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THE ROLE OF SONGS IN ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstract: *This article discusses the role of songs in elementary English learning and explains why songs can be a useful tool for young and beginner learners. At elementary level, students often need simple, memorable and enjoyable activities that help them practise vocabulary, pronunciation, listening and speaking without fear. Songs create a friendly classroom atmosphere and make language learning more natural. They also support repetition, rhythm, memory and learner motivation. The article describes how teachers can use songs for teaching new words, improving pronunciation, developing listening skills, practising grammar patterns and encouraging students to speak. It also gives practical ideas for choosing suitable songs and using them effectively in the classroom.*

Keywords: *songs, elementary English, young learners, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening skills, motivation, classroom activities, language learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary English learning is the first important stage in building a learner’s confidence in a foreign language. At this level, students usually learn basic vocabulary, simple grammar, short dialogues and everyday expressions. However, the process can become difficult if lessons are based only on explanation, translation and written exercises. Young and beginner learners need more movement, emotion, sound and repetition. Songs can answer this need in a natural and enjoyable way.

A song is not only entertainment. In language teaching, it can become a strong pedagogical tool. Through songs, students hear English words in a meaningful context, repeat useful phrases, practise rhythm and intonation, and remember language more easily. Many learners may forget a grammar rule, but they can remember a line from a song for a long time. This shows that music and language are closely connected in the learning process.

Songs are especially helpful in elementary classes because they reduce stress. Some students feel shy when they have to speak alone, but they feel more comfortable when they sing together with classmates. Singing as a group gives them a safe way to pronounce English sounds and use new words. For this reason, songs can make the English lesson warmer, more active and more memorable.

Songs as a Source of Motivation

Motivation is one of the most important factors in elementary English learning. If students enjoy the lesson, they are more ready to listen, repeat and take part in activities.

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Songs bring positive emotion into the classroom. They can change the mood of the lesson and help learners feel that English is not only a difficult subject but also a language that can be enjoyed.

Many elementary learners like music in their daily life. When the teacher brings songs into the English classroom, the lesson becomes closer to learners’ interests. This is very important because students learn better when the material feels familiar and pleasant. A simple song about colours, numbers, animals or daily routines can make students more attentive than a long explanation.

Teaching Vocabulary through Songs

Vocabulary is one of the first areas where songs can be very effective. Elementary learners need to remember many basic words, such as family members, body parts, colours, food, animals, numbers and classroom objects. When these words are presented in a song, they become easier to remember because they are connected with rhythm and melody.

For example, a song about body parts can help students learn words such as head, shoulders, knees, toes, eyes, ears, mouth and nose. If the song includes actions, learners not only hear the words but also connect them with movement. This makes the learning process more active. Students remember the word head better when they touch their head while singing it.

Songs also provide natural repetition. Repetition is necessary at elementary level, but simple drilling can sometimes be boring. In a song, repeated words and phrases do not feel tiring. Students may repeat the same sentence several times because it is part of the music. As a result, vocabulary practice becomes more enjoyable and less mechanical.

Improving Pronunciation and Intonation

Pronunciation is another area where songs play an important role. Elementary learners often find English sounds difficult because English pronunciation is different from their mother tongue. Songs allow learners to hear correct pronunciation many times. They also help students practise stress, rhythm and intonation in a natural way.

English has its own musical quality. Some syllables are stressed, some are weak, and sentences have rising or falling intonation. Songs can help learners feel this rhythm. When students sing, they do not only pronounce separate words; they pronounce words in connected speech. This is useful because real communication also happens in phrases, not only in isolated words.

For example, a simple song with phrases such as How are you?, I am fine, What is your name?, and Nice to meet you can help students practise everyday pronunciation. They hear how the phrases sound together and then repeat them with the melody. This makes pronunciation practice less stressful.

Developing Listening Skills

Songs are a useful way to develop listening skills. Listening is often difficult for elementary learners because they may not recognize words when they hear them in natural speech. Songs provide repeated listening in an enjoyable form. Students can listen for general meaning, specific words, sounds or patterns.

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A teacher can design simple listening tasks with songs. For example, students may listen and circle the words they hear, put pictures in order, fill in missing words, or raise their hands when they hear a target word. These tasks are not difficult, but they make students listen actively. Active listening is more effective than simply playing a song without any task.

Practising Grammar in a Natural Context

Grammar can also be taught through songs, especially simple grammar patterns. Many songs include repeated structures, such as I like..., I can..., There is..., This is..., What do you...?, and I am.... These patterns are useful for elementary learners because they appear again and again in the lyrics.

For example, a song with the structure I can jump, I can run, I can swim helps students practise the modal verb can. Instead of only reading grammar rules, learners hear and repeat the structure in a meaningful and memorable way. Later, the teacher can ask students to make their own sentences: I can draw, I can cook, I can play football.

Songs should not replace grammar explanation completely, but they can support it. A teacher may first introduce the structure, then use a song for practice, and finally ask students to use the same structure in speaking or writing. This sequence helps students move from listening and repetition to personal language use.

Songs and Speaking Confidence

Speaking is often the most difficult skill for elementary learners. Many students are afraid of making mistakes in front of others. Songs can reduce this fear because students sing together. Group singing allows learners to practise pronunciation and phrases without feeling that all attention is on one student.

Songs can also lead to speaking activities. After singing a song about hobbies, students can ask each other: What do you like? Do you like dancing? Can you sing? After a song about food, they can say what they like and dislike. In this way, a song becomes a bridge from listening to speaking.

Teachers can also use chants, which are similar to songs but usually have stronger rhythm and less melody. Chants are useful for practising short dialogues and classroom expressions. For example, students can chant: Can I have a pencil? Yes, here you are. Thank you. You're welcome. Such practice helps learners remember useful communication patterns.

Choosing Suitable Songs

The success of using songs depends on the teacher's choice. Not every song is suitable for elementary English learning. A good classroom song should match the learners' age, level and lesson aim. It should have clear pronunciation, simple vocabulary, useful repetition and an appropriate length. If the song is too long or too difficult, students may lose interest.

The teacher should ask several questions before choosing a song. Does this song teach the topic of the lesson? Are the words useful for students? Is the speed comfortable? Can

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students do an action or task while listening? Is the content appropriate for the classroom? These questions help the teacher use songs with purpose, not only for entertainment.

Practical Classroom Techniques

There are many simple techniques for using songs in elementary classes. One technique is listen and point. The teacher gives students pictures, and students point to the correct picture when they hear the word. Another technique is listen and do. Students perform actions while singing. This is useful for action verbs and body parts.

A third technique is gap filling. The teacher writes the lyrics with some missing words. Students listen and complete the blanks. For younger learners, the missing words can be supported by pictures. Another technique is ordering lines. Students receive lines from the song and put them in the correct order while listening.

Teachers can also ask students to change one part of the song. For example, if the song says I like apples, students can change apples to bananas, pizza or milk. This makes the song more personal and creative. It also helps students move from memorizing to using the language.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, songs have an important role in elementary English learning. They make lessons more enjoyable, reduce stress and help students remember new language. Songs support vocabulary learning, pronunciation, listening skills, grammar practice and speaking confidence. They are especially useful for young and beginner learners because they combine sound, rhythm, repetition, movement and emotion.

However, songs should be used with a clear teaching purpose. The teacher should choose simple, suitable and meaningful songs and connect them with classroom tasks. A song becomes educational when students listen actively, repeat useful language and use the new words or structures after singing. When songs are used in this way, they are not only fun; they become an effective part of English language teaching.

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