ihan hyvän kuulonen, joku tämmönen "adagio" (naurahdus), tyyppinen, by Albinoni eiku mikäs se on. (Juho, p. 4)
- (18) (...) jonkun työskentelyn aikana saatto olla myös sitte jos oli tämmöstä ryhmätyöskentelyä ni jotain vähän taustamusiikkia et se opettaja oli ite tällanen klassisen musiikin harrastaja ni hän sitte käytti sitä ja se oli kyllä minusta toimiva

että **se loi selkeästi rauhallista tunnelmaa**. Niinku missä tahansa opetuksessa sitä voisi käyttää et sehän oli instrumentaalimusiikkia että silleen sillä ei oo semmosta ehkä häiritsevää aspektia ku sitten jos on lyriikkaa. (Juho, p. 4)

Thirdly, the lyrics of a certain song have modeled particular linguistic features. For instance, Juho recalls that in some foreign language classes, at least in Swedish lessons, they sometimes, although very randomly, translated lyrics and looked at certain language structures or informal expressions in them. As far as other foreign language lessons besides English are concerned, translation was also practiced in voluntary Spanish courses at the university. Juho describes how they translated lyrics and looked for familiar words in song texts in groups. However, he does not find this kind of methods very useful because the language used in lyrics is not suitable for everyday life communication:

- (19) Ehkä ihan, ihan hyvin pystyy oppimaan semmosta, enemmän just sellasta, niinkun epäformaalia miten sitä sanotaan ei-muodollista kieltä ja sen käyttöä mutta ei ne minusta hirveen käyttökelpoisia oo semmoset, ööh sanat ja rakenteet mitä vaikka niissä biiseissä oli ni siellä espanjan tunneilla sitten missään varsinaisesti espanjan osaamisessa muuten. Että ehkä se oli semmosta enemmän niinku "nice to know", "nice to know" -tietoa kun sellasta että siitä ois hirveesti kostunut. (Juho, p. 5)

Fourthly, listening to music that includes words is obviously a way of practicing listening comprehension skills. Some participants have experiences about working on these skills through explicit exercises. The tasks have been traditional fill-in exercises, except that the material has been sung instead of spoken language.

- (20) (...) sieltä laulun sanoista on pitäny keksiä et mitäs tässä nyt sitten tapahtuukaan vähän tämmöstä, tämmöstä **kuullunymmärtämistä**. (Elias, p. 4)
- (21) (...) joskus on ollu joku kappale mistä sitten on vähän **kuullunymmärtämistyyliin** pitäny poimia tai niitä se että mikä on seuraava seuraa sitä ja sitte on tuossa tyhjä sana ja siihen pitää kirjottaa se mikä se on, (epäselvää). (Elias, p. 9)

(...) no ainoo mitkä mä muistan ni on semmoset että **täydennä sana minkä kuulet**, että en mä muita muista. (Kaarina, p. 9)

Later, when exploring the participants' learning experiences, it becomes obvious that their experiences are, to notable extent, based on these ways of using music in the classroom. Thus, how music is exploited in the formal settings has a remarkable impact on the learners with regard to the variety and richness of musical language learning experiences.

6.1.2 Music and English in the free time

The role of music in the participants' free time clearly depends on their hobbies and interests. Anna and Elias, who both like music but are not actively, for example, producing music by themselves, are in touch with music mainly through listening to it. Nevertheless, this does not mean there is not much music in their lives. For example, both Anna and Elias prefer listening to music to silence, which means they are listening to music most of their time spent at home, on the way to work or school, or while engaging in other activities, as Elias describes:

(22) Ylleensä mulla on noita, on lenkillä tai muualla tämmösiin liikunta omaehtosiin liikuntasuorituksiin kuuluu sit joko musiikki tai sitte joku äänikirja tai jotakin muuta mitä kuuntelee. (Elias, p. 5)

Kaarina and Juho, who are active musicians, also listen to music in their free time. However, Kaarina says that listening to music at home has decreased after she has started to study music. Evidently, the main difference is that the quality or way in which the person engages in the musical activities depends on his/her relationship with music. While Anna and Elias often listen to music in the background, Kaarina and Juho tend to concentrate on music carefully when operating with it. They both mark that words are not a primary aspect of music

to them. For example, Juho pays more attention to the qualities of sounds and melody than to lyrics when listening to music. In addition to listening, Kaarina and Juho's musical interests have an effect on how music is present in their daily lives. First of all, both of them practice and perform music. Moreover, Juho's musical activities include making and writing his own music and working with music technology.

What is relevant with regard to the present study is that most of the music the participants listen to has been and still is in English. According to them, this is mainly a question of the availability of good and interesting music: English music is wide spread and includes a variety of styles.

- (23) (...) se sattuu oleen semmosta musiikkia varmaan mikä tuli paljon radiosta ja sitte mikä rupes sitä kautta kiinnostaan, että ei ollu oikeen semmosta suomenkielistä musiikkia mistä ois tykänny, tai ei tienny sen olemassaolosta että ku se oli aika paljon enkunkielistä sitte mitä tuli ni se oli iha vaan se että mitä tuli ni sitä kuunteli, ja sitte osti levyjä sen mukaan mistä sitte tykkäs enempi sitte kuunteli niitä ja. (Kaarina, p. 11)

The channels through which English music is listened to in the free time that the interviewees mention are recordings, radio, live performances and television.

Only Juho says he likes music sung in Finnish more than music in other languages, since he feels that it is not possible to understand all nuances and contents in foreign languages. He also prefers writing his own songs in his mother tongue Finnish. In the field of music technology, Juho, in contrast, often comes across with the English language. All participants, nevertheless, like listening to music in many languages. Obviously, the language in which the music is performed is significant in terms of language learning. For instance, Anna finds that her English skills have developed mainly in the free time. Since she spends a lot of time listening to English music, it is likely to have at least a partial role in the learning process.

- (24) (...) mä ainakin olisin sitä mieltä et mun kielitaito tulee melkein suurimmaks osaks jostain muualta ku sieltä koulusta mutta tietysti siinä on sitte televisio ja internet ja kaikki muut tämmöset mukana myös mut varmasti myös musiikki (...) (Anna, pp. 2-3)

Thus, it is useful to know that the participants mainly listen to English music. Because of that, it is likely that music is, at least in some ways, related to their learning of the language as well.

6.1.3 Summary

In sum, the participants' experiences show that, first of all, music is used more in the English classroom when the students are younger or, at least, that the musical experiences are in some way more powerful and memorable than at an older age. Second, the source the music is most often taken from is the textbooks, although all participants report some use of authentic music as well. However, the definition of authentic music in this case is a complex issue. Third, the role of the student in relation to music is commonly that of a receiver and not of a performer. Thus, the student's role could be considered passive rather than active. Fourth, the ways in which music is applied, in other words its functions, are somewhat traditional: music is mainly used in order to fill up extra time, to create a peaceful atmosphere, to provide linguistic models and to practice listening comprehension skills.

In the free time, listening to music is a type of musical activity that all four participants practice. Importantly, most of the music listened to in the free time is in English, since to most participants that is the interesting music easily available. This makes the role of English music crucial in terms of foreign language learning in free time contexts. Furthermore, it is evident that musical hobbies and interests have an impact on the amount and nature of contacts with music and English in the free time.

6.2 Learning English through music

One of the main goals of the present study is to find out what kind of experiences EFL learners have related to language learning and music, in other words, what they have learned about the English language through music. The experiences recorded in the interviews are presented below. They are categorized according to the topic of learning. The first three categories, learning listening comprehension, pronunciation and vocabulary, are built on themes that appeared in the stories of all four participants. The following categories are based on themes brought up by one or two of the interviewees. Each section contains experiences that have taken place both in formal or informal learning contexts.

6.2.1 Learning listening comprehension

As mentioned above, one of the ways in which music has been exploited during the participants' history of formal English education is using it as a tool for practicing listening comprehension. Moreover, it has become evident that all the four participants listen to English music in their free time as well. Thus, it is not surprising that the interviewees all bring up music and listening comprehension.

First of all, all four share the experience that understanding English when it is sung is more challenging than listening to spoken language. Kaarina says it has taken her time to learn to understand English lyrics. She has had difficulties particularly in hearing where words begin or end:

- (25) (...) mitä on ite kuunnellu jotai pop-musiikkia ja muuta missä tai tai ihan mitä tahansa musiikkia missä on enkunkielisiä sanoja niin sen mä muistan että mun on ollu hirveen vaikee hahmottaa niitä sanoja niistä lauluista, taikka saada selvää niistä sanoista että on saanu yksittäisiä sanoja sieltä täältä mutta että se ymmärtämistaito on kehittynyt vasta iha oikeestaan kahenkymmenenen ikävuoden jälkeen varmaan ja ihan tässä viime

aikoina, että pystyy hahmottaan ja kuulemaan niitä missä sana loppuu ja sana alkaa tai niitä ääntämiseröjä. (Kaarina, p. 2)

Also Elias finds that spoken language is easier to comprehend because there are not musical elements involved:

- (26) No, sehän nyt aika paljon riippuu siitä murteesta ja muusta mutta musiikissa on ne, siinä ku on se musiikki mukana ja sitte se voi olla välillä vähän semmosta ni siitä musiikista on selkeesti hankalampi ymmärtää kun taas kuuntelee jotakin englanninkielistä äänikirjaa tai muuta ni niissä pysyy tosi hyvin perässä mitä siellä on toisin kun taas siinä musiikissa, ellei se sitten oo joku hyvin yksinkertainen renkutus missä toistetaan niitä kahta lausetta. (Elias, p. 6)

Furthermore, Juho notes that he often hears the lyrics wrong:

- (27) (...) ihan pakko sanoo se että yleensä (naurahtaen) kyllä on hirvittävän paljon kuullu aivan väärin niitä sanotuksia ja on aatellu että jossain lauletaan ihan jotain muuta, vaikka, vaikka (naurahdus), Bryan Adamsin "Summer of 69" ni vasta viime vuonna varmaan kun lueskelin niitä sanoja ni tajusin olinkin vähän ihmetelly et miks siinä lauletaan että "I got my first real sex dream" vaikka oli "six-string" (...) mä en koskaan ymmärtäny kokonaista kappaletta silleen et mä oisin vaan kuunnellu sen (...) (Juho, p. 6)

Anna shares these opinions as well. She goes on to analyze the reasons why sung English is more challenging to understand than spoken:

- (28) (...) **laulettuna se on vaikeempaa** koska se usein **artikuloidaan niitä sanoja silleen että siitä ei välttämättä saa selvää** ees niinku natiivipuhujakaan tai, ja sit ku se menee välillä niin nopeestikin **sen pitää mennä sen rytmin mukana** ja ehkä joskus vähän venytetäänkin outoja tavuja et se käy siihen musiikkiin ja kaikkee tällasta nii tietysti se ehkä on vähän vaikeempaa musiikin kautta, ja sit ku **siinä myös on sitä muutakin kuunneltavaa** et se ei oo pelkästään se sana minkä sä haluat sieltä kuulla vaan siinä on muutakin, kun taas **puhe on yleensä ainakin hitaampaa**, ehkä sitä myös **lausutaan vähän erilailla**, ehkä sitä myöskin kuulee enemmän siihen on niinku **korva tottunu enemmän kuuntelemaan puhetta ku laulua**, ni ehkä se on siltäkin kannalta sitten helpompaa. (Anna, p. 6)

According to her, the possible reasons for the phenomenon are the articulation that is dependent on the rhythm, the different tempo and pronunciation of spoken and sung language, the musical elements that take a part from the listener's attention, and that the human ear is more used to listen to speech than

singing. Kaarina adds the following reasons to the list: the focus of attention (for instance, melody vs. words), the mixing, the special or poetic vocabulary and the way in which words merge when singing.

- (29) (...) ehkä se johtuu siitä osittain et mä **kuuntelen aina herkästi melodiaa että mä en keskity sanoihin muutenkaan**. Mutta tota, mut sitte se vaan että, että laulaessa se muutenkin vaan sanat sulautuu enemmän tai toisella tavalla yhteen, ni sitten **oli hankala erottaa se että, että missä sana loppuu ja missä ei** ja sitte ku ääntäminen on kuitenkin henkilökohtanen siinä mielessä että sitte joistakin vaan saa enemmän selvää ja sitte varmaa **miksaukset ja kaikki semmoset vaikuttaa** sit et sanat on tarkoituksella vähän taustalla et sitte ne on vaan siellä olemassa, että senkin takia. Ja sitte osaks varmaan sitte riippuu ny tietysti musiikin lajista mutta että **sanastokaan ei välttämättä oo aina yksinkertaista** et joskus on tosi semmosta, erityistä tai runollista (...) (Kaarina, p. 4)

In addition to these general observations about the difficulty of understanding sung foreign language, Kaarina brings up an interesting topic related to listening comprehension. She describes how a song can be stored in one's mind and only later become understandable. She gives two examples, one of which concerns the English language and the other one Swedish. Nonetheless, the phenomenon is similar:

- (30) Sitte telkkarisarjoissa tietysti oli enkunkielistä ohjelmaa paljon ja sitte tunnaritkin oli englanniks ja sit ne oli laulettuja ja sitte, sitte ei tajunnu niistä oikeestaan hirveesti mitään muuta ku sit vuosien et sillee sanat on jääny mieleen mut **sitten vasta joskus niinku ehkä viiden kuuden vuoden jälkeen tajus mitä ne tarkoittaa et sillai et vaikka joku Mustan orin tunnari, se oli vaan joku (epäselvää ääntelyä) ni sit tajus että se onkin "you hear it calling you can't deny"**. (Kaarina, p. 2)
- (31) (...) silloin ku Suomi voitti jääkiekon maailmanmestaruuden ja sit laulettiin se "Den glider in, den glider in" sitte **sitä laulo sillee blablabla tai siis suunnillee sinne päin ja sitte jossain vaiheessa mä tajusin joku niin sitte, pikkuhiljaa että mitä siinä on ja sitte siitä tuli järkevä laulu** (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)

In essence, Kaarina's experiences show how linguistic material can be saved in one's memory in musical form, in other words how music may help to remember language that one does not yet understand. Once the knowledge about the language grows, the combination of music and the linguistic material kept in one's memory begins to make sense. As such, this is one example of how

music may promote foreign language learning by enhancing the capability to recall linguistic items. The role of music as a means for this kind of purposes is discussed also below in the section that deals with vocabulary learning experiences.

In brief, the participants agree on the fact that it is more difficult to understand English in sung than in spoken form. The main reason for this is the interference of musical elements that affect the language, for example the way of pronouncing and the rhythm of words, as well as the listening perception: there are also musical elements that catch attention. Nevertheless, listening to English music is a way of practicing listening comprehension skills even though understanding lyrics is often experienced as challenging. In addition, linguistic material one does not yet understand can sometimes be stored in one's mind in the musical form, or with the help of a certain piece of music. Later, once the person's language skills are sufficient, the material becomes comprehensible. In other words, music helps to remember linguistic material even when it is not understandable.

6.2.2 Learning pronunciation

In contrast with the listening comprehension experiences, the participants find pronouncing easier when singing instead of speaking. For example, Elias explains that singing is more fluent than speaking because speaking requires concentration and mental processing, whereas singing is about the feeling and "going with the flow":

- (32) No ehkä se on silleensä että ku laulaa sen vähän mitä on laulanut ni se menee semmosena, miten se nyt joku flow tai joku tämmönen et **siihen ei niin keskity siihen että mitä sieltä tulee niin se menee silleensä sujuvammin** kun taas puhuu niin miettii koko ajan että tarkemmin sitä mitä puhuu ja mitenkä ne lauserakenteet tai muut menee eihän niitä ny hirveesti pohi mutta tuota kuitenkin käyttää enemmän ajatusprosessia siihen puhumiseen, kun taas

laulaessa se on vaan semmosta että nyt mennään fiiliksellä ja siinä se. (Elias, p. 6)

Especially Juho, who regards speaking as a challenging English language skill for him, highlights that singing makes pronunciation easier. Particularly performing music in English has been useful in terms of learning pronunciation:

- (33) (...) siinä on muuten oppinu tosi paljon jos on esittäny englanniks ni sitä ääntämistä on pitäny konsulttoija että miten tää sanotaan ja sitte on myös ollu pakko ääntää se jotenkin uskottavasti että se musa kuulostaa hyvältä et toi on kyllä totta että tossa on niinku sen mu- öö musiikin ja sen sanoitusten kautta oppinu sitä ääntämistä (...) (Juho, p. 10)

The reasons why pronouncing English is easier when singing than when speaking, according to Juho, are the freedom of artistic expression and the possibility to hide one's weaknesses in the music, along with the chances to practice the words beforehand and listen to examples.

- (34) En mä tiä siinä on va- varmaan **siinä on se ilmasu niin vahvasti mukana** ja toisaalta sitten siinä on, no ehkä sekin vaikuttaa että **se on sitten yleensä aina harjoteltua se on harkittua jokainen sana on niinku tiedossa** mikä sieltä tulee ja toisaalta sitä **on yleensä kelailtu jonkinlaisia esimerkkejä** ku sitä on kuunneltu että ehkä se on niinkin yksinkertanen selitys mutta toisaalta, se on vähän silleen että siinä vaan **melodiaan on helppo piilottaa sitte se oma vajavaisuus** että siinä pystyy vähän tavallaan eläytymisen ja huonon artikuloinnin semmosen **niinku alle piilottamaan semmosia vähän epätäydellisiä tietoja siitä että miten se pitäs sanoo.** (Juho, p. 11)

However, Juho points out that speaking and singing are two separate activities, although learning pronunciation skills through singing may improve speaking to some extent as well:

- (35) (...) **kyllä sillä varmasti jonkin verran on tämmöstä siirtovaikutusta eli transferia myös sit siihen puhumiseen ja ääntämisen oppimiseen** mutta se ei oo ihan, ei oo se ei oo millään lailla sataprosenttinen **on aivan eri asia laulaa ja puhua**, laulaminen on paljon helpompaa kun puhuminen silleen että ei erota onko natiivi vai ei mä oon sitä mieltä että, oman kokemuksen mukaan ni jopa semmosille hyvälle englannin kielen puhujille ni joskus laulettuani englanniks ni sano että sä äännät todella hyvin mikä ei oo sitten toiminu enää kun mä oon avannu suuni niinku puhuakseni. (Juho, pp. 10-11)

Furthermore, Anna and Elias bring up the meaning of English music as a model for different ways of pronouncing the language. In other words, music promotes awareness of the language variety and different accents.

- (36) (...) sieltä varmaan niinku oppii (...) tietysti vähän **erilaista lausumista murteita** vähän jotain tällasta. (Anna, p. 3)
- (37) (...) se tuo esiin näitä erilaisia murteita, musta on älyttömän mukava jotakin skotti- tai irkkumurretta kuunnella (...) niin siinä se että se tois semmosta, **vaihtelua siihen opettajan puhumaan standardienglantiin**, niin niin se on se ois se juttu silleen että kuulee että onhan sitä englantia muunlaisia muutakin kun pelekästään tuo opettajan puhuma tuossa, niin semmosena. (Elias, p. 10)

In addition, Kaarina emphasizes the significance of having an active role when learning a foreign language. According to her experiences, singing herself is more fruitful than listening to sung English in terms of learning:

- (38) No siinä jää enemmän sanat mieleen, ku ne näkee ne sanat. Että musta tuntuu et sitä kautta on oppinu tai et jos laulaa ite ni on helpompi, tai jää ne sanat paremmin. (Kaarina, p. 5)

In conclusion, the participants find pronouncing English easier and more fluent when singing instead of speaking. It seems that this is because of certain features that musical activities contain: the freedom to be artistic and expressive and the support of musical elements such as rhythm and melody. In addition, since listening to music is an essential part of the participants' lives, they have received several examples of pronouncing certain words and, in general, of ways to pronounce sung English. This may facilitate the learners' capability to pronounce English when singing. After all, an average Finn is more likely to receive more sung than spoken input or models of English language, depending, of course, on one's interests and hobbies. Additionally, English music is not only a model of Standard English pronunciation but includes a variety of ways to speak English. Finally, singing requires personal activity from the learner, which makes it an effective tool for learning.

6.2.3 Learning vocabulary

All the participants' had various experiences about learning English vocabulary through music. In this section their experiences are examined from four perspectives: learning specific words, motivation, vocabulary learning strategies and memorizing.

First, the interviewees have concrete examples of English words they have learned from a certain song. Usually, a piece of music introduces certain words to the listener or performer and makes them familiar to him/her. Consequently, the learner becomes aware of new words or new meanings that particular words have.

For example, Kaarina tells she has learned particularly adjectives through music:

- (39) Ai nii, no sitten jos on jotain popkappaleita niin kyllä niistäkin musta tuntuu että adjektiiveja varsinkin (...) "breezy" ja "dandy" ja kaikkia noita Corrsin biisejä (naurua), ni niitä ku ollaan soitettu ja laulettu ni niitä (...) (Kaarina, p. 5)

Anna, then, mentions the alphabets, which she learned in the elementary school with the help of a song:

- (40) (...) jos pitäs miettii ihan jotain et mitä mä oon oppinu niin no ehkä aakkoset, siitähän on tietysti se ihan perus siihen vaan laitetaan se rytmi mukaan ja luetellaan aakkoset mut jäähän se paremmin tietysti mieleen varmaan kaikki tietää mikä se on se aakkoslaulu (...) (Anna, p. 2)

Elias talks about how he came to know the multiple meanings of the word 'alien' because of a certain piece of music:

- (41) (...) esimerkiks tää Englishman in New York ku siinä lauletaan et "alien in America" vai miten se oli niin itteeni aina huvitti se että avaruusolio Amerikassa ja tällä viisiin mutta sitte jossain vaiheessa selvis että se "alien" tarkoittaa muukalaista tai joku tämmönen et sillä on myös tämmönen, tämmönen syväl- tai niinku järkevämpikin selitys siihen (...) (Elias p. 4)

Also Juho notes that music has made certain expressions and phrases familiar to him:

- (42) No kyllä varmasti sitten samalla tavalla ni oon oppinu sitten niistä kappaleistakin mitä oon kuunnellu ni on lähteny sitte tai on soinu joku fraasi vaikka päässä, että mitä se tarkoittaa on tehny mieli tietää että mitä se tarkoittaa ja sitten on ottanu selvää siitä (...) oon varmaan oppinu sen jo englannin tunnillakin mutta luulen että jostain biisistä oon niinku ymmärtäny että mitä tarkoittaa jos on "cold feet", tää nyt ei oo ihan varma muistikuva mutta muistelen että jossain ois tajunnu että haa tuossakin sanotaan se että oon ehkä joskus aikasemmin jo sen kuullu. (Juho, p. 3)

What is more, an interest in particular music genres and styles may lead to learning vocabulary related to a specific theme, as has happened to Kaarina who listens to and plays mostly Christian music.

- (43) Joo ainaki hengellisiä lauluja ku on englanniks laulanu nii niistä on oppinu hirveesti siis kristillis- kristillisyyteen liittyviä sanoja jotai vaikka tai siis, no niin vaikka "exalted" tai, no se nyt tulee ensimmäisenä mieleen (...). (Kaarina, p. 5)

Second, the participants' stories illustrate how music can motivate the learner to find out what the foreign words mean. Kaarina gives examples related to German and French languages that show how the wish to understand the content encourages the learner to learn the words:

- (44) Tai sitten mun kaverin tekemä semmonen missä oli kaikkia semmosia saksalaisia hauskoja lauluja ja muuta, että sitte on ollu motivaatiokin semmonen että mä haluan ymmärtää miks nää on hauskoja (...). (Kaarina, p. 7)
- (45) (...) lukioaikaan sit mul oli yks ranskankielinen levy ni siihen mä oikeesti paneuduin ja sitte sanakirjan kans katoin niitä sanoja et ku mä olin kauheen innostunu silloin, ni sitte katoin niitä lyriikoita että mitä tää vois tarkoittaa. (Kaarina, p. 12)

Elias describes how the situation where some of the words are unfamiliar motivates him to find out what they mean:

- (46) Mmm, kyllähän näitä tietysti ku kuuntelee musiikkikappaleita ja sitte joskus kun kuuntelee niitä niin tarkkaan että siellä on mitä lähinnä sillee että mitä ne sanat tarkoittaa niinni siellä ni kyllähän niissä aika paljon semmosia sanoja on mitä ei

välttämättä ymmärrä ja sitte joskus aina niitä selvittää että mitä ne tarkoittaa että pääsis jotenkin jyvälle siitä ja. (Elias, p. 2)

Juho, who rarely pays attention to words when listening to music, says that when he hears a musically appealing foreign song, it inspires him to find out what the words are about. In these cases, the quality of music is crucial. Essentially, Juho brings up situations where he has learned English words functionally by engaging in music-related activities: in other words, concrete benefit one receives from understanding English has motivated him to learn new words. Firstly, in the free time his work with music technology has resulted in acquiring English terminology in the field. Juho feels that he has learned plenty of music and music technology terminology while reading English books about the theme and working with computer audio programs that are mainly in English. Concrete, action-based learning has been fruitful in understanding English terms:

- (47) (...) välillä on aina ihmetelly jotakin sanaa että mitä se tarkoittaa ja sitten on yksinkertaisesti, on kattonu sen sanakirjasta ja sitten on tajunnu että aaa, ai että sitähän se tarkoittaa ja, on ehkä myös ymmärtäny sen toiminnan että mitä se tarkoittaa siinä ohjelmassa mitä tapahtuu ku mä siitä painan mutta sitte ei oo koskaan tienny että mitä se tarkoittaa se sana oikeasti, ja sitten niistä on tullu semmosia suomenkielisiä, niinku, käsitteitä niistä englanninkielisistä, ja se on yhistä- yhistyny se käsite siihen mitä se tapa- tai mitä se tekee siinä ohjelmassa (...) (Juho p. 2)

Secondly, another example of learning in this way that Juho brings up is a school project that also included using English as a tool for other purposes:

- (48) (...) tein lukiossa semmosen yhen kulttuuriprojektin missä oli joku tämmönen siis englannin kurssilla ni piti tehdä jostakin, jostakin, ehkä luovasta tai taiteellisesta asiasta joku semmonen, joku projekti ja mä tein sitten niinku tietokoneella musiikin tekemisestä. **Siinä varmaan tuli ensimmäisen kerran ehkä niitä sanoja niinku "rhythm" ja "tempo" ja semmosia sitten niinku opittua, paremmin,** siinä nyt varmaan oppi. Siinäkin projektissa silti ajan käyttö meni silleen että kymmenen prosenttia oli kieltä ja yhdeksänkyt prosenttia oli sitä teknistä osaamista kun mä tein sinne kaikkee musiikkia ja muuta. (Juho, p. 4)

Moreover, singing and performing songs in English have inspired Juho to learn about foreign words so that he would be able to interpret and express the music properly.

- (49) (...) **kun laulaa jotain biisiä niin haluaa ehkä tietää sitten sen että mitä se tarkoittaa että siihen voi eläytyäkin paremmin** että, on tavallaan halunnu siihen sen sen kognitiivisen tiedostuksen mukaan että aattelee että silloin olisi helpompi ilmasta se kappale oikealla tavalla (...) "With or without you" -kappaletta ku harjottelin laulamaan ni, silloin ni tietysti ymmärti sen kappaleen nimen perusteella mistä siinä on kyse mutta, mutta myös sitten se ku luki niitä muita säkeistöjä, **se ymmärrys siitä öö kirjoittajan tunnetilasta ni halus sen siirtyvän myös itselle jollon oli pakko opetella niitä sanojakin et mitä niillä nyt tarkotetaan.** (Juho, p. 11)

Third, once a piece of music has encouraged the participants to find out the meaning of an unfamiliar foreign word, they apply certain strategies in order to achieve this. The ways to do this that are mentioned are checking the word from a dictionary or on the Internet, inferring it from the context and asking from other people:

- (50) Joo oon mää välillä kattonu **sanakirjasta** mut sitte vaa **yrittäny sitä kontekstia mieltä**, että että tälleen sen on pakko mennä että tätä se tarkoittaa suunnilleen että en mä kaikista varma oo siitä ihan täydeltä tarkasta merkityksestä mut kuitenkin et sinne päin. (Kaarina, p. 5)
- (51) (...) sitte joskus **vaikka netistä hakenu** sitte viä ne sanat että oonko mä ny ymmärtäny tai kuullu ne oikein. (Kaarina, p. 7)
- (52) No laiskuuttani tietysti ensimmäisenä **kysyy niiltä ihmisiltä jotka siinä lähellä on** ettei tarvihe ite selvittää sen enempää jos jollakin ois vastaus tarjolla mutta jos ei oo niin jos on jaksanu **internetistä** kahtoo tai sit jos oikein kehtuuttaa niin tai jaksaa kahtoo niin **sanakirjasta ehtii** tai semmosesta. (Elias, p. 4)

Fourth, the participants' experiences show that music helps to remember linguistic material related to it: in other words, music is a memory tool. A clear example of this is provided by Kaarina, whom music has helped to remember foreign words that otherwise would have likely been forgotten:

- (53) (...) sitte joku laulu mitä me siellä [kielikurssilla Slovakiassa] laulettiin toi Nad vodou vai mikä se oli, Eranin biisi tai joku semmonen bändi nii Elan niin se olikin, niin ni siitä mä halusin nuotitkin ja sitten mä oon laulanu sitä ja soittanu, (lausuu sanoja slovakiksi) niinku että **mä muistan ne sanat siitä ja sit tiän mitä ne tarkoittaa vaikka mä slovakin oon muuten aika lailla unohtanu**, mutta että sii että niissä on jääny mieleen (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)

Juho, on his behalf, describes how the simple pedagogic songs helped him to learn and, most of all, remember new words:

- (54) (...) kyllä niillä ainakin oikeesti oppi ne sanat et **sanakokeessa vaan ni kelaili vaan sen biisin siihen kohtaan missä se tuli se oikee** ja sit piti vaan muistaa se että miten se kirjoitetaan, jos se eros siitä miten se äännetään että kyllä niistä sillee, sillee oppi (...) (Juho, p. 2)

Evidently, in this case the tool for remembering certain words has been music. Anna, then, names particularly rhythm as a factor which makes it easier to remember new words and expressions:

- (55) (...) sen sijaan että vaan luetellaan se koko lista ja opetellaan se ulkoa nii siihen laitetaan se rytmi mukaan ja se jää paremmin päähän ihan luonnollisesti. (Anna, p. 2)

In sum, the examples of learning specific words indicate that it is possible to pick up vocabulary from music lyrics. Moreover, the participants' experiences show that music is a source of motivation in terms of learning vocabulary. Similarly to other objects of interest, music inspires learners to find out about the meanings of foreign words when they do not understand what it is about: the will to comprehend is a powerful factor. The strategies applied in these cases are, for instance, checking out the meaning from dictionaries, the Internet, other people or concluding it from the context. The experiences about learning vocabulary also support the idea that music is a helpful tool for memorizing language.

6.2.4 Learning grammar

In addition to helping to acquire new separate words, music is material that offers examples of the use of different language forms and how the language system works. However, Kaarina finds that learning these kind of aspects of language does not happen consciously:

- (56) Ja sit sitten musiikki taas sit **se on ehkä sillee vaivihkaa opettanu sit sanastoo ja lauseita ja lauseenmuodostusta** sitten englannista. (Kaarina, p. 11)

Correspondingly, Anna states that, in her experience, it is obvious that listening to English music has some influence on the listener's language skills but the process is almost impossible to scrutinize. Nevertheless, Anna lists some features of language that music may have helped her to learn to use, including grammar:

- (57) (...) sieltä varmaan niinku oppii tällasia vähän **erikoisempia lauserakenteita** esimerkiks mitkä nyt ei ihan niinku puheessa välttämättä toimi (...) (Anna, p. 3)

Also, examples of how a certain song provides a grammatical model are given by both Kaarina and Anna. To start with, Kaarina points out that she has learned how to use the verb 'like' and the question form from the elementary school song. Again, it is worth noticing that music works as tool for memorizing linguistic forms.

- (58) No kyllä musta tuntuu et se "I like coffee I like tea", **ni siitä mä oon oppinu sen like-verbin käyttöä ja sit sen kysymyksen "do you like"**. Et sen mä muistan tai siitä mulla on enemmän sellanen olo et siitä mä oon oppinu että sitä mä oon tuntuu et **oon tainnu sitte kelata myöhemminkin päässä et miten se meni siinä niinku se biisin avulla miten se muodostetaan** (...) (Kaarina, p. 3)

Anna has a similar experience related to learning the “would you like” -form. She remembers an elementary school song that provided a grammatical model of this question form:

- (59) (...) **yks semmonen laulu oli missä opeteltiin varmaankin jotain kysymyksiä, et siinä oli semmonen joku hotellivirkailija joka niinku kysy siltä joka tuli sinne hotelliin kaikkee että “Would you like some information?” ja “Would you like a hotel room?” ja jotain tällasia (...)** (Anna, p. 2)

Yet another example of learning question forms is given by Kaarina. She recalls the first song she heard in the elementary school English classroom: a song, which provided a model of how to ask other people’s name and how to answer to that question.

- (60) (...) se “what’s your name” se voi olla sellanen mikä on tullu siitä, se esittely (...) (Kaarina, p. 4)

Kaarina’s story about how she uses a particular song as a help when dealing with grammar in another foreign language, Slovak, is a concise demonstration of how music works as a means for learning grammar in the participant’s narratives: it offers a model which helps the learner to apply the specific forms him/herself and after that serves as a tool for memorization.

- (61) Sitte slovakin tunneilla yliopistolla ja sitte Slovakiassa kielikurssilla ni jonkun verran no varsinkin siellä kielikurssilla käytettiin sitte biisejä ja niitä käytiin läpi niitä lyriikoita ja **muistan vielä niinku esimerkiks “V cudzom meste” et sitte siitä mä pystyn ottamaan sen adjektiivitaivutuksen** ja sitte kun mä tiän että mesto on neutrisana ni sit se tulee sitte se oks se mä en muista sen sijamuotoo mut kuitenkin se tulee v meste jos se on se v siinä eessä prepositiona (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)

All in all, it seems that songs performed in foreign languages provide the language learners with models of language structures and forms. The learners’ exploitation of these models may be either conscious or unconscious. In the case of conscious learning, the learner picks up the way of expressing certain things, for example asking for something, from a song and applies the model in

his/her own use of the language. Again, the aspect of music as a tool for memorizing occurs: since the model is in musical form, it may enhance memorizing.

6.2.5 Learning culture

It is slightly surprising that only one of the participants brought up the role of music in learning culture. After all, music is closely related to culture: it both reflects something about the culture which it is from and is itself a center around which different cultures emerge (for example musical subcultures). The reason might be that the topic of the interview was learning a foreign language. This is likely to lead the interviewees' thoughts to what has traditionally been the focus of formal language teaching: developing the learner's skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, not so much in understanding the culture related to it.

Nevertheless, Juho explains how musical experiences have broadened his awareness of other cultures. That is, music and its different styles have helped him to understand something about the places in which it was made. According to Juho, however, it is crucial to combine the emotional power of music with explicit facts.

- (62) (...) kun on jonkun kaverin kanssa vaikka keskustellu jostakin biiseistä ni on ehkä tajunnu sitten jonkun musiikin tyyliin vaikka (rykimistä) seutuja, tai että minkä takia on niinku just siellä syntyny joku country vaikka ni, et **on tajunnu että okei et se on ehkä sidoksissa vähän siihen kulttuuriympäristöön mitä siellä on** että tavallaan voi aatella että **musiikin kautta on oppinu sen vaikka Amerikan maantieteestä tai kulttuurista jotain** koska sitä ei ois ehkä tullu ajateltua mut sitten on silleen vähän loogisesti päätelty jotain asioita ja, ja ehkä jotain sitten tuommosia että bluesin ja jazzin kautta että mistä se on vaikka noussu ni, miltä alueelta mistä ihmisryhmistä ja mistä syistä ehkä, et **voi aatella et jotain semmosia asioita niinku musiikin kautta on tullu mietittyä mitä ei ois ehkä muuten tullu.** (Juho, p. 6)

In terms of experiential learning, music is an effective tool for learning and teaching culture because of its emotional power and ability to create experiences that go beyond words, as Juho characterizes:

- (63) (...) musiikki ehkä pystyy luomaan jotain sellasia, voisko ajatella että semmosia sielunmaisemia jostain kulttuurista, et tavallaan jos kuuntelee jotakin kaihoisaa bluesia ni pystyy ehkä sen kautta ymmärtämään ja niitten sanotusten avulla ni ymmärtämään jotakin siitä kulttuurista ja tilanteesta millon se laulu on vaikka kirjoitettu, toisaalta ilman sitä taustatietoo ni se ei välttämättä kuulosta se musiikki samalta. (Juho, pp. 8-9)

As Juho points out, knowing the content and the background of a foreign piece of music makes the musical experience even more powerful. Juho tells a story that demonstrates this:

- (64) Tästä meillä oli yhdellä musiikin demolla OKL:ssä semmonen tapaus missä joku tämmönen unkarilainen tyyppi näytti jotakin sanoitusta ja ke- sit se kerto suoraan että mitä siinä tarkoittaa ja sit se oli vähän silleen että no joo okei, sit se kerto että missä tilanteessa se on kirjoitettu ja mistä se kertoo ja siihen liittyy tämmönen nuorten miesten sotaan lähtö ja kotikylän jättäminen ja totta kai se sai ihan erilaisen merkityksen ne sanat sen jälkeen, et tavallaan silleen se kulttuurinen ja ehkä myös historia ja siinä on tosi monta asiaa voi yhistyä sen musiikin kautta sitten, ja tietysti semmonen tunteiden tuottaminen. (Juho, p. 9)

In brief, as Juho analyzes, music can create experiences in which emotions and understanding about culture and history become combined. Clearly, music is a worthy tool for teaching and learning cultures. Of course, there are different views on whether culture needs to be a part of foreign language education in the first place.

6.2.6 Summary

The interviewees' stories illustrate the ways in which a foreign language is learned through music. The learners' experiences recorded in the data are related to learning listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary,

grammar and culture. It is worth noticing that the focus is on listening and speaking skills. Although vocabulary and grammar are a part of these skills as well as reading and writing, no explicit experiences about learning literary skills occurred in the data. One possible reason for this may be the auditory nature of music. However, music exists in the written form too: one encounters music lyrics in the printed form along with note sheets.

Music as a tool for memorizing turned out to be a theme that often comes up in the learners' stories. Evidently, when language is presented in a musical form it can be effectively stored in the learner's mind. In addition, music as a model of how to use the language is another comprehensive theme: musical examples help the learner to acquire pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Shifting the focus from the cognitive perspective on the emotional side, one participant's experiences about learning culture through music reflect the effectiveness of music as a tool for experiential learning. Music helps the learner to gain deep understanding of cultural phenomena and history related to the target language areas. Finally, music can be source of motivation in terms of language learning: once the learner wishes to understand what the music is about, strives for being able to perform it in a suitable way or needs language related to musical topics for other purposes, he/she is willing to find out about the language.

6.3 The role of music in foreign language learning

Besides looking back at their learning experiences, the participants discussed how they understand the role of music in their personal processes of foreign language learning. Their ideas are presented in this section under three headlines that identify the themes the participants' thoughts concerned: unconscious learning, the functions of music in the learning process, and age and motivation.

6.3.1 Unconscious learning

The difficulty in analyzing the nature of music as a resource for learning is that music-based language learning seems to take place rather unconsciously. As Anna says, it is practically impossible to evaluate the actual impact music has on learning:

- (65) No tietysti englannin kielistä musiikkia nyt oon kuunnellu niinku koko pienen ikäni mutta se **on vähän vaikee arvioida oonko mä sit oppinu siitä jotain mut luultavasti olen** (...) (Anna, p. 2)

Furthermore, Anna states that learning English through music is not similar to traditional, focused learning but happens unconsciously and voluntarily.

- (66) (...) se [*musiikin kuuntelu*] ei oo niinku oppimista vaikka se tavallaan onkin alitajuista oppimista mut se ei oo semmosta pakonomasta oppimista (...) (Anna, p. 3)

Interestingly, Kaarina notes that particularly in the case of learning English the effect of music is even more unconscious compared with learning other foreign languages. She finds that she has learned English through music without noticing it: English has been a part of normal life and thus it has not caught her attention as other foreign languages have.

- (67) No se toimii sillain mun mielestä että, että tota, että sitä ei sillain aattele verrattuna näihin muihin ni ei varsinaisesti oo aatellu mitään sen kummemmin et **se on vaan tullu tai sit se on ollu vaan niin osa sitä semmosta normielämää englannin kohalla**, et siihen ei oo kiinnittäny sillai huomioo tai se ei oo jättäny semmosia vahvoja muistijälkiä niin paljon ku jotkut nää sitte nää muut. (Kaarina, p. 13)

Kaarina's experiences reflect something about the position of English in Finland. It is normal to have English around and learning it as a foreign language is a part of everyday life. Thus, the learner acquires the language, at least in some parts, without paying focused attention to the process.

6.3.2 The functions of music in the language learning process

Despite the problems with scrutinizing the role of music in the language learning process caused by its unconscious nature, the participants have some kind of ideas about the way music functions. From Juho's point of view, there are two key elements in the process of learning a foreign language through music: cognitive skills and emotions. To start with, Juho's conception of learning is based on the combination of mimicry and cognitive skills. People learn new skills first by mimicking others and at some point cognitive skills come along:

- (68) No, varmaan siinä pohjalla on aika paljon käsitys siitä että ihminen oppii matkimalla kuitenkin aika paljon tuommosista niinku uusista taidoista, että jossain vaiheessa sitten semmoset kognitiiviset kyvyt tulee suureen merkitykseen että osaa vaikka yhistellä sanoja ja sitten ymmärtää että mitä ne niinku voi sitten tarkoittaa tai pystyy päättelemään mutta se se pohja tulee oikeestaan aina vaan matkimalla, se lähtee siitä (...) (Juho, p. 8)

The cognitive value of music in learning, then, is in the way it helps the learner to remember linguistic contents. That is what Juho regards as the key function of music in language learning. Especially when cognitive processing is included, for example explicit information about what the lyrics mean is provided, the learner can learn language skills through music.

- (69) (...) **musiikilla on mun mielestä tosi suuri merkitys just ihan alakoulussa ni sen kautta että sillä, sillä se asiasältö voi jäähä just pyörimään päähän** silleen aiheuttaen semmosen positiivisen muutoksen siinä elikkä yksinkertaisesti jos on kuunneltu se "Ride rode ridden" -kappale pari kertaa ja sit se kuus viikkoo soi päässä sen jälkeen ni todennäköisesti oppii sen ratsastaa-verbin aika hyvin ja sitten **jos siinä yhistyy se kognitiivinen puoli** että kerrotaan että mitä ne eri muodot tarkoittaa ja millon niitä käytetään, ni sitte se on tehokasta eihän se tietysti ketään hyödytä että muistaa vaan "ride roden ridden" jos ei tiä mitä se tarkoittaa, ja millon sitä voi käyttää ja mitä muuta siinä tarvii (...) elikkä tavallaan **kaks aspektia siinä se että, että se jää mieleen kun ne musiikit saattaa pyöriä** päässä ja toisaalta sitten pystyy sitä musiikkia kelaamaan ehkä mielessään jollon ne sanat tulee mukana ja sitten voi muistaa niitä merkityksiä mitä ehkä muuten helposti ois jo unohtanu. (Juho, p. 8)

Secondly, there are the emotional aspects related to music. It seems that they function primarily indirectly, as far as learning a foreign language is concerned. Consequently, Juho highlights the significance of cognitive skills in learning. In his view, purely emotional experiences are unlikely to elicit learning. Music can serve as a bridge between knowing and feeling or knowledge and understanding it. In addition, it may motivate learners and help them to remember:

- (70) **Kyllä se [musiikki] voi luoda niitä tunnetiloja mutta että silleen että niistä opittas mitään muuta**, esimerkiksi vaikka englan- tai amerikkalaisesta kulttuurista ni ei se pelkkä musiikki yleensä sillon ehkä ihan riittä kuitenkaan että jos kuunnellaan jotakin kaihoisaa bluesia ni ei se välttämättä anna lapselle tietosuutta ni jostakin rotusorrosta vaan **siihen pitää yhittää sitä kognitiivista tietoutta** tai totta kai jos siinä ois niinku tosi suorat historialliset sanat ja ne sitten käännettäs ni sen vois ehkä tajuta mutta, mutta kyllä se yleensä niinku on jonkinlainen demonstraatioväline ehkä joku semmonen **silta sen tietämyksen ja tuntemisen välillä tai sen niinku tiedon ja sen ymmärtämisen välillä**, että on niinku ehkä semmoset faktatiedot tai jostakin ei nyt tietenkään ehkä voi sanoo et fakta mut joku semmonen asiakokonaisuus vaikka rotusorto, sitten on henkilö subjekti joka ei tiää siitä mitään, ni se joku kappale voi hyvin toimia siltana sen välillä ja **motivaationa** ja myös **muistamisena**. (Juho, p. 9)

In practice, music has an indirect influence on learning because of its ability to affect the atmosphere in which the learning takes place. In a comfortable atmosphere the learner has good circumstances for learning. In fact, Anna finds that this is probably the main function of music in language learning. Juho, on his behalf, emphasizes that the influence music has on learning through emotions and ability to change the atmosphere is indirect: it does not affect the learning itself. The direct affect is related to cognitive processing.

- (71) No kyl mä sanosin et se siihen ilmapiiriin ehkä vaikuttaa just eniten, mutta myös oppimiseen koska sen kautta että se vaikuttaa siihen ilmapiiriin niin se vaikuttaa siihen koko luokan tunnelmaan eli siitä tulee se ihan erilainen fiilis sen jälkeen kun ollaan vähän kuunneltu musiikkia ja sit jaksaa taas paremmin ja sit ne kaikki muutkin asiat onnistuu paremmin, et onhan siinä ihan eri juttu et istutaan koko tunti paikallaan ja kuunnellaan sitä jotain kieliopin opetusta ku että kuunnellaan vähän musiikkia aluks ni silleen siihen tulee ihan eri juttu siihen koko tuntiin. (Anna, p. 5)

- (72) (...) jos on hyvä olo kun menee tunnille ni totta kai se *[musiikki]* vaikuttaa *[oppimiseen]*, mutta **mun mielestä se on välillinen vaikutus** sen saman vaikutuksen vois saada silleen että tarjois kermakaramellit kaikille siitäkin tulis hyvä mieli, että ei se tietenkään sitä sitä poista etteikö se musiikki aiheuta sen mutta et se ei oo semmonen mun mielestä se ei oo se niinku se ei oo se oleellise-oleellisin juttu siinä ei oo se musiikki vaan semmosen **rauhallisen ja hyvän tunnelman tekeminen jossa musiikki on väline** (...) (Juho, p. 9)

Both Anna and Juho also bring up the possibilities of exploiting the emotional power of music especially in teaching and learning culture. In other words, the use of authentic music is beneficial in terms of creating cultural experiences, as Anna notes:

- (73) (...) et kyllä mä sanoisin et musiikki on aika tärkeä osa kieltenopetusta myös niinkun autenttinen musiikki koska se on osa sitä kulttuuria, mielellään hyvin erilaisetkin autenttiset musiikit, et siitä saa hyvin paljon niinku sitä kulttuuria (...) (Anna, p. 5)

In Juho's experience, it is possible to really achieve effective cultural experiences through music:

- (74) (...) **musiikilla voidaan niinku saavuttaa jotain semmosta, näkyvää syvempää ymmärrystä** tai niinkun semmosta **sydämen ymmärrystä** jostakin mistä ei tiedetä ni ei pelkästään sillä mutta kun sitä yhistetään niihin raakoihin faktoihin, väitän vaikka että Tuntemattoman sotilaan alku ois hyvin paljon pliisumpi ilman Finlandia-hymni alkumörinöitä. (Juho, p. 9)

All in all, these learner stories show that music can have an influence, first of all, on the cognitive learning processes. Especially, when language is used in a musical form it helps the learner to remember it. Music may also affect the learner's emotions and the emotional atmosphere of the learning situation. Thus, it indirectly has an impact on the actual learning as well. Furthermore, music has the power to make the learning experience more intense, particularly when learning about cultures.

6.3.3 Age and motivation

Finally, there are two learner variables that have an influence on the role of music in foreign language learning in the interviewees' experience: age and motivation. Starting with age, Kaarina explains that as she has become older, learning through music has become more conscious and thus more memorable. As an example, she compares learning German with learning English. She was nine years old when she started to learn English and fourteen at the time when her German studies began. She finds that age has affected the extent to which the learning process has been conscious:

- (75) (...) se musiikin kautta oppiminen niinku sanojen ja lauseiden ja muu nii on tapahtunu semmosella iällä et siitä muistaa, enemmän (...) et se on ollu ehkä semmosta jotenkin, tai siitä on paljon selkeemmät muistikuvat (...) (Kaarina, p. 7)

It is worth noticing, however, that Kaarina is more interested in German than in English. This is also likely to have an influence on which events she remembers and which she does not.

Anna, then, believes that using music as a tool for learning English is especially beneficial when the learners are young. Based on her own experience, music is a suitable way to learn English as a child, since it makes the learning situation more fun and relaxed. This is partly because the learning takes place, again, unconsciously:

- (76) Kyl mä sanoisin että **varsinkin ala-asteella sillä on isokin merkitystä** koska ala-asteella se opettaminen on niinku hyvin erilaista se ei voi olla vaan pelkkää sellasta mekaanista opettamista ja ulkoo opettelua, et **siihen pitää saada myös jotain leikkiä koska ne on niinku lapsia keille sitä opetetaan ja sitten tavallaan se musiikki tuo just siihen sellasen rennomman tunnelman** että, ensinnäkin se tuntuu siltä et **se on kivempaa niille lapsille ja sit myöskin se oppiminen tapahtuu vähän niinku huomaamatta**, että varsinkin ala-asteella sanoisin että se ois hyvinkin tärkeätä käyttää musiikkia erittäin paljon mutta myös yläasteella ja lukiossa ja tietysti ihan missä vaan aikuiskoulutuksessa (...) (Anna, pp. 4-5)

Also Juho has experienced using music in the elementary school useful in terms

of learning and discusses in more detail why the songs used there were so effective:

- (77) (...) oisko siinä kuitenkin ratkasevana se **toisto**, ja sillonhan muutenkin **en minä itse ainakaan kuunnellut sillon musiikkia alakouluikäisenä oikeestaan missään** (...) et sitte ku koulussa tehtiin jotain sellasta ni ehkä niillä oli aika **voimakaskin kyky jäädä mieleen** mut ky- vähintään yhtä suurena on sitten se että olihan ne semmosia niinku sanoin ni semmosia **duurirallatushumppia**, että vähän samanlaisia ku jotkut ärsyttävät **mainosmelodiat** että semmoset jostain syystä yleensä **tuppaa jäämään mieleen**, että niin, ehkä siinä oli semmonen joku, en minä muista että ne sillon ois lapsena ärsyttäny mutta nyt kun mä lauleskelen tuommosia ni onhan ne aika rasittavan kuulosia. (Juho, p. 5)

Personally for him, simply the presence of music was a powerful factor because he did not hear music much in other contexts at that time. Most of all, the musical features of the elementary school songs are crucial: they are catchy, similarly to advertisement music, and include repetition. Although the songs may sound even annoying to adults, Juho recalls that he did not dislike them as a child and that they have, obviously, been easy to remember. Thus, they have been important in terms of learning English at young age.

Secondly, motivation and personal relationship with music are factors that affect the role of music in learning. Talking about his own history as a learner of English, Elias points out that music has not played an important role:

- (78) No ehkä **sillä musiikilla ei niin älyttömän isoo roolia siihen miun oppimiseen oo**, että se ei se ei oo semmonen, kaiken kattava ratkasu, että mie enemmänkin, sen huomaa että itellä se oppiminen niin se on semmosta, että jos näkee jotakin kirjoitettuna ja kuulee sen samalla ja sitten vielä joutuu puhumaan siitä niin sillä tavalla mie sen opin kaikkein parhaiten ettei se **musiikilla ei siihen oppimiseen niin paljon oo tekemistä että se voi auttaa joissakin pienissä yksinkertaisissa jutuissa tai semmosissa tai sitten sillä on se rentouttava vaikutus tai muuta mutta sillä ei oo semmosta miulle mitenkään mullistavaa**, millään tavalla mullistavaa vaikutusta siinä oppimisessa. (Elias, p. 7)

In essence, for him music can function as a means for relaxation and refreshment. In addition, music may increase knowledge about the small details of the language and bringing change to the language input that the learner normally receives:

- (79) (...) kappaleissahan aina vähän kikkaillaan, jos tai ei nyt aina mut välillä kikkaillaan niillä sanoilla ja muuta niin sieltä voi sitten semmosia oisko se **hienoja nyansseja** oppia tai tämmöstä että se ei oo, ja sen sen tyyppistä niin sillä tavalla että se vois olla semmosta hieman **hienosäätävää se musiikin vaikutus** mutta ei sillä musiikilla puhumaan opita. (Elias, p. 8)
- (80) (...) se **virikistysjuttu** ja sitten se että se tuo esiin näitä erilaisia murteita, musta on älyttömän mukava jotakin skotti- tai irkkumurretta kuunnella (...) niin siinä se että se tois semmosta, **vaihtelua siihen opettajan puhumaan standardienglantiin**, niin niin se on se ois se juttu silleen että kuulee että onhan sitä englantia muunlaisia muutakin kun pelekästään tuo opettajan puhuma tuossa, niin semmosena. (Elias, p. 10)

However, music in formal education is not a source of motivation for Elias. The main way in which the use of music might motivate Elias is that it brings variation:

- (81) (...) **ainoa motivointi ois se olkaas nyt tää tunti kunnolla nii opettaja soittaa sitten teille tuon kappaleen tunnin lopussa mutta vähän tämmönen palkinto mutta ite ku ei käsitä musiikkia ihan semmoseksi** että se on oikeestaan aika sama että soittasko se sen siellä tunnin lopussa vai ei, niin niin ei sillä silleensä se **vaihtelun merkitys ois ehkä se se se isoin** ja sitten kyllähän siinä kun joutuu kuuntelemaan sitä niin sitten tulis sitä kuullunymmärtämistä sillä tavalla ettei opettaja pelkää puhua englantia siellä luokan edessä. (Elias, p. 9)

In contrast, increasing motivation is one of the major functions of music in foreign language learning in Juho's view:

- (82) (...) yks aika tärkeä asia on sitten se että se asia voi motivoida koska musiikki on nykyään iso osa nuorisokulttuuria ja iso osa musiikista on myös englannin kielellä, et sillee siinä on varmaan aika paljonkin haaskattu pa- niitä mahdollisuuksia mitä ois että mitä sillä musiikilla vois oppia (...) (Juho, p. 8)

It is worth noting that the ways in which music is used and approached in language lessons at school is important. Kaarina says she found the ways in which music was applied in her German lessons more motivating than how it was in the English classroom. Besides the ways of exploitation, the materials themselves are crucial.

- (83) Ja jollain tavalla ne kirjatkin on ollu kivempia, siis siinä mielessä että sitten niihin biiseihin missä on ollu ne sanat ni on liittyny tai ne on ollu selkeitä sivuja tai sitten niissä on ollu kivoja kuvia tai hyvät värit tai jotain. Tai että ne on ne on otettu sillai, ja ne on aina kuunneltu niitten kappaleitten yhteydessä missä ne on että niitä ei oo yleensä jätetty väliin niitä biisejä, että sitte on aina kun on vaivannu että miltähän tää kuulostaa tää biisi ni sitte on saanu siihen vastauksen kun on selannu vaikka kirjaa eteenpäin et jaa täällä on tämmönen biisi tulossa, ni sitten se on kans kuunneltu et se ei oo jääny semmoseks epäselväks. (Kaarina, p. 8)

In other words, how music is presented and worked with in the formal settings affects the learner's motivation.

The relationship the learner has with music may have an impact on how motivating music is in his/her experience. Elias, who does not find music a particularly motivating or effective tool for learning, thinks positively of music but says it is not one of the most important things in his life. Juho and Kaarina, who regard music as an essential part of their lives, find it motivating also in the language learning process. Nevertheless, all participants' experiences show that music is a welcome and positive element in the language classroom. In their free time, music is often present and thus affects them linguistically as well.

6.3.4 Summary

It seems that learning a foreign language through music is mainly unconscious in nature, in both formal and informal contexts. This makes it difficult to verbalize the ways in which music affects learning or works as a tool for it. Nevertheless, the participants' experiences show that learning English through music takes place to some extent, although it tends to happen without noticing in the every day life.

Also cognitive and emotional affects of music can be separated. According to the interviewees, the role of music in cognitive processing is based on, for instance, its ability to help learners to remember linguistic items. When explicit information about the language is attached to music, it works as a useful

tool for memorization. The power of music to affect emotions, then, is mainly indirectly involved with actual language learning. For example, it can help to create a fruitful atmosphere, which promotes learning. In addition, music may elicit cultural learning because it can arouse powerful emotional experiences related to culture.

Additionally, the variables of age and motivation may have an influence on the role of music in the learning process. In the interviewees' experience, music is an effective tool for learning a foreign language particularly when the learner is a child. On the other hand, as the learner grows older, she/he becomes more aware of her/his learning. Thus, the effectiveness of music may increase in that sense. Also, motivation has an impact on whether the learner finds music as a helpful or insignificant means for language learning. It seems that one's personal relationship with music, then, affects the degree of motivation: people who are particularly keen on music find it more motivating to learn a language through music than people who are not.

Finally, the participants have diverse views on what is the main function of music in foreign language learning. For instance, some find it serves mostly as a memory tool or as a source of learning motivation, some believe its major function is to have a positive influence on the learning atmosphere, which has an indirect effect on the learning itself. Hence, it seems that music functions differently for individual learners during the language learning process.

6.4 The role of the learning context

The participants also talked about their thoughts about the role of the context in which learning English through music takes place. In general, they find that the context matters: there are differences between formal and informal learning situations. The interviewees' views on and attitudes to the use of music in the

language classroom together with the materials and ways of exploiting music are discussed first. After that, the features of formal settings as a context for learning language through music are compared with those of informal surroundings. It is also explored how the context affects the effectiveness of music as a tool for learning.

6.4.1 Learners' views on music in the English classroom

Starting with the participants' views on music as a part of formal language education, all of them consider using music in the English classroom positive. Musical activities are regarded as useful, relaxing, refreshing, fun, and motivating. However, learning and teaching methods described with such words tend to be experienced as unserious: learning language through music is not "real studying", but rather forms the opposite of serious, traditional and somewhat boring ways of operating in the classroom. This becomes evident in the participants' comments on how they feel about music in the classroom:

- (84) Ne oli ne oli aina semmosia mukavia valopilkkuja siellä ettei sitten tarvinnu parin kanssa keskustella tai tehdä työkirjatehtäviä tai muuta vaan sai vaan olla. (Elias, p. 4)
- (85) (...) se oli jotenkin ihmeellistä jos kuunneltiin jotain oikeeta musiikkia just jossain tunnilla et se oli silleen että miten tämmöstä voi tehdä et **eihän tää oo opiskelua tavallaan semmonen ajatus oli tai et tai jos jossain enkun tunnilla ajaututtiin vaan keskustelemaan jostain asiasta sitten oltiin ihan fiiliksissä tavallaan siitä että nyt meidän ei tarvii opiskella** et me voijaan vaan keskustella. Että kyllä siinä helposti oli semmonen käsitys että eihän koulussa voi tehdä mitään vaikka kielen tunnilla mikä sinänsä ois kiinnostavaa (...) (Juho, p. 7)
- (86) Kyllä se varmaan on aina sillee ollu sellanen **se kivempi osuus siitä tunnista** ku sitä tulee sitä musiikkia koska se tuntuu jotenkin sellaselta että **se ei oo sitä opetusta enää vaan se on jotain ihan muuta se on se hauska juttu se on niinku tavallaan jotain leikkiä tai sellasta** ja samahan se on yläasteellakin että sit ku oli kaikki ne kieliopit ja muut käyty nii sit tavallaan laitettiin semmosena välipalana vaan se musiikki siihen nii se oli taas sit se kiva osuus (...) et kyllä mä voisin sanoa että oon tykänny kyllä varmasti musiikista ja mielelläni niitä oon kuunnellu ihan ala-asteelta lukioon asti ja niinku vieläkin vaikka, että kyllä mielelläni mielelläni osallistun sellaseen. (Anna, p. 3)

Kaarina emphasizes that it has actually been important that musical activities are not always serious but relaxing. She has felt positively about the musical activities in the language classroom particularly when there have not been any tasks included:

- (87) No on se sillai **se on ollu mun mielestä aina hauska hetki kun on kuunneltu sitä ja se on piristäny kun on kuunneltu se biisi.** Ja sitte **että ettei niitä oteta aina sillai älyttömän vakavasti** että täytä aukot ja kuuntele biisi vaan että sitä on oikeesti vaan kuunneltu että ei siihen oo liittyny mitään tehtävää että että, nii että nyt pitää oikeen kuunnella sen takia että kuulis sieltä nyt jonkun sanan niinku ehkä joillain muilla tunneilla on saatettu tehdä vaan että **ne on vaan käyty läpi ne sanat ja pikkusen katottu että mistä siinä lauletaan ja sitten kuunneltu, ja se on ollu paljon rentouttavampaa ja hauskeempaa ku se et sitten on aina joku, että pitää nyt sitten tehdä tää tehtävä siinä.** (Kaarina, pp. 8-9)

The musical material used in the formal learning contexts, then, receives mainly criticism from the participants. Although music itself is welcome, the interviewees have critical comments on the music used and the ways in which it has been done. For example, Juho points out that the auditory material used during his history at school consisted mainly of textbook tapes that were prepared purely for educational purposes:

- (88) (...) kaikkihan oli vaan niitä "OK English" -teippejä mitä laitettiin pyörimään ja sit siinä oli aina kymmenen sekuntia semmosta jotakin humpparallatusta ja sitten alko semmonen täydellinen ääni kertoa sitä kappaletta (...) (Juho, p. 7)

Thus, Juho calls for authentic music also in the classroom and is critical of composing educational songs for textbooks, especially for students who are not children anymore. In his opinion, there is a risk of losing the possible motivation music may awake if it is made a part of the learning materials that the learners often dislike:

- (89) (...) **sillon ehkä ollaan jo metässä kun lähetään tekemään oppimismateriaalia musiikin avulla eli että nyt tehdään tällanen kappale että lapset oppivat (...)** **sillon se muuttuu siks oppimateriaalikulaks mitä niinku vastustetaan jo ennestään** et ehkä ihan ala alaluokilla se toimii mutta saman tien siitä häviää se motivaatioaspekti silloin, ja oikeestaan kaikki muutkin paitsi ehkä se

muistaminen se että kun ne rankutukset pyörii päässä ja niitä inhoo sydämensä pohjasta ni silti saattaa muistaa niitten avulla jotain että että **ehottomasti ei mitään kieli kielimusiikkia niinku piä lähtee säveltämään johonkin kirjoihin johonkin yläkoulun kirjoihin tai lukion (...)** (Juho, p. 11)

Kaarina also claims quality and authenticity. She prefers authentic and original music to that composed for the textbooks, which often tends to be even of poor musical quality.

(90) (...) jos oppikirjoja tekee ja haluaa musiikkia laittaa nii kyllä siinä mun mielestä pitäs käyttää pikkusen niinku jotain asiantuntemusta tai muuta siinä (...) mun mielestä vois käyttää paljon mieluummin sitte opettaja vois sitte ihan alkuperäislevyjä et tietysti noissa kirjoissa tulee tekijänoikeudet ja muut mutta että et sitte käyttäs semmosta autenttista musiikkia ja pikkusen haistelis et mikä mistä ne oppilaat on kiinnostuneita et mikä on sillä hetkellä suosittua musiikkia (...) (Kaarina, p. 14)

The question of materials is essential. For example in Anna's experience, the choice of music does have an impact on how effective it is in terms of learning.

(91) (...) olihan se aina mukavempi jos tuli joku sellanen musiikki siellä enkun tunnilla vastaan mistä itekin tykkäs, et kyllähän sitä kuuntelee vähän eri tavalla, et siitä innostuu vähän enemmän ku sitte et se on semmosta jotain mistä nyt ei niin välitä. (Anna, p. 5)

Furthermore, the ways in which music is exploited are important from the learner's point of view. For example, Kaarina calls for versatile ways of using musical material: after all, music is related to the culture and history of the target language areas as well.

(92) (...) käyttäisin musiikkia ihan semmosena rentouttavana elementtinä ettei aina tarvii olla kauheesti niinku opettajalla koko ajan hihassa joku tehtävä siihen tai muuta et se vois olla vaan sellanen hauska juttu eikä siinä välttämättä tarvi olla aina ees sanoja et se voi liittyä sen kielen historiaan tai sen kielen- tai sen kielen kulttuurin historiaan ja, taikka muuhun kulttuuri-ilmiöön tai muuhun, kyl mä sitä käyttäisin enemmän (...) (Kaarina, p. 14)

Anna, on the other hand, criticizes the fact that the music often remains separate from other classroom activities.

- (93) (...) sen vois liittää sen musiikin vähän paremmin siihen oppituntiin, et sillä vois tehdä jotain muutakin kun ihan vaan kuunnella, et ehkä se sitten niinku sillä ois enemmän merkitystä sen niinku oppimisen kannalta et se ei jäis niin irralliseksi osaks. (Anna, p. 6)

In practice, the connections between the choice and ways of using music and the goals of learning should be made explicit to the learners in order to make music a justified part of language lessons.

Finally, Kaarina points out that music should not be used excessively, since it is always a stimulus. She also reminds of the importance of letting the learner to do something concrete him/herself:

- (94) (...) musta tuntuu et se jää enemmän mieleen jos sitä laulaa ite tai ja sitten että se ei oo semmosta yhteislaulua kuorossa tunnilla vaan että et siitä tehää vaikka bändisovitus tai jotai semmosta. (Kaarina, p. 14)

In brief, the interviewees regard music as a positive element in the English classroom. Musical activities, nevertheless, are not considered a typical or traditional way of teaching a foreign language formally. Even though music itself is welcome, the musical materials and the ways of exploiting them are criticized by the participants.

6.4.2 The differences between formal and informal learning contexts

Comparing the attitudes to music in formal and informal contexts, then, the participants note that the differences are notable. Elias and Juho mark that the key difference is the aspect of voluntariness. In the free time, one can decide oneself which music to listen to. Having to listen to certain kind of music can turn the experience into negative one, for example in the school setting.

- (95) Onhan siinä vapaa-ajalla saa ite päättää mitä kuuntelee miten kuuntelee kuinka kuuntelee koulussa taas on vähän niinku pakko kuunnella, että varsinkin jos on joku hirvee renkutus mitä siellä joutuu kuunteleen nii se on

semmonen negatiivinenkin suhtautuminen siihen hyvin hyvin todennäköistä, että, ehkä siinä isoin just se on että vapaa-ajalla se on niin vapaaehtoista useimmiten mitä kuuntelee (...) (Elias, p. 8)

- (96) (...) kyllä siinä nyt silleen on aika suurikin ero et sitten vapaa-ajalla ehkä itse kuuntelis sitä musiikkia mitä haluaa (...) (Juho, p. 7)

Anna defines the basic difference between the music listened to in formal contexts and informal context from another point of view. She finds that at school the focus is placed on the language, whereas in the free time it is on the musical aspects.

- (97) (...) **se riippuu mitä sä teet siinä samalla**, et ehkä jos vaikka luet jotain samalla tai jotai tällasta siinä on muitakin virikkeitä ni sitä ei tuu kuunneltua niin tarkasti sitä musiikkia ku se on siellä taustalla vaan, varsinkin just jotain sanoja ja tällasta et **ehkä se jää se melodia sit paremmin päähän siinä tapauksessa**, mut sit ku se on **siellä kielten tunnilla nii sen tietää et pitää niinku kiinnittää huomiota niihin sanoihin** ja yleensä se sanasto on siinä edessä vielä, ni sen lisäksi et se kuunnellaan niin sitä voi myös seurata siitä paperilta, niin **totta kai siinä tulee sillon se kielellinen osuus enemmän** (Anna, p. 5)

On the other hand, the learner's interests and listening habits direct his/her attention, as Anna describes her own focus on words in all settings:

- (98) (...) mulla se on niin et mä yleensä kuuntelen kyllä niitä sanoja ihan vapaa-ajallakin ja mua jää häiritsemään jos mä en kuule sitä jotain sanaa mä en tiedä mitä siinä sanotaan niin se pitää käydä tarkistaan jostain et mikä se oli se tietty sana (Anna, p.5)

Looking at the role of the context in terms of actual learning, there are, again, differences between the school and the free time environments. This time, however, the participants' opinions on which setting is more suitable for learning are not always similar. Elias and Kaarina present different points of view. Elias finds that music at school is more effective in terms of learning than music in the free time. He also makes a distinction between conscious and unconscious effects: in the free time, the effect of music is unconscious, whereas

at school music may elicit conscious learning because of a higher degree of concentration.

- (99) Jos kuuntelee vaikka **englannin kielistä musiikkia vapaa-ajalla** ni sillä on semmonen enemmänkin voiko sitä sitten sanoo **alitajunen merkitys** tai jotakin mutta että sieltä sitten jotenkin aivot poimii niitä pikkujuttuja ja niitä alkaa pyöritellä mielessä niinku miulla esimerkiks se "alien in New York" vai mikä se nyt oli niin tuota, sillä tavalla sitten taas. **Koulussa se on siinä kuitenkin joutuu jotenkuten jotenkin keskittymään siihen enemmän sillä voi olla isompikin vaikutus siellä koulussa** näihin asioihin, mutta vapaa-ajalla kun se tosissaan tulee vaan sieltä taustalta niin siihen ei niin paljon käytä aikaa niin se ei varsinaisesti oo semmonen. (Elias, p. 8)

Kaarina, on the contrary, feels that music is more useful in the free time, as far as actual language learning is concerned. The main and simple reason for this is that the learner is more in contact with English music in the free time than in formal education settings. Hence, it is presumable that more learning through music takes place. Moreover, the music that one is in touch with in the free time is music one likes, which is likely to increase the motivation to understand what it is about and thus elicit language learning.

- (100) Joo, niin ni, enkun kohdalla musta tuntuu että ehdottomasti vapaa-ajalla on oppinu enemmän, koska ensinnäkin musiikkia on paljon enemmän vapaa-ajalla ja enkunkielistä musiikkia, niin ni, joo se on ihan selkee. (Kaarina, p. 10)
- (101) No yksinkertaisesti siitä syystä, että **vapaa-ajalla kuuntelee semmosta musiikkia mitä kiinnostaa ja mistä tykkää ja silloin se motivaatio sen musiikin suhteen on myös aika erilainen** tai siis siit sen ja se oppiminen tapahtuu ehkä enemmän sillain huomaamattaki tosin tietysti jos kiinnostaa et vaikka mitä tässä sanotaan tai muuta ni sitte ottaa selvääki koska se on semmonen mielenkiintonen kappale tai muuta. (Kaarina, p. 10)

The differences in Elias and Kaarina's ideas may be a result of their different relationship with music, which became clear during the interviews. Although Elias listens to music a lot in the free time, it is normally at the background. This explains why he says he concentrates more on the music itself in the classroom. Kaarina, in contrast, does not listen to music as much as Elias in the free time nowadays, but considers music a strong stimulus and usually focuses

on it when she hears it. In addition, Kaarina plays music herself in the free time, which means that she pays attention to music also then. Kaarina also highlights the role of motivation, which, according to her, is dependent on the music choices. In the free time she is free to choose the kind of music she likes, which is a source of motivation for her also in terms of language learning. Kaarina has a certain taste for music, whereas Elias describes himself relatively open to all kind of music styles. Consequently, Kaarina is more likely to encounter positive learning experiences in the free time, whereas the choice music, and in sequence the context, may not play such significant a role for Elias.

6.4.3 Summary

First of all, music is experienced positively in the English classroom and especially using it in a relaxed, non-traditional or non task-oriented way is valued. On the other hand, this leads to the situation where music may not be considered a tool for actual learning, but is rather seen as an entertaining factor.

Second, it seems that the interviewees enjoy music in the English classroom but more attention should be paid to the musical materials used in the formal learning contexts: the musical experience could be even more positive if the music used was authentic, interesting and of good quality. Also the ways of applying music in the classroom need consideration. On the one hand, it is important to let music be a source of relaxation and refreshment and not to use it only as a material for exercises. On the other hand, some learners wish that music was integrated into the classroom activities more carefully, instead of using it separately from everything else.

Third, the participants have different kind of attitudes to music listened to in formal or in informal contexts. They appreciate the chance to choose the music they listen to themselves, which is usually possible in the free time but not very common in language lessons. It can also be said that the focus is on

different aspects of music in the two settings: in the free time, the listener may focus on multiple sides of music depending on one's interests, whereas at school the focus is typically on the language, simply because of the fact that the music is listened to in the language classroom.

Fourth, the learners' views on whether it is formal or informal settings that provide the most fruitful environment for learning English through music are contradictive. The learner's relationship with music may be the factor that determines his/her attitude and stance to learning in the two contexts.

7 DISCUSSION

After presenting the findings of the study, it is now relevant to ask what they have revealed about the position of music in foreign language learning in general and, most of all, what their practical implications are? In the section, these questions are discussed. This discussion is built on four main aspects that arose from the analysis. First, it is argued that music promotes whole language learning. Second, it is proposed that music promotes whole person learning. These points of view deal with the general role of music in foreign language learning, or the connections between music and language. Third, it is suggested that the position of informal learning ought to be more established in the field of foreign language learning research, in the language classrooms at school as well as among the learners. Fourth, it is noted that the traditional ways of using music in the classroom need reconsideration. These ideas, then, are concerned with the learning contexts and pedagogical practices related to music and foreign language learning. On a practical level, the findings of the present study offer enlightening information about the role of music in foreign language learning and teaching. These ideas are useful for teachers and authors of learning materials as well as the learners themselves.

First of all, music seems to be a tool that supports whole language learning, which here means that it covers virtually all aspects of language education. The learners' experiences show that music may help to learn listening and speaking skills along with becoming familiar with specific linguistic features, such as vocabulary and grammar. In addition, it is clear that applying music in teaching and learning writing or reading skills is also possible, even though the present study does not include views on these aspects of language learning due to the lack of learner experiences related to the topic in the data. What is more, music does not deal only with the linguistic aspects of

foreign language education, but it may also affect the learning of cultural issues. Music is a powerful means for creating emotional experiences that deepen the learners' understanding of other cultures. Also the different varieties of English can be brought into the classroom through music. Importantly, foreign language can be learned through music inside and outside the school. This makes it a special tool in terms of the range of settings in which it can promote learning: music is a learning tool that is not used only inside the language classrooms.

In practice, music seems to support language learning particularly in two ways: it provides linguistic models and works as a memory tool. Thus, when the teacher's or learning material designer's goal is to provide the learner with models of the language or to help them remember certain details related to it, music is a tool worth considering. With regard to listening comprehension skills, music can be used to make exercises more challenging, since the learners seem to find it more difficult to understand sung than spoken language. Furthermore, bringing authentic music into the classroom may produce emotional experiences that create a real connection between the learner and the target culture. At the same time, the learner receives diverse linguistic input.

Secondly, the findings suggest that music promotes whole person learning, which refers to being in touch with both the cognitive and the emotional sides of the learner. Besides helping to learn the language as discussed above, the participants' experiences indicate that music has an influence on the emotional aspects of the learning situation. For example, it may have an effect on the learner's motivation to learn more about the language in the free time as well as at school. In addition, it can have an indirect impact on learning through its ability to affect the learners' emotions positively and negatively in a given learning situation, for example in an English lesson.

On a practical level, music serves as a means for conditioning the atmosphere: for example, it can effectively create a peaceful feeling in the classroom or help the learner to experience feelings that promote learning in the

free time. From the language teacher's perspective, the choice of music and the learners' age are important. Teachers and authors of teaching materials should pay attention to the authenticity and quality of the music used, since they may have an impact on the learner's motivation. Naturally, it is preferable that music is the type that the learners like. Also the learners' age is worth taking into account: the same songs may not work for children and adults. Furthermore, using music especially with young learners seems to be a highly effective way of not only providing memorable linguistic models but also of creating a relaxed, playful atmosphere and powerful experiences.

Thirdly, based on the participants' experiences, it could be argued that informal learning is a type of learning that ought to be made more appreciated and established than it is at the moment among foreign language educators, researchers and learners. In particular, attitudes to and awareness of informal learning require reformation. It appears that the learners feel differently about foreign language learning at school than in the free time. The findings of the present study resemble those of Nikula and Pitkänen-Huhta (2008), who explored the role of English in Finnish teenagers' out-of-school lives. They found that the learners made an explicit division between formal and informal learning: even though they acknowledged that learning can take place in the everyday life, they considered formal learning as the proper way of learning. In the present study, it seemed that music was not considered a form of "serious" learning even at school. This may be the case because music is an element that the learners encounter also outside the school and because it is considered a fun part of everyday life. In other words, there is a clear distinction between formal and informal learning and the elements that go into these two categories. Furthermore, the learners linked the idea of foreign language learning primarily with school and had not considered their learning outside the language classroom, at least extensively, before.

As a matter of fact, it is worth noticing that none of the participants had thought specifically about the role of music in their learning of English either before the interview. In terms of experiential learning, this is striking because, after all, reflection on experiences is a crucial factor in the process of experiential learning: it makes personal experiences significant in terms of conscious learning. Also, from the perspective of informal learning, it is alarming that the learners are not used to reflecting on their learning in the free time, even if it is related to a factor that is usually present in their everyday lives. However, all the interviewees were able to describe experiences related to the topic once they began to ponder over it and, what is more, could name, at least in most cases, what they have learned about the language through these experiences. This shows that learning can take place without explicit reflection as well, although it seems to happen on a rather unconscious level. Nonetheless, it is likely that learning is enhanced if reflection is included in the process.

In contrast with attitudes and actions, it seems that there are no major differences in the learning process taking place in different contexts, besides the more unconscious nature of learning that takes place in the free time when attention is paid often on other things than the language. Similarly, the functions of music in the learning process are not remarkably different in formal and informal contexts and similar aspects of the target language are learned both at school and outside the classroom. These findings support Littlewood's (1984) model that suggests that the same results can be achieved in formal and informal contexts, although the route of the learning process is different.

In practice, language teachers may want to guide their students to think about their experiences more closely. Correspondingly, becoming aware of these issues allows the learners to benefit more from their contacts with music in the free time. In order to achieve this, it is essential that informal learning is explored and discussed, and that the learners develop their reflection skills. It is also relevant to consider the aspects of consciousness and unconsciousness. To

enhance learning, explicit information about the language should be given to the learners. Developing cognitive understanding about the language makes, for example, the use of music as a memory tool more effective. Partly in contradiction with this view is the learners' experience that the use of music in the classroom should not always include exercises or specific activities. It is essential to let the musical moments be relaxing and refreshing. All in all, it seems that the balance between these two ways of using music in formal settings is important. It is also worth remembering that learning a foreign language through music appears to be rather unconscious in nature. Thus, learning can take place even when not explicitly aiming at it. According to the findings of the present study, learning that happens at school is often more conscious than in the free time, since in the classroom the learner's attention is directed to the linguistic aspects of music. Nevertheless, if both teachers and learners become aware of the ways in which music works as a tool for learning, it is possible that the learners become more conscious of their learning in the free time and the teachers give space to unconscious learning in the classroom.

In essence, it is characteristic of informal learning to occur spontaneously and thus it does not need to be planned beforehand. However, so far it seems that it is a form of learning that has not received enough attention or respect in order to become recognized in the field of formal education. As a result, the learners have not been given tools for dealing with informal learning in its various forms. The most crucial of these tools is probably the skill of reflecting on one's own learning, a skill which has not been practiced within formal education at least during the participants' history as learners of English.

Fourthly, the participants' experiences suggest that the traditional ways of using music in the classroom should be challenged or reconsidered. Looking at the learners' experiences about and opinions on the use of music in the English classroom, it stands out that music is regarded as a form of classroom activities that represents something non-traditional. Perhaps this is one of the

reasons why it is considered a welcome and positive element in the language lessons: compared with other more traditional activities, music is fun and relaxing. In fact, it was pointed out that musical activities are liked particularly if they are not task-oriented as the other activities in the classroom. This implies that formal foreign language learning is considered something that focuses on tasks and goals, and that music is still an element that does not go into the same category. Moreover, it is worth noticing that, correspondingly with Marttala and Minkkinen's (2008) findings, music itself is regarded as a highly positive element in the classroom, whereas the choices of music and the ways in which it is applied are more likely to be criticized by the learners.

In the present study, the learners' experiences show that the use of music in the classroom seems to be based on approaches to learning and teaching that the theories of experiential learning challenge. For example, the songs used in the elementary school are, in a way, a form of drilling and learning words and language structures by heart (note the similarities to for example the Audio-Lingual Method). Also, the participants brought up the fill-in-the-gap exercises, which are a common and traditional type of activity in the language classrooms that focuses on separate units of language rather than deals with the language as a whole. The holistic approaches to learning, such as the theories of experiential learning, do not favor these sorts of exercises, but recommend that the learner is an active agent in the learning situation and that the language is learned in context.

The use of music in the classroom may be somewhat restricted to certain types of activities, but the learners' experiences show that it has potential for more. They describe, for example, how music can produce powerful cultural experiences and increase knowledge about the varieties of the language. Furthermore, if the learner becomes an active agent in the musical activity, for instance by singing or playing him/herself, the traditionally passive role of the learner changes. Thus, music is a suitable tool when aiming at more

comprehensive and learner-centered whole language learning. Nevertheless, it should be considered carefully how music is exploited in the classroom. There is a risk of it becoming one of the “traditional” elements that the learners do not find inspiring any longer. Hence, the starting point for the use of music in the formal settings ought to be the awareness of how the learners feel about it and the variety of ways of it is applied.

Consequently, especially the teachers should consider carefully how to use music in the classroom and thus make the use of it more purposeful. The present study shows that the learners who are actively engaged in various musical activities have a wider range of musical learning experiences than the learners who are mainly listeners of music. Obviously, the learner’s scope of musical contexts in the free time is dependent on their personal interests and resources, but at school the teacher can have an impact on the diversity of the learners’ musical experiences. According to the present study, the learners tend to have a passive role during musical activities in the English classroom. This is unfortunate, since the musically active participants’ experiences show that being an active agent in situations where music and language interact is fruitful in terms of learning the foreign language. Besides being the receiver of linguistic models that music provides, for example singing, playing or writing music oneself is an effective way to develop language skills in practice.

8 CONCLUSION

The goal of the present study was to find out what kind of musical experiences learners' have related to learning English as a foreign language and thus offer a general overview on how learners perceive the role of music in their learning of English. It was found out that during the participants' histories as English learners music has been present at school especially when the learners were children. The music used in the classroom has been mainly from textbooks. Commonly, the role of the learner in musical activities has been that of a receiver. In the participants' free time, the presence of English music is notable, which is likely to result in informal learning of English. The learning experiences related to English and music recorded in the data were related to learning listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and culture. These experiences took place both at school and in the free time. According to the participants, the role of music in the process of foreign language learning is usually unconscious. However, it often serves as a tool for memorization, as a linguistic model or a source of motivation. Thus, music has both a cognitive and an emotional role in the learning process. The interviewees' attitudes to music as a tool for foreign language learning were highly positive both in formal and informal learning contexts. Nevertheless, the musical materials used and the ways of exploiting them in the classroom were criticized.

The methodological framework applied in this study was narrative inquiry. The data for the study were collected by conducting four narrative interviews. The gathered narratives were then analyzed thematically. The narrative interview proved to be a suitable tool for recording experiences. Letting the subjects talk about their experiences freely resulted in data that contain learners' stories, views and ideas on the topic. It was practical to carry

out the data collection by interviewing the participants, since it was possible to ask specifying questions immediately. Because of the objectives of the study it was crucial to record as detailed and thoroughly described narratives as possible. Thematic analysis, then, despite its rather elusive nature, provided a sufficiently clear framework for the analysis of the data. The descriptive character of the present study does not require a highly detailed method of analysis: analyzing the data based on occurring themes produced findings that meet the research questions. Nevertheless, it is essential to keep in mind that even academic analysis is not objective. Also the present analysis of the data is conducted by a person, who has done her work within a personal, situated context of research practices, views and interpretations. There are always words and ideas in the data that have gone unnoticed or have not been taken into consideration.

Also, it is worth taking into account that the data could have been of different in nature if the sample was chosen differently or the interviewees were interviewed in another way or at another time. Naturally, the participants' background, age and (future) occupation, among other factors, have a great impact on their stories. For example, the fact that three of the four participants had studied pedagogy seemed to have an influence on how they analyzed their own learning. Obviously, people who have pondered over learning and have experience about teaching have different views on the issues related learning than those who have focused on other things. On the other hand, it was fruitful in terms of the present study to have access to detailed and analytical stories about learning. Also the fact that the interview plan was built on predetermined research questions is likely to have had an effect on the content of the data, although the conversation was primarily based on the topics brought up by the participants in the first phase of the interview. Because of this, it was crucial that the participants were first given an opportunity to talk about whatever experiences they wanted in terms of valid narrative inquiry and exploration of

experience. Each of the participants also knew the topic of the study beforehand, but some of them mentioned after the interview that they might come up with more ideas about it after the interview. After all, it was the first time they thought about the topic closely. Nevertheless, the interview situation was in all cases peaceful and there was enough time for the interviewees to mention everything that they had to say about the topic at that time.

Due to the factors that affected the content of the data mentioned above and since the criticism that narrative inquiry most often receives concerns its subjective nature, it is appropriate to explicitly point out that the findings of this study are not as such generalizable and that its sample is a small-scale one. However, qualitative analysis of this type does not aim at figuring out or explaining phenomena on a large scale, but its goal is to pay attention to details in order to gain a deeper understanding and an interpretation of the phenomenon in question and point directions to further research that ought to be carried out in various, comprehensive ways.

Indeed, there are still several aspects related to the present topic that require closer examination. First of all, it would be interesting if the role of music in the learning process became the focus of attention. The present study indicates that the learners' understanding of how learning a foreign language through music happens is rather vague due to the seemingly unconscious nature of the process. Moreover, there is little, if any, literature in the field that discusses the foreign language learning process from this perspective. Secondly, the present study examines the topic from the learners' point of view. In future, it would be enlightening to also explore the teachers' perspectives on and experiences about the role of music in foreign language teaching. Thirdly, the present study included both formal and informal learning contexts. In further research, it may be useful to examine the two contexts also separately in order to gain a more detailed picture about specific issues related to each setting and, as a consequence, to be able to outline the connections along with the

similarities and dissimilarities between the two contexts more extensively. In addition, the musical material used in the English classroom ought to be explored more closely. After all, the participants of the present study criticized particularly the materials exploited in their English lessons. Lastly, it would be interesting to scrutinize what kind of a role instrumental music has in foreign language learning as well, while usually the focus is on music with words, as in the present study.

Naturally, music is only one possible tool among others for learning a foreign language. Basically lyrics are material similar to other forms of language material that can be used for pedagogical purposes. Nevertheless, it has become evident along the way that music is a valuable tool. Learners usually have a positive attitude to learning a language through music, since music itself is something that most people enjoy. As the common knowledge and the present study indicate, the musical elements make the lyrics the kind of learning material that is liked, generates memorable experiences and is present in the learner's life also outside the classroom and regarded as a part of real life in general. Thus, the power of music can arouse experiences that result in learning something about a foreign language. Some of these experiences stay with us throughout the years, as has happened with me and the simple song called "What's your name?"

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Transcription notes

Comma (,) = *short pauses*

Full stop (.) = *longer pauses that indicate the end of a speech section*

Three full stops in brackets (...) = *there has been speech before and/or after the speech shown in the excerpt*

Dash (-) = *stop in the middle of an utterance*

Appendix 2: The plan for the interviews

HAASTATTELUSUUNNITELMA

Lämmittely ja taustatiedot

- Kuka olet?
- Englannin opiskelun taustat
- Musiikkitausta

Vaihe 1: Vapaa kertominen

- Kerro tilanteista, joissa olet oppinut jotakin englannin kielestä musiikin kautta.

Vaihe 2: Tarkentavia kysymyksiä liittyen edellisessä kohdassa esiin tulleista asioista.

Vaihe 3: Tutkijan kysymyksiä (tarvittaessa)

- Musiikin käyttö koulussa (miten käytetty, mitä musiikkia, eri kouluasteet) ja mielipiteitä sekä kokemuksia siihen liittyen
- Musiikki vapaa-ajalla (miten musiikki on läsnä vapaa-ajalla, millainen musiikki)
- Oppimiskokemuksia kummastakin kontekstista
- Ajatuksia musiikin merkityksestä kielenoppimisessa (miten se toimii?)
- Ympäristön vaikutus kielen oppimiseen musiikin avulla (vrt. koulu ja vapaa-aika)

Appendix 3: English translations for the interview extracts

- (1) Well I first remember from English lessons that, that this "What's your name, my name is Ken, what's your name, my name is Tom, what's your name, my name is Jeff, my name is Jeff Jerry Jackson", I still remember the melody too but I won't start singing it here and then "I like coffee, I like tea, I like you, do you like me" I remember that and that they have been like etched in my memory there were other songs as well but I can't remember them, but I guess these were the first ones in that third grade book. (Kaarina p. 2)
- (2) (...) in the elementary school we had quite a lot of music in English lessons like I guess there generally is like the textbooks contained a lot of songs that were the kind that you can still remember them you still hear them in your head like a couple of songs like that **although I can't actually remember almost anything else from the elementary school English lessons I can still remember the songs** (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (3) (...) I remember that it worked really well like the teacher sang along and was really excited and put her soul into it like she had different moves and so and then of course everyone else would sing along because she was so excited about it so it works well in the elementary school when everyone still dare to sing and you didn't need to be ashamed of anything (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (4) (...) of course there were few of these simple catchy songs and they you played for example these verb songs where you had like "mennä, go went, lähettää, send sent" and then always at the end of the verse you had even the perfect tense form like "ride, rode, ridden" (with a singing voice), and they did echo in your head a week or two and they were like really annoying little songs, maybe they were fun back then and nice (...) (Juho, p. 2)
- (5) (...) guess I still remember all the melodies like "January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, ooh December" (sings), so I guess you've learned something from them like I don't even know how often you listened to them can't remember if they were played even three four two three times more but, any case that's how the melody went and the words still came out right, so at school at least, at least you've been learning. (Juho, p. 2)
- (6) Well we were in that really cold small classroom in high school and then I guess it stuck in my mind because I thought it sounded like a good piece or that it was musically good, or like catchy. Yeah, it was just that I liked the song. (Kaarina, p. 4)
- (7) Maybe I've had a kind of admittedly a bit boring education in English it's been like like more normal so that this musical aspect has not been brought up in any way, truly, if we're talking about what the teachers or others have taught. (Elias, p. 2)
- (8) (...) I don't have particular clear memories of those musica- music at school I don't know if it's because of my own personality or because there just hasn't been

music that much (...) when you seriously think back I don't have many memories of music (...) (Elias, p. 9)

- (9) (...) in the secondary school the role of music changed in a way like that **you wouldn't sing along anymore** so that the song wasn't related to the uh topic of learning anymore like **they were really just like something you'd do between other activities rarely** (...) so it like changed completely and then actually **in high school I don't know if there's been music at all any longer**, so I guess it stopped there. (Anna, p. 2)
- (10) Well in most cases it has been from the textbooks because it's always the easy solution, and sometimes it's good that way but yeah so it hasn't been used that much, in French lessons I remember **the teacher brought her own records** and then we listened to them. (Kaarina, p. 15)
- (11) (...) [*in the secondary school*] it was authentic material so **they were real songs** and then we'd just listen to them not usually anything else like maybe we looked at a couple of words like what they mean, but **I can't remember that since elementary school there would have been like songs that were like done particularly for the textbook** (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (12) Yes well at least in Swedish lessons there were terribly many now who is that big star from our neighboring country [*Tomas Ledin*] whose songs we listened to incredibly many times (...) **we listened to him at least at the Police School he was our teacher's favorite or then she had just that one CD** but we did listen to that, "Sommaren är kort" and so on. (Elias, p. 5)
- (13) (...) it was very much like, **to fill up the lesson**. (Elias, p. 2)
- (14) (...) I can't remember that we'd like start to analyze the lyrics for example or think about their meaning in more detail or looked at some grammatical stuff or, so maybe they were a bit separate in that sense, **guess the teacher considered it as a means for filling up extra time** like we have a couple of minutes left like what should we do well let's listen to that. (Anna, p. 2)
- (15) (...) what comes to my mind first is exactly that that the teacher thought like **let's calm down this class** and play some two minutes long song now so they'll quiet down to listen to it and after that I'll get the turn to speak or so so it's more like that my image of the music (...). (Elias, p. 9)
- (16) **It did kind of calm you down and that when there's no one you can just concentrate on listening to the music**, and there of course you'd concentrate even a bit more better so (unclear) waver- to ponder over something at home if you're listening to music so you'll do something else at the same time anyway, and there you like had to focus **it calmed down the situation nicely**. (Elias, p. 3)
- (17) (...) in the university we had like that there was often a little bit like let's say pop-like classical background music when we came to the class, when people were showing up one by one obviously during those ten fifteen minutes so, that was really I felt it I paid attention to it and **felt it was like quite calming** like oh it was

nice to come here like you can hear this kind of like "adagio" (laugh) type of thing by Albinoni or who is it that sounds quite good. (Juho, p. 4)

- (18) (...) during some activities there may have been also if we were doing like group work a little bit of background music the teacher himself had classical music as a hobby so he used it then and I thought it worked that it **clearly created a peaceful atmosphere**. Like it could be used in all kind of teaching well that was instrumental music so it like doesn't have that kind of disturbing aspect than if there are lyrics too. (Juho, p. 4)
- (19) Maybe you can quite, quite well learn kind of, more like, kind of informal or how do you say not formal language and how to use it but I don't find that kind of, uh words and structures that for example those songs in the Spanish lessons contained very useful in actually knowing Spanish otherwise. So maybe it was more like "nice to know", "nice to know" kind of knowledge than the kind that you would really benefit from. (Juho, p. 5)
- (20) (...) you were supposed to figure out based on the lyrics what happens here a bit like, like **listening comprehension**. (Elias, p. 4)
- (21) (...) it's likely that we've sometimes had some songs where you've meant to pick up like what's the next what follows it and then there's a gap and you're supposed to write down what it is **in the listening comprehension style**, (unclear). (Elias, p. 9)
- (22) (...) well the only ones I can remember are the ones like **fill in the word you hear**, I can't recall anything else. (Kaarina, p. 9)
- (23) Usually I have it, when I'm jogging or something like this kind of voluntary exercising usually includes either music or some audio book or something else you listen to. (Elias, p. 5)
- (24) (...) it happened to be the kind of music I guess that was played often on the radio and that would then get you interested in it, there really wasn't the kind of Finnish music that you would have likes, or didn't know it exists because there was a lot of English music you'd hear and so it was simply so that you'd listened to what you hear, and then you'd buy records according to what you liked best and then listen to them and. (Kaarina, p. 11)
- (25) (...) I at least find that my language skills come mostly from somewhere else than school but of course there's television and the Internet and all that kind of things involved as well but certainly music too (...) (Anna, pp. 2-3)
- (26) But then then when I have myself listened to some pop music or something where or or any kind of music where the lyrics are in English I can remember that it has been really hard for me to discern the words from those songs, or to understand the words I have only caught single words here and there but it is like the skill of understanding has developed actually only at the age of twenty or more I guess and now just recently, so that you can discern and hear where a word ends and a word begins or those differences in pronouncing. (Kaarina, p. 2)

- (27) Well, it does depend quite a lot on the accent and everything but music has, well there's music involved and the it can be sometimes like well it's clearly more difficult to understand when there's music whereas when you listen to some English audio book or something it's easy to follow what goes on whereas music, unless it's some very simple song where two sentences are repeated over and over. (Elias, p. 6)
- (28) (...) I have to say that usually (laugh) I've heard terribly many lyrics wrong and thought that they sing about something completely else, like, like (laugh), Bryan Adams' "Summer of '69" well I guess it was just last year when I read through the lyrics and realized well I had been wondering why he sings that "I got my first real sex dream" although it's "six-string" (...) I've never understood a whole song by just listening to it (...) (Juho, p. 6)
- (29) (...) **it's more difficult when it's sung** because often **the words are articulated so that you won't necessarily understand** like even if you were a native speaker or, and then when it's so fast sometimes **it has to follow the rhythm** and maybe you sometimes drawl syllables in a weird way so that it fits the music and everything so of course it can be more difficult with music, and then **there's always other things to listen to** like it's not just the word you want to hear but there's something else too, whereas **speech is normally at least slower**, maybe you also **pronounce it slightly differently**, maybe you also hear it more often and so your **ear is like more accustomed to listen to speech than singing**, so maybe it's easier because of that as well. (Anna, p. 6)
- (30) (...) maybe it's partly because **I tend to listen to the melody so that I don't concentrate on the words in the first place**. But yeah, but it's just that, that when you sing it's like the words merge into each other more or in a different way, so **it was hard to tell where, where a word ends and where it doesn't** and then pronunciation is personal in the sense that you simply understand something better **and then I guess mixing and all that kind of things have an effect** like words are put more in the background on purpose so that they just are there, so because of that too. And then it probably depends on the music style but **also the vocabulary isn't necessarily always simple** sometimes it's really kind of, special or poetic (...) (Kaarina, p. 4)
- (31) Then there was a lot of TV series that were in English and the theme songs were in English too and they were sung and then, then you didn't really understand much about them except years I mean that the words have sort of been stuck in your mind but **only after maybe like five or six years you understood what they mean like say "The Black stallion" theme, it was just something (unclear babbling) and then you realized that it is really "you hear it calling you can't deny"**. (Kaarina, p. 2)
- (32) (...) when Finland won the world championship in ice hockey and then they sung that "Den glider in, den glider in" and then **you were singing it like blaablaablaa or something like that and then at some point I realized like, bit by bit that what is said and then it became a sensible song** (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)
- (33) Well maybe it's so that when you sing when you rarely sing it goes on like, as a flow or something like that like **you don't really concentrate on what comes out so it happens like more fluently** whereas when you speak you think all the time

in more detail about what you're saying and how the sentence structures or other things are well you don't ponder over them that much but anyway there's more mental processing going on when speaking, whereas **when you're singing you just go along with the feeling** and that's it. (Elias, p. 6)

- (34) (...) by the way you've learned a lot about pronunciation if you've performed in English you've had to consult like how do you say this and then you've also had to pronounce it in a way that is credible so that the music sounds good so it is true that in like mu- uh you've learned pronunciation through music and lyrics (...) (Juho, p. 10)
- (35) I don't know I guess there's pro- probably **the expression aspect is so strongly present** and on the other hand then, well maybe it has an influence too that **it's almost always practiced it's considered every word is like known beforehand** and on the other hand you've usually went through some kind of examples when you've listened to it maybe the explanation is as simple as that but on the other side, it's like that **it's easy to hide your own deficiencies in the melody you can like hide your incomplete knowledge about how you should say things under like expression and unclear articulation.** (Juho, p. 11)
- (35) (...) **well it certainly does have some of this transfer effect or transfer also on speaking and learning pronunciation** but it's not quite, it's not in any way of hundred per cent **it's a totally different thing to sing and talk**, singing is much more easier than talking so that you can't say whether you're native or not I think that, according to my own experience, even I've sung to like good English-speakers then sometimes after I've been singing in English they've said that I pronounce really well which hasn't been true anymore after I've opened my mouth to like talk. (Juho, pp. 10-11)
- (36) (...) guess you learn (...) of course something about **different ways of pronouncing accents** something like that. (Anna, p. 3)
- (37) (...) it brings up the different accents, I really enjoy listening to some Scotch or Irish accents (...) so the fact that it would bring like, **variation in addition to the Standard English the teacher speaks**, that would be the thing like that you hear that well there are different ways of speaking English than the way in which the teacher speaks there, so like that. (Elias, p. 10)
- (38) Well you can remember the words better, because you can see the words. I feel that I have learned that way or that if you sing yourself it's easier, or you remember the words better. (Kaarina, p. 5)
- (39) Oh right, well thinking about pop songs I feel that adjectives especially (...) "breezy" and "dandy" and all those Corrs' songs (laughing), we've been playing and singing them so (...) (Kaarina, p. 5)
- (40) (...) well if I need to think about what I've learned well maybe the alphabets, there's of course this basic you just put the rhythm there and list the alphabets but naturally you can remember it better I'm sure everyone knows the alphabet song (...) (Anna, p. 2)

- (41) (...) for example this "Englishman in New York" when it says that "alien in America" or how is it well I was always amused by the idea of an alien in America and so on but at some point I figured out that "alien" means a stranger or something like that that it has also this, this kind of deep- or like more sensible explanation (...) (Elias, p. 4)
- (42) Well certainly in the same way I've learned from the songs I've listened to it's started there or there's been some phrase for example going on and on in your head, like what does it mean you've wanted to know what it means and then you've found out about it (...) I've probably learned it already in English lessons but I think that because of some song I've like understood what it means you've got "cold feet", now this isn't a clear memory but I recall that at some point I'd realized that aha there they say it that I might have heard before sometime. (Juho, p. 3)
- (43) Yeah well at least when I've been singing spiritual songs in English I have learned a lot of Christ- words related to Christianity something like or well, well like "exalted" or, well that's the first one that comes to my mind (...) (Kaarina, p. 5).
- (44) .Or then there's this thing that my friend made where there were all kinds of funny German songs and stuff, so there's been motivation like I want to understand why these are funny (...) (Kaarina, p. 7)
- (45) (...) in high school I had one French record so I really put my mind into it and looked up the words in dictionary it was that I was really enthusiastic then, so I looked at the lyrics like what could this mean. (Kaarina, p. 12)
- (46) Mmm, of course when you listen to musical pieces and then sometimes when you listen to them carefully like what's in there like what the words mean well then there are quite a lot of words you don't necessarily understand and then you sometimes go and find out what they mean so that you'd somehow understand them and. (Elias, p. 2)
- (47) (...) at times you've always wondered some words like what does it mean and then you've simply, you've looked it up in the dictionary and then you've realized that ooh, oh it means that and, you've maybe understood its function as well like what does it mean in that program what happens I press there but then you've never known like what the word really means, and then they've become kind of like Finnish, like, concepts those English ones, and the concept has been com- connected with what it happens- or what it does in that program (...) (Juho, p. 2)
- (48) (...) at high school I did this one cultural project that was I mean on one English course you had to do a kind of, some project about some, some, maybe some creative or artistic topic and I did it about making music with the computer. **I guess that was the first time when I really learned like better the words like "rhythm" and "tempo" and so**, guess that was thoughtful. In the project however the time was divided so that ten per cent was about the language and ninety per cent was about technical performance because I did music and stuff for it. (Juho, p. 4)

- (49) (...) **when you sing a song you may want to know like what it means so that you can put your soul into it better** like, you've wanted to be cognitively conscious about it like you think that then it's easier to express the song in the right way (...) when I practiced to sing the song "With or without you" then, well then I of course understood what it's about based on its name but, but also when you read the other verses, **you wanted to gain understanding about the writer's emotional state you wanted to feel it yourself too and so you had to learn the words as well like what they mean.** (Juho, p. 11)
- (50) Yes well I've sometimes checked it in the dictionary but then just tried to think about the context, that that this is how it has to be that it means something like this I'm not sure about all the precise meanings but something like that anyway.. (Kaarina, p. 5)
- (51) (...) then I've sometimes checked the lyrics on the Internet to see if I've understood or heard them correctly. (Kaarina, p. 7)
- (52) Well because of my laziness I'll of course first **ask the people around me** so that I won't need to do more than that if someone's got the answer but if they don't then I'd **check it on the Internet** or if I'm really active then I'll **search the dictionary** or something like that. (Elias, p. 4)
- (53) (...) then there was this song that we sang there [*on a language course in Slovakia*] this "Nod vodou" or what was it called, as song by Eran or a band something like that oh Elan that was it, yeah so I wanted notes for it too and then I've been singing it and playing (says part of the lyrics in Slovak) like, **I remember the lyrics and know what they mean although I've forgotten almost everything else about Slovak**, but I remember the song (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)
- (54) (...) you did really learn the words through them **when there was a word test you'd just go through the song and stop where the right one was** and then you just had to remember how you write it, if it was different from you pronounce it so that yes you did kind of, kind of learn from them (...) (Juho, p. 2)
- (55) (...) instead of just speaking out the whole list and learning it by heart you just include the rhythm and you remember it better naturally. (Anna, p. 2)
- (56) And then music again it **has maybe like furtively in a way taught vocabulary and sentences and how to form sentences** in English. (Kaarina, p. 11)
- (57) (...) I guess you learn like these more special sentece structures for example that don't necessarily really like work in spoken language (...) (Anna, p. 3)
- (58) I feel that this **"I like coffee, I like tea", that I have learned how to use verb "like" from it and then that question "do you like me"**. So that's what I remember or I feel that that is where I've learned it from that that is what I it feels like **I've gone through it in my mind later on like with the help of the song that how it is formed** (...) (Kaarina, p. 3)
- (59) (...) **there was this one song that was used probably to learn some questions**, like there was this hotel receptionists that like asked those who came to the hotel

- things like **“Would you like some information?”** and **“Would you like a hotel room?”** and something like that (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (60) (...) that “what’s your name” -song that could be something that’s come out of it, introducing yourself. (Kaarina, p. 4)
- (61) Then in Slovak lessons in the university and then in Slovakia on the language course there were some well especially on that language course songs were used and we went through the lyrics and **I still remember like for example “V cudzom meste” that that’s where I can pick up the adjective inflection** and when I know that “mesto” is a neuter word then it is it I can’t remember that grammatical case but anyway there is “v meste” if there’s the “v” before the word as a preposition (...) (Kaarina, p. 12)
- (62) (...) when you’ve talked with a friend say about some pieces you may have understood then for example (hawking) the regions of some music style, or that why it’s like been born just there like country for example so, that **you’ve realized that okay it’s probably tied with the cultural environment that exists there** so in a way you can think that **through music you’ve learned something about for example the American geography or culture** because you wouldn’t have come to think about it but then you’ve logically made some conclusions and, and maybe something like through blues and jazz where it’s risen from, from which region from which group of people and maybe for which reasons, like **you can think of things like because of music you’ve thought about something you otherwise wouldn’t have.** (Juho, p. 6)
- (63) (...) music may be able to create something, you could think the kind of soul landscapes related to a culture, that in a way if you listen to some wistful blues then you may be able to understand through it or the lyrics something about the culture and the circumstances where the song’s been written, on the other hand without background knowledge the music might not sound the same. (Juho, pp. 8-9).
- (64) We had a case on a class in the university where this Hungarian guy showed some lyrics and the tal- told us straightforwardly what the words mean and it was like well yeah okay, then he told us in what kind of situation it was written and then it’s about and it was about young men leaving to war and leaving their home village behind and of course the lyrics got a whole different meaning after that, so that in a way music can be connected with cultural thing and maybe even history and real many things, and obviously generating emotions. (Juho, p. 9)
- (65) Well of course I’ve listened to English music for like my whole short life but **it’s a little difficult to say if I’ve learned something through it but probably I have** (...) (Anna, p. 2)
- (66) (...) it [*listening to music*] isn’t like learning although it is in way unconscious learning but it’s not like forcing yourself to learn (...) (Anna, p. 3)
- (67) Well in my opinion it works so that, well that, that you don’t kind of think about it if you compare it with the others like you haven’t actually thought about it in particular but **it has just come or then it has just been like a part of your normal**

life in the case of English, that you haven't really paid attention to it or it hasn't left that many strong memories as some of the others have. (Kaarina, p. 13)

- (68) Well, I guess the basis is the quite much the conception of the fact that a human learns quite many of kind of like new skills by mimicking, so that at some point the cognitive skills become very important, so that you can like combine words and understand what they can like mean then or you can conclude it but the the basis is always built basically on mimicry, that's the starting point (...) (Juho, p. 8)
- (69) (...) I find that **music has a really big meaning particularly in the primary school because, because the content can stay and echo in your mind** and cause a kind of positive change in other words simply if you've listened to that "Ride rode ridden" a couple of times and then it's on your mind six weeks after that you're likely to learn that verb "ride" quite well and then **there's the cognitive side included** that you're told what the different forms mean and when they're used, then it's efficient of course no one benefits from remembering only "ride rode ridden" if you don't know what they mean, and when you can use them and what else you need (...) in other words there are like **two aspects there, that it helps you to remember when the musics echo in your head and on the other hand you can go through the music in your mind when the words come along and then you can remember the meanings you'd otherwise easily forgotten.** (Juho, p. 8)
- (70) **Yes it [music] can create those emotions but so that like that you'd learn anything else through them**, for example about Engl- or American culture then just the music is usually quite not enough then like if you listen to some wistful blues it doesn't necessarily make a child aware of like racism but **you need to combine it with cognitive knowledge** or of course if the lyrics are like really obviously historical and then you'd translate them you might get it but, but it's usually a kind of tool for demonstration maybe kind of like **a bridge between the knowledge and feeling or between like knowledge and understanding it**, it's maybe like the kind of facts or something of course you can't use the word fact but something like a topic like racism, then the person is a subject who doesn't know anything about it, then maybe that certain song can well work as a bridge between that and as **motivation** and also as **a way of remembering.** (Juho, p. 9)
- (71) Well I woud say **that it affects the atmosphere maybe the most, but also learning because through affecting the atmosphere it affects also the feeling in the class** so there's a completely different feeling after listening to some music and then you're more energetic and then the other things work out better too, like it's a completely different thing sitting the whole class still and listening to teaching about grammar than listening to music first so that the lesson becomes different. (Anna, p. 5)
- (72) (...) if you're feeling good when you go to the class then of course it has an effect *[on learning]*, but **I think that effect is indirect** you could create that effect so that you'd give cream caramels to everyone and that would put them in a good mood, so of course it doesn't change the fact that music can do that but it's not like I don't think it's not like it's not the the most essenti- essential thing is not the music but **creating a peaceful and good atmosphere in which music is a tool** (...) (Juho, p. 9)

- (73) (...) so I'd say that music is quite an important part of language teaching also like authentic music because it's a part of the culture, preferably many different kinds of authentic music, so you get like a lot the culture (...) (Anna, p. 5)
- (74) (...) **music can help to like achieve something, deeper invisible understanding** or kind of like **heart's understanding** of something you don't know about well not only through it but when you combine it with those raw facts, I argue for example that the beginning of "The Unknown Soldier" would be much more lame without the first low murmurings of the hymn "Finlandia". (Juho, p. 9)
- (75) (...) learning like words and sentences and stuff through music has happened at that age that you can remember, more (...) it's been kind of like, or you remember it more clearly (...) (Kaarina, p. 7)
- (76) I would say that **especially in the elementary school it has even an important role** because in the elementary school teaching is like very different it can't be just like mechanical teaching and learning things by heart, through music **you need to play too because the ones you teach are children and then in a way it's music that makes the atmosphere more relaxed** like, first of all it feels like **it's nicer for the kids and in addition also learning takes place like without noticing it**, so especially in the elementary school I'd say it's very important to use music a lot but also in the secondary school and high school and of course anywhere within adult education (...) (Anna, pp. 4-5)
- (77) (...) could the crucial part be **repetition**, and anyway then **I myself at least didn't listen to music at the primary school age practically anywhere (...)** so that when you did something like that at school then it may have had quite a powerful ability to stay in your mind but ye- at least as important as that is the fact that they were like I said kind of **happy and catchy songs**, like a bit like some of those annoying **commercial melodies that you usually remember for some reason**, so that, maybe there was some, I can't remember they'd irritated me as a child but now when I sing that kind of songs they do sound quite annoying. (Juho, p. 5)
- (78) Well maybe **music doesn't have that great a role in my learning**, like it's not it's not like, a solution that covers everything, I more like, you notice that you're learning is kind of, like when you see something in the written form and hear it at the same time and in addition you need to say it aloud then you learn it the best so that **music doesn't have that much to do with my learning or it can help with some small simple things or something or then it has a relaxing influence or so but it's not particularly revolutionary for me**, it doesn't have in any way a revolutionary effect on learning. (Elias, p. 7)
- (79) (...) in pieces of music you always play, if or not always but at times you play with the words and so on so then you can learn like maybe like **fine nuances** or things like that so it's not, and that type of things so in that way **the effect of music could be like related to details** but you can't learn to speak through music. (Elias, p. 8)
- (80) (...) **the refreshment aspect** and then that it brings up the different accents, I really like listening to some Scotch or Irish accent (...) so in that it like it would bring like, **variation to the Standard English that the teacher speaks**, so well it's

it would be the thing like that you hear like that there are other types of English than just the one the teacher speaks there, so like that. (Elias, p. 10)

- (81) (...) **the only motivation would be that now let's behave this lesson so the teacher will play you that song at the end of the lesson but like this kind of a prize but when you yourself don't understand music like that** like it's actually quite the same whether she'd play it at the end of the lesson or not, well so it wouldn't like **the meaning of variation would be the biggest** and then of course when you have to listen to it then you'd practice listening comprehension so that it's not just the teacher speaking English in the front of the class. (Elias, p. 9)
- (82) (...) quite an important thing is that the thing can motivate because music is nowadays a big part of youth culture and a big part of music is in English, so that probably mu- many of the changes to exploit music as a tool for learning have been wasted (...) (Juho, p. 8)
- (83) And in some way the books have been nicer, in the sense that the pages on which the lyrics were have been clear or then there have been nice pictures or good colors or something. Or that you always dealt with them like, and you always listened to them when working on the chapter so that you wouldn't usually skip the songs, so that every time when it bothered you that what does it sound like that song you always got the answer when you'd riffled through the pages and like oh there's this kind of song coming, then you'd really listen to it so that it didn't remain like unclear. (Kaarina, p. 8)
- (84) Well they were always like nice positive things like you didn't have to talk with a partner or do workbook exercises or something but you could just be. (Elias, p. 4)
- (85) (...) it was somehow amazing if we listened to some real music like in some lesson or it was like how can we do something like this like **this isn't studying in a way you thought like that or that if you in some English lesson ended up just talking about something we were really sort of thrilled about it like now we don't need to study** we can just discuss. So you'd easily think that you can't do anything interesting at school or say in a language lesson (...) (Juho, p. 7)
- (86) Guess it's always been like **the nicer part of the lesson** when there's music because it feels somehow like **it's not part of the teaching anymore but it's something totally different it's the fun part it's kind of like a play or something like that** and that's the case in the secondary school too like when all that grammar stuff and everything was dealt with then you like had music there as kind of like a snack so again it was the nice part (...) so I could say that I've definitely liked music and I've liked to listen to it from the elementary school to high school and like even still, so I like like to take part into things like that. (Anna, p. 3)
- (87) Well I think **it's always been a nice moment when we've listened to it [music] and it has cheered you up when you've listened to the piece. And then that you don't always take them so overly seriously** like fill in the gaps and listen to the song but that you've really just listened to it so that there's no exercise about it and that, well that now you really have listen to hear some word like it's may have been on some other classes but **that you've just gone through the words**

and looked at what they sing about and then you've listened to it, and that's been much more relaxing and nicer than if there's always something, that you must do this exercise now. (Kaarina, pp. 8-9)

- (88) (...) you had only these "OK English" -tapes you'd play and then there was always ten seconds of some kind of catchy funny music and then a kind of a perfect voice began to read the chapter (...) (Juho, p. 7)
- (89) (...) **guess you're already going the wrong way when you start making learning material using music I mean like now we're going to thins kind of a song so that children learn (...) then it becomes this teaching material rubbish that you like resist already beforehand** like maybe on first grades it works but immediately you lose the motivation aspect then, and actually everything else but maybe remembering like when those simple catchy songs go around in your mind and you hate them from the bottom of our hear you still might remember something because of them so that that **definitely you shouldn't go and compose language language music for some textbooks for some secondary school textbooks or high school** (...) (Juho, p. 11)
- (90) (...) if you write textbooks and want to put music in it then I think you should use like some expertise or something in it (...) in my opinion it would be much better to use like the teacher could use real records of course there copyrights and things with textbooks but that you would use kind of like authentic music and try to find out what the students are interested in and what is popular music at the moment (...) (Kaarina, p. 14)
- (91) (...) well it was always nicer if you came across with that you liked yourself in the English lessons, like you listen to it differently, like you get more excited than if it's like something you don't care about that much. (Anna, p. 5)
- (92) (...) I would use music just as a relaxing element like there doesn't always need to be so like the teacher has to always have an exercise for it or stuff but that it could be just a kind of fun thing and it does not always require words it could be related to the history of the language or vo the langua- or the history of the language culture or, or some other cultural phenomenon or something, yes I would use it more (...) (Kaarina, p. 14)
- (93) (...) music could be integrated better into the lesson, like you could do something else with besides just listening, maybe then it would have like more meaning in terms of learning so it wouldn't be just a separate part. (Anna, p. 6)
- (94) (...) I feel that you remember it better if you sing it yourself or that it's not like singing along in a choir in the lesson but that you make like a band arrangement of it or something like that. (Kaarina, p. 14)
- (95) **Well in the free time you get to decide yourself what you listen to in what ways you listen how you listen at school then you like have to listen**, like especially if it's some terrible piece you have to listen to **it's very very likely that you have a kind of negative attitude to it**, like, maybe that's the biggest difference is exactly that in the free time it's usually so voluntary to listen to things you listen to (...) (Elias, p. 8)

- (96) (...) yes there's like a rather big difference that in the free time you'd listen to the music you want and on the other hand you heard music they force you to listen in the shops and elsewhere (...) (Juho, p. 7)
- (97) (...) **it depends on what you're doing at the same time**, like maybe if you're reading something there or things like that that there are other stimuli too then you don't listen to the music so carefully because it's there just in the background, especially just like words and stuff then **maybe it's the melody you remember better in that case**, but when you're **in a language lesson then you know you have to pay attention to the words** and usually you've got the vocabulary in front of you too, then besides listening you can follow it on the paper, then **of course there's more emphasis on the language aspect**. (Anna, p. 5)
- (98) (...) I do it so that usually I listen to the words in the free time as well and it bothers me if I don't hear some word I don't know what is said so you have to check it somewhere like what was that certain word. (Anna, p. 5)
- (99) If you listen to say English music in the free time it has more like could you call it **unconscious meaning** or something but that your brain pick up those little things from it and they start going around in your mind like in my case for example that "alien in New York" or what was it well yes, like that again. **At school it's you somehow have to concentrate more on it it may have a bigger influence at school** on these things, but in the free time when it really comes from the background then you don't spend that much time on it so it really isn't particularly like that. (Elias, p. 6)
- (100) Yes, well, when it comes to English I feel that absolutely I've learned more in the free time, because for starters there's so much more music in the free time and English music, so, yes it's very obvious. (Kaarina, p. 10)
- (101) Well it's simply because **in the free time you listen to the kind of music you're interested in and you like and then the motivation about the music is also quite different** or like it and learning takes place maybe more like kind of without noticing it except of course if you're interested in like what is said here or something then you find out about it because it's an interesting song or so. (Kaarina, p. 10)