

Youtube English Music Videos as Educational Resource to Teach Vocabulary and Improve the Listening and Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the use of YouTube English music videos as an educational resource to teach vocabulary and improve the listening and speaking skills in the EFL Classroom. The participants of this study were 403 teenagers, 20 high school English teachers, and 2 university teachers from the South region of Ecuador. This research followed an experimental and a mix method qualitative–descriptive and quantitative approaches. The results corroborate that the use of YouTube English music videos helps learners develop their listening and speaking skills; it also increases students’ vocabulary and motivation in both teachers and students.

KEYWORDS: Learning; ICT; Teaching; Strategy.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF SONGS FOR THE INCREASE OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND DEVELOPMENT OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

The learners’ lack of vocabulary directly affects the development and practice of the Listening and Speaking skills when learning English as a foreign language by Ecuadorian teenagers. This is the result of the lack of exposure and opportunities to practice this foreign language, mainly because the mother tongue is Spanish and very few people master the language or use it regularly, which limits students to the exposure and practice of the target language. In addition, English teachers rarely apply strategies and educational resources that motivate learners’ acquisition of vocabulary and the listening and speaking skills in the classroom. In fact, Calle, Calle, Argudo, Moscoso, Smith, and Cabrera (2012) affirm that the main reason for the limited knowledge and use of English by Ecuadorian students is related to the absence of effective teaching strategies due to the use of traditional teaching methodologies, the lack of interaction among students in this foreign language and the confusion that teachers have when trying to use different communicative strategies. Considering that, it is always a challenge for learners to acquire and memorize new words, even more in a foreign language, it is believed that teachers need to find the most exciting, innovating and striking ways to encourage students to acquire new vocabulary and improve their oral communication skills, by using different educational resources, strategies and methods to motivate them.

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According to Wilkins (as quoted in Gómez 2008), by learning more words and expressions, students can learn the English language more quickly than by studying the grammar in depth. For this reason, when teaching new vocabulary to our students, we are not only adding words to their mental dictionary, but also increasing their linguistic abilities and providing them with tools that will help them to understand context and be able to express themselves with greater eloquence (Gómez 2008). On the other hand, music has always had a fundamental role in the life of human beings, especially in young people because through it they express their feelings, it serves them as entertainment and allows them to communicate and integrate socially (Merriam as quoted in Cruces 2001). Hence, listening to music is an activity preferred by teenagers and they can usually memorize a complete song if they like it, even if it is not in their native language. In addition, music allows learners to build up confidence and motivation to learn the target language, which as a result helps them to foster language acquisition (Kao and Oxford 2014). Based on this fact, it can be said that music really attracts and motivates students, so it is imperative to consider it as a didactic resource to be exploited. For this reason, the current study aims at determining the effectiveness of the use of YouTube music videos as an educational resource to teach vocabulary and improve the listening and speaking skills in the EFL Classroom.

To conduct this research, a sample of 403 students were participants, whose ages ranged between 12 and 16 years old; as well, 20 English teachers from public schools also participated and, 2 university professors were in charge of conducting this study in the southern region of Ecuador. The methodology employed was experimental, which permitted us to obtain and interpret the information gathered to evaluate its effectiveness. Additionally, a mixed method approach, qualitative and quantitative, was used to tabulate and analyze the data. The instruments applied were written and oral diagnostic and post-tests, observation sheets, and written and oral evaluations each week, which contributed to obtain reliable data on the subject investigated.

The first step of this study was to implement a diagnostic exam to students, which contained two sections; the first section was a written test based on vocabulary and another oral test given to measure the students' level of listening and speaking skills. After the diagnostic test, students were divided into two groups, the experimental (204 students) and the control (199 students). Likewise, 10 teachers were in charge of conducting classes with the control group, and the rest (10 teachers) worked with the experimental group by using YouTube English music videos as the main educational resource for teaching vocabulary. Prior to carrying out this research, the ten high school teachers in charge of the experimental group were trained to implement the English music videos in the classroom. While applying the experimental part of this study, for fifteen weeks, high school teachers researched and implemented 25 different YouTube English music videos, and designed strategies to teach the new vocabulary to students in order to develop the aforementioned skills. At the same time, the university teachers were in charge of reviewing the designed strategies and observing the English classes with the purpose of evaluating, providing feedback and ensuring that the songs and strategies to be applied were the best for fulfilling the objectives of this experiment. In the last stage of the project, a post evaluation was administered to all students involved in this study, which followed the same characteristics as the exam given at the beginning of the project in order to confirm the students' improvement of the listening and speaking skills as well as the increase in their vocabulary.

	N	Average results of the diagnostic written vocabulary test	Average results of the post written vocabulary test	Standard deviation	Average results of the diagnostic listening and speaking test	Average results of the post listening and speaking test	Standard deviation
Control group	199	6.02	6.16	0.098994949	2.66	2.82	0.113137085
Experimental group	204	5.84	7.38	1.088944443	3.66	5.42	1.244507935

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of students' academic results.

After employing YouTube English music videos to teach vocabulary, the results show that the standard deviation in the control group was 0.09. It was demonstrated through an increase of 0.14 between the average in students' scores obtained in the pre and post-tests. In the experimental group, the standard deviation was 1.08, which demonstrates an increase of 1.54 in the learners' average score between the pre and post-tests. This result evidences that by exposing students to YouTube English music videos, it is possible to help them increase their vocabulary in the target language; and thus, it contributes to the learners' improvement of their linguistic skills.

Regarding listening and speaking skills, the standard deviation in the control group was just 0.11, which was obtained through the results gathered in the diagnostic and post listening and speaking tests. It indicates that learners in the control group improved their skills at a much smaller rate and the increase was 0.16. On the other hand, the experimental group's standard deviation was 1.24; it was demonstrated through an increase in students' average score of 1.76. Hence, it is affirmed that through the use of YouTube English music videos, it is possible to develop students' listening and speaking skills in the English language; in fact, the students were able to identify the message of the song, as well as main ideas and details. In addition, it was found that through the use of this educational resource, it was possible to help students lose their fear of expressing ideas, which helped them to improve the intonation and accent of words. It is also demonstrated that speech skills were also improved through repetition, imitation, and word substitution.

Additionally, through this study, it was possible to demonstrate that the use of songs in the learning process is an essential didactic resource since it functioned as a motivating factor that calmed, uninhibited, stimulated, and engaged students in learning English.

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