Effects of Songs on the Development of Vocabulary Among First Grade EFL Learners

Gülsüm Çevikbaş
Nergis Yumurtacı
Enisa Mede

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Research Article

Effects of songs on the development of vocabulary among first grade EFL learners

Gülsüm Çevikbaş[1] (iD)
Lecturer, İstanbul Kültür University, Department of Foreign Languages, TURKEY
Nergis Yumurtacı[2] (iD)
Teacher, Çamlıca Bahçeşehir College, TURKEY
Enisa Mede[3] (iD)
Assistant Professor, Bahçeşehir University, Faculty of Education, TURKEY

Abstract

The aim of this research study was to investigate the impact of using songs in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms and examine to what extent it contributes to the vocabulary development of the first graders. The participants were 1st grade Turkish EFL learners studying at a private k-12 school in Istanbul, Turkey. Data were collected from pre- and post- vocabulary tests, students' picture drawings and the teacher's reflections related to implementing songs while teaching English to young learners (TEYL). The results revealed that songs help young learners to improve their vocabulary and they are also perceived by their teacher as effective pedagogical tools to promote vocabulary while teaching English to young learners.

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[1] (✉ gulsumcevikbas@gmail.com)
[2] (✉ nergisy544@hotmail.com)
[3] Corresponding Author (✉ enisamede@gmail.com)

Şarkı kullanımının birinci sınıf İngilizce öğrencilerinin kelime gelişimi üzerine etkisi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce sınıflarında şarkı kullanımının etkisini ve birinci sınıf dil öğrencilerinin kelime edinimine ne ölçüde katkı sağladığını araştırmaktır. Katılımcılar, İstanbul'da özel bir ilkokulda öğrenim gören, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen birinci sınıf öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, ön test ve son test kelime testlerinden, öğrenci çizimlerinden ve öğretmen tarafından tutulan yansıtıcı günlüklerden oluşmaktadır. Testlerden gelen veriler betimleyici istatistik ve yüzdeler analizi ile sunulmuştur. Çizimlerden ve günlüklerden gelen veriler ise içerik analizi sonucunda ortaya çıkan kodların temalar ve alt-temalar halinde gruplandırılması yoluyla incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın sonunda, İngilizce şarkı dinletmenin küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin kelime hazinesini geliştirdiği görülmüştür. Şarkıların aynı zamanda öğretmen ve öğrenciler tarafından kelime edinimini geliştirmede etkili bir pedagojik araç olduğu görülmüştür.

Introduction

Most children enjoy listening to songs which play a crucial role in their development (Kalmar, 1982). Songs are very useful during the development stages of a child as they help the body and mind to work together. At the same time, the child develops intellectually, socially and also emotionally. Barker (1999) stated that exposing children to songs helps them to learn the sounds and the meaning of words to hold rhythm to the melody which makes them actively use their motor skills. Likewise, Campbell (2000) supports the view that exposure of music enhances a child's development, and in some ways minimizes some development delays.

It is obvious that songs are a part of a child's daily routine and they can easily be transferred to the young learners' classroom as an effective pedagogical tool to teach a second/foreign language. According to Shen (2009), using songs makes young learners enjoy while building their vocabulary. They learn new words and they have fun at the same time. Entertainment is the key for motivation which increases learning as well (Schunk, 1991).

Apart from being a fun element, songs are great resources which have repetition in themselves. While listening to songs, learners hear the same words over and over which helps them to restore the meaning and pronunciation in their long-term memory. As stated by Sarıçoban and Metin (2000), repetition and rhymes make it easier for young learners to understand, follow and repeat. Songs also have a particular theme and they provide a meaningful learning context as well. Instead of word-level or sentence level learning, providing students with the context that a word is used makes it easier for them to retrieve the meaning (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Murphey (1992) argued that songs are useful tools while teaching and learning vocabulary, sentence structure and sentence patters. Besides connecting grammar and vocabulary, songs help students to improve their language skills. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) indicated that songs serve as great materials that we can use in our lesson plans aiming to integrate the four language skills. While planning lessons, designing activities around the chosen song can be very beneficial, such as making students draw the story of the song, writing related words, i.e. creating a word-puzzle for the song.

Another effect of using songs as a pedagogical tool is that they have a great influence on the development of pronunciation and stress of the words. Delibegovic-Dzanic (2016) claimed that songs help learners to practice the language outside the classroom, and thus builds up their confidence. The researcher brings out an important feature to language acquisition by pointing out the term "Questioning Cycle" which is explained as "learners' making out the new language forms and meaning of new words on their own as they need them for the activity", encouraging the learner to connect new items with previous learned ones. Moreover, it is emphasized that there is a positive relationship between music and the use of lyrics together in songs. Learners can develop their vocabulary when lyrics of songs are integrated with the target language (e.g. English).

In brief, it is obvious that using songs aids with the language development of young learners. Songs are found functional since they are rich in vocabulary besides being entertaining. They are based on a common theme or topic which provides the context for vocabulary learning as well. Simply, songs can be used as effective pedagogical tools to promote vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure as well as increasing motivation while teaching English to young learners. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the use of songs on the

vocabulary development of first grade Turkish EFL learners in a private school in Istanbul, Turkey. The study also attempts to reveal the reflections of the EFL teachers about using songs to teach vocabulary in young learners' classrooms. To meet these objectives, the following research questions were addressed:

1.   Does the use of songs have any impact on the vocabulary development of first grade EFL learners?
2.   To what extent does using songs contribute to the vocabulary development of the participating students?
3.   What are the teacher's reflections about using songs to promote vocabulary in first grade English classrooms?

Method

Research design

This research employs a case study (Yin, 2002) as a research design exploring any type of increase and/or decrease in the development of newly learned vocabulary which is predicted to occur within the specific time period the first graders are exposed to educational songs. The number of units to be investigated is small as it solely focuses on vocabulary development of a particular number of vocabulary items included in the songs.

Setting and participants

The participants of this study were 24 Turkish EFL students of a first grade class at a primary k-12 school in İstanbul, Turkey. They were 7-year-old students (12 females and 12 males). They were all Turkish and their proficiency level was beginner. The system used at the school is called 'Together' in which English teachers are in the class having either an active or a passive role. There is one English teacher who has 19 hours with the class per week. Among these 19 hours, 11 of them are English classes whereas the rest 8 hours are spent with the class teachers during which the English teacher has the role of observer. The first graders have five hours of English literacy with a native teacher where they listen to stories and simply retell what they understand. Besides, the teacher who participated in this study was a 25 year- old female who had 2 years of teaching experience. She had her BA in English Language Teaching and was doing her master's in the same program. She was also one of the researchers of this study.

Data collection tools

In this study, the researchers used three songs to design the pre- and post- vocabulary tests. The content of the songs was chosen based on the 1st grade English program. In other words, the subjects of the songs namely, daily routines, food and habits were a part of the exiting first grade language syllabus. The tests were comprised of three parts; A, B and C, each one including one song. In part A, ten sentences about daily routines were included. Students had to circle the picture which depicted the sentence. For part B, the students were asked to circle the picture which showed the healthy/junk food besides knowing the adjectives. In the parts A and B, there were two options to be selected by the students. Finally, in part C, the

students had to synthesize all three songs. In this last part, there were eight pictures. The students were asked to circle the good habits among these eight pictures.

Moreover, picture drawing was used as a second data collection tool in this study. The students were required to draw pictures of what they remember from the tests and the songs. To be more specific, the students had to draw pictures of the vocabulary items included in the tests. Finally, as the third data collection tool, one of the researchers who was also a teacher of the 1st grade class kept a reflective journal sharing her ideas and expressing her feelings about using songs in her classroom.

Data analysis

As previously stated in this study, the aim was to find out whether and to what extent using songs contributed to the vocabulary development of first grade EFL students. The obtained data were measured and analyzed manually by the two researchers. Specifically, the measurement was carried out following three stages. For the first stage, the mean score of the each correct answer and the overall mean score was measured for the three parts of the test namely, daily routines, healthy vs. junk food and good habits. In other words, the researchers subtracted the number of correct answers in post-test from the number of correct answers in the pre-test to find out the increase in the number of correct answers. This was done for every student and for every part separately. Then, inferential statistics were utilized to obtain detailed information about the impact of each song separately and also to find out the overall influence of all three songs on the vocabulary development of the participants.

For the second stage, the percentage of the increase in the correct number of each question was measured to analyze and interpret each question in the test. With this result, the questions on which the song was influential or not was measured. For the calculation, the number of students who answered only the first question of the pre-test correctly was added up, and then, the same was done for the post-test. The majority between the two tests was then calculated with an equivalent percentage. The same calculation was carried out for every item in the test.

For the third stage, the average rise in the number of correct answers for the whole test was calculated. Specifically, the researchers first added up the total number of correct answers from all the parts in the pre- and post-test for each student separately. Then, the variation between the two tests was detected and divided into the total number of students who took the tests, which showed the average rise in the number of correct answers of the whole test.

Furthermore, the picture drawings of the students were analyzed following similar steps. First of all, the number of pictures drawn in the pre-test were calculated, followed by the number of pictures from the post-test which showed the variation between the two tests. With this result, the average rise in the pictures was explored to see the effect of songs on the vocabulary development of the participating students. More specifically, pictures from each test were analyzed separately to examine the most and least frequent pictures drawn by the students.

Finally, the teacher's reflections were analyzed through content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As the first step, the data were analyzed using open coding to determine the main themes and sub-themes about using songs to teach English in a first grade classroom. To

identify the inter-rater reliability degree, two experts from ELT (English Language Teaching) department identified the main themes from the codes. The inter-rater reliability was found to be .86 on the general themes apart from the different verbalizations of similar perceptions that achieved close agreement (McHugh, 2012).

Results

First of all, the findings of the song on the Daily Routines of pre- and post- test were reported in the following table. In this table, the variation between the differences of the two tests; in other words, how much the students improved in terms of their vocabulary after listening to the song was also displayed.

Table 1. The results of the daily routines part of the pre- and post -test

Students	Number of Total Correct Answers		Variation	Variation (%)
	Pre Test TOTAL Correct	Post Test TOTAL Correct		
Student 1	6	10	4	66.67%
Student 2	10	10	0	0
Student 3	10	10	0	0
Student 4	8	10	2	25%
Student 5	6	8	2	33.33%
Student 6	10	10	0	0
Student 7	10	10	0	0
Student 8	10	10	0	0
Student 9	7	9	2	28.57%
Student 10	9	10	1	11.11%
Student 11	10	10	0	0
Student 12	10	10	0	0
Student 13	8	10	2	25%
Student 14	10	10	0	0
Student 15	10	10	0	0
Student 16	10	10	0	0
Student 17	10	10	0	0

Student 18	10	10	0	0
Student 19	4	10	6	150%
Student 20	10	10	0	0
Student 21	10	10	0	0
Student 22	9	9	0	0
TOTAL	197	216	19	9.64%

As it is shown in the table above, the average variation of the two tests of the first part was (0.86), which means that the use of songs had positively affected each student with a number of (0.86) for the first part on "Daily Routines". The results revealed that most of the number of students have increased in terms of the number of correct answers in the post-test when compared to their pre-test results. Furthermore, most of the students had a good background knowledge of most of the vocabulary related to daily routines, therefore, they answered all the vocabulary questions correctly in both tests. So, it seems that most of the students showed no or very little improvement in the post test. Nevertheless, for the ones who did have a very good background knowledge of the vocabulary items, it is obvious that the song had affected their vocabulary development positively.

Furthermore, the same analysis was done for the total number of correct answers the students had in pre-and post- test on the "Healthy vs. Junk Food" part. The variation illustrated the same results as in the first table as shown in the last column on the following table:

Table 2. The results of healthy vs. junk food part of the pre- and post -test

Students	Number of Total Correct Answers		Variation	Variation (%)
	Pre Test TOTAL Correct	Post Test TOTAL Correct		
Student 1	10	10	0	0
Student 2	10	8	-2	-20%
Student 3	10	10	0	0
Student 4	8	8	0	0
Student 5	5	7	2	40%
Student 6	10	10	0	0
Student 7	9	10	1	11.11%
Student 8	10	8	-2	-20%

Student 9	4	9	5	125%
Student 10	5	7	2	40%
Student 11	10	10	0	0
Student 12	6	7	1	16.67%
Student 13	6	6	0	0
Student 14	8	10	2	25%
Student 15	9	10	1	11.11%
Student 16	9	10	1	11.11%
Student 17	7	9	2	28.57%
Student 18	6	6	0	0
Student 19	8	7	-1	-12.50%
Student 20	10	10	0	0
Student 21	9	10	1	11.11%
Student 22	10	10	0	0
TOTAL	179	192	13	7.26%

As presented in the Table 2 above, the average of variation of two tests of the second part was (0.59), which means that the use of songs had also positively affected each student with a number of (0.59) in relation to "Healthy vs. Junk Food". The results showed that the majority of the students had increased at least 1 or 2 correct answers in their post-test when compared to their pre-test results, which displays the positive influence of songs on their vocabulary development as well. However, the minus (-) numbers in the variation column showed that there was a decrease in the number of the correct answers of few students in their posttest. Although there were a few students that the use of songs did not contribute to their vocabulary knowledge related to healthy vs. junk food, songs helped the majority of them to develop their vocabulary knowledge.

Moreover, the next table of this study shows the total number of correct answers the students had in the two tests on "Good Habits". However, this part of the test had a different format from the other two parts as it required the students to select six pictures that depicted a good habit among eight pictures. The gathered findings are displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The results of good habits part of the pre- and post -test

Students	Number of Correct Answers		Variation	Variation (%)
	Pre Test TOTAL Correct	Post Test TOTAL Correct		
Student 1	6	6	0	0
Student 2	6	6	0	0
Student 3	6	6	0	0
Student 4	2	6	4	200
Student 5	5	6	1	20
Student 6	5	5	0	0
Student 7	6	6	0	0
Student 8	6	6	0	0
Student 9	6	5	-1	-16.67%
Student 10	6	6	0	0
Student 11	6	6	0	0
Student 12	5	5	0	0
Student 13	6	6	0	0
Student 14	6	6	0	0
Student 15	6	6	0	0
Student 16	6	6	0	0
Student 17	6	6	0	0
Student 18	6	6	0	0
Student 19	4	4	0	0
Student 20	5	4	-1	-20%
Student 21	5	6	1	20%
Student 22	5	6	1	20%
TOTAL	120	125	5	4.17%

Considering the gathered results, the number which showed the total of correct answers in the pre- and post-test which were 120 and 125 should be ignored as they did not have any matter or meaning due to the format of the test. However, the total number of the variation is important which was found to be 0.22. This finding clearly shows that the use of songs positively affected each student regarding their vocabulary development on "Good Habits" apart from a few students whose score decreased in the post test.

After analyzing the vocabulary scores of the two tests for each part separately, we also examined the three parts as a whole. The table below displays the obtained results.

Table 4. The results of the whole parts of the test (Part A, Part B and Part C)

Students	Number of Total Correct Answers		Variation	Variation (%)
	Pre Test TOTAL Correct	Post Test TOTAL Correct		
Student 1	22	26	4	18.18%
Student 2	26	24	-2	-7.69%
Student 3	26	26	0	0
Student 4	18	24	6	33.33%
Student 5	16	21	5	31.25%
Student 6	25	25	0	0
Student 7	25	26	1	4%
Student 8	26	24	-2	-7.69%
Student 9	17	23	6	35.29%
Student 10	20	23	3	15%
Student 11	26	26	0	0%
Student 12	21	22	1	4.76%
Student 13	20	22	2	10%
Student 14	24	26	2	8.33%
Student 15	25	26	1	4%
Student 16	25	26	1	4%
Student 17	23	25	2	8.70%
Student 18	22	22	0	0%

Student 19	16	21	5	31.25%
Student 20	25	24	-1	-4%
Student 21	24	26	2	8.33%
Student 22	24	25	1	4.17%
TOTAL	496	533	37	7.46%

As it is deduced from the table, the average of variation of the two tests as a whole test was 1.68, which also showed the positive impact of songs on the vocabulary development of the first graders. Besides these findings, in the next table, we reported the total number of students who gave correct answers in the pre- and post- test with regard to each question. However, it should be noted that the last part of the test was designed with a different format from the other parts. In other words, the format of the last part of the test did not make it possible to make calculations and analyze on question base. Therefore, the total number of questions was 20 which was divided as ten from the first part (Daily Routines) and ten from the second part (Healthy vs. Junk Food) of the test.

Table 5. The results of question-based analysis of the whole parts of the test

Questions	TOTAL Number of Sts. to Answer Correct in Pre-Test	TOTAL Number of Sts. to Answer Correct in Post-Test	Variation	Variation (%)
Question 1	18	22	4	22.22%
Question 2	20	22	2	10%
Question 3	19	21	2	10.53%
Question 4	19	22	3	15.79%
Question 5	20	21	1	5%
Question 6	21	22	1	4.76%
Question 7	21	21	0	0%
Question 8	20	22	2	10%
Question 9	18	21	3	16.67%
Question 10	19	21	2	10.53%
Question 11	21	20	-1	-4.76%
Question 12	17	18	1	5.88%
Question 13	17	20	3	17.65%

Question 14	17	19	2	11.76%
Question 15	16	14	-2	-12.50%
Question 16	18	16	-2	-11.11%
Question 17	22	22	0	0%
Question 18	22	22	0	0%
Question 19	17	22	5	29.41%
Question 20	13	19	6	46.15%
TOTAL	750	814	32	9.39 %

In the above table, the variation showed the difference in the number of students who gave correct answer in the two tests. Therefore, numbers with a minus (-) represented the number of students who answered that question correctly in the pre-test, but incorrectly in the post-test. Therefore, it can be said that songs had a negative effect on the gained vocabulary of two of the students. The results also revealed that the questions on which the songs had a relatively positive impact were 1, 19 and 20. Specifically, question 1 was in the first part (Daily Routines) of the test and it was the vocabulary item, "Wake up". The questions 19 and 20 were from the second part (Healthy vs. Junk Food) of the test, and were the items, "Vegetables", and "Fruit". On the other hand, questions on which the songs had a relatively negative impact were 11, 15 and 16. All three questions were in the second part (Daily Routines) of the test and corresponded to the vocabulary items, "healthy food-broccoli", "fat" and "thin". Therefore, the song was most useful for the items, "Fruit", "Vegetables", "Wake up", whereas it was not very useful for the items, "Healthy Food", "Fat" and "Thin".

Results of the picture drawings

Apart from the vocabulary tests, the students were also asked to draw the picture of what they remember from the tests and the songs. The students' pre- and post-drawings were analyzed and explained in the Table 6 below. The pre-test column showed the number of pictures that the students drew before they took the pretest, and the post-test column reported the number of pictures the same students drew after listening to the songs and after they took the post-test. The variation illustrated the difference in the number of drawn pictures from each test and the last column represented the variation with percentage numbers.

Table 6. The results of picture drawings

	The Number of Pictures Depicted in the Pre-Pest	The Number of Pictures Depicted in the Post-Test	Variation	Variation (%)
Student 1	9	7	-2	-22,22%

Student 2	6	5	-1	-16,67%
Student 3	1	1	0	0
Student 4	5	5	0	0
Student 5	4	4	0	0
Student 6	5	6	1	20%
Student 7	6	8	2	33.33%
Student 8	4	3	-1	-25%
Student 9	3	4	1	33.33%
Student 10	6	8	2	33.33%
Student 11	6	7	1	16.67%
Student 12	5	5	0	0
Student 13	5	6	1	20%
Student 14	6	7	1	16.67%
Student 15	7	6	-1	-14.29%
Student 16	5	9	4	80%
Student 17	4	5	1	25%
Student 18	7	8	1	14.29%
Student 19	2	4	2	100%
Student 20	1	1	0	0
Student 21	6	7	1	16.67%
Student 22	7	5	-2	-28.57%
TOTAL	110	121	11	10%

It can be deduced from the table that the average of variation of post and pre-test was 0.50, which means that the use of songs had positively affected each student's vocabulary gain. The numbers with a minus (-) in the variation column showed that these students had drawn less number of pictures in the post-test than in their pre-test.

For more in-depth investigation, the drawings of the students were also analyzed separately. The drawings displayed that the vocabulary items which were drawn most frequently were from the second part of the test which is "Healthy vs. Junk Food"; although

there were also some pictures from the first part, "Daily Routines". However, there was almost no or very little number of students to draw from the last part, "Good Habits".

To be more specific, the vocabulary items which were depicted most frequently were, "Broccoli vs. chocolate bar" from the Healthy vs. Junk Food part with a number of (11) in the pre- and (10) in the post- test. In addition, "Hamburger" with a number of (5) in the pre- and (7) in the post- test, "fries" with a number of (8) in the pre- and (7) in the post- test, "vegetables" with a number of (7) in pre- and (8) in the post- test, and "fruit" with a number of (6) in pre- and (8) in post-test were very frequently drawn by the students. The reason for this frequency can be explained with the practicality of drawing these items compared to the other ones. In other words, these items were easier and more interesting to draw than the other items, and were more vividly depicted in the test. Therefore, these items were the most easily remembered and drawn ones.

Similarly, the pictures in the third part, "Good Habits", were difficult to understand, remember and to draw, as they were complicated pictures with details in them. It can also be deduced that although the items "vegetables" and "fruit" were the ones to have been answered wrong in the pre-test the most, they were the ones that have been corrected in the post-test. These items were the ones to get stuck in the head and to be remembered and drawn. Moreover, it is observed that the pictures drawn in the pre-test were almost the same as the ones drawn in the post test. However, the drawings in the post-test were much vivid and understandable than the drawings in the pretest.

Results of the teacher's reflections

Apart from the vocabulary tests and the students' picture drawings, the teacher's reflections were analyzed through content analysis. To gain credibility, the teacher's reflections of the whole process were analyzed from four different themes such as feeling excited, having difficulty or not having difficulty according to the parts, drawing pictures commonly from Part B, like or dislike the songs. In the following section, the findings on each theme were summarized in detail.

Feeling excited

The first theme that the teacher reflected upon was anxiety. Anxiety can be defined as a feeling of extreme nervousness or tension (Stern, 1951). As Scovel (1978) states, anxiety can have negative effects on language learning. In the study, the pre-test was the first exam the students had ever taken, which affected their performance. However, at the post-test day, they knew the process, so they looked more relaxed. Considering this theme, the teacher said:

> *"They kept on asking me if that's an exam or not, so I told them that it's just for me to see where they stand. I said that I would not score anything, and then they get relieved." December 11, 2017 (Pre-test day)*
> *"They were sitting in 2s, so I made them put their backpacks between them and the person they sit with, again. They did not get excited, since they knew the process." December 18, 2017 (Post-test day)*

Having difficulty or not having difficulty according to the parts

In relation to the second theme, the students did not have difficulty in the pre-test of part A and B, but they had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the words and procedure in part C. They had to choose the correct picture among two pictures. They might not know the meaning of the words, but they knew that they need to choose among two. Students understood what was expected from them, i.e. they did better when they knew what they were supposed to do. However, in part C, they needed to circle six pictures among eight pictures. In addition, based on the teacher's reflections, the concept 'habit' was rather abstract for them, which affected their performance. On the post-test day, students took the same test, but that time, they knew the meaning of habit, and they were able to differentiate good habits from the bad habits, which influenced their performance positively. The following comment supports this finding:

> "Until part C, the words they saw were kind of familiar to them, i.e. they understood what they were supposed to do. But in part C, they could not understand what I meant by 'good habits'. To help them, I gave examples like doing daily exercises, having daily showers etc. They interpreted that part as 'good things' and 'bad things'." December 11, 2017 (Pre-test day)

> "What was different from the pre-test was, the students could understand easily what was expected from them in Part C. It was so nice to see them circling the good habits intentionally." December 18, 2017 (Post-test day)

Drawing pictures commonly from Part B

After taking the test, each student was given a piece of paper. What expected from them was drawing anything that they remembered in the test. On the pre-test day, students were inclined to draw the items in part B, as they did on the post-test day, too. The researcher did not give importance to the quantity of the drawings, but she commented on the reason why they chose to draw that part. On the pre-test day, it seemed to the researcher that it was more practical to draw from part B, i.e. it was easier to draw a fish than a daily routine such as brushing teeth or getting dressed. However, on the post-test day, the researcher linked that inclination to the part B as a choice stemmed from their love for the song, i.e. they drew most from part B because they loved that song. Regarding this point, the teacher said:

> "While walking around the classroom, I saw that many of them were drawing hamburger, fish, French fries, i.e. the items in Part B. I haven't checked and calculated the items yet, so I don't know which part is drawn the most, but it is more practical to draw a fish than a man having a shower." December 11, 2017 (Pre-test day)

> "As I observed, they were drawing from part B, and the song Healthy vs. Junk food. They were drawing a chocolate bar and a broccoli fighting, their favorite scene from the song! I think they really love the song! I am expecting better results ☺." December 18, 2017 (Post-test day)

Liking or disliking the songs

The second aspect led the analysis to the third aspect whether they like or dislike the songs. The research lasted eight days; however, two days were weekend, so the students were not made to listen to the songs. Songs were played at the same time of the day, in the same order. On pre-test day, students liked the second song, but they did not like the first and the third song. Each passing day, their love for the second song increased, they started to like the first song on the third day, but they never liked the third song. The process for the first song:

> *"They did not like the first song (daily routines)." December 11, 2017 (Pre-test day)*

> *"While listening to the first song, they started to repeat the sentences with me and do the morning routines actions such as moving their hands as if they were brushing their teeth etc. It was obvious that they enjoyed the first song." December 14, 2017*

In addition, the students were eager to listen to the song and watch the video of the song. They wanted the teacher to play it again, so it was clear from the reflection that they really enjoyed it. According to the teacher, the rhythm and the illustrations were of great importance, since the rhythm of the second song was faster than the others and the illustrations of the healthy and junk food grasped their attention. The process for the second song:

> *"They loved the second one (healthy vs. junk food). They got the meaning of strong, weak, fat and thin." December 11, 2017*

> *"They had so much fun with the second song. The thing they liked most was the video, since there were illustrations such as types of healthy and junk food which were fighting, muscled broccoli and fat chocolate bar etc. They laughed so much while watching the video and told me "Teacher, agaiiiinnnn!!!" at the end of it." December 12, 2017*

The teacher interprets students' dislike for the third song as an outcome of their inability to understand the meaning of 'habit'. But even after they got the meaning, they did not prefer it to listen. For the third song:

> *"The third song was about good habits, but even after they watched the video, they could not understand what 'habit' meant. I gave examples, but I think it is not clear for now." December 11, 2107*

To sum up, the main themes generated from the teacher's reflections were feeling excited, having difficulty or not having difficulty according to the parts, drawing pictures commonly from Part B, dislike the 1st song, like the 2nd song, had difficulty with the 3rd song. The teacher's reflections were gathered around those topics for six days and as stated above, some of them changed while the other reflections remained the same.

Discussion

For the purposes of this study, the effects of using songs on 1st grade EFL learners' vocabulary development was investigated. The obtained results revealed that songs have positive impact on building vocabulary, vocabulary retrieval as well as learning with fun in young learners' English classrooms.

Firstly, in terms of vocabulary building, the results of the pre- and post- vocabulary tests allowed researchers to qualify songs as 'effective' tools, since an increase was seen in the number of correct answers at the post-test. This finding can be supported by Kampa's study (2016) in which using music is defined as an effective strategy to build language. Also, having a context makes student focus on certain vocabulary items. The songs were chosen for a reason, they were linked to each other, since their themes are the good habits and how they are included in daily routines. Combining themes around a specific context was also found effective by Hart and Risley (1995) who emphasized the importance of using a context for vocabulary development.

The results of 'Drawing Pictures' part can be associated with the findings of the study carried out by Huckin and Coady (1999), which emphasizes the use of songs for vocabulary retention and retrieval. For in-depth investigation, it can be said that students drew the items from part B, especially the fighting Broccoli and the Chocolate Bar, from their favorite song. They remembered the most striking two items from their favorite song. That was not a coincidence, which will be elaborated in the following paragraph. According to Ara (2009), it can be concluded that songs are beneficial sources to prevent students from getting bored. Songs provide students with an entertaining and stress-free environment, which were also addressed in this study, too. As found out in the research studies so far, the use of songs has positively affected each student by increasing the feel of comfort. The part which is drawn the most was part B which was the favorite song of the students.

Furthermore, the teacher's reflections support the previous research studies conducted to investigate the effect, fun element and illustrations while teaching English to 1st grade students. As it was seen in the analysis of the teacher's reflection, the students' vocabulary performance increased after the use of songs in the lesson. Specifically, they enjoyed listening to the songs which affected their performance in the post-test. Apart from this finding, the song that the students liked most was the second one, Healthy vs. Junk food. As Schmitt (2008) states, students learn more when they are entertained. In the journal of the teacher it was seen that the students wanted to listen to the second song again and again. The pictures drawn most were the two characters of the song, Broccoli and the Chocolate Bar. Therefore, the results of the post-test support teacher reflection and literature on this area, since students remembered what they found interesting. Here, the effect of illustrations was obvious, as suggested in Medina's (1990) study on the effects of music upon second language vocabulary acquisition. Compared to the songs without illustrations, she found out that illustration-integrated songs remained longer in students' minds and their retrieval was easier. Also, rhythm makes it easier for young learners to retrieve meaning, i.e. students' preference for the second song, which has a faster-catchy rhythm, which was supported by the same researcher regarding the impact of rhythm upon verbal memory (Medina, 2011).

Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating whether or to what extent the use of songs in the classroom is effective on the vocabulary development of the first grade English learners. To test this issue, three songs were chosen to be played in class for a week as a treatment. The data obtained from the pre/posttests, students' drawings and teacher reflections revealed that the use of songs had positive effect on the vocabulary development of the first grade EFL learners. The results of the pre- and post- test showed that most of the students had the background or previous knowledge of the vocabulary related to the three parts, "Daily routines", "Healthy vs. Junk Food" and "Good Habits". Listening to the songs contributed greatly to the ones who did not have background knowledge of the vocabulary items related to these parts. Among the three parts, vocabulary items such as "Vegetables", "Fruit" were learnt by majority of the students whereas "Fat" and "thin" were the least achieved items. The second collection tool, picture drawing provided similar results. The most frequently drawn picture was "broccoli", "hamburger", "chocolate bar", "vegetables" and "fruit" which are all from the second part of the test, related to the song about "Healthy vs. Junk Food". Finally, the third data collection tool, the teacher's reflections supported the findings of the other two tools; that is students showed tendency to draw pictures more from the second part than the other two parts of the tests and they found it easier to draw pictures from the second part than the other parts of the test. Moreover, students' engagement in such a test for the first time aroused some anxiety which was reflected by the teacher. However, as they got familiar with the procedure in the pre-test, they showed less anxiety and more reliable results in the post-test.

Apart from the results gathered for this research, there are also some limitations to be taken into consideration. First, we carried out this study at only one class of private school students among all the first graders. Next, our study was limited in terms of the content, i.e. the songs were chosen around a specific subject matter. Finally, due to cross-curricular activities, we could not expose the students to the songs on the sixth and the seventh days which might have had an effect on the results on the following day. Therefore, the results of our study should be taken as suggestive rather than descriptive.

Finally, this study offers some suggestions for further research. First, researchers can focus on the differences between the performance of students with different proficiency levels which can provide comparative results. In addition, songs can be used as a pedagogical tool by the classroom teacher as well which can show the similarities and differences of using songs in L1 and L2 contexts. All these findings can provide in-depth understandings about using songs with young learners.

To conclude, the results of this study contributed to the existing literature showing that songs can be used as effective pedagogical tools to teach and learn vocabulary in young learners' classes. Songs are perceived as fun elements both by learners and teachers which help with the vocabulary development in EFL classrooms. Therefore, using songs is one method to teach vocabulary to young learners and provide them with the opportunity to have fun while learning.

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