

**UDK 37.011.3(73) – 051**

**SHANDRUK Svitlana Ivanivna** –  
Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor  
Department of Linguodidactics and Foreign Languages  
Kirovohrad Vynnychenko State Pedagogical University  
e-mail: Sishandruk@ukr.net

## **SONGS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**Formulation and justification of the relevance of the problem.** With the progress of technology, the development of educational tools for English language teaching has started to contribute significantly to student progress while learning a foreign language. Therefore, the efforts to adapt these tools to a classroom has become of

greater importance. At the same time, the increase in the number of approaches to develop students' skill of communication and cross-cultural interaction is an indicator of the fact that songs are audial and written tools essential for English language teaching.

English language teaching in Ukraine has for

quite a long time followed the traditional path-teaching vocabulary and grammar textbooks, cramming students with a considerable amount of exercises and then evaluating their accomplishments through consecutive exams. It is no surprise that English learners view English language learning as insipid and an unconquerable obstacle. English language teaching can be implemented in a relaxed and enjoyable way by using English songs in the classroom.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** There have been abundant researches abroad on songs as an authentic teaching resource in language teaching (N. Chomsky, E. Gaston, P. Geoff, M. Halle, N. Millington, C. Shen, D. Sigurparyttir etc.).

In a survey conducted by J. Joly, the question whether the in-class utilization of songs which were chosen in accordance with the goals of the lesson was helpful or not was directed to students attending a Japanese speaking course. The results of the survey show that the majority of the students favored using songs in the class existing in ordinary language teaching and increase student enthusiasm towards studying [2, p. 11–14].

According to C. Cheung, as students more easily learn the things about which they have background knowledge, student motivation is increased when the elements belonging to the popular culture of the target language are involved in the class. Bringing a song listened by the student to the class environment increases students' desire to learn and enables them contribute to the process of learning by making use of their own musical knowledge [1, p. 55–61].

**The purpose of the article.** The aim of the article is to study the usage of songs as tools for English Language Teaching. The objective of the article is to study how language learning and music relate to each other.

**The main material of the study.** Songs offer many codes that strengthen student memory such as choruses, rhymes and melodies. Therefore, these codes in songs increase the functionality of songs in language teaching. When a student listens to and memorizes a song involved in the class, the lyrics are embedded in his/her long-term memory. Moreover, neurological researches have shown that musical and lingual processes occur in the same section of brain and that there are significant similarities between musical and lingual syntax [3, p. 378–383].

As an integral part of our language experience, songs can be of great value to foreign language teaching. Georgi Lozanov incorporates music into his teaching method – Suggestopedia, for music is instrumental in creating a relaxing and comfortable environment, which can propel language learning [5, p. 88–94]. Besides music, another indispensable element of songs is lyrics

which serve as a direct genuine source of teaching materials in foreign language classes.

Using songs as tools for teaching English language has many benefits. Songs are able to change the monotonous mood in the class and with the smoothing effect of music; they provide a comfortable class environment so that students can develop their lingual skills more easily. Besides, utilizing songs in class environment amuses students, helps them feel relaxed and get rid of their negative attitudes towards a foreign language while learning a lingual structure through a song. In this direction, the amusing and relaxing mood brought by songs to the class eases the effects of certain emotional cases such as excitement, anxiety, lack of self-confidence and the feeling of being threatened, in addition to influencing learning process positively or facilitating it by stimulating the student emotionally. Also songs help motivating the learners as they provide a pleasant atmosphere. The students are encouraged been actively involved in the learning process by making use of their musical knowledge. In this way songs help students to develop confidence for language learning [3].

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 [7, p. 7–8].

When teaching foreign languages to children and adolescents, there are numerous methods that can be used to enhance the students' learning and interest, and music is most definitely one of them. Musical intelligence is very often overlooked, and although music is not everyone's strongest intelligence, it is usually something that most children as well as adults can appreciate because they have at least some musical intelligence. Language learning and music relate to each other since music and speech connect through sounds and are used to convey a message, although language is precise and music mostly emotional [6, p. 9–10].

Linguists define language as an instrument for communication as a verbal interaction. However, Spanish music therapist Patxi del Campo asserts that in any oral interaction only

15% of the information issued corresponds to verbal language, while 70% of the message is performed through body language; the final 15% belongs to intonation, the musical character of language. This importance of body language can be easily observed by watching a television debate with the volume turned off. The body language clearly indicates the mood and attitude of the participants, and even their agreement or disagreement with what the other speakers are saying [7, p. 7–8].

Being a combination of music and language, songs have innumerable virtues that deserve our attention. Their richness in culture and themes, their idiomatic and poetic expressions, their therapeutic functions make them an impeccable tool for language teaching. Songs should be used in English language teaching for their own merits as they are a kaleidoscope of culture; songs are highly expressive; singing a song by heart is more delightful and meaningful than rote learning; music has several therapeutic functions, such as promoting self-esteem through increased self-satisfaction in musical performance and using the unique potential of rhythm to energize and bring order [5].

Suzanne L. Medina thinks the main advantage of using songs and music is the enjoyable experience they bring to students and the relaxed atmosphere they create in a class. The more relaxed the students, the more receptive to learning they are. In addition, through songs, learners are exposed to authentic examples of the foreign language. It is also important to know that music and songs in the classroom can stimulate positive associations to the study of a language, which otherwise may only be associated with exams, frustration and corrections. Also, not every student will have the opportunity to go abroad to practice English in real life, but there are opportunities to listen to English in a useful way [7, p. 7–8].

One advantage of using songs in the classroom is their flexibility. Songs can be used for a number of purposes and there are many reasons why songs can be considered a valuable pedagogical tool. Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills. Songs can also be useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns, not to mention their reflectivity of mother tongue culture.

Being authentic texts themselves, songs provide students with the opportunity of meeting authentic texts belonging to the target language. Songs help students get prepared for the language they will encounter in daily life. Besides, as a part of daily life, they are the tools of informing the students about the culture of the target language.

A song is a literary text and literary texts harbor cultural elements belonging to the language in which they are written. When the relationship between literary texts and life itself is examined, it is seen that the reality of life and human conditions in literary texts are narrated by being processed in the inner world of the author. In this regard, literary texts have a significant role in comprehending human beings and society with their different aspects. In literary texts written in a foreign language, it is possible to find the reflection of the world of that language, a life which is stranger to us. Songs also reflect culture and transmit cultural values between people, societies and generations. Therefore, while learning a foreign language, a person can learn about a society and its culture through songs [3, p. 382].

Perhaps the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they can be fun. Pleasure for its own sake is an important part of learning a language, something which is often overlooked by teachers, and songs can add interest to the classroom routine and potentially improve student motivation [4, p. 134].

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 English language learners acquire this language. It has been reported to help English 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 [7].

**Results of the research.** Music provides a fun and relaxing way to acquire process and produce English. Through songs, language learners get to see the beauty and variability of English and therefore they become more interested in the English language. Music also helps them to understand some cultural differences and the various pronunciations of English. Practicing lyrics reading, studying the vocabulary, and listening to various songs can help students become more familiar with popular music and make them more confident in their ability to understand the world around them. There are many types of songs which can be used in a classroom, ranging from nursery rhymes to contemporary pop music. There is also a lot of

music that was written specially for English language teaching.

In order for the student to learn English language, the using of technology need to be exploited in classroom as much as possible. For this reason, using songs through technology in lesson environment attract attention. Songs are used for many reasons by methods adopted in foreign language teaching. The facts that music makes students relaxed and melodies, rhythms and rhymes in a song facilitate English language learning improve students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Besides, music and songs are all authentic texts. These authentic texts act as significant sources for students to discover the culture of English language and to improve their cultural awareness.

For English language teaching it is possible to make use of songs effectively if songs are carefully chosen by taking the audience, objectives, language level of students and song content. Using songs this way provides an enjoyable experience not only for students but also for the teacher. Using songs along with such activities will have many advantages such as saving the lesson from being boring and monotonous and improving student motivation.

**Conclusions and prospects for future research directions.** In conclusion, using English songs in the classroom can be justified on the grounds that it will emancipate full mental and affective power in language learning and promote language awareness. Listening to songs can block the learner's psychological barriers, such as anxiety, lack of self-confidence and apprehension as well as intensify the learner's desire to study English language. English songs are wonderful materials in this respect. English language learners could be motivated by the singers, the music, the variety of rhythm, and the popular themes. The intrinsic merits that songs possess are also

effective materials of instruction in English classrooms.

#### REFERENCES

1. Cheung, C. (2001). The use of popular culture as a stimulus to motivate secondary students' English learning in Hong Kong / C. Cheung // *ELT Journal*.
2. Jolly, Y. (1975). The use of songs in teaching foreign languages / Y. Jolly // *Modern Language Journal*.
3. Keskin, F. (2011) Using songs as audio materials in teaching Turkish as a foreign language / Funda Keskin // *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*.
4. Millington, N. (2011). Using Songs Effectively to Teach English to Young Learners / Neil T. Millington // *Language Education in Asia*.
5. Shen, C. (2009). Using English Songs: an Enjoyable and Effective Approach to ELT / Chunxuan Shen // *English Language Teaching*.
6. Sigurparyttir, D. (2011). Language learning through music / Drifa Sigurparyttir. – Prentun: Byksala Menntavisindasvip Reykjavik, Island.
7. Vinyets, N. (2013). Using Songs in Primary Education: Advantages and Challenges / Núria Bach Vinyets. – Treball de Final de Grau Universitat de Vic.

#### ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

**ШАНДРУК Світлана Іванівна** – доктор педагогічних наук, н. із е, завідувач кафедри лінгводидактики та іноземних мов Кіровоградського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка

**Наукові інтереси:** професійна педагогіка, компаративна педагогіка.

#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**SHANDRUK Svitlana Ivanivna** – Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, professor, Head of Department of Linguodidactics and Foreign Languages Kirovohrad Volodymyr Vynnychenko State Pedagogical University.

**Circle of scientific interests:** professional pedagogy, comparative pedagogy.