

The Effectiveness of Using Songs in Teaching English Language to Elementary Students at HURA Village and Teachers Attitudes towards It

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Abstract

This study tried to investigate the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English language in elementary schools in Hura. The researcher tried to answer the following questions: What is the effect of using English songs on students' achievement in English language. What are the teachers attitudes toward using songs in teaching English Language? The sample of the study consisted of (200) students males and females and (10) teachers. The result of the study showed that there is a significant difference between the means of the elementary school students' achievements in learning English language due to using songs an effect of using songs on students' achievement in English language. It also showed that teachers have strong attitudes toward using songs in teaching English language. The researcher recommended; doing more research about using songs in teaching English.

Keywords: Songs, attitudes, academic achievement

1.1 Introduction

Literature plays an important role in teaching in general. Young learners prefer listening to music and songs. Songs in English are being listened by children and youngs around the world. Students can often feel real progress in their level of English when they begin to sing along to the chorus or even just to be able to separate what at first seemed to be a constant stream of words. The process of selecting a song is one of the most difficult aspects of using music in a lesson.

The language level of your class will determine not only which songs you can use, but also what other activities you will use to develop the lesson. Lower levels will become extremely frustrated with fast-delivered lyrics, for instance, while simple repetitive lyrics might not be interesting for more advanced level learners. Songs are a fantastic way to help students work on different elements of language learning. There are many different ways to use songs in the classroom, from sing-a-longs to more structured listening exercises, depending on the class you have and the goals you have in mind.

There are two important outcomes of the effectiveness of using music and songs in the English language classroom. One suggested that there was strong support for use of song in the language learning classroom, but that there was actually very little occurring in most classrooms. Connected, but a separate issue, implied that while many teachers intuitively felt music was beneficial in teaching English language, there was also the perception that was a lack of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that supported such a choice. Therefore, some educators felt unable to defend the decision to champion use of music in the classroom to administrators, business English students or those in a predominantly exam focused environment.

In this study, the researcher is trying to study the effectiveness of using songs in teaching and learning English. In addition, the researcher intends to observe how this resource can help pupils in learning the skills of the language.

The researcher also investigates the advantages and disadvantages of using this learning tool. The main objective of this research is to ascertain the validity of the songs for teaching and learning English in elementary classrooms.

Nurturing the elementary classroom environment with meaningful music activities may help aid young children in developing skills necessary for success (Wiggins, 2007). Educators can develop the knowledge and skills needed to bring music into the classroom as an engaging and stimulating element of literacy education. Keeping young learners engaged in sixty minutes of uninterrupted daily reading activities, the recommended amount of time by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, has many teachers looking for fun, interesting, motivational ways to help their students learn. When children are having fun, they have more interest in learning. Songs can provide the median through which students can learn information in a fun, engaging manner. They can also act as mnemonic devices which aid in retention of knowledge learned (Hare&Smallwood,2008).

1.2 Purpose of the study:

The study has the following purposes:

1. To investigate how much can songs improve students' achievements in English Language.
2. To investigate teachers attitudes toward using songs in teaching English Language and how they make their lessons more fun and interesting.

1.3 Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following main question:

- 1-What are the teachers attitudes toward using songs in teaching English Language?
- 2-What is the effect of using English songs on the students' achievement in English language?

1.4 Hypothesis

- 1-There are no significant differences between teachers attitudes toward using songs in teaching English Language?
- 2-There is significant difference between students' achievements in English language due to using songs.

1-5 Significance of the study:

Teaching English in Hura needs teachers who believe in their abilities to instruct students and who hold the view that there is a positive relationship between using songs and teaching English language. I hope this study will come up with good recommendations that may increase the teachers' concern of using songs in Teaching English language.

1-6 Limitation of the study

This study is limited to the population of all English teachers in elementary schools in Hura village at the beginning of the academic year 2020-2021.

1-7 Definition of terms:

1-Students' achievement- Student achievement has become a hot topic in education today, especially with increased accountability for classroom teachers. The ultimate goal for any teacher is to improve the ability level and prepare students for adulthood.

2-Song- an elaborate vocal signal produced by an animal, as the distinctive sounds produced by certain birds, frogs, etc., in a courtship or territorial display.

Literature Review:

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the literature review and the previous studies concerning the effect of using songs on students' achievement in English language.

2.2 Related Studies

According to Colwell (1994), songs have been used to reinforce school-aged children's academic skills, such as reading development, quite effectively. Colwell conducted a study to determine if implementing music with a whole language program in kindergarten would aid these students' reading accuracy. The results of the study show that text set to music facilitates greater reading accuracy. Because music plays a significant part in the development of young children, it seems logical that using songs would benefit these children. Music is used as a carrier when the melody acts as a vehicle for the words. Words of songs are easily remembered because of a strong musical connection and then often used as educational tools.

Lems (1996) suggested that a most important aspect is that teachers should like the songs that they want to use and they should also want to share them. It is also important that the chosen songs contain words that are easily comprehensible. To be able to provide oral practice, it is necessary to use songs with enough repetitions. Songs should be popular, likely to be listened to by students outside the lessons, and well-written, from a native speaker point of view. Additional Considerations regarding level should be taken into account, too. When introducing songs to a low-level class, these songs should have a limited vocabulary, no more than 16 lines of text and lots of repetitions.

Griffiee (1990), recommends using short, slow songs for beginning-level students and recommends activities such as creating song word puzzles, drawing a song, or showing related pictures.

With higher levels, he suggests using songs that tell stories, moving toward short, fast songs and finally, longer, fast songs that have fewer high frequency vocabulary items.

Lake (2003) supports the idea of using music and songs in the English lessons for various reasons. As he suggests, language and music are closely tied together in the brain when processing pitch, rhythm and syntactical phrasing. Music provides a fun and relaxing way to acquire process and produce English. Through songs, language learners get to see the beauty and variability of English and therefore they become more interested in the English language. Music also helps them to understand some cultural differences and the various pronunciation of English.

Brown (2006) agrees with other authors on the listening skills and cultural knowledge benefits music gives to students and teachers of English, and adds another important value of the use of music in a language classroom. Practicing lyrics reading, studying the vocabulary, and listening to various songs can help students become more familiar with popular music and make them more confident in their ability to understand the world around them.

Murphy (1992), in his work "music and songs" exposes some disadvantages of the use of the songs:

- 1-Teachers don't take the songs seriously.
- 2-It can disturb adjacent lessons.
- 3-You can lose control of the class easily.
- 4-The vocabulary of the songs is too poor.
- 5-Expressions are different to the rules of grammar and this can lead to make mistakes.
- 6-Teachers don't know how to develop material successfully.
- 7-Classrooms may need media.
- 8-The songs go out of fashion soon.

Howard (1983) states that out of all the intelligences, musical intelligence develops first. By a very young age, children have become aware of pitch, melody, rhythm which are all components of reading, and thus, the use of music may have the potential to meet different learning styles. Each individual student learns in a different way. Because of all the different learning styles, teachers need to use a variety of techniques to meet these varied learning styles. Students improve their pronunciation skills while singing, but at the same time the repetitive lyrics have a positive effect on the students' language acquisition level.

Songs can be easily remembered, and are therefore an effective means of providing students with lexical patterns that are stored in their minds and that can be retrieved with ease during any oral communication. When we listen to a song we feel personally challenged and is easier to respond positively or negatively than when confronted to some other kind of texts. Experts know that the songs stimulate auditory and expression skills in people who have communication problems.

Lewis (2002) conducted a six-week study with first grades and found that listening to classical music seemed to have made a substantial difference in the reading comprehension levels and letter/sound recognition of these students. When classical music was played during reading lessons, the children seemed to be more attentive to the lessons which may have played a role in better retention of the material learned. Listening to music appears to enhance memory

The literature appears to show that using music may make learning easier and is therefore a viable strategy for today's classroom. It can create an exciting environment full of emotion and rich language. Music allows the listener to acquire and transfer information kinesthetically and concretely. It can impart valuable concepts to students, which can apply and connect to prior knowledge. Music forms a natural bridge to literacy and is seen as an equalizer for children of all ages and abilities. Given this evidence, early childhood and elementary educators can give young children the opportunity to fully develop their potential in the domains of music and literacy by incorporating music throughout their curriculum on a daily basis. Providing children strong literacy education in their early years has been shown to lead to better outcomes later. (Campbell, F.A,2002).

Griffe in "songs in Actions" (1992), as proposed reasons for using songs in classrooms:

1. They set up a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. They are an actual input of the target language. In addition, you can work on the rhythm of language study.
2. They have a cultural component so it can be used to work the history and culture of other countries.
3. You can work as a more real text.
4. Can be worked as complement for course material.
5. The interest of the students in the songs can motivate them to participate in class, in the language learning process.

Schiller (2000) states that between the ages of two and six years, children become capable of longer periods of attentions and are rapidly developing a more sophisticated vocabulary. During the time, children need multiple and repetitive opportunities, such as learning rhymes and singing songs to help with the formal process of mastering the mechanics of reading. With the lifetime of reading adventures ahead of them, young children are well on their way to becoming literate.

Music is considered to be auditory when children hear the melody and words to a song, and it is kinesthetic/tactile when the children move to the beat/rhythm of the songs. It is tactual in how children elicit emotion to what they are hearing, and it is visual if lyrics to words are written out for children to read (Brown 2008).

It is important for young children to build background knowledge that will be used later as they begin learning to read and write. When children hear, sing and play with music are building a foundation for background knowledge. Emergent readers build this knowledge when they hear, sing, discuss, play with and write songs. They will eventually use this knowledge in reading and writing experiences. With songs, students learn concepts and word meanings they will at some time encounter in print.

As an example, while singing the song "Clementine" the emergent readers learn words and concepts such as canyon, mine and forty-niner. Children enjoy songs they can easily learn and remember (Smith, 2000).

Cullen (1999) states that the first is bottom-up processing, where the listener builds up the sounds into words, sentences and meaning. The second is top-down processing, where the listener uses background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Practicing both of this process is essential for developing listening comprehension.

Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher presents population of the study, sample, instrumentation, procedure, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Population

The population of this study consisted of all male and female students and all the English teachers in Hura elementary schools in the academic year (2020-2021).

3.2 Sample

The sample of the study consisted of (200) male and female students and (10) English teachers males and females in Hura village. The sample was selected randomly.

3.3 Instrumentation

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher used a pre-test and a posttest for students in addition to a questionnaire for their teachers.

3.4 Procedure

The researcher distributed (10) questionnaires on the teachers, then the questionnaires were collected. The researcher provided students with a pre-test before starting using songs in teaching and a post test was given to them after using songs in teaching.

3.5 Data collection

The researcher collected the questionnaires from the teachers and the results of the two exams and then the information was computerized.

3.6 Data analysis

To achieve the purpose of the study the researcher found means standard deviation and average by using SPSS programs.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the effect of using songs in teaching English language in elementary schools in Hura village. This chapter will discuss the results of the study.

4.2 Research Question

1-What are teachers attitudes toward using songs in teaching English language in the elementary school in Hura? The results show a positive attitude toward using song in teaching English to elementary school students and this appears clearly in the following table.

4.3 Results

(Table 4-1)

Question	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean
1	2	0	0	2	6	4%
2	2	1	3	2	2	3.1%
3	0	0	1	4	5	4.4%
4	8	1	1	0	0	1.3%
5	8	1	1	0	0	1.3%
6	7	2	1	0	0	1.4%
7	2	5	3	0	0	2.1%
8	0	2	2	5	1	3.5%
9	0	0	4	4	2	3.8%
10	0	0	1	3	6	4.5%

Discussion

The results of the study showed the following:

Question (1): (2) strongly agree , (0) agree , (0) uncertain , (2) disagree , (6) strongly disagree .The mean was (4%).

Question (2) : (2) strongly agree , (1) agree , (3) uncertain , (2) disagree , (2) strongly disagree .The mean was (3.1%).

Question(3): (0)strongly agree , (0) agree , (1) uncertain , (4) disagree , (5) strongly disagree . The mean was (4.4%).

Question(4): (8)strongly agree , (1) agree , (1) uncertain , (0) disagree , (0) strongly disagree . The mean was (1.3%).

Question(5): (8)strongly agree , (1) agree , (1) uncertain , (0) disagree , (0) strongly disagree The mean was (1.3%).

Question(6): (7)strongly agree , (2) agree , (1) uncertain , (0) disagree , (0) strongly disagree. The mean was (1.4%).

Question(7): (2)strongly agree , (5) agree , (3) uncertain , (0) disagree , (0) strongly disagree .The mean was (2.1%).

Question(8): (0)strongly agree , (2) agree , (2) uncertain , (5) disagree , (1) strongly disagree . The mean was (3.5).

Question(9): (0)strongly agree , (0) agree , (4) uncertain , (4) disagree , (2) strongly disagree . The mean was (3.8%).

Question(10): (0)strongly agree , (0) agree , (1) uncertain , (3) disagree , (6) strongly disagree . The mean was (4.5%).

2-What is the effect of using English songs on the students' achievement in English language?

Hypothesis:

There is significant difference between the means of students achievement in English language due to using songs.

The finding of this study support the null hypothesis which indicated that there was significant difference between students achievement in English language due to using songs.This appears clearly in the following table:

Table (4-2) The Summary of Means Standard Deviation and Correlation of Students achievement in English Language Due to Using Songs

Group	N	Means	Std	R-Value	Significance
Controlled	188	74.3	19.82	0.71	0.0001
Experimental	188	79.47	19.74		

From the above table,we notice that students' means were 76.45 in controlled group and 79.47 in the experimental group.The correlation coefficient between the two groups is 0.71.The correlation is significant at $\alpha \geq 0.05$.This means there is a significant difference between students achievement and using songs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

5-1 Introduction

This chapter will present the conclusion of the study and the recommendations.

5-2 Conclusion

In this study the researcher tried to investigate teachers attitudes towards using songs in teaching English language to students in the elementary schools in Hura The results showed a positive attitude in that.

The results of the study indicated the following:

- There is a significant effect of using English songs on students' achievement in English language.
- The highest average of the study showed that (4.5%)of the teachers believe that songs are very effective in teaching English language".

-The lowest average of the study showed that "1.3 % of the teachers believe that using songs in teaching English is a highly motivating way".

The results of the study showed significant differences between students' achievements in English language due to using songs.

5-3 Recommendation

In the light of the results of this study, the researcher recommended the following:

- 1- Doing more research about using English songs in the lesson in order to improve the students' achievement.
- 2- English teachers should take into consideration breaking down boredom and make the lesson more fun through using songs in teaching.
- 3- English teachers should be qualified to be able to measure students' knowledge of English when they use songs in their classrooms.

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