

Hamline University

DigitalCommons@Hamline

---

School of Education Student Capstone Theses  
and Dissertations

School of Education

---

Fall 2019

## Teaching Grammar Through Music

Katie Monson

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_all](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Monson, Katie, "Teaching Grammar Through Music" (2019). *School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations*. 4475.

[https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_all/4475](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all/4475)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at DigitalCommons@Hamline. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Hamline. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hamline.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hamline.edu), [wstraub01@hamline.edu](mailto:wstraub01@hamline.edu), [modea02@hamline.edu](mailto:modea02@hamline.edu).

TEACHING GRAMMAR THROUGH MUSIC

By  
Katie Monson

A capstone submitted in partial requirement of the requirements of the degree in Masters  
of Arts in Education

Hamline University

St Paul, MN

December 2019

Primary Advisor: Julia Reimer  
Secondary Advisor: Lesley De Paz  
Peer Reviewer: Isabel Rowles

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	6
Overview.....	6
My Journey.....	7
My Research Interest.....	9
Rationale and Significance.....	10
Summary.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.....	13
Introduction.....	13
Language Acquisition.....	14
Implicit acquisition.....	14
Explicit acquisition.....	15
Noticing.....	16
Automaticity.....	17
Immersion Programs.....	18
Teaching with Music.....	19
Music and the brain.....	20
Literacy.....	22
Vocabulary.....	23
Teaching language through music .....	24
Music and grammar.....	25
Morphology and Grammar.....	28

Metacognition .....	30
Conclusion and Research Gaps.....	31
CHAPTER THREE: Methods.....	34
Introduction.....	34
Research Paradigm.....	34
Participants.....	35
Setting.....	35
Community .....	35
District.....	36
School.....	36
Classroom.....	37
Choice of Methods.....	37
Methods, Materials and Procedures.....	39
Research Tools.....	41
Data Analysis Methods.....	42
Ethical Considerations.....	43
Summary.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR: Results.....	45
Introduction.....	45
Overall Class Results.....	46
Results yielded on each question.....	47
Common error trends.....	51
Call and response.....	55

Regular vs irregular verbs.....	56
The Interview .....	57
Summary.....	59
CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion .....	61
Introduction.....	61
Implications.....	61
Overall Findings.....	62
Was the music intervention successful?.....	62
Which verbs yielded the highest student improvement and why?.....	63
What was the most common error trend and why?.....	65
What did the participants think of the songs and how did it affect their learning?.....	65
Did participants understand what they learned from the songs?.....	66
Limitations.....	67
Recommendations.....	68
Communication.....	70
Summary.....	71
References.....	72
Appendix A.....	77
Appendix B.....	79
Appendix C.....	80
Appendix D.....	84

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Average Overall Scores.....	47
Figure 2: Pre- and Post-assessment totals by question.....	50
Figure 3: Regular vs. Irregular Verbs - Total % correct .....	57

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Overview

As a musician, music aficionado and lifelong language learner, my research question came to me through a combination of pure curiosity and experience with these two passions of mine. My research question is *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish?*; And *how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?* In the case of my research, the second language is Spanish, and the songs are self written with the intention of including common verbs in the past tense.

This chapter starts with an explanation of my story as a music lover and language learner. My story leads into my choices in college and career, which also influenced the action research I have decided to pursue. It is important to understand my experiences with music and language and their impact on my education and career in order to realize how I came to be passionate about my research question. This chapter then discusses how the current research study is significant to students and teachers, and the rationale for the project. The chapter includes personal and professional examples and anecdotes that tell the story of my journey to this action research project. A preview of the rest of my thesis is included at the end of the chapter.

## **My Journey**

**Music.** Music has been a part of my life since I can remember. My father was a natural musician and our house was always filled with music: records and cassette tapes, then compact discs and the endless world of internet music sources, and even better, my dad's piano playing and guitar strumming. I was always singing along to whatever medium the music was coming from. When I would sing along to my dad's piano or guitar playing, I was often reading the lyrics out of his song books. Before I was an official "reader" I was singing and looking at words, and even if I did not know all of my letter sounds yet, it was my first experience with connecting text to the oral production of words. I already had the lyrics to the songs memorized, so I learned to read the lyrics easily. This was a powerful lesson for me as a young child: music could help me learn.

I remember always having a song stuck in my head. I loved noticing how my memory worked and how it could help me sing songs over and over again. Something about the familiarity was comforting and easy. I would ask about words in songs I did not understand and then internalize their meaning, attaching an image to the words as I learned what they meant. I remember inquiring to all the wise adults in my life when I first learned the song "Mares Eat Oats" and creating an entire cast of characters and a storyline in my head with the new vocabulary I acquired.

I enjoyed music class in elementary school and looked forward to the new words and stories I would be exposed to when we learned a new song. When I was in first grade, I had my first experience with singing a song in a different language when we learned Frere Jacques in music class. Having grown up in a mostly white, upper middle class distant suburb of a Midwestern metropolitan area, I had not been exposed to

anything but people who looked like me speaking a language I had always understood for as long as I could remember. I asked my first grade teacher why we were singing a song that did not make sense, and she told me that it made sense in French, which was a different language. This led to my first inquiries on language, which I will discuss in the next subsection.

**Language.** Throughout my childhood, I did not have much of a chance to investigate new languages, other than when we would sing a song in a different language in music class at school. I was always curious about what the songs meant and rarely got answers from my teachers. In ninth grade I finally got the opportunity to take a language class, and I chose Spanish. Even as a teenager, I remember learning songs to learn simple phrases. We even learned a song to teach us how to ask to go to the bathroom that I still remember today. I recall being nervous when I was called out to speak in front of the class, and when I had to give a two minute presentation in Spanish about Frida Kahlo, but the songs were always fun and easy and made me feel confident to utter the phrases in real conversation.

I continued Spanish through high school and tested out of the first semester of college Spanish. While I was not planning on majoring in Spanish, after a semester in Spain I was so passionate about the language I combined it with my desire to become a teacher and got a double major in Spanish and education. I remember my grammar classes in college being the most difficult component of the Spanish major program. I had one teacher, however, who used chants and songs he invented to teach some of the more difficult grammar concepts. To teach the conditional tense (for example, “If I were

rich, I would buy...”) he taught us a chant that I still hear in my head when I need to say something in the conditional tense in Spanish.

**From college to career.** When I finished college, I moved to Guatemala and taught in two different English immersion schools, where I used music and lyrics daily to help English learners internalize the language in a fun and approachable way. I then moved back to the United States and taught Spanish as an enrichment class to kindergarten through third graders for four years. The students loved learning simple vocabulary through songs, and through informal observation and summative and formative assessments, the philosophy that I had developed based on my own learning through music seemed to hold true for my second language students as well. The songs seemed to make them comfortable and help them remember new Spanish vocabulary and phrases. The chants and songs I still hear in my head that help me speak my second language, along with the difference I have seen songs make for my students, leads into the next section of this chapter, which will discuss my interest in my research question, particularly as it relates to my current teaching position.

### **My Research Interest**

In 2019, I started working as a second grade teacher at a Spanish immersion school in a suburb of a metropolitan city in a Midwestern state. Within a few weeks, I noticed myself consistently correcting students’ conjugation of verbs in the past tense. After doing some research on the effectiveness of correcting students’ second language errors (having them correct an incorrect utterance after making an error through a variety of strategies) and discussing this method with other teachers, I realized it is usually not effective and often embarrasses students and makes them less eager to speak, thus

hindering their progress (Krashen, 1982). In a study of four French immersion teachers and their use of error corrections with their students, it was reported that only 17 percent of errors that were corrected resulted in eventual repair of the incorrect utterance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Having worked with first and second graders for the majority of my teaching career, I know how much they love to tell stories. They want to tell you about what they did yesterday, the time they went on a vacation, and what happened at the zoo in kindergarten. To be able to tell these stories to a native Spanish speaker and have them make sense, students need exposure to and practice with speaking in the past tense. In immersion programs, they hear the past tense often when being read stories, but do not often speak in it.

The resistance to constantly correct errors when it is not often effective and my positive experiences in learning and teaching through music led me to explore how teachers can use songs and lyrics to impact students' abilities to speak in the past tense. My idea is that through repeatedly singing songs that contain temporal past tense words (like yesterday, last year, or when I was younger) and verbs conjugated to the first person past tense, students may more easily make utterances in the past tense when speaking.

### **Rationale and Significance**

It is imperative to consider the reasoning and importance of conducting my action research project in the setting in which I teach. In immersion schools, it is not common practice to explicitly teach grammar (Krashen, 1982). Learning a second language involves the development of implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2005). Students are meant to naturally acquire language. Especially in second grade, we do not teach lessons on how

to conjugate verbs like one might in a middle school or high school Spanish class. Teachers at my school do, however, use many strategies to help language learners understand content, such as front-loading vocabulary, showing visual aids, and using Total Physical Response. The implementation of these strategies supports my rationale for using songs to impact students' Spanish speaking abilities.

My utilization of songs to influence student use of past tense utterances is not meant to explicitly teach the grammar involved in conjugating a verb to the past tense. I did not tell students the purpose of the songs, other than that they were for enjoyment and to practice singing, speaking, and reading Spanish. The added benefit of increasing reading fluency and teaching other vocabulary besides the past tense verbs is part of my rationale in using songs as part of my class's daily routine. Songs are already a large part of our second grade curriculum, as we have a large production (*Lo Mejor de Segundo Grado - The Best of Second Grade*) at the end of the year for which students have to memorize nine songs in Spanish.

In addition to the rationale for my study, it is important to consider who my action research benefits. The outcome of my research can help language teachers understand how using songs to teach a grammar concept, specifically to improve students' ability to speak in the past tense, is effective. While several researchers have investigated the use of music for improving reading fluency and teaching vocabulary (Medina, 1990; Paquette & Rieg, 2008), there is limited information regarding song lyrics' influence on specific grammar utterances. My research benefits students as well, as songs have already been proven to improve certain aspects of literacy and language learning, and this action research project answers two more specific questions and could potentially help students

learn to tell their stories of the past in a comfortable and enjoyable manner. This has motivated the research questions *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish?*; *And how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?*

### **Summary**

My research question evolved based on experiences I have had as a language learner and music enthusiast. My first experience with a language other than English was through music, and I value the role music has played in my personal, educational, and professional life. As a language learner and a language teacher, I have seen music work as a comfortable and natural medium for practicing vocabulary and sentence structure and am eager to see how it impacts my students' abilities in their second language.

In the next chapter, which is a review of literature around music and language, I will investigate some of the research I mentioned in the Rationale and Significance section of this chapter. After literature on music and language acquisition is reviewed in Chapter Two, Chapter Three will discuss the methodology behind my action research practices. In Chapter Four the data I collect through my action research will be presented and Chapter Five will be a conclusion of the information I gain from data analysis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

I studied the impact that repeated reading and singing of song lyrics, including temporal past tense indicators (like yesterday) and verbs conjugated to the past tense, has on second graders' use of the past tense in Spanish (their second language). Using a self-designed assessment tool, I explored the impact three songs had on second graders' Spanish speaking abilities in the immersion setting. I also investigated the metacognition students utilized and opinions students had of the use of the songs through a student - teacher interview at the end of the whole class music intervention.

This information will help readers understand how and why students reading song lyrics while listening to or singing along to the songs can affect their use of the past tense in their second language. Teachers will benefit from this information, as they will know if it is useful to utilize music to teach grammar in a second language, more specifically past tense verbs. Students will benefit from the research, as their teachers will be able to shift the methods they use which will influence students' acquisition of and efficiency in their second language.

This chapter is a review of literature related to language acquisition, immersion programs, teaching with music, and more specifically, using music to teach grammar in a second language. This chapter also reviews literature around morphology and grammar in a second language and on metacognition in young learners. Research on these topics supports my decision to research the specific questions: *How can repeatedly singing*

*songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish: And how will learners perceive the effect of the songs on their learning?*

### **Language acquisition**

One of the most remarkable and fascinating aspects of human development is language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The way humans acquire both a first and second language has been studied by many researchers. The process of developing one's first language is subconscious; language learners are generally unaware that they are acquiring language (Krashen, 1982). When acquiring a second language, various roles of consciousness are required (Ellis, 2008). The concepts of implicit and explicit acquisition, noticing, and automaticity will be discussed in this section to provide insight on language learning.

**Implicit acquisition.** In implicit learning, learners are not aware of the learning that is taking place; while their behavioral responses make it evident that learning has occurred, learners are not able to verbalize what they have learned (Ellis, 2009). When learning takes place implicitly, it is intuitive and is not analyzed (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In the first language, sentences either sound right or they do not; grammatical errors feel wrong, even if the speakers are not conscious of the rule they violated (Krashen, 1982). Children learning their first language, however, cannot explain this knowledge (Ellis, 2008). "This is a difference between explicit and implicit knowledge—ask a young child how to form a plural and she says she does not know; ask her 'here is a wug, here is another wug, what have you got?' and she is able to reply, 'two wugs'." (Ellis, 2008, p. 1). This is an example of the implicit acquisition that occurs

naturally in the first language. First language is acquired when children engage in meaningful and natural communication with their caretakers; complex structural knowledge of the language is acquired automatically based on evidence from this communication (Ellis, 2008).

The acquisition of a second language also involves the development of implicit knowledge; however, there is not an agreement on how this is achieved (Ellis, 2005). One hypothesis that relates to a second language becoming implicit is that of procedural knowledge. Anderson (1995) suggested that language learning begins with declarative knowledge, indicating the learner's awareness of a rule, a grammar structure for example. The hypothesis is that with practice the declarative knowledge can become procedural knowledge, which refers to the learner's ability to effectively utilize the knowledge. As learners continue to practice, the procedural knowledge may become automated, causing the learner to forget that they learned it initially in the form of declarative knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

**Explicit acquisition.** Learning a second language has similarities and differences to developing a first language. While there is some implicit learning that occurs for adults learning a second language, it is limited compared to native speaker norms; additional resources of explicit learning are usually required (Ellis, 2008). When explicit learning occurs, learners are able to verbalize what they have learned and are aware that they have learned something (Ellis, 2009). One way to develop competence in a second language related to explicit learning is through language learning. This refers to conscious knowledge of a second language, including knowledge and awareness of the rules, and being able to talk about the rules (Krashen, 1982). Without being aware of the

difference between the first and second language, learners may assume that the second language contains the same structures as the first language, when it often does not (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). For example, in English we use an apostrophe to indicate possession (“Mary’s house”), where in Spanish it would sound like “the house of Mary” (la casa de Mary). Spanish language learners may try to apply the apostrophe structure of English to Spanish if they are not made aware of the difference in the two languages.

**Noticing.** The noticing hypothesis suggests that for something to be learned it has to be noticed or consciously registered (Schmidt, 2012). The learner must be aware of a particular language feature for comprehensible input to result in growth in language knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Schmidt (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013) developed this hypothesis after realizing that in his acquisition of Portuguese as a second language, specific features of the language that had been present the whole time he was learning it did not become a part of his use of the language until he consciously noticed them.

There is speculation as to whether a learner needs to be aware that they are noticing something in the input in order to learn effectively. It is most likely that whether or not a learner has acquired knowledge can be most accurately predicted based on the frequency with which the concept is available to be processed (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In Schmidt’s (2012) study of an immigrant, ‘Wes’, from Japan, who moved to the United States when he was 30 years old, he discovered that while he developed fluency, comprehension, conversational ability, pragmatic appropriateness, and strategic competence in English over three years, he consistently made morphological and

grammatical errors that did not improve. Schmidt (2012) concluded that wholly unconscious learning of a second language is likely impossible.

**Automaticity.** Automaticity relates to the ease and velocity with which utterances are expressed; a student with strong automaticity more quickly recognizes and produces communicatively appropriate and grammatically correct utterances (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988). “Here, the emphasis is on the speaker’s ability to respond without needing an inordinate amount of time to formulate an utterance and the ability to understand and produce sentences without undue groping, hesitations, or pauses,” (1988, p. 3).

Within the topic of automaticity is separation of the methods of “rote learning” and “learning by heart” (Hulstijn, 2001). An example of rote learning would be learning lists of isolated first language (L1) and second language (L2) word pairs, while learning by heart would be memorizing a poem or a dialogue containing words from the L2. The vocabulary on the list will not be internalized as effectively as the vocabulary embedded in phrases within the poem or dialogue (Hulstijn, 2001).

Songs and music have connections with the subject of automaticity. Songs cognitively provide opportunities to develop automaticity - which relates to producing language without pauses and being confident in what to say throughout the language process (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Children’s songs also have a repetitive nature that can be valuable to the automaticity of language learners as they hear words and phrases multiple times. Also, most of the language in children’s songs is informal, so it represents genuine language they are likely to encounter (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

Understanding how second language is acquired is helpful in gaining perspective on immersion programs. The next section explains immersion methods, philosophies, and curriculums.

### **Immersion programs**

Lightbown and Spada (2013) defined immersion programs as educational programs through which a second language is taught using content-based instruction; students study common subjects like mathematics, language arts, or science in their second language. Usually, students involved in immersion programs share a common first language and instructional language and materials are adjusted by teachers in accordance to the needs of their second language learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Monolingual majority children attend school with teachers who instruct in a minority language; all subjects are taught completely in the second language, encouraging implicit acquisition (Krashen, 1982). This type of learning involves the Natural Approach, developed by Tracy Terrell at the University of California at Irvine. This approach involves teaching in the second language and places a strong emphasis on incorporating communicative activities in all subject areas (Goldin, 1977). Goldin also explains that with the natural approach, errors made by students that do not impede communication are not acknowledged or corrected, and comprehensible input is used when delivering content. Comprehensible input refers to language that a learner can understand; gestures, prior knowledge and experiences, and contextual information may contribute to making language comprehensible (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Comprehensible input is consistently used through images, realia, and students' previous knowledge. Students' affective filters (anxiety and stress level) are reduced because they

are not expected to produce oral output in the second language until they feel ready (Krashen, 1982).

While this research on immersion methods focuses on natural, more implicit theories, there is also research suggesting that immersion teachers should be mindful that encouraging students to be aware of the differences between languages and facilitating tasks and projects revolving around structural aspects of language can enhance students' awareness of the language (Cummins, 2000). Examples of implementing this type of curriculum include language conventions found in music (Cummins, 2000). The previous section on noticing also explains why more emphasis on awareness of language differences and grammatical structures is beneficial.

### **Teaching with Music**

Songs, poems, nursery rhymes, and chants are common mediums parents use with children (Brand & Li, 2009). Teachers and students benefit from the positive environment and relaxed learning style music provides. Gardner (2011) noted that the first intelligence to develop in young learners is musical intelligence. Brand and Li (2009) reported that after a treatment using music to teach vocabulary, language, and meaning to Chinese students learning English, the attitudes toward learning a new language were more positive in the group of students who were taught using the most songs. They reported that a music- and song-based classroom appears highly effective in teaching the students a second language, in relation to both attitude and achievement (Brand & Li, 2009).

Anton (1990) reported that when using the Contemporary Music Approach (a song listening and writing method to help students acquire second language skills), part

of the purpose of using music was to create a relaxed and comfortable environment; students understood that they would not have to sing alone and that the quality of their singing voice would not be evaluated. Anton (1990) also mentioned that the reason companies use music to accompany their slogans is because music is an effective memory aid, which is beneficial for learning. Because of music's positive, effective, and relaxed presence in the lives of teachers and students, it has been used to teach in a variety of ways. This section continues by discussing the use of music to support growth of literacy and vocabulary, as the two topics are related to the focus of my research: using music to teach language and grammar.

**Music and the brain.** When pondering the benefits of teaching language through music, it is important to consider the connections between music and the human brain. Outside information is processed differently by the brain; psychological and linguistic studies have disclosed that at a very early stage, interaction between music and language acquisition is activated (Fonseca Mora, 2000). Patel (2003) emphasized that music and language are both human universals that involve organizing perceptually discrete elements into hierarchically structured sequences based on syntactic concepts; music overlaps with language in significant ways in the brain. Patel's studies have led to the hypothesis that linguistic and musical syntax share syntactic processes.

Furthermore, researchers have found through neurological studies that the left hemisphere of the brain is where musical structure is processed; the left side of the brain is also associated with linguistic processing (Bae, 2006). Recent studies on brain imaging display during language processing in both first and second languages, different locations in both hemispheres of the brain are activated (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Additionally, while the two sides of the brain function separately, when processing music they operate simultaneously. Bae also wrote that the most productive learning situations occur through activities that engage both hemispheres of the brain (Bae, 2006). When considering the senses, it is noted that while learners can close their eyes to visuals or look away, it is not easy to ignore a song (Fonseca Mora, 2000). Students may not always be listening, but they will hear sound (Fonseca Mora, 2000). Fonseca Mora (2000) reminded language teachers to consider the power of sound, and use a melodic approach to language teaching.

It is important for language teachers to recognize the benefit of auditory input on their learners. Retention of verbal information is greater when learned with music (Medina, 1990). Patel revealed that musical syntactic processing activates language areas of the brain, causing syntactic overlap in the Broca's and Wrenwick's language areas of the brain; this is initiated by harmonic processing (Patel, 2003). The idea that music and language compliment each other within the human brain leads to the connection between music and memory.

Another important concept when discussing teaching language through music is that of music and its impact on memory. In a study developed to test the use of music as a mnemonic device to help learning disabled and non-learning disabled students memorize multiplication tables, Gfeller (1983) discovered that both groups of students performed better on a post-assessment after being exposed to the musical method. Gfeller also notes that it was the groups who participated in extended and repetitive musical rehearsal that benefitted the most (Gfeller, 1983).

In addition to reviewing the way music and the brain interact, it is important to understand how educators have used music to teach academic concepts. The next subsection will review literature on using music to teach literacy.

**Literacy.** While they are both fun and traditional forms of entertaining kids, Harp (1988) wrote that reading instruction and music also compliment each other because children's language has melody and rhythm. Music can be used to enhance language lessons that revolve around reading fluency, writing, and grammar, in addition to other literacy skills (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Fisher (2001) wrote that crucial to literacy instruction are songs, poetry and stories; language arts curricula, like *Sing, Spell Read & Write* by International Learning Systems have been created and are centered around singing songs. Gregory and Lamb (1993) found that with 18 British first graders, phonemic and music sound discrimination was related to reading ability. Similarly, Douglas and Willatts (1994) discovered in their study that literacy development is influenced by musical listening activities. Furthermore, Bae (2006) reported that researchers found that when reading experience was joined with song rehearsal of text set to music, greater reading accuracy resulted in kindergarten students. Paired or partner reading, echo reading, choral reading, and phrasing are four instructional strategies often used to improve reading fluency (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). These strategies can be implemented effectively with song-based literature.

Also in the realm of literacy is the ability to sequence a story. Music contributes to students' abilities to understand the sequence of a story; there are even songs that intentionally address story progression (Fisher & McDonald, 2001). In a study conducted at the University of Georgia, Kennedy and Scott (2005) tested a music therapy

intervention focused on story retelling with middle school English language learners. They discovered the group of students receiving the music intervention significantly outperformed their peers in the control group on a post-assessment evaluating their story re-telling abilities.

Reading strategies that teachers already use are conducive to teaching through music. Partner reading, choral reading, echo (repeated) reading, and phrasing are some instructional strategies commonly used to improve fluency in reading that can be implemented productively with song-based literature (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

Teachers can also use songs to help students improve their writing skills. For example, students can write new lyrics for old songs, or complete writing activities in which they compare and contrast old and new versions of the same song, and write responses regarding how they feel or what they learn from songs (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Students may also write songs in small groups, create illustrations to go with songs, and create stories inspired by songs.

**Vocabulary.** While reading the words of songs while singing has been proven effective in teaching literacy, the vocabulary contained in the lyrics has also been used in teaching. When experimenting with using music to help students learn and retain vocabulary, Medina (1990) found that students who learned new vocabulary using music and illustration out performed students who learned the vocabulary through a spoken story. Through a study using music and lyrics to enhance vocabulary usage, language usage and meaning for Chinese students learning English, Brand and Li (2009) reported that students who were exposed to the most music received higher scores on a post-test, both right after the treatment and three weeks later.

Another way songs have been shown to increase competency in the vocabulary of second language learners is through story-songs, which are poems with a storyline set to music (Medina, 2002). Second language learners who listened to illustrated, sung stories acquired more words at the end of the treatment period than second language learners who were exposed to illustrated, spoken version of the stories (Medina, 2002).

While teaching vocabulary is a necessary part of teaching students meaning in their first or second language, music can also be used to teach a second language in more ways than just isolated words. The idea of using music to teach students a new language will be discussed in the next subsection.

**Teaching language through music.** The simple idea that music is enjoyable is a good place to start when examining how songs and their lyrics can be beneficial in teaching and learning a language. Songs are easily accessible to students, and in opposition with memorizing spoken pattern drills or sentence frames, repetition in songs is rendered enjoyable due to emotional content, melody and rhythm (Gatti-Taylor, 1980). Gatti-Taylor (1980) also wrote that students enjoy the satisfaction of mastering a linguistic concept in a situation that does not involve competition. When we look at songs as acts of speech or oral expression, their lyrics become a form of amplified language, as emphasis is added to the rhythm and tone of words, owing to their union with the melody of music.

In studying the influence of rhyme, rhythm and melody on third grade students learning German, Van Asselt (1970) noted the support of using music to teach language. In addition to rhyme and rhythm, through singing songs, students improve their pronunciation, and repetitive lyrics have a positive effect on language acquisition.

Findings from studies involving teachers using music to start the day at a listening and reading center suggest that in an elementary school classroom, music can be used to benefit language development (Douglas & Willatts, 1994; Fisher & McDonald, 2001; Lamb & Gregory, 1993). Children can also simply be motivated by and attracted to music. Bae (2006) wrote that language learning can be facilitated through music, as children as young as infants are shown to be inclined towards music. Because the imagination is stimulated by music, it is able to change the listener's mood (Fonsecra Mora, 2000).

Another idea to consider is the power of music and its connections to spoken language. There are several shared features between music and language: both originate from sound processing; authors and speakers use both to express a message; people learn both through exposure; and they share intrinsic features like pitch, volume, tone, prominence, stress, pauses and rhythm (Fonseca Mora, 2000).

It is clear that educators have used music as a medium for teaching students and this section has disclosed some of the ways and reasons for music to be used in a language classroom. More specific is the idea of music being used to teach grammatical aspects of language, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

**Music and grammar.** This subsection will explore the idea that music and lyrics have an impact on students' ability to acquire and utilize grammar skills. According to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, for impactful learning to occur, the affective filter must be weakened, meaning a positive attitude toward learning is present (Krashen, 1982). Intermediate language students often lack confidence in grammar and do not possess a strong understanding of grammatical confidence (which would make for a

heightened affective filter), sometimes causing hesitation in speaking (Gatti-Taylor, 1980). While students naturally want to improve oral expression (which inevitably involves grammar), they often remain silent due to self consciousness or shyness. Understanding a literary text or participating in a class discussion often causes language students to display an inaptitude that instructors struggle to understand or fix (Gatti-Taylor, 1980). On the contrary, most students relate easily to music, and songs are often sung in groups where students are not singled out and can still verbally express themselves in a much more approachable manner.

Several experiments and studies have been conducted regarding using music to teach various grammar concepts. Students may not be explicitly told that the purpose of a song is to teach a grammar concept, but the idea is that repetition of the song will help oral phrases be spoken more naturally and correctly.

Legg's (2009) experiment intending to discover whether music could be used as a teaching tool to accelerate English speaking students' learning of French, particularly the perfect and imperfect tense, supports the idea that musical interventions can help students achieve higher proficiency with these past tense phrases. In the study, students completed a pre- and post-assessment in which they were expected to translate 19 sentences, including past tense phrases, from French to English. There was a "Music" and a "Non-Music" group, so some students were exposed to the music intervention and some were not. One group read a poem without singing it, and one group read the poem accompanied by music and a melody. The students in the "Music" group performed better on the post-assessment than the "Non-Music" group, suggesting that adding a melody and the act of singing helped students learn and utilize the past tense vocabulary.

Another study investigating the relationship between music and grammar was conducted by Fagerland in 2006. The study focused on students learning English as a second language (ESL students). The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not songs could be used to enhance the students' understanding of specific grammar concepts: reflexive pronouns, the plural 's', and the structure "another and I". The study found that test group subjects (those exposed to the music intervention), performed significantly better on the reflexive pronouns and "another and I" post-assessments than their control group peers. Fagerland (2006) noted that the repetition of the songs and the implementation of natural intonation, especially in the verses containing reflexive verbs, was helpful in students' retention of the grammatical structures.

Anton (1990) mentioned the Contemporary Music Approach (CMA), a method that combines an intentional classroom based experience technique with findings on left and right brain research. Students sing along with and memorize lyrics in Spanish and then write new songs using the same melodies. The songs students listen to and the songs they write intentionally include a variety of language structures, including vocabulary, verb tenses, and idiomatic expressions. Anton mentions the example of teaching a song containing several verbs in the preterite tense, and then having students use verbs in the preterite tense when rewriting the song. In a qualitative study, 98 percent of students reported that they felt the CMA method helped them learn to speak Spanish better (Anton, 1990).

After reviewing literature on using music to influence language acquisition by understanding the brain's relationship with music, language acquisition theories, and the way music has been used to teach language and grammar, it is relevant to investigate

some specific elements of the second language. The next section will discuss morphology and grammar as it relates to the second language and music

### **Morphology and Grammar in the Second Language**

Because morphology and grammar vary from language to language, it is important to investigate how learners develop language skills in different languages. Understanding the difference in morphology and grammar in English versus Spanish is helpful in understanding why I want to answer the question *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish?*; And how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?

In Spanish, the temporal development of an event that took place in the past is grammaticalized as the preterite, which encompasses the perfect form (an event that happened and is over) and the imperfect (an event that started and is still happening) (Dominguez, Tracy-Ventura, Arche, Mitchell, & Myles, 2013). The perfect and imperfect tenses are expressed with different morphological forms in English than in Spanish. Dominguez et al. (2013) also pointed out that it is common for Spanish learners to initially use the present tense morphology when intending to imply past tense.

After studying the morphological development of 12 second graders in a Spanish immersion school, Boyd (1997) wrote that while the students were able to use the present progressive tense, none of them were able to produce the preterite (perfect or imperfect) form of verbs correctly. Students instead responded by repeating the form the experimenter had used or using the infinitive form of the verb. While many aspects of second language acquisition mirror children's acquisition of their first language, Boyd's

study shows that proper use of the preterite tense is mastered earlier in the timeline in students' first language (English) than in Spanish, indicating it is a more difficult grammar concept to acquire than others being tested in Boyd's study. Boyd wrote that English and Spanish first language learners and ESL students acquire the past tense earlier than students learning Spanish as their second language (SSL students). While past tense inflections carry semantic meaning, the SSL students appear to have failed to include them in their oral output of the language after two and a half years as SSL students (as they have been in the program since kindergarten). Boyd blames this disparity in part on the low number of past tense verbs being output by the teacher; students learning Spanish as a second language are simply not hearing as much of the past tense. On the contrary, students learning English as a second language are more impacted by out of school contacts with English, providing a higher input of past tense verb exposure (Boyd, 1975).

Montrul (2011) explained that to acquire the morphology of a language, a learner must be able to do much more than produce morphemes correctly. While Spanish and English verbs both change to indicate past tense, the two languages accomplish the change in very different ways. Montrul noted:

For example, tense is an abstract formal feature, manifested as –s, –ed, or Ø with English verbs to mark present, past, and future, respectively, but as –o, –s, Ø, –mos, –is, and –n for present, é, –ste, –ó, –mos, –steis, and –ron for preterit, and –ré, –rás, –rá, –remos, –réis, and –rán for future with –ar verbs in Spanish...It is possible to have knowledge of the abstract feature tense and to use tense in correct syntactic and semantic contexts or with

appropriate adverbials but to use the wrong morpheme on the verb, as many L2 learners do. (p. 167)

More simply put, the Spanish past tense is more complex than the English past tense (Boyd, 1975), including an aspect that distinguishes the preterite from the imperfect tense, and a difference between verbs that end in –ar and verbs that end in –er or –ir. Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin (as cited by Boyd, 1975) pointed out that learning problems occur when there are linguistic splits between languages. This is why the semantic complexity of the two past tenses in Spanish and the morphological complexity of each form causes problems for Spanish language learners.

### **Metacognition**

The second part of my research question asks *how will learners perceive the effect of the songs on their learning?* A person's awareness of their cognitive processes and abilities is known as metacognition (Fisher, 1998). The term refers to the human ability to think about their thinking. Studies of metacognitive abilities of young children have suggested that young children have limited knowledge regarding cognitive phenomena, which refers to their metacognitive abilities; young children do relatively little tracking of their own memory, understanding, awareness, and other cognitive activities (Flavell, 1979).

In one such study, children in preschool and elementary school were instructed to study a group of items until they were sure they could precisely recall them (Flavell, Friedrichs & Hoyt, 1970). The older children (fourth graders) in the group studied the items, claimed they were ready to recall them after a while, and most often were successful, or performed with perfect recall. The younger children (preschoolers,

kindergarteners, and second graders) studied the items, claimed they were ready to recall them after a while, and usually were not successful.

In another study, elementary school children were asked to help the experimenter determine whether some essays made sense (Markman, 1977). The experimenter explained that she would ask the children to suggest changes that would help the essays make more understandable. The study consistently showed that the elementary school children were unaware of the problems the essays contained. For example, a third grader answered questions regarding an essay about ants. The essay claimed that ants needed to smell to find their way home, then said that ants did not have noses, so they could not smell. The child said that, according to the essay, ants leave an invisible path that has an odor that they can follow to get back home. The child then said ants needed a nose to smell the odor, and also that ants do not have noses, but when asked if everything in the essay made sense the child said yes. When asked how ants smell without noses the child said “that’s a tough one” but did not imply that anything about the essay was incorrect. This example, and the study as a whole, show that despite children’s abilities to recall information, their ability to infer, and their willingness to criticize, children are unsuccessful in questioning inconsistencies; they are often not aware when they fail to comprehend.

### **Conclusion and Research Gaps**

Many researchers have investigated music’s role in enhancing teaching and learning in regards to literacy. Experts have noted how music positively impacts reading fluency, writing, phonemic awareness, and story sequencing (Bae, 2006; Douglas & Willats, 1994; Fisher, 2001; Fisher & McDonald, 2001; Gregory & Lamb, 1993; Harp,

1998; Kennedy & Scott, 2005; Paquette & Rieg, 2008;). Researchers also have made connections between music and the brain (Bae, 2006; Fonseca Mora, 2000; Patel, 2003;).

Language acquisition is also a topic around which much research has been conducted. The concepts of implicit and explicit acquisition in both the first and second languages have been widely studied in order to obtain a better understanding of how humans learn language (Ellis, 2005, 2008, 2009; Krashen, 1982; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The noticing hypothesis has also gained recognition from language experts (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Schmidt, 2012). The way these theories and others have been applied to immersion schools has helped language teachers understand how immersion programs can be effective in helping language learners acquire a second language (Cummins, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Krashen, 1982).

The impact that music has on some aspects of teaching language has also been researched and reported on. In regards to the enjoyment of this teaching method by students, researchers have found that music positively impacts students' experience in language learning (Fonesca Mora, 2000; Gatti-Taylor, 1980; Van Asselt, 1970). Regarding concepts of grammar, some studies have been conducted to investigate music's impact on this aspect of language which have been deemed successful (Anton 1990; Fagerland, 2006; Legg, 2009). A gap in the research and the available literature, however, exists regarding music's impact on the immersion students' uptake of the specific grammatical feature of past tense conjugation in Spanish. Researchers have not investigated the method of repeated singing of songs containing past tense vocabulary and the impact this intervention could have on second language learners' abilities to speak in the past tense in their second language.

It has been written that the past tense is morphologically difficult for native English speakers learning Spanish to grasp in Spanish, as it differs significantly from the way this tense is formed in English (Boyd, 1975; Montrul, 2011). While research has proven that songs and music have connections to automaticity (Paquette & Rieg, 2008), there is a lack of literature pertaining specifically to songs having an impact on automaticity in regards to past tense verb usage; limited research can be found on using repetitive singing of songs containing common past tense verbs to determine whether or not this technique helps students speak with more automaticity and proper grammar in the past tense.

The methodology I developed helped me construct an action research project that helps readers understand how and why students reading and singing song lyrics affects their use of the past tense in their second language. Chapter Three will discuss my methods and how they developed into an action research project to answer my question *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish; And how will learners perceive the effect of the songs on their learning?*

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methods

#### Introduction

Songs, along with poems and nursery rhymes, are used by educators and parents as an enjoyable and relaxing medium through which to teach children (Brand & Li, 2009). The previous chapter details what the literature states on using music as a medium for teaching, specifically for teaching language, and more specifically for teaching grammar in a second language. My experiences and curiosity and the literature I reviewed led me to investigate *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish?; And how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?* In this chapter I will explain the research paradigm, my methods and the rationale for choosing them, the setting and participants involved, and the data collection and analysis process.

#### Research Paradigm

The research conducted to answer my specific question was an action research project. Mills (2018, p. 10) defines action research as “any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn.” The purpose of gathering information in action research is to gain insight, develop a reflective practice, and impact positive change in educational practices, thus improving student outcomes (Mills, 2018).

After identifying an area of focus, teacher researchers develop research questions. Then they develop a timeline and then begin collecting data. After collecting data, teachers sometimes choose to realign their focus if necessary (Mills, 2018). Teachers then implement some kind of teaching intervention or change in technique and then collect, analyze and interpret data again after the designated time they have decided upon. I will discuss the participants and setting for my action research before explaining the methods used for collecting and analyzing data in my action research project.

### **Participants**

The participants in the action research are 22 second grade students between the ages of seven and eight years old. Eighty percent of the students are native English speakers and 20 percent are native Spanish speakers. Sixty-five percent of the students are white, 20 percent are Hispanic, and 15 percent are another race. Two of the students receive special education services. Ten of them receive free or reduced school lunch.

### **Setting**

The study took place at a kindergarten through fifth grade Spanish immersion elementary school in a suburb of a Midwestern metropolitan city. For the sake of anonymity, I will call the school Spanish Immersion Elementary in this paper. The school is in a district that services students from several suburbs. It is a magnet school, so families from all over the district choose to send their children there to receive a specialized education, in this case learning Spanish at a young age. Important to consider in the overall setting are the community, the district, the school and the classroom.

**Community.** The community encompassed by the district includes seven different suburban cities which are populated by more than 100,000 residents. The

community contains a wide range of ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. All of the cities are close to a large metropolitan area. Members of the community have the opportunity to participate in several different committees within the district, including a Healthy Schools committee and District Curriculum committee.

**District.** The school district is ranked 341st out of 440 schools in achievement in the state (School Digger, 2019). It includes 13 primary schools, three middle schools, two high schools and three alternative schools and serves 12,553 students (School Digger, 2019). The district is committed to helping students graduate with college and career readiness. The district reports it focuses on a well-rounded education for students, which is emphasized through its arts education programs.

**School.** The mission statement for Spanish Immersion Elementary explains that students are inspired to achieve academic excellence while developing traits of responsibility, respect and honesty in a transforming global society. The school community promotes a passion for Spanish language and culture. The school is a magnet and is open to all students in the district via application and lottery. Seven hundred forty students attend the school, with a population of around 64 percent white students, 17 percent Hispanic students and 10 percent of students with two races or more (School Digger, 2019). At Spanish Immersion Elementary, 25 percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch (School Digger, 2019). The majority of the staff at Spanish Immersion Elementary are white and Spanish is their second language. Twenty six percent of the classroom teachers are Hispanic and native Spanish speakers. There are six sections of kindergarten, five sections of first through third grade, and three sections of fourth grade and four sections of fifth grade.

**Classroom.** The classroom where the study took place consists of 25 students and one full time teacher. There is a native Spanish speaking intern from El Salvador who is in the classroom for an hour and a half each day. It is one of the five sections of second grade in the school. A Responsive Classroom approach is utilized, which is an evidence-based method for teaching that places emphasis on positive classroom community (through morning meeting and community circles), engaging academics, effective classroom management, and developmental awareness.

### **Choice of Method**

The goal of my research was to determine if using songs that contain past tense verbs impacts students' oral production of these verbs. Based on my research, an important aspect of the teaching intervention was using repetition through singing songs. As Wolfe and Hom (1993) discovered through a study in which pre-school students attempted to memorize phone numbers using both familiar and unfamiliar melodies, familiar melodies are more effective in helping students memorize verbal utterances.

To determine if the songs were effective to use with my students, I made sure that each song contained two verbs and temporal words that indicate past tense (like *yesterday* or *last year*) and that each verb was repeated a minimum of three times in each song. Fagerland (2006) noted that repetition is helpful in supporting students in maintaining grammatical concepts. After the songs were created and successfully met these requirements, I completed a pre-assessment to determine what knowledge and abilities students already had in conjugating verbs in the first person past tense. I conducted the pre-assessment before teaching the students the songs.

My assessment method was a teacher-made test, a method described by Mills (2018). A teacher-made test is a common quantitative data collection technique teachers use to assist them in monitoring and adjusting instruction (Mills, 2018). The assessment I created had six questions that required an answer in the past tense, using the six verbs from the songs (See Appendix B). I administered the exact same assessment for the pre-assessment and post-assessment. On both the pre- and post-assessment, I reminded students to start their sentences with *yo* (I) so that they would produce a complete sentence. For example, when I asked *¿Qué comiste anoche para la cena?* (What did you eat for dinner last night?), students often gave an answer like *pizza* instead of *Yo comí pizza* (I ate pizza) but I found that the simple prompting with by saying *Empieza con yo* (Start with I) was a successful way to get students to answer using some form of the verb *comer* (to eat).

The data collected from the assessments was quantitative, as students received a numerical score (out of six) on each assessment. The pre-assessment and post-assessment quantitative data was then compared to determine the efficiency of the use of the songs to help students speak in the past tense in Spanish.

There was also an element of qualitative data collected in my action research. I asked students five interview questions after completing the music intervention (singing the songs for two weeks) and administering the post-assessment regarding how they felt about the songs. (See Appendix D). One purpose of the interview was to gauge students' metacognition - if they realized what they were learning and how. Also, I inquired about students' opinions on singing the songs and if it made them feel comfortable and if they enjoyed it.

Another aspect of qualitative research I included was persistent observation. Mills (2018, p. 154) explained that persistent observation is paying attention to pervasive qualities and atypical characteristics. I noted if certain students were not singing or were not looking at the words, or if certain students were over enthusiastic and singing the songs at other times of day. I also took into account students' reading levels, as this affects their ability to have success producing the lyrics. While these observations will not be analyzed in Chapter Four, they will help lead to further questions and research possibilities for the future.

I also practiced peer debriefing with a colleague who has already done her masters through Hamline and a colleague who is also a language teacher. Mills (2018, p. 154) defined peer debriefing as interacting with other professionals to discuss growing insights and reflect on the situation. My peers helped me by listening, prompting, and noting my discoveries throughout the action research process.

### **Methods, Materials and Procedures**

I have already stated that my research method was to use the same assessment before and after teaching students three songs containing a total of six verbs in the past tense in Spanish to determine if the songs impact their ability to properly orally produce these verbs in the past tense. In this section I will elaborate on the details of the process, including testing and data analysis.

My teaching intervention used three songs that contained a total of six verbs (two verbs in each song) in the past tense in Spanish to see if singing the songs daily while reading the words would help students successfully conjugate verbs to the first person past tense when speaking. I chose six verbs that students commonly use. I chose three

regular verbs (verbs that follow a common ending pattern, like adding -ed in English) and three irregular verbs (verbs that “break the rules”, like *swam* or *ran* in English). I wrote the lyrics myself so that they contained temporal words and common verbs in the past tense, but I used melodies familiar to students. The three songs I chose as melodies to accompany my lyrics were You Are My Sunshine, London Bridge is Falling Down, and Baby Beluga (See Appendix A for song lyrics).

The verbs I chose were based on verbs I commonly hear students mis-conjugate (See Appendix A). The songs encouraged natural intonation, which in Spanish means the last syllable of the past tense verb is emphasized. Isenberg and Jalongo (2009, pp. 240-241) described the most effective process for introducing and teaching songs to students:

1. Play the song in the background for several days so it is familiar when it is introduced to the children.
2. Teach children the chorus first while you sing the verses.
3. Sing along with a recording and have children join in when they feel most comfortable.
4. Use lined poster paper to create a song chart.
5. Create a rebus song sheet to help children remember the verses of songs.
6. Teach the song one phrase at a time. Then, combine the phrases.
7. Teach the actions to an action song first, then teach the words (or vice versa).

After all students had completed the pre-assessment, I played the songs (which I had previously recorded, of myself singing with my guitar) in the background as students were entering the classroom and during “calm time” (a ten minute period after lunch when students do a calm activity like coloring or play-dough) for one week. The songs did not have choruses, just verses, so the next

week I started by playing the recordings with students gathered on the carpet and invited them to sing along.

The next day, I projected the songs on the Smart Board screen with a few images to engage the students and taught them one phrase at a time. The following day, we combined the phrases and sang the songs in their entirety, with the words projected again. After that we sang all three songs once a day (sometimes twice when students requested to sing a song again). I had the past tense words bolded, but never explicitly pointed them out or told students that those were the words I wanted them to learn to use correctly in everyday speaking. No students ever asked why they were bolded.

One of the songs used a call and response method, where one line is in the second person and asks a question, and the next line is in the first person and answers the question, to mimic the way the questions were asked and expected to be answered on the assessment (See Appendix A, Song 3). A few times, I divided the class in half and had one half sing the call/questions and one half sing the response, and I did point out that we were representing two different people: the person asking the questions and the person answering them. After the two weeks of the music intervention, I gave the post-assessment.

**Research tools.** The main tools for my research were the songs, pre-assessment and post-assessment, and qualitative survey I used at the end of my action research. I also recorded students singing using the iPad provided by the district. The purpose of recording students was to be able to take a closer look, when I was not teaching, at how many students were participating and if they were simultaneously reading the words in

the songs. The iPad was also used to record student responses to the assessments and the interview, so I could go back and listen if needed to clarify results.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

I used both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected by giving students a pre-assessment before the music intervention and a post-assessment after the music intervention. The assessment was exactly the same both times and contained six questions that I read to students orally and they answered orally. I recorded their answers using an iPad and they either got each question right or wrong based on whether or not they conjugated the verb to the first person past-tense correctly. Each question was worth one point, with the highest possible score being six out of six and the lowest being zero out of six.

When I analyzed the data, I looked for average pre- and post-assessment scores to gauge overall improvement, pre- and post-assessment results for each question to compare each verb (three were regular verbs and three were irregular), common trends in errors, and differences in results from the song using the call response compared to the two songs that did not use call and response. I also looked at the difference in correct answers on the questions containing regular verbs versus the questions containing irregular verbs.

The qualitative data was collected through a short interview I administered after the post-test. The data was then compiled and opinions that were common among students were noted.

## **Ethical Considerations**

I followed the guidelines and procedures as written by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Hamline University. The purpose of the IRB is to protect the rights and safety of research participants and to facilitate research activities. Because my project involved research with human subjects, I submitted an IRB application and written notice of approval or exemption was acquired before I began my action research. I submitted the application over the summer of 2019, and began the action research in September of 2019.

I was also mindful of my school district's policies on conducting research with human subjects. I completed a *Request to Conduct Research* form from the district so that my proposal could be reviewed by the appropriate staff. I distributed a letter (See appendix C) to my students' families explaining the music intervention at Meet the Teacher night before the school year started. The letter gave parents an opportunity to decide if their child would be assessed before and after the music intervention and interviewed after so that I could include their results in my data analysis. Students would still participate in the learning and singing of the songs, as that is a regular part of second grade instruction.

I was also respectful of my students' privacy during the action research. I kept the door closed when we were singing the songs and we sang the songs at a time of day when no other educators (interns, educational assistants) were in the room. I did not discuss how the action research was going with anyone besides my peer reviewers. I kept the data I collected based on pre-assessment and post-assessment and qualitative interviews on my computer, which requires a password to access so that no one else

could view the scores or observational data I recorded. I kept data about specific students to myself and shredded any paper containing information pertaining to the study after I used it.

As I concluded the necessary steps I took to ensure my action research project was ethical and followed both Hamline's and my school district's guidelines, I was ready to apply the methods I decided to use to carry out the action research.

### **Summary**

The main emphasis of this chapter has been to outline my research paradigm, the setting for my research, and the methods I used to conduct my action research and collect data. After ensuring my practices were approved by both Hamline University and my school district, I put my plan into action with the intention of answering the questions *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish; And how will learners perceive the effect of the songs on their learning?*

The next chapter of my thesis will be a breakdown of the data I gathered through conducting action research. It will include an analysis and interpretation of the data I have collected and how it has helped me answer my research question.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Introduction

I conducted action research to answer the questions *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish?*; *And how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?* The study took place over four weeks, including a pre-assessment, a teaching intervention, post-assessment, and an interview. The pre-assessment was given the second week of school in September, when the second grade participants had recently returned from summer break. They were asked six questions that required answers in the past tense. They were given a score of one through six out of six based on whether or not they correctly produced the past tense verb prompted in each of the questions. The exact same assessment was given as a post-assessment after participants sang three songs, each containing two of the target verbs, every day for two weeks.

This chapter will provide the results of the study from several different perspectives. As I conducted the study and analyzed the results, I reflected on the following questions to guide me to an answer to my research questions: *How did the results of the assessment differ before and after the music intervention?/Did the majority of students benefit from the music intervention?* I will provide results relating to these questions by comparing average scores from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. *What kind of results did each question yield/Did a certain verb or type of verb*

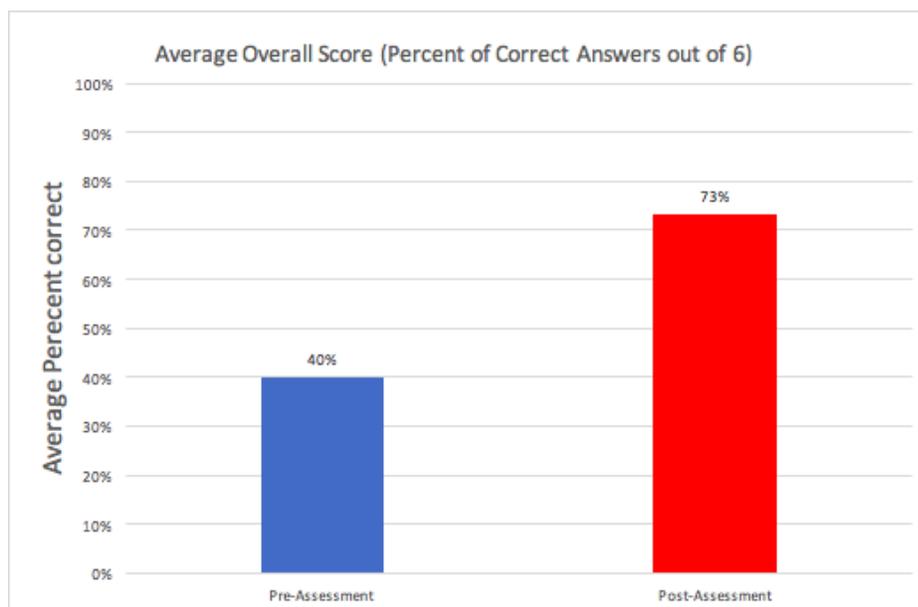
*(regular/irregular) yield stronger or weaker results?* I will answer these questions by providing pre- and post-assessment results for each question and comparing the results of the three questions containing regular verbs to the three questions containing irregular verbs. *Did the call and response song yield greater improvement in pre to post-assessment scores than the other two songs?* I will provide insight on this question by comparing the results of the questions relating to the call and response song to the results of the questions to the other songs.

Regarding the participants' metacognition, I will provide a summary of student response to three of the interview questions. In order to reflect upon participants' overall experience, I will report on their answers to the interview questions regarding how they felt about singing the songs, and later reflect on how this may have affected their learning of the verbs through singing the songs.

### **Overall class results from pre- to post-assessment**

*How did the results of the assessment differ before and after the music intervention?*

On the pre-assessment, the average number of questions participants answered correctly out of six questions was 2.4 questions, or 40% of questions answered using the past tense form of the prompted verb correctly. On the post-assessment, the average number of questions participants answered correctly out of six questions was 4.4 questions, or 73% of questions answered using the past tense form of the prompted verb correctly (See Figure 1, below). This means that the average score increased by two out of six questions, or 33%, after the music intervention was implemented. It also indicates that the average student nearly doubled their score, producing 183% higher results on the post-assessment than the pre-assessment.

**Figure 1**

Seventeen out of 22, or 77%, of participants improved on the assessment after the music intervention was completed. Of the participants who improved their scores, four participants increased by one point, or by 17%; four participants increased by two points, or by 33%; four participants' scores increased by three points, or by 50%; four participants increased their scores by four points, or by 66%; and one participants' score increased by five points, or by 83%. Three of the five participants whose scores did not improve were native Spanish speakers, and scored six out of six, or 100%, on both the pre- and post-assessments. One participant did not show any change. One participant out of 22 decreased his score by two points, or by 33%.

### **Results yielded on each question**

*What kind of results did each question yield/Did a certain regular or irregular verbs yield stronger or weaker results?*

**Question 1: ¿Qué dijiste ayer/esta mañana en la reunión de la mañana?**

**(What did you say yesterday/this morning during morning meeting?)**

To get Question 1 correct, participants needed to use the first person past tense conjugation of the verb *decir* (to say) which is *dije* (I said). *Decir* is an irregular verb; it does not follow the pattern of changing the ending to *-i* like most *-ir* verbs in Spanish. On the pre-assessment, five out of the 22 participants, or 23% of participants answered Question 1 correctly. Four of those participants were native Spanish speakers, so only one Spanish as a second language (SSL) student successfully answered Question 1. On the post-assessment, 10 out of 22 participants, or 55%, answered the question with the correct verb form (See Figure 2). In summary, 22% more participants answered Question 1 correctly on the post-assessment than on the pre-assessment.

**Question 2: ¿Cuál letra hiciste para el alfabeto? (What letter did you make for the alphabet?)**

This question refers to an alphabet line we made as a class. Each student chose a letter and created a drawing of something that begins with that letter in Spanish. To get Question 2 correct, participants needed to use the first person past tense conjugation of the verb *hacer* (to make) which is *hice* (I made). Like *decir*, *hacer* is an irregular verb; regular *-er* verbs in Spanish are conjugated to the first person past tense by changing the *-er* ending to *-i*. On the pre-assessment, six out of the 22 participants answered Question 2 correctly, or 27% of participants. The scores increased to 11 of the 22 participants answering the question correctly on the post-assessment, or 50% (See Figure 2). Question 2 yielded a 23% increase in participants who could correctly answer the question.

**Question 3: ¿A dónde fuiste después de la escuela ayer? (Where did you go after school yesterday?)**

To get Questions 3 correct, participants had to answer using the first person conjugation of the verb *ir* (to go) which is *fui*. *Ir* is also an irregular verb. On the pre-assessment, eleven out of 22, or 50%, of participants answered the question with the correct form of the verb. On the post-assessment, twenty participants, or 91%, answered correctly (See Figure 2). This shows a 41% increase in correct answers between the pre- and post-assessments. *Ir/fui* was one of the verbs taught in the call and response song.

**Question 4: ¿Qué comiste anoche para la cena? (What did you eat for dinner last night?)**

Question 4 was marked correct if participants answered using the first person past tense conjugation of the verb *comer* (to eat) which is *comí*. *Comer* is a regular verb. It follows the Spanish language pattern of changing an -er ending to -í to indicate first person past tense. On the pre-assessment, eleven out of 22, or 50%, of participants answered the question with the correct form of the verb. On the post-assessment, twenty participants, or 91%, answered correctly (See Figure 2). This shows a 41% increase in correct answers between the pre- and post-assessments.

**Question 5: ¿Qué viste afuera esta mañana? (What did you see outside this morning?)**

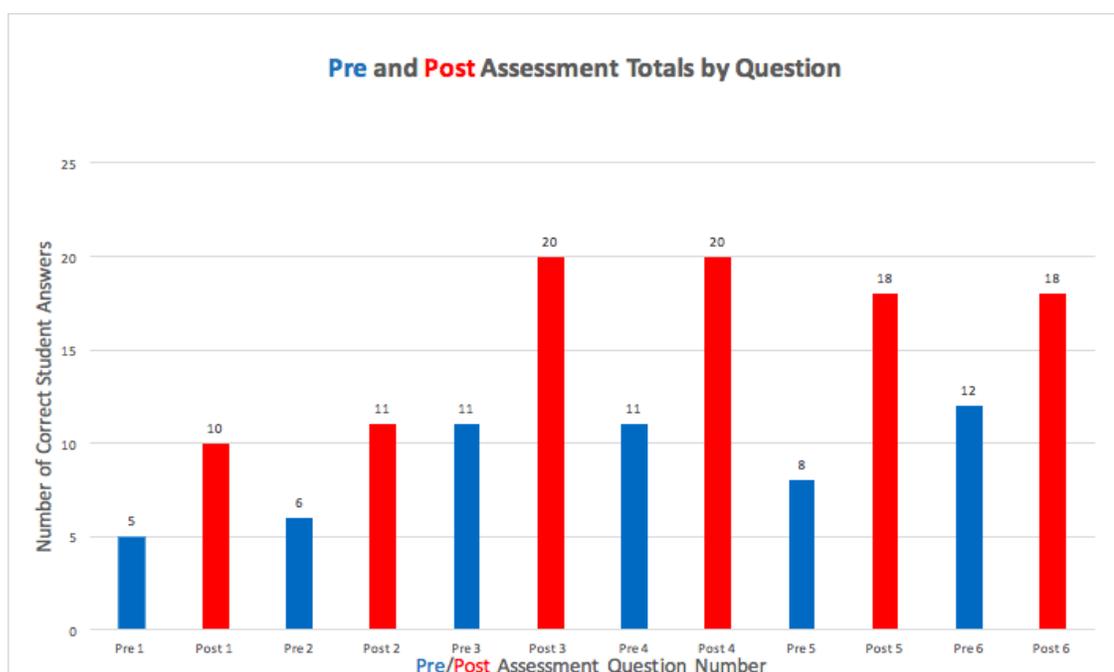
To get Question 5 correct, participants had to answer with the correct first person past tense conjugation of the verb *ver* (to see) which is *vi*. *Ver* is a regular verb in pronunciation. Some consider it irregular in written form, as the *i* does not have an accent as regular *ir* verbs do in the first person past tense, but it is regular in

pronunciation so I will consider it regular in this analysis. On the pre-assessment, eight out of 22, or 36%, of participants answered the question with the correct form of the verb. On the post-assessment, 18 participants, or 82%, answered correctly (See Figure 2). This shows a 46% increase in correct answers between the pre- and post-assessments. The verb *ver/vi* was part of the call and response song.

**Question 6: ¿Con quién jugaste hoy/ayer en el recreo? (Who did you play with yesterday at recess?)**

Participants had to use the correct first person past tense form of the verb *jugar* (to play) which is *jugué*. *Jugar* is a regular verb. It follows the pattern of changing an *-ar* ending to *-é* to make it first person past tense. On the pre-assessment, 12 out of 22, or 55%, of participants answered the question with the correct form of the verb. On the post-assessment, 18 participants answered correctly, or 82% of participants (See Figure 2). This shows a 27% increase in correct answers between the pre- and post-assessments.

**Figure 2**



### Common error trends

While analyzing the answers participants gave for each question on the pre- and post-assessment, I noted the types of errors participants made if they did not correctly conjugate the verb to the first person past tense. The six most common types of errors participants made were: answering in the second person past tense (repeating the form of the verb used in the question); answering in the third person past tense; applying a regular first person past tense verb ending to an irregular verb; answering in the third person present tense; answering in the first person present tense; answering with the infinitive form of the verb.

**Answering in the second person past tense.** The most common error on both the pre- and post-assessment was participants answering in the second person past tense. For example, I asked *¿Con quién jugaste hoy/ayer en el recreo?* (Who did you play with at recess yesterday?) and they answered *Yo jugaste con mi amigo* (You played with my friend). On the pre-assessment, 28 incorrect answers out of 132 total answers (six answers from each of 22 participants) were given by participants in which they repeated the form of the verb given in the question, thus using the second person (the “you” form) instead of the first person (the correct form). This equates to 21% of all answers (correct and incorrect) involving a mis-conjugation to the second person past tense. Participants made 79 errors total collectively, so 35% (28 out of 79) of all errors involved participants answering in the second person past tense.

On the post-assessment, 18 errors were made by participants answering in the second person past tense. This means that 14% of all answers (correct and incorrect) involved this type of mis-conjugation on the post-assessment, which is a six percent

decrease from the pre-assessment. Participants made 35 errors total collectively on the post-assessment, so 51% (18 out of 35) of all errors on the post-assessment were made by participants answering in the third person instead of first person past tense.

**Answering in the third person past tense.** The second most common error on the post-assessment (it was equally as common as the previous error on the pre-assessment) was participants answering in the third person past tense. For example, I asked *¿Cuál letra hiciste para el alfabeto?* (What letter did you make for the alphabet?) and they responded, *Yo hizo la letra A* (I he/she made the letter A). On the pre-assessment, 28 incorrect answers out of 132 total answers were given by participants who conjugated the verb to the third person (the “he/she” form) when answering the question. This equates to 21% of all answers (correct and incorrect) involving a mis conjugation to the second person past tense. Of the 79 errors participants made collectively on the entire assessment, 35% involved participants answering in the third person past tense.

On the post-assessment, six errors were made by participants answering in the third person past tense. This means that five percent of all answers (correct and incorrect) involved this type of mis-conjugation on the post-assessment, which is a 15% decrease from the pre-assessment. Participants made 35 errors total collectively on the post-assessment, so 17% (6 out of 35) of all errors on the post-assessment were made by participants answering in the third person instead of first person past tense.

**Applying a regular first person past tense verb ending to an irregular verb.** The next most common error was participants using the regular past tense suffix of a verb on a verb that required an irregular ending. For example, I asked *¿Qué dijiste ayer/esta mañana en la reunión de la mañana?* (What did you say yesterday/this morning

in morning meeting?) and they answered *Yo dije* ... (I said...). On the pre-assessment, six incorrect answers out of 132 total answers were given by participants who conjugated an irregular verb using a regular verb ending when answering the question. This means that five percent of all answers involved a mis-conjugation caused by applying a regular ending to an irregular verb. Of the 79 errors participants made collectively on the entire assessment, seven percent involved participants making this type of error.

On the post-assessment, five errors were made by participants answering incorrectly because they applied a regular ending to an irregular verb. This means that four percent of all answers (correct and incorrect) involved this type of mis-conjugation on the post-assessment, which is only a one percent decrease from the pre-assessment. Of the 35 total errors made on the post-assessment, 14% were made by participants answering with a regular verb ending on an irregular verb.

**Answering in the third person present tense.** The next most common error was participants using the third person present tense conjugation of the verb instead of the first person. For example, I asked *¿A dónde fuiste después de la escuela ayer?* (Where did you go after school yesterday?) and they answered *Yo va a mi casa* (I he/she goes home). On the pre-assessment, six incorrect answers out of 132 total answers were given by participants who conjugated the verb to the third person present tense. This means that five percent of all answers involved this type of mis conjugation. Of the 79 errors participants made collectively on the entire assessment, seven percent involved participants making this type of error.

On the post-assessment, only two errors were made by participants answering incorrectly because they applied the present tense third person verb form. This means

that and a half percent of all answers (correct and incorrect) involved this type of mis-conjugation on the post-assessment, which is three percent decrease from the pre-assessment. Of the 35 total errors made on the post-assessment, six percent were made by participants answering in the third person present tense.

**Answering with the infinitive form of the verb.** The next most common identifiable error was participants using the infinitive form of a verb in their answer. For example, I asked *¿Con quién jugaste hoy/ayer en el recreo?* (Who did you play with today/yesterday at recess?) and they answered *Yo jugar con mi amigo* (I to play with my friend). Two incorrect answers were produced by participants using the infinitive on the pre-assessment, or one and a half percent of all answers given. This means three percent of 79 total errors made by participants involved this type of error.

On the post-assessment, one error was made by a participant who used the infinitive form of a verb, or less than one percent of errors. This is about a one percent decrease from the pre-assessment. The infinitive error accounts for three percent of the 35 total errors on the post-assessment.

**Answering in the first person present tense.** The least most common identifiable error was participants using the first person present tense conjugation of the verb instead of the first person past tense. For example, I asked *¿Qué viste afuera esta mañana?* (What did you see outside this morning?) and they answered *Yo veo un pajarito* (I see a bird). On the pre-assessment, two incorrect answers out of 132 total answers were given by participants who conjugated the verb to the first person present tense. This means that one and a half percent of all answers involved this type of mis conjugation.

Of the 79 errors participants made collectively on the entire assessment, three percent involved participants making this type of error.

On the post-assessment, none of the participants made the error of answering in the first person present tense. This means there was a one and a half percent decrease in this type of error between the pre-assessment and the post-assessment.

### **Call and response song**

One of the three songs I taught the participants to try to improve their use of past tense verbs when speaking used a call and response format (See song three in Appendix A). For example, the song starts with *¿A donde fuiste el lunes pasado? Yo fui al zoológico* (Where did you go last Monday? I went to the zoo). The intention was to gauge if a song that includes both the third person form produced in the question and the first person form produced in the answer would help improve what I had predicted to be the most common error based on informal observation of the participants, which is participants repeating the form of the verb said by the person asking the question (the third person) instead of changing the verb to the first person past tense. (In fact, it was the most common error, as noted in the previous section on common error trends) .

One of the verbs used in the call and response song, *ver* (to see) yielded the highest percentage of improvement of all six verbs between the pre-assessment and post-assessment of all six verbs. Participants' correct answers rose from 36% correct on the pre-assessment to 82% on the post-assessment, which is a 46% improvement. The other verb used in the call and response song, *ir* (to go) yielded the second highest percentage of improvement (tied with a verb not used in call and response, *comer*/to eat), with

correct student answers rising from 50% on the pre-assessment to 91% on the post-assessment. This is a 41% improvement between the two assessments.

### **Regular versus irregular verbs**

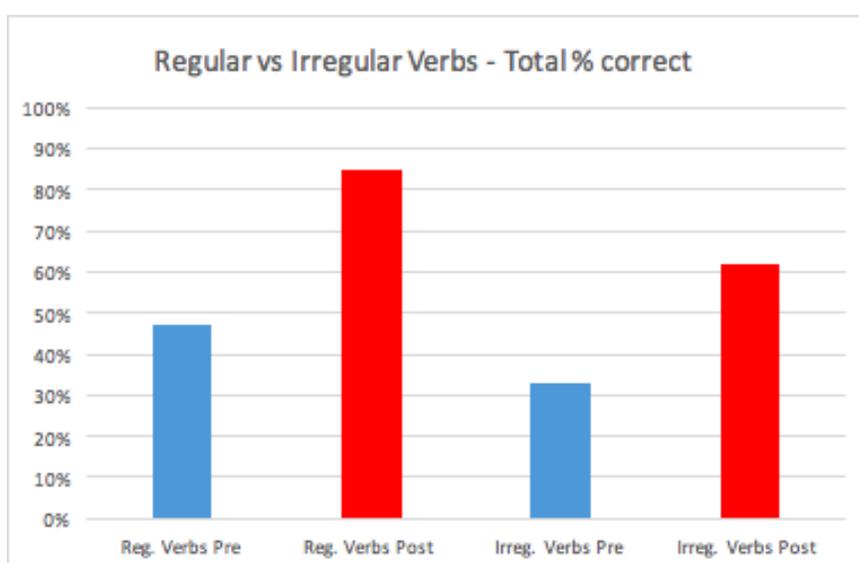
I was also curious to see if the correct production of regular verbs or irregular verbs were more impacted by the music intervention. I intentionally used three regular and three irregular verbs so I would be able to compare them. The results show that the intervention was more effective with the regular verbs. Two of the three regular verbs yielded the highest percentages of improvement between the pre-assessment and post-assessment.

The regular verb *ver* (to see), yielded the highest percent increase of all verbs, with participants improving from 36% to 82% between the two assessments, which is a 46% increase. (Please note, *ver* is irregular in the present tense, but regular in the past, so I considered it regular for my research.) With the regular verb *comer* (to eat) participants' correct answers improved from 50% to 91% between the pre- and post-assessments, or by 41%. This was the second highest increase made, tied with the irregular verb *ir* (to go). The regular verb *jugar* (to play) yielded the fourth highest percent improvement between the pre- and post-assessments, with participants scores increasing from 55% correct to 82% correct, which is a 27% increase in correct answers.

Collectively, there were 66 questions involving regular verbs and 66 questions involving irregular verbs asked to participants on each assessment (3 questions times 22 participants). On the pre-assessment, 31 of the 66 answers to questions containing regular verbs were correct, or 47%. On the post-assessment, 56 of the 66 answers to questions containing regular verbs were correct, or 85%. This is a 38% improvement in

total correct answers to questions containing regular verbs between the pre- and post-assessments. In regards to irregular verbs, 22 of the 66 questions containing irregular verbs were answered correctly on the pre-assessment or 33%. On the post-assessment, 41 of the 66 questions containing irregular verbs were answered correctly, or 62% (See Figure 3). This is a 29% increase between the pre- and post-assessments. So, overall, the participants improved more noticeably in their use of the regular verbs.

**Figure 3**



### **The interview**

At the end of the music intervention, participants were asked five questions regarding their opinion of the experience and what they thought they learned from singing the songs (see Appendix D). The first question asked participants, “How did you feel about singing our songs every day?” Participants were prompted with “Did you like it? Why or why not? Did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable?” Of the 22 participants interviewed, 16, or 73% of participants reported that they had positive feelings about singing the songs (either they liked it, it made them happy, or it was

“good.”) Ten of those participants, or 45% of the total sample of 22 participants, explained that they had positive feelings because they like to sing. Two of them added that they like to sing with other people or with the whole class. Of the six that said they did not like it, two reported it was because they do not like to sing.

The second part of that question asked participants if they were comfortable singing the songs or not. Seventeen of the 22 participants, or 77% reported in the interview that they felt comfortable singing the songs. Four participants, or 18%, said they were not comfortable singing the songs, and one student reported that they were not sure if they were comfortable or not.

The second question in the interview asked participants, “Why do you think we sang the songs every day?” Five of the answers were related to learning and were given by one student each and included: to practice reading; to learn to sing more in Spanish; to get better at singing; to learn more songs; and to teach other kids how to sing songs when we grow up. Four of the 22 participants, or 18% said they did not know why we sang the songs. Ten of the 22 participants, or 45% reported that they thought we sang the songs to practice for a concert or so we remember them. Half of those ten participants specifically mentioned the second grade concert that will happen in the spring, which is known to be a very important event for Spanish Immersion Elementary second graders. Two participants said they thought we sang the songs because it was fun, and one said we sang the songs to get better at them.

Next, participants were asked, “What did you learn from singing the songs?” Predictably, the answers varied widely, but the most common answer came from eight of the 22 participants, or 36%, who said “I don’t know” or “Nothing.” Four of the 22

participants' answers were about the message of the song, i.e., was something like "That you can't trick people to get stuff" or "You shouldn't eat too much junk food" or "You can go a lot of places if you don't get tired" which were lessons or messages from the songs. Unexpectedly, two reported they learned new words. The other eight participants gave unrelated miscellaneous answers.

The fourth question in the interview was "Do you ever use the songs to help you when you are speaking or writing?" The most common response, given by 16 of the 22 participants, or 73% was "No." However, two participants seem to connect back to the song, reporting that they used the songs to remember how words were spelled and that they "see the words and remember when they really need it." One student reported "Sometimes I sing it and I feel nice and relaxed and I just start to write," and one said "Sometimes I feel comfortable writing." Two participants' answers were unclear.

Finally, participants were asked "Did you sing the songs anywhere else?" Nine of the 22 participants, or 41%, said "No." Of the participants that reported that they sang the songs outside of class, the most common answer was "at home" or "to my mom and dad," reported by seven of the 22 participants, or 32%. Two participants said they did not know, and the remaining seven gave varying responses like "on the bus," "in the bathroom," or "when I'm bored."

## **Summary**

My action research led me to analyze results regarding the impact my music intervention had the participants' learning, the results of different types of verbs, the results of different types of song, and the way the participants felt about the songs and what they learned. This chapter has displayed what I learned from analyzing the

assessment results and the interview answers. The most substantial results that emerged from my action research were: the increase in overall results between the pre- and post-assessments; the difference between the results of regular versus irregular verbs; and the difference in results in the song using call and response versus the songs that did not.

The common error trends that emerged also provided significant insight the research on grammar on the second language. Next, in Chapter Five, I will elaborate on these results and what type of impact they indicate that my music intervention had on participants' learning.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

The purpose of my action research was to answer the questions *How can repeatedly singing songs in Spanish containing temporal words and past tense vocabulary impact Spanish immersion second graders' use of past tense verbs when speaking Spanish; And how will learners perceive the songs and their effect on their learning?* Throughout each section of this chapter, I will summarize my findings and discuss them through the lens of a Spanish immersion teacher, and also by revisiting my literature review and comparing my findings to the information I presented in Chapter 2 (the Literature Review), based on books and scholarly articles I reviewed before beginning my action research. I will then discuss limitations I encountered that affected my research. Then, I will explain what recommendations I have for future research that could be done to strengthen and build on my research and clarify some of the questions I developed while conducting and analyzing my research. Finally, I will explain how I plan to communicate my findings with other professionals and the immersion community.

#### Implications

In this section I will discuss the implications of my overall findings, and the answers to some specific questions I made conclusions about during my research.

**Overall findings.** The overarching question my research was aiming to answer was whether or not the specific music intervention I conducted with the participants

would be successful in improving their abilities to correctly conjugate verbs when speaking in the past tense. I wanted to know if singing songs containing first person past tense verbs would have any effect on participants' speaking abilities. As previously reviewed in Chapter Two, both Van Asselt (1970) and Fonsesca Mora (2000) noted through their research that teaching language through music had a positive effect on language acquisition. Paquette and Rieg (2008) specifically stated that language lessons that revolving around grammar, among other literacy concepts, can be enhanced by music. After conducting my action research, I can confidently conclude that my views are in line with these researchers; music is a successful medium through which to teach elementary school students a language concept. Next I will describe my conclusions to more specific aspects of my research questions and how they align with the findings of other researchers.

**Was the music intervention successful?** Based on the improvements participants made between the pre-assessment and post-assessments, I conclude that repetitively singing songs containing temporal words and first person past tense verbs has a positive impact on second grade Spanish immersion participants' abilities to correctly conjugate verbs in the first person past tense when speaking. The average percent of correct answers went from 40% to 73%, which means on average participants improved by 33%, or got one third more of the questions correct after participating in the music intervention.

While I was not able to find any previous research concerning the exact same concept I was investigating, the research around grammar that I analyzed supports my conclusion that music has been successful in teaching grammar in a second language. An experiment aimed to decide if music could accelerate the ability of English speaking

students learning French to use the perfect and imperfect tenses concluded that musical interventions were successful (Legg, 2009). Furthermore, Fagerland's study (2006) suggested that in regards to reflexive verbs, repetitive singing of songs was helpful in students' abilities to retain grammatical structures.

My research adds to the conclusion made by my predecessors that songs are an effective way to teach language. As a music enthusiast who recalls music aiding in my discovery of other languages, this conclusion is aligned with my predictions and also the conclusions of others. Next I will elaborate on more specific aspects of my research and conclusions that lead to ideas for future research.

**Which verbs yielded the highest student improvements and why?** When selecting the six target verbs for my action research, I thought about two things: I wanted to choose verbs that children commonly use when speaking in order to most effectively influence their speech, and I wanted to use a mix of regular and irregular verbs so I would be able to determine if there is a difference in the impact of my music intervention on regular versus irregular verbs.

As Boyd (1975) explained, the past tense is more complex in Spanish than in English because of the different verb endings which causes problems for Spanish learners. I also have noticed that in English and Spanish, irregular verbs can cause difficulty, as children often apply a regular ending to an irregular verb. So, as my literature review and my own experience as a language learner and teacher made me realize that both regular and irregular verbs can cause students to make errors, looking into which verbs were impacted more with my music intervention became important.

After conducting my action research, I conclude that the music intervention was

slightly more effective with the regular verbs, as the scores increased more significantly from pre-assessment to post-assessment on the questions containing regular verbs. (The number of correct answers to questions with regular verbs rose by 38%. The number of correct answers to questions with irregular verbs rose by 29%.) These results did not surprise me, as the conjugation necessary for regular verbs is more consistent and therefore easier to apply than the conjugation irregular verbs require.

Another aspect that I analyzed in regards to different success rates among verbs was the two verbs used in the call and response song versus the four verbs not used in the call and response song. I had realized that students often repeat the second person form of the verb when trying to answer in the first person, which makes sense because the second person is the form used in the question. So I wanted to see if creating a song that had a question and answer format would help the participants involved in the action research correct this type of error.

After conducting my research, I conclude that the call and response song was more effective in improving the participants' use of first person past tense verbs, as the two verbs used in the call and response song yielded the highest percentages of improvement of the six verbs. I do wonder if there is anything else about these two verbs that made them easier for participants to conjugate. One other difference in this song was that I used two different colored fonts for the question (including the second person conjugation that kids often repeat) and the answer (including the first person form that is the correct way for them to conjugate when speaking about themselves) and I pointed this out to the participants one day. This led to a short discussion on how the verb (although I did not call it a verb) in the question is different than the verb in the answer. We

compared it to English and realized how “silly” it would sound if we answered questions in English using the same form of the verb from the question.

**What was the most common error trend and why?** When I looked through the pre- and post-assessments and analyzed the errors participants made and began to categorize them, there were some error types that I had predicted, and some that surprised me. The most common error on both the pre- and post-assessment was participants answering in the second person (the “you” form) of the verb. I believe this is because the second person is the form language learners hear when being asked a question. One of the reasons I chose this topic was because I had noticed kids misconjugating in this way, so I was excited to see that the call and response song had a strong impact in correcting this type of error.

The error type that I did not expect to be so common was the participants conjugating the verb into the second person past tense. This ended up being just as common as participants conjugating to the second person (as discussed in the previous paragraph) on the pre-assessment, and the second most common type of error on the post-assessment. Upon reflection, I wonder if this type of error is so common because it is a tense students hear and see when reading. Many of the fiction texts read to students or read by students contain this type of conjugation.

**What did the participants think of the songs and how did it affect their learning?** A prevalent theme in my literature review was that students enjoy singing and feel comfortable singing, making it an effective medium for teaching, as students learn more when they are not nervous or anxious, and they enjoy learning more. As Brand and Li (2009) explained, the relaxed learning and happy environment music encourages are

beneficial to both students and teachers. I was interested to see if this held true for my specific music intervention.

My approach at exploring the idea that singing is enjoyable was to include a question in the interview conducted after the two weeks of singing that asked simply *How did you feel about singing the songs every day?* The most common answer given by 16 of the 22 participants, was that they felt good, happy, or that they liked singing the songs. This is in line with my predecessors' research results; students enjoy singing (Brand & Li, 2009; Gatti-Taylor, 1980).

The other part of the question regarding the participants' feelings about the songs was *Did you feel comfortable singing the songs?* The majority of the second graders, 17 out of 22, reported that yes, they felt comfortable. This result, when considered along with the overall success of the songs in teaching a language concept, aligns with Krashen's hypothesis that the affective filter (learners' attitudes that affect the relative success of second language acquisition) must be weakened (meaning a positive attitude is present) for learning to occur (Krashen, 1982). In the case of my action research project, the participants' positive attitude toward singing and the level of comfort they felt made it more possible for learning to occur, leading to positive results from the intervention.

**Did participants understand what they learned from singing the songs?** In researching literature regarding metacognition in elementary aged students, I learned that most students at this age do not have very advanced metacognitive awareness. I wanted to know, however, if any of my language learners would figure out my purpose for having them sing these songs every day and what they thought they learned from it.

After conducting the interview at the end of my action research and analyzing the

results for Chapter Four, I realize that none of the participants were aware of what I was trying to teach them through the songs. The closest answer I got to the actual intended purpose (to teach the participants to properly conjugate verbs to the first person past tense) was that we sang the songs to learn new words, which two participants stated during the interview.

My findings align with those of Flavell (1979) who suggested that young children have little awareness of their metacognitive abilities. In my experience as an immersion teacher, I feel this is especially true with immersion learners in regards to their second language, as immersion theory encourages teachers to facilitate through a natural approach (Goldin, 1977) so students are not often made explicitly aware of language structure or grammar concepts being taught. Because young students do not have strong metacognitive skills and teachers often are not explaining language acquisition objective, it makes sense that the participants' answers in the interview did not reflect the intentions of my teaching. I do not consider this a failure or a success in the intervention, but it is interesting to consider and I will reflect on it more later in this chapter as I discuss future research on my topic.

### **Limitations**

There were some limitations with this research project. First, I only had access to my class of 25 students, three of whom were not included in my results do to accordance with the Human Subject Review process. It is not ethical for me to use an intervention on one half of the students and not the other, as all students should have access to the same educational opportunities. So, I did not have a control group and could not compare students who participated in the music intervention with students who did not. This

meant I could not see how much growth students would have made in their abilities to conjugate verbs to the first person past tense just by participating in a Spanish immersion program.

Another limitation in my research is the small sample size I used to gather and analyze data. With access to only 22 participants, five of whom were native Spanish speakers, I felt limited in the data I was able to acquire. Also, the research was limited to Spanish immersion student participants from relatively similar socioeconomic class and only three different races were represented. While I did not report on how different socioeconomic or racial groups performed, I do think having a relatively homogeneous group limited my research.

### **Recommendations**

As I conducted the action research and analyzed the results of the assessments and the interview, several new questions for further research came to mind. In this section I will discuss recommendations I have for future research.

To address the idea of having a control group, one idea would be to have half of the class participate in a music intervention with half of the verbs, and the other half of the class participate in a music intervention with the other half of the verbs. All participants would be tested on all verbs, so the researcher could determine if the verbs that participants did not sing in their songs about yielded any improvement.

Another recommendation I have for further research is to develop and implement a similar project that only focuses on regular verbs, maybe even all the same type of regular verbs (all *-ar*, or all *-er* and *-ir*), to see if the repetition of the regular endings yields higher results across the board. The idea is that as it is obvious through my

research and my literature review that repetition is beneficial, it may be beneficial to be repetitive with the verb endings, which is not accomplished as strongly when irregular verbs are included.

Another question I developed while analyzing my research was what other elements affect improvement in verb conjugating abilities (frequency of words in texts students read, use of words in speaking exercises like morning meeting, shorter words versus longer words, pointing out conjugation differences)? I would encourage future researchers to try different methods (in addition to songs) and see what is most effective in improving participants' abilities to conjugate verbs.

I also wonder if the participants will retain the skills they apparently obtained from participating in the music intervention. It would be interesting to re-assess the participants a month or two after the intervention, and again at the end of the school year. Another idea is to review the songs for two or three days before re-assessing, and then re-assess again later in the year without reviewing the songs to see the proximity to having sung the songs is a major determining factor in student results.

Another recommendation I have for future research is to conduct the same project with another group of participants in a different school year, but to discuss the purpose of the songs to instill some metacognitive awareness in the participants. This would address the idea of whether or not immersion learners could benefit from sometimes being made aware of grammar concepts instead of always using a more natural approach.

Finally, in regards to the most common type of errors the participants made (using the second person form of the verb), I wonder if this type of error is as common when participants are not being asked a question. For example, if I just said *dime sobre tu dia*

*ayer* (tell me about your day yesterday) would participants be less likely to make this type of error? This could be done using the same exact music intervention, but changing the assessments so the prompts were given as commands instead of questions.

### **Communication**

In order for my research to benefit my colleagues in the immersion school at which I teach, I plan to share a link to my capstone once it is published so they can gain insight into the idea of using music to teach language. There is another school in our district that is transitioning into being a dual immersion school, so I plan to share my capstone with their staff as well.

I also plan to approach administration to see if I could present my methods and results chapters to our staff in order to communicate the outcomes of my research visually and interactively. I think it is important that immersion teachers realize that while it is essential for our students to be immersed in language naturally and through content, there is also value in using other methods, like music, to make language learning fun and enjoyable, and to decrease common errors that we hear students make.

Finally, I would like to communicate the findings of my research to parents in our school community in a more general way. Parents are already overwhelmed with keeping up with their children's immersion education so I would not want to add the pressure of understanding how to teach grammar, but I do think that presenting them with research based evidence that listening to and singing songs in Spanish is beneficial could be enlightening to them. At one of our upcoming parent education nights, I plan to provide parents with this information, as well as a list of songs and Spanish artists they could listen to with their children.

**Summary**

Teaching grammar in the immersion world is a complex and controversial topic. My passion for music and language, combined with my curiosity about teaching grammar in an immersion setting led me to research that helped make the topic a little less complicated to me. Through examining my own journey with music and language, researching literature, developing methodology, and conducting and then analyzing action research, I learned that music is one way to help language learners improve their grammar without explicitly teaching a concept. I hope my findings can help other immersion teachers explore the idea of using music in their classrooms.

## References

- Anton, R. J. (1990). Combining singing and psychology. *Hispania*, 73(4), 1166-1170.  
doi:10.2307/344326
- Bae, S. (2006). Facilitating second language learning with music. *Zero to Three*, 27(1), 48-51. doi:10.21125/iceri.2018.1875
- Boyd, P. A. (1975). The development of grammar categories in Spanish by Anglo children learning a second language. *Tesol Quarterly*, 9(2), 125-135. doi:10.2307/3585479
- Brand, M. & Li, X. (2009). Effectiveness of music on vocabulary acquisition, language usage, and meaning for mainland Chinese ESL learners. *Contributions to music education*, 73-84.
- Cummins, J. (2000). Immersion education for the millennium: What we have learned from 30 years of research on second language immersion. Retrieved October, 5, 2000.
- Domínguez, L., Tracy-Ventura, N., Arche, M. J., Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2013). The role of dynamic contrasts in the L2 acquisition of Spanish past tense morphology. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 16(3), 558-577.  
doi:10.1017/s1366728912000363
- Douglas, S., & Willatts, P. (1994). The relationship between musical ability and literacy skills. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 17(2), 99-107. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9817.1994.tb00057.x
- Ellis, N. C. (2008). Implicit and explicit knowledge about language. *Encyclopedia of language and education*, 1878-1890. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3\_143

- Ellis, R. (2005). Measuring implicit and explicit knowledge of a second language: A psychometric study. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 27(2), 141-172. doi:10.1017/s0272263105050096
- Ellis, R. (2009). Implicit and explicit learning, knowledge and instruction. *Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning, testing and teaching*, 42, 3-25. doi:10.21832/9781847691767-003
- Fagerland, R. (2006). Can music be used effectively to teach grammar? *A Journal for Minnesota and Wisconsin Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 41, 41-58.
- Fisher, D. (2001). Early language learning with and without music. *Reading Horizons*, 42(1), 8. doi:10.1037/14913-010
- Fisher, D., & McDonald, N. (2001). The intersection between music and early literacy instruction: listening to literacy!. *Reading Improvement*, 38(3), 106-116.
- Fisher, R. (1998). Thinking about thinking: Developing metacognition in children. *Early Child Development and Care*, 141(1), 1-15. doi:10.1080/0300443981410101
- Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American psychologist*, 34(10), 906. Q doi:10.1037/0003-066x.34.10.906
- Flavell, J. H., Friedrichs, A. G., & Hoyt, J. D. (1970). Developmental changes in memorization processes. *Cognitive psychology*, 1(4), 324-340. doi:10.1016/0010-0285(70)90019-8
- Fonseca Mora, C. (2000). Foreign language acquisition and melody singing. *ELT journal*, 54(2), 146-152.

- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Gatbonton, E., & Segalowitz, N. (1988). Creative automatization: Principles for promoting fluency within a communicative framework. *TESOL quarterly*, 22(3), 473-492.
- Gatti-Taylor, M. (1980). Songs as a linguistic and cultural resource in the intermediate Italian class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 13(6), 465-469.
- Gfeller, K. E. (1983). Musical mnemonics as an aid to retention with normal and learning disabled students. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 20(4), 179-189.
- Goldin, M. (1977). Who Wouldn't Want to Use the Natural Approach? *The Modern Language Journal*, 61(7), 337-339. doi:10.2307/324552
- Gregory, A. H. & Lamb, S. J. (1993). The relationship between music and reading in beginning readers. *Educational Psychology*, 13(1), 19-27.
- Harp, B. (1988). When the principal asks: "Why are your kids singing during reading time?". *The Reading Teacher*, 41(4), 454-456.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2001). *Intentional and incidental second language vocabulary learning: A reappraisal of elaboration, rehearsal and automaticity* (pp. 258-286). Na.
- Isenberg, J. P., & Jalongo, M. R. (2006). *Creative thinking and arts-based learning: Preschool through fourth grade*. Pearson Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Kennedy, R., & Scott, A. (2005). A pilot study: The effects of music therapy interventions on middle school students' ESL skills. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 42(4), 244-261.

- Krashen, S. (1982). Acquiring a second language. *World Englishes*, 1(3), 97–101.  
doi:10.1111/j.1467-971x.1982.tb00476.x
- Legg, R. (2009). Using music to accelerate language learning: an experimental study. *Research in Education*, 82(1), 1-12.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned 4th edition-Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers*. Oxford University press.
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66.
- Markman, E. (1979). Realizing That You Don't Understand: Elementary School Children's Awareness of Inconsistencies. *Child Development*, 50(3), 643-655.  
doi:10.2307/1128929
- Medina, S. L. (1990). The Effects of Music upon Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition.
- Medina, S. L. (2003). Acquiring vocabulary through story-songs. *MexTESOL Journal*, 26(1), 7-10.
- Montrul, S. (2011). Morphological errors in Spanish second language learners and heritage speakers. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 33(2), 163-192.
- Paquette, K. R., & Rieg, S. A. (2008). Using music to support the literacy development of young English language learners. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(3), 227-232.
- Patel, A. D. (2003). Language, music, syntax and the brain. *Nature neuroscience*, 6(7), 674.

- Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O. F. (2008). *Reading, Writing and Learning: A Resource Book for K-12 Teacher*.
- Schmidt, R. (2012). Attention, awareness, and individual differences in language learning. *Perspectives on individual characteristics and foreign language education*, 6, 27.
- SchoolDigger.com. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.schooldigger.com/>
- Van Asselt, J. (1970). *Music as an aid to teaching German in the elementary schools*. US Office of Education, Bureau of Research.
- Wolfe, D. E., & Hom, C. (1993). Use of melodies as structural prompts for learning and retention of sequential verbal information by preschool students. *Journal of Music therapy*, 30(2), 100-118.

## Appendix A

### The Songs

**Song one: “Necesito una tortuga”** *(to the tune of “You Are My Sunshine”)*

Ayer yo le dije a mi mamá  
 Que yo quería una tortuga  
 Ella me miró  
 Y dijo no no  
 Entonces yo jugué solito

Más tarde yo le dije a mi mamá  
 Que yo siempre estoy solo  
 Porque no tengo una tortuga  
 Ayer yo jugué solo, solito

Anoche yo le dije a mi mamá  
 Que yo jugué solo otra vez  
 Ella me miró  
 Y dijo vale  
 Y ahora yo tengo mi tortuga

**Song two: “Me duele la panza”** *(to the tune of “London Bridge is Falling Down”)*

Ayer yo hice unas galletas, una torta y un pastel  
 Yo comí toda la comida  
 Ahora me duele la panza

Ayer yo hice una hamburguesa, una pizza, y papas fritas  
 Yo comí toda la comida  
 Ahora me duele la panza

Ayer yo hice un tamal, unos tacos, y una enchilada  
 Yo comí toda la comida  
 Ahora me voy a vomitar

### Appendix A (Continued)

Song three (call and response): **¿A dónde fuiste? (to the tune of Baby Beluga)**

¿A dónde fuiste el lunes pasado?

Yo fui al zoológico

Y que viste el lunes pasado?

Yo vi muchos animales

Yo fui al zoológico

Yo vi un oso

Yo fui al zoo

Yo vi un pingüino y un león...

¿A dónde fuiste el jueves pasado?

Yo fui a la tienda

Y qué viste el jueves pasado?

Yo vi mucha comida

Yo fui a la tienda

Yo vi una banana

Yo fui a la tienda

Yo vi una pizza y unas uvas...

¿A dónde fuiste el domingo pasado?

Yo fui a la feria

Y qué viste el domingo pasado?

Yo vi a muchas personas

Yo fui a la feria

Yo vi a muchos niños

Yo fui a la feria

Yo vi a un abuelo y sus nietos

Tu fuiste a muchos lugares

Si yo fui por todo el pueblo

Tu viste muchas cosas

Entonces voy a cerrar mis ojos.

## Appendix B

### Pre- and post-assessment

Student # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿Qué dijiste ayer/esta mañana en la reunión de la mañana?** (must say *dije*)  
(What did you say yesterday/this morning at morning meeting?)

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿Cuál letra hiciste para el alfabeto?** (must say *hice*)  
(What letter did you make for the alphabet?)

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿A dónde fuiste después de la escuela ayer?** (must say *fui*)  
(Where did you go after school yesterday?)

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿Qué comiste anoche para la cena?** (must say *comí*)  
(What did you eat last night for dinner?)

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿Qué viste afuera esta mañana?** (must say *vi*)  
(What did you see outside this morning?)

\_\_\_\_\_ **¿Con quién jugaste hoy/ayer en el recreo?** (must say *jugué*)  
(Who did you play with today/yesterday at recess?)

Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_ %

\_\_\_\_\_ / 6 =

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent to Participate in Research letter given to parents

<p><i>Hamline University</i>          Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form.          IRB approval #          Approved:          Expires one year from above approval date.</p>
---



#### *Informed Consent to Participate in Research*

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The student researcher or faculty researcher (Principal Investigator) will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your reference, and will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions.

This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research participant.

- If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.
- You should feel free to discuss your potential participation with anyone you choose, such as family or friends, before you decide to participate.
- Do not agree to participate in this study unless the research team has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

**Title of Research Study:** Teaching Grammar through Music

**Student Researcher and email address:** Katie Monson, kmonson05@hamline.edu

**Faculty Advisor:** Julia Reimer, 651-523-2506, jreimer@hamline.edu

#### **1. What is the research topic, the purpose of the research, and the rationale for why this study is being conducted?**

The topic or title of my master's thesis is Teaching Grammar through Music. The main objective of the research is to determine if singing songs containing temporal words (like yesterday or last year) and past tense verbs in Spanish impacts Spanish immersion second graders' abilities to conjugate verbs to the past tense correctly when speaking Spanish. The research will inform teachers if music is an effective medium through which to teach students how to speak in the past tense. Another objective of the research is to collect qualitative information regarding students' views on the use of the songs and how students perceive the effect the songs may have had on their learning. The significance of this data will be to provide educators with information on the metacognitive development of students in this age group.

**2. What will you be asked to do if you decide to participate in this research study?**

**Appendix C (Continued)**

If you choose for your child to participate in the study, they will take a six-question pre-assessment (all six questions will encourage students to answer using verbs conjugated in the past tense). I will then teach the students three songs containing the six verbs from the assessment conjugated to the past tense. Then they will take an identical post-assessment after we have sung the songs for two weeks. They will also answer four interview questions at the end of the study regarding their perception of the experience.

**3. What will be your time commitment to the study if you participate?**

The pre- and post- assessments will take about two minutes each per student. Learning the three songs will take about a half an hour for each song. The three songs will then be sung once per day for two weeks, which will take about three minutes total each day (one minute for each song). The interview at the end of the study will take about two minutes per student. This adds up to about two hours' total time for the study. The testing will take place one on one (myself and the student) either in the classroom or in the media center at the school. I will record audio of the students' answers to the pre- and post-assessments and the interviews.

**4. Who is funding this study?**

There is no funding needed for this study.

**5. What are the possible discomforts and risks of participating in this research study?**

By participating in this study, there is a small chance of discomfort for students in answering the pre- and post-assessment questions or in singing the songs. I will use best teaching practices to help minimize this risk and help students feel comfortable. Loss of confidentiality is also a risk; however, I will take the steps listed in question 6 to minimize this risk.

**6. How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your data and research records be protected?**

I will record student answers using audio only on a school administered teacher iPad that is password locked and only I have access to. I will record any notes on my personal computer that is password locked and only I have access to. I will delete audio recordings when the study is finished. The iPad and my computer will always be in my possession, at school or home. I will use a pseudonym for the school name and pseudonyms for any reporting on students (Student X, Student Y, etc.).

**7. How many people will most likely be participating in this study, and how long is the entire study expected to last?**

Up to 25 students will be participating in the study. The entire study (including pre- and post-assessment, learning and singing the songs) will span over about five weeks, during September and October, 2019.

**8. What are the possible benefits to you and/or to others from your participation in this research study?**

There are benefits to your child for participating in the study. I will use a strategy (songs and lyrics) that has been proven to help students feel comfortable and successful while learning. Reading song lyrics has also been proven to improve students' reading fluency, so while I will be testing whether or not the songs help with their grammar, they will also be enhancing students' reading skills. Also, practicing their second language in a joyful and

### **Appendix C (Continued)**

comfortable manner (singing) will amplify the voices of all students, especially those who are often anxious to speak out individually.

**9. If you choose to participate in this study, will it cost you anything?**

The study will not cost you anything.

**10. Will you receive any compensation for participating in this study?**

You will not receive any compensation for participating.

**11. What if you decide that you do not want to take part in this study? What other options are**

**available to you if you decide not to participate or to withdraw?**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Hamline University or with the school. In addition, if significant new findings develop during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to continue participation, we will provide that information to you. If you decide you do not want your child to participate, they will not be required to take the pre- and post-assessment or answer the interview questions at the end of the study. The songs are a part of a normal second grade classroom routine, so students will still partake in learning to read and sing the songs.

**12. How can you withdraw from this research study, and who should you contact if you have any questions or concerns?**

You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should tell me, or contact me or my faculty advisor, Julia Reimer at [jreimer@hamline.edu](mailto:jreimer@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2506. You should also call or email Julia Reimer for any questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints about the research and your experience as a participant in the study. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board at Hamline University at [IRB@hamline.edu](mailto:IRB@hamline.edu).

**13. Are there any anticipated circumstances under which your participation may be terminated by the researcher without your parent/guardian's consent?**

There are no anticipated circumstances under which your participation may be terminated by me, the researcher, without your consent.

**14. Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?**

I, the researcher, will gain no benefit from your participation in this study beyond the publication and/or presentation of the results obtained from the study, and the invaluable research experience and interactive learning that the students will gain as a part of their educational experience.

**15. Where will this research be made available once the study is completed?**

The research is public scholarship and the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways, such as in conference presentations or published in research journals.

**16. Has this research study received approval from Hamline University and the school district?**

Yes.

## Appendix D

### The Interview

Student # \_\_\_\_\_ Interview (given after intervention stopped)

1. How did you feel about singing our songs every day? (Did you like it? Why / why not? Did you feel comfortable/uncomfortable)
2. Why do you think we sang the songs every day?
3. What did you learn from singing the songs?
4. Do you ever use the songs to help you when you're speaking or writing? Which words?
5. Did you sing the songs anywhere else?