

A Qualitative Study on Song Teaching To Primary School Children: The Sample of Artvin *

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Abstract: *One of the main goals of music education is, undoubtedly, to leave impacts on students' affective, cognitive, intuitive and psychomotor structures. It is also aimed for the students to internalise these impacts and to be able to make a music culture on their own. At this stage of culture-making, the importance of song teaching is an inarguable fact. On the other hand, it is a known that there can occur various difficulties on the process of this training especially on the children at younger ages. It is a known fact that facing various issues about when to employ which method is rather common. While giving children music education we must sure have basic information about their affective, cognitive, intuitive and psychomotor developments. At the same time we must also have appropriate plans and programs scheduled. In this study; a qualitative practice on song teaching to 20 elementary school students is made. On song teaching; the melody of a song is given to 10 students only by playing the melody on the org monophonically and with vocals while the melody of the same song is given to another 10 students played polyphonically accompanied by the org and with vocals. The practice had been done for 40 minutes per week for 4 weeks. At the end of this study the findings had been gathered and presented with statistical information.*

Keywords: *Music education, song teaching, polyphony*

Date of Submission: 28-11-2017

Date of acceptance: 11-12-2017

I. Introduction

Human grows up hearing the sounds and rhythms starting from the babyhood. These units the human grows up hearing are the main elements of music. These units settle in the human's ear in time and constitute an accumulation. According to Zimmerman (1971); musical learning depends on our perceiving of the musical sounds that we hear. It is a known fact that the periods of babyhood and early childhood are very important. The information and accumulation learnt at these ages shapes the personality, likes and favourites of the human in his later life. Especially in this period where the socialization of the child starts, education period should be suitable to the child's development, needs and likings. Considering the child's development; a convenient, beneficial, affective and productive education period should be applied. According to Feierabend (1990) the early childhood experts accepted music's integration to their own curriculum and arranged its benefits to musical achievements on social, cognitive, psychomotor, emotional and creative development fields. Roes (2003) stated that the music teaching in schools had been suggested to assess under the two titles of "classroom teaching" and "individual teaching". Primarily, the singing of appropriate songs in unison and in other parties too, breathing exercises, voice production, sight-seeing, ear-training, listening to good music and then singing with an instrument or solo had been suggested.

This work was presented at the International Science and Technology Conference, Berlin, 17-19 July 2017.

1.1. Singing

Singing is generally a pleasurable and entertaining activity for people at every age. It is a widely known fact that most of the people use singing to express themselves, state their sorrow or happiness and to overcome it. According to Elmer (2002) who approaches the event in mostly psychological aspects, singing as a personal behaviour interests all classical general psychological fields like action, memory, thinking, learning, motivation, development, perception, sensation and personality. And Joyner (1969) mentions in his study that vocal accuracy has three components: discriminating the characteristics of the vocal example, remembering it and reproducing it. Apfelstadt (1988) extended these categories. The situation is also same for the little children. According to Persellin & Bateman (2009); singing, for little children, is in the meaning of the turning of their experiences and emotions into a personal way of expression. Opinions on singing which forms one of the main components of music education are at a wide variety. Namely, according to Gault (2002); singing is an

important part of many general music programs. According to Flowers & Dunne-Sousa (1990) the development of singing skill is an important component of school music from the start. According to Kern (1903) singing in cultural means, is the main unit in school music training. According to Persellin (2003) vocal modelling and learning methodology are two important factors in affecting children's singing abilities. According to Mizener (2008) children should feel comfortable while singing and should continue to be in desire of singing in their adulthoods too. Some researchers, on the other hand, views singing education from a larger perspective and alongside the training that will be applied should be suitable for the children's development, they also mentioned the necessity of considering some various impacts.

1.2. Rote-Singing

The singing process of the children at young age who had not received note education is surely through rote-learning. Though even if they received any note education, this method is still being used in teaching some songs. Because teaching these songs by notes could be troublesome. For this reason, there are also many opinions and researches on song teaching (Sorells, 2006; Apfelstadt, 1984; Jarjisian, 1983; Moore R.S & Brotons M., & Fyk J., & Castillo A., 1997). According to Sorells (2006), rote (hearing based)-singing happens through imitation through ear and repeating. Apfelstadt (1984), however, states that rote singing is inefficient in the means of vocal accuracy development since the students easily forget what they had learnt. And Moore R.S & Brotons M., & Fyk J., & Castillo A., (1997); reached the conclusion that the older children perform better performances than the younger children and the girls sing more accurate than the boys.

1.3. Practices

Many researches are being done on teaching to sing and singing technics (Persellin, 2003; Mizener, 2003; Kerr & Persellin, 2004; Persellin & Bateman, 2008; Hornbach & Taggart, 2005; Klinger, Campbell & Goolsby, 1998; Kullenberg & Pramling, 2015; Liao, 2008; Mizener, 2003; Levinowitz, 1989). According to Mizener (2004) the research fields include vocal accuracy, singing ability and the development of the singing ability. These researches consist of holistic or phrase-by-phrase and the immersion methods. Another view on singing ability belongs to Carlsen. According to Carlsen (1969), the perceptual area in music consists of the aural stimulant of the musical sound. There are many researches on the using of harmony through accompany during song teaching (Guilbault, 2004; Petzold, 1966; Hale, 1977; Hedden & Baker, 2010; Atterbury & Silcox, 1993; Brittin, 2000). These researches are being done in children who had received music education in very early periods of their lives. According to Guilbault (2004), music education that contains harmony accompaniment can develop accurate singing and tonal improvisation skill. One of the researches that confirm this claim was done by Jones (1979). According to this study children's ability of matching the tones increased as a result of the using of vertical harmonies that were played by organ.

In a research that had been done by Jarjisian (1983), it was observed that the combination which does not only consist of only one or diatonic or pentatonic patterns but consist of both of them helps the children's development of singing. According to Petzold (1966), traditional harmonic accompaniment may help the children to sing more accurately. Because the harmonic content of the melodic line does not reflect only chords, it also provides the tonality which supports the awareness of the singer of the tonal centre of the given song. In a study he had done, Hale (1977) moved by the opinion that it is necessary for children in kindergarten to sing with accompaniment, and followed a method which is only with harmonic accompaniment or three stepped –where the octave of the melody is played in the first place, harmonic accompaniment is being added to the melody later and in the end only harmonic accompaniment is being used. As a result of this, he observed that three stepped method is more efficient in children's accurate singing. According to Azzara (1999); learning an extensive repertoire for students who develop musical abilities provides the opportunity of free innovation of new melodies, rhythms and harmonies. On chord using, however, Petzold (1966) stated that using basic chords is more efficient in children. Again, as Petzold (1966) stated; he supported the hypothesis which states the age is a major factor in the auditory perception development, it has been supported by other, although with some limits. Auditory perception, in most cases, reaches the highest level at age 8 level who receives education in the third grade and the most significant progress is being recorded at the ages 6 and 7 (1st and 2nd grades). In a study that is done by Guilbault (2004); the tonal success and the effect of harmonic accompaniment in their improvisations of kindergarten children and first grade students had been examined. As a result of the study, it has been observed that the song which was taught with harmonic accompaniment has no meaningful effects on these children. In a study that is done by Hedden & Baker (2010); 26 students who receives education in 2nd grade had been divided in two groups, one group has been taught a song through a capella and the other has been taught a song with piano accompaniment and their singing has been recorded. To evaluate the accuracy of the tones, the records has been analysed by three experts and a computer. In the results, the accuracy

percentages of the tones were found as 70% by the experts and 80% by the computer. When their singing conditions were compared, however; perceptual analysis shows that there is an important distinctness in the accuracy percentage of the song that was taught as a capella; this percentage was not observed in acoustic analyses. In spite of these researches and studies, some researches reached different conclusions. One of these researches had been done by Atterbury & Silcox (1993). This study had taken place throughout a year to detect the effect of harmonic accompaniment of the piano in the singing ability of kindergarten children. As a result of this, it was observed that there is no significant diversity in the singing accuracy of children who were taught with or without accompaniment.

II. Purpose of The Study

In the study especially these two sub problems had been emphasised:

1. What is the place and importance of accompaniment usage during the teaching of a new song in 3rd grade student who has not received any music education before?
2. How long does the accompaniment perception actualise the teaching of a new song in 3rd grade student who has not received any music education before?

2.1. Method of the Study

This research had been done as a Case Study which is one of the Qualitative Research Methods. According to Yildirim & Şimşek (2013); case studies can be done with quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Kothari (2004); qualitative research holds a special importance in human sciences which's purpose is to discover the impetuses that lie underneath the human actions. In this study, participant observation had also been used. Participant observation is one of the qualitative research types (Bogdan & Biklen; 1992). According to Miles & Huberman & Saldana (1994); qualitative researchers study by expanding the understanding and sentence. In this study there had also been used description, interview and document review. In the document review; direct quotations are often be being place to in order to conspicuously represent the opinions of the individuals who were interviewed and observed. (Yildirim & Şimşek; 2013)

2.2. The Sample of the Study

The sample group of the study is 20 participants who receive education in the 3rd Grade of Primary School. These participants are on two groups and each group contains ten participants. The participants have received music lessons for 80 minutes per week for 4 weeks. (This application had been used for 40 minutes per week in each group.)

2.3. The Data Collecting Tools and Analysis of the Study

In this study, 3rd grade students who had not received any music education before are separated in two groups; one group is being taught song education with a capella and the other group is being taught song education with accompaniment. During the study, feedbacks are taken from the students; assessment form which was prepared within the program of The Ministry of Education and is presented in the references is being used.

III. Findings

The first one of the two groups that consists of ten students each were taught with a capella and the second group were taught with piano accompaniment; they were taught the original compositions that was composed by the researcher who had done this study. The researched was arranged as 40 minutes for each group. The training has taken place once a week and for four weeks total. In the first week of the study, the students were given general information by being asked for 10 minutes about what they know about music and rhythm; and being made various rhythm and physical movements for 10 minutes. 20 minutes was saved to song teaching. At the end of the training, it have been observed that the children who were taught the song as a capella had higher understanding and more vocally and rhythm accurate repeats than the children who were taught the song with piano accompaniment. In the second week of the study; general information about sound was given to the students for 10 minutes, and they were asked the songs they had heard elsewhere. The children's satisfied their kinetic needs by being made various rhythm and physical movements for 10 minutes; and the remaining 20 minutes was saved for song teaching. After the repeat of the song which was told the former week; a new song has been taught. As a result of that; it have been observed the children who were taught the song with piano accompaniment have perceived easier compared to the first week but they still could not attain the success of the first group who were taught through a capella completely. In the third week of the study; brief and general information about the elements of music writing were given to the students, and the children were again being made various rhythm and physical movements for 10 minutes. 20 minutes was saved

for song teaching. After the repeat of the song which was told the former weeks; a new song has been taught. As a result of that; it have been observed that the children who were taught the song with piano accompaniment have improved quite remarkably and comprehended the song, its rhythms and lyrics much better and repeated much easier compared to the former weeks.

In the last week of the study; the children were shown the places and sounds of the notes in the board for 10 minutes, the children were again being made various rhythm and physical movements for 10 minutes, and were again taught a song for the remaining 20 minutes. After the repeat of the song which was told the former weeks; a new song has been taught. As a result of that; it have been observed that the children who were taught the song with piano accompaniment have not struggled at all, and perceived and repeated the song much easier compared to the former weeks.

The table is given below.

Table 1

	Vocal Accuracy	Rhythm Accuracy
Week 1		
First Group	80 %	80 %
Second Group	20 %	40 %
Week 2		
First Group	90 %	100 %
Second Group	40 %	50 %
Week 3		
First Group	100 %	100 %
Second Group	80 %	80 %
Week 4		
First Group	100 %	100 %
Second Group	100 %	100 %

IV. Conclusion

It is known that there are many researches have been done about the importance of harmony using through accompaniment while song teaching. Still, when the body of literature is searched, it is observed that these studies were mostly made with children who have received music education before. Though it is considered that doing the same researches on children at various ages who have not received any music education before would also be beneficial, for that the applications for children with music education and children without music education would be much more different. In this study, a group of 3rd grade students in elementary school and at the ages of 8 who did not received any music education before were divided into 2 groups; one group was applied song teaching with only a capella and the other group was applied song teaching with only piano accompaniment. This application is being done on students who have similar skills. It is observed that seeing the children whose ears were not traditionally used to polyphony, have got used to polyphony after two weeks week although they had not received any music education before the research; is a pleasing finding for the music education researches and applications in the future. According to these findings; the necessity and benefit of the children's singing with accompaniment had been reinforced, as Hale (1977) also stated. Although the statement of Hale only included Kindergarten children, this opinion has also been necessary and beneficial in elementary school children as well, as it was applied in this study. It is understood that the three-step method what was brought by Hale (1977) would be beneficial and affective on these students as well. It is a known fact that children's critical and analytic thinking and understanding improves with the listening of polyphonic music samples. In this study, however, it was observed that the application of basic chords (I, IV and V levels), as Petzold (1966) stated, was also beneficial. On the contrary of the result of Atterbury & Silcox (1993)'s study, important contrasts have been found on the accuracy of the songs that were taught with and without accompaniment in the first two weeks. Still, it is thought that the situation that children had not received any music education before and they were not especially used to polyphony has a great effect on this contrast. As a conclusion; it can be said that the children without any music education and whose ears were unfamiliar to polyphony getting used to the situation after the 3rd week of this study which was done with elementary school 3rd grade students is a pleasing and encouraging finding. Also, the feedback forms that were given to and filled by the students concluded as the results below:

V. Attitude

5.1 How did you feel during the activity?

		f	%
Happy	Female	6	30
	Male	6	30
	Total	12	60
Excited	Female	3	15
	Male	0	0
	Total	3	15
Very Good	Female	1	5
	Male	2	10
	Total	3	15
Good	Female	0	0
	Male	2	10
	Total	2	10

5.2 What do you think about this activity?

		F	%
Good	Female	5	25
	Male	7	35
	Total	12	60
Very Good	Female	3	15
	Male	3	15
	Total	6	30
Entertaining	Female	2	10
	Male	0	0
	Total	2	10

VI. Product

5.3 What can you say you learnt from this activity?

		F	%
Songs	Female	4	20
	Male	2	10
	Total	6	30
Rhythm	Female	2	10
	Male	0	0
	Total	2	10
Motions	Female	3	15
	Male	3	15
	Total	6	30
Music	Female	1	5
	Male	5	25
	Total	6	30

As it can be understood from the feedback forms that were taken from the children; the students who stated they have learnt songs and music are at the rate of 60%. On the other hand 10% of the students stated they have learnt music through rhythm and the 30%th of the students stated they have learnt music through motions. As it can be understood from here; alongside with kindergarten children, rhythm and body movements should be taught along song teaching, especially during the music education of elementary school students. Song teaching on the other hand, should be given gradually polyphonically.

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Dr.Ömür Bütev Dolğun "A Qualitative Study on Song Teaching To Primary School Children: The Sample of Artvin *." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)* , vol. 7, no. 6, 2017, pp. 01-07.