
Teaching Vocabulary Using Songs and Poems for English as Second Language Learners

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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. Many scholars state that in learning vocabulary the aspects of pronunciation, meaning, spelling, and the grammatical usage of the specific words should be taught. Various strategies can be utilized to teach vocabulary in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context. This study investigates whether the usage of English songs and poems in the ESL classroom enhance the knowledge in the vocabulary of the secondary level learners. This study poses the research question “How does the usage of English songs and poems enhance the ESL students’ knowledge in vocabulary at the secondary level?” to test two hypotheses, a) The use of English songs is more effective than using English poems in teaching vocabulary. b) There is a significant and positive impact after the usage of songs and poems in grade 10 compared to grade 6. Twenty-five students from each class from grade 6 and grade 10 at H/ Weeraketiya Rajapaksha Central College participated in the study. The data were collected using the pre-tests and post-tests which were conducted for the experimental groups to obtain the results of the learners’ achievement on vocabulary. The data was were analysed using the SPSS version 22. The findings indicated that both songs and poems have a positive impact on the enhancement of vocabulary knowledge at the secondary level. In both grades, songs were more effective in teaching vocabulary than poems. The second hypothesis of this study was partially confirmed as Grade 10 group that exposed to songs had an improvement whereas Grade 10 group that exposed to poems had shown a reduction in their marks, compared to Grade 6. Overall, the findings indicate the effectiveness of the usage of English songs and poems in teaching and learning vocabulary in the secondary level ESL classroom. Though teachers do not pay much attention to the usage of songs and poems, they would be very much productive in enhancing the ESL learners’ knowledge in vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Songs, Poems