

## TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH MUSIC

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**Abstract:** *the article under discussion discusses the role of music in teaching a foreign language. The author depicts the improvement of vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and imagination of the learners by using music at EFL/ESL lessons. Besides, music enhances learners' motivation and makes studying more challenging.*

**Keywords:** *music, vocabulary, beneficial, EFL/ESL classroom, emotions, challenging, creativity, interesting, motivation, grammar, adolescents, spelling, pronunciation.*

Music contains a variety of vocabulary that can easily be adapted to the appropriate age or level of learning. Songs are full of phrases and expressions that will prepare children for using an authentic language. It teaches grammar and many songs can be used as grammar exercises, especially for adolescents since "in order to make a grammar lesson effective, beneficial, and interesting a teacher should use some well-developed and fascinating techniques in the classroom" [3, pp. 9-10].

Through music, culture as well as pronunciations and different accents can be taught. Figurative language and metaphors are a big part of music and songs and are very adjustable to our everyday experiences. Even slang can be introduced which is an ideal way for teachers to connect with their students on a new, exciting level.

The creativity of songs encourages the students' imagination and enables original learning. Very often, songs tell a story and many lyrics are ideal for the students to build upon, using their own thoughts and ideas. Through music, students will learn how to express themselves more effectively because song lyrics often spur lively discussions and different interpretations, which are needed in many EFL/ESL classrooms. Many students seem to be afraid of using the target language in the classroom because formal language learning creates a stressful atmosphere. Most of the time, the target language is only being used when students are reading from their textbooks or answering questions in their workbooks. Horwitz and Cope (1986) have shown that many students exhibit foreign language anxiety in the classroom [1, pp. 125-132]. However, songs in the language classroom tend to entertain and relax the learners, thus stress may be reduced through the use of music [2, pp. 1-4].

Language learning becomes more challenging as the children grow older because the vocabulary increases. Emotions become more relevant and more emphasis is placed on grammar, correct spelling and pronunciation. The vocabulary develops into being more complex and the fun that young learners experience with playing games in the classroom becomes more serious with all the different emotions. Spelling and grammar become more important as pictures and visual aspects slowly disappear from the textbooks as the years pass.

Teaching adolescents is giving and the tasks vary from using background music while the students study in the classroom, to analyzing song lyrics and everything in between. Background music is a controversial topic and does need more research, but it can be good to introduce older learners to the use of music in the classroom by bringing in background music to see how they respond. Many people are in fact able to study and listen to music simultaneously and it can actually create a very peaceful atmosphere because music can be very effective to increase the students' ability to learn. Music played at 60 beats per minute (SB/M) has been shown to produce a state of relaxation in both children and adults. Background music can be appropriate to use when the students are working on their homework, creative assignments such as writing papers or journals, or even when working on other quiet activities that require the students to use their imagination and visualization. When brainstorming for assignments, background music can also be helpful because it can help with building emotions and creativity. Since all learners are different, it is important to ask them for feedback to see what suits each student.

Song lyrics are a task on their own when it comes to using music for learning because they contain so many variable assignments that include creativity, grammar, spelling and increased vocabulary. It is good for students to be able to work on assignments that accept various views and opinions because music and song lyrics enable creative writing and independent thinking. When lyrics have been placed into the music and they have been stored in the memory, their meanings can be discussed and analyzed where the students should be encouraged to use the target language. It has been shown that students' comprehension is better when tales are told with repetitions, comprehension checks and gestures.

Adolescents can relate to most lyrics and often connect them to their own experiences in life so a wide range of vocabulary will help the students to improve their comprehension skills and add on to their vocabulary, grammar and correct spelling. Through music, grammar can be taught in a new way. Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and more can be introduced through music to break up the usual routine. Songs with assignments from textbooks and handouts enhance learners' motivation and make the lesson interesting.

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