

English Songs as a Pedagogical Resource to develop Listening Comprehension in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

The main objective of this essay is to determine the influence of using songs in the English language teaching process for 3rd and 4th-grade students at a public school in the city of Chone. This article presents a literature review of recent research analyzing the impact of using songs as a pedagogical strategy within academic planning. The research was conducted using a methodology executed through a mixed-methods approach, with a non-experimental design. To carry out this research, a sample of third- and fourth-grade students was selected, comprising a total of 40 students, to whom pre-tests and post-tests were administered. During the feedback on the tests, observation checklists were used. The post-test was applied after using songs as a method to develop in students the skills and abilities required to acquire a second language, such as English. The results of this research showed that using songs to teach English is a highly effective strategy that motivates students to express themselves with greater confidence in another language, helping the teacher to introduce new content more assertively.

Keywords: Songs, Pedagogical strategies, English language teaching

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este ensayo es determinar la influencia del uso de canciones en el proceso de enseñanza del idioma inglés para estudiantes de 3.º y 4.º de educación general básica, en una escuela pública de la ciudad de Chone. Este artículo presenta una revisión bibliográfica de investigaciones recientes que analizan el impacto del uso de canciones como estrategia pedagógica dentro de la planificación académica. La investigación se llevó a cabo utilizando metodologías ejecutadas a través de métodos mixtos, con un diseño no experimental. Para realizar esta investigación, se seleccionó una población de estudiantes de 3er y 4to grado, que constituye un total de 40 estudiantes, a quienes se les aplicó una prueba previa y una prueba posterior. Durante la retroalimentación de los test se aplicó una lista de observación. El post-test fue aplicado después de usar las canciones como método para desarrollar en los estudiantes las competencias y las habilidades requeridas para adquirir una segunda lengua como lo es el inglés. Con los resultados de esta investigación se logró denotar que usar canciones para enseñar inglés es una estrategia altamente eficaz que motiva a los estudiantes a expresarse con mayor confianza en otro idioma, ayudando al docente a introducir de forma más asertiva nuevos contenidos.

Palabras clave: Canciones, Estrategias pedagógicas, Enseñanza del idioma inglés

Introduction

English songs as a pedagogical resource has gained increasing attention in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly in elementary education, where listening comprehension plays a foundational role in language development. Listening is not only the first language skill to emerge but also a complex process that involves decoding sounds, recognizing vocabulary, and constructing meaning from spoken input (Howatt & Dakin, 1974).

Several studies highlight that songs provide learners with authentic and meaningful linguistic input through repetition, rhythm, and melody. Musical elements such as tempo and intonation closely resemble natural speech patterns, supporting learners' ability to recognize stress, pronunciation, and connected speech, which are essential components of listening comprehension (Jekiel & Malarski, 2023). Repeated exposure to songs facilitates vocabulary retention and pronunciation awareness, particularly among young learners who benefit from predictable and engaging auditory input (Rohmah & Indah, 2021).

From an affective perspective, songs play a significant role in reducing anxiety and increasing motivation in the language classroom. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1985), emotional factors such as stress and lack of confidence can hinder language acquisition. Research indicates that the use of songs creates a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment, lowering students' affective filters and encouraging active participation in listening activities (Hui & Lin, 2008). These motivational benefits are especially relevant in elementary settings, where sustained attention and engagement are critical for effective learning (Supriyani & Fatin, 2025).

Empirical research supports the effectiveness of songs when integrated into structured listening activities. Ali (2020) found that students exposed to song-based listening tasks demonstrated improved comprehension of both general meaning and specific details. Similarly, Tanyi (2024) emphasizes the importance of incorporating pre-listening strategies, such as vocabulary preview and contextualization, to enhance learners' understanding and focus during listening tasks. These findings suggest that songs are most effective when used intentionally rather than as isolated or purely entertaining activities.

Educator perspectives further reinforce the pedagogical value of songs in EFL classrooms. Studies reveal that although planning song-based lessons may require additional preparation, teachers consistently report increased student attention, motivation, and interaction during listening activities (Annuri et al., 2025). However, research also indicates that the effectiveness of songs depends largely on appropriate selection criteria, including clarity of lyrics, tempo, repetition, and relevance to students' age and proficiency level (Uknowledge & Miller, 2017; Kobilova, 2021).

Recent systematic reviews confirm these findings, concluding that musical input positively influences listening development when accompanied by explicit instructional guidance. Hamilton et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers should guide learners to notice sound patterns and meaning after listening, maximizing the linguistic benefits of songs. This reinforces the idea that songs function best as a complementary pedagogical resource within a structured instructional framework.

Literature demonstrates that English songs are an effective pedagogical tool for supporting listening comprehension in elementary EFL learners. Their effectiveness derives from a combination of linguistic reinforcement, affective engagement, and repeated exposure to authentic language. Nevertheless, successful implementation requires careful song selection, structured pedagogical planning, and alignment with listening comprehension objectives. These considerations provide the

theoretical foundation for the present study, which examines the use and perception of English songs as a pedagogical resource in elementary classrooms.

To conclude this literature review, it is worth mentioning Delgado & Farfan (2022), who assert that songs have become an important teaching resource, a pedagogical strategy that seeks the rapid, effective, and accurate development of students' skills in understanding what they hear. To successfully implement this strategy, educators must carefully analyze the context in which it will be used; that is, they must consider the musical trends or potential tastes of the student group. This helps to capture their attention more easily, motivating them both intrinsically and extrinsically to develop their listening skills.

Methodology

The purpose of this analysis is to to analyze the influence of songs as a pedagogical strategy on students' attention and the English language learning process. Examining participants' insights concerning the use of songs as a pedagogical strategy in English language teaching. This research uses a mixed-methods approach, with a non-experimental design. The quantitative part taking from an instrument as pre-test and post-test applied to students from 3rd and 4rd grade, making a comparison performance before and after by including songs as an academic strategy to improve learning process. The pre-test was applied before the execution of the strategy; subsequently, a post-test was applied that allows us to analyze the effectiveness of this strategy. Both test were applied to 40 students in the third and fourth grades of basic general education, inside a public school in Chone city.

The results are organized according to the main variables explored, including the use of songs to introduce topics, song characteristics such as clarity and repetition, the use of complementary classroom activities, and the appropriateness of song duration for educational purposes.

Subsequently, was executed an observation checklist as source from qualitative data, the results obtained from the participants are presented in tables to facilitate their interpretation. Following the presentation of the results, a general interpretation is provided in order to identify patterns, compare the findings with previous research, and analyze the potential pedagogical implications of using songs in English language learning, the results of the pre-test and post-test are shown in Table #1 below.

Table 1. Distribution of Listening Comprehension Scores in Pre-test and Post-test

Score Range	3rd Grade Pretest	3rd Grade Posttest	4rd Grade Pre-test	4rd Grade Post-test
4 – <5	0	0	0	0
5 – <6	1	0	2	0
6 – <7	2	0	0	0
7 – <8	8	4	6	2
8 – <9	5	5	7	5
9 – <10	4	8	3	7

10	0	5	0	4
Total	22	22	18	18

Source: Own Elaboration

English songs represent a high-value strategy within the language teaching process. Music possesses the capacity to enhance memory, attention, and motivation; consequently, this improves students' linguistic expression and demonstrates their endorsement of implementing such resources within the classroom. (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2015).

The use of songs to introduce topics, it is resource effective to improve listening competence in students, according to the pretest no one from the population reached maximum grade after the strategy. After implementing the strategy 5 students in 3rd grade and 4 in 4rd grade reach de maximum grade. In medium grades the results reflect and 50% of improvement in the performance academic.

Peña and Soler (2020) identified that students who sang songs in English achieved longer lasting lexical retention compared to those who only memorized word lists. Learning in real contexts helps students to follow instructions given and executed in the language, which strengthens the teaching process.

The song characteristics such as clarity and repetition, is a factor that the educator should pay attention because this category remarks an importance in the students who needs more stimulation for develop the competence of listening. In the posttest it is observed that zero students have grades under <5., that is remarkable because it is measured to determine the motivation to improve listening competence in the students.

Table 2. Analysis of results of the observation sheet. Dimensions: Use, Motivation and Follows Instructions.

Dimensions	Yes (%)	Partially (%)	Indifferent (%)	Sometimes (%)	No (%)
Use of songs to introduce topic in English classes	33.33	40.00	10.00	10.00	6.67
Interaction, reduced distraction, and motivation	30.00	36.67	13.33	13.33	6.6%
Student follows instructions and performs listening tasks	23.33	46.67	13.33	10.00	6.6%

Source: Own Elaboration

The use of songs in the process of teaching a second language is an innovative tactic when teaching the contents of the subject, the teacher when introducing a topic must opt for non-traditional methods that capture the student's attentions teaching without putting a lot of academic pressure on the learners (Kummar T., et al, 2022).

Moreover, songs and music can be proven to be an effective listening activity that has multiple benefits to offer. Particularly in the case of young and elementary learners, music has been used widely to teach important concepts in a fun way by second language teachers.

The results indicate a generally positive perception toward the use of songs as a pedagogical strategy in English language teaching. Most participants reported agreement with the statements, suggesting that

songs contribute to student engagement, attention, and listening comprehension. However neutral responses indicate that the strategy is not yet consistently or systematically implemented, highlighting the need for teacher training and structured integration into academic planning.

Teaching English can be a complex process, which is why the use of songs in the classroom as a didactic resource for learning English, in this case, can become a useful tool to get students motivated in the classroom, since understanding their songs or what is fashionable is useful for them to transfer language learning outside the classroom. classes and bring it into your daily routine (Viedma Bermejo, E. M., 2025).

The results indicate a generally positive perception toward the use of songs as a pedagogical strategy in English language teaching. Most participants reported agreement with the statements, suggesting that songs contribute to student engagement, attention, and listening comprehension. However, partial agreement and neutral responses indicate that the strategy is not yet consistently or systematically implemented, highlighting the need for further teacher training and structured integration into lesson planning. Table #3 below shows the results of the observation sheet with respect to the dimensions of Song clarity, speed, and repetition.

Table 3. Analysis of results of the observation sheet. Dimensions: Song’s clarity and performs listening task.

Dimensions	Yes (%)	Partially (%)	Indifferent (%)	Sometimes (%)	No (%)
Song clarity, speed, repetition	36.67	43.33	6.67	10	3.33
Student follows instructions and performs listening tasks	23.33	46.67	13.33	10.00	6.67

Source: Own Elaboration

Student receptivity toward the use of songs is positive, it is essential for educators to strengthen this strategy through resources such as modern music. These tracks are characterized by simple and repetitive melodies, making them easily comprehensible even for beginner-level students. (Chiang et al., 2018).

Music positively impacts language acquisition when the lyrics are directly aligned with the learning objectives and content to be mastered. (Harding et al, 2019). For this reason, educators must gain insight into the students' psyche and align the selected songs with the group's specific context; in doing so, they ensure that the pedagogical strategy achieves a positive impact on the learners.

The results indicate a generally positive perception toward the use of songs as a pedagogical strategy in English language teaching. Most participants reported agreement with the statements, suggesting that songs contribute to student engagement, attention, and listening comprehension. However, partial agreement and neutral responses indicate that the strategy is not yet consistently or systematically implemented, highlighting the need for further teacher training and structured integration into academic planning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that songs are perceived as a valuable pedagogical tool in English language teaching. Participants generally showed a positive attitude toward the integration of songs into classroom activities, particularly when songs are used to introduce topics, reinforce vocabulary, and support

listening comprehension. These results are consistent with previous research that highlights the motivational and cognitive benefits of music in second language acquisition.

According to Kumar et al. (2022), songs help reduce academic pressure while increasing student engagement and attention. Similarly, Chiang et al. (2018) argue that repetitive structures and rhythmic patterns in songs facilitate language comprehension, especially for beginner learners.

The analysis indicates that songs are perceived not only as an entertaining resource but also as an effective instructional strategy. When songs are accompanied by structured activities such as lyric completion, vocabulary identification, and pronunciation practice, they can significantly enhance the learning process. However, the results also reveal certain limitations. Some participants expressed neutral opinions regarding the systematic use of songs in English classes. This may suggest that although teachers recognize the potential benefits of music, it is not always fully integrated into lesson planning. In some cases, the selection of songs or the design of accompanying activities may not be sufficiently aligned with learning objectives.

Therefore, these findings highlight the importance of providing teachers with additional training and pedagogical resources that support the effective use of music in language teaching. Proper song selection, appropriate duration, and the inclusion of interactive activities can maximize the educational impact of this strategy. Overall, the results confirm that songs can play an important role in improving motivation, participation, and listening comprehension in English language learning.

Additionally, the results suggest that songs become more effective when they are accompanied by well-designed classroom activities that promote active student participation.

Despite the positive perceptions identified in the study, the findings also indicate that songs are not always used systematically as part of teaching practice. For this reason, it is important to encourage teachers to integrate music more consistently into their lesson planning and to select songs that align with students' language level and learning objectives. Ultimately, incorporating songs into English language teaching can create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment, supporting both language development and student motivation.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it should be noted that using songs as a means to develop listening skills is beneficial for both students and teachers. This positive feedback loop is evident in the results of the observation checklist and the tests administered to the students in the sample.

This study concludes that the use of English songs is positively perceived as a pedagogical resource for developing listening comprehension in primary school students. The findings suggest that songs enhance motivation, participation, and classroom interaction, while supporting exposure to authentic language input. Despite this positive perception, the partial implementation reported by participants indicates the need for more systematic pedagogical planning and professional development for teachers.

The results of this study demonstrate that songs are generally perceived as an effective and motivating tool for teaching English as a foreign language. Participants recognized that music could enhance students' attention, participation, and listening comprehension in the classroom.

With the execution of this work, the main objective set at the beginning of this investigation is fulfilled, which was to analyze the influence of songs as a pedagogical strategy in the attention of students and in the process of learning the English language. The results show that the use of songs are highly effective strategies since they motivate students to develop their ability to listen to the language in a more dynamic way through the use of music.

The analysis also shows that specific characteristics of songs, such as clarity, repetition, and appropriate duration, contribute positively to the learning process. These elements help students understand the lyrics more easily and reinforce vocabulary and pronunciation.

To finalize, it can be said that songs, besides being an efficient strategy for developing listening skills, also develop students' soft skills, thus benefiting the teaching process. It can be noted that using songs is innovative and adds dynamism to the process of teaching a second language.

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