

## Using Songs in Teaching English for Young Learners

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### Abstract

Nowadays, in every school, English is taught as one of the main subjects. Teaching young learners is not the same as teaching adults since children learn in their own unique way. Because children really like playing and having fun, the learning and teaching process should be adapted to their personalities. Music is one of the types of entertaining activities for them, and songs are the most popular form of music that children are familiar with. Songs are very crucial in the development of young children who are learning a second language. Through this paper, the writers want to show that with the help of songs, children may improve their language abilities such as speaking, listening, and writing.

**Keywords:** *young learners, music, songs, speaking, listening and writing*

### Abstrak

*Saat ini, di setiap sekolah, bahasa Inggris diajarkan sebagai salah satu mata pelajaran utama. Mengajar anak-anak tidaklah sama dengan mengajar orang dewasa karena anak-anak belajar dengan cara mereka sendiri yang unik. Karena anak-anak sangat suka bermain dan bersenang-senang, maka proses belajar mengajar harus disesuaikan dengan kepribadian mereka. Musik adalah salah satu jenis kegiatan yang menghibur bagi mereka, dan lagu adalah bentuk musik paling populer yang akrab dengan anak-anak. Lagu sangat penting dalam perkembangan anak-anak yang sedang belajar bahasa kedua. Melalui tulisan ini, penulis ingin menunjukkan bahwa dengan bantuan lagu, anak-anak dapat meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa mereka seperti berbicara, mendengarkan, dan menulis.*

**Kata Kunci:** *anak-anak usia sekolah dasar, musik, lagu, berbicara, mendengarkan, dan menulis*

## **INTRODUCTION**

People are learning English in greater numbers now that English has become an international language. The importance of English as a world language has motivated individuals to study it as early as possible. In Indonesia, for example, English is taught to children before they attend a playgroup. This phenomena has increased the visibility of Teaching English to Young Learners. Before continuing, it is necessary to review the concept of young learners in order to share the same perspective and knowledge. Young Learners are described as children between the ages of 5 and 12 (Rixon, 1999), however Lynne Cameron defines young learners as those under the age of 14.

Furthermore, the concept of young learners is mostly based on the years spent in primary or elementary school prior to the move to high school. As a result, the ages of the young learners may differ from one country to another. According to some psycholinguists, being young is one of the factors that contribute to effective language learning. There are various factors for why children learn better at an early age. For starters, the brain is more adaptive before puberty than later, and language learning may proceed without self-consciousness at an early age, as well as because young children have more possibilities than adults. The children are constantly learning without the cares and responsibilities that adults have (Brumfit, 1994). For decades, early childhood educators have been guided by the phrase "Children learn through play." Children, by nature, want to play and have fun rather than learn. According to Isenberg, play is a need for every kid and an important childhood activity that helps children master all developmental needs (1993).

Most children like singing songs, and they may be a welcome distraction from the repetition of learning a foreign language. Using songs in the classroom can also provide a welcome diversion from following a rigid curriculum. Songs may be taught to any number of students, and even teachers with little resources can make excellent use of them. Songs can help young children who are learning a foreign language strengthen their language skills. However, songs may be used incorrectly, and the potential for language learning is not fully realized. This study begins by exploring why songs should be regarded as valuable instructional tools. The author then proposes utilizing songs as language learning activities to maximize the benefits of using songs and tries to demonstrate how this may be done using actual examples. Finally, the article investigates how classic children's songs might be adapted to help teachers in using them more regularly to teach a larger range of topics.

## **LISTENING**

According to Purcell (1992), students might feel bored by listening to a narrative or conversation over and over again while they try to learn the meaning of new words or phrases in context. Listening to a song over and over again, on the other hand, might appear less tedious due to the rhythm and melody. Songs can also assist kids develop their listening abilities by giving them experience listening to different types of intonation and rhythm. Songs can help to develop an emotion in English since it has a stress-timed rhythm. Murphey believes that music has the ability to imprint itself on our brains, noting that "songs act on our short- and long-term memory" and are thus appropriate tools for use in the language classroom (1992, p. 3).

Singing games and chants are physical manifestations of symbolic play and imitation. These exercises assist children in transitioning from sensor motor experience to symbolic transformation

(Isenberg, 1993). Singing songs helps children develop cognitive skills as well as linguistic skills; children gain language appreciation, vocabulary, and rhyme (Shiple, 1998). Another factor is that songs and rhymes are memorized, which may constitute part of a child's language vocabulary. Thus, the purpose of this study is to illustrate how teachers might utilize songs to help young learners improve their listening, speaking, and writing abilities. When the songs are introduced, the children's first skill is listening. This section will concentrate on tasks that will allow you to practice your listening abilities. Hearing for thorough understanding, listening for summarizing or writing, listening to isolated vocabulary, and listening for word order are among the tasks (Griffie, 1992).

## **SPEAKING**

Children are frequently eager to learn new sounds, but this might take a lot of effort. Although some teachers use minimal-pair drills, these activities are rarely engaging for young students. Songs, on the other hand, can provide a fun way for young learners to practice a new sound without monotony. Songs have a natural rhythm with a recurrent beat that is similar to spoken English stress patterns. Some songs can be used to practice rhythm and stress because of these patterns. For example, the song *Girls and Boys Come Out and Play* could be utilized to teach English rhythm and tension (Richards, 1969, p. 162).

Due to the phonemic distinctions between Asian languages and English, Moriya (1988) underlines the importance of employing songs for pronunciation practice with Asian English learners. For example, there are a number of areas where Japanese students learning English face difficulties. Ohata (2004) illustrates how variances in vowels, consonants, and syllable types generate problems for Japanese English learners. Singing songs to practice different sounds can be more exciting and fun than doing minimal-pair drills.

Millington (2011) investigated how songs should be utilized in the classroom to teach English to young learners and discovered that using songs as a task is beneficial, learners will be able to transfer words from these songs into their daily lives and will be able to increase the number of songs they can sing performance. Vocabulary practice can be accomplished through songs. They are frequently centered on a theme or issue that might serve as a background for learning vocabulary. For example, the song *I Can Sing a Rainbow* could be used to learn body parts, while the tune *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* could be used to study color names. Monosyllabic words, many of which are repeated frequently, characterize most children's songs. This repetition exposes these words to more people, which can aid in vocabulary growth. Due to the usage of low frequency and archaic words, some of the vocabulary and phrasing used in traditional and popular English songs might be difficult for language learners. The lyrics and the song.

## **WRITING**

There are numerous exercises that offer different ways to motivate children to write that are inspired by songs and music. Dictation is the first exercise that may be used to help children improve their writing abilities. Dictation is an excellent technique to start a song, particularly when singing. Children will remember not just the lyrics but also the tune after hearing the song several times. Many children's songs include a basic language structure or phrase pattern that the learner may memorize. Songs might be used to reinforce classroom-taught questions. A typical children's song has a short phrase length and frequently includes simple conversational vocabulary. According to Murphey (1992), the pauses following each sentence are often longer than the phrase itself,

allowing learners to process the language and imagery in real time. However, the instructor must exercise caution when picking a song since some songs have unusual sentence patterns that are not usually applied in English speech.

The children are given short, slow songs, and the teachers instruct them to write down the words. The teachers play the recording until the majority of the youngsters can complete the song lyrics. On the other hand, the students are given questions concerning the music to discuss (See the worksheet)

## CONCLUSION

Because children, by nature, prefer to play and have fun, teachers may teach the young learners through entertaining activities. Music is one of the entertaining things that children are familiar with, and singing is a simple type of music. Children learn the language naturally and in a joyful way via songs and entertaining activities. Songs can help children improve their language abilities such as listening, speaking, and writing. These three abilities are listed in the order that the children learn them: first, they learn to listen to songs, then they learn to speak or sing the songs, and finally, they learn to write the words of the songs. The exercise not only leads to the children's enjoyment but also to the improvement of the students' skills. Songs may be an effective teaching and learning tool. Songs may assist students improve their listening abilities and pronunciation, as well as teach vocabulary and sentence structures.

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