

# Using Songs in Speaking Classes

WEINBERG Joel

## Abstract

スピーキングクラスにおける歌唱活動は、楽しくかつ興味深い方法により、授業に変化をもたらし、ムードを盛り上げ、ひいては講師とクラスメイトの関係、クラスメイト同士の関係を変えることができる。歌を授業の主題についての前置きとして用いるなど、その利用方法は数多くある。歌唱活動の効果としては、歌の内容を分析し、テーマについて違った角度から理解することができる点をはじめ、語彙力・リスニング力の強化、自然な文法表現の学習して、発音練習、リズムと速さの強化などもあり、また声量が上がり、物静かな生徒でさえ自信をつけることができるなどが挙げられる。本書では、歌唱活動をスピーキングクラスにおいてどのように組み込むのか、そしてこの種のレッスンからなぜ生徒たちが英語を学ぶことができるのかについて説明する

## I. Introduction

“I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony...” The New Seekers

Speaking classes provide the opportunity for students to practice English they already know, and to learn new words and phrases to improve their fluency. There are many activities teachers can employ to make Speaking classes more enjoyable and interesting for students. Incorporating songs into a Speaking class is one activity that has many benefits that will enhance the atmosphere and promote an interest in speaking. Saricoban and Metin (2000) found that songs benefit the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Data collected for this paper also found the benefits of using songs in Speaking class include (but are not limited to) the following: the motivation of the class improves; listening skills are augmented; inhibitions are reduced; vocabulary is learned; pronunciation is understood; collocations and idioms are practiced; natural forms of grammar are introduced; slang is noticed; students’ speaking volume is raised; context for a lesson is provided; and finally, singing is fun. With all of these benefits potentially attributable to singing, teachers should look to use songs in their Speaking classes more often.

## II. Background and Literature Review

This section reviews some of the background and related literature concerned with nine aspects of using songs in Speaking classes, and the benefits attributable to this practice.

### 2.1 Improves Motivation

The first benefit of using songs in a Speaking class is that it motivates the students. It is not unusual for teachers to divide a large Speaking class into smaller groups of 2-4 students so that each person has more of an opportunity to participate. Arranging students with compatible partners is helpful to reduce the stress some people feel regarding speaking in front of large groups or in front of other more capable people (Young, 1990). Dividing classes into smaller groups also increases the opportunities for individual speaking. These are valid and important methods of improving class participation, especially in a Speaking class where verbal and aural participation are important to successful outcomes. Unfortunately, dividing the class into small groups and pairs has unintended consequences as well. It dis-associates students with the class as a whole. This could adversely impact students' motivation because instead of one unified group, a class of 30 students could have 15 pairs, each with a different mood or level of involvement, uniquely discussing a different aspect of a topic. In such cases a teacher must create a feeling of unity within each pair of students, as well as among the class as a whole. Failure to unify the students results in reduced motivation for participation in the class. As Dornyei and Ushida (2011) point out, "fragmented groups, characterized by uncooperative cliques, can easily become ineffective, thus diminishing the individual member's commitment to learn" (p. 111).

Motivation is generated by the students working together toward a common goal (Dornyei, 2001b). Singing as a class provides a goal for students to work together to achieve. In this way, students motivate each other by singing, and when students are motivated, better learning outcomes are the result. Chen and Chen (2009) studied the integral connection between learning motivation and learning performance and conclude that singing in class is an excellent means to improve both. Students in their research were polled after participating in singing activities and the results show a majority felt improved motivation to learn English which positively impacted their learning outcomes.

The unfortunate drawback of making small groups (demotivation to participate with the whole class) can be somewhat rectified by incorporating a group activity where all members participate at the same time. Singing with classmates can kickstart students' situational willingness to communicate (Yashima, MacIntyre, & Ikeda, 2018) with the class

as a whole. There is no downtime for any member of the class, because everyone is involved at the same time. Creating a unified class atmosphere improves the motivation of the class because students from all corners of the room feel that they are working in unison to complete a goal (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). That promotes cooperation among the members. Regardless of each individual's ability, while they are singing, students feel that they are a coequal part of a larger effort, rather than a minor piece of a disjointed amalgam. This encourages participation, which then carries over to other activities once the singing portion of the class has ended.

## **2.2 Boosts Listening Ability**

As the students listen to songs in class, there are two ways in which their listening ability improves. Cullen (as cited in Schoepp, 2001) states that "the first is bottom-up processing where the listener builds up the sounds into words, sentences and meaning. The second is top-down processing where the listener uses background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Practicing both of these processes is essential for developing listening comprehension" (p.1). Boothe and West (2015) conclude that as students listen to songs they are "simultaneously...strengthening and reinforcing language skills through extensive and intensive listening." Lyrics completion worksheets are examples of bottom-up listening, where students listen for individual words and phrases. Discussion activities of the song give students practice with top-down listening, where students practice listening for the overall meaning and message in the songs, as well as help students improve their ability to hear and make sense of fast and fluent English.

## **2.3 Reduces Shyness**

The next benefit of incorporating singing in a Speaking class is that it reduces the feelings of shyness among weaker members. Shyness can be the result of feeling self-conscious. Krashen (1982) discusses how students' "affective filter"-- their feelings of self-consciousness, boredom, fear, or anxiety--promotes feelings of shyness and a reluctance to expose their perceived vulnerabilities in front of other people. This affective filter inhibits students from speaking and, as Boothe and West (2015) explain, "serve[s] as a screen to block comprehensive input by preventing information about the second language from reaching the language areas of the mind" (p.1). Thus, the affective filter precludes the necessary practice of the language which would promote progress. Cunningham (2014) found that including music in her EAP classroom helped to reduce students' affective filter. Additionally, the students in her study

found that rapport and engagement with other students in the class was improved with the inclusion of music because students felt more relaxed. This observation validates Gardstrom and Diestelkamp's (2013) report on the ability of music to reduce anxiety in group environments.

As King (2013) explains, "the absence of talk...is determined by an array of competing forces. Although some instances of silence may reflect the passivity, demotivation, or lack of ability of a learner, it should also be acknowledged that silence has the potential to be an active state too. Indeed, students may *choose* not to speak for any number of reasons" (p. 328). While there will always be some students who are shy by nature (including when interacting in their own language), King notes that it is not always the result of linguistic inability that keeps these students quiet. It might be a conscious or subconscious response to unengaging activities in the class. Therefore, even these non-talkative students potentially can be coaxed from their protective quiet shells if provided with a more stimulating classroom environment in which to participate.

## 2.4 Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Blends

The next benefit of singing in a Speaking class is the opportunity to meet, practice, and learn new vocabulary in a natural context. According to Krashen (1989), there is substantial evidence that vocabulary is acquired incidentally by reading or listening to oral stories. When unfamiliar words are encountered in stories, they are understood incidentally through the context of the story and by the already known vocabulary. Medina (1990) found that songs "share the same elements as stories" (p. 6), and therefore listening to songs provides "the same amount of vocabulary [as] is acquired from listening to a story" (p. 3). The problem with some textbooks is that they do not introduce vocabulary in a contextually meaningful way to all students. The situations in those texts might feel manufactured and unnatural, or the topics uninteresting or unrelatable. If any of these issues are present, the textbook is less than ideal, and students may pay less attention to its contents. Song lyrics of a popular song, however, have the benefit of familiarity; this familiarity provides a reason for paying attention to any unknown vocabulary. One of the factors that helps the retention of new vocabulary is the ability to contextualize the words and understand their relevance. When new vocabulary is heard in a song, it creates a context for students to assign to that new word, making it more relevant, meaningful, and memorable.

Compared to encountering new vocabulary in a textbook, a song is by definition more lyrical and poetic. This provides students with a mnemonic device for remembering new

words and teaches how they are used as well. In order to match the tempo and rhythm, some songwriters bunch, link, and otherwise abbreviate words in their songs. Singing these songs is instructive for students to understand that elisions are a normal and frequent part of how the words are incorporated into natural speech patterns. The song provides the platform on which all this incidental learning can be gleaned.

Another important benefit to hearing new vocabulary in a song is that the words are likely repeated more than once, and repetition is crucially important for memorization to occur. Cho and Krashen (1994), as well as Nation (2001, p. 27) talk about the need for new vocabulary to be encountered in a range of contexts many times before that vocabulary can be comfortably incorporated into a student's working lexicon. Hearing a word repeated in a song provides the basis for one of those necessary new-word encounters. This learning may not happen deliberately or immediately, but after listening to the word many times and then vocalizing the word in the process of singing the song, the word will gradually be noticed and naturally understood. That is, in essence, how a first language is learned by young children. It is not a deliberate process, rather it is a series of repeated encounters, trial and error, and eventual correct incorporation of the new vocabulary.

## 2.5 Collocations, Idioms, Grammar, and Slang

Learning new vocabulary terms and noticing how they blend in conjunction with other words is useful in recognizing linguistic patterns. Collocations are phrases of words that are often found together. Compared to learning words in isolation, learning them in stanzas of lyrics show students words which often collocate. Idioms are expressions whose meaning cannot be predicted by the individual words in the expression, such as the following example found at [marysenglishblog.com](http://marysenglishblog.com). The song is "High Hopes," by Panic! At the Disco, and has several good examples of both collocations (in bold) and idioms (underlined) in its chorus:

Had to have high **high hopes** for a living; Shooting for the stars when I  
couldn't make a killing. Didn't have a dime but I always had a vision;  
Always had high **high hopes**. Had to have high **high hopes** for a living;  
Didn't know how but I always had a feeling I was gonna be that **one in**  
**a million**; Always had high **high hopes**.

While lyrics expose listeners to idioms, collocations and other chunks of language, they are simultaneously introducing conversational grammatical patterns. Sometimes these

natural grammar patterns are inconsistent with those that are taught in language textbooks. Take, for example, the theme song from the movie “Ghostbusters,” which employs the call-and-response refrain “Who you gonna call? Ghostbusters!” This example provides a good opportunity to contrast how grammar is normally presented in textbooks and tests, versus how language is actually used when grammar teachers are not monitoring their adherence to the rules of language. This seemingly simple question from the Ghostbusters song is fraught with “errors” that are quite common in conversational English. First, there is the misuse of subject and object pronouns. “Who” is a subject pronoun, while “whom” is an object pronoun. The subject of this sentence is “you,” the person doing the calling. The person you are calling is the object, and therefore the grammatically correct version of this question begins with the pronoun “whom.” The next issue is the elision of the helping “be” verb, which should follow the object pronoun. After that there is a conversationally common blend of the verb “going to,” which results in “gonna” (which is also present in the lyrics of High Hopes above). The answer to the Ghostbusters question should be “We are going to call Ghostbusters,” but the songwriter has dropped the subject and verbs completely, leaving only the declaration “Ghostbusters!” standing alone. A grammar teacher would therefore correct the famous tagline “Who you gonna call? Ghostbusters!” to “Whom are you going to call? We are going to call Ghostbusters!” which is not as vigorously expressive. Examining these lyrics makes clear the fact that although there are codified rules and expectations about how words are used, language is an organically evolving, patterned system. The rules are not insusceptible to change, and songs are often where the first kernels of language deviation occur.

When a song includes slang and idiomatic language, it is an appropriate place for a teacher to discuss and practice how these language items are commonly used by some native speakers. However, this is an area of language education that is either too delicate or impolite to publish in a textbook. By definition, slang deviates from the rules of the language and perhaps the ethos of educators to teach only “correct” forms discourages teachers from touching this part of language education. However, neglecting this body of material completely would leave students with a significant gap in their understanding of real-world English.

An example of slang is heard in The Temptations song “Ain’t Too Proud to Beg.” “Ain’t” is a slang combination of the verb “am not,” and, as often happens in colloquial English, the subject of the sentence is left out. A simple explanation of the word “ain’t” is possible, but that would miss the opportunity to explain how language is more than a means of

communication. It is a mark of identity and the words that a speaker chooses can be a racial, regional, and generational marker. Students benefit from this awareness as it helps them identify the group using the language, and potentially spares them from misappropriating words, being impolitic, or accidentally offensive. Due to all of the loaded meanings and unspoken context that slang and colloquial English carry, most language teachers prefer to ignore it altogether. Depending on how much time a teacher has to devote to unpacking all the hidden meanings, this is a potential goldmine of interesting language nuggets to appeal to students' curiosity.

Teachers are advised to use caution around the issue of slang when selecting which songs to use in class. Much would depend on the students' age and the culture of the school (liberal, conservative, secular, religious, public, private). Common sense and utility should dictate whether it is appropriate to teach songs with profanity and other mature content. It is not uncommon for students to like a song without realizing that the words are inappropriate for all audiences.

Two more issues regarding slang and idioms in popular music are their specific connection to demographics, and their temporary nature. Slang terms often identify the age of the singers, and the era in which the song is sung. For example, in The Beach Boys song "Little Honda," the eponym is described this way: "It's not a big motorcycle, just a groovy little motorbike. It's more fun than a barrel of monkey." The term groovy is loaded with historical connections. According to one online dictionary (<https://www.etymonline.com>), "groovy" (n.d.) started as a term used by African American jazz musicians to mean "first-rate, excellent" in 1937. By the mid-20th century, jazz had been appropriated by white musicians and audiences, and the slang term had also been adopted by this new demographic. By the time The Beach Boys used it in their 1964 song "Little Honda," the term "groovy" had expanded to yet another demographic, that of middle-class Caucasian teenagers. Today, more than 50 years later, neither the slang term "groovy" nor the expression "a barrel of monkeys" are commonly heard anymore. While there is nothing wrong with using an out-of-fashion slang term, students should be taught which is which so that they can decide if they want to use a term that is so clearly identified with a different era and, possibly, a different socioeconomic class.

## **2.6 Practices Projecting**

The next reason that students in Speaking classes benefit from singing is because it gives them practice projecting their voices loudly. Perhaps as a result of low confidence, or possibly

from years of schooling in which they did not use loud voices in class (if they used their voices at all), many students speak very softly even when the situation requires a louder voice. Regardless of the reason for their hitherto low voices, when students begin singing in Speaking class, they start to form new habits. It is easier to encourage students to increase their voice volumes when they are accompanied by loud music. As the students learn to feel more comfortable projecting their voices, they start to recognize where the power behind their voices emanates from. Many students speak from their mouths rather than from their lungs and diaphragms in their abdomens. Songs teach students to take deep breaths before releasing their voices. In this way, songs can be used in Speaking classes as a warmup exercise, similar to the way any professional singer runs through scales before singing on stage. Songs helpfully loosen the muscles in the abdomen and prepare students for the transition from being quiet as they were in other classes, to being an active participant in the Speaking class. This is especially true if students are not accustomed to speaking a second language. A physical and mental transition must occur that allows the students to mentally relax their anxieties about speaking in another language (Young, 1990), while at the same time energizing their voices to make them comprehensible from the back of the classroom. Using fun songs is a great way to begin a Speaking class and accomplish all of this.

## **2.7 Songs Provide Context**

Many Speaking courses are organized around themes: Week 1—environmental issues; Week 2—health issues; Week 3—feminist issues, etc. Typically, the content teachers use to provide students with background information comes from textbooks, newspapers, the Internet or other forms of media. Songs can easily be utilized to add depth and nuance to nearly any issue and provide a new angle and springboard for discussion. For example, Michael Jackson sings about environmental issues in “Earth Song” (“What have we done to the world / Look what we've done”), Bruce Springsteen sings about health issues in “Streets of Philadelphia” (“I was bruised and battered, I couldn't tell what I felt. / I was unrecognizable to myself. / Saw my reflection in a window and didn't know my own face”), Aretha Franklin sings about feminist issues in “Respect” (“All I'm askin' / Is for a little respect when you get home”). The possibilities to use songs in a Speaking class are nearly endless and each song adds a new layer of depth, and a different perspective.

It may be that the students have never heard of the singers or the songs the teacher uses in a lesson, so before a conversation can begin the students would need background instruction on race, class, gender issues, and so on. All of this provides the context for a



deeper and more meaningful discussion. Songs provide an excellent point of entry for nearly any issue.

## **2.9 Singing Is Fun**

Another reason to include singing in a Speaking class is that students enjoy it. This idea connects to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis which posits that for optimal learning to occur, students must have a positive attitude toward the activities in a lesson. When students are having a good time in class, their affective filter is lowered, and more learning can occur.

Studies have shown that when people sing, higher levels of endorphins are released than when people are not singing (Layton, 2009). When we hear music, signals are sent from our ears to our brains that stimulate a sense of pleasure. Stated another way, singing makes us feel good.

Finally, two studies, Domoney and Harris (1993) and Little (1983) looked at how music is often the major source of English for students outside of the classroom. Given that most students already enjoy singing and listening to music, it is an easy decision to incorporate that activity into Speaking classes. Students are more likely to participate in activities that they enjoy. If the students enjoy Speaking class, that will provide intrinsic motivation for them to engage with each other in English. If this can be accomplished, the class becomes easier for both the teacher and the students, and more meaningful learning can be achieved. With this in mind, teachers should consider incorporating songs and singing into their Speaking classes.

## **III. Survey Items and Results**

This section explains the research study and presents data regarding singing in classes, collected by way of student surveys. The students' responses are explained, and some interpretation is provided.

### **3.1 Participants**

The participants of this research study were 41 members of three classes of Japanese freshmen university students (18 and 19 years old) of intermediate skill level (TOEIC 550-700), 10 were male students (24%) and 31 were female students (76%). The students were

studying English with the intention of studying in English-speaking countries the following year. All of the students voluntarily participated in this study.

### **3.2 Instrument**

The 15 items on the anonymous survey (appendix A) were designed by the teacher and administered in class at the end of the 14-week semester. The students were given 10 minutes to access and complete the online survey on their smartphones in class. The students were requested to honestly answer every item without leaving any blank. The items were designed using a 5-item Likert Scale, and response choices were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree."

### **3.3 Description**

The duration of the study lasted for one 14-week semester. Singing was a part of every Speaking class session, and the in-class activity lasted an average of 20 minutes each time. Approximately 8 hours of the semester was devoted to this activity over the 14-week semester. A different song was chosen by the teacher every time.

### **3.4 Materials**

Each student was asked to choose an English song that he or she wanted to sing in class. The rationale for this was to promote "buy in" from the students and give the students a sense of ownership in the class. By allowing the students to submit the materials, the activity became more relevant to them. Before choosing a song, the teacher confirmed that the student who submitted the song was present in the class that day. In the weeks before Christmas, the Christmas-themed songs were used to create a festive atmosphere and to give context to the Christmas lesson topics. The submitted songs were nearly all American or British pop music of the last few years, as well as a few Disney-movie musical soundtracks (appendix B).

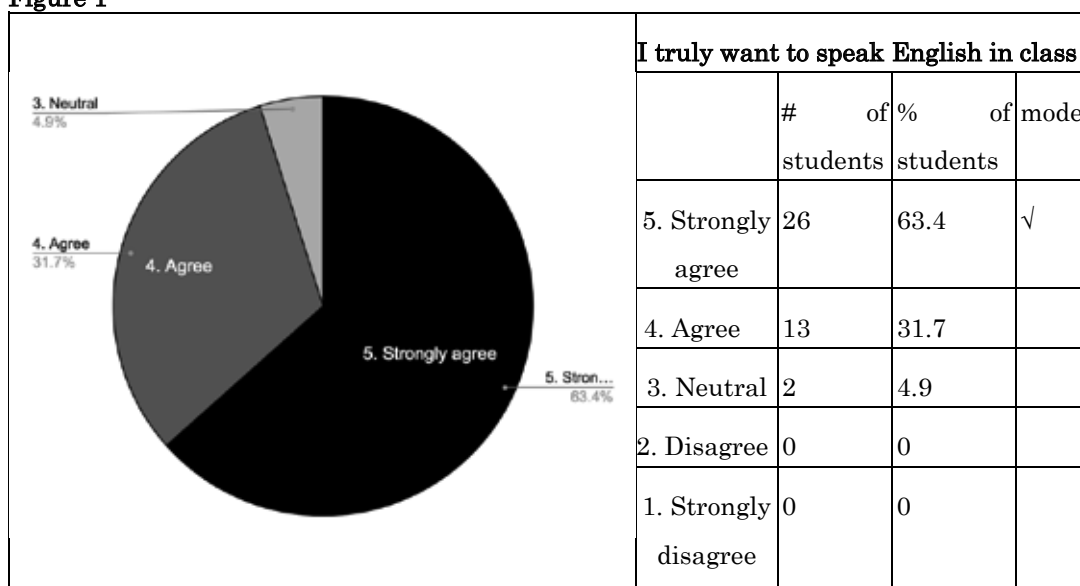
### **3.5 Results and Discussion**

The survey items were composed of three general categories of statements to which the students ranked their level of agreement: the first category was students' self-assessment of their attitudes towards English and the reasons they sometimes did not speak in English classes; the second category concerned how the singing activity helped improve the atmosphere of class; the third category of statements assessed how students felt their English skills or cultural understanding improved as a result of the singing activity.

### 3.5.1 Students' Self-Assessment of Their English in General

The first group of statements on the survey was intended to assess how students felt about their English classes and to identify the reasons why students did not always participate in English. Based on the students' responses, the overwhelming majority of students wanted to speak in English (figure 1), while there were no students who did not want to speak in English. This finding illustrates that the participants in this study were eager to practice and improve their English ability. It must be acknowledged that not all English classes are populated with this large proportion of willing students. A less motivated group of students would conceivably not respond as positively to the activities in this research study.

**Figure 1**



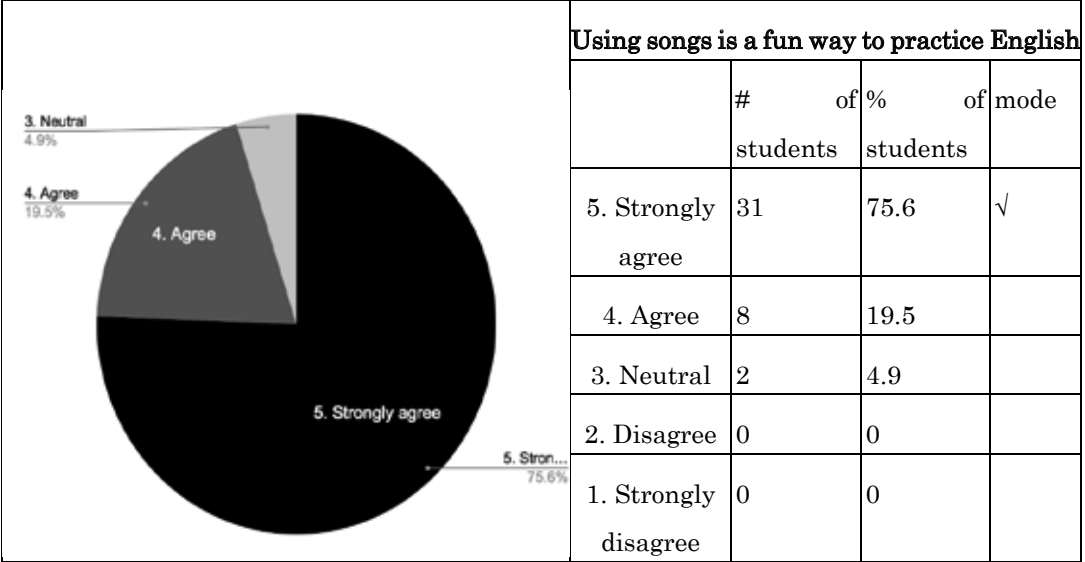
Many students self-identified as shy (39.5%), however a sizable proportion of the students disagreed with that characterization (29%). The fact that nearly 40% of students described themselves as shy, yet still enjoyed singing in class (figure 2), indicates that shyness is not a significant obstacle. A lack of sufficient vocabulary (63.2%) was credited by some students as a potential reason for their silence in class, while 36.8% of students were neutral or disagreed that vocabulary held them back. One of the purposes of using songs in class is to address this lack of vocabulary, which this research found was an area where a majority of the students felt they improved (see section 3.5.3). 42.1% of students felt that they needed more background information to participate in class discussions, while 57.8% of students were either neutral or disagreed that a lack of background information caused their silence.

Students' fear of sounding uninformed was not a notable concern for the majority (52.6%) of the students even though, as previously noted, nearly 40% thought of themselves as shy. The attempt by the researcher to identify a single reason for non-participation was unsuccessful.

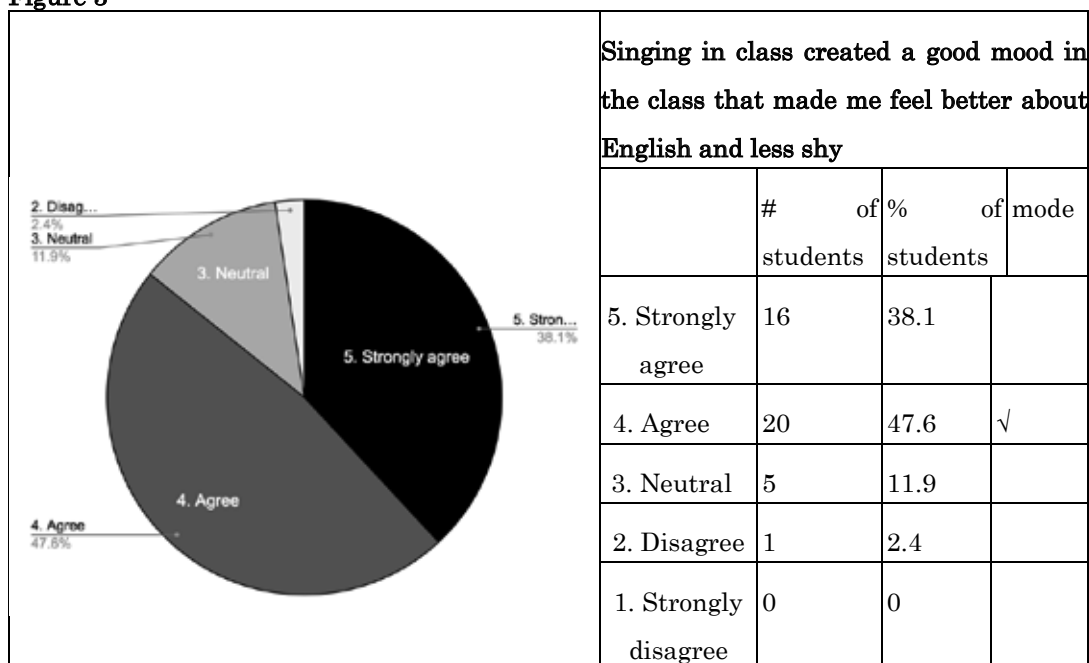
3.5.2 Students' Reflections

The second group of statements attempted to measure the degree to which singing in class affected the students' feelings about English and the overall atmosphere of the class. There was overwhelming agreement (figure 2) that the inclusion of singing in Speaking class was fun (95.1%). There were no students who disagreed with that statement. This finding provides an option for teachers searching for a class activity that students enjoy.

Figure 2



Additionally, 85.7% of the students felt that singing in class created a good mood (figure 3). This improved mood contributed to the positive attitude students held about English, and made them feel less shy.

**Figure 3**

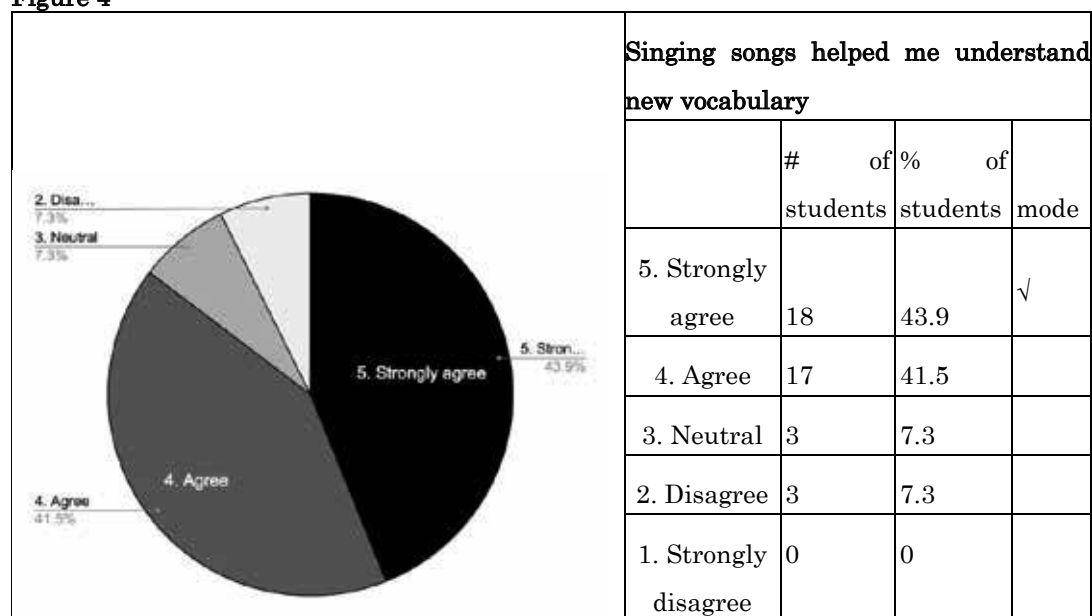
The energy level of the students was improved according to 85.3% of students, and 70.7% said the feeling of togetherness and unity with their classmates was created with the inclusion of singing in class. As with any large group of people, the preceding positive responses were not shared unanimously among every member of the class. There was one student (representing 2.4% of the survey participants) who did not agree that singing in class “made me feel better about English.” While dissenting students' opinions should not be ignored, the preponderance of the previously discussed positive responses can inform teachers' judgement when considering whether or not to include songs in a class.

### 3.5.3 Students' Perceived English Skill Improvement

This last group of statements was designed to understand how students felt their English skills improved as a result of singing in class. A large majority of the students considered many aspects of their English skills to have benefitted from singing in class: improved speaking volume 65.9%, improved vocabulary 85.4% (figure 4), improved speaking fluency 70.8%, improved pronunciation 82.9%, improved listening ability 82.9%, improved cultural understanding 61%, and improved reading speed 56.1%. These encouraging results provide the justification for teachers who are considering including songs in their Speaking classes,

or for teachers who already use songs in their classes and are curious about the perceived benefits for the students.

**Figure 4**



#### IV. Areas for Further Research

Due to the variance of factors, it is difficult to isolate singing from the many other means of English input in a typical student's life. For example, 82.9% of students felt their listening skills improved as a result of singing in class. Listening skills are integral to nearly all forms of classroom instruction and isolating students who sing in class from all other forms of listening activities is certainly impractical, if not also almost impossible. As a consequence of this limitation, no tests were administered before or after this research was conducted to determine if the students' skills improved or not. Yet without such test results, it is not valid to suggest that singing is the only factor that can be credited for improving listening ability (or fluency, or vocabulary, or pronunciation, or any other language skill). Some form of early-semester test, followed by a semester of singing, and concluding with a followup assessment test is necessary to determine whether the students' belief in their improvement matches their actual improvement.

## V. Conclusion

The data collected for this research confirm the proposition that singing improves many aspects of Speaking classes. Improved vocabulary, better understanding of a different culture, fluency, pronunciation, listening, speaking volume, and a sense of unity with their classmates were among the many benefits that a majority of the students agreed singing in class improved. Speaking classes are meant to provide a place for students to practice using the language they have previously learned. By doing so, students improve their fluency and confidence with the language. In the course of practicing what students already know, content can be introduced to give the students' conversations parameters. Content can be brought to a classroom in many different ways, but using songs is a useful method to enliven the mood of a class. Songs have many educational benefits that will lead to improved fluency. One of the great barriers to improvement in any speaking environment is the lack of participation. If students do not try to use the language, there will be no improvement in their fluency. Students don't participate for any number of reasons, and it may be impossible for a teacher to rectify every reluctant student's ambivalence towards using English. If, however, a teacher can take steps to make the atmosphere of a class more enjoyable, then more students are likely to commit to participating. Using songs in a Speaking class, especially songs that are suggested by the students themselves is a useful way to enliven the mood of hesitancy, engage reluctant students, and make the material generally more familiar and approachable. Shy students are more likely to participate in activities involving songs because in a group activity, the individual pressure to perform is relieved. Shyness can be the result of a fear of standing out in a crowd; if the group is all engaged in a choral rendition of a song, then the pressure of the spotlight is taken off the shyer students. Songs also provide the opportunity and context in which to learn new vocabulary and to practice words that are already known. As lyrics are often repeated, songs give students many chances to hear and use the same words. This controlled exposure to the language eliminates the randomness of vocabulary usage, and new vocabulary words can be practiced many times in a short span of time. Beyond vocabulary and pronunciation, other facets of bottom-up language learning such as collocations, idioms, grammar, slang and blending are often naturally used in songs. It is not necessary to specifically focus on these language aspects if it slows down a class or inhibits students' enjoyment. These syntactic features will be unconsciously processed and absorbed into students' existing understanding of the language. Singing songs gives students practice with projecting the voices. Often students are incomprehensible simply because they cannot be heard. When students sing, they are practicing projecting their voices from their

diaphragms, rather than from their mouths. This needs to be reinforced by the repeated practice of singing out loud. Using songs in class also provides a basis for discussion of topics. Nearly every issue that is likely to be discussed in a Speaking class (the environment, hobbies, movies, etc.) has been sung about. Some songs can be quite deep and explore the nuances of issues that textbooks do not touch. This can provide a point of entry for the issue, it can reinforce previously learned ideas, or it can be an extension of a theme that students would otherwise not be exposed to. Finally, using songs provides a fun, rhythmic, and moving way to encourage students to practice the language. If students are having fun, their affective filter is lowered, and they will be intrinsically motivated to join the activity. Students benefit from the addition of songs in Speaking classes and teachers should consider this approach to make their classes more meaningful for their students.

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## Appendix A

The statements on the student-surveys were as follows:

Using songs is a fun way to practice English
Using songs helped me practice speaking in a loud voice
Using songs helped me understand new vocabulary
Using songs helped me understand a different culture
Using songs helped me improve my speaking fluency
Using songs helped me practice my pronunciation
Singing in class was energizing
Using songs helped my listening ability
Reading the lyrics helped me practice reading faster and with a natural rhythm
Singing songs created a feeling of unity with my classmates
I truly want to speak English in class
I feel shy speaking English in class
The reason I sometimes don't speak in class is that I don't know the proper vocabulary words
The reason I sometimes don't speak in class is because I don't know enough background information on the topic
Singing in class created a good mood in the class that made me feel better about English and less shy

## Appendix B

The songs were (in no particular order):

Song Title	Singer or Composer
"All I Want for Christmas is You"	Mariah Carey

"A Million Dreams"	Ziv Zalfman
"One Call Away"	Charlie Puth
"Perfect", "Thinking Out Loud", "What Do I Know"	Ed Sheeran
"Can't Stop the Feeling"	Justin Timberlake
"Speechless"	Naomi Scott
"Try Everything"	Shakira
"Arabian Nights"	Justin Paul
"Hold Me While You Wait"	Lewis Capaldi
"Homeless Heart"	Jennette McCurdy
"One Last Time", "Santa Tell Me"	Ariana Grande
"Cool Kids"	Echosmith
"Toxic"	Britney Spears
"Last Christmas", "Wake Me Up", "Freedom", "If You Were There"	Wham
"Symphony"	Clean Bandit
"2002"	Anne Marie
"Everything at Once"	Lenka
"Firework"	Kati Perry
"It Ain't Me"	Kygo & Selena Gomez
"Love Yourself"	Justin Bieber
"Makes No Difference"	Sum 41
"Marry You", "Talking to the Moon"	Bruno Mars
"On My Own"	Les Miserables
"September"	Earth, Wind, and Fire
"Strong"	Sonna Rele
"This is Me"	Keala Settle
"What About Us"	Pink
"Sk8er Boi"	Avril Lavigne
"I Really Really Really Like You"	Carly Rae Jepsen
"Happiness is Here"	Carolyn Gardner
"Hungry Like the Wolf"	Duran Duran
"Now I See"	Zachary Levi Pugh
"On My Mind"	Ellie Goulding
"Story of my Life"	One Direction