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Ciencias de la Educación
Artículo de Investigación

La efectividad de las canciones en inglés para enseñar vocabulario

The effectiveness of English songs to teach vocabulary

A eficácia das músicas em inglês para ensinar vocabulário

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Resumen

Esta investigación tuvo por objetivo analizar la efectividad del uso de canciones en inglés para enseñar vocabulario. Los investigadores usaron el enfoque mixto para este estudio. Los participantes de esta investigación fueron 30 estudiantes y un docente de inglés del Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi-Latacunga. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante el uso de una entrevista para determinar los diferentes puntos de vista por parte del maestro. Luego, se aplicó una encuesta para conocer las preferencias de los estudiantes acerca de la enseñanza de vocabulario a través de canciones en inglés. Los resultados de la entrevista y la encuesta mostraron que esta estrategia ayuda a los alumnos a incrementar el vocabulario, además mejora la pronunciación y es posible desarrollar otras habilidades fundamentales para producir el idioma Inglés; de la misma manera el docente considera que esta estrategia promueve el interés en el estudiante por aprender vocabulario, por esta razón hay que crear actividades que se puedan realizar usando canciones y que llamen su atención, además tener en cuenta el nivel de los estudiantes y el tipo de canciones que se pueden usar. Por lo tanto, este recurso facilita el proceso de enseñanza en los docentes y es una forma interactiva de aprendizaje para los estudiantes, mejorando el entorno y evitando la tradicionalidad.

Palabras clave: Canciones en inglés; vocabulario; efectividad; enseñanza; principiantes.

Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the effectiveness of using songs in English to teach vocabulary. The researchers used the mixed approach for this study. The participants in this research were 30 students and an English teacher from the Language Center of the Technical University of Cotopaxi-Latacunga. The data was collected through the use of an interview to determine the different points of view on the part of the teacher. Then, a survey was applied to find out the preferences of the students about the teaching of vocabulary through songs in English. The results of the interview and the survey showed that this strategy helps students increase vocabulary, also improves pronunciation and it is possible to develop other fundamental skills to produce the English language; In the same way, the teacher considers that this strategy promotes the student's interest in learning vocabulary, for this reason it is necessary to create activities that can be done using songs and that attract their attention, in addition to taking into account the level of the students and the type of songs that can be used. Therefore, this resource facilitates the teaching process for teachers and is an interactive way of learning for students, improving the environment and avoiding traditionality.

Keywords: Songs in English; vocabulary; effectiveness; teaching; beginners.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa teve como objetivo analisar a eficácia do uso de músicas em inglês para ensinar vocabulário. Os pesquisadores usaram a abordagem mista para este estudo. Os participantes desta pesquisa foram 30 estudantes e uma professora de inglês do Centro de Línguas da Universidade Técnica de Cotopaxi-Latacunga. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevista para determinar os diferentes pontos de vista por parte do professor. Em seguida, foi aplicada uma pesquisa para saber as preferências dos alunos quanto ao ensino de vocabulário por meio de músicas em inglês. Os resultados da entrevista e da pesquisa mostraram que essa estratégia ajuda os alunos a aumentar o vocabulário, também melhora a pronúncia e é possível desenvolver outras habilidades fundamentais para produzir a língua inglesa; Da mesma forma, a professora considera que esta estratégia promove o interesse do aluno em aprender vocabulário, por isso é necessário criar atividades que possam ser feitas a partir de músicas e que atraiam a sua atenção, além de levar em consideração o nível do alunos e o tipo de músicas que podem ser usadas. Portanto, esse recurso facilita o processo de ensino para os professores e é uma forma interativa de aprendizagem para os alunos, melhorando o ambiente e evitando a tradicionalidade.

Palavras-chave: Músicas em inglês; vocabulário; eficácia; ensino; iniciantes.

Introduction

The research carried out in this article is based on determining the perceptions of one teacher and students' preferences of the Language Center of the Technical University of Cotopaxi from Latacunga City about the effectiveness of English songs to teach vocabulary.

Vocabulary is a crucial part of learning English. Knowing the right words allows for clear and accurate communication, understanding texts, expanding knowledge, improving pronunciation, and increasing confidence in speaking skills. However, it is a problem for student learners from the Language Center of the Technical University of Cotopaxi. Afzal (2019) states that vocabulary development is vital, but at the same time, it is a complicated task for non-native beginner learners because they do not have high vocabulary knowledge, cannot comprehend the language, and show poor academic performance.

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To begin with, Isnaini & Aminatun (2021) carried out a study about finding put thoughts on their vocabulary mastery using songs in the Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, which shows the students feel comfortable and agree that English songs help them to improve their vocabulary. They also establish listening and looking at the lyrics of English songs allows them to know the word pronunciation. In the same way, to Bawawa (2020) the use of songs in English develops the quality of vocabulary in students and motivates them to learn new words, this tactic changes the environment within the classroom and many of the students have fun when performing this type of activity, they can change their emotions and feel relaxed, as they progress appropriately. By contrast, Wardiman et al., (2022), indicated students find it difficult to clearly understand the pronunciation and accent of the singer in the songs. Therefore, it is important to take into account the kind of songs that can apply according to students' levels.

On the other hand, a study carried out by Yuhariah & Syafryadin (2023) considers that songs in language learning are a great tool, especially when it comes to vocabulary. Listening to English songs is an effective method, it helps learners to accustom their ears to English words, allow them retention of words and vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, Triwardani (2022) argues the songs are a didactic resource which nowadays teachers use as a teaching aid in the classroom to facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary by students. On the internet, there are different genres or styles which can be adapted to the topic of the class.

Methodology

In this study, the researchers used a mixed research approach because it allowed analyzing and describing the teacher's perspectives and students' preferences about the effectiveness of the use of English songs to teach vocabulary in A1 students. The participants of this research were 30 students and an English teacher from the Language Center of the Technical University of Cotopaxi. This research used a survey and interview as an instrument to collect data. The survey was elaborated in Google Forms and it consisted of 10 questions. Additionally, the researchers also conducted an interview to obtain information about the teacher's perspective on the implementation of songs in English class.

First, a questionnaire taken from Isnaini & Aminatun research (2021) was adapted to a survey which helped to collect information about students' preferences (Table 1). This survey was related to vocabulary development through English songs with two alternatives: yes or no. In addition, a

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questionnaire from Nguyen & Nguyen research (2020) was adapted to an interview that was applied to the teacher to find out about the method of teaching vocabulary through English songs (Table 2). The data collection instruments were useful to analyze the students' and teacher's perspectives on the research topic.

Table 1 Students' preferences about English vocabulary development

No	Statements	Yes	No
1	I like listening to English songs.		
2	English songs can help me to learn vocabulary.		
3	Listening and reading the lyrics of English songs can help to memorize the words.		
4	When I want to learn new vocabulary, I prefer listening to songs than studying from a book.		
5	English songs help me pronounce English words correctly.		
6	The songs provide new vocabulary in a way I can understand easily.		
7	English songs make me get interested in learning listening and speaking skills.		
8	The teacher should implement activities to develop vocabulary through songs and reading lyrics along.		
9	I like listening to English native-speaker singers.		
10	I listen to music using applications (Youtube Music, Spotify, Soundcloud, etc.) since there are various kinds of songs.		

Source: (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021)

Table 2 Teacher's perception about the use of English songs to teach vocabulary.

No	Questions
1	What do you think about the use of songs to teach vocabulary to beginner learners?
2	In your opinion, are songs important in developing beginner learners' vocabulary? Why?

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- 3 What kind of songs do you think facilitate beginner learners' vocabulary retention?
- 4 Why do you think it is necessary to introduce new vocabulary before having learners listen to a song?
- 5 Do you consider that it is important to play the song multiple times for beginner learners to repeat words? Why?
- 6 What kind of activities can you create using songs for vocabulary development in beginner learners?
- 7 Would you recommend songs, as an effective strategy to teach vocabulary to beginner learners?

Source: (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020)

Analysis and discussions

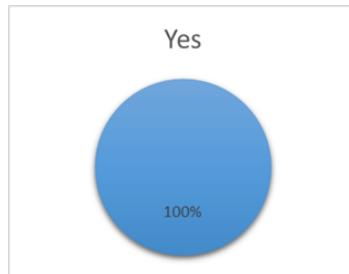
Results of the survey (Table 1)



Graphic 1. I like listening to English songs

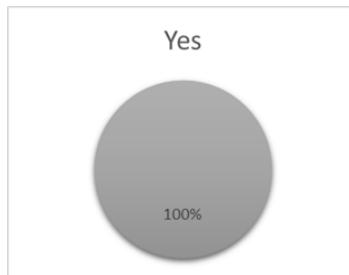
With the data obtained, 100% of students like to listen to songs in English which means that songs in English are well received by A1 level students, being an active way to teach the language and develop vocabulary skills.

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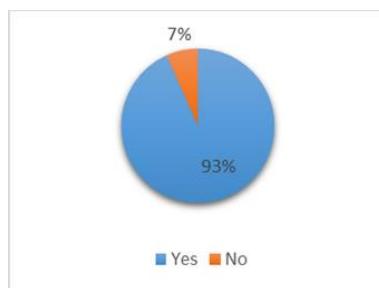
Graphic 2. English songs can help me to learn vocabulary.

It is possible to observe that 100% of students consider that English songs help them to learn vocabulary. So this strategy for English language teaching not only favors teachers in the teaching and learning process but also promotes autonomous learning in students



Graphic 3. Listening and reading the lyrics of English songs can help to memorize the words.

This question showed that 100% of students state that listening to and reading the lyrics of English songs can help them memorize words. It can be noted that these skills are considered important in language learning; therefore, they can be enhanced in a way that contributes to vocabulary learning.



Graphic 4. When I want to learn new vocabulary, I prefer listening to songs than studying from a book.

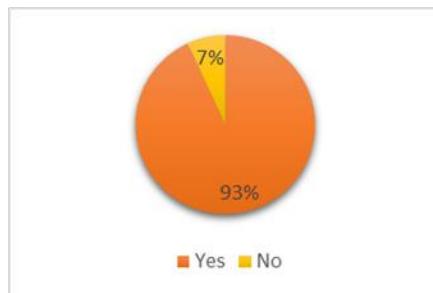
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It clearly shows the current situation of the students in terms of their way of learning 93% of students prefer to learn the vocabulary of the language through songs; however, a minimum percentage, corresponding to 7%, still prefer to use books. It means that students' learning process is not based on the traditional way, but they are looking for dynamic and active ways of learning.



Graphic 5. English songs help me pronounce English words correctly.

From the data obtained, it can be seen that 97% of the students state that English songs help them to pronounce English words correctly, while 3% do not consider this to be the case. Therefore, the development of this skill not only allows them to learn the meaning of the vocabulary but also to recognize them phonetically.



Graphic 6. The songs provide new vocabulary in a way I can understand easily.

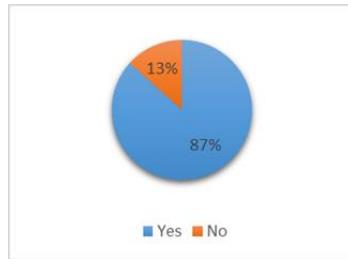
This question showed that 93% of the students consider the English songs to provide new vocabulary to understand the context easily while for 7% don't provide new vocabulary. Therefore, it is important to select the songs according to the level.

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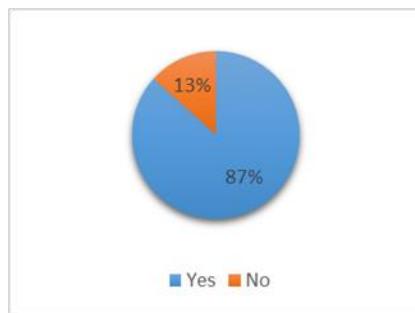
Graphic 7. English songs make me get interested in learning listening and speaking skills.

As can be seen in this chart, 93% of students said “Yes” to this question. This explains that English songs motivate the students to develop others skills while 7% do not interested in learning new skills through songs.



Graphic 8. The teacher should implement activities to develop vocabulary through songs and reading lyrics along.

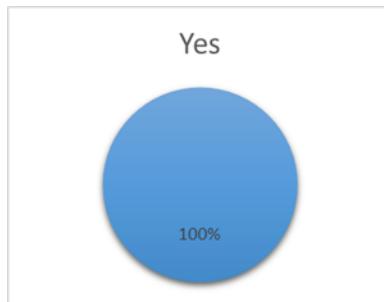
Regarding this question, 93% of the students responded that the teacher should implement activities to develop vocabulary through songs, while the 7% consider it is not necessary to apply these activities.



Graphic 9. I like listening to English native-speaker singers.

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About the preference of singers, 87% like listening to English native-speaker singers while 13% prefer to listen to singers in their own language, the Spanish.



Graphic 10. I listen to music using applications (Youtube Music, Spotify, Soundcloud, etc.) since there are various kinds of songs.

100% of the students listen to music using applications such as youtube music, spotify, etc. because there is a variety of songs and these applications can be easily downloaded and used in their cell phone.

Results of the teacher interview (Table 2)

Question 1. What do you think about the use of songs to teach vocabulary to beginner learners?

According to this question, the teacher mentions that it is possible to use songs for beginners, but it should be taken into account that the songs also have their own level, and the student should be helped to adapt to this process by choosing songs that are easy and have a catchy rhythm.

Question 2. In your opinion, are songs important in developing beginner learners' vocabulary? Why?

In his opinion, songs are important because they increase students' vocabulary, in addition develop the 4 skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, improve pronunciation and students can produce the language. Gradually they understand what they are saying when they communicate with each other.

Question 3. What kind of songs do you think facilitate beginner learners' vocabulary retention?

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To the teacher there are different types of songs, which are applied according to the subject of the class, for example, romantic songs, adventure songs, sentimental songs, which can make the student feel attracted to this kind of music.

Question 4. Why do you think it is necessary to introduce new vocabulary before having learners listen to a song?

The teacher mentions that he does not share the idea of directly introducing vocabulary, since he does not do it, he develops another technique which consists of introducing the song to the students, they must listen and relate to it, and during the development of this activity they can discover the vocabulary, understand the pronunciation and the context of the songs.

Question 5. Do you consider that it is important to play the song multiple times for beginner learners to repeat words? Why?

The English teacher does not agree with repeating the songs, so the students repeat the words since the process of repetition is considered traditionalism, which we try to avoid. On the contrary, playing the song serves to familiarize the students with the language and, according to the tastes of each student, to give them a taste for music in the target language.

Question 6. What kind of activities can you create using songs for vocabulary development in beginner learners?

The activities that teachers can create for students to learn vocabulary are karaoke, filling in the gaps in the lyrics of the songs, and multiple-choice, which are accompanied, controlled, and evaluated by the teacher. In addition, as autonomous work, the teacher works with a weekly song, evaluating the rhythm and pronunciation of the words, which allows the teacher to demonstrate the practice and review of the pronunciation of each word.

Question 7. Would you recommend songs, as an effective strategy to teach vocabulary to beginner learners?

The teacher recommended the use of English songs to teach vocabulary because of the positive reaction from a large percentage of students per classroom. Teacher has seen that students listen to English songs from their cell phones in and out of class. In addition, the teacher mentions that the students' non-acceptance of this technique is minimal; however, the margin of error in vocabulary learning is 5 to 10%.

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Conclusions

The research concludes that students prefer to learn vocabulary through English songs because they consider that this kind of activity allows them to develop other important skills such as listening and speaking. Furthermore, looking at the lyrics of the songs while listening helps them to improve the pronunciation of the words and at the same time they can memorize them for later use when communicating among classmates. On the other hand, the use of the book to study new vocabulary is a traditional method, and in some cases it is boring. Therefore, for students, this strategy of learning vocabulary through songs has a positive effect. Moreover, as they mentioned, the teacher should implement innovative activities that attract attention and encourage them to want to learn vocabulary.

Likewise, it is important to understand the teacher's support for the use of songs as a pedagogical tool to teach vocabulary to students in the initial phase, highlighting the importance of selecting appropriate pieces that have an accessible level and a captivating rhythm, to facilitate students' adaptation. He adds that songs have an intrinsic value in lexical expansion, not only for vocabulary enrichment, but also for strengthening listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation skills. The teacher's didactic approach consists of letting the students listen to the song and discover the lexis, pronunciation, and context in the course of the activity rather than directly introducing the new vocabulary. He suggests using different categories of songs depending on the lesson topics to captivate the learners' interest and establish an emotional connection. He opposes and avoids the constant repetition of words to teach because he considers traditionalism promoting, instead, the use of songs to familiarize students with the target language and stimulate appreciation for songs in the classroom. The teacher recommends activities such as karaoke, fill-in-the-blank lyrics and multiple-choice exercises for lexical development, applied in a structured approach and subject to teacher assessment. Despite acknowledging a modest margin of error in vocabulary learning, the teacher has observed mostly positive reactions to the use of songs in English, with minimal non-acceptance among A1 learners.

The teacher's level of knowledge about using English songs to teach vocabulary to A1-level language center students influences his practice. If the teacher does not know how to use English songs for the teaching-learning process, he cannot affirm the effects during the teaching-learning process. For this reason, good song management by the teacher is essential to provide efficient, motivated, and active learning in English language learners. In addition, undergraduate curricula

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aimed at teacher training should include content on different ways of student learning attached to reality and focused on students' preferences, including songs in English.

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