

## Enhancing Students' Oral Proficiency through the Integration of Songs: Insights from Arab Teachers in Northern Israel

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### Abstract

This study explores the impact of integrating songs into language instruction to improve students' oral proficiency. The study focuses on understanding how the teaching of songs contributes to students' oral skills, further enhancing their overall linguistic abilities. It employs qualitative methods and design, including in-depth interviews with fifteen Arab teachers who work in a small town in northern Israel. Seven overarching themes emerged from the findings, all of which highlight the benefits of teaching and learning songs as a tool for enhancing oral proficiency, especially when tailored to students' particular skill levels. While the study presents positive outcomes of song teaching, it acknowledges its limitations, including the small, localized participant sample and reliance on subjective experiences. Future research is encouraged to broaden the sample size and include participants from diverse geographical locations for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

**Keywords:** Oral Proficiency; Language Instruction; Songs in Education; Arab Teachers; Qualitative Research.

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## **Introduction:**

English language instruction is a mandatory component of the curriculum in all schools across Israel, including Arab schools. Within this framework, English teachers continually seek novel and innovative approaches to enhance the efficacy of language skill development, particularly in areas such as speaking skills. The imperative for such efforts arises from the recognition that traditional teaching methods may not always adequately address the enhancement of speaking skills, which are crucial for the ongoing progress and future success of students.

The significance of English as an international language and a practical tool in various domains, including the high-tech industry, underscores the Ministry of Education's heightened focus on bolstering students' speaking proficiency, aligning with the broader objective of nurturing well-rounded language skills.

This study aims to scrutinize the effectiveness of employing songs as a distinctive and revitalizing method to enhance students' speaking abilities. In the current era of pervasive internet access, students are consistently exposed to a diverse array of English songs through social networks and other communication channels. Consequently, exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the use of this tool and its impact on improving students' speaking abilities becomes an intriguing and relevant avenue of investigation.

Moreover, this study offers a unique contribution to the field of English language education by focusing specifically on the perceptions of Arab English teachers regarding the integration of songs in their teaching practices. Unlike previous research, which may have predominantly examined this topic from a Western perspective or within different cultural contexts, this study delves into the experiences and perspectives of teachers working in an Arab village in northern Israel. By centering the voices of these teachers, the study provides

insights that are culturally relevant and contextually situated, shedding light on the nuanced dynamics of language teaching in an Arab community. Additionally, the qualitative approach employed in this research allows for a deep exploration of teachers' subjective experiences, offering rich and detailed insights that complement existing literature in the field. Therefore, this study fills a gap in the literature by offering a culturally sensitive examination of the use of songs in English language education, making it a valuable addition to the academic discourse and worthy of publication.

## **Literature Review:**

### **Students' Oral Skills**

In its essence, "speaking skill is a productive skill that requires students/learners to produce words or language or to express ideas orally. It is used to communicate between one another by speech or saying" (Socheath, 2018). Learning a new language entails the practice and mastery of four key skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Each skill demands comprehensive learning until proficiency is attained, with each contributing uniquely to the language acquisition process. Researchers generally concur that the mastery of speaking skills signifies a broader competence in the acquired language. This is because oral skills encompass the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language (Gayramara & Candulas 2024)

Oral skills encompass various facets, including the ability to articulate thoughts clearly and concisely, engage in active and attentive listening, and employ appropriate language and nonverbal communication in diverse social and professional contexts. Their significance extends across educational, professional, and personal realms, as the cultivation of strong oral skills facilitates effective communication and the establishment of robust relationships

(Arrobaa & Acosta, 2021). Rahman (2010) underscores that oral communication is a dynamic and interactive process involving individuals who strive to convey facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and values. It is an active and conscious effort, requiring considerable exertion to articulate thoughts into comprehensible words and expressions (Rahman, 2010). In essence, the speaking skill in a new language stands out as one of the most vital and intricate components of the language acquisition process, implying that mastery of this skill equates to a broader language proficiency (Arrobaa & Acosta, 2021).

Mousena (2020) claimed that oral language and communication are fundamental for developing social and educational relationships and for comprehending the world. Functionally, ontogenetically, and phylogenetically, oral language comes before written symbolic language. In a school setting, oral language gains symbolic importance through the mediation of educational content and the instructional methods used by teachers.

### **Strategies for Enhancing English Oral Skills**

Numerous researchers concur that a spectrum of strategies exists for improving speaking skills, both in general and specifically within the realm of the English language. The effectiveness of these strategies may vary based on geographical locations, educational contexts, and individual teaching approaches, making it challenging to pinpoint a singular, universally applicable method (Rahman, 2010). Considering that English is often treated as a second or foreign language, strategies for enhancing speaking skills can be shaped by the prevailing perception of the language within a given country or locality. Moreover, the age and demographic characteristics of students further influence the appropriateness of these strategies, as what proves effective for one population may not necessarily yield similar results for another (Yang, 2014).

A notable investigation by Khan, Khan, & Samad (2021) focused on 10th graders in a public school in the Bannu district of Pakistan. The study aimed to identify effective strategies, particularly emphasizing the approach of conducting classes almost exclusively in English. This immersive method required students to respond and engage solely in English, incorporating activities such as unscripted role-plays, problem-solving/decision-making exercises, discussions and debates, group projects, as well as warm-ups and fillers. The results indicated a significant difference between the control group and the research group, with the latter exhibiting substantial progress in acquiring English speaking skills.

Extending this line of inquiry, another study from Pakistan targeted sixth graders in an elementary public school with challenging socio-economic backgrounds. Alam & Uddin (2013) sought to improve the learning environment and employed strategies such as listening exercises, peer and self-error corrections, short pauses, and speech fillers. The outcomes demonstrated positive signs of improvement over consecutive sessions, highlighting the potential impact of targeted strategies in diverse educational settings.

Socheath (2018) underscores the importance of tailoring teaching strategies to the specific levels and characteristics of students, particularly addressing challenges in ESL/EFL classes. Some students may be hesitant to express themselves in English due to fear of making mistakes or facing ridicule from peers. Challenges also include students reverting to their native language during group activities and others grappling with limited vocabulary and grammatical skills. Addressing these challenges, Socheath emphasizes the need for comprehensive language development, covering vocabulary, parts of speech, expression, sentence structures, tenses, and other skills encompassing listening, writing, and reading.

Furthermore, agreed-upon strategies involve immersive language exposure, such as listening to English-speaking radio channels, watching movies, reading books, engaging in conversations with native English speakers, watching lectures, practicing situational English scenarios alone, playing video games in English, and participating in reading aloud exercises (Yang, 2014). These activities aim to create a holistic language learning experience, fostering not only speaking skills but also enhancing other language dimensions.

### **Songs in Education: A Multifaceted Approach**

Throughout the annals of human history, music and songs have woven themselves seamlessly into the fabric of cultural, social, religious, and educational events (Pardede, 2018). The intrinsic connection between music and human cognition is underscored by studies that posit music as one of the earliest intelligences to emerge in the brain. Notably, research suggests that young children are inherently predisposed to a musical sense, demonstrating a natural inclination to hum melodies, rhyme, sing songs, and move to rhythms from an early age (Sihvola & Gafor, 2020: p. 4).

Arguably, one of the most pervasive avenues through which people worldwide encounter the English language is through songs and music. Alipour et al. (2012) assert that songs originating from English-speaking countries like the United States, England, and Australia permeate nearly every household globally. Consequently, individuals find themselves exposed to the English language through the captivating melodies and lyrical beauty of the songs they enjoy. Recognizing this widespread exposure, educational systems worldwide have increasingly embraced the integration of songs in English as a crucial component of the curriculum, particularly in classes where the language is studied as a foreign (EFL) or second language (ESL). The overarching aim is to introduce an additional dimension that not only enhances students' exposure to

the language but also facilitates a non-traditional and engaging mode of learning simultaneously (Vishnevskaja & Zhou, 2019).

In recent years, the educational landscape has witnessed a paradigm shift, acknowledging the myriad benefits of incorporating songs into language learning. Beyond their linguistic value, songs offer a multisensory experience, captivating learners' attention through auditory and rhythmic elements (. The melodic nature of songs facilitates a more immersive and memorable learning environment, aiding in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation improvement, and overall language comprehension (Rurintulus& Wuntu, 2023 & Assadi & 2024)

Moreover, songs serve as cultural ambassadors, offering insights into the nuances of English as it is naturally spoken and expressing diverse cultural perspectives. This cultural richness embedded in songs not only broadens students' linguistic proficiency but also nurtures a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which the language is embedded.

As educators increasingly recognize the pedagogical potential of songs, the integration of this musical dimension into language classes has evolved from a mere supplement to a fundamental and intentional teaching strategy. In doing so, educators strive to harness the inherent musicality that captivates learners, creating a harmonious synergy between language acquisition and the universal language of music. The incorporation of songs in education, therefore, transcends being a mere tool; it evolves into a dynamic and transformative teaching method that aligns with learners' natural tendencies, cultivating a love for language that persists beyond the classroom (Vishnevskaja & Zhou, 2019).

## **Pros and Cons of Incorporating Songs**

The integration of songs into the learning process of English as a foreign or second language has garnered positive acclaim from researchers, who highlight numerous advantages associated with this pedagogical approach (Alipour et al., 2012). Previous research suggests a direct correlation between listening to music and songs and improvements in memory, spatial learning, average IQ, knowledge of foreign cultures and societies, teamwork, and overall classroom dynamics (Pardede, 2018).

Integrating songs into English language learning offers numerous advantages. Researchers have noted positive outcomes associated with this pedagogical approach, including improvements in memory, spatial learning, and overall classroom dynamics (Alipour et al., 2012). Listening to music and songs has been linked to enhancements in average IQ, knowledge of foreign cultures and societies, and the development of teamwork skills (Pardede, 2018).

However, despite these benefits, there are some potential drawbacks to consider. Some song lyrics may contain complexity and ambiguity, making them challenging for learners to fully grasp without additional explanation. Additionally, songs often use a limited vocabulary and simplified grammar, which may not adequately prepare learners for more formal language contexts. Time constraints and concerns about authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and overreliance on songs as a teaching tool also warrant careful consideration (Rahmat, N. H., & Muhamad, N., 2020).

## **Emotional and Cognitive Benefits**

Vishnevskaja & Zhou (2019) underscore emotional and cognitive benefits stemming from the incorporation of songs into English teaching. Emotional advantages include an enhanced classroom atmosphere, activated emotions and



senses, and an overall positive shift in students' attitudes toward the language. On a cognitive level, integrating songs into English teaching is associated with improved learning abilities, especially in listening, reading, and writing (Hassani & Hadizadeh, 2021).

### **Enhanced Student-Teacher Relationship**

Studies worldwide, particularly among young students in primary schools, reveal a positive relationship between integrating songs in English teaching and improvements in emotional and cognitive abilities. Notably, one of the significant benefits observed is the enhancement of the relationship between students and teachers, both emotionally and professionally. Through the medium of songs, teachers establish a closer connection with students, fostering more effective learning experiences. Additionally, the introduction of songs has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety levels among students learning English as a foreign language (Hassani & Hadizadeh, 2021).

### **Improvement in Oral Skills:**

The contribution of teaching songs to the improvement of students' oral skills is a focal point of interest. Research indicates an indirect yet substantial link between learning through songs and advancements in language skills, particularly oral skills (Chan et al., 1998; Tala & Gaab, 2006: in Pardede, 2018). A study conducted in Medellin, Colombia, among first-grade students demonstrated that learning English through songs positively influenced vocabulary acquisition and correct pronunciation. Exposure to a variety of English songs with different themes and vocabulary contributed to improved vocabulary, spelling, and future reading abilities over successive sessions (Mira, 2018).

## **Early Exposure in Kindergartens**

Research in Iran, specifically in Kerman, suggests the merit of introducing songs in English to improve speaking skills as early as age 5-6 in compulsory kindergartens. A study involving 50 children divided into control and research groups demonstrated that the research group, which learned through songs, showed a significantly more pronounced improvement in pronunciation and speaking abilities compared to the control group. Post-tests indicated enhanced confidence, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension among children exposed to English through songs (Hassani & Hadizadeh, 2021).

## **Motivation and Participation**

In a meta-analysis study, it was found that songs increase students' motivation to participate in class discussions and express their opinions in English without fear, even if they make mistakes in vocabulary or sentence structure (Aguirre et al., 2016). Another study among students aged 10 to 15 in a school in Colombia further supported these findings. The research class, which learned with the help of songs and music, demonstrated significant improvement in language skills compared to the class that learned through standard methods (Niño, 2009; in Sihvola & Gafor, 2020).

## **Conclusion and Future Questions**

In conclusion, the literature review underscores the manifold advantages of incorporating songs into English language teaching. The evidence points towards improved emotional and cognitive abilities, enhanced student-teacher relationships, and notable advancements in oral skills among students exposed to English through songs. As this review serves as a foundation for the upcoming research, the main question revolves around how teaching songs contributes to the improvement of students' oral skills. Secondary questions delve into the

suitability of song types, specific components of oral skills that songs can enhance, optimal timing for incorporating songs in lessons, and potential variations in the effectiveness of song-based exercises across different age groups. The anticipated findings are expected to align with the existing body of research, affirming the widespread benefits reported by educators integrating songs into their English language teaching methodologies.

## **Methodology: Unveiling the Depths of Teacher Perceptions**

### **Research Approach**

The chosen research method adopts a qualitative, semi-structured in-depth interview approach, aligning with the principles of qualitative investigation. This method offers a unique opportunity for researchers to delve into the internal and profound processes of a social phenomenon, yielding nuanced and comprehensive findings (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). The qualitative approach allows for a detailed exploration of the experiences and subjective perceptions of teachers, providing a rich tapestry of insights.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Investigation**

The qualitative approach is strategically employed to facilitate a thorough examination of teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the integration of songs during English lessons. Unlike quantitative methods that may offer statistical trends, the qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics at play. By focusing on the subjective experiences of teachers, this method aims to unravel the nuanced impact of using songs as a tool for enhancing students' abilities and speaking skills.

## **Objectivity through Subjectivity**

The intention is not to eliminate subjectivity but to harness it as a valuable source of information. Through in-depth interviews, the research seeks to extract authentic and personal narratives from teachers, allowing for a holistic representation of their viewpoints. While quantitative methods may quantify responses, the qualitative approach prioritizes the depth and richness of individual experiences, providing a more textured understanding of the researched phenomenon.

## **Exploring the Teacher's Lens**

The research aims to transcend the surface by tapping into the subjective lens through which teachers perceive the use of songs in English language education. It recognizes that teachers are not only conveyors of information but also active participants in shaping the learning environment. By exploring their perspectives, the study aspires to uncover the subtle nuances, challenges, and successes associated with integrating songs as a pedagogical tool.

## **Analyzing Teacher Experiences**

The qualitative investigation will involve a careful analysis of the interview data, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and unique insights. Thematic analysis will be employed to categorize and interpret the information, allowing for a systematic exploration of the multifaceted aspects of teachers' experiences. This analytical process will be guided by the overarching research question: How does teaching songs contribute to the improvement of students' oral skills?

## **Ethical Considerations**

The research will adhere to ethical standards, ensuring informed consent from participating teachers. Confidentiality and anonymity will be prioritized to

protect the identity and privacy of the participants. Ethical approval will be sought from relevant authorities to conduct the research in an ethically responsible manner.

### **Limitations of the Qualitative Approach**

While the qualitative approach provides depth and insight, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The findings may not be generalizable to a broader population due to the small sample size and the context-specific nature of qualitative research. However, the emphasis lies in the richness of insights rather than statistical representativeness.

### **Conclusion**

In adopting a qualitative, in-depth interview approach, this research aspires to uncover the intricate layers of teachers' perceptions regarding the use of songs in English language education. By embracing subjectivity, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the impact, challenges, and potential benefits associated with integrating songs as a pedagogical tool. Through rigorous analysis, the research endeavors to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on innovative language teaching methodologies.

### **Research Population**

Fifteen English teachers, comprising both males and females, were selected as participants for the study from Sha'ab School, an Arab village situated in the northern region of Israel. This diverse group of teachers brings a range of qualifications and experiences in English education to the study, contributing valuable perspectives from their roles in elementary and middle schools within the same community. The selection process was meticulous to ensure a representative and varied sample. The demographic details of the final sample are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Participants of the Study**

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Experience	School
Sahir	Male	34	BA in English L&L	8 years	Elementary
Jasmine	Female	33	BA in English L&L	10 years	Elementary
Samir	Male	31	MA English Literature	7 years	Junior High
<b>Amjad</b>	Male	29	BA English	5 years	Junior High
Nadeen	Female	42	BA + MA in English Education	16 years	Junior High
Lara	Female	38	MA in English Linguistics	12 years	Elementary
Amjad	Male	30	BA + MA in English Education		
Tariq	Male	36			
Aisha	Female	29	BA in TESOL	6 years	Junior High
Kareem	Male	40	PhD in Applied Linguistics	18 years	Junior High
Leila	Female	35	MA in TESOL	11 years	Elementary
Rami	Male	37	BA in English L&L	14 years	Junior High
Farida	Female	39	BA + MA in English Education	15 years	Elementary
Bilal	Male	32	MA in TESOL	8 years	Junior High
Dina	Female	28	BA in English Literature	4 years	Elementary
Khaled	Male	45	MA in Applied Linguistics	20 years	Junior High

This expanded and diversified participant pool aims to capture a more comprehensive range of experiences and insights related to the research question.

### **Research Tool: In-Depth Structured Interview**

In this research, the primary investigative tool is an in-depth-structured interview carefully designed to extract comprehensive insights from English teachers. The goal is to elicit detailed and expansive answers within the given time constraints. Originally planned as a semi-structured interview, the adjustment to a pre-prepared set of questions was made to accommodate the teachers' limited availability. Despite this adaptation, the questions remain open-ended, allowing participants to express opinions and share subjective experiences and perceptions, aligning with the principles of qualitative research.

### **Example Interview Questions:**

1. What are your general observations about your students' oral skills?
2. In what ways do you actively contribute to enhancing your students' oral skills?
3. Do you believe that the methods and tools you introduce in class effectively aid in the improvement of your students' oral skills? How so?
4. Regarding the use of songs to enhance oral skills, do you hold the belief that songs can contribute to this improvement? If yes, in what ways?
5. Reflecting on your experience as a teacher who incorporates songs to enhance oral skills, can you share insights into the effectiveness of this approach?
6. Considering your students' perspective, how do they perceive the inclusion of songs in the classroom for improving oral skills?
7. What has been your personal journey as an educator using songs to enhance oral proficiency in your students?

8. Drawing from both your experience and students' feedback, what recommendations would you offer to fellow English teachers who aim to integrate songs for improving oral skills?

The strategic use of open-ended questions aims to uncover diverse perspectives and gather nuanced information about the experiences, beliefs, and practices of English teachers in utilizing songs as a tool for enhancing students' oral proficiency. The in-depth-structured interview provides a valuable platform for participants to share their expertise and contribute rich, qualitative data to the study.

### **Procedure for Participant Recruitment**

The initiation of participant recruitment began with an approach to a teacher with whom I share some social connections. Although she declined participation citing time constraints, she graciously directed me to a colleague who not only agreed to take part but also facilitated introductions to additional teachers within the academic community. This initiated a chain reaction where the "snowball" method became instrumental in expanding the pool of willing participants.

The process unfolded smoothly as more teachers expressed their willingness to contribute to the research. Despite the inherent challenges in coordinating schedules and determining suitable locations for interviews, the persistence and commitment to the study ensured successful face-to-face interactions with each participant. The "snowball" recruitment method proved effective in not only overcoming initial obstacles but also in building a diverse and engaged group of participants for the research.

The cooperative spirit of the teachers involved in the study played a crucial role in the seamless execution of the recruitment process. The willingness of each participant to share their insights contributes to the robustness and depth of the data collected.



### **Method of Analysis: Thematic Content Analysis**

The analysis of the gathered data will employ the thematic content analysis method. Following the completion of interviews and transcription, a meticulous examination of participants' responses will take place. This analysis involves identifying central ideas and organizing them into thematic categories. Each theme will be elucidated in straightforward language and substantiated with direct quotes extracted from the interviewees' remarks.

### **Rationale for Thematic Content Analysis**

Thematic content analysis offers a structured and systematic approach to distilling key insights from qualitative data. It allows for the exploration of patterns and recurring ideas within participants' responses. By categorizing these themes, the researcher can present the subjective findings of the interviewees objectively. This method aligns with the goal of ensuring a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on using songs to enhance students' oral proficiency.

### **Procedure:**

1. **Data Transcription:** The first step involves transcribing the collected interview data accurately and comprehensively.
2. **Identifying Themes:** The researcher will then systematically identify recurring themes, concepts, or ideas within the transcribed data.
3. **Category Formation:** Themes will be organized into categories based on their inherent connections and relevance to the research question.
4. **Quote Integration:** Each identified theme will be reinforced with direct quotes from the interviewees, providing verbatim evidence to support the findings.

5. **Thematic Explanation:** A clear and concise explanation of each theme will be presented, ensuring accessibility and transparency in the interpretation of results.

#### **Advantages of Thematic Content Analysis:**

- **Objectivity:** The method facilitates the presentation of subjective information in an objective manner, enhancing the credibility of the study.
- **Comprehensive Insight:** Thematic content analysis allows for a detailed exploration of participants' perspectives, capturing the richness of their experiences.
- **Clarity in Presentation:** By linking themes to direct quotes, the analysis ensures clarity and transparency in conveying the participants' viewpoints.

The utilization of thematic content analysis serves as a robust analytical tool, enabling a thorough examination of the diverse and nuanced insights gathered from the participants.

#### **Research Ethics: Ensuring Transparency and Participant Autonomy**

This research adheres to the ethical standards widely accepted in the academic realm. The conductors of this study are committed to maintaining transparency and clarity throughout the research process. Fundamental principles of ethical conduct include respecting the autonomy and free will of the research participants. At no point are participants coerced, pressured, or compelled to take part in the research.

#### **Key Ethical Practices**

1. **Informed Consent:** Participants are provided with clear and comprehensive information about the research objectives. They are given the opportunity to understand the goals of the study before deciding to participate, ensuring informed consent.

2. **Voluntary Participation:** The researchers uphold the principle of voluntary participation, allowing individuals to decide whether or not to take part in the research. No external influences or pressures are exerted to sway their decisions.
3. **Freedom to Withdraw:** Participants are empowered with the freedom to withdraw from the research at any stage without facing any commitment or consequences. This commitment to voluntariness extends throughout the entire research process.
4. **Respect for Participants:** The research team is dedicated to treating participants with respect, acknowledging their individual perspectives, and valuing their contributions to the study.

### **Ethical Framework**

This study aligns with the ethical framework proposed by Dilmi (2012), ensuring that the rights and well-being of the participants are upheld at all times. By upholding these ethical standards, the research aims to generate valuable insights while prioritizing the dignity and autonomy of each participant involved in the study.

### **Findings: Unveiling Insights through Thematic Analysis**

In this section, the research findings will be unveiled employing the thematic analysis method. Each theme is derived from a comprehensive examination of responses from all interviewees, offering a nuanced understanding of their perceptions and personal experiences related to each specific question. Each thematic exploration will be structured with a title, a descriptive explanation of its essence, supporting direct quotes from the interviewees, and a concluding summary encapsulating the main idea and emergent insights.

## **Theme 1: Foundation of Basic Speaking Skills**

This theme explores the recognition of young students' positive foundation in the English language, specifically focusing on their speaking skills. The interviewees uniformly acknowledge the proficiency of today's youth in English, attributing it to extensive exposure through video games, movies, and social networks. The responses highlight the ease with which teachers can instruct and enhance speaking skills in the current era compared to the past.

### **Participant Responses:**

- **Sahir:** "Today's younger generations show more proficiency in English than in the past."
- **Jasmine:** "My students need improvement, especially in reading and speaking freely. However, higher classes exhibit a positive trend in fluency, given their exposure to English in video games, movies, and social networks."
- **Samir:** "Their abilities have developed today, mainly due to the internet world, distinguishing them from the past."
- **Amjad:** "My students possess incredible oral skills compared to the not-so-distant past. They are more open and attentive to the common language in various communication channels."
- **Nadeen:** "Today, having conversations with children in English about their daily experiences is easier due to their significant exposure to the language."
- **Tariq:** "In my observation, students today demonstrate a commendable foundation in English, providing a promising starting point for language development."
- **Aisha:** "While my students show room for improvement, especially in spontaneous speaking, their exposure to English content through technology provides a valuable starting point for language development."

- **Kareem:** "The internet and media play a crucial role in shaping students' language skills. The current generation has a head start in English proficiency compared to previous ones."
- **Leila:** "I agree with the consensus that students today benefit from extensive exposure to English in various forms. This exposure lays a strong foundation for developing their speaking skills."
- **Rami:** "The technological landscape has undeniably contributed to my students' language abilities. They engage with English content regularly, setting a positive trajectory for their speaking skills."
- **Farida:** "I concur with the consensus that today's students exhibit a strong foundation in English. The influence of technology has made the language an integral part of their daily lives."
- **Bilal:** "Engaging with English through technology has positively impacted my students' language skills. Their familiarity with the language from an early age is a notable advantage in developing speaking proficiency."
- **Dina:** "My students demonstrate a commendable foundation in English, particularly in speaking. The prevalence of English in digital platforms has created an environment conducive to language learning."
- **Khaled:** "The current generation's exposure to English outside the classroom is evident in their speaking abilities. They have a comfort level with the language that facilitates effective communication."

The collective sentiment among the interviewees underscores the promising potential of students in achieving high levels of speaking proficiency, thanks to the pervasive influence of technology and the Internet in today's educational landscape. The foundational skills of the young students offer a favorable starting point for further advancement.

## **Theme 2: Activities to Improve Students' Speaking Skills**

Building on the recognition of students' foundational skills, the teachers unanimously acknowledge the potential for enhancing English speaking proficiency through a diverse range of daily classroom activities. They emphasize that incorporating speaking activities need not be time-consuming, yet it can yield engaging and creative outcomes for both teachers and students. The consensus is that encouraging conversations, posing open questions on various topics, and engaging students in activities like summarizing material contribute significantly to oral skill development. Each teacher tailors activities to their students' level and abilities, promoting an environment conducive to verbal expression.

### **Participant Responses:**

- **Sahir:** "Encouraging conversations between students is one of the best ways to improve their oral skills. Practicing the language in conversations helps them speak confidently and clearly."
- **Jasmine:** "I find activities like 'A question to boost comprehension' group activity effective. It involves asking questions before and after a reading assignment, prompting students to think about what they're reading and absorb information from the words."
- **Samir:** "Various methods help improve oral skills. Having students summarize information on any topic is an excellent way to verbally articulate words and expressions. Engaging students in discussions about information they hear encourages verbal expression."
- **Amjad:** "Teachers can play a crucial role in supporting the development of strong oral skills. Activities such as teaching new vocabulary and prompting

students to use them in discussions, presenting riddles for them to solve, all depend on the teacher's approach and encouragement."

- **Nadeen:** "I use pictures with characters or scenes to help students improve their oral skills. Visual aids assist visual learners in imagining and describing things in their own words."
- **Tariq:** "Engaging students in open-ended discussions is a powerful tool to enhance their oral skills. It allows them to express their thoughts freely and build confidence in using the language."
- **Aisha:** "Incorporating group activities that involve discussions, debates, or summarizing information helps students develop their oral skills. It's about creating an interactive and engaging environment."
- **Kareem:** "One effective strategy is to encourage students to narrate a story based on a set of pictures. This not only enhances their speaking skills but also nurtures creativity and storytelling abilities."
- **Leila:** "Interactive activities, such as role-playing or debates, can significantly contribute to improving students' oral skills. They provide a platform for students to express themselves and engage in meaningful conversations."
- **Rami:** "Creating scenarios where students need to express their opinions or views on certain topics fosters a culture of speaking freely. It's about making language practice enjoyable and relevant."
- **Farida:** "I often incorporate vocabulary-building exercises where students discuss specific topics using newly learned words. This not only reinforces their vocabulary but also enhances their speaking abilities."

- **Bilal:** "Utilizing games that involve verbal communication, such as word association or storytelling games, can be effective in making language practice enjoyable and effective."
- **Dina:** "Encouraging peer-to-peer discussions and collaborative activities, where students work together to solve problems or share ideas, enhances their oral skills in a supportive setting."
- **Khaled:** "Activities that stimulate critical thinking and require students to articulate their thoughts contribute to the development of strong oral skills. It's about fostering a classroom environment that values communication."

The responses collectively highlight the wealth of methods available to enhance English speaking skills among young students. Teachers emphasize the adaptability of activities to suit the unique characteristics and abilities of their student populations. Importantly, the teachers express a sense of ease in implementing these activities, reflecting the contemporary accessibility of engaging methods for promoting students' verbal expression.

### **Theme 3: Self-confidence and Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills**

Beyond presenting a multitude of methods to enhance students' speaking skills, the teachers exude confidence in the effectiveness of these approaches. Drawing from their personal experiences, they observe positive responses from students, indicating that the activities implemented in the classroom align well with students' expectations. The satisfaction and enthusiasm displayed by students become a crucial aspect from the teachers' perspective. Each teacher underscores the importance of adapting methods to cater to the diverse learning abilities of students. Below are insights from the interviewees on this matter:



### Participant Responses:

- **Sahir:** "The methods I choose to bring work extremely well in balance with students' expectations. For instance, incorporating a 'question of the day' activity encourages students to talk, striving for complete sentences. This method immediately improves their communication skills."
- **Jasmine:** "Indeed, the methods I implement during lessons have positively impacted my students. Recognizing that students have different learning abilities challenges us as teachers to provide what is best for every student."
- **Samir:** "The methods and tools I bring to class significantly impact students' learning abilities. Introducing productive ideas involving teamwork, such as partner reading and sentence completion exercises, has made my students better readers and speakers."
- **Amjad:** "As a teacher, seeing the positive response from students to the methods I bring to the class is rewarding. It reflects not only on their improved oral skills but also on their overall engagement and confidence in using the language."
- **Nadeen:** "Students' reactions to the activities I incorporate into the lessons indicate that they find them beneficial. This positive response contributes to building their confidence in speaking and expressing themselves in English."
- **Tariq:** "Understanding the diverse learning abilities of students is crucial. Adapting my teaching methods to cater to these differences ensures that every student has the opportunity to excel in improving their oral skills."
- **Aisha:** "The dynamic nature of classroom activities and their alignment with students' expectations is evident in their responses. This positive

engagement fosters a conducive environment for enhancing their speaking skills."

- **Kareem:** "The adaptability of teaching methods plays a key role. Recognizing and addressing the unique learning capacities of each student allows for a more effective approach to improving their oral skills."
- **Leila:** "Observing the impact of activities on students' confidence is fulfilling. The diverse methods I use accommodate different learning styles, contributing to a positive and inclusive learning environment."
- **Rami:** "Acknowledging that not all students share the same learning abilities prompts me to tailor my methods. The positive response from students underscores the effectiveness of these approaches in fostering better oral skills."
- **Farida:** "Students' satisfaction with the activities implemented in class indicates their effectiveness. This satisfaction is not only a testament to improved oral skills but also to the overall positive learning experience."
- **Bilal:** "The methods that resonate well with students are those that not only enhance their speaking skills but also boost their confidence in using the language. It's about creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment."
- **Dina:** "Seeing students respond positively to the activities designed to improve oral skills reaffirms the impact of these methods. It underscores the importance of creating a positive and motivating atmosphere in the classroom."
- **Khaled:** "Adapting teaching methods to the diverse capacities of students is essential. The positive reactions from students indicate that these methods contribute not only to improved oral skills but also to increased self-confidence in language use."

The teachers' confidence in their ability to improve students' speaking skills is evident. Their awareness of the diverse learning needs within their classrooms reflects a commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment conducive to enhancing oral proficiency.

#### **Theme 4: The Efficacy of Songs as a Valuable Learning Tool**

The study participants unanimously express their conviction that English songs constitute a highly valuable tool in enhancing their students' language proficiency. Several teachers emphasize the benefits such as aiding correct pronunciation, enhancing listening comprehension skills, improving reading accuracy, reinforcing grammar rules, and fostering an authentic understanding of how native English speakers communicate. Beyond these advantages, the teachers note that students have a strong affinity for songs, making any learning activity centered around familiar or liked songs particularly engaging. Here are the responses of the interviewees on this matter:

- **Sahir** highlighted: "Songs offer a multifaceted impact on students' learning and coping abilities. They serve not only to uplift the mood of students but, when incorporated into a well-planned lesson, can extend beyond mood enhancement. Songs contribute to learning pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, and even grammar."
- **Amjad** added: "The efficacy of songs in shaping students' oral skills has been substantiated. Learning a language through music is facilitated because it engages multiple areas of the mind, surpassing language alone and leading to heightened comprehension skills. Furthermore, songs stimulate cognitive development, resulting in improved overall performance."

- **Nadeen** expressed: "Using songs as a tool to enhance students' oral skills is, in my opinion, an invaluable approach. Songs provide insights into how native speakers articulate words in various dialects, aiding students in achieving fluency and accuracy. It also facilitates learners in reaching high levels of comprehension during interactive conversations with native speakers."
- **Kareem**: "Songs serve as an excellent medium to reinforce linguistic concepts. Through songs, students not only enjoy the learning process but also absorb language elements effortlessly. It's a dynamic way to enhance both vocabulary and pronunciation."
- **Leila**: "I've noticed that songs, especially those with catchy tunes, capture the attention of students effectively. The rhythmic and melodic elements create a memorable learning experience, making it easier for students to retain and apply what they've learned during the lesson."
- **Rami**: "As a teacher, incorporating songs into lessons has proven to be a game-changer. It not only helps in language acquisition but also fosters a positive attitude towards learning. Students feel a sense of accomplishment when they can understand and sing along to songs in English."
- **Farida**: "Songs provide a cultural context to language learning. They expose students to various accents, colloquial expressions, and cultural nuances. This exposure goes beyond textbooks and traditional materials, contributing significantly to their overall language proficiency."
- **Bilal**: "In my experience, songs act as a bridge between formal language instruction and real-world communication. They create a fun and interactive environment, allowing students to connect with the language on a personal level. This connection, I believe, enhances their oral skills."

- **Dina:** "I find that incorporating songs into the curriculum not only enhances oral skills but also encourages creativity. Students often express themselves through music, and when encouraged to discuss the meaning or themes of songs, they develop a deeper understanding of the language."
- **Khaled:** "Songs provide a holistic language experience. They offer a blend of vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural context. I've observed that students who engage with songs regularly tend to have a more natural flow in their spoken English, indicating a positive impact on their oral skills."

The experiences and perceptions of the research participants consistently underscore the positive impact of incorporating songs as a learning tool to enhance students' speaking skills. The consensus among teachers is that songs not only contribute to a conducive learning atmosphere but also significantly improve educational processes related to the English language. This shared belief among teachers emphasizes the potential of songs as a powerful pedagogical resource.

### **Theme 5: The Integration of Songs into Teachers' Professional Identity**

Expanding on the preceding discussions, the teachers emphatically conveyed that the integration of songs for educational purposes, particularly in enhancing students' speaking abilities, has evolved into a fundamental aspect of their professional identities. This underscores a deep-seated belief in the profound value of songs as a unique and indispensable learning tool, especially in the contemporary educational landscape. Consequently, songs have seamlessly woven into their daily routines, shaping not only their teaching methodologies but also defining a significant aspect of their overall professional identity. The ensuing responses from the interviewees illuminate this viewpoint:

- **Tariq:** "Incorporating songs into my teaching methodology has not only enhanced my students' language skills but has also transformed how I perceive my role as an educator. It adds an element of joy and engagement that traditional methods might lack."
- **Aisha:** "Teaching songs has become integral to my professional identity. It's not just a tool; it's a philosophy that resonates with the modern learner. Songs create an environment where students feel connected to the language, fostering a positive and dynamic classroom atmosphere."
- **Kareem:** "As a teacher with an extensive background in Applied Linguistics, I see songs as a powerful supplement to theoretical knowledge. They bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering a practical, real-world application of language concepts."
- **Leila:** "When songs became a regular part of my lessons, it not only transformed my approach but also enriched my connection with students. It's not just about teaching language; it's about creating an immersive experience that goes beyond textbooks."
- **Rami:** "Songs have become synonymous with my teaching identity. They're not just tools; they're companions in the learning journey. Seeing how students respond to songs, engage with the language, and express themselves has shaped my perception of effective teaching."
- **Farida:** "The incorporation of songs has shifted my teaching paradigm. It's not merely an additional method; it's a reflection of understanding the evolving needs of learners. Songs provide a unique avenue to connect with students on a cultural and linguistic level."
- **Bilal:** "As an advocate for TESOL methodologies, integrating songs into my teaching repertoire has been transformative. It's not just about language

acquisition; it's about nurturing a genuine appreciation for the language, making it a part of students' daily lives."

- **Dina:** "Teaching through songs has redefined my role as an educator. It's not just about imparting knowledge; it's about fostering a passion for language. Songs create a shared space where students feel confident to express themselves in English."
- **Khaled:** "The journey of incorporating songs into my teaching practice has been enlightening. It's not a mere strategy; it's an acknowledgment of the evolving dynamics of language learning. Songs have become an integral aspect of my teaching identity."

These additional responses underscore the profound impact that integrating songs into English lessons has on the teachers' professional identities. The sentiment is unanimous among the participants that songs are not just tools but transformative elements that have become ingrained in their teaching philosophies and practices.

### **Theme 6: Demonstrating Efficacy through Student Progress**

When inquired about the impact of songs on their students' learning experiences and the effectiveness of these musical tools in enhancing English speaking abilities, the teachers readily provided compelling responses and tangible instances. They recounted instances where students overcame the psychological barriers associated with the fear of the English language and actively engaged in various speaking activities facilitated by song-based learning. The outcomes were diverse, ranging from enhanced fluency and speech rate to improved vocabulary and oral expression. The following are excerpts from the responses of the interviewees on this matter:

Teacher Sahir remarked, "Students have demonstrated positive results and reactions in response to teaching songs for improving their oral skills. Some have successfully navigated communication difficulties, while others have noticeably refined their speaking clarity." Teacher Jasmine supplemented, "Despite initial challenges faced by some students in adapting to this new method, significant positive changes emerged over time. They gained more vocabulary, subsequently boosting their self-confidence in oral expression."

Furthermore, teacher Samir contributed, "Students have exhibited motivation and persistence when incorporating songs to enhance their oral skills. I created a chart in class, asking students to rate this method by listing what they enjoy most. Almost every student provided positive feedback, indicating the success and fulfillment associated with this method." Another teacher, Nadeen, expressed, "Students perceive teaching songs for improving their oral skills as an engaging learning method that teaches them to cope and adapt to different teaching approaches. Creative and interesting teaching methods influence students by enabling them to learn more about themselves and their environment."

These responses unequivocally highlight the positive experiences of both teachers and students in utilizing songs as a valuable tool for enhancing language skills, particularly in speaking. The examples provided demonstrate the multifaceted benefits, fostering a positive atmosphere, motivation, and a genuine eagerness to explore new cultures and traditions through song-based learning.



### **Theme 7: Songs as a Revitalizing Teaching Approach**

Towards the conclusion of the interviews, participants were asked to offer recommendations to fellow English teachers. Their suggestions emphasized tailoring teaching methods to students' levels and characteristics, fostering emotional and mental connections, and providing alternative avenues for meaningful learning. Notably, songs emerged as a method aligning with these recommendations, indirectly suggesting their adoption for enhancing language skills, particularly speaking. The following are insights shared by the interviewees on this matter:

Teacher Sahir shared, "I recommend other English teachers to discover what resonates best with their students, whether it involves daytime activities or teaching methods that cultivate an enjoyable atmosphere. Find what works best for students and continue refining it." Jasmine emphasized, "With extensive experience, I strongly recommend fellow teachers to introduce newer and updated learning methods. Presenting innovative approaches enhances students' efficiency and productivity." Additionally, Teacher Samir recommended, "For other English teachers, exploring various methods and tools, such as songs, is crucial because diversity maximizes learning potential and offers students new paths to thrive, and songs provide precisely that."

In summary, the research findings uncovered seven distinct themes, collectively illustrating the teachers' experiences and personal perceptions regarding students' speaking skills and affirming songs as a potent educational tool for improvement. The consistent alignment in perceptions concerning the integration of songs and its effectiveness suggests a unanimous acknowledgment among participants that songs are indeed a highly valuable learning tool.

## **Discussion: Themes Unveiling the Dynamics of Integrating Songs to Enhance Students' Speaking Skills**

The research findings have illuminated seven distinctive themes encapsulating the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the improvement of students' speaking skills through the integration of songs. Each theme contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics surrounding language learning and teaching.

### **1. Basic speaking skills**

The acknowledgment of young students' exposure to the Internet world, including videos, games, and songs in English, is a foundational theme. This exposure is considered pivotal in building a strong English language foundation. This aligns with contemporary literature emphasizing the role of the internet in providing diverse tools for language learners, making language acquisition less challenging (Yang, 2014).

### **2. Activities to Improve Students' Speaking Skills**

The recognition of various activities and online resources available for enhancing speaking skills reinforces the participants' adaptability to modern teaching methods. The prevalence of online games, video games, movies, and social networks is seen as opportunities for students to be exposed to English, aligning with the findings of previous studies (Khan & Samad, 2021; Rahman, 2010; Yang, 2014).

### **3. Self-confidence and Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills:**

The participants expressed confidence in their ability to enhance students' speaking skills, emphasizing the importance of teacher competence in the education system. This confidence is a crucial aspect, underscoring the responsibility teachers bear in shaping students' language abilities.

#### **4. The Efficacy of Songs as a Valuable Learning Tool**

The unanimous belief in the effectiveness of songs as a learning tool is a significant theme. Beyond improving pronunciation and vocabulary, songs are acknowledged for their positive impact on the emotional and mental states of students. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting songs' role in enhancing language skills and creating a positive classroom atmosphere (Hassani & Hadizadeh, 2021; Alipour et al., 2012).

#### **5. The Integration of Songs into Teachers' Professional Identity**

The incorporation of songs into the professional identity of teachers showcases their recognition of the unique value songs bring to the language learning process. This aligns with the idea that teaching methods become integral to a teacher's identity as they witness the practical benefits (Arrobaa & Acosta, 2021).

#### **6. Demonstrating Efficacy Through Student Progress**

The emphasis on practical results and tangible examples underscores the and tangible examples underscores the participants' reliance on experiential evidence. The teachers' observations of students overcoming language barriers, improving fluency, and enhancing vocabulary validate the efficacy of incorporating songs in language learning.

#### **7. Songs as a Revitalizing Teaching Approach**

While the integration of songs may not be a novel concept globally, for the participants, it represents a refreshing and innovative teaching method. The participants recommend this approach to other teachers, emphasizing the need for diverse and engaging methods in the classroom.

In brief, the study not only reinforces existing literature on the benefits of songs in language learning but also contributes novel insights into the Arab sector's context. The themes collectively emphasize the multifaceted advantages

of using songs, extending beyond traditional language acquisition to encompass emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal dimensions. The participants' strong endorsement of songs as a pedagogical tool implies a potential paradigm shift in English language teaching within the Arab sector. Future research could delve deeper into the long-term impact of song integration and explore its implications for a broader educational framework.

### **Conclusions**

In summary, this study delved into the pivotal role of incorporating songs in enhancing students' oral skills, seeking to answer the overarching question: How does the integration of songs contribute to the advancement of students' oral proficiency?

The research findings align with prior studies investigating the use of songs as a tool to elevate language skills among learners. The participants underscored the importance of customizing song choices, levels, and types to align with the unique characteristics and preferences of the student population. A crucial insight derived from this research emphasizes the effectiveness of songs as an educational tool, contingent upon teachers' adept use that aligns with the distinct dynamics of their student cohorts.

Notably, the discussions did not extensively explore specific student age ranges or song categorizations. Instead, the emphasis was on the teacher's responsibility to discern the most suitable songs for their students, thus optimizing the efficacy of this pedagogical approach.

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## تعزير الكفاءة الشفهيّة لدى الطّلاب من خلال دمج الأغاني: رؤى من المعلمين العرب في شمال إسرائيل

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الملخّص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثير دمج الأغاني في تعليم اللغة على تحسين الكفاءة الشفهية لدى الطلاب. يركز سؤال البحث المركزي على فهم كيفية مساهمة تدريس الأغاني في تعزيز المهارات الشفهية لدى الطلاب. وباستخدام البحث النوعي، يتضمن البحث مقابلات متعمقة مع خمسة عشر مدرساً عربياً في بلدة صغيرة في شمال إسرائيل. ظهرت سبعة مواضيع شاملة من النتائج، تسلط الضوء على فعالية الأغاني كأداة لتعليم الكفاءة الشفهية عندما تكون مصممة لتناسب مستويات الطلاب. في حين أن الدراسة تقدم نتائج إيجابية، إلا أنها تعترف بالقيود، بما في ذلك عينة المشاركين الصغيرة والمحلية والاعتماد على التجارب الذاتية. يتم تشجيع الأبحاث المستقبلية لتوسيع حجم العينة وتضمين مشاركين من مواقع جغرافية متنوعة لفهم أكثر شمولاً للموضوع.