

---

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC: SONGS AND LYRICS IN TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS TO YOU LEARNERS

*Nasiba Salikhova*

*Senior teacher of the department of English in preschool education  
The Uzbek state world languages university.*

**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the methodic techniques which help to improve learners' listening skills. It was done with the goal of highlighting the ways of teaching English to children through songs and identifying the benefits of teaching English to children, which is used in the courses. After analyzing the relevant theories of scientists, the researcher identified the basic ways of teaching English to children through songs, based on these features the researcher also found out useful types of them that could be used effectively in classroom and that would help learners to practice the skills in language.

This study is focused on trying to improving listening skills through songs and to discover how to facilitate children's language learning process regarding through songs at primary schools. First, it is necessary to explain what vocabulary is. Listening is not only the single words in a language, but it also includes phrases. When children are learning EFL listening they learn single words such as cat, table, classroom, etc., as well as phrases such as greetings, idioms, collocations, etc. Secondly, it is important to remember that a word does not have only one meaning, but several meanings that learners need to know. In the words of Thornbury " ...at the most basic level, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning. Knowing the meaning of the word is not just knowing its dictionary meaning, it also means knowing the words commonly associated with it, as well as its connotations, including its register and its cultural accretions".(2002: 15)

As Cameron gives a similar definition, "in language teaching terms, the development of words, their meaning and the links between them will be covered under the term Listening" (2001;18). EFL listening for children does not comprehend all these aspects of a word because they are more difficult for children and have to be learnt over much more time. However, it is essential that children learn many words. According to Kwiatkowski's argument: ...teaching listening at this level is a very important element of teaching English, because children, knowing more and more words, can better communicate with other children.

Moreover, "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without listening nothing can be conveyed. That is, without grammar, children can try to communicate with others and to express their opinions, but without listening, they cannot say anything. (2007:2) Teachers of EFL need to take into account that children have already learnt a first language and that it enables them to relate meanings of words of both languages and as Pinter argues, they may "acquire through hearing and experiencing lots of English, in much the same way as they

---

acquire their first language”. Another aspect that should be taken into account is that “helping the child to learn and develop becomes more important than simply teaching the language” since children usually want their teachers be a helper or a facilitator, rather than an authority that simply gives them new knowledge.

Rendering to Phillips’ opinion, one characteristic is that children “are quick to learn words... This may be because words have tangible, immediate meanings...” (1993: 74), or because “the word is a recognizable linguistic unit for children in their first language and so they will notice words in the new language”. For these reasons, the listening that children between five and seven years old are expected to learn is basic vocabulary such as greetings, classroom objects, members of the family, numbers, colours, etc. which are used in a context that is familiar to children. Consequently, children begin to discover that another language or languages exist by which they can communicate with others.

It is also important to consider the processes children are going through.

Jean Piaget pondered that children’s reasoning and understanding differ depending on their age. Based on that, he argues that ...all people pass through the stages in exactly the same order. It is important to note that the age ranges associated with the stage may not apply to every child. Some children may reach a particular stage earlier or later than the others may. (Piaget. p: 35)

Similar to Piaget, Reilly and Ward (1997: 3) consider that whom they call “very young learners”, that is children between five and seven years old, are in the preoperational stage. Cameron agrees with Piaget’s ideas that “five year olds learning a foreign language need very concrete listening that connects with objects they can handle or see...” This is because children begin to familiarize with the world and need to use language to socialize with their peers. (2001: 81) This does not only happen in their first language, but in English too. For this reason, it is important that children learn a wide range of listening to communicate with others in context. In order to contextualize the listening we need to use different ways to teach it. Some of the more common ways to teach EFL listening are by means of translation, real things, actions (gesture), pictures (illustrations, posters), use of synonymy and definition, songs, storytelling, games, using readings, etc. However, not all of these ways to teach EFL listening are adequate for very young learners. The ones that are used with them are real things, pictures, songs, storytelling, actions and games. This study focuses on real things, pictures, songs, storytelling and games, which we think, will be very useful for teaching listening during our research. The reason for not using actions (gestures) as a single way of teaching EFL listening is that they are also involved in songs and games. Although games and storytelling are not considered by some authors as techniques to teach listening, for the purposes of our research, we will refer to games and storytelling as teaching techniques.(1993:6)

Songs are a good way to introduce listening because children love them and learn the words by singing. They also help children to develop listening skills and learn the pronunciation of the words. Furthermore, as Griffiee argues, they are

---

useful to relax children when they are restless. Teachers can use the same song as a warm up in different classes to create a routine and to revise listening. Finally, songs worked very well with the groups, so I can say that as well as pictures, songs worked well with big groups. (1992:12)

Realia is maybe one of the most useful ways to teach listening because it uses “authentic material” refers to realia in these terms: “Objects (sometimes called ‘real things’) are an ideal way of showing the meaning of English words for concreting things”. In other words, realia is the use of real objects such as stuffed toys to teach animals or plastic or real fruits and vegetables to teach food. It involves children using their senses, for example, the sense of touch to identify some textures, the sense of smell-to-smell the fruits and the sense of sight to observe and identify some objects.

Summarizing my article I would like to say that songs allow teachers to catch children’s attention more easily, teach listening in a fun way and exemplify the concepts without translation. Songs are another way to teach vocabulary. Firstly, it is because they “are especially good at introducing vocabulary because songs provide a meaningful context for the listening”. In this way, songs can be used as a warm-up in the class to introduce new vocabulary to children and as a way to motivate them to learn. Secondly, one of the obstacles presented in teaching children is that they are very restless, so “songs and music can be used to relax learners and provide an enjoyable classroom”. Thirdly, they can be very useful “for pattern practice and memory retention” because “songs give pleasurable repetition with no boredom and provide active participation in the language”.

In addition to this, they also involve listening and speaking skills and children love and enjoy singing a song at the same time as they learn. Finally, in the classroom, an EFL teacher can use a chant, that is a song without music, to “teach children the sounds and rhythm of English, to reinforce structures and listening, but above all, to have fun”.

### Reference

1. Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, Cambridge.
2. Cunningham, J. G., & Sterling, R. S. 1998. “Developmental change in the understanding of affective meaning of music”. *Motivation & Emotion*, 12, 399-413.
3. Dowling, W. J. 1999. “The development of music, perception and cognition”. In D. Deutsch (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music* (pp. 603-625). San Diego: Academic Press.
4. Griffiee, D. (1992). *Songs in action*. Great Britain: Phoenix ELT.
5. Piaget, J. 1923. *The language and the thought of the child*. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.
6. Jean Piaget., (1997). *The Language and Thought of the Child*. 288 pages.

- 
7. Murphey, T. 1990. Song and music in language learning. An analysis of pop song lyrics and music in teaching English to speaker of other languages. Berna: Peter Lang.
  8. Phillips, S. (1993). Young Learners. China: Oxford University Press.