

POPULAR SONGS AS A MEANS OF TEACHING GRAMMAR

Peshkova O.G. (Kharkiv), Zharinova Ye.G. (Moscow, Russia)

Songs assist in understanding and perceiving the target culture. They are the means through which cultural themes are presented effectively. Since they provide authentic texts, they are motivating. Prosodic features of the language such as stress, rhythm, intonation are presented through songs, thus through using them the language which is cut up into a series of structural points becomes a whole again.

There are various ways of using songs in the classroom. The level of the students, the interests and the age of the learners, the grammar point to be studied, and the song itself have determinant roles on the procedure. Apart from them, it mainly depends on the creativity of the teacher. For teenagers or adults in the intermediate or advanced level, it is better to use more meaningful or popular songs, which not only review or introduce grammar points but also reflect cultural aspects. At the primary level of singing the song, the prosodic features of the language is emphasized. At the higher levels, where the practice of grammar points is at the foreground, songs can be used with several techniques. Some examples of these techniques are:

- ☐ Gap fills or close texts
- ☐ Focus questions
- ☐ True-false statements
- ☐ Put these lines into the correct sequence
- ☐ Dictation
- ☐ Add a final verse
- ☐ Circle the antonyms/synonyms of the given words
- ☐ Discuss

A teacher's selection of a technique or a set of techniques should be based on his or her objectives for the classroom. After deciding the grammar point to be studied, and the song and the techniques to be used, the teacher should prepare an

effective lesson plan. Since songs are listening activities, it is advisable to present them as a listening lesson, but of course it is necessary to integrate all the skills in the process in order to achieve successful teaching.

When regarding a lesson plan, as a pre-listening activity, the theme, the title, or the history of the song can be discussed. By directing the students toward specific areas, problem vocabulary items can be picked up in advance. Before listening to the song, it is also beneficial to let the students know which grammar points should be studied. At this stage, pictures may also be used to introduce the theme of the song. In the listening stage, some of the techniques listed above can be used, but among them gap filling is the most widely used technique. Through such gaps, the vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation are highlighted. This stage can be developed by the teacher according to the needs of the students and the grammar point to be studied.

In the follow-up, integrated skills can be used to complete the overall course structure. Since many songs are on themes for which it is easy to find related reading texts, it may lead the learner to read a text about the singer or the theme. Besides, many songs give a chance for a written reaction of some kind. Opinion questions may lead the learner to write about his own thoughts or reflections. Some songs deal with a theme that can be re-exploited through role plays. Acting may add enthusiasm to the learning process. Finally, some songs deal with themes, which can lead to guided discussion. By leading the students into a discussion, the grammar point could be practiced orally and, in a way, naturally. As a consequence, the use of songs in language classrooms provides many advantages. They entertain and relax the learners while they are learning or practicing a structure, and they often eliminate the students negative attitude towards learning. Through providing authenticity and context they make the grammar points more understandable and easy. As language teachers, we can benefit from using songs, since our concern is to motivate the students and draw their utmost attention on the subject during teaching.

References:

1. Murphey T. Music and song / T. Murphey. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. – 126 p.