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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC IN TEACHING TURKISH

## ЗНАЧЕНИЕ МУЗЫКИ В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ ТУРЕЦКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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The whole history of teaching foreign languages is, in a way, a search for the best methodologies of doing so. Methods of teaching can be seen as systems providing the optimal ways of getting basic knowledge of a foreign language for students. The existing wide variety of methods suggests the choice of those most efficient for particular individuals. Each of the methodologies used relies on a number of theoretical underpinnings. This article advances proposals on using music in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, based on the principles of suggestopedia — the psychology of positive teaching developed by G. Lozanov. It is claimed that suggestopedia helps students learn a foreign language 3 to 5 times faster than those who rely on traditional methods of study.



Suggestopedia makes colloquial dialogues in a foreign language be pronounced and/or listened to in the same way as music, and music is used as a facilitating and motivating factor, without lyrics. However, teaching

Вся история преподавания иностранных языков содержит поиск вопросов о том, как преподавать языки. Методы преподавания представляются как системы, которые показывают для студентов способы оптимального получения базовых знаний. Многообразие методов порождает проблему выбора наиболее эффективных. Каждый используемый метод определяется теоретическими основаниями.

В настоящей статье излагаются предложения по использованию музыки в преподавании турецкого языка как иностранного, основанные на принципах суггестопедии, или психологии положительного обучения Г. Лозанова. Утверждается, что учащиеся, использующие этот метод, могут учиться примерно в 3–5 раз быстрее по сравнению с учащимся, изучающим язык с помощью традиционных методов обучения.

В суггестопедии разговорные диалоги на иностранном языке произносятся и / или слушаются так же, как и музыка, которая используется для облегчения, для мотивации, без слов. Тем не менее, преподавание только через суггестопедию само по себе недостаточно. Методика ограничена использованием только кругом взрослых учащихся, небольшой группой. Необхо-

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based on suggestopedia alone will not suffice, since in the classical form it is limited by adult audiences and small ones to boot. Other peculiarities of students and groups also have to be accounted for, such as their linguistic background: if their first language is a Turkic one, they can be expected to learn Turkish faster, since they are already familiar with the melodic mode of the language.

It can nevertheless be postulated that the use of songs in language learning helps develop such skills as vocabulary, rules of grammar and correct pronunciation. Songs facilitate teaching new words, grammatical rules, learning direction, layout, numbers and demonstrative adjectives. This is both useful and interesting for all categories of learners, children as well as adults.

**Keywords:** Turkish language; methods of teaching language; problems of teaching language; music; Turkey

димо также учитывать другие особенности обучающихся, например, если их родной язык является тюркоязычным — они учат турецкий язык быстрее, они уже знакомы с мелодической языка.

Тем не менее, утверждается, что использование музыки развивать такие способности, как словарный запас, грамматические правила, правильное произношение с помощью песен. Песни облегчают преподавание новых слов, грамматических правил, расположения, направления, числа, показательных прилагательных. Это интересно и полезно для обучающихся детей и взрослых.

**Ключевые слова:** турецкий язык; методика преподавания; проблемы преподавания; музыка; Турция; тюркский язык

## Introduction

In the history of foreign language education, how the language should be taught has long been a major issue. Therefore, many different methods have been developed and used. Foreign language teaching methods are systems trying to show the way to make the student a more competent learner, in teaching efforts beyond it being a means of causing to acquire background knowledge (Memiş, Erdem, 2013: 298). The diversity of existing methods in foreign language teaching also brings up the problem of which methods are more effective in language instruction. A method which could be useful for a person may not be helpful for another person in the same degree (Tarcan, 2004: 6). The method used in foreign language teaching determines the theoretical foundations of the instruction. Ue to this, it bears significance to know well the basic principles, limits of the methods used and the ways and particularities of using them. In this study, we have presented some proposals on using music in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

## *Suggestopedia in Which Music is Used as a Tool*

Although the systems can exhibit changes the limits, names or varieties of the systems used in foreign language education, Mental Instruction which includes learning by music takes place among the foreign language teaching methods recognized by the European Council Contemporary Languages Department and is widely used.

Suggestopedia was developed after 1960 by the Bulgarian psychotherapist and educator, Georgi Lozanov, by making use of data of psychology. Lozanov asserts that being taught language in accordance with this method, students can learn



between approximately 3 and 5 times faster with respect to students learning language by traditional teaching methods. He claims that this method gives positive results through psychology of positive learning and this could be possible through suggestion (Doğan, 2012: 306). The most interesting particularities of suggestopedia are the decoration of the classroom, use of music and the authoritative attitude of the teacher (Memiş, Erdem, 2013: 308–309). In this method, in terms of effective learning, it bears significance that the classroom medium is bright, spacious, interesting and comfortable. In suggestopedia, colloquial dialogues in foreign language are pronounced and/or listened to as accompanied by background music. The music usually has no singing and stimulates relief and motivation.

Nevertheless, teaching through suggestopedia alone is not recognized as a language teaching method. Being able to apply this to teaching groups comprised of a few adults reduces the area of this system. However, music is for everybody and everyone should benefit effectively from its power of teaching. In foreign language education, it is important to consider also the power of music to develop such skills as vocabulary, grammatical rules, or correct pronunciation by means of songs.

### ***Impacts of Cantabile Education***

Using songs in language education has many significant impacts and consequences. Some of the impacts are mentioned below:

#### *Singing activates the language acquisition mechanism in the brain*

According to U. Eco, music is a free language, the pronunciation systems and structure of which are different (Eco, 1979: 12–15). Using this language as a key in teaching Turkish as a foreign language could lead to extremely positive results. While findings of neurologists show that the music and language structure are processed in the same area of the brain, they report also that the musical structure and linguistic syntax take place here in the same parallel way (Maess, Koelsch, 2001).

Songs with their rhythmic and melodic structures based on repeating, have been shown by N. Chomsky in 1965 to be factors activating the Language Acquisition Mechanism representing the language learning skill in human brain (Chomsky, 1965: 63–64; Gökşenli, 2011: 17). Murphey suggested that songs could trigger the repeating mechanism taking place in the “Language Acquisition Device” mentioned by Chomsky, and also mentioned its significance in foreign language teaching (Murphey, 1992: 7). Krashen specifies that songs leading to involuntary repeats is an evidence of existence of the site in the brain which Chomsky named the “Language Acquisition Device”.

*Through repeats songs ensure word acquisition, strengthen learning and impact emotional memory*

One of the basic properties of songs impacting the Language Acquisition Mechanism is that it impresses the listener psychologically, receptively and culturally much more



than it could do in reading a single text. According to Leon, songs constitute a site of our emotional memory and only odors, tastes and photographs can have a reminder impact stronger than those (Leon, 1978: 24). Research made on word teaching in a foreign language and on remembering what have been taught show that songs provide great benefit in mastering vocabulary (Batdı, Semerci, 2012: 127). Murphey specifies that children like to repeat the song lyrics by likening them to egocentric language; people tend to repeat the voices they hear around, sometimes in their own brains, and sometimes in their own voices (Murphey, 1992: 7).

With respect to classical learning techniques, it is much more lasting when learning as accompanied by music, plain texts or patterns to be memorized. This power of music has been used for hundreds of years. Teaching the religious texts which are difficult to memorize in the form of hymns is one of such ways. And, in our day, the youth are able to memorize with the help of accompanying rhythmic patterns the lyrics of the Rap songs that take pages and pages. In foreign language education, it is very important to have continuous language practice and use persistently the patterns and words learned. From this angle, music has a miraculous impact. The student can repeat several times with pleasure a song he/she loves, hence, he/she will acquire the skill targeted.

As part of the structure of songs, persistent repeats are being made in the riff sections. Such repeats help to progress rapidly in language development process and acquire fluency. The blind learning and affective aspect provided by songs ensure each of them can become an important learning material.

*Songs eliminate the feeling of being hindered and make shy and silent students participate in the class*

Education by music is extremely important in terms of developing social skills. Learning by music helps students to get rid of worry and fear that hinder learning, instead providing a comfortable medium free of fear (Berk, 2008: 45). The positive psychological impact of songs eliminates the stress of the feeling of being hindered that can be felt while learning words in the foreign language; it increases the feeling of satisfaction and pleasure (Zengin, Kurbanov, 2003: 202). Songs make life enjoyable and they can make language learning more enjoyable as well (Brewer, 1995: 2).

Furthermore, songs encourage the silent and shy students to speak in front of their teachers and friends. Research shows that learning by music increases the active participation of students and makes the class acquire a communicative aspect (Batdı, Semerci, 2012: 127). Teaching by music regulates the relationships between the individuals in the classroom. It has been repeatedly proved that singing collectively integrates the group members into a closer unity. Language learning in an individual who feels more comfortable and happier would naturally be better.



### *Songs increase interest and motivation in the class*

Teaching by music creates a positive atmosphere in the class. And this, in its turn, impacts positively the eagerness to learn and the efficiency. Songs are extremely useful tools to focus the students' interest, concentration and motivation.

Based on the studies he has held in Kosovo, Bosna-Herzegovnia and Iraq, Nişancı (Nişancı, 2013: 173–178), points out that the biggest problems encountered in teaching Turkish are the lack of interest and motivation of students, based on his work in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq. In addition, he notes that a singing lesson prepared to accommodate and provide practical opportunities in four major skills can be a major remedy for this.

### *Songs develop articulation/pronunciation*

Using music in foreign language teaching not only helps learn more words; but it also ensures correct pronunciation, too. A good example here is singing a song without foreign accent in a language which they don't speak at all. Particularly in those of high musical intelligence, lyrics are pronounced quite close to the mother language.

### *Songs increase the speed of speaking*

Besides helping to use the language without any hesitation, songs help speak fast and fluently, and speed up the language developing process, too (Hisar, 2006: 26). The melodic and rhythmic structure of songs helps the individuals using foreign language, to become able to speak quickly and fluently.

### *Songs activate various learning steps*

According to scientific researches, the more sensory organs are active during learning, the greater the permanence of the knowledge. Use of music in foreign language teaching is a tool in which the student hears the language he/she would be learning, and which he/she himself/herself uses directly. Songs can simultaneously make functional many language learning steps, such as speaking, listening, culture acquisition, understanding the reading, and making practice.

*Songs are materials which can be used everywhere all the time without having the medium of a class*

Songs are materials which can be used by students not only in class medium but at home and everywhere, including the situation of individual learning.

*Songs transfer the culture of the language students learn, they make language learning enjoyable*

Using music in teaching Turkish as a foreign language comes at the frontline of the most significant elements to ensure the language students are learning feels prettier and closer. Teaching by music can help introduce traces of actual life into the class and to feel the Turkish culture in a more immediate way. Songs bearing traces of



Turkish modes make students feel the language in connection with the medium which it originates from. Furthermore, songs help develop love for the language they learn.

### ***Conclusion and Proposals Towards Education by Music***

Our suggestions lie in the general direction explored in the author's previous work on "Teaching English to Turkish children and youngsters" (Vural, 2008). This methodology has been not applied in Turkish teaching. At the same time, data obtained from studies on similar topics, were taken into consideration while the following proposals were being prepared.

When a musical intelligence type is considered in the multiple intelligence theory, it has been noted that a very well planned class full of songs creates positive learning results by activating linguistic skills (Batdı, Semerci, 2012: 127). The following points are thus to be considered while implementing education by music:

Most importantly for foreign language education by music, we should take into account the age of the person or group learning the foreign language. The melodies should be selected according to the voice ares and musical pleasure allowed by the age of the group.

The native language of the group teaching Turkish is another point to consider in musical teaching. Students from the Turkic nations learn Turkish more quickly than those without Turkish origins. Therefore, it is appropriate to mention similar words for people who speak different dialects of Turkic, or to mention the already known (numbers (bir, iki üç...) etc.) issues briefly while the training is being given.

Nişancı specifies that the first property of the material to ensure the successful class in language education by music should be that it is authentic; i.e. the songs should be prepared not for the purpose of language education but for natural speakers of that language (Nişancı, 2013: 176). This means that we should use songs exactly as they were written and liked in that language. However, songs written specifically for the purpose of class use are extremely effective, too, in foreign language education.

Another point that must be considered in musical sense is the memorability of the melody. If the melody is easy to remember, it is the most important factor for it to be repeated frequently. And, frequent repeating would guarantee that students learn the lyrics - the words aimed to be transferred in foreign language.

Major tones or Turkish Maqams such as Rast, Çargah, etc., could be suitable particularly for minor children due both to the bright effect they create and their sequence properties. In addition to these, the Turkish culture can be transferred through songs jointly with the teaching of Turkish. The lyrics of the songs and the modes which they have been written in can ensure this. Songs written in simple modes make the new learning language to be felt jointly with the medium which they were originated from.



Musical pieces to be used in foreign language education can also be in form of writing lyrics for popular melodies, too. However, such case brings along the problem of varying prosody (harmony of lyrics and music), too. If such a method is to be followed, it is extremely important not to make any prosodic mistakes. If the musical note values are inconsistent with the open/close syllables in Turkish, this will have an extremely negative impact on learning. Nevertheless, such a problem can be eliminated by composing a new setting for the lyrics composed of the words determined in the foreign language. However, in such a case, it would be very important that the person composing the setting should possess musical knowledge, experience and taste. It has to be remembered that a melody not pleasing is a melody not liked and never repeated.

A piece of music with a nice melody prevents the students from affective (negative) filtering which hinders learning (Nişancı, 2013: 177).

Also the measure key to be selected such as tone (2/4 or 3/4), should be selected by considering the lyrics of the song and age group to be taught. The reason for preferring the  $\frac{3}{4}$  measure pattern was explained in the study carried out with fourth grade students as we have mentioned above.

Songs make it easier to teach new words, grammatical rules, location, direction, number, demonstrative adjectives. It would give extremely longlasting results to teach the alphabet, the numbers, the right/left or the parts of the body, by making physical movements according to the rhythm of the song. Furthermore, it is also important to benefit from songs in order for the students to acquire correct pronunciation, too.

For both children and adults, songs take an important place in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Particularly, at the earliest stage of the foreign language instruction, songs should be included in the language teaching process to introduce the language and make it felt. Education by music which comes out as a very significant tool on subject of teaching the knowledge to the individual willingly, is very much coherent with foreign language education. Thus, musical approaches should be developed and disseminated in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, too.

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