

IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH MUSIC AND SONGS

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Abstract

Music and song activities can enhance and develop young learners' listening ability. Listening is a primary language skill, which needs to be developed before the other language skills and particularly the speaking ability. It is an indispensable condition for developing a person's second language abilities. A sample group of Grade 4 classes in a research project included 30 English additional language learners. One grade 4 classes were selected, 15 pupils were being the experimental and the other 15 were being the control group. Over a month, the experimental group was exposed to and received planned music and song activities daily. A significant difference in the means between the control and the experimental groups was recorded during a re-test done on all learners of the two classes. The experimental group performed well in their listening abilities in English as a second language. This finding has important teaching implications for ESL.

Key words: music, song activities, young learners, listening ability, primary language skill, second language abilities, experimental group, control group, ESL.

Annotatsiya

Musiq va qo'shiq faoliyati yosh o'quvchilarning tinglash qobiliyatini oshirishi va rivojlantirishi mumkin. Tinglash – bu boshqa til ko'nikmalaridan va ayniqsa nutq qobiliyatidan oldin rivojlanishi kerak bo'lgan asosiy til qobiliyatidir. Bu insonning ikkinchi til qobiliyatini rivojlantirishning ajralmas shartidir. Tadqiqot loyihasidagi 4- sinflarining namunaviy guruhi 30 nafar ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilarni o'z ichiga oldi. 4-sinfning bir sinfi tanlab olindi, ulardan 15tasi tajriba, ikkinchi 15tasi nazorat guruhidir. Bir oy davomida eksperimental guruhga har kuni rejalashtirilgan musiq va qo'shiq mashg'ulotlari olib borildi va qabul qilindi. Nazorat va eksperimental guruhlar o'rtasidagi o'rtacha farq ikki sinfning barcha o'quvchilarida o'tkazilgan takroriy test paytida qayd etildi. Eksperimental guruh ikkinchi til sifatida ingliz tilida tinglash qobiliyatini yaxshi namoyish etdi. Ushbu topilma ESL uchun muhim o'qitish ta'siriga ega.

Kalit so'zlar: musiq, qo'shiq faoliyati, yosh o'quvchilar, tinglash qobiliyati, asosiy til qobiliyati, ikkinchi til qobiliyatlari, eksperimental guruh, nazorat guruhi, ESL.

INTRODUCTION. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that if teachers in early childhood education realized the value of music programs and planned music programs for the young custodians, all learners in their classrooms could gain from the program. In



particular, young ESL learners would benefit from such programs because the music performed would improve their listening skills. It is these skills that make song programs be used in the second language with the second learners' language skills also improved when learning the second or rather the new language. In today's fast-paced and visually stimulating world, developing effective listening skills is paramount for elementary school students. Music and singing have long been recognized as powerful tools for motivating young learners and improving their listening skills. The purpose of this study is to investigate the benefits of using music and songs to improve listening skills in primary school students, highlighting the different approaches, methods, and outcomes associated with this pedagogical approach.

Over the centuries, music has been used for many types of activities. In past times, music was not only used for praise but also for enjoyment and to relieve stress. Most children love music in one form or another and for this reason music is often used to facilitate language learning activities in schools. Music can be used to enhance speech and language skills such as auditory attention, perception and memory. Songs can be used to improve articulation, auditory awareness, memory and sound awareness [4]. Concerning English as a second language, Rosenfeld and Merdinger state that "Music is an important part of any culture. Even an unfamiliar song may be welcomed by an ESL student for whom music is a natural and familiar mode of expression" [5].

METHODS. Music and songs offer an interactive, immersive method for fostering active listening in elementary school students. By utilizing rhythmic patterns, melodic structures, and meaningful lyrics, music captures children's attention and encourages them to focus on what they hear. Simple, catchy melodies and repetitive lyrics can help students identify specific sounds and patterns, fostering the development of listening skills. As students interpret song lyrics and follow thematic narratives, songs provide opportunities for understanding and interpretation beyond mere auditory reception. Integrating music and singing into the curriculum not only enhances the learning experience but also cultivates crucial listening skills such as auditory discrimination, memory, and comprehension. Moreover, the emotional aspects of music deepen students' engagement and connection to what they hear, eliciting responses that can further augment their listening skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The aim of this research initiative was to explore how music could cultivate the listening aptitudes, and ultimately the language talents, of English as a Second Language learners at the fourth-grade level. Attentive listening is the essential language skill that all individuals necessitate to evolve their linguistic capacities. The researchers designed this inquiry to emphasize how a judiciously planned musical curriculum may heighten learners' attentiveness to assist them gain a deeper comprehension of English. If the fundamental language skill (listening) is optimized, it should bolster the other language skills: speaking, reading and writing. This could ameliorate the learners' grasp of English and consequently aid their learning and studying in English as their secondary language, as well.

This research project involved conducting quantitative analysis and employing a basic pre-test – post-test experimental design. In this type of framework, an experimental group is exposed to a treatment or strategy, while the control group does not receive the treatment.

While all conditions remained consistent between the experimental and control groups, a test-based investigation into the impact of a targeted stimulus was conducted [1]. Both the trial group and the comparative assembly received pre and post assessments simultaneously, however the latter beneficiaries did not undergo the "treatment". Certain

principles of positivist methodology, as established by Herrington and Oliver, were reflected in this research [2]. For instance, authentic contexts mirrored real world application of knowledge and activities accurately replicated practical experience. Objectivism views reality as independent of perspective – an orderly objective reality known through unbiased means [7]. We researchers also aimed to logically interpret findings and apply outcomes to aid young learners in mastering the language of learning and instructing.

Initially, a class was chosen and split into experimental and control groups. Appropriate visual and auditory tools were then selected in accordance with students' developmental stage. Their age was a factor in identifying fitting, meaningful and straightforward melodies. For one month both groups were closely observed.

Incorporating music and song can boost listening acuity while providing an entertaining approach to language acquisition beyond traditional methods. The following experimental procedure outlines an effective process for utilizing tunes and ditties to boost elementary pupils' listening skills:

1. *Song Selection*: Carefully choose age-appropriate songs with clear lyrics, catchy melodies, and relevant themes to capture students' interest and align with language learning objectives.

2. *Pre-Listening Activities*: Introduce the theme of the song, discuss related vocabulary, and provide background information to scaffold students' understanding.

3. *Active Listening Session*: Play the selected song, encouraging students to actively listen and engage with the content, such as identifying keywords or following instructions.

4. *Post-Listening Activities*: Facilitate discussions, reflective exercises, or creative tasks that reinforce vocabulary and comprehension while promoting language application.

Benefits and Outcomes:

The incorporation of music and song in language learning offers numerous benefits for elementary students. Actively engaging with songs provides students with opportunities to expand their vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop a deeper cultural understanding. These interactive experiences promote increased student engagement, enhanced listening comprehension, and foster a positive attitude towards language learning.

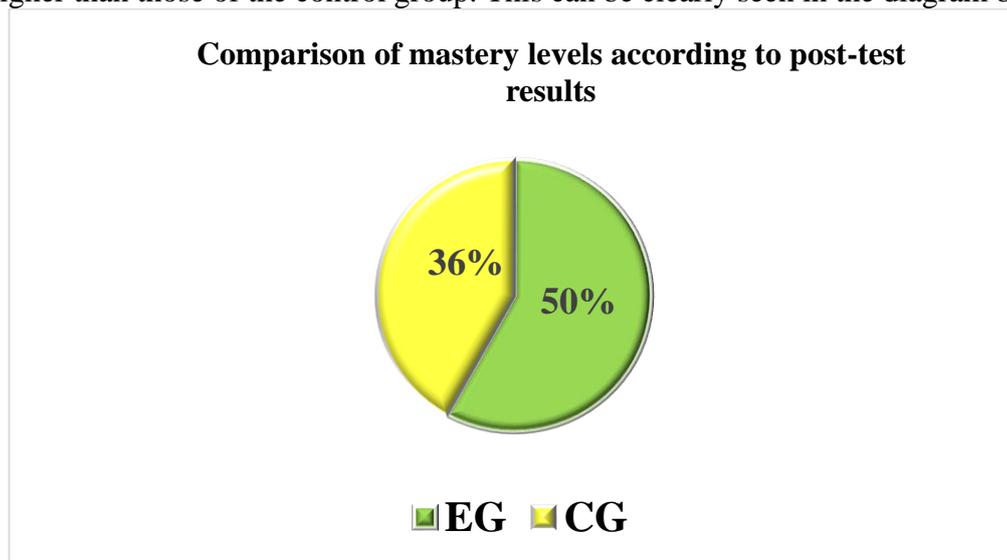
Following a month of the study, tests with the same sub-tests were administered individually to all learners in the experimental and control groups. By comparing pre-test and post-test scores, the data from both sets of test results were combined to indicate improvement or lack thereof for each learner. These specifics are not discussed in this article as they are considered particularly valuable to the teachers of the two classes. It is challenging to determine whether, for example, basic sound discrimination or potentially songs could impact the development of listening skills more than other music activities in the program. Therefore, the researchers found it unnecessary to differentiate between the results of each subsection. An overall mean for the entire sample was calculated and yielded significant results. Students began to comprehend spoken English and showed remarkable progress in their pronunciation. The overall means for the experimental and control groups produced the following results.

Table 1: Listening skills: Means for experimental and control group

Experimental & Control groups	Pre-test listening skills		Post-test listening skills	
	EG	CG	EG	CG
	15	15	15	15

Points	Students				Students			
	5	3	20%	2	13%	5	34%	2
4	4	26%	5	34%	8	53%	5	34%
3	5	34%	6	40%	2	13%	7	47%
2	3	20%	2	13%	0	0	1	6%
Average level of mastery in (%).	33%		35%		50%		36%	

Multiple comparisons of means were conducted on the difference-means of the various levels of the identified significant variables. Comparison of mastery levels according to post-test results – shows the level of growth (EG–CG; EG/CG), $50\% - 36\% = 14\%$; $50/36 = 1.4$), where it can be seen that the children of the experimental group grew by 14 percent (1.4 times) higher than those of the control group. This can be clearly seen in the diagram below:



Overall, using music and songs could have a favorable impact on the acquisition of English as a second language, particularly on listening skills for ESL learners. Enhancing the English language skills of young non-English speaking learners could improve their overall academic performance, contributing to their success in school

Conclusion

In summary, the results of this research project highlight that music and songs can have a significant impact on improving listening skills, especially among young ESL learners. By incorporating music programs into early childhood education, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that improves students’ ability to listen attentively and understand auditory stimuli. The results of this study show that a well-planned music program can not only help ESL learners improve their listening skills, but also contribute to their overall

language acquisition and proficiency. Moving forward, it is important for educators to recognize the value of music in promoting active listening and consider implementing music-based activities to support language learning in a variety of classroom settings. Ultimately, by harnessing the power of music and song, teachers can help students communicate more effectively and become lifelong learners

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