



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of English Songs on Vocabulary Learning: A Comparative Analysis between School Curriculum and YouTube

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In the continually evolving educational environment, multimedia tools have become essential for language instruction, particularly for young children. This study investigates the use of English songs in first-grade lessons and compares them to songs available on YouTube, focusing on their vocabulary and alignment with established word frequency lists such as the New General Service List (NGSL). The research employs a comparative content analysis methodology. Research tools include the transcription of song lyrics, quantitative analysis of vocabulary frequency, and cross-referencing tools for comparing the lyrics against the NGSL to assess the educational value of the songs. The study reveals that first-grade curriculum songs are highly aligned with the NGSL, providing structured exposure to high-frequency words essential for early language acquisition. In contrast, YouTube songs offer a broader range of vocabulary, including unique and thematic words, enhancing language exposure but requiring careful content curation to ensure educational relevance. The findings underscore the complementary nature of both educational tools, suggesting that a balanced integration of structured curriculum songs and diverse YouTube content can optimize vocabulary learning and language development for first-grade students. This research contributes to the understanding of multimedia integration in education, highlighting the potential of digital platforms to supplement traditional resources and the importance of strategic content selection to maximize learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

In the evolving educational environment, multimedia tools are now essential in language instruction for children, as education continues to progress. Songs have been recognized as a powerful tool in aiding language learning, providing rhythmic repetition and captivating material that can greatly improve vocabulary retention and pronunciation skills. This paper aims to investigate the use of English songs in first-grade lessons and compare them to songs on YouTube, with a focus on the vocabulary and how it aligns with established word frequency lists for the English language.

Psychological and educational research has extensively documented the significant influence of music on different aspects of human cognition, especially in the early stages of development (Joyce 2018). The study of the role of songs in language learning is an interesting and important topic within this field of knowledge. Music and language have similar qualities like rhythm and phonetics, making songs a great tool for teaching language skills to children. The special blend of music and lyrics in songs can greatly improve memory recall and help with learning new vocabulary and grammar.

During the early stages of schooling, songs serve as more than just tools for keeping students engaged; they are valuable assets for conveying information in an effective way. Madani & Mahmoodi Nasrabadi's research in 2017 suggests that musical activities, containing melody and rhythm, can help children remember information better. Repeating song lyrics is crucial for learning language, as it enhances vocabulary and language patterns in an enjoyable and memorable manner, especially for

language acquisition. Moreover, the emotional aspect of music, which can trigger feelings, boosts its effectiveness as a learning aid, turning education into an enjoyable activity that promotes continued involvement. The rise of digital technology, especially the Internet, has completely transformed how educational content is distributed and obtained. YouTube is a vital tool in modern educational settings, serving as a key example. It offers an extensive array of content, including countless educational songs that are accessible not only to children in classroom settings but also to a global audience. This accessibility enables a continuous and expansive learning environment where children can supplement their formal education with content viewed at home or on the move. The platform's diverse range of content—from animated educational videos to recordings of classroom songs—provides a rich repository for comparative analysis against traditional educational materials.

Despite the ubiquitous presence of these resources, there remains a significant gap in scholarly understanding of how the content of English language songs on informal platforms like YouTube compares to those embedded within structured first-grade curriculums. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing and comparing the vocabulary presented in both mediums. Understanding whether these digital platforms support, complement, or perhaps even diverge from established educational curriculums in terms of language teaching is crucial. Such insights could significantly impact curriculum development, pedagogical strategies, and content creation, ultimately influencing how language education is approached in both formal and informal settings.

By examining the specific vocabulary used in songs from structured first-grade curriculum books and those available on YouTube, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of these modalities as tools for foundational English language development. This comparison not only highlights the potential of digital platforms as allies in education but also underscores the necessity of curating and evaluating content that meets educational standards and supports effective learning outcomes.

Significance of the study

This research holds substantial significance due to its focus on the comparative analysis of English language songs used in traditional first-grade curriculums versus those accessed via YouTube. As educational paradigms continue to evolve, understanding the role of diverse media in language acquisition becomes crucial, particularly in the context of globalization and the increasing emphasis on English language proficiency worldwide.

Firstly, this study addresses a notable gap in existing educational research by providing empirical data on how the informal digital learning environment compares with traditional educational settings in terms of vocabulary development. With the rising influence of digital platforms in everyday learning, it is imperative to assess whether these new media meet the pedagogical quality of traditional learning resources. This comparison will illuminate the potential of platforms like YouTube as viable tools for structured language learning, potentially reshaping educational practices and resource allocation.

Secondly, the findings of this research could have significant implications for curriculum developers and educators by highlighting which medium offers more effective vocabulary exposure and retention according to established frequency lists like the New General Service List (NGSL). As curriculums are adapted to incorporate more digital resources, understanding these dynamics ensures that educational content is both relevant and effective.

Moreover, this study enriches the academic dialogue on the integration of multimedia in education by empirically examining its effectiveness compared to conventional teaching methods. As digital literacy becomes increasingly integrated into educational standards, such insights are vital for educators and policymakers aiming to create balanced and effective learning environments.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the optimization of language learning strategies for young learners, offering insights that could lead to more informed decisions in educational content creation and pedagogical approaches, thereby enhancing the overall quality of language education in both formal and informal settings.

Research Questions

This study is guided by several research questions:

1. What are the differences in the frequency of core vocabulary words between English language songs used in first-grade curriculums and those available on YouTube?
2. To what extent do English language songs on YouTube reflect the vocabulary standards recommended by educational word frequency lists compared to those songs in a first-grade curriculum?
3. How do the words used in first-grade curriculum songs and English language YouTube songs align with or deviate from the New General Service List (NGSL)?

To address these research questions, the study will employ a comparative content analysis methodology. English language songs from a representative sample of first-grade curriculums and those popular on YouTube will be analyzed. The lyrics of these songs will be transcribed, followed by a quantitative analysis of the vocabulary based on frequency and occurrence of words listed in the NGSL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The incorporation of music in language learning programs has attracted considerable interest because of its possible influence on the building and memorization of vocabulary in children. This literature review examines different research papers that have investigated this connection, focusing on both theoretical foundations and practical results.

Word frequency and language acquisition

The study conducted by Lieven (2010) provides important examination of the influence of input frequency on the acquisition of first languages. The study looks at how the occurrence of different morphological, lexical, and syntactic structures in language input influences the language development of children. Lieven's research indicates that regular exposure to particular language patterns can greatly help children learn those patterns, emphasizing the importance of frequency in how naturally children acquire language. This research emphasizes the significance of organizing language learning resources in a manner that consistently presents learners with essential linguistic structures, enhancing their learning process and establishing a strong base in the initial phases of language acquisition.

In the same way, Reynolds examined how word form variation and frequency impact the acquisition of second language vocabulary during incidental learning in reading situations in 2015. This research underscores the dual importance of word form variation alongside frequency, demonstrating that exposure to diverse word forms and frequent encounters with these words in reading materials significantly enhances vocabulary retention and acquisition. Reynolds' findings advocate for the inclusion of varied and frequent vocabulary in educational texts, suggesting that such an approach can substantially improve language learning outcomes. Both studies collectively affirm the crucial impact of frequency and diversity of exposure on language acquisition, providing valuable insights for the development of effective language education strategies.

The paper "Understanding Sustainable Development of English Vocabulary Acquisition " by Lu et al. (2022) examines the factors influencing vocabulary acquisition among Chinese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study recognizes that vocabulary acquisition is a critical but challenging aspect of language learning, essential for academic success and career development. The researchers modified the Vocabulary Size Test to include more cognates and non-lexicalized words, aiming to better represent authentic language use. They administered this test to 527 Chinese non-English major sophomores to explore how word features like cognateness, frequency, polysemy, word family, part of speech, and word length affect vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that cognateness, frequency, and polysemy positively correlate with vocabulary acquisition, while word length and lexicalization negatively correlate.

The study's findings emphasize the importance of high-frequency word lists like the NGSL in vocabulary teaching. The NGSL's inclusion of high-frequency words is designed to provide maximal coverage of texts, aiding learners in acquiring a substantial vocabulary base. The research suggests that vocabulary learning strategies should focus on high-frequency, cognate-rich, and polysemous words to enhance acquisition. By understanding these factors, educators can develop more effective vocabulary teaching methods, thereby promoting sustainable vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. The study highlights the need for continued research into the specific features of words that facilitate learning and the practical applications of frequency-based word lists in educational settings.

The paper "The effectiveness of L2 vocabulary instruction: a meta-analysis" provides a comprehensive review of the efficacy of various vocabulary instruction methods in second language (L2) learning contexts. By analyzing multiple studies that utilize frequency-based word lists, including the New General Service List (NGSL), the meta-analysis aims to identify the most effective strategies for vocabulary acquisition. The research encompasses a range of instructional approaches, from traditional rote memorization to more interactive methods like contextual learning and multimedia use. One of the key findings is that high-frequency word lists, such as the NGSL, play a crucial role in vocabulary instruction, as they help learners focus on words that are most useful in everyday language use, thereby enhancing their communicative competence more efficiently.

The study also highlights the importance of integrating high-frequency vocabulary into various teaching materials and activities to maximize exposure and reinforcement. The meta-analysis shows that approaches combining explicit instruction with meaningful use of vocabulary in context tend to be more effective than methods relying solely on one type of learning. For instance, learners who engage with vocabulary through reading, listening, and interactive exercises tend to retain and use new words more successfully. The findings suggest that educators should adopt a multifaceted approach to vocabulary teaching, utilizing tools like the NGSL to guide curriculum design and ensure that learners acquire a robust and practical vocabulary base. By doing so, they can support more effective and sustainable vocabulary acquisition, ultimately improving learners' overall language proficiency.

Music and language acquisition

The importance of music in improving language learning is due to its capacity to involve both cognitive and emotional aspects. The musical aspects of music help in remembering and recalling information, which makes songs beneficial for learning new words. Research conducted by Mary F. Joyce at Northeastern University and by Gülsüm Çevikbaş, Nergis Yumurtacı, and Enisa Mede in Istanbul highlight this relationship. Joyce's work on kindergarten children using song picture books suggests that integrating music with reading activities significantly enhances vocabulary learning, particularly through the utilization of rhythm and rhyme which reinforce phonemic awareness (Joyce, 2011). Similarly, Çevikbaş et al. explored how first-grade EFL learners benefit from songs, noting substantial improvements in vocabulary retention facilitated by the repetitive and engaging nature of musical language instruction (Çevikbaş et al., 2018).

The empirical research reviewed spans various educational contexts, each underscoring the efficacy of songs in language education. For instance, Joyce's quasi-experimental study, which included control and experimental groups, demonstrated notable improvements in vocabulary acquisition among students exposed to song picture books, compared to those who were not (Joyce, 2011). On the other hand, Çevikbaş et al. provided a detailed analysis of the cognitive benefits of music in language learning, supported by data from vocabulary tests, student drawings, and teacher observations, which collectively affirmed the positive outcomes of musical engagement in language acquisition (Çevikbaş et al., 2018).

The theoretical frameworks that underpin these studies include psycholinguistic theories and the Involvement Load Hypothesis, which suggest that cognitive engagement through music can significantly enhance language learning outcomes. Both Joyce and Çevikbaş et al. reference foundational theories and prior research to bolster their claims about the benefits of songs in vocabulary learning, highlighting how songs activate multiple learning modalities that increase engagement and improve retention rates.

Expanding the discussion on educational mediums, a study by researchers focusing on preschool learners of English as a Foreign Language compares the effectiveness of songs and stories in vocabulary acquisition. This research highlights that both songs and stories are potent tools for engaging young learners and facilitating language development through different modes of learning. Songs, often accompanied by actions, enhance memory and recall through learning, while stories provide rich contextual backgrounds that help children infer the meaning of new vocabulary. The findings suggest that a balanced approach incorporating both songs and stories could cater to diverse learning preferences and maximize educational outcomes.

"Vocabulary Load of English Song Lyrics for EFL Learners" by Öztürk (2017) focuses on analyzing the lexical content of English song lyrics to determine their suitability for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The research examines the word frequency and lexical coverage needed to understand different genres of songs. By analyzing a corpus of song lyrics, the study identifies the most common words and phrases, highlighting those that align with established word frequency lists used in educational settings. The results indicate that pop songs, in particular, tend to have a high repetition of common vocabulary, making them accessible and useful for language learners. However, some genres, such as rap or indie music, may contain more complex and less frequent vocabulary, posing a greater challenge for beginners. The study suggests that teachers carefully select songs based on their students' proficiency levels and learning goals, using songs with high-frequency words to reinforce vocabulary and improve listening skills. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating songs into a broader language learning curriculum to maximize their educational benefits.

The impact of songs in ESL classrooms

Duisembekova's (2014) study investigates the potential of English songs on YouTube for vocabulary acquisition among young learners, reflecting the growing utilization of online platforms in education. Employing a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and pre- and post-exposure vocabulary tests, the study assessed how these songs enhance vocabulary comprehension and retention. Results showed significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition for children who engaged with these YouTube songs compared to those who did not, highlighting the platform's effectiveness in language education. Duisembekova emphasized the cognitive and motivational benefits of integrating such multimedia resources into language learning, suggesting that the audiovisual nature of YouTube songs fosters deeper engagement and reinforces learning. This supports multimedia learning theories that highlight the benefits of engaging multiple senses in educational processes.

In a related study, MJZ Abidin, M Pour-Mohammadi, and their collaborators in 2011 explored the impact of using songs on YouTube to improve vocabulary competence among upper secondary school students. Through a controlled experimental design, this study compared the vocabulary competence of students learning through traditional methods versus those engaging with English language songs on YouTube. Findings revealed a notable enhancement in vocabulary competence in the YouTube group, underscoring digital media's role as an effective educational tool. The research aligns with cognitive theories that suggest multimedia can decrease cognitive load and enrich the learning environment, providing practical insights for educators and curriculum developers on incorporating digital media to enhance language learning outcomes. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion about digital media's role in education, advocating for further exploration of digital content to bolster language education across diverse educational settings.

Johanna Johansson's thesis on the benefits of songs in the ESL classroom, particularly within a Swedish upper secondary school context, presents an in-depth analysis of how songs facilitate incidental vocabulary learning and contribute to a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. Her research emphasizes that songs promote vocabulary acquisition through repeated exposure and contextual learning, making them an invaluable resource in ESL education. Moreover, Johansson discusses the practical applications of using songs, suggesting that they are not only versatile and effective educational tools but also enhance students' attitudes towards learning English.

Completing the examination of the literature is the study by Davood Madani and Mahboobeh Mahmoodi Nasrabadi, which investigates the effect of songs on vocabulary retention among preschool English language learners. Their findings highlight that song-based instruction significantly outperforms traditional methods, underscoring the potential of using songs to enhance vocabulary retention (Madani & Nasrabadi, 2017). This study confirms that musical engagement can effectively support memorization and recall of new vocabulary, providing a robust argument for integrating music into early language education.

Collectively, these studies offer a comprehensive overview of the significant advantages of incorporating songs into language learning across various educational settings and age groups. The consistent theme across the literature is the powerful role of music in enhancing the language acquisition process by engaging multiple senses and providing enjoyable and memorable learning experiences. Future research should continue to explore the integration of songs in digital education platforms, particularly evaluating the effectiveness of online resources like YouTube in delivering educational content to enhance language learning further.

These studies not only demonstrate the benefits of using songs in language education but also discuss their pedagogical implications. The findings suggest that songs can serve as a dynamic component of language learning for young learners, particularly in EFL contexts. This is evident in the way songs maintain students' interest and motivation, key factors in sustaining engagement with the language learning process.

In summary, the literature makes a compelling argument for incorporating music into language learning programs. The research analyzed in this article presents convincing proof of how beneficial songs can be in improving the learning and remembering of new words in young students, supporting their inclusion as a common practice in vocabulary teaching.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employs a comparative content analysis approach, designed to systematically assess and compare the vocabulary utilized in English language songs from first-grade curriculums and those available on YouTube. The main objective is to identify the differences in the frequency of core vocabulary words between these educational tools and evaluate how closely they align with established English language word frequency lists such as the New General Service List (NGSL).

Sample selection

The research sample comprises 10 English language songs found in first-grade curriculums in Saudi Arabian schools, and an equivalent number of English language songs from YouTube, popular among the same educational level. YouTube songs are selected based on criteria such as view counts, relevance to first-grade education, and appropriateness for the age group, ensuring they are similarly positioned for a comparative analysis.

Data collection

Lyrics from the selected songs are meticulously transcribed to facilitate precise textual analysis. For YouTube songs, versions with clear audio and officially provided lyrics (when available) are chosen to maintain accuracy in transcription. This transcription is conducted manually, with each song listened to repeatedly to ensure that lyrical content is accurately captured and documented.

Analytical procedure

The analytical process is divided into several key stages:

1. **Vocabulary extraction:** Each song is processed to extract a comprehensive list of unique words, which are then catalogued for further analysis.

2. **Frequency analysis:** The frequency of each word is calculated for songs from both sources. This involves counting how often each word appears in the lyrics, providing a quantitative basis for comparison.
3. **Alignment with frequency lists:** Words from the song lyrics are cross-referenced with entries in the NGSL. This step assesses the educational value of the songs by determining the presence of high-frequency, educationally significant vocabulary.

RESULTS

The analysis of vocabulary in first-grade curriculum songs reveals significant insights into the type and frequency of words that young learners are exposed to in a structured educational setting. The study focused on songs from first-grade curriculums in Saudi Arabian schools, examining their alignment with the New General Service List (NGSL). A significant portion of the vocabulary in these songs aligns with the NGSL, which includes words essential for early language acquisition. Examples of high-frequency words found in the curriculum songs and their ranks within the NGSL include "hello" (rank 709), "how" (rank 69), "are" (rank 24), "you" (rank 6), "I" (rank 5), "am" (rank 85), "fine" (rank 645), "thank" (rank 457), "good" (rank 77), "bye" (rank 2016), "see" (rank 134), "again" (rank 309), "to" (rank 2), "five" (rank 258), and "little" (rank 391). These high-frequency words are crucial for building a foundational vocabulary, and their frequent repetition in songs helps reinforce their recognition and retention among young learners.

In addition to high-frequency words, curriculum songs also contain thematic and context-specific vocabulary that, while not as frequent in everyday language, are relevant to the themes of the songs. Examples of these words include "monkeys," "jumping," "bed," "bumped," "ouch," "doctor," "Sunday," "Monday," "Tuesday," "Wednesday," "Thursday," "Friday," "Saturday," "farmer," and "horse." These words, although not part of the NGSL, play an important role in thematic learning. They help children understand and enjoy the context of the songs, thereby enriching their learning experience. The repetition of high-frequency words in curriculum songs is a key feature that aids in vocabulary acquisition. Words like "hello," "how," "are," "you," "I," "am," and "fine" are repeated across different songs, reinforcing their learning through consistent exposure.

In comparison, the vocabulary analysis of English language songs on YouTube, aimed at the same educational level, reveals a different pattern of word usage. The study examined popular YouTube songs for first-grade learners. Similar to the curriculum songs, many high-frequency words from the NGSL were found in YouTube songs. Examples of these words and their ranks within the NGSL include "left" (rank 103), "knee" (rank 1375), "chewing" (rank 1535), "playing" (rank 581), "with" (rank 14), "do" (rank 35), "watching" (rank 481), "birds" (rank 1221), "fly" (rank 924), "along" (rank 378), "came" (rank 184), "big" (rank 149), "asked" (rank 426), and "happened" (rank 609). These words are part of the foundational vocabulary that young learners need to acquire and are frequently used in educational content, providing a solid base for language development.

YouTube songs often include a broader range of thematic and unique words, reflecting the diverse content available on the platform. Examples of such words include "sittin'," "fencepost," "slapping," "bubble," "gum," "yo-yo," "Herman," "Worm," "grape," "grapefruits," "cantaloupes," "watermelons," "burped," and "rainbow." These words may introduce children to a wider array of vocabulary, although they may not be as critical for foundational language development. The inclusion of these unique and thematic words in YouTube songs can enhance children's language development by broadening their vocabulary and helping them understand and appreciate the richness of the English language. However, this also means that educators and parents need to be vigilant in selecting appropriate YouTube content to ensure it aligns with educational goals and is suitable for the age group.

For both tables, which showcases the full data, refer to table 1 and table 2 in the appendix, it was used to produce the pie charts below at Figure 1 and Figure 2.

The vocabulary in YouTube songs exhibits greater diversity compared to first-grade curriculum songs. This diversity can be advantageous for broadening language exposure as it introduces children

to a mix of high-frequency and less common words. Such varied exposure can enhance vocabulary learning by providing a richer linguistic environment. However, it also necessitates additional support to ensure that foundational words, which are crucial for early language development, are adequately reinforced.

First-grade curriculum songs have a high alignment with the New General Service List (NGSL), ensuring that children are frequently exposed to high-frequency, educationally significant words. This alignment supports structured vocabulary acquisition, focusing on essential words that form the basis of early language skills. In contrast, while YouTube songs also overlap significantly with the NGSL, they include a higher proportion of unique and less common words. This reflects the platform's broader content diversity, which can be both a strength and a challenge.

The vocabulary in first-grade curriculum songs tends to focus on a core set of high-frequency words, supplemented by thematic words relevant to the song's context. This approach helps maintain a structured learning environment. On the other hand, YouTube songs feature a more varied vocabulary, including both high-frequency and unique thematic words. This variety can broaden children's language exposure but may require additional contextual learning to ensure comprehension and retention.

Both first-grade curriculum songs and YouTube songs offer distinct advantages for vocabulary acquisition. Curriculum songs provide a structured approach that emphasizes high-frequency vocabulary, essential for building a strong language foundation. Meanwhile, YouTube songs offer diverse vocabulary exposure, enhancing language learning by introducing children to a wider array of words and contexts. The combination of these two sources can engage children through music and rhythm, making vocabulary learning enjoyable and memorable.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **First-grade curriculum songs:** Focus on high-frequency words with contextual thematic words, providing a structured approach to vocabulary learning.
- **YouTube songs:** Offer a broader range of vocabulary with unique and thematic words, enhancing language exposure but requiring careful curation.

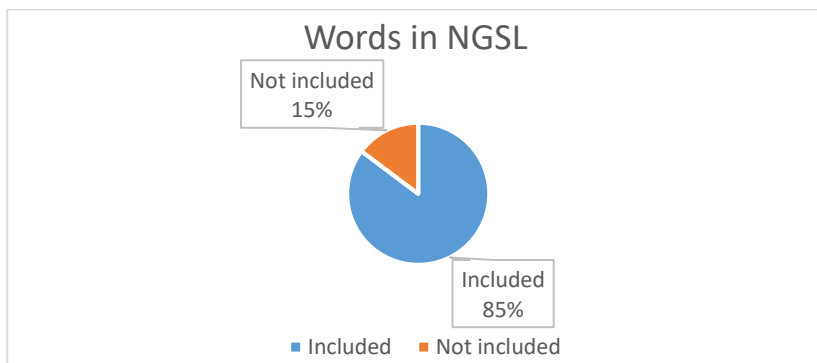


Figure 1: Words from first grade curriculum

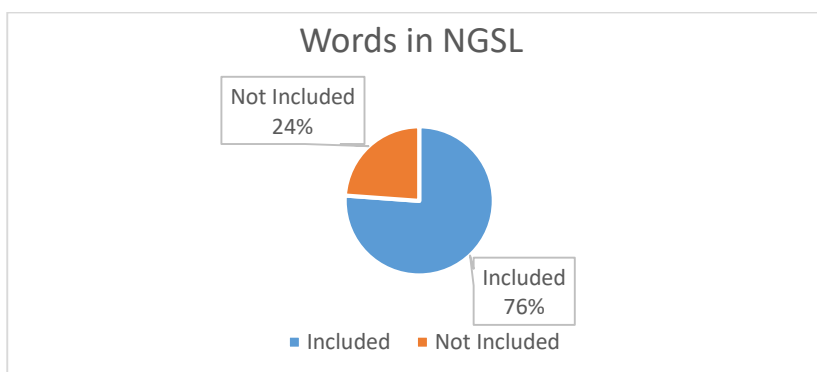


Figure 2: Words from YouTube

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study underscore the significance of integrating both traditional first-grade curriculum songs and YouTube songs into language learning environments for young children (Lieven, 2010). Each source brings unique strengths that, when combined, can create a comprehensive and engaging educational experience. First-grade curriculum songs are designed with a clear focus on high-frequency words, which are essential for building a solid foundation in language learning. This seems consistent with the finding of Joyce (2011). These songs provide a structured approach that ensures children are repeatedly exposed to the most commonly used words in the English language, thereby reinforcing their understanding and retention. This repetition is crucial for young learners as it helps them to internalize and remember essential vocabulary, facilitating their ability to use these words in various contexts.

In contrast, YouTube songs offer a broader and more diverse vocabulary, introducing children to a wider array of words and language structures. This diversity can be highly beneficial as it exposes children to different contexts and themes that they may not encounter in traditional curriculum songs. The inclusion of unique and thematic words in YouTube songs can enhance children's language development by broadening their vocabulary and helping them understand and appreciate the richness of the English language. However, this also means that educators and parents need to be vigilant in selecting appropriate YouTube content to ensure that it aligns with educational goals and is suitable for the age group. The diversity of vocabulary in YouTube songs can sometimes include less common or colloquial words that may require additional explanation and contextual learning to be fully understood by young learners, aligning with the findings of Çevikbaş et al. (2018).

The comparative analysis between the vocabulary used in first-grade curriculum songs and YouTube songs highlights the complementary nature of these educational tools (Abidin et al., 2011). Curriculum songs, with their high alignment with the New General Service List (NGSL), provide a reliable and structured approach to vocabulary acquisition. They ensure that children are exposed to words that are not only frequent but also educationally significant, thus supporting a structured learning environment (Duisembekova, 2014). On the other hand, YouTube songs, while also containing many high-frequency words, offer a higher proportion of unique and less common words. This broader vocabulary can introduce children to new concepts and ideas, fostering a more well-rounded language learning experience. The key challenge here is to balance the structured approach of curriculum songs with the diverse exposure provided by YouTube songs, ensuring that foundational vocabulary is reinforced while also expanding children's linguistic horizons.

One of the significant advantages of using songs, whether from a traditional curriculum or YouTube, is their ability to engage children through music and rhythm as demonstrated by Kocaman (2016). Songs make learning enjoyable and memorable, which can significantly enhance vocabulary retention. The multisensory experience provided by songs—combining auditory and visual elements—can cater to different learning styles and preferences, making language learning more accessible and effective for a broader range of students. This engagement is particularly important for young learners, who may find traditional rote learning methods less appealing. By incorporating songs into the language learning curriculum, educators can maintain high levels of student interest and motivation, which are critical for sustained learning.

However, the diversity and variability of YouTube content pose certain challenges that need to be addressed. While the platform offers a vast array of educational songs, not all of them may be appropriate or align with educational standards. Educators and parents must curate the content carefully to ensure it is age-appropriate and educationally beneficial. This involves selecting songs that not only entertain but also reinforce key vocabulary and language structures that are essential for early language development. Additionally, there is a need for a balanced approach to ensure that while children are exposed to a variety of words, there is also sufficient repetition of high-frequency words to reinforce their learning. This balance can be achieved by integrating selected YouTube

songs that complement the high-frequency vocabulary focus of traditional curriculum songs, thereby providing a comprehensive and enriching language learning experience.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate context of first-grade language education. They highlight the potential of digital platforms like YouTube to supplement traditional educational resources, offering a dynamic and interactive way to enhance vocabulary acquisition. However, this also underscores the importance of strategic content curation and the need for educational frameworks that guide the integration of digital media into the curriculum. By leveraging the strengths of both traditional curriculum songs and YouTube content, educators can create a multifaceted approach to language learning that supports both foundational vocabulary development and broader language exposure. This approach can ultimately lead to more effective and enjoyable language learning experiences for young children, setting a strong foundation for their future academic success.

The findings from this study highlight the importance of integrating both structured curriculum songs and selected YouTube content to optimize vocabulary learning for first-grade students. By leveraging the strengths of both sources, educators can create a dynamic and effective language learning environment that supports vocabulary acquisition and language development.

CONCLUSION

This research has demonstrated the significant role that English songs play in first-grade language education, both within traditional curriculum settings and through digital platforms like YouTube. By comparing the vocabulary in first-grade curriculum songs to that in popular YouTube songs, this study has provided valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of each medium in supporting vocabulary acquisition.

First-grade curriculum songs are meticulously designed to include high-frequency words that are crucial for building a solid foundation in language learning. These songs align well with the New General Service List (NGSL), ensuring that children are frequently exposed to educationally significant vocabulary. The repetitive nature of these songs reinforces the recognition and retention of high-frequency words, making them an effective tool for structured vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the inclusion of thematic and context-specific words in these songs aids in contextual learning, helping children to understand and enjoy the content while expanding their vocabulary.

On the other hand, YouTube songs offer a broader and more diverse range of vocabulary, introducing children to a wider array of words and language structures. This diversity can be beneficial for broadening language exposure and introducing new concepts and ideas. However, the inclusion of unique and less common words in YouTube songs also poses challenges. Educators and parents need to carefully curate YouTube content to ensure it aligns with educational goals and is age appropriate. The greater variety of vocabulary in YouTube songs may require additional contextual learning to ensure comprehension and retention, highlighting the need for a balanced approach in integrating these songs into language learning.

The comparative analysis between first-grade curriculum songs and YouTube songs underscores the complementary nature of these educational tools. While curriculum songs provide a structured approach with a focus on high-frequency vocabulary, YouTube songs offer diverse exposure that can enhance language learning. By integrating both sources, educators can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that supports vocabulary acquisition and language development. This multifaceted approach leverages the strengths of both traditional and digital media, ultimately enhancing the quality of language education for young learners.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of using a balanced approach in language education that combines the structured learning of curriculum songs with the diverse exposure provided by YouTube songs. This integration can optimize vocabulary learning for first-grade students, making language acquisition both effective and enjoyable. As digital platforms continue to play an increasingly important role in education, strategic content curation and the development of educational frameworks will be essential in guiding the integration of digital media into the

curriculum. By doing so, educators can provide young learners with a comprehensive and enriching language learning experience that sets a strong foundation for their future academic success.

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- TheLearningStation - Kids Songs and Nursery Rhymes. (2013, July 11). *Herman the Worm ♪ Camp Songs for children ♪ Kids Brain Breaks Songs by the Learning Station* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-rg7EIt1x4>
- Patty Shukla Kids TV - Children's songs. (2017, April 17). Graduation Song Thank you for kids, children & babies with lyrics | Patty Shukla [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xZD1i_g5Dw

APPENDIX

Table 1: NGSL analysis of words in first grade curriculum

Word	Included in NGSL	Rank (if included)
hello	Yes	709
how	Yes	69
are	Yes	24
you	Yes	6
I	Yes	5
am	Yes	85
fine	Yes	645
thank	Yes	457
good	Yes	77
bye	Yes	2016
see	Yes	134
again	Yes	309
to	Yes	2
five	Yes	258
little	Yes	391
monkeys	No	
jumping	No	
on	Yes	21
the	Yes	1
bed	No	
one	Yes	55
fell	Yes	1131
off	Yes	221
and	Yes	3
bumped	No	
his	Yes	52
head	Yes	330
ouch	No	
mom	Yes	1218
called	Yes	541
doctor	Yes	617
said	Yes	56
no	Yes	135
more	Yes	142
Sunday	Yes	943
Monday	Yes	445
Tuesday	Yes	819
Wednesday	Yes	1218
Thursday	Yes	1407
Friday	Yes	760
Saturday	Yes	933
comes	Yes	487
again	Yes	309
There	Yes	23
was	Yes	17
a	Yes	10
farmer	Yes	1838
who	Yes	68
had	Yes	113
horse	Yes	1323
And	Yes	47
PACO	No	
name-oh	No	
P-A-C-O	No	

Are	Yes	24
hungry	Yes	1172
thirsty	No	
happy	Yes	358
sad	Yes	1024
What's	Yes	60
the	Yes	1
matter	Yes	555
They're	Yes	87
all	Yes	74
Who	Yes	66
is	Yes	8
angry	Yes	864
scared	Yes	1192
She	Yes	95
sleepy	No	
bored	No	
he's	Yes	72
We're	Yes	53
well	Yes	228
Who	Yes	66
took	Yes	454
the	Yes	1
cookies	No	
from	Yes	37
me	Yes	36
Yes	Yes	302
Not	Yes	122
Robot	No	
bear	No	
turn	Yes	529
around	Yes	228
touch	Yes	1088
ground	Yes	808
show	Yes	533
shoe	Yes	1534
you're	Yes	6
out	Yes	181
too	Yes	192
How	Yes	69
old	Yes	287
are	Yes	24
they	Yes	87
you	Yes	6
I	Yes	5
am	Yes	85
ten	Yes	956
Abdullah	No	
Amina	No	
One	Yes	55
little	Yes	391
two	Yes	143
three	Yes	187
four	Yes	198
five	Yes	258
six	Yes	543
seven	Yes	687
eight	Yes	732
nine	Yes	1133

ten	Yes	956
here	Yes	248
camels	No	

Table 2: NGSL analysis of words in YouTube videos

Word	Included in NGSL	Rank (if included)
sittin'	No	
fencepost	No	
slapping	No	
left	Yes	103
knee	Yes	1375
chewing	Yes	1535
bubble	No	
gum	No	
chomp	No	
playing	Yes	581
with	Yes	14
yo-yo	No	
do	Yes	35
op	No	
watching	Yes	481
birds	Yes	1221
fly	Yes	924
by	Yes	111
along	Yes	378
came	Yes	184
Herman	No	
Worm	No	
big	Yes	149
asked	Yes	426
happened	Yes	609
swallowed	No	
grape	No	
apples	Yes	1543
grapefruits	No	
cantaloupes	No	
watermelons	No	
burped	No	
spring	Yes	1746
rain	Yes	1316
pouring	Yes	2733
down	Yes	218
flowers	Yes	1945
rainbow	No	
sky	Yes	750
bring	Yes	233
new	Yes	123
life	Yes	222
summer	Yes	581
heat	Yes	688
sun	Yes	841
kids	Yes	892
having	Yes	185
fun	Yes	735
warm	Yes	666
breeze	No	
trees	Yes	1066
green	Yes	561
fall	Yes	466

leaves	Yes	1043
changing	Yes	668
color	Yes	930
climate	Yes	1756
getting	Yes	185
cooler	No	
falling	Yes	1307
wind	Yes	1034
blowing	Yes	2260
loud	Yes	2000
winter	Yes	1177
ice	Yes	1354
snow	Yes	1404
freezing	Yes	2123
cold	Yes	512
days	Yes	403
shorter	Yes	2097
nights	Yes	1329
longer	Yes	1015
words	Yes	227
It's	Yes	14 (it), 3 (is)
end	Yes	404
year	Yes	174
Graduation	No	
Teachers	No	
Moms	No	
Dads	No	
Grandparents	No	
everyone	Yes	472
you've	Yes	24 (you), 35 (have)
done	Yes	365
taught	Yes	817
us	Yes	47
read	Yes	204
write	Yes	357
learn	Yes	274
told	Yes	410
alright	No	
take	Yes	146
helped	Yes	870
tie	Yes	1319
shoes	Yes	1082
shapes	Yes	1870
colors	Yes	917
many	Yes	158
things	Yes	133
want	Yes	134
say	Yes	186