

Using English Songs and Poems to teach vocabulary for the learners of English as a Second Language

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Abstract

Vocabulary is an important aspect of teaching and learning a language, especially in teaching and learning a second language or a foreign language. Lexical Approach by Lewis (1993) contains a taxonomy of lexical items which shows what kind of vocabulary the learner should develop. When learning vocabulary, the aspects of pronunciation, meaning spelling and grammar should also be taught. In that case, there have been various strategies to teach and learn vocabulary in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context. This study investigated whether the use of English songs and poems to teach vocabulary for the Secondary level ESL learners enhances their vocabulary learning in the ESL classroom. This study provided an answer to the research question “To what extent do English songs and poems increase students’ vocabulary enhancement at the secondary level?” and claimed two hypotheses a) The use of English songs is more effective in teaching vocabulary than using English poems. b) There is a significant difference in using songs and poems in grade 6 than in grade 10. Twenty-five students from each class from grade 6 and grade 10 at H/Weeraketiya Rajapaksha Central College participated in the study. The data was collected using the pretests, posttests, and delayed tests. The data was analyzed using SPSS. The findings indicated that both songs and poems have a positive effect on the enhancement of vocabulary knowledge at the secondary level. In both grades, songs are more effective in teaching vocabulary than poems. In general, the findings will be indicative of the effectiveness of the usage of English songs and poems to teach and learn vocabulary for the secondary level ESL learners though teachers did not pay much attention to its usage, hence, the need of teachers’ training on using this strategy to teach vocabulary is indicative.

Keywords - Songs and poems, Vocabulary, Teaching and learning, Secondary level, ESL learners

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