

The effect of using songs as lesson materials to develop speaking skills: An experimental study

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Music and speech share similar features that naturally exist in the human mind. Speech, appearing as a skill of speaking, leads to practice communicative competency. The General English syllabus introduced at the Advanced Level in Sri Lanka aimed to develop speaking proficiency with the textbook designed to develop communicative competency. However, studies indicate that oral proficiency among the Advanced Level students remains alarmingly low, especially in the Arts stream. Moreover, there is a gap in the focus on developing speaking skills among the Arts students, particularly in the use of songs as lesson materials. Furthermore, the effectiveness of this approach and the opinions of the Arts students have not been sufficiently explored. Based on this context, this study investigates the effect of using songs as lesson materials on the development of English language speaking skills and the students' opinions on the use of songs as lesson materials in speaking activities. Accordingly, 80 Advanced Level (Grade 12-Arts) students from a government school in a suburban area of Gampaha district were selected as the sample. The participants were divided into experimental and control groups. A pre-test was given to both groups, followed by a post-test after the treatment. Meanwhile, an opinion questionnaire containing a five-item Likert scale was distributed. The test results showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test results. Additionally, the findings of the questionnaire revealed that a higher percentage of students preferred the use of songs as lesson materials for speaking activities. Therefore, it is recommended to include more song-related speaking activities in the syllabus to develop English language speaking skills and to use songs as lesson materials in delivering speaking lessons in English as a Second Language classrooms in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Communicative competency, English as a second language classroom, Oral proficiency, Songs as lesson materials, Speaking skills

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