

Implementing Songs In The Process Of Foreign Language Teaching

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Annotation: This article is devoted to problem of students' improving their interest for learning English language, which may appear especially in language universities. The purpose of this article was to identify the ways of teaching and enhancing language learner's skills through songs.

Key words: implementing, song, language learner, develop, teaching, activity, appropriate, attention.

Recent researches in the field of foreign language teaching have pointed out that students' motivation and interest are among the most important factors for the learning of a foreign language. There are several means to improve the teaching effectiveness and to raise the interest and motivation of the students. Recorded tapes, filmstrips, sound films, songs, comics, newspapers and magazines are all familiar to teachers and students and they have proved to be, in most cases, very effective because they are strongly related to everyday life.

Among these teaching aids, pop and folk song are materials that best reflect young people's concerns as they often relate to important trends in modern society. Young people enjoy original folk and pop songs because of their authentic cultural content .

Music and language share various characteristics. On the one hand, both come from the processing of sounds; on the other hand, they are used together by authors/speakers to express a message, although language is much more accurate than music, whose effect is principally emotional. In addition, music and language have intrinsic characteristics in common, for example pitch, volume, prominence,

stress, tone, rhythm and pauses. A further shared characteristic of language and music is that we learn both of them through exposure. No language can be acquired without oral or written input (or visual input, in the case of sign language), and in a similar fashion we acquire our notions of music from what we hear around us.

Songs have been part of the human experience for as long as we can remember. Humans use songs daily, be it in bars, in the shower, listening to the car radio, etc. Therefore, songs have become an essential part of our language experience, and if used in coordination with language they can be of great value. Music is used by teachers to help second language learners acquire a foreign language. It has been reported to help foreign language learners to acquire vocabulary and grammar, improve their spelling and develop the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Songs usually stick to the students' minds, and unlike anything else; are not forgotten so easily. Therefore, the use of songs in a classroom should be to teachers' advantage, providing a number of various activities to practice listening comprehension.

“Songs often contain authentic, natural language -not stilted language found in many student texts”, wrote Dale Griffie and we absolutely agree with his statement. Songs contain the power of music as well as the power of lyrics.

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modern society. Young people enjoy original folk and pop songs because of their authentic cultural content.

Developing reading skill through songs: Many students and even language teachers underplay the role of reading in the learning process. As our research has shown, students find reading the easiest skill and perhaps that is the reason why they sometimes think they do not need to practice it as often as speaking or listening. What they do not realize is that reading is not a passive skill – it requires as much of our activity and effort as the other skills and that a well prepared reading exercise can significantly support also our speaking, writing and listening proficiency. Foreign language texts surround us on the Internet, in schools or in the shops and therefore we should not underestimate the power of the written word.

Songs and song lyrics can provide a variety of reading activities. Here are some of them:

- reading a text related to the band or the theme of the song (either before or after the listening)
- skimming through the gapped lyrics and predicting answers
- reading the lyrics and predicting the tone/mood/melody of the song
- reading the lyrics and guessing the song's title or the performer

Reading should always be purposeful – students should be given clear instructions to know what to focus on. We must also bear in mind that not every song lyrics are appropriate – for example, abstract lyrics with poetic qualities are more suitable for advanced learners than for beginners. Nevertheless, if carefully chosen, song lyrics can provide a valuable authentic reading material.

Developing listening skill through song: “We tend to take listening for granted. We only become aware of what remarkable feats of listening we achieve when we are in an unfamiliar listening environment, such as listening to a language in which we have limited proficiency.”

Listening is the most difficult and least favorite skill of all. In comparison to the other receptive activity - reading, “spoken words do not stay still to be scrutinized and puzzled over, as do written words.” However, students realize that listening is important since 32% of them would like to preferably focus on listening activities.

There are several reasons why students find listening to foreign languages in particular, so difficult:

- spelling and pronunciation differ a lot: “Many learners of foreign language to recognize the spoken forms of words that they ‘know’ very well in print or writing.”
- connected speech – students are able to recognize the words in isolation, connected speech poses a big problem though (factors of assimilation, weakening of sounds etc. come into play.)
- rhythmic pattern of foreign languages, rule for putting stress and intonation (while in Uzbek the stress is always changeable.)
- other factors such as poor acoustic conditions or noise can make the listening activity even more stressful for the learners.

As we have already suggested, when not conducted properly, listening can become a very stressful and de-motivating activity. According to Penny Ur, in order to avoid this, we must make several things sure. Firstly, we need to ensure good listening conditions – the recording and the recorder (CD player) must be in perfect condition and we are obligated to guarantee that all students can hear it properly. Secondly, we must pay special attention to pre-listening activities.

Developing writing skill through songs: Written texts are usually more structured than spoken texts (with possible exceptions such as formal speeches which however often exist in written form as well). “Writing demands a greater degree of explicitness, since writers and their readers are separated in time and

space. They therefore can't rely on immediate feedback in order to clear up misunderstandings." We must respect punctuation rules and given layout when writing for example formal letters. Most text genres are associated with stereotypical vocabulary and grammatical constructions. Students need to get familiar with these types of texts to be able to imitate their form in the future. We should stress that the pre-writing and post-writing phases are very important and therefore time-consuming.

Songs can help to develop writing skills in several ways, written texts being both a means and an end of song activities:

- taking notes of the mood of the song – emotional associations aroused in the listeners
- song report
- CD review, concert review
- completing the lyrics
- students can write their own (alternative) lyrics
- writing an essay about the interpreter; about the kind of music students like to listen
- rewriting or/and interpreting the story of the song

Writing is not a typical aim of lesson plans based primarily on listening. We can nevertheless use other activities (reading, listening and speaking) as a springboard to practice both creative and purposeful writing.

Developing speaking skill through songs: Our research has shown that students consider speaking the most important and useful skill. 40% of respondents stated that they would prefer to focus on speaking in their lessons and for 43% of them communication is the main reason for studying foreign language. Indeed, "learners who master the language are called its "speakers".

The obvious solution is to make students talk as much as possible. However getting students to speak is probably the most difficult task teachers can face. Often students feel afraid of being embarrassed by producing mistakes. Last but not least, classroom environment might seem to them artificial, out of touch with real-life situations. In order to prevent these problems, we have to make sure that:

- the topics are carefully chosen and students find them interesting.
- students have something to say – if they seem “stuck”, we can provoke discussion by using pictures, giving them some hints, pre-teaching useful vocabulary etc.
- mother tongue is not used
- classroom conversations are as near to real-life situations as possible.

Listening activities present very good stimuli for classroom discussions. Speaking itself consists of a great deal of listening because it usually takes two to participate in a conversation. That is why these two skills should be practiced together.

Songs can be used as a basis for variety of both pre- and post-listening activities. These are some ideas:

- predicting the lyrics or the mood of the song according to its title
- guessing the name of the song
- giving presentations on students' favorite interpreters, songs and genres; discussing musical preferences and other topics.

Using songs as language learning tasks can help to maximize the potential of songs as teaching and language learning tools. As stated above, there are benefits to using songs in the classroom; however, more often than not, songs are used relatively ineffectively, often as activities between learning. It was stated above that no matter how enjoyable or memorable singing songs can be, singing songs in

itself will not teach learners to use the language and will not give them the ability to communicate in another language.

The list of used literature

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