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THE VALUE OF SONGS FOR TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS

If you open any of books for teaching English to young learners, you'll find a lot of different kinds of songs and chants. Teachers all over the world use songs and chants as an effective tool to teach English. What makes them so attractive?

The reasons are in the language. Melody and rhythm are important parts of songs and chants. In terms of rhythm, English is a stress-timed language. It means that some syllables are of longer duration than others. So songs and chants are regarded wonderful means of teaching stress and intonation patterns of English, and rhythm and music aid memorization. If rhythm helps making something memorable, melody helps our recall. N. T. Millington and T. Murphey believe that "songs work on our short- and long-term memory" [1, p. 135].

The value of using songs in teaching English is substantiated by the research in the fields of cognitive science. It shows that the same brain structures are involved in music and language processing. Sally Goddard Blythe, a consultant in neuro-developmental education and director of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology, claims that parents should sing to their children every day. It helps to avoid language problems. Modern parents put too much emphasis on reading, writing and numeracy, and not on the singing. She says: "Song is a special type of speech. Lullabies, songs and rhymes of every culture carry the 'signature' melodies and inflections of mother tongue, preparing a child's ear, voice and brain for language" [2]. Our brains remember language better when it is set to music.

It proves why teachers get many benefits from using songs in teaching English. First of all, songs are very useful in learning vocabulary, simple sentence structures and sentence patterns. Songs help to improve listening skills and pronunciation. Songs with motions practice children coordination [3]. Classical songs are the reflection of culture. The greatest benefit is that it is fun. Children like singing, and songs are learnt easily. All these factors allow to develop their interest and motivation in learning languages.

Teachers can use songs and chants as a part of starting and ending lessons or as an integrated part of language-, story- or topic-based work. You can aim at children's creating their own songs and chants: taking a well-known tune and putting their own words to it. It's better to start with singing children's own names, e. g. taking the song "Hello" from "Magic Box" by N. M. Sedunova and advising kids to sing their names to this tune. Or creating a rap in which everyone says their name and one thing about themselves: *Everyone clap! Say the name rap! My name is Kate. I can sing and dance.*

It's very interesting to practice counting with any type of vocabulary in the song "Five little monkeys." You can count animals or food: *One little, two little, three little monkeys, four little, five little, six little ...bears, seven little, eight little, nine little ...lions, ten little...wolves.* The famous song "Old McDonald" allows deciding what animals Old McDonald has on his farm. Furthermore, you can use only the tune and sing, for example, colours: *I see yellow, red and blue. Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh (2 times). Blue, blue, blue (2 times). Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh. I see purple, orange, grey. Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh (2 times). Grey, grey, grey (2 times). Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh. I see brown, black and white. Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh (2 times). White, white, white (2 times). Ee-ah-ee-ah-oooh.* Children can combine the colours to rhyme. The song "I like bananas, coconuts and grapes" is suited to sing any fruit or vegetables. To the rhythm of waltz it is possible to add any words: *One, two, three, one, two, three...juice. One, two, three, one, two, three...cakes* etc.

As you can see, the possibilities of songs are unlimited. There is a variety of resources to find an appropriate song. Among them Super Simple Songs, Dream English Kids Songs, Pancake Manor, Carolyn Graham with her jazz chants and songs and so on.

Of course, just singing a song isn't enough, but working with a song is a good way to present new information and maintaining learners' interest throughout the lesson.

LITERATURE

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3. Simpson A. How to use songs in the English language classroom / A. Simpson. – URL: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-use-songs-english-language-classroom> (date of access: 15.05.2016).