

The Use of Music as a Way of Formation of Communicative Skills of Students in Teaching English language

Rimma M. Akhmadullina

Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, RUSSIA

Albina R. Abdrafikova

Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, RUSSIA

•Received 04 June 2015 • Revised 10 July 2015 • Accepted 07 September 2015

The relevance of the topic is specified by the necessity of improving the quality of students' training in foreign languages for their mobility in terms of Russia's entry into the Bologna process. This article is intended to support the effective use of instructional techniques of music and musical information with the aim of formation of communicative skills of students – future teachers of the English language. The main methods of research are analysis of theoretical sources and empirical data, test method, qualitative and quantitative analysis. Experimental method aims to determine the influence of music on the formation of communicative skills of students. This article analyzes research on the effects of music on the human functional state, its indirect impact on the processes of thinking, speaking, and learning in general, through physiological and emotional mechanisms of the analogies between music and speech in a variety of ways. The best techniques for using music in classrooms for teaching English are being analyzed for each type of information separately. The use of music is viewed from different points: in terms of impact on the psycho-emotional state of students, their motivation for language learning. The authors also provide guidance on how to consider an educational environment that contributes to the effective use of music in the classroom, including the connection of methods of teaching with assignments in the form of individual and collective research projects in English.

Keywords: emotional condition, communicative skills, methodical techniques, music, musical information, stages of work with musical information.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the study

In the context of new requirements to the quality of education, broadening of

Correspondence: Rimma. Akhmadullina,
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, 2 Tatarstan, building № 33, 420021, Kazan,
RUSSIA
E-mail: akhrimma@mail.ru doi:

international relationships in all social and economical spheres as well as a need to increase the mobility of students and teaching staff, an important task to prepare students in foreign languages has become extremely important. Despite the variety of existing effective ways, in pedagogical science a search for new theoretical and methodological approaches, methods of teaching and the conditions that can contribute to the achievement of that task in accordance with modern scientific knowledge about the functioning of mental processes in learning still continues. One of the new directions of the search can be considered methods of language teaching through music.

Vygotsky (1986) wrote "...Music stimulates us to do something, it influences us in an annoying way. But it influences us in a way that is not directly associated with any particular reaction, movement or act. And this proves that music clarifies, cleanses the psyche and brings back to life huge and suppressed power"....

Theoretical framework and literature review

It is specified that music as an external factor has an effect on the person not directly but indirectly, through the internal factors, among them one of the most important is the psycho-physiological and emotional state of the student. Exactly this mechanism of its impact on the efficiency of the learning process most often falls into the field of view of researchers.

Despite contradictory scientific data in the field of medicine, physiology and psychology on the effects of music on the human functional state (its ability to cause psychological and physiological changes in the sensory, autonomic, motor and intellectual spheres of man) it has been proved that in comparison to other didactic means of music has a number of advantages because it creates a comfortable background, raises emotional responses, activates the neuro-mental activities of students, has a beneficial effect on physiological functions and emotional state of the body (Glazunova, Zubareva, Arzumanov, 2011). While listening to music a special atmosphere is created, generating a variety of emotional states (i.e. emotiogenic), which, in turn, activates a variety of associations (visual, auditory, tactile, smelling), reactions (motor-movements, pantomime) (Vershina, 1996).

Considering music as a didactic tool, activating cognitive processes indirectly, through emotional state, it should be noted that the research of emotional modulation of cognitive processes, in particular the processes of thought and speech have been investigated thoroughly and a lot of works in various fields of science are devoted to it.

Currently, most psychologists who study the intellectual activities recognize the role of emotions in thinking. It is believed that emotions do not just affect the thinking, but are a required component, or that the majority of human emotions are intellectually dependent. A link between emotions and thinking and other cognitive processes has been established, moreover, the influence of positive emotional state on the effectiveness of the learning process has been proved as well.

Thus, if it's too early to speak about the direct effects of music on the thinking processes, there can be seen the analogy between music and speech in a number of studies in various aspects.

The comparison of music and speech perception leads to the conclusion that speech and music have a rhythmic initiation: music is associated subconsciously with the communicative experiences of the individual, arouses his speech associations, forms a focus on the perception of music and speech as a single communicative complex with a rhythmic basis (Andreyeva, 2010).

Considering music as a linguistic phenomenon scientists posited that every language has its own music, own music foundation (pace, dynamics, metrorhythm, pitch and form). As well each person lives his own music of life (Murphey, 1992).

Toropova (2014) posited that music as a linguistic phenomenon has at its disposal its own beep codes: intonation characters, signs, language codes, syntax and grammar. The use of music in language teaching has been thoroughly investigated by different scientists who worked out and implemented various technologies: a special technology of developing speech skills in teaching English to 5-8 years children on musical-rhythmic basis (Nevezhina, 2000); theoretical foundations of the musical and poetic folklore in teaching content of foreign language to form socio-cultural competence (Romanovskaya, 2005); a methodology for acquiring monological skills during foreign language class for teenage students using different genres of youth music (Andreeva, 2010), etc.

The aim of our research work is the study of effective teaching methods of applying music and musical information for the formation of the students' communicative skills in learning a foreign language. Identifying stages of their use during English language classes with pre-service teachers and setting objectives at each stage of learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

The methodological basis of our work was the linguistic concept of emotions, which deals with emotions in close association with cognitive processes, and their relationship is as follows: cognition raises emotions because it is emotiogenic and emotions cause cognition because they interfere with all levels of cognitive processes (Nashoeva, 2011).

According to Glazunova (2004) music is a means of psycho-emotional adjustment of the teacher. She justifies the principles of psycho-emotional adjustment of teachers with the help of music: the principle of scientific character, access, integration, orientation of musical influence, ethno-cultural conformity, personification, matching of psycho-emotional state of the listener and the content of a piece of music; the principle of sufficiency, catharsis.

Methods and techniques

In our study, we consider the notion of "music" in the context of a course of English language teaching as:

1. Instrumental performance of various musical works;
2. Song (a capella, solo and choral);
3. Video clips from recordings of songs;
4. Verbal information from the world of the music industry, which includes articles, book reviews, interviews, music, advertising, television and radio programmes of the music world;
5. Non-verbal information from the world of the music industry: photography music ensembles, musicians, composers; musical instruments, the interiors of modern video studios and concert halls (Solovova, 2008).

The experiment was carried out with junior students aged 20-22 at the Department of Russian and foreign philology at Kazan Federal University. The number of students included 86 people. The experiment had 4 stages.

At the first pre-stage (January-March 2015) participated 40 students. The purpose of this stage was the selection of music and musical information, as well as teaching methods at the English classes on the assumption of its effectiveness on the emotional state of students. We applied a method "Self-assessment of emotional

states " by A. Uessmana D. Riksa (Karelin, 2007). At the last stages of the experiment (September-December 2015), the other students of the selected 86 people were involved. At the second stage (ascertainment) students of the experimental group (A) in an amount of 22 people and a control group (B) - 24 people took part. A comparative analysis of formation of communicative skills of students was carried out in the field of the English language according to the following criteria: the formation of the basicspeech and language skills; the development of linguistic memory; the development of expressive reading skills; develop a sense of rhythm, intonation; the development of creative skills in writing; the development of humanitarian and philological knowledge and skills; development of skills of interpretation of text. Thus results in two groups were similar. The third stage of the experiment (formation) consisted in the use of the selected music and musical information in the experimental group (A), as well as methodological techniques for the purpose of the formation of the communicative skills in English language proficiency. Teaching in the control group (B) took place due to the traditional methods without the use of the mentioned above methods.

To select the best techniques to work with music in the classroom, we are considering the following options to work with every type of musical information.

1. Instrumental music lessons in English were used to create a particular mood; stress relief; the emotional switch from one activity to another; to add the national tints in the situation of communication, thereby leveraging imagination, emotions, promoting their verbal expression, widening the range of country and socio-cultural knowledge. For our study we have chosen classical music such as:

- Mozart. Symphony No. 25;
- Beethoven. The Fifth Symphony, the Pathétique Sonata;
- Rachmaninoff. 2 Concerto;
- Strauss. Waltzes.
- Bach. Chorales etc.

As well as music that obviously has a lot of information and sets a specific plot, for example:

- Mussorgsky. "Dawn on the Moscow river"- Overture to Hovanschina;
- Shostakovich. The seventh (the Leningrad) Symphony;
- Prokofiev. The musical Suite "Peter and the Wolf";
- Tchaikovsky/C. Saint-Saëns/Debussy. Music series "Four Seasons".

For the teacher, at this point, it is important to choose musical passages that are capable of forming stable associations:

- with the era;
- with a geographic region/country;
- with the person or group of people.

If students did not have certain knowledge and experience in this field, we anticipated the job of individual and collective research projects in a certain language, which in turn motivated them, and the process of associative learning was more effective (Abdrafikova, Akhmadullina, Singatullova 2014).

2. The following component of musical culture, that we used, is the song material. Therefore, in terms of learning a foreign language, song system has many similarities with system of work with the text (Solovova, 2008). The use of the song material stimulates motivation and promotes better absorption of linguistic material in connection with the operation of the mechanisms of involuntary memory, which increase the volume and strength of memorized material. The song, on the one hand, is an example of foreign language speech sound, and on the other a carrier of cultural information.

In our study when working on a song we have allocated two stages.

1. the use of the words without music, prior listening to the song.
2. work with the song during and after listening.

In the first phase of the methodical task of teachers was determined through:

- development of a strategy for reading and listening comprehension, language skills (lexical, phonetic, grammatical). To achieve this objective the following exercises have been suggested: the reconstruction of the text prior to the listening to a song, pick a rhyme and finish line, change text, replacing the tense of verbs; gender or the number of pronouns, etc.

- development of creative skills in writing. At this stage the following were used: dictations prior to the listening of the song, tasks to record songs under the dictation, the conclusion of the verse to rhyme or a white verse according to the meaning.

The second phase, had the following objectives:

- the formation of the basic speech and language skills during teaching a foreign language. The following types of tasks were suggested: rhythmically speak jazz rhymes to the music, to listen to the music and mime the movement (If you are happy and you know it);

- development of linguistic memory: reconstruction of the text during or after playback of a song, make a note in the list of words and expressions that have been used without changes;

- the development of expressive reading skills: competition for the best reading of the text of the song;

- develop a sense of rhythm, intonation: sing a song together with the recording, using the phonogram but using text, but alone; on their own, without relying on text;

- development of creative skills in writing: writing descriptions-illustrations to the text of the song, describe what photographs or illustrations for a video you would have included in the video to the song, retell the main content of the songs in your own words, develop the idea for the song in a small essay/short story/report, use the song with the amended text for the advertising of any product or service;

- the development of humanitarian and philological knowledge and skills: connect/find songs similar in idea/purpose/period of creation with art films/works of fiction (for example: theme/idea "it sunny where"/"Materialism".-The Great Gatsby (by Scott Fitzgerald)-Madonna's Material Girl and Marilyn Monroe's Diamonds are a girl's Best Friends, etc.);

- development of skills of interpretation of text: a discursive analysis of songs (based on 5-10 for one genre or one author), the analysis of the poetic features of the text. The analysis of the poetic features of the text, the definition of the size and structure of poetic rhyme (AAA, BBB, CCC or AWAWA CAPE, AVAVSV), finding the examples of alliteration, metaphors, similes, impersonation, etc., providing unexpected rhythmical passages. The tasks were suggested for advanced level learners.

3. Video clips with the recorded songs. Unlike audio or printed text, which, of course, can be highly informative, educational and developmental value, videotext has the advantage of combining various aspects of verbal interaction. Visual line allows you to better understand and strengthen both factual information and purely linguistic features of speech in context (Barmenkova, 2010).

Video resources provide almost unlimited possibilities for analysis based on comparison and matching cultural realities and the characteristics of human behaviour in various situations in intercultural communication. It is also clear that watching the video may have a strong emotional impact on students, and provide an incentive for the creation of an additional motivation for further training and search and creative activity.

When using video our attention focuses on such techniques as:

- use of video without sound, with the task of relating video with the text of the songs or the prediction of subjects and content/sound character of one song, without giving out its words;
- use of pauses, predicting subsequent text or display a description of the plot/character sequence;
- use quick/rewind.

In general, the use of video helps to fulfill the lack of foreign language environment. It broadens and educates the students' aesthetic taste.

4. Finally, the music is verbal and non-verbal information from the world of the music industry. Let's clarify these concepts. Verbal information includes: web, interviews with people from the world of music and show business, announcements about events in the world of music, advertising, concerts and performances, etc. Non-verbal information means: caricatures of famous musicians, pictures of interiors of modern video studios and concert halls, photographs, musical ensembles, musicians, composers, etc.

At this stage, the following has been suggested:

- remember/learn how to correctly pronounce the names when matching images of musicians with their names;
- extension of lexical stock and information from the field of music: grouping words/names, categories, selection of synthesis concept, checked out from the text of the keyword associated with the development of music in history;
- receptive speech skill development within the framework of the subject of communication: matching of headings and text, the selection of the desired headings to the text of the proposed restoration of the text in logical order, answer the questions to the text;
- development of productive spoken skills within this theme of communication: restoration of the interview, using only questions/answers, only translation of the interview, drafting abstracts of presentations on the basis of the text description/comparison/determination of cause-effect relationships, holding debates on the topic, survey/sociological study on the musical preferences of youth, etc.

At the fourth (control) stage of the experiment the assessment of the formation of the communicative skills in the experimental (A) and control (B) groups due to the above criteria took place.

RESULTS

Analysis of the results showed that performance improved in both groups, but they have somewhat exceeded in experimental group.

As a result of formation of the communicative skills of students was successful accomplishing of tasks to "4" and "5" points. Diagram 1 shows the criteria and the number of students of experimental and control groups who coped with the tasks successfully.

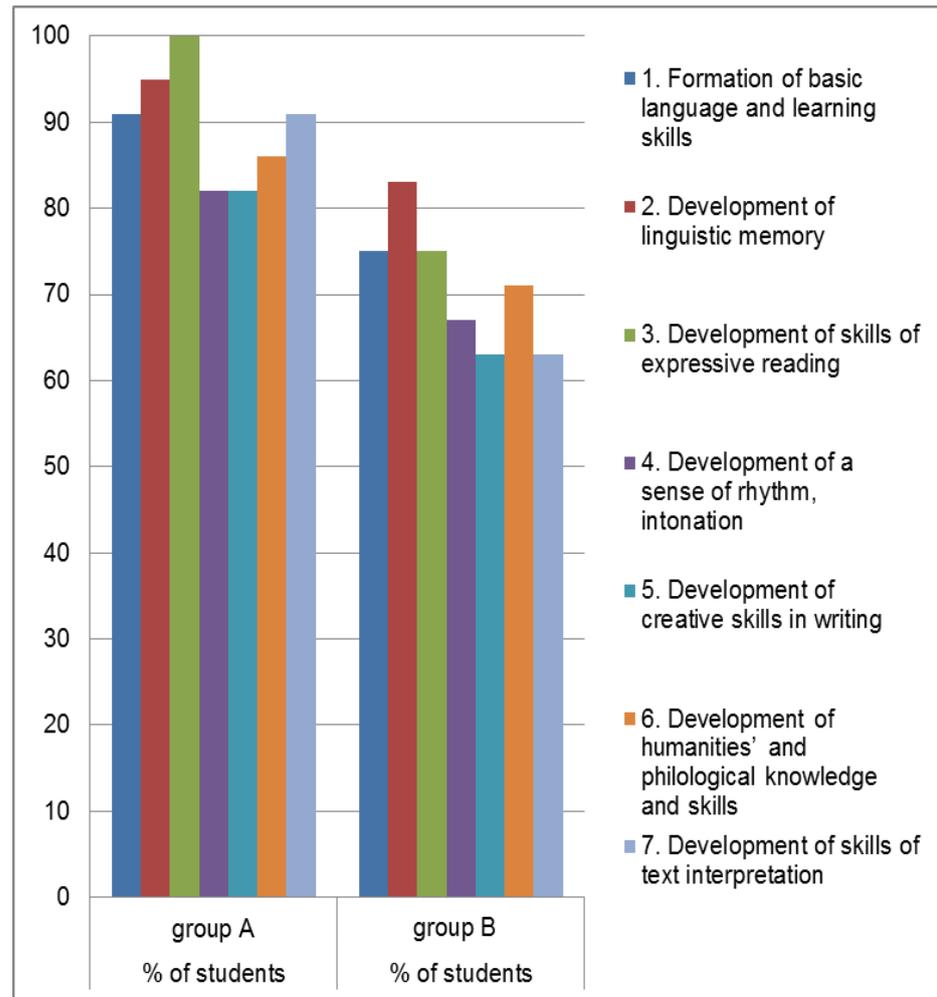


Diagram 1The Results of Communicative Skills Formation in Experimental (A) and Control (B) Groups.

DISCUSSION

On the one hand, there are scientific data about the effects of music on the functional condition of the person; on the other hand the image of the direct effect of music on the processes of thinking and learning in general is ambiguous. At the same time, numerous works confirmed the possibility of the effective use of music when learning a foreign language by taking into account psychophysiological and emotional state of students, as well as the appropriate use of teaching methods in lesson planning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that we have identified methodological techniques of the use of music and musical information, which create favorable psychological climate, reduce the psychological tension, activate language activities, increase the emotional tone, support the motivation to study a foreign language.

Music or songs while listened by the entire group simultaneously, promote team-building as well as a more complete disclosure of the creative abilities of each.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research materials and the obtained results can be used by University faculty to perform practical trainings in teaching a foreign language. The identified methodical techniques with the help of music can improve the knowledge of English.

REFERENCES

- Abdrafikova, A. R., Akhmadullina R. M., Singatullova A. A. (2014). The Implementation of Project and Research Activities in Working with Gifted Children in Terms of School-University Network Cooperation (Regional Aspect). *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 7, No 12, 542-544. DOI: 10.5539/elt.v7n12p54.
- Andreyeva, I. A. (2010). Using different genres of youth music in foreign language teaching monologic speech adolescent students: a monograph. Publisher: Armavir: ASPU, 121.
- Barmenkova, O. I. (2010). Video lessons in learning a foreign language at school. *Foreign Languages at School*, 3, 12-15.
- Glazunova, L.I., Zubareva L. A., Arzumanov T.R. (2011). Experimental substantiation of using music in the educational process of the University. *Integration of education*, 4, 30-35.
- Glazunova, L. I. (2004). Music as a means of psycho-emotional adjustment of the teacher. *Integration of education*, 1, 143-147.
- Karelin, A. (2007). Great Encyclopedia of psychological tests. Moscow: Eksmo, 416.
- Murphey, T. (1992). Music and Song. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 151.
- Nashkhoeva, M. R. (2011). Linguistic concept of emotionality emotions and text. *Herald of the South Ural State University*, 1(218), 95-98.
- Nevezhina, I.I. (2000). Foreign Language Teaching of 5-8 years children to music and rhythm based on a material of English language. Retrieved from <http://www.dissercat.com/content/obuchenie-inostrannomu-yazyku-detei-5-8-let-na-muzykalno-ritmicheskoi-osnove-na-materiale-an>.
- Romanovskaya, O. E. (2005). Teaching the methodology of working with musical and poetic folklore as a means to improve the methodical competence of future teachers of a foreign language: On a material of the British folk songs. Retrieved from <http://www.dissercat.com/content/obuchenie-metodike-raboty-s-muzykalno-poeticheskimi-folklorom-kak-sredstvo-povysheniya-metodi>.
- Solovova, E. N. (2008). Methods of foreign language teaching (advanced stage). Moscow: Astrel, 121.
- Toropova, A. V. (2014). Music and language codes: The psychogenetic aspect, *Theory and practice of community development*, 5, 45-48.
- Vershinina, G. B. (1996). Emotional and verbal development of students through the use of music in the system work on communication skills. Retrieved from <http://www.dissercat.com/content/emotsionalno-rechevoe-razvitie-uchashchikhsya-na-osnove-ispolzovaniya-muzyki-v-sisteme-rabot>.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). The psychology of art. Moscow: Art, 319-320.