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IMPROVING EFL PRONANCIATION VIA SONGS AS AUTHENTIC TOOL

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ПЕСЕН КАК АУТЕНТИЧНОГО СРЕДСТВА ДЛЯ УЛУЧШЕНИЯ НАВЫКОВ ПРОИЗНОШЕНИЯ (АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК)

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Introduction

It is generally recognized, the study of a foreign language requires more than the mastery of its grammar and vocabulary. Learners must also acquire the knowledge and practice of how native speakers use the language. Therefore, it is difficult for English Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially engineering students, to speak the target language fluently and correctly.

Learner's communicative competence depends on all of the basic skills of the target language, covering the skills of listening and speaking, reading and writing. Pronunciation is an integral part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence.

Often incorrectly pronounced sounds makes communication difficult, sometimes even changing a phrase's meaning. Clear speech is essential in today's global engineering and a key to building a successful engineer's career.

The components and features of EFL pronunciation teaching and learning should cover the training of the speech organs, such as lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, palate, tongue, vocal folds, ears, etc.

The usefulness of teaching and learning foreign language pronunciation is a widely debated issue in the language teaching world. Recently, researchers, including P. Robertson, 2003; P. Pardede, 2010; P.A. Gilakjani, 2012; R. Adams-Goertel, 2013 et al. studied the value of pronunciation which is important to the success of a foreign language usage [1, 2, 3, 4].

Pronunciation is not an addition to grammar, vocabulary or any other aspect of language learning. If a learner's general purpose is to talk clearly to others in another language, a reasonable pronunciation is significant.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of learning activities to improve students' EFL pronunciation through authentic English songs.

The method of the study is extracurricular action research. In conducting the study researchers collected the data through observation, self-evaluation, and tests.

In this research the author proposes the **hypothesis** that engineering students can improve their pronunciation by using authentic English songs.

Songs play a significant role in motivating students to learn English. They can support the development of learners' ability in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as provide opportunities for learning pronunciation, rhythm, grammar and vocabulary [5].

Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language. The author would like to point out some aspects of pronunciation, which can be improved through the songs. For instance, using songs may help learners to focus on: • sounds; • words; • connected speech.

Since languages differ in the range of sounds, students must learn how to "physically" to produce certain sounds, previously unknown to them.

Songs are authentic and easily accessible examples of spoken English. The rhymes in songs provide with repetition of similar sounds.

Teaching English via using songs has many advantages for student to improve their pronunciation: 1) some songs are funny; 2) songs are good to introduce supra segmental phonetic (stress, rhythm, and intonation); 3) songs improve student' motivation; 4) reinforce grammatical structures; 5) enhance pronunciation and vocabulary; 6) help memorize patterns making learning easier; 7) build fluency [6].

The process of research was conducted in four stages, including:

- 1) pre-test;
- 2) extracurricular classes in which students sang and dramatized authentic songs;
- 3) post-test;
- 4) self-evaluation.

Two second-year students' groups of Institute of Non-Destructive Testing provided the subjects of this study. One group (N = 14), **control** group, received traditional EFL classes. The other group, **experimental** (N = 15), sang and dramatized songs at extracurricular classes.

The ideal way of testing pronunciation is to actually listen to the learner. The pre-test included tasks to measure students' speaking skills and pronunciation on the following themes: "Student life", "Worlds around us". The post-test analysis data showed that there was a significant difference between the **control** and **experimental** group of students' achievement.

The average of the pre- and post tests score increased:

- from 62% to **70%** in the **control** group;
- from 59 to **87%** in the **experimental** group.

Students of experimental group were asked to undertake a self-evaluation of their dramatized songs at extracurricular experience. They completed the evaluation form by giving a feedback and rate their experiences on the following scale: A – excellent, B – good, C – fair. The result shows how the interviewed students evaluated dramatized songs practice:

- 83% - excellent;
- 14% - good;

- 3% - fair.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that improving EFL pronunciation via dramatized authentic songs at extracurricular classes is effective, and students are more inclined toward using dramatized songs for better EFL pronunciation than traditional classes.

The author's discoveries are based on the value of authentic songs use for pronunciation and speaking practice with Altai, Buryat, Tuvan, Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek and Yakutian EFL learners.

Undoubtedly, EFL pronunciation should be viewed in the same light as the other aspects and skills of EFL language, such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and so on, since it is a crucial part of communication. Therefore, pronunciation components have to be incorporated in the materials, classroom activities and testing tools.

Reference

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