

Original Paper

A Critical Analysis of Lexicon and Phonological Development through Children's Songs in First Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This paper investigates the significance of children's songs in promoting vocabulary and phonological development during first language acquisition, especially within diverse and multicultural educational contexts. It adopts Sociocultural, Postmodern, and Interactionist theoretical frameworks to analyse the influence of these songs on language learning. Sociocultural theory emphasises the crucial role of social interactions and cultural relevance in language development. In contrast, Postmodern theory critiques the cultural biases frequently found in traditional song selections and advocates for broader inclusive linguistic representation. Interactionist theory underscores the importance of interactive and multisensory experiences in facilitating language acquisition. The study finds that children's songs' repetitive structures and rhythms significantly aid vocabulary development and phonological awareness. However, it also identifies challenges such as cultural biases and limited opportunities for individual feedback in group learning environments. To address these issues, the research recommends expanding the repertoire of songs to include diverse linguistic and cultural elements, promoting equity in language learning and fostering a richer cultural understanding. The paper underscores their potential as practical tools for promoting language development while catering to learners' varied needs by situating children's songs within a broader, inclusive teaching framework.

Keywords

First language acquisition, Children's songs, Phonological development, Vocabulary growth, Cultural inclusivity

1. Introduction

Children's songs have always been a resource for young learners to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation skills as they learn their first language (L1). With their tunes and repetitive nature, which children love to sing along to repeatedly, these songs provide a fun and engaging way for children to interact with their first language learning. Children's songs like 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm' employ repetition to efficiently educate young learners about animal names, noises, and motions. Thiessen et al. found that this repetition helps youngsters enhance their vocabulary and memory abilities (Thiessen, Emily, & Jenny, 2005). Rhyme and head rhyme of children's songs provide lively phonics in nursery rhymes like "Twinkle, twinkle, little star". This helps youngsters comprehend sound patterns and syllable structures, improving their reading and writing abilities.

However, in classrooms where students speak different languages at home, such as in the United Kingdom, the significance of English children's songs requires further examination. How well do these songs support the development of pronunciation skills in children from various language backgrounds? This study examines how children's songs contribute to L1 acquisition using Sociocultural, Postmodern, and Interactionist theories. These theoretical views will aid in studying the influence of children's songs on their development and phonological awareness in various cultural settings.

According to sociocultural theory, children's songs aid language development by combining new vocabulary and sound patterns into relevant social situations (Vygotsky, 1978). Songs provide a suitable environment for language acquisition through regular and directed conversations. Postmodern Theory continues to provide insights into the cultural narrative present in children's songs. This viewpoint calls into question the impartiality of these tools and how they may inadvertently exclude or marginalise youngsters whose language and culture vary from those shown in traditional songs (Pennycook, 2021). Interactionist Theory emphasises the role of interaction in language learning—children's songs help by including interactive elements, such as call-and-response patterns and group engagement (Bruner, 1985; Tomasello, 2003).

This research uses these theoretical approaches to investigate how children's songs help with lexical and phonological development, particularly for learners from linguistically varied backgrounds. The purpose is to present ideas for how these songs can be used to build more inclusive and flourishing learning settings.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sociocultural Theory

Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, social interactions influence language acquisition in a person's cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). A key concept in the theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the tasks a child can accomplish with help from a skilled peer or adult but cannot do independently (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea highlights the importance of interaction during learning, as assistance decreases as learners' skills progress (Wood, Jerome, & Gail, 2006).

Children's songs promote social language development by providing a fun and engaging learning experience through their catchy tunes and repetitive lyrics that help build a solid foundation for language acquisition and exploration of linguistic patterns and grammar rules within a culturally diverse context. Thorne indicated that interactive experiences involving songs enhance children's language learning capabilities through social interactions, which aid in internalising linguistic elements (Thorne, 2007). Moreover, since language is viewed as a communal pursuit, music can connect language understanding with cultural sensitivity, fostering a richer process of more in-depth language learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.2 Postmodern Theory

Postmodern Theory presents a view of how language is learned and questions conventional methods that treat language acquisition as uniform and standard across all contexts. Instead, it recognises the diverse interpretations and influences of social and cultural factors on children's language learning processes. It calls for a more intentional and inclusive approach to language training, including critically examining whose voices and cultural narratives are emphasised and marginalised (Norton, & Kelleen, 2004). This theoretical perspective encourages educators to expand their repertoire of children's songs to include varied linguistic and artistic representations, promoting a more equitable approach to language acquisition.

Moreover, Postmodernism within language education advocates the analysis of power structures embedded within linguistic activities, which urges educators to reflect on the preferential treatment given to specific languages or dialects in educational environments (Pennycook, 2021). Children's songs carry deep-rooted cultural and language biases. Many mirror mainstream cultural stories and language styles that may not resonate with children from various cultural backgrounds. For instance, using English nursery rhymes for language learning often promotes English forms but overlooks local dialects or minority languages. Postmodern theory questions this approach and suggests a broader language learning model that values and embraces the unique linguistic identities of all learners (Canagarajah, 1999).

Postmodern Theory uses deconstruction to show how choosing and incorporating children's songs in the environment can perpetuate societal biases and establish social ranks. The theory advocates for an all-encompassing method of language instruction by scrutinising which perspectives and cultural stories are highlighted or sidelined (Norton, & Kelleen, 2004). This framework urges educators to broaden the range of children's songs to encompass linguistic and cultural portrayals to foster a fairer language learning method.

2.3 Interactionist Theory

Interactionist Theory posits that language learning transpires through significant interactions between children and their environments (Bruner, 1985; Kubota, & Angel eds. 2009). This theory posits that language acquisition is most effective when infants actively communicate with others and negotiate meaning through real-time interaction. Language development is regarded as a collaborative process

wherein interaction with caregivers, classmates, and the social environment is crucial in shaping a child's language capabilities.

Children's songs serve as valuable media for this relationship. When young people sing or participate in musical group activities, they are not merely passive recipients of language instruction. Instead, individuals actively participate in and negotiate meaning through their responses and actions. For instance, songs like "If You're Happy and You Know It" need physical responses (clapping, stomping), transforming the song into an interactive social engagement where children connect with their language and classmates. This interaction promotes vocabulary expansion and phonological awareness as infants engage in language in significant contexts (Bruner, 1985; Tomasello, 2003).

3. Impact of Children's Songs on Lexicon and Phonological Development

3.1 Lexicon Development

Children's songs benefit learning by featuring catchy tunes and engaging topics to help them acquire language skills quickly and enjoyably. Sociocultural Theory emphasises the significance of learning through interactions and real-life situations for effective language development. In a classroom setting where music is integrated into teaching practices, students engage with each other through music, enriching their learning experience. This collaborative approach embodies the Sociocultural Theory principles that underscore the importance of interaction and cultural resources in nurturing skill development.

3.1.1 Contributions to Thematic Vocabulary Areas

Songs such as 'Five Little Ducks' and 'The Wheels on the Bus' play a crucial role. While they may not be amusing, they serve the objective of training young brains by engaging and memorably delivering topic vocabulary that young people can easily understand. These songs use repetition and context to assist children in becoming familiar with vocabulary related to numbers, animals, or actions, thus improving their language acquisition process.

For example, in the song "Five Little Ducks", bright numbers and engaging words, such as "quack" and "waddle", form a narrative that youngsters can readily understand and learn from, demonstrating vocabulary and displaying how actions result in consequences within a storytelling framework. Similarly, "Wheels on the Bus" uses rhythm to introduce action verbs and tangible items, making vocabulary development an entertaining and musically exciting experience for young learners. The repeating melody of songs helps children recall words well.

Studies have shown that incorporating songs into language acquisition produces favourable results. Thiessen, Hill et al. found that exposing infants to songs with patterns in their native language improved their ability to differentiate speech sounds and identify essential linguistic components (Thiessen, Emily, & Jenny, 2005). This ability is critical for vocabulary development because it enables youngsters to break down spoken language into individual words and to comprehend their meanings.

3.1.2 Broader Cognitive Benefits of Songs for Lexicon Acquisition

Songs are vital for language acquisition because they improve the cognitive functions necessary for language growth and development and promote word memorisation (Wolfe & Candice, 1993). Research shows that young toddlers retain word sequences better when presented in music rather than spoken language. This highlights the importance of the melodic aspects in the mechanics of knowledge retention and retrieval.

“The Alphabet Song” is a timeless resource that helps children learn the names of letters through its captivating rhythm. It improves their ability to recall the order of letters, which is an integral part of developing literacy skills, such as reading and writing. Additionally, songs that convey stories, such as “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”, provide contextual terms that help children more effectively organise and recall their vocabulary. The song’s tales and exercises give young learners an organised way to grasp and retain terminology effectively.

Engaging with language through music provides a stimulating experience that improves cognitive capacity by combining auditory and visual features. Frequent physical exercises, such as children dancing or moving in time to the rhythms of songs, also improve children’s vocabulary comprehension by placing words in context (Tomasello, 2003). Integrating music into language education allows educators to use the natural characteristics of songs to promote growth and a deeper understanding of students’ language abilities. This strategy aligns with improving critical thinking and memory retention and building connections between new materials and previous learning.

For instance, when children sing along in class, they do more than echo the lyrics; they actively interact with the meanings of words within a lively, communal setting. Instructors or guardians frequently demonstrate the actions depicted in the song (e.g., “the wipers go swish, swish, swish”), allowing children to mimic these actions and thereby enhancing their vocabulary comprehension through a multisensory approach. Interactionist Theory emphasises the significance of interactive exchanges, indicating that children’s engagement in a song fosters a social atmosphere in which vocabulary learning is intricately woven into context (Bruner, 1985; Tomasello, 2003).

3.2 Phonological Development

Phonological awareness—the ability to recognise and manipulate sound structures—is critical to early language development. Children’s songs, with their repetitive, rhythmic nature, are ideally suited for enhancing this aspect of linguistic competence. From a Sociocultural perspective, these songs offer a socially engaging way for children to become attuned to the phonemic structure of their language, making language learning an enjoyable and interactive process (Goswami, & Peter, 2016).

3.2.1 Enhancing Specific Phonological Skills in Native Language

Classic children’s songs such as ‘Hickory Dickory Dock’ and ‘Peter Piper’ are exceptional resources for enhancing children’s awareness skills. They emphasise the significance of rhyme schemes and rhythmic patterns. These songs help children recognise sound patterns and syllabic structures in words, essential for developing phoneme segmentation and blending skills vital for clear speech and literacy

growth (Tomasello, 2003).

Research findings suggest that music improves children's cognitive and language skills. Involvement in music and song training can improve children's understanding of pitch and rhythm, which are crucial elements for language and music development (Schön, Cyrille, & Mireille, 2004). Songs' repetitive structure enables children to recognise sound patterns, thus enhancing their discrimination and phonemic awareness, which are crucial for fostering literacy skills.

Moreover, children's songs can significantly improve different cognitive functions essential for acquiring a new language. For example, preschool children enhanced memory retention for sequences of new words when presented in songs rather than speech, which indicates that the musical structure of songs aids in the encoding and retrieval of information, which is beneficial for acquiring a new language (Wolfe, & Candice, 1993).

3.2.2 Phonological Awareness Through Diverse Linguistic Inputs

Postmodern Theory encourages educators to transcend the conventional norms of language found in traditional children's songs, promoting the incorporation of diverse dialects and nonstandard language forms. This method aims to cultivate deeper insights into phonology. Exposing children to songs that showcase a variety of phonological structures, including those from regional dialects or minority languages, enhances their capacity to adapt to different sound patterns. This improves phonological awareness, which is essential for advancing language skills (Canagarajah, 1999).

Gillon pointed out that children exposed to diverse phonological inputs, including regional and nonstandard dialects, show enhanced phonological awareness (Gillon, 2018). This discovery aligns with the postmodern focus on valuing linguistic variety and questions the prevalence of standardised language in children's music. By integrating diverse linguistic backgrounds into the song repertoire, instructors can assist children in cultivating a nuanced understanding of phonological variations, which is crucial for comprehensive language development.

Incorporating various linguistic elements into children's songs resonates with Postmodern Theory, which emphasises acknowledging and affirming all forms of language. This approach enhances phonological awareness and deepens children's language learning experiences by equipping them with diverse, multilingual environments.

3.3 Integrating Lexicon and Phonological Development

From a Sociocultural perspective, songs are ideal tools for integrating these linguistic domains because they provide socially engaging and contextually meaningful inputs that support both word learning and sound recognition (Vygotsky, 1978).

3.3.1 Songs as Multimodal Tools

Children's songs serve as multimodal inputs, engaging children through auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic elements that enhance their lexical and phonological development. For instance, songs like 'The Wheels on the Bus' introduce vocabulary related to actions and objects while reinforcing language's rhythmic and prosodic features. This combined focus on vocabulary and phonology helps

children internalise both the meanings of words and their sound structures.

3.3.2 Challenging Traditional Norms Through Diverse Inputs

Postmodern Theory critiques the limited range of phonological patterns and vocabulary typically found in traditional English-language songs. This advocates the inclusion of songs from diverse linguistic and cultural contexts to ensure that children are exposed to a wide range of phonological and lexical inputs. By incorporating songs from different dialects and languages, educators can offer a more inclusive approach to language learning that reflects the full range of phonological and lexical diversity in students' lives (Garcia & Li, 2014).

For example, adapting songs like 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' into different regional dialects or singing 'The Alphabet Song' with various local accents can help children practice sounds from different dialects while learning new vocabulary. This approach encourages linguistic flexibility, supporting both phonological awareness and lexical development in a culturally inclusive manner.

4. Children's Songs as Socially Mediated Tools for Language Learning

From a Sociocultural perspective, acquiring language is fundamentally a communal endeavour, shaped by engagements with those who possess excellent knowledge and facilitate the learner's growth. Children's songs hold significant value in this context, providing organised and engaging avenues for learners to enhance their vocabulary and phonological awareness. These repetitive and rhythmic songs create a supportive framework for children to interact with unfamiliar words and sounds. This organised repetition aids in solidifying their grasp of sound patterns, rendering the vocabulary presented in songs more unforgettable and straightforward.

4.1 Engagement through Repetition and Rhythm

Children's songs employ repetitive lyrics, rhymes, and melodies that captivate young listeners, making the process of language learning interactive and enjoyable (Campbell, 2010). According to Vygotsky's ZPD highlights the gap between what a child can achieve independently and what they can achieve with support (Vygotsky, 1978). In this context, children's songs provide guided learning through repetition, allowing them to internalise new vocabulary and sound patterns over time.

For example, popular songs like 'The Wheels on the Bus' or 'If You're Happy and You Know It' are performed in group settings, often led by caregivers or peers, creating a collaborative learning environment. The repetitive elements of these songs enhance phonological awareness by familiarising the children with sound patterns, rhymes, and alliterations. At the same time, rhythm and melody emphasise prosodic features such as stress and intonation, which are critical for fluent speech development (Goswami, & Peter, 2016). Children can practice and reinforce new language structures through active participation in these songs, moving closer to independent language use within their ZPD.

4.2 Songs as Cultural and Social Mediators

Beyond their linguistic value, children's songs also act as cultural mediators that connect language

learning with social norms and cultural knowledge. These songs often embed culturally specific expressions, idiomatic phrases, and social values in their lyrics. For instance, traditional nursery rhymes or folk songs usually convey cultural narratives, historical events, or social customs, embedding language acquisition within a broader cultural framework (Campbell, 2010). By exposing children to the language of their cultural environment, songs help them develop both their linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

4.3 Scaffolded Learning Through Social Interaction

The social interaction facilitated by children's songs further supports scaffolded learning, a core concept of Sociocultural Theory. In group singing activities, children are encouraged to take turns, listen actively, and participate in synchronised actions, all foundational to language development. This process strengthens linguistic skills and develops social and emotional competencies. As children observe and imitate more knowledgeable others, they receive guidance that gradually decreases as they become more proficient (Wood, Jerome, & Gail, 2006).

For instance, singing games like 'Ring a Ring o' Roses' or 'The Hokey Pokey' integrate movement with language, encouraging children to interact with new vocabulary and sound patterns while engaging in physical activities. This multisensory experience enhances cognitive development, reinforcing that language learning is deeply embedded in social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

4.4 Cultural Inclusivity and Linguistic Diversity

While traditional children's songs have aided language acquisition, it is vital to diversify song selection to represent the broad linguistic and cultural tapestry prominent in today's classrooms. Educators can create a more inclusive learning environment by using songs from many cultural backgrounds, such as "Frère Jacques" from France or "Los Pollitos Dicen" from Latin America. This technique allows students from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds to connect their home-language experiences with classroom learning. Nevertheless, it encourages bilingualism or multilingualism (Paquette, & Sue, 2008).

Furthermore, Postmodern Theory empowers educators to question the dominant cultural narratives of traditional songs. It is essential to incorporate dialects and minority languages, thereby recognising every child's linguistic identity. This method promotes a more inclusive and culturally relevant approach to language instruction by connecting the gap between the home and school through children's songs. It will assist us in challenging the uniformity of language practices and foster a learning atmosphere that promotes and honours diversity, aligning with the translanguaging principles (Garcia & Li, 2004).

Research shows consistent exposure to language via songs enhances children's memory retention and phonological awareness, which are essential for acquiring a language (Register, 2001). Melodic tunes and repetitive lyrics in songs like "The Alphabet Song" and "Five Little Ducks" enhance children's word retention while familiarising them with patterns and rhythmic styles that support their phonological development.

Educators can enhance this method by incorporating various styles and regional accents, allowing children to experience a broad range of speech sounds reflecting the full linguistic diversity spectrum within their native language. This approach fosters understanding and facilitates children's knowledge of intricate sound patterns in their language.

5. Songs as Cultural Representation: A Postmodern Perspective

Postmodern Theory encourages educators to analyse the representation of diverse voices and language styles in the resources they choose for their classrooms. Some fear conventional songs might not entirely reflect the lexical subtleties in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. This limitation may result in a preference for certain language forms over dialects or minority languages, thereby restricting children's exposure to linguistic expressions.

Educators can address these challenges by integrating music from various cultural traditions into their instructional approaches. This strategy provides children with a broader range of language sounds and vocabulary, more holistically reflecting the diversity of their environments. This aligns with the aim of Postmodern Theory to decentralise language education and foster a deeper understanding of linguistic development (Norton, & Kelleen, 2004).

5.1 Cultural Bias in Traditional Children's Songs

Children's songs in English-speaking countries reflect the dominant beliefs of their societies, like in familiar melodies, 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and 'The Wheels On The Bus'. These melodies express patterns and deep-rooted cultural values that might not resonate equally with young individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Pennycook, 2021). While these songs seek to engage learners' attention, the Postmodern Theory challenges the idea that nursery rhymes are free from cultural bias.

Postmodern Theory in education encourages educators to critically examine the selection of children's songs by exploring the perspectives and cultural narratives represented within them. There is a concern that by emphasising music from the cultural sphere, educators may inadvertently neglect the perspectives of minority communities. This oversight may marginalise disadvantaged groups, limiting the variety of cultural and linguistic experiences available to students (Canagarajah, 1999).

To address this issue effectively, educators are encouraged to adopt a teaching approach that involves thoughtfully assessing and broadening the selection of children's songs to encompass a variety of cultural perspectives. This approach aligns with the principles of Postmodern Theory, which advocates for deconstructing teaching methods to reveal and challenge ingrained cultural biases, thereby promoting a more equitable and diverse educational environment.

5.2 Power Dynamics and Language Hierarchies

Children's songs can also reflect broader power dynamics in language education. The widespread use of standardised language forms in traditional English-language songs often reinforces the dominance of dialects and linguistic norms while sidelining regional accents, nonstandard dialects, or indigenous

languages. This creates a hierarchy of language use that privileges certain forms of speech while devaluing others, thus perpetuating linguistic inequalities in educational settings (Kubota, & Angel, 2009)

For example, songs like “London Bridge is Falling Down” or “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep” are often used in early language education. However, their cultural references and linguistic forms may not be accessible or relevant to all children, particularly those from non-Western backgrounds. This highlights the need for educators to critically reflect on the cultural and linguistic assumptions embedded in their materials, ensuring that they do not perpetuate social hierarchies through language (Pennycook, 2021).

5.3 Decentralising Language Learning Through Diverse Songs

Postmodern Theory promotes language education by addressing the cultural biases in traditional children’s songs. It uses a decentralised approach that encourages incorporating diverse linguistic and cultural content to create a learning environment that reflects students’ diverse backgrounds.

By including songs from backgrounds such as “Frère Jacques” from France or “Sakura” from Japan in the classroom setting, educators allow students to connect with varied linguistic styles and cultural stories weaved throughout music traditions. This increases children’s knowledge of other language patterns while celebrating their cultural history, fostering a sense of connectedness and inclusivity in the school environment (Garcia, & Li, 2014).

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, instructors can modify songs to represent better the many languages spoken by their pupils; this can be accomplished by altering lyrics, integrating local dialects, and translating songs into different languages. These changes are consistent with breaking down linguistic hierarchies and accepting all kinds of language and communication as valid (Canagarajah, 1999). Expanding the number of children’s songs used in classrooms can assist educators in disrupting the prevalence of language structures and pursuing strategies in language education.

This comprehensive approach to education is a step towards identifying and appreciating each student’s linguistic and cultural heritage while ensuring that language learning is efficient, fair, and representative of our interconnected world.

5.4 Critical Reflection on Song Selection in Education

Postmodern Theory encourages teachers to consider the songs they choose for classroom use and the tales and language styles they provide or exclude when selecting music materials for students’ learning experiences.

By selecting songs that reflect the cultural and linguistic fabric of the classroom, teachers may create a welcoming learning environment in which every child can recognise themselves and feel a feeling of belonging. This strategy benefits language learning and contributes to a fuller understanding of a language's cultural and social components.

This approach to teaching language is convenient because it recognises the importance of context in language acquisition. This strategy allows students to form connections with the subject matter, which can improve their learning experience and outcomes. Furthermore, it extends beyond language

education by empowering students to investigate and value various expressions and language traditions.

6. Songs as Input in Interactionist Theory Perspective

6.1 Songs Multisensory Learning Tools and Their Limitations

According to interactionist theory, language acquisition occurs through meaningful social interactions. This approach emphasises the value of active engagement in language exchanges, in which children interact with their surroundings, receive feedback, and use language in socially dynamic situations. The idea proposes that children's songs serve as interactive tools, allowing them to engage verbally and physically with language.

Songs like 'If You're Happy and You Know It' blend words with actions like applauding and stomping, resulting in a multisensory learning experience. This perspective, reinforced by Interactionist Theory, implies that such songs are more than passive linguistic exercises. Instead, they place young people in a socially meaningful setting, allowing them to reinforce vocabulary and phonological patterns through active engagement (Tomasello, 2003).

The Interactionist Theory assumes that all children benefit equally from these interactive language experiences. However, this assumption frequently overlooks many classrooms' different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Research shows that children from non-English-speaking homes may need help engaging with English-language songs that do not reflect their cultural or linguistic background (Pennycook, 2021).

For example, the phonological structures and vocabulary included in traditional English children's songs may need to be discovered or be relevant to children from diverse cultural backgrounds, restricting their capacity to participate fully in the language-learning process. This necessitates a more inclusive song selection that represents the varied language realities of modern schools.

6.2 The Need for Feedback and Deeper Linguistic Engagement

Interactionist Theory highlights the importance of real-time feedback in language development. However, options for customised feedback are frequently limited in group singing activities such as those found in early childhood education. While children can participate in group activities, a lack of individualised correction may reinforce errors such as mispronunciations without prompt supervision from teachers (Tomasello, 2003). This undermines one of the key strengths of the interactionist approach: personalised input to improve language development. Ensuring each child receives the corrective feedback required to improve their phonological and lexical skills in large groups is challenging.

Although children's songs encourage repetition and connection but frequently foster surface-level linguistic engagement, while rhythmic repetition and recognisable patterns can help with early vocabulary acquisition, they may impede deeper linguistic understanding. Bruner contends that meaningful language learning requires engagement with complicated linguistic systems rather than

simply memorising words and sounds (Bruner, 1985). Children may learn to repeat words without fully grasping grammatical rules or having profound implications. This shows that while children's songs are good at teaching fundamental vocabulary and phonological patterns, they may need to be reinforced with more cognitively demanding activities such as conversation or narrative to build a more profound knowledge of language.

While the Interactionist Theory promotes multisensory participation in language learning, this technique may only be appropriate for some learners. Children with sensory processing impairments may find a combination of auditory, tactile, and verbal inputs overpowering, limiting their capacity to focus on linguistic content (Shams, & Aaron, 2008). For these students, songs' interactive and multimodal qualities may serve as a barrier rather than a facilitator of language acquisition. This constraint emphasises the importance of more adaptable and varied approaches in the classroom, guaranteeing that all children, regardless of sensory preferences, can benefit from language-learning activities.

7. Conclusion

Children's songs offer a potent tool for learning a new language from scratch by leveraging melody and repetition to enrich their vocabulary and phonological development (Goswami & Peter, 2016). However, the significance of these songs for language learning is multifaceted. This can be better understood by examining various theoretical viewpoints.

From a perspective that considers society and culture together, children's songs are more than fun. They play the role of tools that help children learn language in the context of their culture (Vygotsky, 1978). These songs provide ways to practice language patterns and new words, helping children learn better through repetition and engagement, which are vital for their mental development (Wood, Jerome, & Gail, 2006). To make them more effective, songs should reflect the diversity of students, creating an inclusive educational environment that is easy for them to relate to.

Postmodern Theory challenges using songs that uphold a narrow set of cultural stories and language norms (Canagarajah, 1999). It advocates examining the songs used in educational contexts to ensure that they include children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By incorporating a range of linguistic aspects into teaching practices, educators can establish an inclusive language-learning atmosphere that values diverse forms of language and communication.

The Interactionist Theory emphasises the importance of interaction in language acquisition by suggesting that children's songs can be a beneficial interactive learning method (Tomasello, 2003). Engaging in group singing activities can enhance children's phonological awareness. However, having a large group may limit the effectiveness of this interaction, highlighting the need for feedback and smaller group settings to address individual learning needs (Bruner, 1985).

Although incorporating children's songs can greatly enhance phonological skill development in educational settings, it is essential to integrate them within a diverse teaching approach that includes

storytelling and interactive reading activities alongside play-based methods to ensure a well-rounded language learning journey that caters to all aspects of linguistic growth and progressivism (Pennycook, 2021). Education professionals should prioritise embracing diversity and inclusivity in utilising songs as valuable language acquisition tools while promoting cross-cultural awareness to facilitate fair and equitable language learning opportunities for all students.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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