

THE ROLE OF SONGS IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

This article theoretically and practically analyzes the linguodidactic significance of songs in forming and developing speaking skills. The study covers issues of pronunciation (including connected speech), vocabulary, grammatical structures, and speech fluency through songs. Furthermore, the results of several recent experimental studies (Kitjaroonchai & Sukman, 2025; Hidayat, 2025; Jain et al., 2024; Faridloh, 2022; are analyzed. The article proposes a three-stage methodology (preparation, application, reinforcement) for effectively using songs in the classroom. Scientific evidence and practical recommendations are intended for English language teachers, methodologists, and language learners.

Keywords: songs, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, connected speech, linguodidactics, English language teaching methodology, motivation, experimental research.

Introduction

In today's context of globalization and intensifying international communication, mastering a foreign language, especially English, has become an essential requirement. Among the four basic language skills — reading, writing, listening, and speaking — speaking is both the most complex and the most necessary in practical life. Many language learners, despite knowing grammatical rules sufficiently, face serious difficulties in speaking naturally, fluently, and accurately. These problems are often related to pronunciation deficiencies, unfamiliarity with connected speech mechanisms, limited vocabulary, and psychological barriers (fear of speaking).

From this perspective, songs prove to be an effective supplement — and sometimes an alternative — to traditional language teaching methods. Songs not only make the learning process more engaging and emotionally rich, but they also provide authentic, natural language samples; through rhythm and melody they activate memory; and they improve pronunciation and intonation. The purpose of this article is to highlight the role of songs in developing speaking skills from a theoretical and scientific standpoint, analyze the most recent research findings in this area, and develop practical methodological recommendations.

1. Linguodidactic Potential of Songs

From a linguodidactic perspective, songs have several distinctive features:

1. Natural language sample. Song lyrics contain collocations, idioms, and everyday expressions used in real life. This enables learners to understand the syntactic and semantic patterns of the language in context.
2. Rhythm, music, and mnemonic effect. Musical rhythm and rhyme significantly facilitate memorization. Repetition (chorus, refrain) strengthens memory and aids long-term retention.
3. Emotional and motivational factor. Songs evoke positive emotions, reducing stress and anxiety in the classroom. Music activates both the limbic system (emotions) and the neocortex (cognitive functions), increasing learning effectiveness.
4. Intercultural competence. Through songs, learners become acquainted with the culture, traditions, daily life, and values of English-speaking countries. This helps overcome cultural barriers in communication.

2. Improving Pronunciation and Connected Speech

Pronunciation, particularly mastery of connected speech mechanisms, plays a crucial role in developing speaking. English songs offer an excellent opportunity in this regard.

As British Council researcher Colm Boyd (2018) notes, pop songs can effectively teach the following connected speech phenomena:

- Elision (dropping of sounds): For example, in Beyoncé's "Single Ladies", the phrase "single ladies" is pronounced /sɪŋgə'leɪdiz/ where the "l" sound is barely heard.
- Catenation (linking consonant to vowel): In Ed Sheeran's "Shape Of You", "shape of you" is pronounced /'ʃeɪpəv ju:/, a clear example of catenation and elision.
- Assimilation (sounds adapting to each other): "Don't you" becomes "doncha" /'doʊntʃə/.

By singing and listening to such songs, learners consciously acquire natural pronunciation norms used in real life. This makes their speaking more natural and fluent.

3. Analysis of Scientific Studies

In recent years, numerous studies have investigated the impact of songs on speaking skills. Let us analyze the most significant and evidence-based findings.

3.1. Kitjaroonchai & Sukman (2025)

The study involved 28 first-year students over 15 weeks. The experimental group was taught using English songs. Results showed statistically significant improvement in speaking skills ($p < .05$). In particular, lexical complexity, grammatical accuracy, and speech fluency improved significantly ($p < .001$).

3.2. Jain et al. (2024)

Conducted in rural Chinese schools, this study examined the effect of English songs on pronunciation and fluency. The experimental group showed significant improvement in pronunciation and fluency compared to the control group taught traditionally. Songs also helped compensate for the lack of additional audio materials in rural areas.

3.3. Faridloh (2022)

This study developed a three-stage methodology (preparation, application, and evaluation) for teaching speaking using songs. Results indicated that students'

enthusiasm for lessons increased, vocabulary expanded, pronunciation improved, and communication apprehension significantly decreased.

4. Methodology for Using Songs (Practical Recommendations)

Based on the above research and pedagogical experience, the following three-stage methodology for effectively using songs to develop speaking is recommended:

Stage 1: Preparation (pre-listening)

- Short discussion or conversation about the song's topic.
- Explanation of difficult words and phrases (vocabulary, collocations, idioms).
- Providing information about the song title, performer, and genre.

Stage 2: Application (while-listening & while-singing)

- Listen to the song (1-2 times) — familiarization with the lyrics.
- Singing along (repeating the chorus).
- Identifying connected speech phenomena and modelling pronunciation.

Stage 3: Reinforcement (post-listening & speaking production)

- Question-answer and discussion based on the song's content.
- Role-play expressing the song's characters or situations.
- Creative task: writing a continuation or an adapted version of the song.
- Using phrases from the song in a new context to create dialogues.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, songs are a powerful, effective, and engaging tool for developing speaking skills. They improve pronunciation (especially mastering connected speech mechanisms), increase vocabulary, teach grammatical structures in context, and enhance fluency and naturalness. Most importantly, songs enrich the emotional dimension of language learning, boost student motivation, and reduce speaking anxiety. Numerous scientific studies (Kitjaroonchai & Sukman, 2025; Herman, Gumelar & Hidayat, 2025; Jain et al., 2024; Faridloh, 2022; Sri Nurvia, 2016) have proven the statistically

significant positive effect of songs on speaking skills. Therefore, English language teachers are advised to use songs regularly in their lessons, integrating them with the three-stage methodology outlined above. Future research should focus on the effect of songs on specific components of speaking (e.g., dialogic speech, monologic speech, speaking in different situations)

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