

TEACHING INDONESIAN SONGS' MELODY IN TEACHING ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

Jannes Freddy Pardede, S.S., M.Hum.

Faculty of Letters

Universitas Kristen Indonesia

Mobile Phone: 082124496213, 081585357125

Email: jannesfreddy@yahoo.com

Abstract

Young learners sometimes get bored even frustrated to learn English. There are many reasons why they feel like this. One of them is an inappropriate method of teaching. Psychologically, children usually like to play, relax and have fun. They tend to be so dynamic and easily change their concentration from one to another. This situation also occurs in learning English. Therefore, teachers of English should be more creative in creating and applying various kinds of games, songs and any other activities. In this paper, the writer would like to show the influence of Indonesian songs' melody in learning English for young learners. Based on the writer's experience, teaching English songs is an effective way in attracting young learner's concentration in learning English. In teaching, the writer translates some Indonesian songs' lyrics such as *Bangun Tidur* and *Burung Kakaktua* into English lyrics first. Through this way, learners can more focus on English words without getting difficulties in learning melody or rhythm of the songs anymore because most of them have already been familiar with the songs in Indonesian version. The followings are some benefits of teaching English songs for young learners: 1) Young learners become more active and joyful in learning English, 2) they can learn vocabulary with fun, 3) they can pronounce words nearly look like native speakers, 4) they can learn grammatical forms unconsciously, and 5) they can be more alert on spelling and connected sounds.

Keywords: Indonesian, songs, young learners, ESL/EFL

A. Introduction

Basically, we could not separate our life from songs. Songs have already been part of daily life. Who does not like songs at home, school or while travelling? In our television, CD/VCD, DVDs, or even in our mobile phones we always listen a large numbers of songs. Language teachers can use songs in teaching new vocabulary, to explain themes and topic and to attract students' interest in learning. But *how songs really benefit our students in learning English? And how to teach English through the song more effectively?* In the beginning of this article the writer would like to present the brief review of related theory to these questions. It consists of *Music as a Powerful Aids to Language Learning*, *Selecting Songs for ESL/EFL Classroom*. In the second part of this article, the writer would like to present *The Implementation of Indonesian Song's Melody in Teaching English*.

B. Brief Review of Related Theory

Nowadays, it is a common practice to use songs in the classroom to support second language acquisition. There is strong practical proof emphasizing the use of music in the English language classroom; there is also a growing body of research showing that songs are a useful tool in language acquisition. Music is fun, and creates a lively classroom. Music and language go hand in hand, and they also share part of the brain, where transfer takes place, so it only makes sense that one would help the other (Patel, 2003).

1. Music as a Powerful Aids to Language Learning

For many years, various experts such as philosophers, scientists, instructors and therapist have known the role of music for therapeutic and developmental functions. Scientists have made great findings in the theory of foreign language acquisition. More than 40 years ago, a teaching method developed by Bulgarian psychoterapist G. Lozanov known as Suggestopedia was in style in foreign language teaching. One of the primary activities was reading with music. Neurologists have found that musical and language processing occur in the same area of the brain, and there appear to be parallels in how musical and linguistic syntax are processed (Maess & Koelsch, 2001). Musical and language processing take place in the same area of the brain (Medina, 1993). Many educators report success using instrumental music as a warm up and relaxation tool, as a background for other activities, and as the inspiration for writing activities (Eken, 1996).

Fonseca-Mora (2011) defined music and rhythm as powerful aids to language learning, memory, and recall. It seems that everyone who feels motivated to do it is able to learn other languages to some degree as long as an appropriate learning method is used. However, learning foreign languages is not easy, as many variables

need to be considered if the desired result is optimal language learning in a non bilingual environment. Probably, one of the main obstacles to learning a foreign language in this context is the lack of continuous target language auditory input. Language acquisition depends on interaction. With interactions affect has been shown to be a mediating force for communication to become successful. For instance, teacher talk and parental talk share many similar features. Both can be described as simplified codes created to help the hearer to learn and understand language (Arnold and Fonseca-Mora, 2007). They share features such as the frequent use of repetition, of formulaic expressions, expansions, preference for simplified vocabulary, change in voice volume, and modification of intonational contours. These speech melodies are indicators of emotions and they have a great impact on communication because, as Berger and Schneck (2003: 689) stated: "Humans are not thinking machines that feel, but rather, feeling machines that think".

In general, young learners tend to learn the rhythm and musical contours of the language long before they can say the words. They easily recognize the sound qualities of direction, frequency, intensity, duration, tempo, intonation, pitch, and rhythm. In learning, we need to use very simple musical forms, which are easily learned by young children. Pairing words and rhythm properly help to hold songs together, and to improve the ability of the mind to recall it. Using rhythm, rhyme, and categories to organize the information may simplify the learning of any new linguistic unit. One experiment, dividing the class in two groups, one group heard a story sung; another had it told them. All of the participants reported enjoying song stories more than regular stories and only the ones in the "singing" group were able to reconstruct the story and remembered the words used. A lesson in which two groups of children learned a grammatical concept in English, one group using traditional methods and the other using songs, reported the same result. After two months, only the children who learned through song could remember the grammar rule. The singing children clearly continued to sing the song after the initial class, which repetition deep rooted the concept along with the lyrics and melody. Song also give children knowledge of culture, improve their sensory awareness, encourage turn taking, and increase improvisation skills and the sociality of the group rises. Singing in groups helps to reduce a child's anxiety and increase their self-confidence. Both music and language should be used in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom. (www.usingenglish.com/articles/learning-English-withmusic.html). The musical-linguistic method increases the learner's interest of sounds, rhythms, intonations and develops linguistic fluency through repetition and imitation. Song is an effective tool for second language acquisition to the same extent as other nonmusical means. It can no longer be regarded as recreational devices, having little instructional value. As a result, teachers might consider giving song a more prominent role in the second language curriculum (Medina 1993).

2. Selecting Songs for ESL/EFL Classroom

According to Mol (2009), there are many types of songs which can be applied in the ESL/EFL classroom, ranging from nursery rhymes to contemporary pop music. There is also a lot of music written specifically for English language teaching. A criticism of the latter is that they often lack originality and musical appeal but there are good examples to be found of stimulating, modern, 'cool' music, appealing to the real tastes of language learners. 'Real' music that the children hear and play every day can be extremely motivating in the classroom, too. However, the words in the song may not always easy to understand; they may, for example, containing slang or offensive words, there may be some grammatical errors (www.academia.edu/6681059/Using_songs_in_the_english_classroom).

In a world where non-native speakers of English are likely to produce the majority of songs in English, learners have the opportunity to listen to pronunciation in a wide range of varieties of the language. Song will have learners become familiar with word stress and intonation, and the rhythm with which words are spoken or sung also helps memorization. Again, this will enable learners to remember chunks of language which they can then use in conversations or in writing. Simple, repetitive songs often contain a recurrent grammatical pattern which is useful to teach especially with younger children. A great number of songs often contain interesting vocabulary and idioms. There is often a message, a theme, or a story underlying a song which students can discuss, explain, debate, and write about at almost any level. Educator Tim Murphey conducted an analysis of the lyrics of a large corpus of pop songs and found that they have several features that help second-language learners: They contain common, short words and many personal pronouns; the language is conversational; time and place are usually imprecise; the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than words are spoken with more pauses between utterances; and there is repetition of vocabulary and structures. These factors allow learners to understand and relate to the songs (Murphey, 1992). Pop songs are written to be easily understood and enjoyed. Griffie (1990) suggested using short, slow songs for elementary-level students and discusses activities such as creating song word puzzles, or showing related pictures.

Songs should be carefully selected for the young learner ESL classroom. As stated by Lems (1996) and Poppleton (2001), songs should meet the following criteria:

1. The lyrics should be clear, not submerged in the instrumental music.
2. The vocabulary load for the song should be appropriate to the proficiency level.
3. Songs should be pre-screened for potentially problematic content.

C. The Implementation of Indonesian Song's Melody in Teaching English

Gadner (1983) stated: "It's not how intelligent you are, but how you are intelligent." No two students learn in exactly the same way. In any classroom there will be a mix of learning styles, and one student may "use" more than one style, depending on what the task or topic is. Gadner classified eight styles of learning, and in his "aural/musical" category will have a lot of positive effects of learning through songs. They are strong in singing, picking up sounds, remembering melodies and rhythms; they like to sing, hum, play instruments and listen to music. Through song we can create a lot of activities such as dancing and acting (physical learning style); reading, drawing and doing puzzles (spatial intelligence); telling stories, and writing (verbal learning styles).

Based on the writer's experience in teaching English language for young learners, Indonesian songs' melody is one of effective ways in teaching especially in increasing vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Teaching English through Indonesian songs' melody is very simple and easy to imitate by the learners. Through songs students are often strongly motivated to learn. It is a relaxing or fun part of the lesson, but it is actually an excellent method to improve their English. Now, how can we teach English songs in English version? The followings are the steps in implementing Indonesian Song's Melody in Teaching English for young learners.

1. Choose an Indonesian song with lyrics that students already get familiar such as *Bangun Tidur*, *Burung Kakaktua*, and *Cicak-Cicak di Dinding*. (Finding copies of Indonesian songs for children is not difficult. Many are available on the Internet, and many recordings contain lyric sheets).
2. Listen to the song and after that ask students sing together.
3. At this stage, you could listen to the song again and write down any words or phrases - or you can find the lyrics online. (Type the song name into Yahoo or Google and you should be able to find the lyrics easily).
5. Translate and write the Indonesian lyrics into English version. (You need to consider the number of syllables on your English translation)
6. Read the words or phrases you have already made. (Give short explanation of the new words and show and compare them to Indonesian lyric).
7. Sing the song in English version and then ask students sing together. (If needed you may record this song and save in your students mobile phone so they can be easy to listen the song and study English at the same time).

Through this method, students are easily to sing the song because they recognize the melody of the song well. It will be better if the song is sung repeatedly more than three times until the students get familiar with the lyric of the song in English version. (See the examples of songs on appendixes!)

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Songs can be used for young learner English as a second language (ESL) classroom to create a learning environment; to build listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills, grammar and pronunciation; and to expand cultural knowledge. Singing along with English songs will help them learn how to pronounce English words correctly and will also help to reduce their accent. They will know more about the rhythm of sentences and how to connect your words together while speaking. Listening to songs will help learners learn more vocabulary quickly. They are also more likely to remember new words and English expressions if they listen to them in a song than if they read them or learn them in their English class. The followings are some benefits of teaching Indonesian songs' melody in teaching English for young learners: 1) Young learners become more active and joyful in learning English, 2) they can learn vocabulary with fun, 3) they can pronounce words nearly look like native speakers, 4) they can learn grammatical forms unconsciously, and 5) they can be more alert on spelling and connected sounds.

If you have a list of children songs in Indonesian lyrics, you may try to translate them into English lyric. Through this teaching method, students are getting fun, more motivating and much easier to remember a list of English words! Try these tips and you will see a big progress.

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Appendix

The List of Songs for Children

a) Bangun tidur (When I Wake Up)

*Bangun tidur ku terus mandi...
Tidak lupa menggosok gigi
Habis mandi ku tolong ibu...
Membersihkan tempat tidurku...*

(English)

When I wake up, then I take a bath
I don't forget to brush all my teeth
After bathing, I help my mother
I make my bed and clean it right now

b) Burung Kakatua (The Cockatoo)

(Bahasa Indonesia)
*Burung kakatua
hinggap di jendela
nenek sudah tua
giginya tinggal dua.*

*Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la
Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la
Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la
Burung kakatua*

(English)

My bird of cockaton
Sits on the window sill
My grandmother is old
She only has two teeth!!!

Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la
Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la

Tredung, tredung, tredung tra la la la.
My bird of cockatoo

c) Cicak - Cicak di Dinding (Lizard, Lizard on the Wall)

(Bahasa Indonesia)
*Cicak, cicak di dinding
diam-diam merayap,
datang seekor nyamuk
hap... lalu ditangkap*

(English)
Lizard, lizard on the wall
Quietly walking on the wall
Here comes Mr. Mosquito
Hup... grab into his mouth...