

## USING SONGS TO TEACH GRAMMAR EFFECTIVELY IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the importance of song based activities in teaching grammar structures to students at school 34 in Mingbulak district Namangan region. To gather data online survey was held among EFL teachers. Two participating groups were selected deliberately, 7A as a control and 7B as an experimental. Song based activities were given 7B students while pre and post tests which measured the students' grammar competence were taken from both groups. The test results were scored and compared.

**Keywords:** Song based activities, teaching grammar, teaching tool

The songs play an important part in second language acquisition. But why and how can songs have such an influence on acquiring a new language. "Researchers over the last twenty years have made astounding advances in the theory of language acquisition. Many find the pedagogical conjoining of language and music compelling." Stansell (2005.)

The most obvious reason for using songs is that it can be fun and stress-free way of learning foreign languages as Brumfit(1994) stated "Children are learning all the time without having the worries and responsibility of adults".

Besides, songs and rhymes include a variety of language materials thus helping learners to improve language skills. "Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills".

Murphey (1992)

According to Maria Luisa Cruz- Cruz (2005) music and songs can be an effective instructional supplement to teaching English grammar and vocabulary. She also stated that the use of appropriate music can make learners feel energetic and motivated.

Moreover, Saricoban&Metin (2010) pointed "Music contains a variety of vocabulary that can easily be adjusted to the appropriate age or level of learning. It is full of phrases and expressions that will prepare children for using genuine language. It teaches grammar and many songs can be used as grammar exercises".

Although the benefits of using songs to teach young learners have been studied in detail, insufficient attention has been paid to their role in teaching teenage learners. Thus this paper aims to describe how song-based activities be put into use with teenage learners to teach grammar point and what results they bring at the end of the research. The paper first discusses how EFL teachers think of using songs in their classes, and the study conducted between experimental and control groups and the results gained from this research.

This study was prepared to investigate the effects of using songs according to the study used by Zehra Ezgi Kara (2013)

Traditionally, the effectiveness of songs has been mostly assessed by measuring the improvement in listening and speaking skills or vocabulary acquisition

To test our primary hypothesis that songs are an effective teaching tool, this research was conducted

The design of the research was mixed method of a quantitative part which described the data collected from surveys and the results of pre and post-tests as well as qualitative part illustrated the data from pre and post interviews.

The study sample comprised 2 different grades at a secondary school № 34 in Gulistan village which was nearly 20 km away from the centre of Mingbulak district. The 7A grade consisted of 16 students and 7B consisted of 18 students.

A deliberately controlled trial design was used in which 7 B grade students were chosen for an experimental group that received song –based tasks and 7A students as a control group that received no intervention

The reason of that choice was that the students in 7 Bgrade almost always showed lower academic results and interest in succeeding than 7A

In addition, a random sample of teachers with EFL teaching practices recruited from different parts of Namangan online and students from the experimental and control group were selected to gather the data for the research.

Data consisted of a questionnaire via Survey Monkey was aimed for teachers online, questionnaire on paper for the students from the experimental group and pre and post tests for both groups

Firstly the researcher conducted an online questionnaire among English teachers via survey monkey. In total 32 respondents answered 5 questions about using songs. The main purpose of this survey was to identify how EFL teachers think of the importance of the songs, why and how often they use them in their classrooms, according to what criteria they choose songs and what challenges occur while using them.

Next, questionnaire in a written form which was given to experimental group students comprised the following questions to discover their opinions about song based activities.

1. Do you like listening to English music?
2. Why do you listen to English music?
3. How often do you listen to English songs?
4. How often do you have to do song activities?
5. Do you like to do song activities?

Then, both group students were assessed on the specific topic before the treatment and again after the treatment

Because of the same age and the same academic curriculum both groups were selected. In order to describe the difference in learning the specific topic pre tests were taken from both groups to identify their existing knowledge and post tests to analyze the results after treatment

Firstly, language source grammar, to be clear, tenses were the target of the research. “Lemon Tree” by Fool’s Garden to teach Present Continuous. At first pre-tests relating to this tense were taken from both groups in a natural environment.

Students’ existing knowledge of grammar point, Present Continuous, was checked by 10 multiple –choice questions as a pre- test. Then in each group Present continuous was introduced at a different time because of the school schedule. In both groups the instructor taught the grammar structure in the same way, but the next step was different. Experimental group students listened to a song and did one of these leveled tasks including Fill-in the Blanks with the correct words from the box and Underline the Correct Word exercises as to their preferences. The song was played twice and the song activity lasted nearly 10 minutes in the experimental group. In the next stage both group students were asked to make up sentences using Present Continuous. In the end post test relating to the above grammar point was taken from both group students. Post test consisted of 10 multiple choice questions. In addition, whole class interview was given to experimental group students to discover their impressions on the treatment.

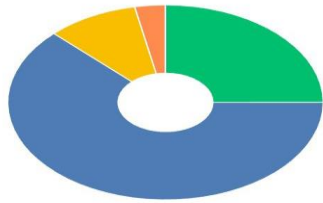
The results of pre and post tests were entered into tables and then explained in detail by comparing both group results

#### Results

##### The survey among English teachers

In the first place the researcher used a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree for the statement “ Songs can be great teaching tool for leaning a language” to identify teachers’ viewpoints about songs.

1. Songs can be great teaching tool for learning a new language



Ответили 32 Пропустили 0

Strongly agree	25%	8
Agree	62,5%	20
Neutral	9,38%	3
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly disagree	3,13%	1

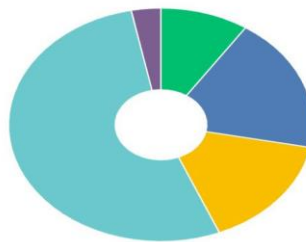
Table 1

From Table 1 above, 62.5 % teachers agreed with the statement following 25% of educators who strongly agreed. There were 9.38% respondents who became neutral while only 3.13% that is 1 teacher strongly disagreed. As can be seen, most teachers have positive attitudes using songs to teach a language.

As to the Table 2 53.13% participants of the survey use songs because they think music motivates students to learn the language. Because of having necessary language sources for their learners 18.75% teachers use songs. As a great intervening activity 15.63% teachers implement songs to their classes. Moreover, 9.38% participants use a song as to the preference of students. Here motivating role of songs is recognized mostly.

Table 2

2. I use a song because



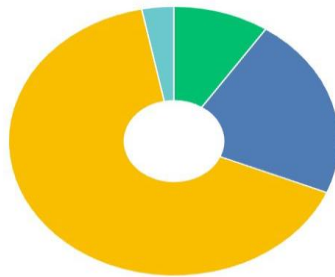
Ответили 32 Пропустили 0

my students like it	9,38%	3
it has necessary language sources for my students	18,75%	6
it can be great intervening activity	15,63%	5
It motivates students to learn the language	53,13%	17

Furthermore, 65.63% respondents choose songs according to students' age and level while 21.88% teachers think the topic of the song is important to use. 9.38% teachers consider students' interest the most influential factor in this case. So, Table 3 below showed the most important criteria to choose a song is here students' age and level.

Table 3

3. I choose a song according to...



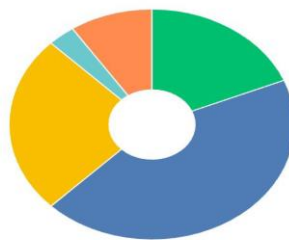
Ответили 32 Пропустили 0

students' interests	9,38%	3
the topic of the song	21,88%	7
students' age, level	65,63%	21
Другое (уточните)	3,13%	1

The fourth statement is about challenges in using songs. 43.75% respondents believed songs are fast and difficult to understand. 25% teachers worried songs may disturb other classes. However, 18.75% educators considered uninterested students real challenge. One participant said English songs can be inappropriate for our mentality. Thus it can be seen from Table 4 the song speed and difficulty to understand can be major problem to use them.

Table 4

4. When I use songs, this can be a challenge



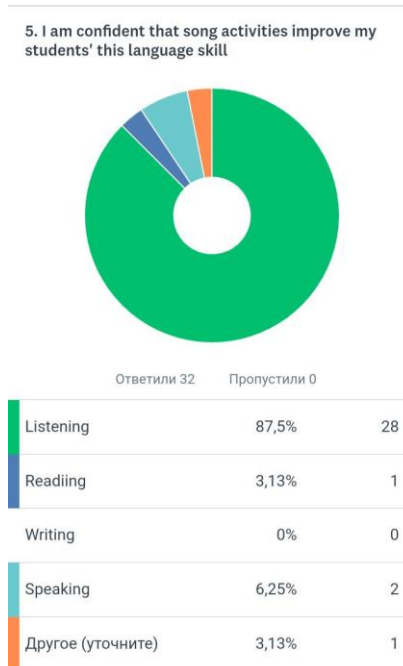
Ответили 32 Пропустили 0

Uninterested students	18,75%	6
Songs are too fast and difficult to understand	43,75%	14
Songs may disturb other classes	25%	8
They are not appropriate for our mentality	3,13%	1

The last, 87.5% teachers answered that songs improve listening skill while 6.25% chose speaking. 3.13% marked reading skill. As to the Table 5 we can see that most

teachers are of the opinion that songs are more beneficial to listening than other language skills.

Table 5



Here it should be mentioned in every statement apart from the first one ( Table 1) there is one invalid answer 3.13% which is unacceptable.

**Pre and post test results of experimental and control group**

Table 6 shows that control group students pre test results were 39,4% while after traditional teaching results increased to 43,1 as to the Table 7

Table 6(7A Control group Pre test)

Correct answers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Students	0	3	3	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	63
Percentage	0,0%	18,8%	18,8%	25,0%	25,0%	12,5%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	39,4%

Table 7(7A Control group Post test)

Correct answers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Students	0	0	5	7	2	0	0	2	0	0	69
Percentage	0,0%	0,0%	31,3%	43,8%	12,5%	0,0%	0,0%	12,5%	0,0%	0,0%	43,1%

Before the treatment experimental groups test results formed 36,9%, given the traditional lesson and treatment together their test results reached 50.6%

Table 8( 7B Experimental group Pre-test)

Correct answers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total 180
Students	0	2	7	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	59
Percentage	0,0 %	12,5 %	43,8 %	25,0 %	6,3 %	6,3 %	6,3 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	36,9 %

Table 9( 7B Experimental group Post test)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total 180
Students	0	1	4	6	5	0	0	2	0	0	81
Percentage	0,0 %	6,3 %	25,0 %	37,5 %	31,3 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	12,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	50,6 %

As can be seen from Table 10, while experimental group results were 36,9% which was lower than control group before the treatment, however their post test results rose significantly to 50,6% which was 10% higher than control groups post test

Table 10

	Experimental group	Control group	Difference between both groups
Pre-test	36,9%	39,4%	-2,5
Post-test	50,6%	43,1%	7,5%
Difference between pre and post tests	13,8%	3,8%	10%

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research supported the hypothesis that songs could be great teaching tool in teaching foreign language. Not only songs motivated the participants but also song based activities helped the students in my classroom to acquire new knowledge efficiently.

As the amount of time was restricted only a day, there will be some discussions for further study

1. Only one study could provide the appropriate results?
2. How will the students react if song activities are always teaching part?

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