

MUSIC AND SONGS AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ESP CLASSES

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Annotation: This article discusses the role of music and songs during English classes for ESP learners.

Key words: lesson, music, reason, grammar, dictionary, phonetics, foreign language, benefit, role.

INTRODUCTION:

Music is one of the valuable teaching tool. It makes complex concepts more accessible and enjoyable. It facilitates language learning. Upbeat or uplifting music also may enhance cognitive abilities. Music also is highly pleasurable and sustains our attention.

Teachers use music and songs in Foreign Language classes for several reasons. The main reason is the good atmosphere it creates in the classroom. Students relate to songs as part of entertainment rather than work and find learning vocabulary through songs amusing rather than tedious. Didactically songs are also useful in teaching the rhythm of the language and informing the students about the culture of that language’s speakers. The major problems that teachers have with using songs in the classroom is the non-standard grammar in many of the songs and the ‘non-serious’ image of the pop songs. The first problem is that the non-standard grammar will confuse the foreign language students. The answer to this in current research is that not all songs are suitable for foreign language classes. But students usually can deal with the non-standard grammar issue in most of the songs. On the contrary, the students find the exposure to the singers, as authentic foreign language speakers, useful. After all non-standard grammar is fairly common in daily usage of most languages and the students have to learn to deal with it in a language they learn. The second problem, that of the ‘non-serious’ image of pop music, was addressed by all the researchers working in the field. The teachers worry that their students will enjoy the music, but will actually learn less than by more traditional methods. This worry has been refuted by all the research done on the issue, dealing with different languages, different student populations and different levels

of classes. The common agreement is that students learn the same amount of material by both methods. The main difference is that the students report learning through songs as much more enjoyable. This refutes several theories based on analysis of brain functioning, according to which music should considerably enhance the learning potential of the students.

MAIN PART

Most adults who learn a foreign language speak with an accent which derives in part from phonological and phonetic differences between their native language (L1) and the target foreign language (L2). Music can be effective in improving phonetic skills in a variety of ways. Leith (1979) stated, “There is probably not a better nor quicker way to teach phonetics than with songs” (p. 540). Gatti-Taylor (1980) believed that phonetic instruction was one good use to which songs could be put, even in beginning classes, stating, “It is relatively easy to find song lyrics that stress a particular phoneme” (p. 466).

Traditional pronunciation texts have emphasized or implied that students should strive for perfect pronunciation or near-native pronunciation. Morely (1996) contended that this would be an unrealistic goal, an important shift in language instruction now tends to emphasize a communicative focus: “one that views the proper place of pronunciation in the L2 curriculum as an integral part of communication, not a separate drill-based component set aside from the mainstream of spoken discourse” (p. 151).

The current research recommends using the students’ every day experience of foreign languages to enhance their learning. Pop music is an important component of that experience and makes learning a foreign language more fun. It encourages the students to take an active part in the learning process by contributing from their musical knowledge. Therefore, they become more confident in their learning ability and more motivated to continue learning the language.

Seven Reasons Why Using Music is Important in Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language Of the many tools and resources available to both EFL or ESL teachers and foreign language learners, music is one of the best, but most under-used. Many texts and information volumes are on the market to aid both teachers and learners in the process of applying the use of music to their classrooms and other language learning environments.

Here are seven important reasons why using music in the EFL or ESL classroom is a great idea for both EFL teachers and English or other foreign language learners.

- **The Learners Like It** Motivating foreign language learners is a constant concern of teachers worldwide, under a broad range of teaching and learning conditions and environments. One aspect virtually any language learner, of any age or profile, likes is music. Learners are usually quick to talk about their favorite music and musical artists like Atomic Kitten (pictured above).

- **EFL Teachers Like It** The EFL or ESL teacher has a preference for music as do their learners. So whatever you, as the teacher might like, you can pass on your enthusiasm to your language learners.

- **Music is Often Free** One frequent problem of English and other foreign language classes is finances. Costs and budgets are a sore point in almost every school district, language institute and teaching / learning situation. Music though, is most often freely available in many genres regardless of where you may be living or teaching.

- **There is a Wide Variety of Music Available** A quick search on the internet for “free music”, “music broadcasts” or “online radio stations” will yield dozens if not scores or even hundreds of websites where music can be easily acquired.

- **Music Affects the Brain**

Long-standing academic and intellectual studies have extensively demonstrated that music has in-depth impact and affects the brain. This effect can either be positive or negative depending on its type. With some astute guidance, you could be sure of using music with a positive effect on your English or other foreign language learners.

- **Music Can Enhance Learning** If you’re looking for a way to enhance your EFL learners’ experience with language acquisition, music is one aspect that is quickly and easily implemented. Classical music like the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Vivaldi or Chopin and Easy-listening genres of music are well proven to enhance learning. Especially in the areas of language and mathematics.

- **Music Motivates and Interests Learners** Ask your learners what they do in their free time and likely one of their responses will include listening to their favorite kinds of music. If you

want to “perk up” a lagging classroom session fast, you can use music to do so in a great hurry.

The benefit of song has been promoted by discussing the findings of this article in the areas of text recall and involuntary mental rehearsal. In addition, student comments from questionnaires done by Gatti-Taylor (1980) offered a view of what students believed to be the benefit of songs in the curriculum. All students agreed that the association of words and music made memorizing less difficult. Most said that the music added enjoyment to class meetings: “It created a pleasantness that was always present. A number of students volunteered remarks to the effect that they played the songs at home, or that they occasionally found themselves spontaneously singing the refrains in the course of their daily routines” (p. 468). Purcell (1992), said that the benefits of song even resound in the songs themselves. As the last refrain from the famous folksong reminds, *porque cantando se alegran, cielito lindo, los corazones* (because by singing hearts are made glad)” (p. 196).

CONCLUSION:

As a conclusion, I must mention that music is one of the extremely important tool for students to learn and can lead to better brain development , increases in human connection, and even stress relief . Here are five reasons why music is important mean for teaching foreign language.

1. Music stimulates brain development . some studies showed that music increases IQ points, index scores, and a standardized measure of academic achievement.
2. Music a way to connect with other students. Students are naturally very social , and it’s important to encourage them to build relationships by providing them experiences to share with each other.
3. Music integrates many subject areas all at once.it improves students reading, writing and listening skills.
- 4 Music teaches discipline. It helps students to develop time management skills and discipline. Learning discipline and time management is countless benefit for students.

5. Music can relieve stress. Finally, music is an excellent way to relieve stress, which is significant for students who may feel overwhelmed during lesson and try to balance extracurricular activities.

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