The Great Effects of Applying Music on Learning Second Language

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Received July 24, 2020; Revised September 3, 2020; Accepted September 29, 2020

Cite This Paper in the following Citation Styles

(a): [1] Ha Thi Kim Linh, Nguyen Thi Tinh, Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen, Kieu Thi Thu Chung, Huynh Tan Hoi, "The Great Effects of Applying Music on Learning Second Language," *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 8, No. 11, pp. 5453 - 5456, 2020. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.081148.

(b): Ha Thi Kim Linh, Nguyen Thi Tinh, Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen, Kieu Thi Thu Chung, Huynh Tan Hoi (2020). *The Great Effects of Applying Music on Learning Second Language*. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(11), 5453 - 5456. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.081148.

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Abstract Today, in order to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems related to education, economy and society, countries increasingly open, interact with each other more, then learning foreign languages is one of the extremely necessary requirements. However, learning a language is not an easy one for everyone. Everyone has a different ability, and the way and tools people use to learn languages are not the same. One of the tools they use is music. By using rhythms of favorite songs, the learners might have much more better pronunciation, that is, they would find it enjoyable to learn a new language, easier to remember. They no longer learn the grammatical structures or sentences in the books, and as a result, they could improve their speaking skills as well as other skills more naturally. This article will mention benefits of learning languages via music, the paper also mentions some characteristics of music and words to prove that music is an effective tool to make foreign language learning extremely effective. The paper was completed with the support of 100 students currently studying at some universities in Ho Chi Minh City. These students are studying English or Japanese. The online survey method and oral interviews aim to further clarify the importance of music for foreign language access. The results show that most students mention the effects of music but there are also students who are not really aware of the importance of this form of learning.

Keywords Applications, Foreign Languages, Music, Learning

1. Introduction

In the context of international integration today, foreign language skills, especially English, Chinese, Korean and Japanese skills are extremely necessary. Learning foreign languages is more focused than ever, with the introduction of a variety of language centers, large and small, and self-learning foreign languages through online courses are also gaining a lot of popularity [1].

However, there is a question that is always searched on Google: "How to improve foreign language skills". And among the many tips, the most popular one is listening to music and learning songs in that language, for example, practicing singing English songs, Japanese, etc.

Therefore, the question is how music, or more precisely songs do, improve the language learning skills? Why can music improve its language skills? What do music and languages have in common to make it easier for a person to learn a foreign language? These question will be answered in this article [2].

2. Research Content

2.1. Literature Review

When talking about the impact of music on language learning, we can find countless articles on Google, but there are still no Vietnamese articles going into the research on the function of music, as well as the similarities of music with language. This is because language and music studies are often very specialized because they are two different groups of industries [3].

In foreign countries, in the past, there have been many studies by foreign experts on the applications of music in language learning, especially learning English, Dwayne Eng., a master's degree in pedagogy in English and Applied Linguistics at King's College London University with the article: "Why use music in Language Learning? A Survey of the Literature", or the author of Franco Deluge, Giulia Lampas, respectively, is the head of departments of psychology and oriental studies at the University of Rome with an analysis of the impact of music on memorizing tonal languages such as Mandarin or Thai [4].

Songs are usually short and are very short texts but contain a lot of meaning. This makes the lyrics ideal for foreign language acquisition. Songs in English, Chinese or Japanese often have certain structures. Familiarization with structured songs allows students to focus on the meaning and overall understanding of the song [5]. Through the song, students can feel empathy with the singer's feelings or the lyrics that can express their mood. This helps them to understand the meaning of the song in class. Besides, the song can also generate a lot of discussion and put students at the center of the learning process, developing critical and creative thinking [2].

This paper, based on the ideas of the above-mentioned studies as well as some of the other studies listed in the references, the application of music in learning foreign language for Vietnamese will be analyzed [2].

2.2. Current Situation of Foreign Language Learning in Vietnam

Currently, in terms of English, most pupils and students born in 1980 onwards have foreign language education from high school level and even junior high school [5]. Going to higher levels such as university, graduate school, etc., it is possible to continue further training and especially specialized foreign language, even another foreign language. In terms of English, an average student has over 10 years of learning English after graduation [1]. However, the English proficiency of Vietnamese students is generally still low compared to other countries in the region and around the world. Students can only use English to complete assignments, but can not use English to apply for a job and communicate fluently in everyday situations (as assessed by the seminar "Language Training").

From this, it can be seen that the need to improve English skills is extremely urgent for students in particular and the young generation of Vietnam in general in the context of global integration today.

3. Research Methods

To be able to clarify why music helps improve language skills, the paper compares the general characteristics of two learning methods. In addition, we conducted a survey of 100 students who are studying various subjects at some universities (University of Education, FPT University and University of Technology) in order to get their opinions on the effect of listening to foreign music on language learning. Comparisons between music and language, as well as the results of the survey will be presented in the "research results".

4. Research Results

When a person talks to another person, it gives the listener two volumes of information at once: in semantics to convey the content of thoughts and in intonation to convey emotional content. Music makes it easier to remember and is a powerful tool for developing skills that include vocabulary and pronunciation in a language, whether it's your native language or a second foreign language [4].

To make it clearer, we conducted a survey about music listening habits, as well as the impact of listening to foreign music on language learning. The survey was conducted with 50 respondents, with a total of 5 questions but including 1 question divided into 2 separate branches. The results of the survey are as follows.

First to talk about the reality of foreign language learning we asked the first question, "How many foreign languages have you learned so far?"

Figure 1. Number of foreign languages that learners have been trained

So we can see, in preparation for globalization, foreign

language training is very important. Therefore, the numbers of young people nowadays all learn at least one foreign language or more, and in which the number of people learning two or more foreign languages accounts for 80%. Especially in recent years, in addition to English being the world's most commonly used language, Vietnamese students are also equipped with additional languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

Next, when we talk about the level of confidence in using a foreign language in the second question, the results are as below:

Figure 2. Confidence in using a foreign language

The above results show that up to 50% of people are only able to communicate on basic topics, not able to communicate well in daily life and at work. In fact, Vietnamese people have not yet been highly appreciated for their ability to use language in work and education.

After this question, the survey will branch into two different cases. For those who are confident of 50% or more, when asking about the level of listening to foreign music, we have the following results:

Figure 3. The habit of listening to foreign music for people who are confident in their foreign language skills

As we can see, the number of people who confidently communicate well in the foreign language they have learned often listened to a lot of foreign music. In contrast, the number of people with poor language ability might listen to music very little and even listen to songs written in their native language. For those who listen to a lot of foreign music, when they were assessed about the effect of music on learning foreign languages, the majority answered positively.

Figure 5. The effect of listening to foreign music in improving foreign language skills

Thus, we can see, when listening to many music of the language we are learning, more than 80% think that music helps improve pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar skills, and 36.2% of people think that music can help communicate more fluently.

With the above results, we can see that music; especially the songs of the related language that young people are learning have a significant improvement in their foreign language skills [7]. Thanks to the catchy and familiar element of music, plus the standard pronunciation by native speakers in the lyrics, music is a powerful tool to improve the ability to listen, speak, read and write when studying a foreign language.

The lyrics can be the good resource in exercises that promote critical thinking. When asked about how songs help students in learning through oral interviews, they think that songs help them develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills much more effectively. The following Japanese song example is about soap bubbles. The song opens with the following paragraph:

"Shabon dama donda, yane made tonde"

From this song, students can develop better listening skills, in addition to speaking and pronunciation skills, and reasoning skills are also formed, especially unknown words. Students can use the lyrics to identify the main idea of the text and then find the words that helped them reach that conclusion. For example, in this song, the word "shabon dama" will refer to a human life, that is, humans are born and then lost, however, and we should live happily and optimistically. Inference is also seen as a very necessary skill when translating lyrics due to their ambiguous language.

5. Discussion

The results of the survey and research have shown that using music is an extremely useful tool in improving language skills. Therefore, it is essential to include more songs in the curriculum, be it easy songs, playful songs or songs with slow tempo [4]. The inclusion of songs in a language training program not only stimulates students to express their confidence through the song, but they have the opportunity to improve their communication skills better [6]. Currently, most English language centers in Vietnam have native teachers; most of them both teach the songs to the students and stimulate students to communicate. As a result, most students enrolled in these centers are much more confident than students who attend the normal school program.

In fact, nowadays, with the influx of foreign music waves to Vietnam, many young people have been able to access the full range of information and music trends taking place across the globe. Therefore, in order to attract younger generations, it is necessary to update the textbook program with new native songs, popular and popular hits that are widely spread. This will further stimulate the need to express yourself as well as show the understanding of the learner's movement, contributing to cultivating the confidence needed to be able to communicate well in a foreign language, thereby improving both Listening, speaking, reading and writing [8].

However, we should also check the content of the songs carefully. Due to the fact that some songs have an artistic element, they have removed grammatical elements, causing some lyrics to not conform to the basic grammatical structure used in that language [9]. Even some of the lyrics of today's hits, using new words that have an artist's signature that has not yet been recognized as a mainstream word in that language. Therefore, it will be easy to cause confusion in administration

6. Conclusions

With the above results, we can see that music plays a huge role in improving foreign language communication skills. Therefore, we need to apply music during teaching classes at appropriate time, that is, students can sing, can relax instead of forcing them to learn all the time. In addition to centers with foreigners where regularly implement this method, high school curriculum should also be taken into consideration in order to reduce the content of difficult academics. Students' pronunciation and communication skills need to be encouraged and developed much more than usual.

7. Limitations of Research

There are still some limitations in the research process.

Hopefully, the paper would be much more completed in the future.

Acknowledgments

To write this thesis, we would like to thank the cooperation of the participants in the survey.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is noted in the paper.

Source of Funding

We would like to send our warm thanks to our universities for financial support in order to complete the paper (Thai Nguyen University as well as Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam).

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