

Using Songs to Teach English to Young Learners¹

Sezgin ÇOCUK

Mardin Artuklu Univ.
sezgincocuk@gmail.com

Abstract

In today's world, teaching English to children has gained considerable attention and the utilization of songs in language learning of children has become a subject that has increasingly drawn more interests. Studies have shown that the inclusion of songs in language teaching, especially in language teaching programs which are prepared for children contributes to the formation of a more comfortable language learning atmosphere. Besides, technological developments have rendered the utilization of language teaching materials in children's language classes far smoother and more functional. This situation obligates the adaptation and incorporation of technologically-produced materials including songs into language teaching. The aim of this paper is to present a review of the relevant literature that regards the use of songs to teach English to young learners. Besides, reasons for using songs and criteria for the selection of songs that are used in young learners' language classes are provided.

Keywords: Young Learners, Songs, Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Course books that are employed in English courses possess various activities many of which do not interest students, which consequently leads students to lose their concentration on the content of the course and regard it as uninteresting and tedious. In the process of language learning, children endeavor both cognitively and affectively to learn a language. The way they are instructed a language is different than that of adult learners, which means that second language instruction of children obligates their language instructors to possess specific competences and insights. In addition, grammatical structures and explanations that are to be instructed to children need to be handled with extreme caution due to the fact that the attention span of children is rather restricted, which means that appealing and entertaining activities should be provided for them in the course. Similarly, their immediate environment quite interests them. Therefore, English courses of children should be enriched with appealing and charming activities to sustain children's enthusiasm and concentration (Brown, 1994).

1. YOUNG LEARNERS

Each child is regarded as a unique individual that possesses his / her own characteristics and develops independently at different times and different stages. However, children possess similar characteristics that are relevant to their age and basic skills that language teachers should be aware

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of due to the fact that it is quite essential for their language instruction to be much smoother and more straightforward. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) favor the fact that each child develops independently arguing "some children develop early, some later. Some children develop gradually, others in leaps and bounds" (p. 1). If language teachers ignore children's developments regarding their cognition, emotion, language and anatomy and do not have any knowledge, teaching a language to them will be rather compelling. In their attempt to learn a language, YLs will demonstrate distinct behaviors and attributes that language teachers should take into consideration constantly. Pinter (2006) clarifies characteristics of YLs as follows:

- YLs are pupils of pre-school or elementary school.
- Imaginative, fantastic events or things in addition to physical actions quite interest them.
- Even in their native language, YLs narrowly read and write.
- Even though they cannot analyze language, YLs can pick out meaningful items.
- They quite care about themselves. Others do not interest them much.
- They often approach language holistically.

Harmer (2007) clarifies some characteristics of YLs arguing that YLs learn a language differently than adult learners and YLs do not generally concentrate on learning a language. Rather, they can benefit and learn from everything that is around them and seeing, hearing, touching and interactions are of paramount importance for them to be able to comprehend and learn. Additionally, formal grammar instruction does not interest them and they are often in pursuit of learning the world around them, which as a result makes them quite enthusiastic and curious. What is more, they quite appreciate being praised by their teachers in addition to talking about their own experiences. They cannot concentrate on something longtime due to the fact that their attention span is around ten minutes. When they are not provided with attractive and entertaining activities, they can immediately and simply get bored. Therefore, these characteristics of YLs should be taken into consideration by their language teachers.

Similarly, Slattery and Willis (2001) hold the belief that language teachers should not ignore the characteristics of YLs arguing that such ways as seeing, hearing and doing are quite supportive to their language instruction since they often fail to figure out grammatical explanation. Additionally, non-verbal clues aid YLs in comprehending a new situation and they often attempt to utilize their first language to make themselves clear, which bolsters their language instruction. Imitation aids them in learning new sounds. Naturally, they are quite curious and keen on playing games and using their imagination, yet their attention span is rather limited. Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) comment on some characteristics of YLs expressing that they are often engaged in activities that require physical effort due to the fact that they possess considerable amount of energy. Although their learning takes place gradually, they forget quickly. Besides, they are quite good at imitating. When an activity quite interests them, their attention span can be surprisingly long, yet they can simply lose their attention, which results in boredom. They are quite interested in their own world.

Halliwell (1992) expresses some characteristics of YLs arguing that YLs start a language course with some knowledge and ideas that they already have. While they attempt to learn a language, they endeavor to exploit their skills and they do possess characteristics that aid in language learning. YLs can utilize their rather limited knowledge skillfully and creatively and their unconscious learning is much more dominant than their conscious learning. Besides, they often attempt to render what they are engaged in much funnier. Smoothly, they can figure out separate words and besides, they can exploit their imagination.

Language teachers who teach English to YLs should take some assumptions relevant to their language instruction into consideration. Life experiences of YLs are quite important for them in that those experiences aid YLs in learning. Piaget in Hudelson (1991: 256) argues that YLs who are pupils of primary school are usually at a stage that is described as concrete operational, from which the conclusion can be inferred that those pupils highly appreciate touching to learn and besides, their own life experiences are quite essential for them. They are quite often keen on dealing with objects around them. Additionally, the fact that YLs are placed into groups in which pupils are acquainted with each other bolsters up their language instruction. Similarly, Vygotsky in Hudelson (1991: 257) says that when YLs are placed into groups in which some pupils are better than others, they will benefit from this, which justifies that language teachers should provide such contexts for YLs. Moreover, interaction is quite informative for YLs. Mercer and Mercer (2001) clarify some specific characteristics of YLs that language teachers should be aware of so that YLs can be included in the process of learning English. Some crucial characteristics of YLs are as follows:

- YLs are quite self-centered. That means that they are quite interested in their own world.
- Their families and peers may aid them in learning.
- Young pupils quite appreciate playing games. While they are playing, they both enjoy and learn.
- They are indeed interested in new experiences to learn and they are often keen on imitating the adults around them. As they keep imitating adults, they will soon start to converse naturally what adults say since YLs are not afraid of making mistakes so much as adult learners.
- They often learn through such senses as seeing, touching and hearing. Such senses are quite essential for them.
- Language instructors of YLs should provide them with attractive activities to sustain their attention span due to the fact that YLs possess a rather restricted attention span.

When language teachers teach English to YLs, they should take the aforementioned characteristics of them into consideration and they should be able to obtain some essential conclusions regarding their characteristics and their language instruction. Harmer (2001) argues that language teachers of YLs should provide distinct and rich activities that aid young pupils in learning. Besides, teachers should develop good and sincere relations with YLs and they should design flexible and attractive activities and practices that prevent pupils from losing their attention and motivation. When a child comes to the world, he / she is instinctively qualified to learn language (Halliwell, 1992). They do possess some characteristics that aid in learning and language teachers should be aware of those characteristics to aid pupils in exploiting them most ideally. Young learners' holistic approach to language prevents them from being able to analyze language and their learning is mostly unconscious (Halliwell, 1992; Cameron, 2001; Slatterly & Willis, 2001). Absolutely, YLs should not be provided with activities and practices that require them to analyze language due to the fact that such practices and activities will not be much rewarding for them (Lobo, 2003). Additionally, language teachers of YLs should create a meaningful context for them since they are quite interested in comprehending the meaning of a language item.

YLs can learn a language item swiftly, yet they forget it that fast, which is quite a common characteristic of YLs (Kedde, 1997; Scott & Ytreberg, 1990; Slatterly & Willis, 2001). Repetition is of paramount significance for YLs in that if they are not provided with activities and practices that possess repetitions, they will not keep what they have learnt in their mind longtime (Lobo, 2003). Language instructors should "constantly recycle new language" and "add new things and use words that they will not know" (Slatterly and Willis, 2001: 4). The short attention and concentration span of YLs is a rather major issue (Holden, 1980, Wood, 1988; Slatterly & Willis, 2001; Scott & Ytreberg,

1990; Cameron, 2001; Brewster et al., 2002). They cannot concentrate on something longtime, which results in the fact that they are simply distracted. Especially, when they are exposed to too demanding activities, they can immediately lose their motivation (Cameron, 2001). Scott and Ytreberg (1990) argue that providing YLs with attractive, colorful and rich activities and practices is quite essential. Moreover, YLs are quite occupied with the world around them, which renders it important for teachers to expose YLs to both the spoken world and physical world. Feeling amused and relaxed is quite indispensable for YLs. When language is not presented in an attractive way, it will not appeal to YLs, which as a result makes them feel unmotivated.

2. EXPLOITATION OF SONGS IN YOUNG LEARNERS' ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

The flexibility of most songs renders them quite worth using in young learners' English courses and songs possess many functions to be integrated into language instruction. The use of songs to teach English advances young learners' listening skill in addition to pronunciation, which will potentially improve their speaking skill (Murphey, 1992). Songs can also be employed to teach vocabulary and grammatical structures as well as the culture of the people who speak the target language (Murphey, 1992). The most remarkable aspect and potential of songs is the amusement that they provide for YLs, which is of paramount importance in their English instruction. Additionally, songs efficiently render English courses more intriguing for YLs, which enhances pupils' motivation.

When YLs are presented a new language through songs, they are to feel quite delighted and self-sufficient due to the fact that the tedious and monotonous atmosphere in a traditional language course is broken. The integration of songs into language instruction of YLs is quite beneficial for them since they acquire and learn new vocabulary and grammatical patterns that they will later attempt to use to communicate (Krouse, 1988). Le Roux (2002) favors the integration of songs into language instruction of YLs since songs make YLs feel more relaxed and besides, songs arouse positive feelings and attitudes in YLs.

Purcel (1992) argues that when pupils are required to listen to the same story and dialogue repeatedly to pick up new vocabulary and phrases, it is a prevailing issue that they will simply get bored. However, listening to the same song repeatedly does not bore pupils that much due to the fact that songs possess rhythmical and melodic patterns. Besides, songs advance young learners' listening skill since they provide pupils with practices of distinct intonation and melody. Murphey argues that songs get embedded into the mind quite smoothly and "songs work on our short and long-term memory", which renders them quite worth utilizing in language courses (1992, p. 3).

Practices for producing new sounds are quite intriguing for YLs even if such practices require them to spend a great deal of effort. Minimal-pair practices, which are preferred and employed by many language teachers, are rarely attractive for pupils. However, practices of new sounds through songs do not bore and tire pupils so much as minimal-pair drills do. Most songs like 'Girls and Boys Come Out and Play' naturally include similarities between the rhythms that accompany consecutive beats in them and the stress patterns of daily English (Richards, 1969, p. 162). Moriya (1988) finds songs quite efficient for Asian pupils who learn English to be able to practice the pronunciation of English without being challenged too much by compelling phonemic distinctions. Ohata (2004) points out such compelling areas as syllables, vowels and consonants Japanese pupils who learn English confront. Practices for pronunciation through songs interest and thus amuse pupils more than other routine pronunciation drills.

The fact that most songs are based on a topic creates the necessary context for pupils to grasp new vocabulary. The song 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' is quite a good resource to teach and practice body parts. Songs that are written for YLs consist of monosyllabic words that are frequently repeated, which exposes pupils regularly to those words and thus leads to better vocabulary acquisition. Most songs that are written especially for YLs possess grammatical patterns and

sentences that handily get placed into pupils' mind and songs are worth exploiting to review a topic or topics that students have learnt in the class. The song, for example, 'Where is Thumbkin?' can be exploited to practice Wh- questions. Murphey (1992) argues that in a typical song, each expression is followed by cessations long enough for pupils to grasp the language and English teachers should adopt plain and regular songs.

Jolly (1975) holds the opinion that the integration of songs into language instruction creates the relevant context for pupils to better acquire and understand the culture of the language in which a song is written and songs are described as the mirror of a culture. According to Shen, "language and music are interwoven in songs to communicate cultural reality in a unique way" (2009, p. 88). Songs that reflect the culture of the target language are quite effective for adult learners. However, songs that include intriguing historic events relevant to the target language can be exploited in language courses of YLs.

Most songs comprise repetition and rhythmical patterns and the integration of songs into language learning and acquisition process of YLs renders it quite entertaining, which is regarded as the most remarkable aspect of songs. YLs are quite keen on songs and besides, they do not know anything regarding language learning anxiety, which is experienced by most second language beginners (Krashen, 1981). This fact renders the integration of songs into language instruction quite indispensable and essential. Cameron (2001) strongly backs up the utilization of songs to teach English to YLs. Additionally, Johnstone (2002) argues that young learners' exposure to songs in the process of language learning is to contribute to their language instruction remarkably. Additionally, Demirel (2004) strongly advises the utilization of songs for listening and pronunciation practices in addition to dictation in language instruction of YLs. Cullen (1998, 1999) states that songs are worth exploiting in English courses due to the fact that YLs generally appreciate listening to songs. They possess positive feelings and attitudes toward songs and music. This renders songs worth employing to set a relaxing and non-intimidating atmosphere in the class and help pupils overcome their hesitation and shyness in the process of language learning.

The attention span of YLs is rather limited, which requires language teachers to provide YLs with various and attractive activities in the class. The fact that YLs should participate in the course when they are quite sure that they are ready rather than when their teachers ask them to participate is of paramount importance and songs provide this opportunity for YLs (Djigunovich and Vilke, 2000). Songs are ideal tools for YLs to repeat and practice in language courses. Without songs, it is quite possible that pupils will regard repeating and practicing language as rather dull, yet when they are provided with opportunities to repeat it through singing activities, they are to feel much more relaxed and amused and in return they are to be more familiar with the language (Rumley, 1999). Additionally, Sharpe (2001) argues that as pupils are engaged in singing activities, they are gradually to absorb the language and besides, songs set authentic opportunities for pupils to use the language in high spirits. Songs are indispensable for YLs both inside and outside school. Basing language instruction on this indispensable source of enjoyment for YLs normalizes language instruction and renders it less stressful.

Using materials of high quality to teach English to YLs is of paramount importance. Among materials that are worth exploiting in English courses of YLs, songs are regarded as quite valuable tools in that they are authentic sources that provide YLs with considerable amount of aural input, which is of great importance for young learners' language instruction. Much research provides evidence that clarifies the benefits of using song in language instruction of YLs (Schoepp, 2001; Mora, 2000; Liu, 2006).

3. THREE REASONS FOR EXPLOITING SONGS IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Songs are worth employing to teach English to both YLs and adult learners when English teachers take their linguistic skills and interests into consideration. In the process of their intellectual development, children's musical intelligence develops more clearly, which aids them in receiving sounds and rhythms more (Davies, 2000). This is regarded as one of the reasons that render songs worth exploiting in language courses. Additionally, Schoepp (2001) argues that there are three main reasons for employing songs in language instruction; affective reasons, cognitive reasons and linguistic reasons.

3.1. Affective Reasons

Stephen Krashen (1982) developed the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which justifies the influences of affective factors on language instruction, which is of paramount importance for language teachers as it explains pupils' failure and success in language learning. Pupils should possess positive feelings and attitudes toward language learning and English teachers are supposed to provide pupils with a learning environment that will arouse favorable feelings and attitudes in them. Krashen (1982) argues that pupils' affective filter must be lowered for the best language instruction. Pupils with a lowered affective filter are to develop positive feelings and attitudes toward language learning. Contrarily, when pupils' affective filter is high and strong, they are not to feel motivated to learn, which means that they will not search for input. Language teachers are responsible for setting a relaxing and non-intimidating atmosphere that will lower pupils' affective filter. Songs are regarded among tools that aid in lowering pupils' affective filter, which will as a result bolster language instruction. The utilization of songs in language instruction can boost pupils' awareness and interests in addition to motivation.

Sharpe (2001) argues that a suitable language learning atmosphere has to be provided to pupils to lower their affective filter and songs can be exploited to lower pupils' affective filter and promote language instruction. Songs advance pupils' four skills of English and additionally, Sarıçoban and Metin (2000) propose the utilization of songs to lower pupils' affective filter.

Eken (1996, p. 46) gives several reasons for employing songs in primary schools as in the following:

- To teach and practice a grammar rule, topic and lexis.
- To practice and promote listening activities.
- To promote pupils' imagination and creativity.
- To render the class more anxiety-free and non-threatening.
- To render language instruction much funnier and richer.
- To stimulate pupils to express their feelings and attitudes.
- To disclose pupils' mistakes more directly.

3.2. Cognitive Reasons

Music enables both hemispheres of the brain to function jointly connecting the functions of the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere, which renders learning much faster and smoother. The brain of a person functions further upon hearing music. Besides, music has been proven to aid in thinking intellectually (Davies, 2000). What is more, the exploitation of songs in language instruction promotes pupils' automaticity, which is regarded as the primary cognitive reason for exploiting songs. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, p. 473) give the definition of the term, automaticity, as "a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language

rapidly without pauses". When pupils are instructed language through songs, this will aid them in improving language automatically. In the past, it was a traditional belief that language automaticity of pupils in a non-communicative environment would be improved through just repetition drills, yet the communicative teaching methodology argues that language automaticity can be improved through different ways rather than repetition. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, p. 476) argue that language teachers should "place students in an environment in which it is appropriate to use target utterances in a genuinely communicative fashion". The repetitive and consistent nature of songs creates opportunities for pupils to develop their language automaticity.

3.3. Linguistic Reasons

There are linguistic reasons for using songs in language courses especially in primary schools. Most songs provide pupils with the language that they are to face in life rather than the formal language that they are taught in the class. Domoney and Harris (1993) and Little (1983) argue that music is the key source that exposes pupils to English outside the class, which remarkably promotes language instruction. When they listen to their favorite songs, it is quite constant that they will desire to listen to the song when they step out of the class. Songs' repetitive nature aids pupils in developing their fluency of colloquial English. Besides, songs can extend pupils' vocabulary setting a convenient context in which pupils can internalize new vocabulary quite well.

4. CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF SONGS

Songs are worth using for language instruction. However, there appear to be issues that are relevant to the use of songs in the class. Terhune (1997: 8) discloses some of them as follows:

- Pop songs do not possess any scientific value, which causes such songs to be regarded as ineffective materials by teachers and pupils.
- Students possess different types of intelligence and learning style which cause trouble for learners who are not interested in music.
- Physical conditions of a class and its being lack of technological devices such as a high quality sound system pose difficulties.
- Pupils possess different tastes relevant to types of music.
- Songs, which are grammatically compelling for students, cause issues.
- Inappropriate sentences and words in a song create problems.
- Excessive repetitions in a song can cause boredom rendering it ineffective.

Jensen (2000) considers that some teachers may not have been trained enough to exploit songs fully in language courses. Besides, teacher training programs do not provide anything useful regarding the exploitation of songs in language instruction. When pupils are listening to grammatically compelling parts in a song, it is a major problem that the teacher cannot slow down the song. Additionally, it is a main problem for teachers not to be able to increase the tempo of a song when excessively repeated parts are played.

When English teachers know how to exploit songs well, many of these problems will disappear. Terhune (1997) expresses that when exploited effectively, songs are quite rewarding materials for language instruction. Students may ignore the educational value of songs and they may lose their concentration when they are incessantly exposed to songs without relevant and intriguing activities. Therefore, language teachers have to design attractive activities relevant to songs to prove their efficiency to pupils. To conclude, for the elimination of such difficulties and to avoid utilizing songs

ineffectively, there are several criteria that should be taken into consideration by language teachers in the selection of songs. Pupils' interests, ages and language levels are of paramount significance in the selection of songs. Sariçoban and Metin (2000) hold the belief that songs possessing a story, cultural components of the target language or incessant repetitions are quite worth exploiting. Griffe (1992) mentions four essential criteria in the selection of songs as follows:

- The number of pupils in a classroom, their ages, interests and the time allocated to the course should be taken into consideration.
- Teachers' interests, ages, and the purpose of utilizing songs should be considered well.
- Physical conditions of a classroom, equipment in it and being able to design a course plan compatible to the song are major issues.
- Type of music is also significance.

Songs that are to be utilized in the class should not comprise embarrassing components for pupils. According to Sariçoban and Metin (2000), there are two categories of songs; songs that are convenient for adults and songs that are suitable for YLs. Popular songs that are culturally rich and provide grammatical structures should be utilized for adult learners while songs that are quite familiar and internationally popular should be picked out for YLs. Griffe (1992) believes that brief but to the point songs that are also accompanied by drawings and visuals should be employed in the instruction of YLs. However, lengthy and speedy songs may be convenient for adult learners and students with a high level of language proficiency. Besides, the sound of a song should be clear and recognizable for pupils.

Murphey (1992) argues that any ordinary song is worth using in the class and can be somewhat motivating, yet songs especially trendy songs that pupils typically desire to listen to are to make the most remarkable contributions to language instruction. Often, such types of song as rap and heavy metal are not adopted by English teachers due to the heavy music that renders the vocabulary in them obscure. Besides, such songs often provoke poor feelings and attitudes in the learner. Added to this, songs containing abusive words should not be utilized. Some songs can be rather demanding and compelling for pupils to comprehend, yet such songs can be exploited when supplementary materials that will aid in comprehension are utilized (Abbott, 2002). Additionally, Sibarah (1999) argues that songs especially ones that are pertinent and supportive to the content and object of the course should be incorporated into language instruction. When a song that possesses grammatical patterns, vocabulary and a topic relevant to the content of the course is utilized, it is to be the most direct and specific complement to the course (Griffe, 1992).

There are significant factors that should be taken into consideration by language teachers in the process of song selection. Firstly, pupils' age, interests and language level should be top priority of teachers. As to English teachers, they should adopt songs that they themselves are to find appealing so that they can pass their ardor and willingness to pupils. Additionally, songs consisting of rather compelling and demanding vocabulary, grammatical patterns, pronunciation and repetition should not be adopted (Abbott, 2002). Teachers should select songs, which are consistent with the grammatical pattern, vocabulary and topic that the teacher plans to teach, which will bolster the lesson. The fact that pupils are included in the selection of song is of paramount importance for them to participate in the course further. Finally, such technological devices as CDs, CD player, overhead projector or the internet should be available in the class for the use of songs.

In the selection of songs that will be utilized in the class, here are some questions that should be taken seriously by language teachers (Hancock, 1998);

- Will pupils enjoy the song?

- Will the song be convenient for the language level of pupils?
- Will the song be relevant to the grammatical structure that will be instructed?
- Will pupils be able to hear the lyrics of the song clearly?
- Are there obvious characters in the song?
- Is there a clear theme in the song?
- Is the pronunciation of the song natural?

Songs that are appealing to both teachers and pupils should be integrated into language instruction due to the fact that such songs are to have the most remarkable effects on learning. To summarize, the most convenient songs to utilize in language courses are ones that bolster the content of the course and both teachers and pupils appreciate (Griffe, 1992). Lems (1996) argues that in the selection of song, English teachers should be quite sure that they themselves are to enjoy the selected songs. Additionally, songs that are adopted should consist of comprehensible vocabulary and possess enough repetitions for pupils to be able to practice English orally. Clearly, the fact that pupils will find the selected songs worth listening to outside the class is of great significance and besides, the language proficiency of pupils should be taken into consideration. For pupils with lower level of English, songs that contain less vocabulary should be adopted. "Songs for students of the intermediate level should contain manageable load of vocabulary, limited total text length and should not be heavily embedded" (Lems, 1996, p. 2).

5. STUDIES PERFORMED ON THE USE OF SONGS FOR YLS

There are studies that regard the effects of authentic language teaching materials on students' language development. However, more studies that are conducted empirically are needed in this context (Razmjoo, Mehrpur & Darban, 2012). The utilization of songs to teach English to young learners is quite a common practice of English teachers (Ara, 2009; Millington, 2011). In many countries, songs that are practical and functional to use in the classroom have had significant effects on a number of approaches to English teaching (Edelenbos, Johnstone, & Kubanek 2006). Furthermore, more significance should be given to the communicative side of the language young learners learn and games and songs should be incorporated into their language instruction (Ersöz, 2007). According to Butler and Newman (2008) and Pindale (2013), there are many studies that justify the use of songs in language instruction. Additionally, studies that were carried out empirically revealed that songs simplified oral production much more than other traditional drills and effectively enhanced students' motivation (Ajibad & Ndububa, 2008). Hallam (2010) argues that learning English through songs possesses positive effects on children's socialization, intellectual development and the way they act in the classroom.

Additionally, songs have constructive roles in the development of children's brain (Rauscher et al., 1997). In the process of language learning, listening and speaking practices as well as singing activities are of great significance and these practices are not as compelling as reading and writing activities. Additionally, songs have great emphasis on listening, which leads to the fact that they can be utilized advantageously to teach a new language to children (Şevik, 2011). A study was carried out in Malaysia regarding the effects of song videos on language learning and the findings of the study indicated that when students learnt English through song videos, their vocabulary knowledge improved notably (Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, Singh, Azman & Souriyavongsa, 2011). Researchers who were interested in the effect of songs on language learning described songs as essential foreign language teaching materials (Barry & Pellissier, 1995).

Tse (2015) conducted a study in Malaysia to find out primary school English teachers' perceptions about the utilization of songs to teach English. The study revealed that English teachers who were teaching in primary schools supported the incorporation of songs into English courses and they expressed that when children learnt English through singing activities, they had many more opportunities to improve their language skills. However, English teachers argued that they had difficulty in finding appropriate songs that were relevant to each topic. Additionally, Horn (2009) found that the use of songs in English courses in African primary schools enhanced children's English marks on the post-test, which supported the integration of songs into English courses. Following a musical project aiming to utilize English songs to promote students' oral production, Cifuentes (2006) reported that "students showed behaviors, emotions or feelings particularly to interest in or enthusiasm for the work the activities proposed" (p. 52).

Lestari (2011) used music and English songs to find out whether learning English through songs and music would improve Indonesian students' pronunciation skill or not. The findings indicated that the students who learnt English through songs and music pronounced better than the students learning English through traditional ways. Similarly, Ratnasari (2007) conducted a study in which children songs were utilized to teach pronunciation. The findings of the study revealed that songs had remarkable effects on the improvement of Indonesian students' pronunciation. Kusriani (2011) investigated the effects of songs on the development of English pronunciation and reported that all language learners, especially young learners, appreciated learning English through songs. Furthermore, their English pronunciation got better. In a similar study, Moradi and Shahrokhi (2014) found that songs remarkably improved Iranian children's English pronunciation, stress and intonation. The findings of the post-test in the research revealed that the children who learnt English through songs considerably overcame their pronunciation problems.

Suksamiti (1994) conducted a study to learn whether learning English through songs enhanced students' language achievement level and found that the children who learnt English through songs got higher marks than those who learnt the language through course books. Similarly, Ratwongkiri (2002) implemented a study whose results indicated that the children who learnt English via songs obtained higher marks than the children learning English through the Total Physical Response method. Additionally, Phuwarat (2003) conducted a study in which a pre-test and a post-test relevant to listening skill were used. The findings showed that children's listening test marks increased significantly. In a similar study, Sukket (2007) investigated the effects of songs on the improvement of speaking skill and vocabulary and found that when children learnt English through songs, their speaking ability and vocabulary knowledge improved remarkably. In addition, Kongamonsaichon (2009) found that learning English through songs and stories improved primary school students' listening and speaking abilities as well as their vocabulary acquisition.

Şevik (2014) conducted a study regarding young learners' beliefs about classroom songs. The results of the study revealed that songs improved children's listening skill and young learners expressed that they appreciated learning English through songs. Additionally, children who participated in the study reported that they could learn and recall vocabulary more easily when they learnt English via songs and they felt more motivated thanks to songs during the course. However, children in the same study disagreed that their English teachers frequently used songs to teach English to them. This disagreement supports the finding that in language instruction of young learners in Turkey, English teachers frequently do not utilize songs (Şevik, 2011). Kahraman (2008) investigated the effects of songs on the improvement of listening ability and found that songs improved students' listening skill.

Utilakova (2012) conducted a study on the use of songs to teach English to primary school students in Prague. Young learners reported that they felt more motivated to participate in the course when they learnt English through songs. Additionally, children expressed that songs in English courses helped them recognize English words and their English pronunciation improved. Furthermore,

primary school students in the study stated that learning English through songs improved their communication ability. Kuattiningsih (2008) utilized songs to teach English words to Indonesian grade 2 students and observed that when songs were incorporated into English courses, they simplified children's vocabulary learning in addition to helping the teacher control the children. Additionally, songs rendered English courses more rewarding in terms of motivating children to participate in the course.

Li and Brand (2008) conducted an empirical study. The conclusions of the study indicated that lyrics and music in a song remarkably enhanced students' grades. Gorjian, Alipour and Saffarian (2012) implemented a study that showed that using songs in English courses had significant effects on vocabulary learning. Ludke, Ferreira and Overy (2014) investigated the effect of singing activities on memorizing sentences and obtained the result that singing activities were the most useful way for students to learn sentences. Kömür, Saraç and Şeker (2005) carried out a study that aimed at finding the views of English teachers and students in primary schools about songs. The results revealed that songs were utilized hardly any in English instruction. However, both teachers and students in the study reported that songs significantly enhanced students' vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, using songs in English courses had a remarkable effect on students' motivation. However, teachers' inability regarding music and the fact that there were not enough materials in English and music courses rendered the utilization of songs difficult.

Şevik (2011) conducted a study concerning primary school English teacher's views about using songs to teach English to children and the results of the research indicated that English teachers in primary schools were strongly in favor of using songs in their English courses. Mostly, they expressed that using songs in English courses encourage children in addition to lowering children's anxiety. According to the teachers, songs are quite significant educational tools that should be essentially included in English curriculum. Additionally, Romero, Bernal and Olivares (2012) implemented a study to investigate the effects of songs on Colombian students' motivation to speak English and the results revealed that students described learning English via songs as amusing and appealing. According to Romero et al., (2012, p. 21), *"Songs turn out to be an important part of the daily teaching activities. The combining of curricular activities with music not only helps students to develop speaking, but grammar as well; students can also internalize new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and improve modulation among other oral communication skills."*

Furthermore, the results of their study presented that the integration of songs into English courses enhanced learners' desire to learn English in addition to creating an anxiety-free classroom setting for students to speak. Additionally, in a study, participants, after a seven-day interval, smoothly recognized the proper names in their first language that they had initially learnt through songs (Rainey & Larsen, 2002).

Similarly, Malaysian primary school students appreciated learning English via songs and songs improved their English pronunciation in addition to broadening their vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, songs formed a language learning atmosphere in which children's self-confidence enhanced. Malaysian primary school students reported quite positive opinions about learning English through songs (Seita et al., 2012). In a study conducted on the effects of songs on learning verb forms in French, Ayotte (2004) found that students who learnt the present, future and conditional verb forms through songs performed better and more accurately on the posttest.

To conclude, studies that were carried out both in Turkey and in different parts of the world present results that indicate positive relations between using songs and language learning.

CONCLUSION

In today's world, teaching English to children is of great significance and therefore, children should be provided with a learning atmosphere in which they can learn English more easily and more comfortably. Studies have shown that the use of songs to teach English to young learners improves students' language skills. Additionally, using songs in language classes helps students develop intellectually and socially. Songs provide students with a more relaxing and entertaining atmosphere that increases children's motivation and arouses positive feelings regarding language learning. Therefore, English teachers who teach English to children should use songs and song-related activities in their language courses more.

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