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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SONGS ON VOCABULARY OF HIGH SCHOOL ESL LEARNERS OF THE SELECTED PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN LAHORE

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to find out how songs impact ESL students' vocabulary studying in a private high school in Lahore. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences served as the study's theoretical foundation. The quantitative study used a survey and quasi-experimental approach. The research subjects were thirty ninth and tenth grades from several private schools in Lahore. The students were selected through convenience sampling. This study used pre- and post-tests as a basis for quasi-experimental research. The impact of the selected treatment was analyzed through SPSS software, using the paired t test. The Songs technique seems to have a marginally greater impact on vocabulary scores than the conventional technique, as indicated by the higher Cohen's d. Language Policy makers, curriculum designers and teachers may find the results valuable in incorporating songs as teaching methodology in the curriculum and classroom activities.

Keywords: vocabulary learning, songs, gardener's theory, ESL context, multiple Intelligences

1. Introduction

A broad vocabulary is necessary for comprehension when learning a second language. Learning vocabulary is a crucial component of developing language proficiency (Annisa, 2013). A learner has to comprehend the meaning of terms in order to be effective during the learning process. One could contend that acquiring vocabulary is a prerequisite for becoming proficient in all other language skills. Students should therefore acquire language in an effective manner (O'Keeffe, 2012). However, it can be challenging to understand multiple terms at once. According to Hirsh (2018), in order for a student to comprehend a text, there must be at least 95% lexical coverage (p. 169). Acquiring language proficiency can be a challenging and time-consuming task (Abbasi & Ali, 2022). Additionally, O'Keeffe (2012) asserts that improving vocabulary leads to improvements in all areas of reading, writing, and listening skills.

Teachers usually try to teach vocabulary orally, but research has shown that this is ineffective because kids soon forget the terms (Simpson, 2015). Songs not only make learning enjoyable, but they also help language acquisition flow naturally (Tilwani, et al, 2022). Similarly, using songs as instructional tools in English language learning contexts is not a new idea Scholars like Bartle (1962), Richards (1969), and Jolly (1975) have extensively examined the linguistic advantages of music education in second language learning institutions. Early language development is greatly aided by musical songs. Linguistic and musical grammar processing is thought to occur in the same brain region as language and song processing (Donohue & DeBonis,

2008). Lyrics teach vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and other language systems. Students can improve their memorization skills by chanting phrases and by rapidly expanding their vocabulary with word texts. Since songs are enjoyable to the human mind, learning a song is quicker and easier than learning a curriculum. Learning a song is quicker and simpler than learning a curriculum since music is pleasurable to the human mind (Segal, 2014). Furthermore, this approach is very helpful while learning a foreign language. Learning to hum along to songs can help a learner remember and acquire new language (Adams & Simpson, 2015). Song lyrics can be a fun way to learn vocabulary because they give students contextualized lexical items.

1.1 Problem statement

ELT curricula often undervalued vocabulary because of the widespread belief that it will take care of itself. Some vocabulary meaning understanding is necessary to be able to read for meaning. Students who do not have a rich vocabulary repertoire find it difficult to understand what they read in a text or hear in a discussion. Concurrently, efforts have been made to identify the best strategy for learning vocabulary in a second language. According to Maess (2012), neuroscientists have also discovered that language and musical songs processing take place in the same hemisphere of the brain and that neurological mechanisms that underlie language and syntax in songs may be identical. Therefore, using English song memorization, which is considered as a strategy in language education and comprises of a musical melody, may help the students learn the language more quickly, particularly when it comes to vocabulary. In Pakistani context songs are not getting extensively used for vocabulary teaching which can be a potential means of vocabulary teaching (Pathan, 2012).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The aim of the current study is to find out impact of songs on the vocabulary of ESL students high school Lahore.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To identify the impact of songs on retention and retrieval of English vocabulary of high school ELS learners of Lahore.

1.4 Hypothesis

The following alternative hypothesis was put to the test in order to determine whether or not the use of songs to introduce new vocabulary items affected second language learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention:

1. There is a change in overall vocabulary scores after the intervention was introduced for teaching English vocabulary to the high school ESL learners of Lahore.

1.5 Research Question

The present study's research question is as follows:

1. What is the impact of songs on the retention and retrieval of English vocabulary of high school ESL learners of Lahore?

1.6 Significance

Vocabulary is the first and foremost step in language acquisition. Without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others and express their own ideas. Both the teaching and learning of language are problematic for teachers and students in Pakistan. Most of the times students give up learning because they got blank when they need to participate in any conversation or have to write something creative due to lack of vocabulary of English language. They are unable to find suitable words that are needed to carry out the conversation. Since this fact, several

researches on vocabulary acquisition have been carried out; nonetheless, the most effective teaching strategy has not yet been found but due to the development of modern technology where everyone has easy excess to musical devices, learning vocabulary through songs can be the most comprehensive method to teach and learn vocabulary. The study's conclusions could be useful in introducing new method of songs into the classrooms to cope up with this problem.

Literature Review

2.1 What is Vocabulary?

The grasp of words and their meanings is known as vocabulary, according to Fran Lehr, M. A., and Jean Osborn (2004). Conversely, Hatch and Brown (1995) described vocabulary as a list of terms that are unique to a language or as an assortment of concepts that may be helpful to individual language speakers (Rahmawati, 2014). Function words and content words are the two categories into which vocabulary is separated. While content words, which comprise nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that make up most of vocabulary, are used to convey parts of speech on the other hand function words are primarily employed to describe grammatical function (Susanti & Wijaya, 2013).

2.2 The concept of learning vocabulary in Pakistan

Language proficiency includes all the four basic skills of a language (Hafsa et al., 2020) but vocabulary is needed no matter what skill one is trying to learn. In Pakistan, the practice of learning English has long been gaining popularity. Pathan (2012) states that schools, colleges, universities, and madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan offer English as a subject. Even though the students have been exposed to English since their early school years, they still struggle with effective communication in everyday situations. A language's foundation is its vocabulary. Students must be able to comprehend terminology well in order to succeed in both their academic and professional endeavors, as English is a second language in Pakistani academia and a prerequisite in professional domains.

2.3 Definition of Song

According to Griffee (1992), a song is any piece of music with lyrics, especially popular songs like those heard on the radio. In the same area, Griffee (1992) adds that although songs are a distinct form, they share characteristics with speech.

2.4 Songs and Language Learning

Both language and songs are complex means of human expression that have many links and commonalities. Perceiving, interpreting, and producing structured sequences of elements—whether they be notes, chords, phonemes, or words—are cognitive processes shared by language processing and song processing. Neuroscience studies have shown that there is overlap in the brain networks that process language and songs, suggesting some degree of overlapping cognitive functions (Patel, 2012). Language is a complex, dynamic system of conventional symbols used for thought and expression (Kaderavek, 2015). It can be manually transmitted by written or spoken words, sign language, or both. Some people assert that music is a universal language in and of itself and songs are not apart from it. People of any language, nationality, gender, age, or religious system can comprehend this kind of art with ease (Israel, 2013).

Research has shown time and time again that songs are good for vocabulary growth. Chen (2020) and Khezri (2011) found that including songs during language learning can enhance

vocabulary expansion. Khezri's pilot study suggests that learning new vocabulary in a foreign language can be more enjoyable and effective when done while listening to songs. Rifai (2019) further emphasized the importance of a vocabulary-rich environment, suggesting that music teachers should promote sophisticated songs to enhance students' lexicons. Smith (1984) also highlighted the potential of song related activities to strengthen language skills, further supporting the role of songs in vocabulary learning. Thus, students may acquire the language more quickly by employing English song memorization, which is regarded as a technique in language teaching and includes a melodic tune, especially when it comes to vocabulary.so, the connection of Songs with the language leading adds positive insights to the objectives of the present study.

2.5 Songs: brain and memory

Great music, in the words of Sir Thomas Beecham, "is that which leaves the memory with difficulty and penetrates the ear with facility." Amazing music leaves a lasting impression (Dingle, 2008). According to Gardner (1984), "all normal (non-brain-damaged) people possess some musical intelligence," which lends credence to the idea that learning is enhanced by music. Foreign language teachers can make use of their students' musical intelligence and interests to assist them strengthen their language abilities. Salcedo (2002) states that song is used as a teaching tool in this situation. This theory relates to how the left and right hemispheres of the brain work; the former uses language to express ideas, while the latter is in charge of memory, emotions, motor control, and problem-solving.

As a result, most learners process information using their right hemisphere, and while most instruction primarily uses left brain strategies, songs allow learners with a strong right brain orientation to access new learning opportunities (Salcedo, 2010). Songs therefore serve as a bridge between the two hemispheres of the brain, enhancing retention through a complimentary process in which the left hemisphere learns the words, while the right hemisphere learns the melody (Guglielmino, 1986). According to Jencke (2008), there is strong evidence from a body of research to support the idea that songs can improve learning outcomes by having an emotional impact on people. According to research, songs can elicit a range of emotions, such as motivation and relaxation (Jancke, 2008). Learning performance is then significantly impacted by these emotions. People exhibit increased engagement, attentiveness, and receptivity to learning materials when they feel good emotions produced by songs (Hallam, et al, 2002). This emotional involvement improves memory retention, information processing, and general cognitive functioning. Additionally, studies demonstrate that background music improves memory retention by raising emotional arousal (Jancke, 2008).

2.6 Impact of using songs on classroom environment

New methods are required to teach language skills in order to maintain the interest of the learners (Salahuddin et al, 2024), and songs may be an excellent tool to create the perfect learning, interest-maintaining environment in a language learning classroom. It can help students become more aware of different cultures, increase their vocabulary, and improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. (Akhter, et al, 2022). According to Lo and Li (1998), using songwriting as a teaching tool for English creates a relaxed learning environment that improves all four language abilities. Songs are another way to break up the monotony of the classroom. Furthermore, music can help reduce the stress and worry that many students experience when picking up a new language. Giving students access to a multi-stimulant learning environment in the classroom increases their motivation and enhances their subconscious learning, since most learning processes

are made up of knowledge that has been retained subconsciously. Since these factors hasten subconscious learning, the ideal learning environment in this case should include music, theater, and kinesthetic elements as well as be sufficiently rich in stimulants that can address to many senses and reinforce happy sentiments (Cengiz, 2004).

2.7 Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention of Words through songs

The use of Songs in language instruction is supported by a multitude of scientific and physiological arguments. Several studies have demonstrated the usefulness of songs in teaching a variety of language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For example, Hazel-Obarow (2004) examined the short- and long-term effects of songs on the vocabulary development of young English language learners. The findings showed that youngsters are far more motivated to learn vocabulary when there is a musical component such as songs. Another term for the process of learning a language without realizing it is accidental vocabulary acquisition. Ahmad (2012) defines incidental learning as "the process of gaining knowledge without making an effort" (p. 71).

Furthermore, according to Pavia et al. (2019), listening to songs typically has a positive impact on incidental vocabulary learning, confirming the findings of Shakerian et al. (2016) and Li and Brand (2009). However, they also emphasize how crucial it is to hear the song several times in order to promote incidental vocabulary learning (pp. 761–762). The findings of Tomczak and Lew's (2019) study provide more evidence that the song group's recall of multi-word units has improved. Lestari and Hardiyanti (2020), who assert that songs have a favorable impact on vocabulary learning and retention, lend credence to this. However, they specifically mention how things go better when you listen to slow music. The effect of songs on upper-level EFL learners' recollection and retention of gender related vocabulary was examined by Mohammad Alipour et al. (2012). Collins (2013) also looked into how songs affected elementary school students' recall and retention of the English language. This study showed that teaching language via interactive play and music is a more effective approach than teaching it via rote memory.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

Theorist, Howard Gardner (1993), supports the use of music in second language instruction. This psychologist claims that there are eight different types of intelligence, including musical, spatial, linguistic (verbal), logical physical-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical (distance travelled), interpersonal (knowing others), and intrapersonal (knowing oneself) and naturalist (observing and appreciating the and artificial systems and patterns). Gardner emphasizes that in real-world circumstances, intelligences do not function in isolation. There is constant interaction between intelligences. These many forms of intelligence are all interrelated and enhance one another. Yet, being interdependent does not imply that they function independently; rather, they are employed to assist individuals in problem-solving and skill-development. For Gardner (1999), although it is true that all people have a natural tendency to succeed in all of these areas, the majority of people really tend to flourish in just one or two of these areas due to a combination of cultural influences, motivation, and life experiences. Other approaches to working with music include playing instrumental music in the background as students work on a writing assignment, presenting new vocabulary to the class through story songs and displaying cards with the imagery, and employing songs that feature the tunes that alter the rhythm while utilizing the linguistic structures we are working with. (J. Lalas & S. Lee, 2002). Armstrong (2000) provides several instances, such as these: Cooking is a multifaceted process that involves reading the

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recipe (linguistic), dividing it in half (logical-mathematical), creating a menu that pleases the whole family (interpersonal), and satisfying one's own hunger (intrapersonal). Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is consistent with the use of music as a tool for learning a second language. There are a variety of ways to use music to teach second language students. Students can hear background music that is instrumental while penning a paper. Students may be asked questions to generate verbal responses to enjoy jazz or classical music. Careful study of the Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence, contributed to development of conceptual framework of this research. According to Gardner this intelligence helps the students to learn new vocabulary faster than the other conventional methods as this Intelligence is associated with memory and multiple creative expressions. Individuals having strong musical intelligence have more power to understand and apply this methodology in learning vocabulary.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study investigated the potential effects of using songs to introduce new vocabulary on second language learners' vocabulary retention and acquisition. Quantitative research methodology was used in the investigation. The research was quasi experimental because the research subjects were pre-assigned in classes rather than selected at random. Thirty students completed achievement tests as part of the data collection process. These achievements tests included pre-test right before intervention, post -tests right after teaching through conventional method and then through songs.

3.2 Population and Sampling

Students in grades 9 and 10 of high school made up the population under investigation in this study since they had previously been exposed to an English learning environment for a few years. The study had thirty students in all.

3.3 Tools

Two written tests were generated for pre and post-test for the conventional method and songs methods respectively. These tests comprised of words from the songs and the students were asked to make sentences from each word before and after treatment. Their gained scores were later on analysed and differentiated by using SPSS.

3.4 Procedure

Songs were carefully chosen, with emphasis placed on the concept and lyrics. The instructor created a conducive environment for the test by using a high-quality sound system and multimedia. "Counting Stars by Republic, Hey Soul Sister, don't stop Believin, Happy Pharrell Williams, and forever by Tylor Swift" were the songs played in class. These pupils' vocabulary pieces were chosen in order to satisfy the study's goals. The researcher administered a pre-test to determine the learners' attitudes toward songs and music in general and in relation to the classroom before to the commencement of the study.

Words from these songs were selected to which students will be using in their own sentences after teaching them. For this process two methods (conventional method, musical method) were used in the pre and post-test. Firstly, the words from the songs were taught to the students through conventional method. The students learnt those words and write down sentences from each word. Their scores were recorded.

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For the post-test the same procedure of selecting words from the same songs as used in conventional method was repeated but the students were taught through songs method. The selected songs were played in the classroom and after sometime they were asked to use the words in to sentences. The students followed the instructions and the performance was recorded.

Data Analysis

Table 4. 1:
Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test with the conventional method	2.6000	30	.77013	.14061
	post-test with the conventional method	5.2667	30	1.50707	.27515
Pair 2	Pre-test with the song's method	3.6333	30	1.51960	.27744
	Post-test with the song's method	6.0333	30	1.18855	.21700

Note: N= Number of students

The statistics provide us with the mean, standard deviation, and standard error for both pretest and post test scores under each method. For the conventional method the mean pretest was 2.6000 increasing to 5.2667 in the mean post-test. The standard deviation (SD) for the pretest was 0.77013, which nearly doubled to 1.50707 for the post-test, indicating increased variability after the intervention. Correspondingly, the standard error of the mean (SEM) also widened from 0.14061 in the pretest to 0.27515 in the post-test. In contrast, the songs method showed higher initial mean scores, with the pretest mean at 3.6333, rising to 6.0333 in the post-test phase. The standard deviation for pre-test was 1.51960 and pretest was 1.18855. meanwhile the Standard error of the mean for the song's method was 0.27744 which decreased to 0.21700.

These statistics give us an initial impression of the central tendency (mean), variability (standard deviation), and precision (standard error) of the vocabulary scores for each method before and after the intervention.

Table 4. 2:
Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
					Lower
Pair 1	pretest with the conventional method – post-test	-2.66667	1.58296	.28901	-3.25775

		with the conventional method				
Pair 2		pretest with the song's method – post-test with the song's method	-2.40000	1.71404	.31294	-3.04003

	Paired Differences				Significance	
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
	Upper		T	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	pretest with the conventional method – post-test with the conventional method	-2.07558	-9.227	29	<.001	<.001
Pair 2	pretest with the song's method – post-test with the song's method	-1.75997	-7.669	29	<.001	<.001

Note: df= difference, t= t test

Paired samples t-tests evaluate whether the mean difference between pretest and post test scores is statistically significant for each method.

Table 4. 3:
Paired Samples Effect Sizes

					95% Confidence Interval
			Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	Lower
Pair 1	pretest with the conventional method - post-test with the conventional method	Cohen's d	1.58296	-1.685	-2.239
		Hedges' correction	1.62542	-1.641	-2.181
Pair 2	pretest with the song's method - post-test with the song's method	Cohen's d	1.71404	-1.400	-1.901
		Hedges' correction	1.76002	-1.364	-1.851

Paired Samples Effect Sizes		
		95% Confidence Interval[a]

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			Upper
Pair 1	pretest with the conventional method - post-test with the conventional method	Cohen's d	-1.118
		Hedges' correction	-1.089
Pair 2	pretest with the song's method - post-test with the song's method	Cohen's d	-.887
		Hedges' correction	-.864

Effect sizes (Cohen's d) quantify the magnitude of the difference between pretest and post test scores. For the conventional method, Cohen's d was calculated at 1.58296 while the songs method showed a slightly larger effect size with Cohen's d of 1.71404.

Both effect sizes are considered large according to conventional guidelines, indicating substantial improvements in vocabulary scores after using either method.

The 95% confidence intervals around the mean differences suggest where the true population mean difference is likely to fall. For the conventional method, the interval was (-3.25775, -2.07558). Similarly, the songs method yielded a confidence interval of (-3.04003, -1.75997)

These intervals confirm that the mean differences are unlikely to be due to random chance alone, further supporting the statistical significance of the findings. These results underscore the effectiveness of both methods in achieving substantial increases in vocabulary scores among participants.

4.4 Findings and Discussions

4.41 Students pre and post test Results:

In order to answer the research question of the study, **what is the impact of songs on the retention and retrieval of English vocabulary of high school ESL learners of Lahore?** the statistical analysis was conducted after the pre and post-test of the students taught through conventional method and Songs method. In the conventional method, the mean difference between pretest and post-test scores was -2.66667, with a standard deviation of differences of 1.58296. The standard error of the mean difference was 0.28901. The 95% confidence interval (CI) for the difference (-3.25775, -2.07558). Both the one-sided and two-sided p-values were less than 0.001, underscoring the statistical significance of the observed improvement. In contrast, the mean difference in scores for the song's method was -2.40000, with a standard error of the mean difference of 0.31294 and a somewhat higher standard deviation of differences at 1.71404. There has also been a significant decline in scores following the intervention, as indicated by the 95% confidence interval for the difference (-3.0403, -1.75997). The one-sided and two-sided p-values were both less than 0.001, in line with the traditional approach, confirming the statistical significance of the improvement seen with the song's method.

Both t-tests show significant mean differences between pretest and post test scores for each method, indicating that both teaching approaches led to improved vocabulary scores. The effect sizes (Cohen's d) are also provided, suggesting large effects for both methods.

As far as statistical significance, **both methods** showed statistically significant improvements in vocabulary scores. The p-values (both < 0.001) indicated strong evidence against the null hypothesis that there is no difference in scores before and after the intervention. Songs **Method** has a slightly higher Cohen's d (1.71404) compared to the Conventional Method (1.58296), suggesting that the Songs Method might have a slightly larger effect in improving vocabulary scores. Confidence **intervals** around the mean differences overlapped, indicating that while the Songs Method shows a marginally smaller mean difference, there is no clear statistical evidence to decisively favour one method over the other based on mean difference alone. Considering the practical aspects of implementing each method, the Songs Method might be more engaging and enjoyable for students, potentially influencing motivation and retention of vocabulary.

Therefore, while both methods are effective, the statistical evidence slightly favours the **Songs Method** for vocabulary learning in this context. This negates the hypothesis assumed before the research. Although the results are positive but not both methods comparatively yielded the same results. However, practical considerations and student preferences should also be taken into account when deciding which method to adopt in educational settings.

5. Conclusion

Similar findings have been reported by Li and Manny (2009), Xioawei (2010), Alipour, Gorjian and Zafari (2012), and Schwarz (2013) as well as Medina (2000). According to these findings, songs play a big part in language learning. However, these researches worked for the overall second language acquisition. The current study added a further section to the available researches by investing the impact on the vocabulary field. While some of the researchers like Schuster and Mouzon (1982), and Gfeller (1983) reported more positive results completely relying on the songs method rather than the conventional or traditional method. Students can learn informal language, which is not covered in standard lessons, as well as formal vocabulary with the aid of songs. Furthermore, unlike language acquired through conventional means, vocabulary taught through songs is not quickly forgotten. Even if they do not take notes to keep the words, students can nonetheless remember them over time.

Students who enjoy songs also arouse their curiosity, which prompts them to look up unfamiliar phrases and ways of using them. The statistical examination of student viewpoints shed important light on the diverse function songs play in English language instruction. Although opinions and experiences varied, the benefits of music for memorization were consistently acknowledged. Teachers may make the most of songs' utilization to provide students with engaging and successful language learning experiences by utilizing these ideas.

While both methods had equal sample sizes and exhibited variability in scores, the higher average score and potential for enhanced engagement with the musical method suggested its value as a pedagogical tool. By leveraging the strengths of music in educational contexts, educators can create dynamic and effective learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs and promote linguistic proficiency. Regarding the influence of the music methodology on student performance, engagement, vocabulary retention, and overall efficacy, teachers' opinions of it in language instruction were largely favourable. The results of this study hold great

importance for those who create curricula and teach language. Including songs that showcase a variety of musical preferences helps raise engagement and motivation levels among students.

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