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Full Length Research Paper

Teacher views about using songs in teaching English to young learners

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The primary aim of this study was to explore the views of Turkish state primary school EFL teachers about songs and using songs in teaching English to young learners. English language teachers' (n= 52) opinions were collected through a questionnaire and the results demonstrated that Turkish EFL teachers have strong beliefs about the pedagogical value of songs and about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching EFL to young learners. However, findings showed that teachers had difficulty in accessing to appropriate songs to use in their classes and in measuring student success when they use songs. Therefore it was suggested in this study that teachers be provided with song materials to use in their classes. Measuring student success was closely related to how to teach songs, and therefore it was suggested that teachers be given in-service training about how to teach songs. To conclude, we may argue that the findings of this study strengthened previous research findings about the role of songs in teaching English to young learners.

Key words: English language teaching, songs, young learners.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners (YLs) has become its own field of study as the age of compulsory English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has become lower and lower in countries around the world, especially in Europe. Ersöz (2007) defines young learners as those children from the first year of formal schooling (6 years old, in our case) to 12 years of age. YLs in Europe are learning EFL at an increasingly early age. As stated in Eurydice (2005), the average starting age to compulsory EFL has decreased to 8.2 years old. Syllabus planning for the YL EFL classrooms flourished as a reflection of this common practice. If we carefully examine the English language syllabuses designed for YLs especially over the last decade, we will come to realize that; they almost always focus on the communicative use of the English language; that the skills of listening and speaking are set as priorities especially in primary education; and that songs are included as essential teaching tools in teaching EFL to YLs. Edelenbos et al. (2006), for example, in trying to exemplify research, good practice and the main underlying principles of early language teaching across Europe argue that games and songs have played a central part in a number of approaches in various countries. As to the philosophical background to the centrality of games and songs in early EFL curricula, they talk about 'age-related language-learning' and they further argue that songs are prime examples of age-related material.

As mentioned by Ersöz (2007), in designing a syllabus for the YL EFL context, the focus should be on the communicative value of the language and should include songs and games. Likewise, Sharpe (2001) also argues that in planning the primary modern foreign language curriculum attention should be focused on oral and aural ends and that songs should be included in the curriculum. Bourke (2006) in trying to explore the debate on the teaching of EFL to YLs, also stresses the importance of songs by arguing that when we plan a syllabus for YLs we should make sure it is experientially appropriate and that it should definitely contain songs, chants and rhymes. Likewise, as Halliwell (1993) points out, YLs should be taught EFL through songs and games. Indeed, Rumley (1999) makes the case clear by arguing that songs help children to learn because they provide a safe, non-threatening context within which to play with language. Songs provide excellent opportunities for repetition and practice which would otherwise be tedious. This repetition helps learning and this in turn leads to

familiarity so that children feel comfortable with a language other than their mother tongue.

The findings of research studies that explore the use of songs in YL EFL contexts mainly conclude that teachers, YLs and parents are in favour of using songs as teaching tools. Kirsch (2006, 2008), for example, argues that singing is definitely one of the most effective language learning strategies reported by most children. Likewise, Klein (2005) argues that children respond enthusiastically to songs and welcome them. Indeed, research demonstrates that many teachers of YLs know the value of songs in EFL contexts. Ilter and Er's (2007) study about parent and teacher views on teaching EFL to YLs concludes that both parents and teachers have positive attitudes toward early language learning and that they both favour the teaching of EFL through games and songs. Büyükduman (2005), in concluding a research study about the opinions of primary school EFL teachers in regards the English curriculum in Turkey, points out that all the schools should be provided with audio-lingual materials for the better teaching of EFL in primary schools and that books about games and songs should be written for the better teaching of EFL to YLs.

The exposition of the language learner to necessary and sufficient input is considered as one of the most important factors in language learning process (Krashen, 1981). Evaluated in this context, one of the prominent features of songs is their rhythmic and repetitive nature. The repetitive nature of songs, the joy songs impose to the learning activity and the associative power between the melody and the content of the word may reinforce the attainment of the language to be internalized. Therefore, the fostering influence of songs in the YL EFL contexts doubles. This is because children are keener to rhythm and they have not yet constructed personal barriers as was stated by Krashen (1981). Likewise, Johnstone (2002) who favours an early start to the learning and teaching of EFL claims that providing the children with a sufficient amount of input and interaction, embedded in a range of intrinsically interesting cross-curricular activity is important. Therefore, teachers of YLs may make an important contribution to children's early language education by introducing their classes to recorded songs, poems and stories. As pointed out by Çakır (1999) as well, music can be a wonderful medium for natural language learning. Songs are comprehensible, enjoyable, authentic and full of language we need in real life. They are part of our lives and they are around us.

Cameron (2001) in discussing the importance of language learning goals, states that there is a further force in primary school classrooms that may shift teaching away from learning, and that is the borrowing of materials and activities from general primary practice. This transfer of methodology happens rather often at primary level, partly because of methodological vacuum in teaching YLs, and partly because primary practice has some genuinely good techniques and ideas that clearly work well with YLs. Prime examples of techniques transferred from primary education would be theme-based learning and the use of songs and rhymes. She further argues that phonological awareness in the foreign language, the ability to hear the individual sounds and syllables that make up words, will develop from oral language activities, such as saying rhymes or chants and singing songs. Martin (2000a) also argues that songs, rhymes, story-telling, role-plays and game-like activities with a high language content are strong features of many primary modern foreign language programmes and pupils are able to memorize texts in songs and stories and they should be encouraged to do so.

In fact, songs have been part of the human experience for as long as we can remember. Songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and if used in cooperation with a language lesson they can be of great value (Schoepp, 2001). According to Schoepp, three patterns emerge from the literature as to why teachers and researchers find using songs valuable. These are affective, cognitive, and linguistic reasons.

1) As for affective reasons, Schoepp argues that the practical application of Krashen's affective filter hypothesis is that teachers must provide a positive atmosphere conducive to language learning. Songs are one method for achieving a weak affective filter and promoting language learning.
2) As for cognitive reasons, songs present opportunities for developing automaticity which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the language classroom.
3) As for linguistic reasons, we may say that songs offer a good variety of language samples and prepare the students for genuine language they will face.

In a similar vein, Sharpe (2001) also argues that singing is a vital part of the life of a young child, inside and outside the school, and incorporating the foreign language into this fundamental activity is another way of normalizing it. YLs readily imitate sounds, and will usually have learnt to associate singing and playing with rhythms and rhymes with pleasure from an early age. Through singing traditional songs, made-up songs, catches and rounds, and other age-appropriate material, pupils gradually internalize the structures and patterns of the foreign language as well as the specific language items which the teacher may wish them to learn. Repetition of language, for example in returning choruses or 'cumulative' songs, is experienced as positively pleasurable rather than negatively boring.

Advantages of using songs

Rumley (1999), the French co-ordinator of the Kent project, argues that children enjoy songs and that it is important for language learners to feel motivated and the

success they experience in participating in the activities contributes to the development of positive attitudes which they take with them to their secondary schools. Songs also provide an opportunity and a context for untedious repetition and reinforce listening and speaking because all the children must concentrate for the duration of the activity. Likewise, Sarıçoban and Metin (2000) in trying to argue examples of integrated sources and techniques clarify the use of songs as: songs are one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms. Songs offer a change from routine classroom activities. They are precious resources to develop students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Songs can also be used to teach a variety of language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, pronunciation, rhythm, adjectives, and adverbs. Learning English through songs also provides a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who are usually tense when speaking English in classroom settings.

Songs may both be used for the presentation or practice phase of the grammar lessons as well. They may encourage extensive and intensive listening, and inspire creativity and use of imagination in a relaxed classroom atmosphere. While selecting a song, the teacher should take the age, interests of the learners and the language being used in the song into consideration. To enhance learner commitment, it is also beneficial to allow learners to take part in the selection of the songs. Likewise, Martin (2000b) argues that in relation to children's grammatical development, there is a good deal of evidence that right from the start, children can absorb and reproduce large *'chunks'* of language in the form of songs and other routines, even though they cannot analyze and manipulate these.

According to Orlova (2003), it is possible to suggest that among the methodological purposes with which music, songs and chants are used in class, it is possible to rank the following:

i) Practicing the rhythm, stress and intonation patterns of the English language.
ii) Teaching vocabulary, especially in the vocabulary reinforcement stage.
iii) Teaching grammar. In this respect songs are especially favoured by teachers while investigating the use of tenses.
iv) Teaching speaking. For this purpose, songs and mainly their lyrics are employed as a stimulus for class discussion.
v) Teaching listening comprehension.
vi) Developing writing skills. For this purpose a song can be used in a variety of ways- for example, speculating what could happen to characters in the future, writing a letter to the main character, etc.

Kirsch (2008: 85) points out that many language teachers have described the benefits of using rhymes, songs and games in foreign language classes as follows:

i) Rhymes, poems and songs are very popular with young language learners who tend to be familiar with this type of literacy from school or home. Children do not shy away from poems and songs in foreign languages.
ii) Teachers are equally familiar with them and thus may find them a good way into the teaching of foreign languages.
iii) They promote positive feelings.
iv) The rhythmical patterns facilitate and accelerate learning.
v) They are good means of developing listening, pronunciation and speaking skills. Pupils do not tire of listening to and repeating them over and over again. They join in with the parts they know and acquire more sounds, words and sentences with each successive performance until they gradually master the text.
vi) These forms of literacy help pupils get into the rhythm of a language and learn to pronounce sounds and words confidently, accurately and with expression.
vii) Pupils are more likely to remember the new words and structures because they are repetitive, meaningful and presented in predictable patterns and larger chunks. The internalization of sounds, words and sentence patterns brings learners a step closer to using these in other contexts.
viii) Rhymes, poems and songs can initiate a range of activities: listening, reading, drawing, performing actions, playing and enacting, performing in front of an audience and practicing intonation, pronunciation and structures.
ix) Poems or songs about typical traditions or cultural artifacts are helpful in developing pupils' cultural awareness and understanding.
x) Besides, many teachers take advantage of the popularity and repetitive structure of songs to practice key vocabulary in an enjoyable way.

Finally, under the light of the argument carried out so far, I would like to present my own summary about the advantages of songs, especially in the case of teaching EFL to YLs:

i) Songs are regarded as the most effective way of teaching listening comprehension to young learners.
ii) Songs are a common feature of many primary modern foreign language programmes.
iii) Songs are regarded as one of the mostly-enjoyed activities and one the most effective language learning strategies by most young learners.
iv) Songs, when used in appropriate ways, may extend young learners' attention spans.
v) Songs are regarded as a good means for age-related language learning.
vi) Songs are believed to accelerate memorization.
vii) Songs provide a variety of comprehensible input.

Table 1. Demographic information about the questionnaire participants (n=52).

Gender		Teaching experience (years)				Age (years)					
Female (%)	Male (%)	Less than 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25 and less	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
38 (73.1)	14 (26.9)	10 (19.2)	29 (55.8)	10 (19.2)	3 (5.8)	2 (3.8)	25 (48.1)	14 (26.9)	8 (15.4)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)

viii) Songs provide a safe and natural classroom ethos.
ix) Songs provide a large amount of repetition which is not tedious and which results in automatic use of the target language.
x) Songs provide a rich source of culturally-related elements.

Having reviewed the significance, relevance and advantages of using songs in YL EFL contexts, the primary aim of this study was to take the opinions of Turkish EFL teachers teaching in state primary schools on the use of songs in their English classes. For this aim, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

1) What are Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in their YL EFL contexts?
2) What are the Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes toward using songs in teaching EFL to YLs?
3) What do Turkish EFL teachers think about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching EFL to YLs?
4) In what frequency do Turkish EFL teachers use songs in their YL EFL contexts and can they access to appropriate songs easily?

METHODS

Research design

This study was designed as a descriptive study with an aim to explore the beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and frequency and accessibility of Turkish EFL teachers toward songs and using songs in their YL EFL contexts.

Participants

52 Turkish EFL teachers all teaching in Turkish state primary schools (24 different primary schools) in the southern cities of Burdur and Isparta, voluntarily participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the participants to get the most adequate data from the teachers within the researchers' reach in these two cities. The participants' ages ranged from less than 25 to 46-50. Only two of the participants were less than 25 and only one participant was at the age range 46-50. Those who were at the age range of 26-30 occupied the highest portion with 48.1% (n=25). In regards to gender, 73.1% (n=38) of the participants were females and 26.9% (n=14) were males. In regards to teaching experience, 29 (55.8%) out of the 52 participants occupied the highest portion with a teaching experience for 6-10 years. The demographic information related to the participant gender, teaching experience and age are given in Table 1.

Research instrument

A questionnaire in English was prepared by the researcher and was administered in 24 different Turkish state primary schools in the southern cities of Burdur and Isparta. The questionnaire was composed of 18 questions. In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research. In the second part, they were asked to fill in demographic information about their gender, teaching experience, and age. In the third part, the participants were asked to choose the best option which represented their opinion about using songs in teaching EFL to YLs. The questionnaire included a five-point Likert type scale with five options, namely: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The last question (question 18), which was related to teacher frequency of using songs in the class, asked the participants to choose one from the seven options, namely: (I teach one song to YLs) 'per week', 'per two weeks', 'per three weeks', 'per month', 'per two months', 'per a term', and 'per a year'. The 18 items in the third part of the questionnaire were prepared under the light of the relevant literature. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.674, suggesting moderate reliability which can be a result of the low number of the questions asked and the number of the participants. Nevertheless, as suggested by relevant research any number above 0.67 can be accepted as acceptable in terms of the research instrument's reliability (Cohen et al., 2007).

Data analysis

Following the administration of the questionnaire, the results obtained from the participants were analyzed using an SPSS 11 package/programmer. Each participant was given a participation number and the data were entered accordingly using descriptive analysis method. Later, the frequencies and percentages for each question were presented in tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the analysis of data for each item will be given in four tables and a discussion about each table will follow, in this part of the study.

As can be seen from Table 2, teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in teaching English to YLs were explored by means of five statements. The analysis of the results for the first statement reveal that nearly all of the participating EFL teachers, 94.2% believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for YLs. 5.8% declared that they were undecided, and none disagreed with the first

Table 2. Teacher's beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in teaching English to YLs (n=52).

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1- I believe that songs should be an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum for young learners.	26	50	23	44.2	3	5.8	_	_	_	_
4- I believe that songs present many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in many language areas.	16	30.8	27	51.9	8	15.4	1	1.9	_	_
7- I believe that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value.	26	50	21	40.4	4	7.7	1	1.9	_	_
11- I think that teachers must use songs only for fun, and breaking down boredom.	3	5.8	7	13.5	10	19.2	25	48.1	7	13.5
14- I believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of young learners.	30	57.7	19	36,5	2	3.8	1	1.9	-	-

Table 3. Teachers' attitudes toward using songs in teaching English to YLs (n=52).

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2- I believe that I do not have enough resources to use as songs.	11	21.2	25	48.1	3	5.8	10	19.2	3	5.8
5- I find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language curriculum .	19	36.5	21	40.4	6	11.5	6	11.5	-	-
8- I believe that using songs to teach English may distract students' attention during the lesson.	13	25	9	17.3	7	13.5	16	30.8	7	13.5
12- I believe that using songs in my English class can be time consuming.	-	-	2	3.8	7	13.5	23	44.2	20	38.5
15- I believe that I can not measure students' knowledge of English when I use songs in my classes.	6	11.5	16	30.8	19	36.5	10	19.2	1	1.9

statement. Results for the fourth statement indicate that a great majority of EFL teachers, 82.7% believe that songs present many opportunities for YLs to show their skills in many language areas. 15.4% stated that they were undecided, and one participant disagreed with statement four. Results for the seventh statement show that nearly all of the participating EFL teachers, 90.4% believe that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value. 7.7% stated that they were undecided, and one participant disagreed with statement seven. Statement eleven asked whether teachers should use songs only for fun, and breaking down boredom. The results reveal that the majority of the participating EFL teachers, 61.6% disagree with statement eleven. 19.2% stated that they were undecided, and 19.3% agreed with statement eleven. Finally, the results for statement fourteen indicate that nearly all of the participating EFL teachers, 94.2% believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of YLs. 3.8% stated that they were undecided, and one participant disagreed with statement fourteen.

Evaluated overall, Table 2 demonstrates parallel findings to earlier research studies that songs are pedagogically valuable in the YL EFL contexts, that they should be an essential part of the YL EFL curriculum, and that songs are very important for developing listening skills. Statement fourteen was the most *'strongly agreed'* item in Table 2 with 57.7%. Statements seven and one, followed with 50% for each. Statement eleven was the most *'strongly disagreed'* and *'disagreed'* item with 13.5% and 48.1% consecutively. This result strengthens the participating EFL teachers' strong beliefs about the pedagogical value of using songs in the YL EFL contexts.

As can be seen from Table 3, teachers' attitudes toward using songs in teaching English to YLs were explored by means of five statements. The analysis of the results for the second statement reveal that the majority of the participating EFL teachers, 69.3% believe that they do not have enough resources to use as songs. 5.8% stated that they were undecided, and 25% disagreed with statement two. Results of the fifth statement indicate that the majority of EFL teachers, 77% find it difficult to find an appropriate song for every topic of the English language

Table 4. Teachers' thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to YLs (n=52).

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
3- I believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary.	28	53.8	21	40.4	3	5.8	-	-	-	-
6- I believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language.	25	48.1	20	38.5	5	9.6	2	3.8	-	-
9- I believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for young learners.	33	63.5	19	36.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
13- I believe that songs are not very effective in teaching English to young learners.	1	1.9	2	3.8	3	5.8	23	44.2	23	44.2
16- I believe that using songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English.	17	32.7	25	48.1	3	5.8	5	9.6	2	3.8

curriculum. 11.5% stated that they were undecided, and 11.5% disagreed with statement five. Results for the eight statement show that 42.3% of the participating EFL teachers, believe that using songs to teach English may distract students' attention during the lesson. 13.5% stated that they were undecided, and 44.3% disagreed with this statement. Statement twelve asked whether using songs in English classes could be time consuming. The results reveal that the great majority of the participating EFL teachers, 82.7% disagree with this statement. 13.5% stated that they were undecided, and 3.8% agreed with statement twelve. Finally, the results for statement fifteen indicate that 42.3% of the participating EFL teachers believe that they can not measure students' knowledge of English when they use songs in their classes. 36.5% stated that they were undecided (the highest percentage of indecisiveness in relation to teacher attitudes), and 11.1% disagreed with statement fifteen.

Overall, the majority (69.3%) think that they do not have enough resources to use as songs, and the majority (77%) finds it difficult to find appropriate songs. These findings show that the majority of the participating EFL teachers have problems in finding and reaching to appropriate songs. Therefore, a list of useful online web sites is provided at the end of this study. The percentage of those who believe that using songs to teach English may distract students' attention (42.3%) and those who disagree with this (44.3%) are almost equal. This finding shows that half of the participating EFL teachers have problems about the ways related to how to present and teach songs to YLs. They need to be enlightened about the ways of presenting and teaching songs to YLs without distracting students' attention. Therefore, a brief literature review on this topic will be provided in the concluding part of this study. Nevertheless, results of statement twelve reveal that 82.7% of the participating EFL teachers that songs are not time consuming. This finding strengthens teachers' positive attitudes toward using songs in YL EFL contexts. Finally, the results of statement fifteen reveal that 42.3% can not measure student knowledge when they use songs and 36.5% are undecided, making a total of 78.8%. This finding shows that the majority of the participating EFL teachers have problems in measuring students' knowledge when they use songs. I believe that this finding is also closely related to the "how issue" mentioned earlier. Therefore, ways of measuring student knowledge and understanding will also be briefly dealt with in the concluding part of this study.

As can be seen from Table 4, teachers' thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to YLs were explored by means of five statements. The analysis of the results for the third statement reveals that almost all of the participating EFL teachers, 94.2% believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary. The rest, 5.8% stated that they were undecided. Results of the sixth statement indicate that the great majority of EFL teachers, 86.6% believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition which results in automatic use of the target language. 9.6% stated that they were undecided, and 3.8% disagreed with statement six. Results for the ninth statement show that all of the participating EFL teachers (100%) believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for YLs. Results of the thirteenth statement show that the great majority of the teachers, 88.4% disagreed with this statement that songs are not very effective in teaching English to YLs. 5.8% stated that they were undecided, and 5.7% agreed with statement thirteen. Finally, the results for statement 16 indicate that the majority of the teachers, 80.8% believe that using songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English. 5.8% stated that they were undecided, and 13.4% disagreed with statement 16.

Overall, it is possible to argue that the participating EFL teachers have very positive thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs in teaching English to YLs. Depending on the analysis of teacher responses deriving from this research, it can be argued that the most effective means of using songs in teaching English to YLs

Table 5. Frequency of using songs and accessibility to songs (n=52).

Statement	Option									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
10- I can easily access and find appropriate songs to use in my English classes.	5	9.6	10	19.2	14	26.9	20	38.5	3	5.8
17- I use songs in my classes as much as possible.	7	13.5	26	50	10	19.2	9	17.3	-	-

18- I teach one song to young learners.	Per week		Per two weeks		Per three weeks		Per month		Per two months		Per a term		Per a year	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	3	5.8	7	13.5	6	11.5	17	32.7	9	17.3	8	15.4	2	3.8

is that songs are highly motivating and entertaining with 100%. The second is that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary with 94.2%. The third is that songs provide a large amount of repetition with 86.6%. The fourth is that songs can lower students' anxiety toward learning English with 80.8%. Teacher responses to statement thirteen, in a way confirm these results as the teachers disagreed with this statement that songs are not very effective in teaching English to YLs with 88.4%. Even though previous research about the effectiveness of songs states no such order of priority, it can be claimed that the findings of this particular research parallel earlier research findings in terms of content. As can be seen from Table 5, teachers' frequency of using songs and their thoughts about the accessibility of songs in teaching English to YLs were explored by means of three statements. The analysis of the results for statement 10 reveals that almost half of the participating EFL teachers, 44.3% disagree with the statement that they can easily access and find appropriate songs to use in their English classes. 26.9% stated that they were undecided, and the rest 28.8% agreed to statement 10. Results of statement 17, however, indicate that 63.5% of EFL teachers think that they use songs in their classes as much as possible. 19.2% stated that they were undecided, and 17.3% disagreed with this statement. Finally, the results for statement 18 indicate that the most frequent teaching of one song to YLs is 32.7% per month. The second most is 17.3% per two months, the third is 15.4% per a term, the fourth is 13.5% per two weeks, the fifth is 11.5% per three weeks, the sixth is 5.8% per a week, and the least is 3.8% per a year.

Overall, it is possible to argue that the participating EFL teachers have difficulty in easily accessing to and finding appropriate songs to use in their classes. However, even though this is the case the teachers indicated that they used songs in their classes as much as possible. Depending on this finding, it may be argued that the participating EFL teachers would use songs on a more frequent basis if they were able to easily access and find appropriate songs. Finally, the analysis of song usage frequency indicated that the mostly preferred two frequencies of using songs were; one song per month with 32.7%, and one song per two months with 17.3%. The least preferred two frequencies were; one song per a year with 3.8%, and one song per week with 5.8%. Even though this research is not large enough to recommend an ideal and common frequency for using songs, it becomes apparent out of the analysis of this research findings that the ideal and common frequency that the participating EFL teachers preferred was the teaching of a song per 3 or 4 weeks.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary aim of this study was to explore the opinions of Turkish EFL teachers teaching in state primary schools on the use of songs in their English classes. In specific, this study sought to explore Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of songs, teacher attitudes toward using songs, teacher thoughts about the effectiveness of songs, and their frequency of using songs and accessibility to songs. Reviewing the relevant literature about songs, it becomes clear that songs are regarded as effective listening materials, that they are a common feature of many MFL programs, and that they are regarded as one of the mostly enjoyed activities and one of the most effective language learning strategies reported by most YLs. As the findings of this study demonstrate, according to the primary school EFL teachers, songs are an important and necessary part of EFL teaching and learning in YL contexts for the reasons to be given below.

The findings of this study presented in Table 2 demonstrate parallel findings to earlier research studies about the pedagogical value of songs. Out of the research findings, it is possible to conclude that EFL teachers believe that songs should be an essential part of the EFL teaching curriculum for YLs (94.2%); that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of YLs (94.2%); that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value

(90.4%); and that songs present many opportunities for YLs to show their skills in many language areas (82.7%). Evaluated overall, these findings show that EFL teachers have strong beliefs about the pedagogical value of songs. However, having a close look to the Turkish EFL curriculum for YLs we come to realize that songs are not given the necessary attention on a systematical basis. We realize that a few songs are distributed in an ad hoc manner into course books for YLs. Therefore, depending on the strong beliefs of teachers about the pedagogical value of using songs, I believe that songs should be approached on a structured and systematical basis in Turkey.

Looking into research findings presented in Table 3 about teacher attitudes toward using songs, we come across to a dilemma with the findings from Table 2. Even though teachers stated very positive feelings about the pedagogical value of songs, findings related to teacher attitudes demonstrate that 77% of the teachers find it difficult to find appropriate songs and 69.3% believe that they do not have enough resources to use as songs. In a way these findings strengthen my earlier argument that songs are dealt with in an ad hoc manner in Turkish EFL settings and that there is a need for a structured and systematical approach regarding songs. To help teachers in their search for appropriate songs, a list of useful online websites is provided at the end of this study. Findings from Table 3 also reveal that 42.3% of the teachers can not measure student knowledge when they use songs and that 36.5% are undecided, making a total of 78.8%. This problem shows that Turkish EFL teachers need in-service training about “how to teach songs”. Looking into the relevant literature about how to teach songs, we will come to realize that there are three basic stages in teaching songs. As argued by Davies and Pearse (2000), for example, these stages are pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. The problem about measuring student success mentioned by the EFL teachers in this study are closely related to the post-listening stage in which, borrowing from Davies and Pearse (2000), learners connect what they have heard with their own ideas and experiences. In other words measuring student success after teaching a song can be carried out by post-listening stage activities such as giving opinions, relating similar experiences, role-playing, writing and pronunciation activities.

Findings presented in Table 4 about teachers’ thoughts about the effectiveness of songs, strongly parallel both the findings presented in Table 2 of this study and the earlier research findings. Thus strengthening the earlier argument made in this study that Turkish EFL teachers think that songs are an important and necessary part of EFL teaching and learning in YL contexts. All of the participating (100%) EFL teachers believe that songs are a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, 94.2% believe that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary, 86.6% believe that songs provide a large amount of repetition and 80.8% believe that using songs can lower student anxiety.

Finally, we see that the dilemma mentioned for the findings from Table 2 continues to exist for the findings from Table 5 as well. 44.3% of the teachers stated that they can not easily access to appropriate songs and 26.9% were undecided, making a total of 71.2%. On the other hand, 63.5% stated that they used songs in their classes as much as possible. Results about how often they use songs indicate that the average is using one song in every 3 to 4 weeks. Depending on these findings we may speculate that the EFL teachers would use songs more often if they were able to easily access to songs. Below are a list of useful online websites (Accessed on October 17):

http://www.everythingpreschool.com/songs/all.htm
http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs
http://bussongs.com/
http://freekidsmusic.com/
http://www.teachingenglishgames.com/eslsongs.htm
http://www.songsforteaching.com/index.html

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