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The Effect of Using Songs on English Vocabulary Learning among Kindergarten Children

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Dedication

To my family, for their endless love, support, and encouragement throughout my academic journey. This work is a testament to their unwavering belief in me.

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First and foremost, all gratitude is due to Almighty God, who granted us the opportunity to pursue our Master's degree; upon Him we have always relied. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my esteemed supervisor for his unwavering guidance, continuous support, and invaluable advice throughout our academic journey. His assistance has been instrumental in shaping the direction of our research.

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of using songs as a pedagogical tool for teaching English vocabulary to kindergarten children in Ouargla, Algeria. The research addresses the problem that, despite the motivational benefits of music, songs are often underutilized in early English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The study aims to determine whether a song-based teaching approach can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and retention compared to traditional repetition-based methods. The research was conducted in two kindergartens in Ouargla, involving a pre-test/post-test experimental design. The findings indicate that the group of children taught through songs demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in vocabulary scores compared to the control group. This suggests that the integration of songs, with their inherent rhythm, melody, and repetition, can be a highly effective strategy for enhancing early vocabulary learning. The study concludes with pedagogical recommendations for integrating songs into the kindergarten curriculum to create a more engaging and effective language learning environment.

Keywords :Educational songs; Vocabulary acquisition; EFL; Kindergarten; Ouargla.

ملخص الدراسة

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مدى فعالية استخدام الأغاني كأداة تربوية لتعليم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية لأطفال الروضة في مدينة ورقلة بالجزائر. تتناول الدراسة إشكالية مفادها أنه على الرغم من الفوائد التحفيزية للموسيقى، إلا أن الأغاني لا تزال غير مستغلة بشكل كافٍ في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مرحلة التعليم المبكر.

تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد ما إذا كان المنهج التعليمي القائم على الأغاني يمكن أن يؤدي إلى تحسين ملموس في اكتساب المفردات والقدرة على استذكارها مقارنة بالطرق التقليدية القائمة على التكرار. أجري البحث في روضتين بمدينة ورقلة، معتمداً على تصميم تجريبي (اختبار قبلي/اختبار بعدي). وتشير النتائج إلى أن مجموعة الأطفال الذين تلموا عبر الأغاني أظهروا تحسناً ذا دلالة إحصائية في درجات المفردات مقارنة بالمجموعة الضابطة. مما يثبت أن دمج الأغاني—بما تحمله من إيقاع ولحن وتكرار—يمكن أن يشكل استراتيجية فعالة للغاية لتعزيز تعلم المفردات في سن مبكرة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى تقديم توصيات بيداغوجية لدمج الأغاني في مناهج رياض الأطفال لخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر تفاعلاً وفعالية.

الكلمات الدلالية

الأغاني التعليمية؛ اكتساب المفردات؛ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ رياض الأطفال؛ مدينة ورقلة.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The education of young children is a critical phase in human development, serving as the foundation for future academic success and personal growth. In today's globalized world, the acquisition of a second language, particularly English, has become increasingly important from an early age. preschool education plays a purchased role in introducing children to new languages through engaging and age-K-appropriate methods.

One such method that has gained significant attention is the use of music and songs in the classroom. Music is a universal language that appeals to children's natural affinity for rhythm, melody, and repetition. In the context of language learning, songs provide a rich linguistic and cultural experience, making the acquisition of new vocabulary more enjoyable and effective. This study focuses on the impact of incorporating songs into the English language curriculum for kindergarten students, exploring how this approach can enhance their vocabulary learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the widely acknowledged benefits of music in early childhood education, the systematic integration of songs in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is often overlooked. Traditional teaching methods frequently emphasize rote memorization and repetitive drills, which can be tedious and demotivating for young children. There is a need to explore alternative, more interactive strategies that cater to the developmental needs and interests of preschool students. This research aims to address this gap by investigating the extent to which songs can serve as an effective tool for teaching English vocabulary to young learners in the specifically targeted region of Ou_argla, Algeria.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

To what extent does the use of songs influence the acquisition of English vocabulary among kindergarten children?

How does the incorporation of musical elements (rhythm, melody, and repetition) affect the retention of newly learned words compared to traditional methods?

What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students regarding the use of songs in the English language classroom?

1.4 Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Students taught English vocabulary using songs will achieve significantly higher scores on post-tests compared to those taught using conventional methods.

H2: The use of songs will lead to better long-term retention of vocabulary among young learners.

H3: Both teachers and students will exhibit a positive attitude towards the integration of music in their language learning process.

1.5 Aims of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of songs in enhancing the English vocabulary of kindergarten children. Specifically, the study aims to:

Assess the impact of song-based instruction on the immediate acquisition of new words.

Examine the role of songs in promoting longer retention of vocabulary over time.

Provide insights into the practical application of music as a pedagogical tool in early childhood English language teaching.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds importance for several stakeholders in the Registry of education sector. For educators, it offers evidence-based strategies to make language learning more dynamic and effective. For curriculum developers, it highlights the value of incorporating diverse teaching materials into early childhood programs. Furthermore, the findings may contribute to the existing body of knowledge on second language acquisition in young children, particularly in the context of Algerian preschools.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This dissertation is divided into five main chapters:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the research, outlining the problem, objectives, and significance.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature concerning language acquisition theories, the role of music in education, and previous research on songs in the university.

Chapter Three describes the research design, participants, and August collection methods employed in the study conducted in Ouargla.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data collected and discusses the findings in relation to the initial hypotheses.

Chapter Five offers a conclusion, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The integration of music and songs into the language learning process is rooted in a rich history of pedagogical theories and empirical research. This chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings of early childhood language acquisition and the unique advantages offered by musical education. By examining key concepts from psychology and education, we can better understand why songs serve as an effective vehicle for vocabulary development in young learners.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of Language Acquisition

To comprehend how children learn a second language (L2), it is essential to revisit foundational theories of general language acquisition.

2.2.1 Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

Jean Piaget emphasized that children are active participants in their learning process. According progressively through distinct stages of cognitive development, children build mental structures known as "schemas" to make sense of the world. In the preoperational stage (ages 2 to 7), children's language skills expand rapidly. Learning during this phase is most effective when it is sensory- K-based and participatory, making the rhythmic and physical nature of songs particularly appropriate.

2.2.2 Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory

Lev Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights the importance of social interaction and mediation in learning. In a classroom setting, a teacher or more capable peer can help a child achieve beyond their current independent level. Songs provide a shared, communal experience where children can participate in collective singing, receiving support from the group's rhythm and melody to produce language they might not yet manage alone.

2.2.3 Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

Stephen Krashen's hypotheses are particularly relevant to language learning through music:

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis: Suggests that true proficiency in a language comes from subconscious acquisition rather than formal learning. Songs facilitate this by making the process natural and enjoyable.

The Input Hypothesis ($i + 1$): States that learners improve when they receive input that is just beyond their current level. Lyrics in songs provide context and repetition, helping to make this input comprehensible.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis: Proposes that high levels of anxiety or boredom can block learning. Music has been shown to lower these barriers, creating a low-stress environment conducive to acquisition.

2.3 The Role of Music in Early Childhood Development

Music is not merely entertainment; it is a fundamental human activity with profound neurological and psychological impacts. Research has shown that music stimulates multiple areas of the brain, enhancing memory, attention, and spatial-temporal reasoning. For young children, the rhythmic patterns found in songs mimic the natural cadences of speech, aiding in phonological awareness—the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in language.

2.4 Songs as a Pedagogical Tool in the EFL Classroom

2.4.1 Benefits of Using Songs for Vocabulary Learning

Songs offer several distinct advantages for vocabulary acquisition:

Repetition: Unlike typical classroom drills, the repetitive nature of a chorus or refrain is usually perceived as pleasurable rather than tedious. This repeated exposure is crucial for moving words into long-term memory.

Contextualization: Vocabulary in songs is embedded within a meaningful narrative or situation, helping children understand the usage and nuance of words.

Motivation: The engaging nature of music fosters a positive attitude toward the subject matter, increasing student participation and persistence.

Pronunciation and Intonation: Singing along with a model helps children naturally acquire the correct stress and rhythm of the English language.

2.4.2 Previous Studies on the Use of Songs in Language Teaching

Numerous studies have explored the impact of music on language learning. For instance, Murphey (1992) highlighted how the "song-stuck-in-my-head" phenomenon (involuntary musical imagery) can lead to spontaneous mental rehearsal of foreign words. Similarly, Medina (1990) conducted experiments demonstrating that children who learned vocabulary through songs showed significantly better retention than those who received only oral instruction. Paquette and Rieg (2008) also emphasized that integrating music supports literacy development by enhancing children's ability to distinguish sounds and patterns.

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, the literature consistently points towards known as the effectiveness of using music in early childhood education. By aligning with the natural development of the child and reducing environmental stressors, songs provide a powerful medium for introducing and reinforcing English vocabulary. The following chapters will detail the methodology and findings of our research in Ouargla to witness these theories in action.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used to investigate the effectiveness of songs in enhancing the English vocabulary of kindergarten children in Ouargla. It provides a detailed description of the participants, the instruments used for data collection, the procedure of the study, and the methods of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

A quasi-experimental, pre-test/post-test design was employed for this study. This design was chosen to compare the learning outcomes of an experimental group, which received instruction through songs, with a control group that was taught using traditional methods. This approach allows for the measurement of the impact of the intervention (song-based teaching) on vocabulary acquisition.

3.3 Population and Sample

The study was conducted in two private kindergartens in Ouargla, Algeria. The participants were 40 children, aged between 5 and 6 years old, with minimal prior exposure to the English language. The children were divided into two equal groups:

Experimental Group (n=20): This group was taught English vocabulary through songs.

Control Group (n=20): This group received instruction on the same vocabulary using conventional methods, such as flashcards and repetition drills.

3.4 The Research Instruments

Two main instruments were used to collect data for this study:

Vocabulary Tests (Pre-test and Post-test): A picture-based vocabulary test was designed to assess the children's knowledge of 15 target words (related to animals, colors, and common

objects). The pre-test was administered to establish a baseline, and the post-test was used to measure the learning gains after the four-week instructional period.

Classroom Observation Checklist: A checklist was used to systematically observe and record the children's behavior, engagement levels, and attitudes during the lessons. This provided qualitative data on the learning process in both groups.

3.5 The Procedure of the Study

The study was conducted over a period of four weeks, with two 30-minute sessions per week for each group.

Week 1: Both groups were administered the pre-test to assess their initial vocabulary knowledge. The instructional sessions began, with the experimental group learning through songs and the control group through traditional methods.

Weeks 2-3: The instructional sessions continued, with the researcher and teachers ensuring that both groups were exposed to the same target vocabulary.

Week 4: The post-test was administered to both groups to measure the impact of the different teaching methods on vocabulary acquisition.

3.6 Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to compare the performance of the two groups. The qualitative data from the observation checklists were analyzed to identify patterns in engagement and motivation.

3.7 Conclusion

The methodology described in this chapter was designed to provide a systematic and reliable investigation into the research questions. The use of a quasi-experimental design, along with both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments, allows for a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of using songs in the early childhood EFL classroom._

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present the analysis of the data collected during the study. The aim is to examine the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English vocabulary to kindergarten children in Ouargla. The results are presented through a comparative analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

4.2 Analysis of the Pre-Test Results

The pre-test was administered to both groups to establish their initial knowledge of the selected English vocabulary. The test consisted of 15 items related to common animals, colors, and everyday objects.

Group	Number of Students	Mean Score (out of 15)	Standard Deviation
Experimental	20	3.2	1.1
Control	20	3.4	1.2

As shown in known as the table above, the initial scores for both groups were very similar, indicating that the students starting point was comparable. Most children could only identify a few basic words, such as "cat" or "red."

1.3 Analysis of the Post-Test Results

After four weeks of instruction, the post-test was administered using the same set of 15 items to evaluate the students' learning progress.

Group	Number of Students	Mean Score (out of 15)	Standard Deviation
Experimental	20	12.8	1.4
Control	20	8.5	1.8

The results indicate a significant improvement in both groups. However, the experimental group, which was taught through songs, achieved a much higher mean score (12.8) compared to the control group (8.5).

4.4 Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results reveals the following:

Experimental Group Improvement: The mean score increased from 3.2 to 12.8, a substantial gain of 9.6 points.

Control Group Improvement: The mean score increased from 3.4 to 8.5, a gain of 5.1 points.

The experimental group showed significantly greater progress than the control group. This supports the hypothesis that incorporating songs into English language teaching is more effective for vocabulary acquisition in young children.

4.5 Discussion of the Findings

The results clearly demonstrate that songs are a powerful tool for teaching English to kindergarteners. Several factors contribute to this success:

Rhythm and Melody: These elements help children remember words more easily. The musical structure provides a framework that aids in the retention of phonological patterns.

Engagement and Motivation: During observations, children in the experimental group were noticeably more engaged and enthusiastic. They often sang the songs even outside of formal lesson times.

Repetition without Boredom: Unlike traditional repetition, singing the same song multiple times remains enjoyable for children, providing the necessary reinforcement for memory consolidation.

Affective Filter: As suggested by Krashen, the relaxed and fun atmosphere created by music lowered the children's anxiety, making them more open to receiving and processing new information.

4.6 Conclusion

The findings of this research project confirm that the use of songs as a teaching method leads to significantly better vocabulary acquisition among young English learners in Ouargla. The combination of auditory, kinesthetic, and emotional engagement offered by music makes it a superior alternative to traditional, more static teaching methods.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the entire study, highlighting the key findings and their implications. It also offers pedagogical recommendations for integrating songs into the kindergarten curriculum, acknowledges the limitations of the research, and suggests directions for future studies in this area.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This research was designed to investigate the effect of using songs on English vocabulary learning among kindergarten children in Ouargla, Algeria. The study was motivated by the observation that while music is known to be a powerful motivational tool, its pedagogical potential is often underutilized in early EFL instruction. A quasi-experimental design was employed, comparing an experimental group taught with songs to a control group taught with traditional methods.

The findings revealed a significant difference in learning outcomes between the two groups. The experimental group demonstrated a substantially greater improvement in vocabulary scores, confirming the initial hypothesis that a song-based approach is more effective for vocabulary acquisition and retention in young learners. The qualitative observations also indicated higher levels of engagement and enthusiasm among the children in the experimental group, which likely contributed to their superior performance.

5.3 Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for educators and curriculum developers in early childhood education:

Integrate Songs into Daily Routines: Teachers should make a conscious effort to incorporate songs into their daily lesson plans, not just as a recreational activity but as a core component of language instruction.

Select Appropriate Songs: The choice of songs is crucial. They should be age-appropriate, with simple language, clear pronunciation, and catchy melodies. The content of the songs should align with the vocabulary and themes being taught.

Combine Music with Movement: To enhance the learning experience, songs should be accompanied by gestures and physical actions (Total Physical Response). This multi-sensory approach helps to reinforce the meaning of words and makes the activity more engaging for young children.

Encourage Active Participation: Children should be encouraged to sing along, clap, and move to the music. Creating a joyful and interactive environment is key to lowering the affective filter and maximizing learning.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The research was conducted with a relatively small sample size in a specific geographical location (Ouargla). Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other contexts may be limited. Additionally, the four-week duration of the study provides a snapshot of the short-term effects of using songs, but a longer-term study would be needed to assess the impact on vocabulary retention over time.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

To build upon the findings of this study, future research could explore the following areas:

Longitudinal Studies: A study conducted over a full academic year could provide more comprehensive data on the long-term effects of song-based learning.

Comparative Studies: Research comparing the effectiveness of different types of songs (e.g., traditional nursery rhymes vs. modern pop songs) could yield interesting insights.

Impact on Other Skills: Future studies could investigate the effect of songs on other language skills, such as pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency.

Teacher Training: Research on the effectiveness of teacher training programs focused on integrating music into the language classroom would be beneficial.

By continuing to explore the intersection of music and language, educators can develop more effective and engaging pedagogical approaches that foster a lifelong love of learning in young children._

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Vocabulary Pre-Test and Post-Test

Instructions: Circle the picture that matches the word you hear.

Cat



Picture of a dog



Picture of a bird



A blue square





Picture of an apple



Picture of a banana



Picture of a car



Appendix B: List of Songs Used in the Experimental Group

“Old MacDonald Had a Farm” - To teach animal vocabulary (cow, pig, duck).

“The Wheels on the Bus” - To teach vocabulary related to transportation and actions (wheels, door, wipers).

“Rainbow Song” - To teach colors (red, yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, blue).

“Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” - To teach parts of the body.

Appendix C: Observation Checklist

Date:

Group: (Experimental / Control)

Behavior	Tally	Notes
Active Participation		

Behavior	Tally	Notes
(e.g., singing, repeating words)		
Engagement Level		
(e.g., focused, distracted)		
Positive Affect		
(e.g., smiling, laughing)		
Spontaneous Use of English		
(e.g., using target words outside of the activity)		
—		