



## THE ROLE OF SONGS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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**Abstract:** The article highlights vital roles songs and their lyrics to enhance listening skills in teaching English as a foreign language. Listening is an important capability of social interactions, and it has been found that people receive new messages more efficiently via listening than reading. From four aspects of skill, listening is naturally considered as the primary skill in the acquisition of the native language.

**Keywords:** teaching, English, listening, skills, songs, lyrics, improvement, lessons.

Listening is an important medium of information gathering in our life. In addition, listening is the language activity that is used most frequently. That is fact that, a new-born baby will first listen to the voices and sounds in his or her environment in order to internalize linguistic input, before he or she speaks and learns to read and write. Listening is an important capability of social interactions, and it has been found that people receive new messages more efficiently via listening than reading. From four aspects of skill (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), listening is naturally considered as the primary skill in the acquisition of the native (first) language. Songs in general use simple conversational language with a lot of repetition. They can strongly activate the repetition mechanism of the language acquisition, which is just what many teachers look for in sample texts. This type of repetition presented in songs will activate the students to get a lot of pattern drills automatically without realizing it. I also concluded that songs offer a lot of practice for students to link the sounds of phrases or sentences naturally as



they listen and sing, following the tape, so that they can improve their pronunciation and the use of natural reductions of English without noticing it. Songs facilitate the learning of a language in interesting and effective ways. Most of our students have access to this form of culture. Songs that touch upon social issues and cultural aspects are appropriate choices. By adopting a learner-centered approach, students are able to participate, exploit and experience the meaning of the songs themselves. The interactive and reflective learning process will generate an abundance of language output from the students. Listening comprehension through songs can be developed based on the correct material selection and systematic and coherent lesson plans. To select the appropriate songs, it is necessary to consider learning purposes as well as the applicability and adaptability of the chosen texts. In order to do systematic lesson planning, we should pre-establish goals carefully stated for each lesson plan; design careful listening tasks from the simplest to the most complex; ask for an active, overt students' participation; and have a teaching not testing purpose when listening. Moreover, it is necessary to develop listening for gist, selective listening, and listening for predictions which are the relevant skills when developing listening comprehension. Songs as authentic material. According to Hornby, a song is a piece of music with words that is sung. Song is also a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs can also provide a relaxed lesson. They can also form the basis for many lessons. Ross says that the example of authentic listening materials is listening to song to learn more about well-known bands that sing in English. As we know wherever we are, songs always follow us at home, at school, at office, at cars, and so on. So, we can directly listen to the song and also interest to learn the value of language in it. When designing lessons and teaching materials to further develop listening comprehension skills, students need to be motivated and stay motivated. This is best accomplished by determining the suitability of the



listening material such as the use of song as authentic material. The use of song stimulates and motivates students to comprehend the content of materials. The possibility of using songs in English as a foreign language class has been actively considering for the last two decades. It is considered because songs have many value of language. Orlova states that it is possible to suggest that among the methodological purposes with songs used in class, it is possible to rank the following: Practicing the rhythm, stress and the intonation patterns of the English language. Teaching vocabulary and grammar. Developing listening comprehension, writing skills, and speaking. For this last purpose, songs and mainly their lyrics are employe as a stimulus for class discussion. The use of song procedure There are various ways of using songs in the classroom. The level of the students, the interests and the age of the learners, the grammar point to be studied, and the song itself have determinant

roles on the procedure. Apart from them, it mainly depends on the creativity of the teacher. Procedure of any listening activity can be done by activating prior knowledge, helping students organize their learning by thinking about their purposes for listening, and if speaking is also a goal of the classroom, using well-structured speaking tasks informed by research. And it is explained the following steps to focus on a listening practice:

*a. Activating prior-knowledge*

Prior knowledge is organized in schemata: abstract, generalized mental representations of our experience that are available to help us understand new experiences. The idea of prior knowledge is one part of the cognitive model of language processing. That model says that when people listen or read, they process the information they hear both top-down and bottom-up. Top-down means using our prior knowledge and experiences. Bottom-up processing means using the information people have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers like



first, then and after that to assemble their understanding of what they read or hear one step at a time.

*b. While-listening*

Having a purpose for listening helps us listen more effectively. For example, when listening to a weather report, if our purpose is to decide whether to wear a coat, we want to focus on the temperature. In the listening activities, teachers should explain students which the purpose of the activity is. Students could listen for the main idea, for details, and for making inferences. Therefore, students develop a sense of why they listen and which skill to use to listen better. Teachers can build skills by asking students to focus on their reason for listening each time they listen. This is a form of strategy training. The idea of knowing the purpose of listening is a very effective first strategy to teach because it helps students organize and reflect on their learning.

*c. Post-listening*

When teachers think of listening activities, they have a tendency to think of students listening to a recording and doing a task. Students overhear other people talk and then react to that conversation. Brown states that this sort of task is important because it allows teachers to isolate students' responses and thereby gauge the progress the students are making on listening skills. Teachers can use post-listening activities to check comprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening

strategies, and extend the knowledge gained to other contexts. A post-listening activity may relate to a pre-listening activity, such as predicting; may expand on the topic or the language of the listening text; or may transfer what has been learned to reading, speaking, or writing activities. Both teachers and students agree that use of songs has hardly a place in teaching English in primary schools. At the same time, they emphasize that learning songs in English could play a significant role in vocabulary growth in the target language. They suggest that using songs in



teaching practice could be a motivating factor for students in their learning experiences, but lack of materials in English and music courses and teachers' deficiencies in music education make using songs difficult in primary schools. Majority of the students and teachers who participated in this study stressed the importance of the contributions of music to vocabulary teaching. Although the students in the study are 4th and 5th graders, their ideas and comments on the current practices in ELT are meaningful and original. In addition, teachers emphasized that they had no facilities and devices such as VCD, DVD and printed materials in terms of using songs in teaching English. The series of activities that can be developed from the songs can offer a great deal of advantages in promoting the learning of English by stimulating students' interest and enhancing students' involvement. It is also important that language teachers should be creative and innovative in their teaching practices. Using songs in the classroom they can deviate occasionally from the routines and do something refreshing and different in the classroom. This does not require too much effort to find a song. This means students' participation in the lesson. In addition, several techniques can be incorporated into English language teaching with the songs used. Songs can bring about communicative aspects of language teaching in our language classrooms. With songs successful and enthusiastic learning can be provided.

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