

Effect of Teaching through Songs on Speaking Skills in English among Early Graders of Pakistan

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of Teaching with Songs on increase of English speaking skills among early graders of public sector schools in Bahawalpur. The relevant research revealed that speaking skills can be developed if kids are taught with the songs. The pretest-posttest equivalent control group design, that is, Experimental design was used. To carry out this investigation two classes from one school were selected to collect data for the purpose. 60 students were conveniently selected for experimentation. There were 30 participants in each group. An oral test to assess speaking skills had been developed and pilot tested at a smaller group of students. After pilot testing, minor changes were incorporated. The pre-test was administered to control and experimental groups. Intervention lessons were delivered in the experimental classrooms only, comprising 15 songs which were rehearsed by the young learners as well. The same pre-test was used as the post-test as well. The responses of the kids on speaking skills tests were recorded and evaluated in the light of scoring rubrics. They were rechecked by relevant class instructors for inter-rater reliability. The data were analyzed using t-statistics and the software SPSS. Results of the research showed that songs had a noteworthy influence on the increase of speaking skills among ECE level learners. The outcomes of the research are worthwhile for teachers, curriculum specialists, syllabi designers and policy makers. In addition, song is suggested for teaching different aspects related to speaking in English.

Keywords: teaching through songs; early childhood education (ECE), speaking

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Introduction

The importance of English language is accepted throughout the world because it has become a language for communication and the language of science and technology. It has attained the status of compulsory subject in the academic institutions of Pakistan from grade 1 to graduation level. Speaking is an important language skill. The research communicates that maximum learners don't acquire proficiency of speaking fluently specifically early graders of public sector schools in Pakistan. Rahman (2002) witnessed that maximum pupils depend on memorizing rather than consuming their intellectual talent. They are not inculcated any training of English speaking skills. The foremost cause of this condition is the teaching methodology used in classroom. Maximum teachers practice the translation method of teaching English which is obsolete nowadays (Ali and Javed, 2004). Because of the pitiable worth of teaching English, Speaking is not advanced appropriately and the pupils are unable to speak even a single sentence in English (Rahman, 2007). Teachers don't encourage youngsters' talk and snub them continuously in public sector schools.

Absence of training is one more obstacle in mode of English Speaking. Rahman (2002) detailed that in Pakistan, subject matter is conveyed to the school children through rote memorization. The independence to discourse in classroom is wanting. If students are provided with the opportunity to interact with the individuals around them even in public sector schools of Pakistan with lower socio-economic background, there might be an improvement in their talking ability. Early graders might be able to talk in English language if they are actively engaged in classroom talk in English. Young learners might be creative and fluent in English speaking skills if they are given confidence to talk and participate in activity (Siddiqui, 2007). It might be opined that if the creative talent of talking is not punished/snubbed, the early graders can be effective speakers of the future.

Statement of Research Problem

This research study discovered the effect of songs on increasing English speaking skills of early graders of school children at public sector school in district Bahawalpur, one of the backward most district in Punjab(Pakistan) where the learners are not well-versed and proficient in English speaking. Further, this research was demarcated to early grade learners. Focus was the subject of English speaking skills. It is delimited to an experiment in a public sector school where the young learners are considered to be the least proficient in speaking English. They are undertaken as the backward most pupils in Pakistan as cited earlier.

Objective of the Research

More precisely this was the purpose of the research:

To see the effect of Teaching through Songs on domain of speaking among early graders in public sector school of Bahawalpur.

Research Questions

The researcher tried to answer the following question:

- Is Teaching through Songs beneficial in enhancement of English speaking skill named as fluency?
- Is Teaching through Songs beneficial in improvement of English speaking skill namely comprehension?
- Is Teaching through Songs beneficial in development of English speaking skill in terms of correct pronunciation?

Significance of the Study

This research was an effort to advance speaking abilities by using Songs as teaching strategy in 1st graders. Outcomes of research deliver evidence to educators about practice of songs with support of which speaking talents of pupils at ECE School may possibly be value-added in terms of pronunciation, comprehension and fluency.

Results might be valuable for English instructors at ECE School because they propose an efficient instructional method to teach skills like pronunciation, comprehension and fluency in speaking.

ECE teachers' training organizations might get advantage from outcomes of research for prospective ECE educators of English by concentrating on songs and delivering future instructors suitable pre-service preparation. Teachers training institutes may possibly organize training gatherings for on-job English tutors so that they may advance their approaches concerning teaching already cited skills of speaking.

The results of this research provide valuable data to syllabi specialists and curriculum designers of English in scheming communicative syllabi and books for ECE schools. In the light of outcomes, the experts will be capable to include *songs* as methodological part of curriculum for high school. Additionally, the outcomes of the research will be of assistance for the scholars who want to explore the arena of English teaching at ECE School.

Literature Review

In mainstream of ECE institutes due to non-availability of trained teachers, artistic ability of intellectual cognizance is not established rightly, reasoned Siddiqui (2007). Schooling supports cramming of information. Pupils just get respectable grades but English speaking skill is not enhanced in this state of affairs.

A child attains rapid growth and development during first five years of his life. A child's future learning and consequent outcome of his life is based on the learning pathways developed in these early years. (Bajwa, 2004). A child's ability to learn is not solely dependent on him but is related to the environment in which children interact and is a function of their family, early life settings, schools, neighborhood, and [class], and communities. (Graham & Johnson, 2003). To achieve optimized learning and development in school for learners, the transition to school phase requires the best integration of such factors as children's preparedness to go to institute, schools eagerness for the students, and more over the zeal and aptitude of people and groups to give learning and better chances to the youngsters like songs. (Griffith, 2006). Children are inclined to easily assimilate and willingly become accustomed to, and put up the routine in fresh settings at what time new environment bears relative, procedural and teaching similarity and continuity that links their prior learning and previous experience with new understanding. "Effective learning usually occurs over time as children practice and master new skills, concepts and techniques. It is rare that significant learning just 'happens'; new learning typically builds on previous knowledge and experience. For this reason, effective learning environment plan for and build in continuity, predictability and repetition". (Harmer, 2004) "Maximizing opportunities to strengthen continuity can make a significant difference to a child's early school experience" (Hayes & Craig, 1991). Suggestopedia is an effective teaching method in which songs are used to teach speaking skills.

Students achieve pleasurable promotions involving nervousness, more than losing fellows and the instructors who are trustworthy, so the fear of to be unfamiliar that is ahead in talking English. The parents also await how the students will cope with the change and how they have to cater the change in their guidance playing role in new environment along with seeing their children develop to new grades. All those who guide and educate students must bear in mind the importance of transition to maintain learning which a continuous process is. Thus, a learning environment that caters for all students at their level providing specialized instruction for their requisite learning style thereby providing better opportunity for successful transition through successive levels "It is important to link subsequent steps in students' education to earlier experiences and to involve songs in these activities and decisions" (Iqbal, 2011). Therefore, the speaking preparation should be such directed on the way to make sure to every learner may get chances to achieve educational brilliance and powerful wits of being sound and cared. Educationalists are aware of the significance for planning steps to make out line which is taken in encouraging achievements towards the learners and the families of them when students experience further challenges (Raji, 2009). Students have to leave after the last session in the earlier institute to move forward for the further achievements and if they are trained at earlier levels they would be better learners ahead as well (Cooze, 2006) The preceding discussion can be summed up in a way that songs could be an effective strategy to enhance

confidence, pronunciation, fluency and English speaking comprehension skills, as reported by Cooze (2006), Rasool (2009), Zafar (2009), Fatima & Zubeda (2009). Therefore, this experiment had been planned to see the effect either speaking skills can be enhanced by teaching through songs or not among early graders of Pakistani public sector school.

Method and Procedure

The details regarding method and procedure are as ahead:

Design

The general plan of this research was an experimental design. More precisely, the Pretest Posttest Equivalent Control Group Design has been used. Two classes, one each from public and private sector, were selected for experiment.

Sample

The total participant sin experimentation were 60. There were 30 participants in each group comprising girls and boys as the school was co-education. The technique of "convenient sampling" was used. The schools and the participants were chosen on the foundation of the criteria as under:

- Consent from the head of the institute.
- Accessibility to at least two sections of 1st class in the institutes.
- Readiness of the instructors to spare their classes willingly for the treatment.
- Availability of a teacher who was able to teach through songs.

Instrument

The instrument for collecting data was the test to evaluate the speaking abilities at the ECE school level. The speaking tasks were modified from the related literature. The test was authenticated by the professionals' opinion, piloted and implemented as pre-test & post-test before and after intervention respectively.

Data Analysis

This section describes analysis of data. The data were examined in the subsequent ways by using t-statistics with the help of SPSS as displayed ahead:

- Over-all comparison of experimental and control groups in pre-test of speaking talents in terms of fluency, English comprehension and correct pronunciation.
- Over-all comparison of experimental and control groups in post-test of speaking talents in terms of fluency, English comprehension and correct pronunciation.

Overall Results

Table 1 shows the evaluation of gain and effect sizes of together the control and experimental groups in both the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 1

Overall Comparison from Pretest to Posttest Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Group		Pre-Test Mean	SD (Pre-Test)	Post-Test Mean	SD (Post-Test)	Gain	Effect Size	<i>t</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
Control (N=30)	Speaking	7.05	3.07	8.20	3.79	1.158	0.05	1.80	0.070
Experimental (N=30)	Speaking	7.07	3.17	15.50	4.700	8.430	0.73	4.19	0.000***

The progress in the average marks was 1.158 ($t=1.8$, statistically insignificant) in the domain of speaking comprising fluency, comprehension and pronunciation, among the controls. The development in the average marks was 8.430 ($t=4.19$, statistically significant) in the speaking domain comprising fluency, comprehension and pronunciation, considerably among experimental group participants, as evident from the gain scores and effect sizes, *t*-values and *df* that is 58 for the above displayed data.

Table 2 ahead shows the evaluation of gain and effect sizes of together the control and experimental groups in both the pre-test and the post-test in sub-skill of fluency in English speaking skill.

Table 2

Overall Comparison from Pretest to Posttest Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups in Fluency

Group		Pre-Test Mean	SD (Pre-Test)	Post-Test Mean	SD (Post-Test)	Gain	Effect Size	<i>t</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
Control (N=30)	Fluency	3.05	2.07	3.20	3.79	0.15	0.01	0.70	0.060
Experimental (N=30)	Fluency	3.09	2.17	5.19	4.700	2.10	0.73	2.71	0.000***

The progress in the average marks was 0.15 ($t=0.7$, statistically insignificant) in the domain of speaking fluency among the controls. The development in the average marks was 2.10 ($t=2.71$, statistically significant) in the speaking fluency, considerably among experimental group participants, as evident from the gain scores and effect sizes, *t*-values and *df* that is 58 for the above displayed data.

Table 3 ahead shows the evaluation of gain and effect sizes of together the control and experimental groups in both the pre-test and the post-test in terms of English comprehension.

Table 3

Overall Comparison from Pretest to Posttest Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups in English Comprehension

Group		Pre- Test Mean	SD (Pre- Test)	Post- Test Mean	SD (Post- Test)	Gain	Effect Size	<i>t</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
Control (N=30)	Comprehension	3.00	2.07	3.20	3.79	0.20	0.01	0.70	0.060
Experimental (N=30)	Comprehension	3.01	2.17	5.31	4.700	2.30	0.75	2.95	0.000***

The progress in the average marks was 0.20 ($t=0.7$, statistically insignificant) in the domain of English comprehension among the controls. The development in the average marks was 2.95 ($t=2.95$, statistically significant) in the English comprehension considerably among experimental group participants, as evident from the gain scores and effect sizes, *t*-values and *df that is 58* for the above displayed data.

Table 4 shows the evaluation of gain and effect sizes of together the control and experimental groups in both the pre-test and the post-test in terms of pronunciation.

Table 4

Overall Comparison from Pretest to Posttest Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups in Pronunciation

Group		Pre- Test Mean	SD (Pre- Test)	Post- Test Mean	SD (Post- Test)	Gain	Effect Size	<i>t</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
Control (N=30)	Pronunciation	1.05	0.07	1.19	0.79	0.14	0.05	0.80	0.090
Experimental (N=30)	Pronunciation	1.05	0.17	5.50	4.700	4.45	0.53	2.39	0.000***

The progress in the average marks was 0.14 ($t=0.8$, statistically insignificant) in the domain of English pronunciation among the controls. The development in the average marks was 4.45 ($t=2.39$, statistically significant) in English pronunciation considerably among experimental group participants, as evident from the gain scores and effect sizes, *t*-values and *df that is 58* for the above displayed data.

Findings

These findings were observed from the analysis of the data:

The table 1 displays that the control group developed in speaking inconsiderably. The progress was not significant in terms of English speaking skills. The experimental group was upgraded significantly in average totals of fluency, comprehension and pronunciation that constituted speaking skills because the experimental group got effect sizes better than the control groups.

The table 2 displays that the control group developed in speaking fluency inconsiderably. The progress was not significant as displayed in the table above, in terms of Fluency. The experimental group progressed significantly in average totals of fluency because the experimental group got effect size better than the control group.

The table 3 displays that the control group developed in speaking inconsiderably. The progress was not significant in terms of English comprehension. The experimental group was upgraded significantly in average totals of comprehension because the experimental group got effect size better than the control group.

The table 4 displays that the control group developed in pronunciation inconsiderably. The progress was not significant in terms of English pronunciation skills. The experimental group was upgraded significantly in average totals of pronunciation that constituted speaking skills because the experimental group got effect size better than the control group.

Conclusion

On the basis of study result, it can be concluded that the domain of speaking skills comprising fluency, comprehension and pronunciation, might be upgraded significantly by using songs among the boys and girls in public sector school students at ECE level in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The answers to the research questions are ahead number-wise: yes. Songs assist in educating the ECE students in terms of speaking skills like fluency, comprehension and pronunciation in the subject of English language at public sector schools.

Recommendations

These recommendations are that songs may be useful to teach speaking skills other than fluency, comprehension and pronunciation. They are recommended for giving confidence and motivation to young learners at ECE level and other levels as well. Songs may be handy to teach any genre in English.

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