

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH SONGS AS A STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING ABILITIES IN YOUNG LEARNERS

LA EFICACIA DE LAS CANCIONES EN INGLÉS COMO ESTRATEGIA PARA DESARROLLAR LAS HABILIDADES DE ESCRITURA EN LOS JÓVENES ESTUDIANTES

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Abstract

Songs are important tools in teaching English, especially practical for language learning with children. They are rhythmic, repetitive, and emotional; these properties of songs make the process of acquiring language as effortless as possible. This research is based on analysis of the application of song-based activities as a teaching resource to improve writing skills among sixth-grade students in a school in Latacunga in 2025. A quantitative pre-test and post-test design was used to figure out the writing competencies of these students, including coherence, comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary. The sample consisted of 17 students, aged ten years old. The data reveal a positive change after the intervention; namely, the number of students with excellent writing skills has doubled. These results imply that through the addition of songs to the teaching of



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English, they can mainly promote the growth of writing skills, and this can also be a basis for the development of further educational programs.

Keywords: young students; songs; communicative language teaching; improvement of written expression

Resumen

Las canciones son herramientas importantes en la enseñanza del inglés, especialmente prácticas para el aprendizaje del idioma en niños. Son rítmicas, repetitivas y emotivas; estas características hacen que el proceso de adquisición del lenguaje sea lo más sencillo posible. Esta investigación se basa en el análisis de la aplicación de actividades basadas en canciones como recurso didáctico para mejorar las habilidades de escritura entre estudiantes de sexto grado en una escuela de Latacunga en 2025. Se utilizó un diseño cuantitativo con pruebas previas y posteriores para evaluar las competencias de escritura de estos estudiantes, incluyendo coherencia, comprensión, ortografía y vocabulario. La muestra consistió en 17 estudiantes de diez años. Los datos revelan un cambio positivo después de la intervención; es decir, el número de estudiantes con habilidades de escritura excelentes se ha duplicado. Estos resultados sugieren que la incorporación de canciones en la enseñanza del inglés puede principalmente promover el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura y también servir como base para el diseño de futuros programas educativos.

Palabras clave: *alumnos jóvenes; canciones enseñanza comunicativa de idiomas; mejora de la expresión escrita*

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Introduction

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, developing writing abilities remains a major difficulty for both students and teachers. Despite using traditional grammar and structured writing methods, many students struggle to communicate ideas coherently, expand their vocabulary, and correctly apply language structures (Sharma & Joshi, 2024). The emphasis on formulaic writing exercises and rigid grammar routines can impede students' ability to develop fluency and creativity, thereby impeding their overall writing proficiency. Conventional classes often compound these challenges due to their limited time and reliance on blackboards and textbooks.

Traditional classroom instruction alone may not totally engage students or foster meaningful improvement in writing. Ineffective lesson planning further exacerbates this issue. Teachers' ability to organize and adapt activities strongly influences the integration of innovative strategies that increase confidence when expressing written or spoken ideas (Bukhori, B., 2025). Students who lack confidence often face additional challenges, such as limited vocabulary, difficulty generating ideas, and low participation, which can hinder the



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development of writing skills.

A well-known song provides authentic language input, contextualized vocabulary, and exposure to cultural elements, which can enhance comprehension, retention, and the internalization of grammatical structures (Sequeira, M. A., 2025). Beyond their linguistic benefits, songs create an engaging and motivating classroom environment, encouraging creativity, participation, and a positive attitude toward English learning. By integrating songs into writing lessons, not only does it diversify teaching methods, but it also addresses some of the limitations of traditional instruction by promoting meaningful and interactive learning experiences.

The aim of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of using songs as an innovative teaching tool to improve the writing skills of sixth-grade students, considering both linguistic development and motivational factors.

Theoretical Framework

Writing as a skill in Second Language (L2) learning

Writing is a complex skill in learning a second language (L2), requiring the integration of various cognitive, linguistic, and communicative processes (Manchón, R, 2020). This complexity arises because learners must simultaneously plan their ideas, organize content logically, and apply appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Additionally, writing in L2 also demands continuous revision and self-monitoring to ensure clarity and coherence, making it a highly demanding activity that goes beyond simple language knowledge. Therefore, successful writing development in a second language depends on nurturing multiple interrelated skills that work together to produce meaningful, accurate, and contextually appropriate texts.

Express written texts involve more than just constructing correct sentences; effective writing requires planning, organizing thoughts, monitoring progress, and revising work to communicate meaning clearly and appropriately in different contexts (Hyland & Jiang, 2020). From this perspective, teaching writing should be considered a communicative, meaning-oriented process that allows students to construct knowledge while emphasizing strategic reflection and control during text production.

Grammar accuracy based on contextulized practice

Writing is a fundamental macro-skill in second language (L2) learning, as it requires the combined use of cognitive, linguistic, and communicative processes. Contemporary authors in applied linguistics define it as a highly demanding productive skill that requires planning, structuring, monitoring, and revising the text (Manchón, 2020). Early-stage learners particularly benefited from mastering key elements such as verb tenses, auxiliary verbs, and subject-verb agreement.

Incorporating songs in the classroom often can make learning grammar more enjoyable and meaningful; it helps students to internalize these patterns and apply them in their written expressions. Sadiqzade (2024) argues that guided, contextual practice can significantly strengthen these skills. In addition, it indicates that mastering grammar helps students express themselves clearly. The idea of using songs as a teaching tool presents a practical and engaging method to reinforce grammar learning, making it more memorable.

The focus on increasing the vocabulary range

A broad vocabulary also allows students to make their communication more precise and engaging. As noted



in research by Dang (2022), having a diverse vocabulary enables students to select the most appropriate words for different contexts, which helps to prevent unnecessary repetition and enhances the overall clarity and richness of their expression.

Therefore, providing frequent, meaningful, and emotionally engaging input supports the retention of verbs, adjectives, and idiomatic expressions (García-Carmona & Fernández-Corbacho, 2022). A rich vocabulary allows students to communicate more creatively and effectively. The connection to music as a tool for vocabulary enhancement is insightful, demonstrating how engaging materials can facilitate language retention. Ultimately, repeated exposure to vocabulary through music boosts language acquisition, making it a valuable strategy for expanding students' word banks.

The importance of coherence and cohesion

Coherence and cohesion are fundamental elements in creating texts that are not only easy to read but also logically structured. Coherence refers to the clear organization of ideas, ensuring that the text flows smoothly and that the reader can easily follow the writer's line of thought. On the other hand, cohesion involves the use of linguistic devices such as connectors, anaphora, and discourse markers to link sentences and paragraphs together.

These tools help establish relationships between different parts of the text, making it unified and consistent. According to Agustini (2025), both coherence and cohesion work hand in hand to enhance the overall clarity and effectiveness of written communication, enabling readers to comprehend and engage with the content more efficiently. Songs expose learners to complete narrative structures and sequences, offering clear examples of how to organize their writing. Thus, integrating songs into writing instruction can strengthen these skills by providing rhythmic and contextualized examples of connected ideas.

Use of songs as tools to improve comprehension in writing

The use of songs as a teaching resource has gained relevance in language learning over the last decade, especially in communicative and input-based approaches. According to Paquette (2020), this approach enhances familiarity with the language and provides learners with authentic input that reflects real-life usage. Such exposure includes frequent encounters with useful lexical items and grammatical structures that are commonly used, allowing learners to recognize and internalize patterns naturally. By focusing on high-frequency vocabulary and grammar within authentic materials, language instruction becomes more relevant and practical, better preparing students for effective communication. This method supports deeper comprehension and retention, as learners engage with language that is both contextually appropriate and functional for everyday interactions. Ultimately, these practices contribute to more efficient and effective language acquisition.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative, quasi-experimental research approach was implemented to analyze the influence of songs in English on the development of writing skills. This approach allowed the collection of numerical, comparable data to identify changes in participants' performance after the intervention. The study followed a pretest–posttest design, consisting of a preliminary test, two intervention sessions, and a final post-test. Evaluation criteria were established to ensure objective scoring of specific writing aspects, including coherence,



vocabulary range, spelling, and grammatical accuracy.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 17 sixth-grade students, aged 10 to 11, enrolled at Lenin School in Latacunga during 2025. Participation was authorized by the school principal, ensuring institutional consent. A non-probability, purposive sampling method was employed, selecting students who were available and willing to participate. This approach was deemed appropriate given the limited population size and the focus on a single class group.

Intervention

The intervention was based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and consisted of two sessions following the pretest. The sessions included meaningful activities such as singing, repetition exercises, and guided practice, which allowed students to recognize and use linguistic structures in controlled contexts before applying them independently in the post-test. The activities were structured to progressively prepare students to incorporate vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and cohesive devices into their written work.

Instruments, Validity, and Reliability

A writing assessment rubric was used to evaluate coherence, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical accuracy. The rubric was developed based on established L2 writing frameworks and reviewed by two experienced English teachers to ensure content validity. Its design allows consistent scoring across participants and promotes reliable measurement of students' writing performance in both the pre-test and post-test.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instruments were the pre-test and the post-test, both designed to evaluate different aspects of writing skills.

- Pre-test: It consisted of five written tasks. The first two activities measured coherence in basic written sentences, the third activity assessed listening comprehension, the fourth evaluated current vocabulary knowledge, and the fifth rated spelling accuracy. Although this study focuses on writing, listening comprehension was included because understanding spoken language supports students' ability to construct meaningful sentences and use vocabulary appropriately in written tasks.
- Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): During the intervention, various CLT strategies were applied to encourage collaboration, participation, and active engagement. Researchers acted as teachers and facilitators, guiding students through meaningful activities, including listening to and singing English songs.
- Post-test: The same tasks from the pre-test were administered at the end of the intervention to evaluate improvements in writing skills. A rubric with a four-level scale (Excellent, Good, Low Performance, Needs Support) was used to assess each task based on coherence, vocabulary use, spelling, and overall structure. This scale ensured consistency in scoring and allowed for clear comparison of pre- and post-test results.

The pre-test and post-test were the main tools for collecting data. They were both made to examine different



parts of writing skills.

Data Analysis Procedure

A descriptive method was employed to analyze the test results and identify changes in students' writing performance. Data were organized using tables and percentages to facilitate interpretation. The approach focused specifically on the quantitative phase, enabling observation of trends and variations in writing skills after the intervention.

Results and Discussion

This section shows the results obtained, described in three tables. Table 1 shows the results based on the pre-test.

Table 1. Pre test results

Student	Coherence	Comprehension	Spelling	Vocabulary	Total Score (%)	Notes
1	5	2	4	3	56%	Low performance
2	2	2	3	3	40%	Needs support
3	6	3	3	3	68%	Good
4	3	6	1	5	80%	Excellent
5	3	5	2	4	36%	Needs support
6	7	3	4	3	68%	Good
7	6	3	4	3	64%	Good
8	2	3	3	3	44%	Needs support
9	7	4	5	5	84%	Excellent
10	2	2	4	2	40%	Needs support
11	6	4	3	3	64%	Good
12	7	5	5	4	84%	Excellent
13	3	2	2	2	36%	Needs support
14	8	4	5	5	88%	Excellent
15	2	2	3	3	40%	Needs support
16	3	3	2	3	44%	Needs support
17	2	2	3	2	36%	Needs support

Table 1 summarizes the performance of students in the pretest. Overall, initial results indicate that most students demonstrated low to average writing skills. Specifically, 53% of students scored below 50%, placing them in the "Needs Support" category, while only 29% reached "Good" or "Excellent" levels. Coherence showed the highest relative performance, whereas comprehension presented the lowest scores. Spelling and vocabulary were generally limited, reflecting initial difficulties with basic linguistic resources.



The pre-test results confirm the need for a targeted methodology to improve writing skills, particularly in comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling.

Table 2. Post test results

Student	Coherence	Comprehension	Spelling	Vocabulary	Total Score (%)	Notes
1	8	5	5	5	92%	Excellent
2	7	4	4	4	76%	Good
3	10	4	5	5	96%	Excellent
4	7	4	4	4	76%	Good
5	10	5	5	5	100%	Excellent
6	10	4	5	5	96%	Excellent
7	8	5	4	5	84%	Excellent
8	7	4	4	4	76%	Good
9	10	4	5	5	96%	Excellent
10	8	4	4	4	80%	Good
11	10	4	5	5	96%	Excellent
12	10	5	5	5	100%	Excellent
13	8	4	4	4	80%	Good
14	10	5	5	5	100%	Excellent
15	7	4	4	4	76%	Good
16	7	4	4	4	76%	Good
17	8	4	4	4	80%	Good

After the intervention using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach with songs, students showed considerable improvement in all writing components. Table 2 presents the post-test results. The post-test results indicate that all students moved into the “Good” or “Excellent” categories, with 47% achieving a perfect score. This confirms the effectiveness of the CLT methodology combined with songs in promoting English writing skills.

Table 3. Comparative analysis.

Category	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)	Interpretation
Needs Support (0–50%)	53 %	0 %	All students improved
Regular (51–60%)	12 %	0 %	Shifted to higher categories
Good (61–80%)	18 %	53 %	Majority improved to “Good”
Excellent (81–100%)	24 %	47 %	Significant achievement

The comparative analysis shows that all students improved their writing skills, with increases ranging



approximately from 12% to 44% in total score. Students with the lowest initial performance demonstrated the greatest gains, confirming that the methodology was particularly beneficial for supporting weaker writers. Coherence and vocabulary showed the most consistent improvements, while comprehension and spelling also increased, though to a slightly lesser extent.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach with songs positively influenced students' writing performance, fostering both skill development and motivation.

Discussion of Results

The results of this study indicated that song-based activities had a very positive effect on the development of students' vocabulary, coherence, spelling, and writing comprehension skills. The results of this study indicated that song-based activities had a very positive effect on the development of students' vocabulary, coherence, spelling, and writing comprehension skills. The study pointed out that carefully selected songs, which are both engaging and contextually relevant, serve as effective tools in the teaching of English vocabulary. Songs combine melody, rhythm, and repetition, which together create memorable linguistic patterns that aid in long-term retention.

Specifically, the coherence part showed notable progress compared to the initial assessment. According to Rahman (2024), repeated exposure to contextualized sentence structures plays a crucial role in helping learners effectively organize their written ideas. Similarly, improvements in spelling were observed, likely due to the simple, musical lyrics. Similarly, improvements in spelling were observed, likely due to the catchy musical lyrics. Kumar (2022) stated that the inclusion of song-based tasks during the CLT sessions enhanced student engagement, creating a more participatory and confident learning environment.

Similarly, improvements in spelling were observed, likely due to the easy musical lyrics. Kumar (2022) stated that the inclusion of song-based tasks during the CLT sessions enhanced student engagement, creating a more participatory and confident learning environment. By integrating easy-to-follow lyrics into writing lessons, students were allowed to engage meaningfully with language, promoting improvements in spelling.

As seen in this research, songs can serve as a powerful motivational tool for enhancing students' confidence in learning English. Engaging with songs through singing allows learners to practice key language elements such as pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation within a relaxed and enjoyable environment, which helps reduce speaking anxiety (Yulfi & Aalayina, 2021). The repetitive nature of song lyrics facilitates the internalization of vocabulary and sentence structures, enabling students to feel more prepared and capable when using the language. Moreover, the enjoyable and interactive aspects of songs can elevate students' self-esteem by providing regular opportunities for achievement, such as memorizing lyrics or performing in front of peers.

Conclusions

This study has shown that the use of songs in English classes positively influenced the development of sixth-grade students' writing skills, specifically in coherence, spelling, vocabulary, and overall writing performance. The pre-test and post-test results confirmed measurable improvements after the song-based intervention, indicating that repeated exposure to contextualized linguistic input supports better organization of ideas, correct word spelling, and boosted lexical knowledge.



The findings suggested that integrating songs into writing lessons promotes active participation, which increases students' confidence to produce written texts. These outcomes are aligned with the results, demonstrating that song-tasked activities contribute to the progressive improvement of students' writing components.

Finally, further studies could explore the long-term retention of writing skills and investigate the effects of combining songs with other motivational or multimedia resources to strengthen second language acquisition. These steps would provide more solid evidence related to the effectiveness of music-based pedagogical strategies in L2 writing instruction.

Recommendations

Despite these positive outcomes, several limitations must be considered.

- First, the sample size was small (17 students), which restricts the generalizability of the results.
- Second, the duration of the intervention was short (two CLT sessions), limiting the ability to observe long-term retention and sustained improvements.
- Third, the study lacked a control group, making it difficult to attribute all observed changes solely to the song-based intervention.
- Finally, while quantitative pre- and post-tests provided measurable data, the study did not include other qualitative measures that could offer a deeper understanding of students' writing processes.

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