



USING MUSIC AND STORYTELLING IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Abstract

The article deals with the teaching process and studies using music and storytelling to young learners in teaching English to young learners. Stories and music are very important for our psychical health. We learn our mother tongue through stories. So, it is natural to learn foreign language through them as well. Teachers should try to teach their students about language, life and culture through stories.

Keywords: learning styles, songs, rhymes, storytelling, sensitivity, psychological characteristics.

Introduction

Although children learn a language faster than adults, they do not learn through traditional language teaching methods. Through fun activities children can learn a language better as learning becomes natural for them since these activities do not make them conscious that they are learning a language. In Uzbekistan, since a proper learning atmosphere has not been ensured in children's English classes according to children's interest and psychological characteristics, benefit is yet to come from the compulsory English education at the primary level. In order to appeal to young learners' learning styles, songs, rhymes, storytelling and games can be very effective tools for teaching children a foreign language. These tools can be used in children's classes to utilize their natural ability to learn a language. This paper introduces the benefits of some interesting tools in teaching children English and also suggests incorporating them at the primary level English curriculum in Uzbekistan.

In order to get children involved in the language class and to ensure a natural anxiety-free language learning environment certain techniques could be applied. One of the best ways of getting children drawn in the language class is through fun activities. Among the fun activities songs, rhymes and games are the most effective ones to be used for children in the language class. Also they are fantastic materials for the language teachers to use with young learners because of their unlimited benefits.

Music has always been a vast part in people's lives: it is ubiquitous, it surrounds us everywhere, and it is broadly accepted all around the world. Regardless of the extent to



which the capacity and sensitivity to music are programmed in the human brain or are by-products of other authorities and tendencies in the culture of music, without a doubt it plays a fully central and fundamental role. It seems that the passion for music is deeply rooted in human nature. Sacks points out: "we the people, we are a species to a lesser extent in music or speaking". Presently, avoiding music is not an easy task, for it belongs to many aspects of life. Various kinds of music may be heard in almost every place and during performing important events such as Olympic Games. Seeing school, it is said that using songs during classes is not so popular. It is perceived in that way because for majority people listening to music is connected with spare time, not with working or learning. According to McDermott and Hauser, music may be found in every human culture. Namely, we can hear it almost everywhere: while listening to the radio, when watching television and on different family occasions, such as birthday parties, wedding ceremonies, at a funeral, in restaurants, shops, cars, and even in the streets. The authors define music as, on the one hand strange, but on the other hand, a marvellous phenomenon since it has been for such a long time and still surrounds people.

Materials

It is common knowledge that music can create a wide range of feelings. Moreover, music is so accepted that people all over the world pay a lot of money for musical business. People may naturally make use of music and songs for their own behave in everyday life. Primarily, they may simply listen to music at any time and at any place. Next, there is a possibility to sing without listening to any recording. Still, some people like humming or whistling while listening to a piece of music. Not only people listen, but they also talk about it, as music seems to be quite a common topic especially among teenagers who share their opinions about the latest news connected with artists or brand-new video clips they have recently seen. Some people find it useful to use songs and music to make a social environment, form a feeling of partnership or just dance. All of the cases mentioned above show that music is really important phenomenon in our lives because it may be with us everywhere, whether we want it or not. Definitely, it has been with people for long times and has become part of our habitual lives.

Very often music is the main source of English outside the classroom. Thus, using it in the lesson seems to be a good idea. There can be distinguished affective and cognitive rationale for playing a song during a lesson. As a matter of fact, affective reasons are connected with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. In short, it gives an explanation why some learners learn and others do not. The crucial thing is that students need to develop a positive attitude towards learning. Krashen has it that: "for effective learning the affective filter is must be weak. A weak affective filter means that a positive attitude



to learning is present.” Hence teachers’ task is to provide a positive atmosphere favorable for learning. In this aspect music and songs may be one of the methods for obtaining weak affective filter enumerates eight reasons for the use of song in a language classroom. Firstly, a song may be used to present a topic, new vocabulary or a language point. Then, it may also be used as a practice of lexis. Beyond question, songs can be used as a material for extensive and intensive listening. Some teachers may use them to focus on frequent learner errors in a more indirect way. Not to mention that songs are a perfect source for stimulating discussions about feelings and attitudes. Learners may talk over with another in pairs or in small groups what happened in the song and then share their opinions with the rest of students. Additionally, songs may arrange a relaxed classroom atmosphere and contribute to fun and variety in language teaching. Finally, songs may be said to encourage the use of imagination and creativity during foreign language lessons. Songs also give a chance to develop automaticity which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the classroom. Automaticity is defined as “a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses”. To put it in other words, songs may help to automate the language improvement process. Essentially, the students should be placed in an environment in which it is possible to use the target language in a communicative way. As a matter of fact, the nature of songs is said to be quite repetitive, logical and persistent. Some teachers might not be aware of possibilities of using songs in the classroom. They may feel that such activities are not appropriate for classes which often cause discipline problems. To add more, lecturers may think that using music may create chaos or students may be reluctant to sing. Stanislawczyk and Yavener are of the opinion that a song is an advantageous tool and a teacher should take advantage of it during linguistic practice. She also emphasizes the importance of the engagement learners get when listening to songs or creating own lyrics: “In the era when guitar players are ubiquitous, music must be an integral part of language study. It is a part of classroom activities from the start of the work in language, supplying additional language learning and cultural insights. At the advanced level, students become even more actively involved in music by creating songs”. The passage below attempts to present rationale for using song activities in English foreign language classrooms.

Fundamentally, popular songs touch the lives of learners, and are connected with their various interests and everyday experiences. Almost all popular songs are related to the same topic of friendship, love, dream, sorrow, and the rest which are the common feelings of people. Since most young people nowadays are interested in a wide range of cultural forms outside classes, songs may be a really motivating and unique teaching tool. Experiencing with films, television, computer games and popular music seems to be



highly motivating. Accordingly, more time and concentration to popular music in English foreign language classroom would surely increase learners' motivation as classroom tasks would reflect on their knowledge, their music and the vocabulary they already know from the songs. Although motivation is absolutely important in learning all school subjects, this is studying a foreign language that makes motivation play a huge role points out that learning a language is a long-term process and learners are in charge of their learning at length. The students need to support their efforts for a long time, very often against numerous failures and difficulties.

Another important factor making a song valuable for an English lesson is that it may create really favourable conditions for learning. Murphy is of the opinion that "the use of music and songs can stimulate very positive associations to the study of a language, which otherwise may only be seen as a laborious task, entailing exams, frustration, and corrections". People usually identify songs with fun, which is why learning through songs is associated with an enjoyable atmosphere. Moreover, music may be used to relax students since for many learning a new language is a new experience. Our mother tongue – our basis of communication, is in some classes forbidden to use and learners may feel lost or helpless. The author also adds that especially instrumental playing silently in the background makes students feel more secure when doing the task at the same time. Songs played in the background when learners read some conversations, are typical of Suggestopaedia. This teaching method was invented by Georgi Lozanow in Bulgaria and its valuable element is music in the background. Essentially, the Suggestopaedia method involves the students' barriers and negative attitudes such as low self-esteem, anxiety or lack of motivation to learning. Meanwhile, students' learning occurs subconsciously and may be amusing for them as well. These are some important features of that teaching technique: a relaxed atmosphere, a classroom positive environment, a new identity of learners, or music activities themselves. Listening to songs is an excellent way of learning about the culture of a specific country, as well as the language that is used inside the cultural community, as language is one of the branches of culture. Griffie remarks that music is not universal and, therefore, music is a reflection of the time and place that produced it. There are many songs which are a culture capsule including within themselves a meaningful piece of social information. The songs of the 1940s reflect not only the accessible sound technology of their time, but also the hopes and fears of their period. The same phenomenon is for the songs of every decade. For that reason playing a song into the classroom means bringing the culture of the song in with it. Another benefit is that songs may be used as a way of looking at a culture and contrasting it with other cultures. Moreover, pieces of music can be used to recapture historical times. For example, Christmas carols from Europe tell the history and the geography of that area,



too. Furthermore, there are many songs which are about famous cities and they may be used to learn about important sights, feelings or sounds of a city. Baoan is also of the same opinion as Griffiee. He notices that pop songs ten years ago may sound old-fashioned to modern learners' ears. In this aspect, today's popular songs will be perceived either rubbish or classics in the future. Searching for the reasons why some particular kind of music is well-known at a certain time and abandoned at another time may supply a lot of background knowledge for both learners and teachers. A further advantage of using songs in English classroom is that they include linguistic information, for instance vocabulary items, pronunciation or grammar.

Thus, students acquire new knowledge very often with no intention of doing so. Also, for many teachers the didactic role of music would be the first to appreciate. Songs may be considered as representing 'distortions' of the normal speech patterns of a language. Jolly states that normal speech and songs are on the same continuum of vocally-produced human sounds. Namely, they both represent forms of communication in a linguistic sense and have melodic and rhythmic content. As stated earlier, songs may contain rich linguistic knowledge. It is all about the about learning that this process takes place in many different ways and all kinds of learning are going on all the time. However, occasionally it is deliberate because learners acquire information presented in a classroom or when they look up a word in a dictionary. Sometimes, on the contrary, the learning process can be unexpected, as when the students listen to music. Ergo, it is advisable for foreign language teachers to use songs and their students will learn language elements through unintentional learning. As Griffiee writes, there is a deep relationship between rhythm and speech an sensitivity to rhythm is a fundamental first step in language learning. When music and songs are used in the classroom then the students are exposed to the rhythms of the language. Besides, popular songs include a lot of examples of colloquial speech. For instance, in some songs the '-ing' ending is frequently reduced from the full '-ing' to just 'n' sound. This is the natural and everyday language of songs as opposed to the artificial language in many course books that is a good way to incorporate living into the classroom. Also Schoepp shares the same opinion as Griffiee, and gives an example of a song "My Best Was Never Good Enough" by Bruce Springsteen as a good example of colloquial English. This song is full of jargon-ridden like "every dog has his day " and "every cloud has a silver lining". As expected, most English second language students will encounter an informal language of conversation outside the classroom. Beyond question, using songs may prepare learners for the authentic language they will be confronted with.



Methods

Songs are traditionally presented in three stages, with pre-study activities, while studying activities and post-study activities. This classification is very useful as the students may get involved and then consolidate the knowledge. The purpose of the pre-stage is to develop the students thematically, linguistically, educationally and psychologically for the activity. The learners may be introduced to the subject matter and key lexis, or any linguistics features from which they may benefit at a later step. The essential element of pre-stage is to create a reason for the students to want to listen to the song. Arevalo clarifies that the concept of prior knowledge is a part of the cognitive model of language processing. When people read or listen, they process the message they hear both bottom-up and top-down. The latter means using experiences and prior knowledge, whereas bottom-up processing means using the information people have about word meanings, sounds, and discourse markers like 'first', 'then' to bring together their comprehension of what they hear or read step by step. During the second stage, which might be seen as the main focus of the lesson, the learners complete the activities and tasks which directly concern the song. Interestingly, the author gives the idea of grading tasks as the students familiarize with the song. For instance, when listening to "An Englishman in New York" by Sting, first activity might be identifying the subject matter of the song. Next, a later task might be dealing with specific information and intensive listening or reading by asking them for example, to tick sentences true or false. In this stage, the learners are very often performing activities simultaneously, their task may be to listen to a song and underline something in the text. Additionally, the students might be asked to reflect on its language and content after the comprehensive exploitation of the song. Arevalo is of the opinion that having a purpose for listening helps listen more efficaciously. He compares a listening activity to listening to a weather forecast and illustrates it with a desire to know whether to wear a coat or not; thus the focus is on the temperature. That is to say, in this stage the teachers should explain their students what is the aim of the task. Essentially, the students may listen for details, for the main idea, and for making conclusions. Accordingly, the learners develop a sense of why they listen and which skill use to listen better. The lecturers may develop these skills by asking the students to focus on their purpose for listening every time they listen. This form of strategy is called training. The concept of knowing the reason of listening is a very efficient first strategy because it helps the students to organize and reflect on their learning. The third stage usually involves follow-up activities that practice the productive skills of writing and speaking in different ways. Although the students might have been writing or speaking in order for example to discuss their personal experience of the topic, the aim and focus of the pre-stage is not the improvement of productive



skills, but the means for motivation increment and introducing the general theme. In that stage, it is the text of the song that stimulates for further exercises which improve other language skills. The author gives an example of follow-up work to “She’s leaving home” by the Beatles where the learners either write the letter the girl wrote for her parents, or role-play the dialogue between the girl and her parents. At this stage the activities will almost exactly include the assimilation of previously taught language with new languages and ideas recently introduced through the song. Interestingly, Arevalo notices that usually when the teachers think of listening activities, they have inclination to think of the learners listening to a recording and doing an activity. However, the teachers may use post-listening tasks to check apprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and also continue the knowledge gained to other contexts. A post-listening activity might relate to a pre-listening task, such as predicting, may transfer what has been learnt to writing, reading, or speaking activities, or may extend on the topic or the listening text.

English is called „the lingua franca of the whole world". Recent years have seen a massive increase in English language teaching in all Europe, not only in schools but also in factories and elsewhere. The knowledge of English is required by many employers and in many other parts of people’s life. It will be important to understand English very well in the future and this is the reason for finding better and more enjoyable ways how to start teaching young learners.

Children from an early age should learn about foreign cultures so that they grow up tolerant and sympathetic towards others. The earlier a man starts the more he gets. As a result of this, English teaching has started to be increasingly important.

We decided to write about the use of stories in language teaching at a basic school. Most language teachers concentrate on vocabulary, grammar, sometimes on pronunciation which is covered in textbooks, but there are more pleasant, practical and useful ways to introduce and practise all these common requirements. Children love tales and stories and learning through pleasure is the way to reach the goals.

Results

Fairy tales express inner intensity of a child, which he or she unconsciously understand and which offer different possibilities of problem solving. Fairy tales always have good end. At the end a good man is awarded - for his or her good nature, persistence, courage - a bad man is affected by upright punishment. Obvious polarization between “good” and “bad” makes different situations explicit and comprehensible. Characters are not individual, unique, but typical. That is why the identification is easier. A child identifies



with a young hero not because he is “good”, but because he titles the child, and if the hero is “good” character, the child wants to be “good” as well [6.24].

Classic fairy tales solve a problem important for a human in particular developmental stage. Psychologists believe that human mental development is in progress of several periods. In every period we try to cope with a problem, gain some skills and experience, which is very important for our next life. These periods tie together on themselves. Successful command of one period is precondition of antiquation of problems in following period.

According to Erikson we go through eight periods during our lives. We obtain basic confidence in first year. We look for a way to our own autonomy till we are three. This is connected with locomotive faculties. In a pre-school age we balance between a desire to be initiative and feel guilty when we are unsuccessful. Before puberty it is assiduousness vs. inferiority and in a period of puberty and adolescence we look for our identity - it means the conception about who we are. Intimacy, establishment of close and steady relation, is important for us in another period. In a middle age we focus on upbringing of our children, later of our grandchildren. Old age end the development by stage of integrity - the sense of satisfaction, conciliation, in another case the sense of frustration and desperation.

According to the above mentioned theory and my experience I will take a story as a suitable resource for teaching and learning a foreign language. A story is something that everybody is familiar with, a majority of people used to listen to stories and like them very much. Children want to enjoy a character’s adventures and like to distinguish between good and evil. Having worked with children’s stories I have made my own theory. Although I work with children who are involved in learning English very much, it is very important to choose a suitable level for a certain class. They study English as their hobby and this is why they are very involved. They want to learn and I have freedom to create lessons in my way. Stories give me many opportunities for practising everything children have learnt.

In The Storytelling Handbook state:

- Stories are motivating and fun; they create a deep interest and a desire to continue learning.
- Listening to stories is a shared social experience; it provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation.
- Stories exercise the imagination; children can become personally involved in a
- Story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations.



- Stories are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world; they provide a way of enabling children to make sense of their everyday life.
- Listening to stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language.
- Stories help students of all levels to understand literature, they carry ideological messages.
- Children books offer universal truths, moral appeals to one generation after another.

We develop whole life and in each period of our life we need stories with heroes who solve similar problems that we solve in a particular period. These stories usually do not give concrete advice how to cope with our problem; they give notice that situations like that may come. They prepare our soul on that. For our soul the story is real. Stories are very important for our psychical health. We learn our mother tongue through stories. So, it is natural to learn foreign language through them as well. Teachers should try to teach their students about language, life and culture through stories.

Stories are an ideal tool in learning language as they guide us through our whole life. So, not only learning our mother tongue, but also other foreign languages through stories can make our effort more interesting, amusing and memorable. Students have an amazing ability to absorb language when activities are familiar and enjoyable to them. Teaching foreign language on the base of storytelling is exactly the activity which is both familiar and it is fun.

Stories are for all of us, not just for children, that is why using them in teaching adolescents is as important as using them in teaching young children. Stories can attract students' attention, because they provide challenging topics based on their everyday interests such as love and friendship. They also provide a huge space for fantasy and creativity.

Stories may link English with other subjects across the curriculum, which we demonstrate in my theses. They teach students to think. All skills, functions and structures may be taught by stories. Vocabulary, pronunciation and creativity may be developed.

Conclusion

All in all, teaching English to young learners is one of the significant problems in teaching process. Teaching English to young learners with the help of music and stories and music. It develops not only children's language skills, but also improves cultural and spiritual knowledge.



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