

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH SONGS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Annotatsiya. Globallashuv va xalqaro muloqotning jadal rivojlanishi sharoitida chet tilini bilish shaxsning ta‘limiy, kasbiy va shaxsiy rivojlanishining muhim tarkibiy qismiga aylandi. Ingliz tili xalqaro muloqot, fan, texnologiya, ta‘lim, biznes va madaniyat sohalarida eng keng tarqalgan tillardan biri sifatida zamonaviy til ta‘limida alohida o‘rin tutadi. Shu sababli, ingliz tilini o‘qitishning samarali, qiziqarli va o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan usullarini izlash muhim pedagogik masala bo‘lib qolmoqda. Chet tilini o‘rganish jarayonini yanada motivatsion va hissiy jihatdan jozibador qilishi mumkin bo‘lgan amaliy vositalardan biri — ingliz tilidagi qo‘shiqlardan tizimli ravishda foydalanishdir.

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o‘qitishda qo‘shiqlarning pedagogik salohiyati, xususan, so‘z boyligini oshirish, talaffuz, tinglab tushunish, grammatik bilimlar, nutq ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirish, madaniy kompetensiya, motivatsiya va hissiy jalb etish masalalari tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada qo‘shiqlarni chet tili darsining turli bosqichlariga kiritishning psixologik va metodik afzalliklari muhokama qilinadi. Shuningdek, unda qo‘shiqlar bilan ishlashning amaliy tuzilmasi, jumladan, tinglashdan oldingi, tinglash jarayonidagi va tinglashdan keyingi mashg‘ulotlar taklif etiladi. O‘quvchilarning lingvistik kompetensiyasini rivojlantirishda bolalar qo‘shiqlari, haqiqiy (autentik) estrada qo‘shiqlari va ritmga asoslangan mashg‘ulotlardan foydalanishga alohida e‘tibor qaratiladi. Muallif qo‘shiqlarni shunchaki ko‘ngil ochish yoki dam olish vositasi sifatida emas, balki to‘g‘ri tanlangan va metodik jihatdan to‘g‘ri tashkil etilgan taqdirda tilning tizimli rivojlanishiga ko‘maklasha oladigan haqiqiy pedagogik resurs sifatida ko‘rish kerakligini ta‘kidlaydi.

Kalit so‘zlar: ingliz tilini o‘qitish, qo‘shiqlar, chet tilini o‘rganish, tinglab tushunish, so‘z boyligini oshirish, talaffuz, motivatsiya, til ko‘nikmalari, autentik materiallar, kichik yoshdagi o‘quvchilar.

Аннотация. В условиях глобализации и стремительного развития международной коммуникации владение иностранным языком стало неотъемлемой составляющей образовательного, профессионального и личностного развития человека. Английский язык, являясь одним из наиболее распространенных средств международного общения, а также языком науки, технологий, образования, бизнеса и культуры, занимает особое место в современной системе языкового образования. В связи с этим поиск эффективных, увлекательных и личностно-ориентированных методов преподавания английского языка остается важной педагогической задачей. Одним из практических инструментов, способных повысить мотивацию и эмоциональную вовлеченность учащихся в процесс

изучения иностранного языка, является систематическое использование песен на английском языке.

В данной статье рассматривается педагогический потенциал использования песен при обучении английскому языку; особое внимание уделяется таким аспектам, как усвоение лексики, постановка произношения, развитие навыков аудирования, формирование грамматических навыков и умений устной речи, развитие социокультурной компетенции, а также повышение мотивации и эмоциональной вовлеченности. Обсуждаются психологические и методические преимущества включения песен в различные этапы урока иностранного языка. Предлагается практическая структура работы с песнями, включающая задания, выполняемые до, во время и после прослушивания. Особый акцент сделан на использовании детских песен, аутентичных популярных композиций и упражнений, основанных на ритме, для развития языковой компетенции учащихся. В статье обосновывается тезис о том, что песни не следует рассматривать исключительно как развлечение или способ снять напряжение; при грамотном подборе и методически выверенной организации они представляют собой ценный аутентичный педагогический ресурс, способствующий систематическому развитию языковых навыков.

Ключевые слова: преподавание английского языка, песни, изучение иностранного языка, аудирование, усвоение лексики, произношение, мотивация, языковые навыки, аутентичные материалы, учащиеся младшего возраста.

Abstract. In the context of globalization and the rapid development of international communication, foreign-language proficiency has become an essential component of an individual's educational, professional, and personal development. English, as one of the most widely used languages of international communication, science, technology, education, business, and culture, occupies a particularly important position in modern language education. Therefore, the search for effective, engaging, and learner-centered methods of teaching English remains an important pedagogical issue. One of the practical tools that can make foreign-language learning more motivating and emotionally engaging is the systematic use of English songs.

This article examines the pedagogical potential of songs in English-language teaching, with particular attention to vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, listening comprehension, grammatical awareness, speaking development, cultural competence, motivation, and emotional engagement. The article discusses the psychological and methodological advantages of incorporating songs into different stages of a foreign-language lesson. It also proposes a practical structure for working with songs, including pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities. Particular attention is paid to the use of children's songs, authentic popular songs, and rhythm-based activities for developing learners' linguistic competence. The article argues that songs should not be viewed merely as entertainment or a relaxation activity but as an authentic pedagogical resource that can support systematic language development when appropriately selected and methodologically organized.

Keywords: English language teaching, songs, foreign-language learning, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, motivation, language skills, authentic materials, young learners.

Introduction

Foreign-language learning has become an increasingly important component of modern education. The development of international relations, academic mobility, digital communication, tourism, science, technology, and the global labor market has created new requirements for individuals' communicative competence. Knowledge of a foreign language provides learners with access to information, educational resources, professional opportunities, international communication, and cultural exchange.

Among the world's major languages, English occupies a particularly significant position. It is widely used in international communication, scientific publications, higher education, information technology, business, diplomacy, entertainment, and online communication. Consequently, English-language competence is increasingly regarded not simply as an additional academic skill but as an important component of lifelong learning and professional development.

However, learning a foreign language is a complex process that requires learners to acquire vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, listening comprehension, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Traditional approaches based exclusively on memorization, translation, and written exercises may not always provide sufficient opportunities for meaningful communication or maintain learners' motivation over a long period. This has encouraged teachers to incorporate authentic and emotionally engaging materials into the language classroom.

Songs represent one such resource. Music is naturally connected with emotion, memory, rhythm, repetition, and social interaction. English songs can therefore provide learners with repeated exposure to authentic language in an engaging context. Through songs, students encounter vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful combinations and hear pronunciation, stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech in a natural form.

The purpose of this article is to examine the pedagogical potential of English songs in foreign-language teaching and to present practical approaches to their effective classroom application.

Foreign-Language Learning and the Need for Motivating Teaching Methods

The process of learning a foreign language involves considerably more than memorizing isolated words and grammatical rules. Learners need to develop the ability to recognize language in real communicative situations and use it appropriately. This requires regular exposure to meaningful language and opportunities for active practice.

One of the central challenges faced by foreign-language teachers is maintaining learners' motivation. Students may lose interest when language learning becomes associated exclusively with repetitive exercises, vocabulary lists, grammatical explanations, or tests. Consequently, teachers need to create a learning environment in which students can perceive the practical and emotional value of the language.

Songs can contribute to such an environment because they combine linguistic input with melody and rhythm. Unlike isolated vocabulary items, words presented in songs occur within a meaningful context. Repetition within a song provides additional exposure, while rhythm can help learners remember sequences of words and phrases.

The use of songs can also contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere. Music may reduce the monotony of a lesson and provide a transition between different types of activities. For young learners in particular, songs can transform language practice into an enjoyable communicative experience.

Therefore, the pedagogical value of songs lies not simply in their entertainment function but in their ability to combine linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning.

Motivation is a key factor in successful language learning. Students who are interested in learning activities are generally more willing to participate, repeat language items, communicate with classmates, and practice independently.

Music has a natural emotional dimension. Many learners already listen to music outside the classroom, making songs familiar and personally meaningful materials. When teachers connect students' existing interests with educational objectives, classroom activities can become more relevant.

The use of songs may also create opportunities for student choice. Teachers can occasionally allow learners to suggest appropriate songs, vote on alternatives, or select songs connected with particular topics. Such participation can increase learners' sense of involvement in the learning process.

However, motivation should not replace educational purpose. A song should be selected because it can support a particular learning objective, not simply because it is popular. The most effective practice is therefore to combine students' interests with clearly defined linguistic outcomes.

Songs as Authentic Materials in English Language Teaching

Authentic materials are resources originally created for communication rather than specifically for language teaching. Songs are particularly valuable in this respect because they expose learners to naturally occurring language and cultural references.

Through songs, learners can encounter: authentic pronunciation, different accents and varieties of English, natural rhythm and intonation, contractions and connected speech, frequently used expressions, colloquial vocabulary, grammatical structures in context, cultural references, elements of everyday communication.

For example, learners who study vocabulary through a song may encounter a word repeatedly in different grammatical or lexical combinations. This contextualized exposure can help them understand not only the meaning of the word but also its typical use.

Nevertheless, songs should be selected carefully. The teacher should consider learners' age, language proficiency, interests, educational objectives, pronunciation clarity, vocabulary difficulty, grammatical complexity, and cultural appropriateness. Songs containing excessive slang, highly complex structures, or unclear pronunciation may be unsuitable for beginning learners.

Thus, the effectiveness of a song depends not simply on its popularity but on its pedagogical suitability.

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the fundamental components of foreign-language learning. Learners need a substantial lexical repertoire to understand spoken and written language and to express themselves effectively.

Songs can facilitate vocabulary learning through repetition and contextualization. When a new word appears several times within a melody, learners receive repeated exposure without experiencing the same degree of monotony associated with mechanical repetition.

Song-based vocabulary activities may include: identifying unfamiliar words before listening, matching words with definitions or pictures, completing missing words in the lyrics, identifying synonyms and antonyms, grouping vocabulary into semantic categories, creating sentences with newly learned words, identifying collocations.

For young learners, visual support can be particularly effective. Teachers can combine songs with pictures, gestures, flashcards, objects, or physical movements. For example, an animal-themed song can be accompanied by pictures of animals, while students repeat the names and imitate the corresponding movements.

Such activities make vocabulary learning more multisensory and may facilitate long-term retention.

Songs and Pronunciation Development

Pronunciation is another area in which songs can provide considerable pedagogical support. Learners often experience difficulties with English sounds, word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, linking, and intonation.

Songs provide repeated models of pronunciation. Learners can listen to a particular phrase several times and attempt to reproduce it according to the rhythm of the original performance.

Teachers can use songs to practice: individual sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation, connected speech, rhythm, contractions, difficult sound combinations.

Choral repetition is particularly useful for beginners. Instead of asking each learner to pronounce a difficult sentence individually, the teacher can first allow the entire class to repeat it together. This can create a less stressful environment and encourage students who may be reluctant to speak individually.

Songs can therefore serve as a bridge between controlled pronunciation practice and more natural spoken communication.

Songs for Developing Listening Comprehension

Listening is often one of the most challenging language skills for learners because natural speech may contain reduced sounds, different accents, rapid speech, and unfamiliar vocabulary.

Songs provide an opportunity for learners to practice listening repeatedly. Unlike a one-time listening task, a song can be replayed several times while learners perform different activities.

A teacher may organize listening activities in three stages.

Pre-listening stage

Before playing the song, the teacher introduces its title and topic. Students may predict the content, discuss key words, look at pictures, or answer simple questions.

For example:

What do you think the song is about?

What words might you hear?

What does the title suggest?

Who might be singing the song?

This stage activates learners' background knowledge and prepares them for listening.

While-listening stage

During the first listening, students may simply listen and identify the general topic.

During subsequent listenings, more focused tasks can be introduced: fill in the missing words, choose the correct word, put lines in the correct order, match sentence beginnings and endings, identify repeated expressions, mark statements as true or false, identify specific information.

Post-listening stage

After listening, learners can discuss the meaning of the song, explain new expressions, answer comprehension questions, summarize the content, or express their opinions about it.

This progression from general understanding to detailed comprehension reflects a gradual development of listening competence.

Although songs are particularly useful for vocabulary and pronunciation, they can also support grammar instruction.

Grammatical structures are easier to understand when they are encountered in meaningful contexts rather than presented exclusively as abstract rules. A teacher can select songs containing the grammatical structure being studied and ask learners to identify examples.

For instance, songs can provide examples of: present simple, present continuous, past simple, future forms, modal verbs, imperatives, comparative structures, pronouns, prepositions, question forms, conditional structures.

After listening, students can underline examples of the target structure, classify them, transform sentences, or create their own examples.

In this way, the song becomes a contextual source of grammatical input rather than merely a listening activity.

Songs and Cultural Competence

Foreign-language education is closely connected with intercultural learning. Language cannot be fully separated from the culture and social contexts in which it is used.

English songs can introduce learners to aspects of everyday life, traditions, values, relationships, historical references, places, celebrations, and cultural practices. Through songs, students can compare cultural perspectives and discuss similarities and differences between their own culture and cultures represented in English-language music.

This makes songs particularly useful for developing intercultural awareness.

Teachers should, however, provide appropriate contextual information when a song contains cultural references that learners may not understand. Short explanations, pictures, maps, or follow-up discussions can help students interpret such references more effectively.

The learning environment has an important influence on students' participation and willingness to communicate. Anxiety and fear of making mistakes can prevent learners from actively using a foreign language.

Songs can create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere. Group singing allows students to participate collectively, reducing the pressure placed on individual learners. Rhythm, repetition, and movement can also make classroom interaction more dynamic.

For younger learners, songs accompanied by gestures and physical movement can be particularly effective. Activities such as clapping, pointing, dancing, or performing actions connected with vocabulary can combine language learning with physical activity.

Thus, songs can support not only linguistic development but also emotional engagement and classroom interaction.

Methodological Model for Working with an English Song

An effective song-based lesson should have a clear structure. The following model can be adapted according to learners' age and proficiency level.

Stage 1: Introduction

The teacher presents the title, performer, or topic of the song and asks students to make predictions.

Stage 2: Pre-teaching vocabulary

Important words and expressions are introduced through pictures, definitions, examples, or translation where necessary.

Stage 3: First listening

Students listen to understand the general meaning without completing complicated tasks.

Stage 4: Detailed listening

Students complete a focused activity such as a gap-fill exercise, matching task, ordering activity, or comprehension exercise.

Stage 5: Language analysis

The teacher draws attention to selected vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation features, or useful expressions.

Stage 6: Speaking practice

Students discuss the topic, answer questions, express opinions, or create short dialogues using newly learned language.

Stage 7: Singing

Students sing the song individually, in pairs, in groups, or as a whole class.

Stage 8: Follow-up activity

Learners can write a short summary, create new verses, prepare a presentation, or use vocabulary from the song in their own sentences.

This structure transforms a song from a passive listening activity into an integrated language-learning task.

English Songs for Young Learners

Songs are especially valuable in teaching children because young learners generally respond positively to rhythm, repetition, movement, and visual stimuli.

Examples of songs frequently used in English-language classrooms include:

“ABC Song”;

“I See Something Blue”;

“Greeting Song”;

“Ten in the Bed”;

“Rain, Rain, Go Away”;
“The Animals on the Farm”;
“Put on Your Shoes”;
“One Little Finger”;
“If You Are Happy”;
“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Such songs can be used to teach alphabet letters, numbers, colors, animals, body parts, clothing, emotions, actions, and everyday expressions.

For example, a song about animals can be combined with flashcards and movement. Students can identify an animal when they hear its name, repeat the word, imitate its movement, and subsequently use the word in a simple sentence.

Similarly, action songs can be used to teach imperatives and everyday vocabulary. Learners can perform the action while hearing the corresponding expression, creating a direct association between language and physical activity.

The Teacher's Role

The effectiveness of song-based learning depends significantly on the teacher's methodological decisions. Simply playing a song in class does not automatically produce meaningful learning outcomes.

The teacher should: establish a clear learning objective, select an age- and level-appropriate song, identify potentially difficult vocabulary, prepare pre-listening activities, design purposeful listening tasks, provide opportunities for language production, monitor learner participation, provide feedback, connect the song with the broader lesson topic.

The teacher should also avoid overloading learners with too many tasks. The purpose of a song-based activity is to facilitate learning, not to turn an enjoyable resource into a complicated examination.

Discussion

The pedagogical value of English songs can be understood through their ability to integrate several dimensions of language learning. First, songs provide repeated exposure to language. Second, they combine verbal input with rhythm and melody. Third, they provide opportunities for listening and pronunciation practice. Fourth, they can introduce culturally meaningful content. Finally, they can increase learner engagement.

The main advantage of song-based instruction is therefore its integrative character. A single song can serve as a source of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, listening comprehension, speaking practice, and cultural discussion.

At the same time, effectiveness depends on methodological implementation. A teacher who simply plays a song without preparation or follow-up may achieve entertainment but limited language-learning outcomes. By contrast, carefully planned pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities can transform the same material into a comprehensive pedagogical resource.

Conclusion

English songs represent a valuable and flexible resource for foreign-language education. Their pedagogical potential extends beyond entertainment and relaxation. When carefully selected and appropriately integrated into a lesson, songs can support vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation development, listening comprehension, grammatical awareness, speaking practice, motivation, and intercultural learning.

The combination of language, rhythm, repetition, melody, and emotion makes songs particularly suitable for learners who may find conventional language-learning activities monotonous. They can create a positive classroom atmosphere and encourage students to participate more actively in language practice.

For young learners, children's songs can be especially effective because they combine simple language with repetition, movement, rhythm, and visual support. For older learners, authentic English-language songs can provide exposure to natural expressions, cultural references, and different varieties of spoken English.

Therefore, the use of songs should be regarded not as an occasional recreational activity but as a purposeful methodological technique within a broader communicative approach to foreign-language teaching. Properly planned song-based activities can turn vocabulary practice, pronunciation training, listening exercises, and grammatical revision into meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

In the modern educational environment, where learners have unprecedented access to English-language music through digital technologies, teachers can make productive use of this existing interest. The song can become not only a source of enjoyment but also a bridge between classroom learning and authentic English-language communication. In this sense, the familiar idea that a song can help people “build and live” can be extended to language education: a well-chosen song can help learners listen, understand, remember, communicate, and ultimately develop greater confidence in using English.

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