

THE IMPORTANCE OF SONGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the importance of integrating songs into English language teaching, highlighting their potential to enhance students' language skills and create an engaging learning environment. The use of songs in the EFL classroom is discussed, with emphasis on their impact on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening skills. Techniques for effectively incorporating songs into lessons, such as gap filling activities, are also outlined. The article emphasizes the need for teachers to be familiar with various methods and technologies for using songs in teaching, and to adapt these approaches as necessary to maximize their effectiveness.

Keywords: Songs in EFL classroom, methods of using songs, gap filling, clip staging, summarizing, teaching grammar with songs, Grammar-translation method, making handouts for activities with songs

INTRODUCTION

Songs can serve as a valuable resource in the EFL classroom, offering students and engaging and authentic way to practice language skills. Integrating songs into language lesson can create a lively and dynamic learning environment, helping students internalize vocabulary and grammar structures effortlessly.

As S. A. Ward mentioned "The rhythm of the verse helps the learner to put the stress in the right places, creating a natural flow of language and building up fluency. At the same time the presence of rhyming words and such poetic device as alliteration and onomatopoeia help to focus on certain sounds, thus giving valuable ear training and help in pronunciation. In the syntactical area a song gives us the opportunity to repeat the same structural item many times, thereby aiding correctness and fluency of expression". [1]

Actually, the importance of songs in teaching English is recognized by all teachers, however, using songs in EFL classroom does not always show its

effectiveness as soon as they expect. This is because specific teachers instruct learners to sing the songs while listening to their lyrics, and the language in the songs is too fast and full of stylistic overtones that are difficult for language learners to translate. If EFL teachers aim to develop to enhance their students' listening skills, pronunciation, and vocabulary with the songs they use in the classroom, they should be familiarized with the existing methods and technologies of using songs, and be able to make changes to them if necessary. We will get acquainted with a certain methods and technologies that allow effective production of songs in the development of students' receptive and productive language skills, and ways to creatively apply them to the teaching process.

MAIN BODY

Songs can be a great way to add creativity and excitement to English lessons. "What is it about the power of music that takes hold of your mind and your mood to create an intensely emotional experience? Music can surround you; it can make you feel energetic and motivated. Is there any way to unleash this power in the classroom to energize and motivate students?" [2]

Here are some ways of making the activities with songs in EFL classroom effective in developing students' receptive and productive language skills:

1. **Gap filling.** This activity helps to improve students' listening, vocabulary and word patterns. Lyrics can be used to ask students to fill in the blanks, especially for missing words and tenses. In this case, if the teacher simply gives the students a handout with the lyrics written and a few blank spaces and tells them to listen to the words written down, it may not be effective. The teacher must first clearly explain the condition of the exercise and discuss what words can be substituted for the omitted words. Based on the grammatical features and meaning of the lyrics, trying to guess the words and their meaning improves children's analytical thinking and prediction skills.

2. **Sing along.** The main purpose of singing along a song with the group is to encourage students to pronounce the words correctly and to speed up their speech. There are also cases when the song chosen by the teacher can be complicated for the language level of some students in the group. No matter how many times the students listen to the song, it can be difficult for the students to sing it along. In such cases, the teacher can help the students by using slow mode in the device used to run the track. When the complex and fast-paced sentences in the song are slowed down, they begin to sound intelligible to the reader. Or, on the contrary, by speeding up a slow song, it can complicate the process of singing the song together for students, thereby motivating them to speed up their speech. It is especially effective if it is organized in the form of a competition between students of a higher level, who have developed the

ability to sing songs. For example, students can compete on how many times they can sing a certain song until it is accelerated.

3. **Clip staging.** Giving the students as a task to act out a music video in accordance with the song learned during the lesson will increase their desire to understand the meaning of this song. In this way, it is possible to form not only listening and comprehension skills of students, but also the ability to communicate and work together as a team.

4. **Summarizing.** After listening to the song several times or after the text is distributed before playing the song, students are asked to create their own questions based on the song. After listening to the song, the students are asked to summarize what they heard in their words, and whether they understood the meaning or not is analyzed. The lyrics are analyzed. It is important to analyze the message and lyrics of the song and let the readers have their own interpretation of what the song is about. New words, sentences and phrases in the song are analyzed and memorized, and other exercises can be performed with their participation.

5. **Teaching grammar with songs.** It is known that many students find learning English grammar boring, and teachers, on the other hand, point out that language learners have difficulty in learning grammar. The main reason for this is that grammar is often taught in a traditional way, and most teachers today still only use rule-based and translation-based methods, such as the **Grammar-translation method**, to teach grammar. But language grammar can be learned naturally using various modern methods. For example, with the help of songs, it is possible to remember various language units, and to automate the process of students' sentence formation. Because songs are usually melodious and based on rhythm, they are much easier to remember and apply to speech, and the language patterns learned through songs are much easier to use later in the speech process, and it is a method that speeds up sentence formation.

Songs are also especially good at introducing vocabulary because they provide a meaningful context for the vocabulary. However, it depends on the choice of songs since there are also some songs without meaningful context. From the grammatical point of view, they "provide a natural context for the most common structures such as verb tenses and prepositions" [3]. Therefore, if the teacher intends to use songs for the purpose of teaching grammar, it is important to be able to choose the right song.

Here are some suggested songs that can be used to help students learn specific grammar topics [1]:

Present simple	“Wonderful tonight”, Eric Clapton
Present Continuous	“Tom’s Diner”, Suzanne Vega
Past Simle	“Candle in the Wind”, Elton John
Past Continuous	“And she was”, Talking Heads
Present Perfect	“I still haven’t found what I’m looking for”, U2
“Will” future	“All my loving”, The Beatles
“Going to” future	“Brass in pocket”, The Pretenders
1st Conditional	“I’ll sail this ship alone”, The Beautiful South
2nd Conditional	“If I were a boy”, Beyonce
Imperative	“50 ways to leave your lover”, Paul Simon
Adjectives and Adverbs	“The Logical Song”, Supertramp

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As it is seen using songs in EFL classroom makes the learning process intriguing and effective. It enhances not only students’ listening skills, but also vocabulary and grammar patterns. Therefore, EFL teachers should be competent enough to make high-quality and effective handouts for their students. Fadhli [4] suggested that the song provided should be appropriate to the EFL students. Moreover, in line with the worksheet used by Fadhli, he inferred that worksheet is beneficial for the EFL students under two reasons. They are making the EFL students active in the study and stimulating the EFL students’ interests to study a lot. In conclusion, the explanations inferred that songs can stimulate the young EFL students to study English attractively and effectively as they (lyrics) can be memorable since the information in them accompanied by music and rhythm.

Today, the preparation of handouts is extremely fast and easy with the help of modern technologies, Internet resources and programs based on Artificial Intelligence. Copies of many song lyrics are readily available on the Internet. However, caution is required when using sites that use machine-generated transcripts, which can be filled with errors and inaccuracies. After finding the text of the song, it depends on the technical and professional creativity of each teacher to make it interesting, colorful and understandable for the students. Placing symbols and signs that match the meaning of the song will help attract children’s attention.

It is important to use methods that create the basis for its full usefulness in the process of working with distributed materials. For example, if the song being used is aimed at teaching language structures, students are asked to circle or underline any examples of the target structure. It is very important to find the structure and discuss its various functions and importance in the context.

If the song being studied is an activity focused on listening for key words and phrases, different versions can easily be created with easier or more difficult words, and fewer or more spaces depending on the level of the learners. Often there may be students of different levels in the class, and in such cases the teacher may create handouts with two or three different versions of the same song and distribute them accordingly, or let the students decide which version to work with.

With these creative ways to use songs in English lessons, teachers can encourage their students to learn English in a fun and effective way. Teachers should also take into account the age and language level of students.

CONCLUSION

The integration of songs into English language teaching holds significant value, yet its effective implementation is not always immediately realized. To fully leverage the potential of songs in the EFL classroom, teachers must be well-versed in appropriate methods and technologies. Incorporating activities such as gap filling, sing along, clip staging, and summarizing can enhance students' listening skills, pronunciation and vocabulary. These activities foster critical thinking, prediction skills, collaborative teamwork, and personalized interpretation of song lyrics. Educators should tailor the use of songs to suit students' language proficiency levels for optimal engagement and skill development. By embracing diverse methodologies mentioned above, teachers can unlock the pedagogical potential of songs in honing students' receptive and productive language abilities.

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