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Торайғыров университета

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## **ERRORS AND DEVIATIONS IN ENGLISH SONGS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

*Singing songs and memorizing their lyrics is a way of learning foreign languages, and a good addition to the main educational process. However, language mistakes in the lyrics of songs can cause much harm to language learners. The study aims to describe language errors in British and American popular songs and investigate language learners' attitude towards them. The research methodology was based on a survey conducted among language learners, and an analysis of lyrics of the English songs. The survey results demonstrated that young people are active listeners of songs, and according to most of them, both lyrics and music are important. More than half of the respondents pay attention to the lyrics, which are not always examples of correct language use. The most frequent mistakes in the lyrics of the songs are abbreviations of words and word combinations, omission of parts of words, as well as improper coordination of sentence members.*

*Keywords: the English language, songs, mistakes, errors, deviations, lyrics.*

### **Introduction**

Music is an important part of people's life. Singing songs is one of the forms of entertainment for all people regardless of age, time and location [Zainal, 2016]. Enjoying the melody, one as well pays attention to the lyrics of songs. The ways that texts and music align with each other and the ways meanings are conveyed, and how the activity fits into larger contexts vary considerably from society to society [Turpin & Stebbins, 2010].

Singing songs and memorizing their lyrics is a way of learning foreign languages, and a good addition to the main educational process [Naranjo, 2018]. Young people get in contact with the English language through popular songs, and most of them learn the basics of English through songs spontaneously [Tuji jeziki, 2017]. It is evidenced that singing contributes to improving memory, intonation and pronunciation [Ara, 2009; Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Forster, 2006; Lightbounwn & Spada, 2006; Robinson, 1996].

However, the lyrics of modern English-language songs are not always examples of correct language use. Though, authors of texts cannot be blamed for ignorance of the language; most often distortions in lyrics are a consequence of the desire to bring the lyrics of the song closer to the “live” spoken language. Such mistakes can cause much harm to language learners. When English learners use song listening techniques where the lyrics are not correct according to grammar, it will have a fatal impact on the development of those students in oral and written [Uktoljesa, 2020].

In this respect, we aimed at analyzing lyrics of the English-language songs by figuring out mistakes in them, and investigating the English as a foreign language learners’ perspective towards listening to the English-language songs and language distortions.

The relevance of the topic is due to the high interest in learning the English language and the fact that English-language songs are an integral part of this process, and in the process of learning a foreign language it plays latently important role in shaping the understanding of vocabulary and grammar. In practical terms, the results of the study can be used in planning the English lessons.

### **Methods and materials**

A survey was conducted among adolescents to find out their preferences in listening to music and their awareness of language errors in the English-language songs’ lyrics. Forty-four people aged 13–20 years took part in the survey. The survey asked several questions about language of the songs the participants listen to, importance of music or lyrics, and how much they pay attention to mistakes in the lyrics. The survey questionnaire was administered online through Google form.

To analyze the language errors in the English-language songs’ lyrics we selected 30 popular British and American songs. The mistakes found in their lyrics were further described and categorized.

### **Results and discussion**

The results of the survey showed that young Kazakhstani people are active listeners of modern English-language songs (97.7 % of respondents).

The study results on the participant’s preferences of either lyrics or melody are stated in Figures 1–3.

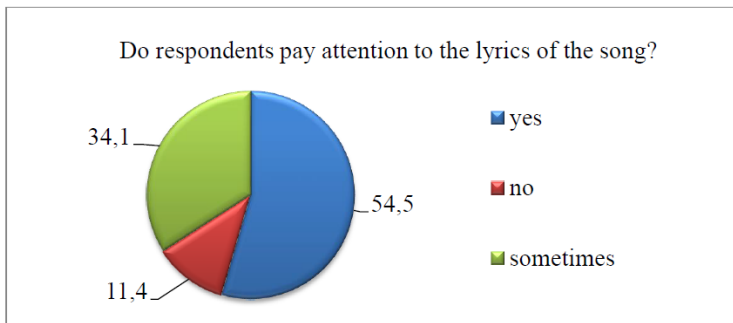


Figure 1 – Importance of lyrics of songs

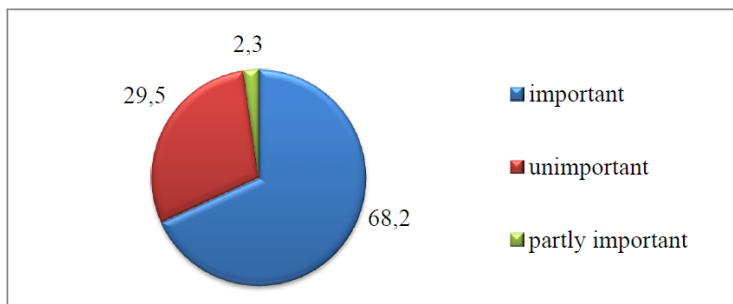


Figure 2 – Importance of meaning of songs

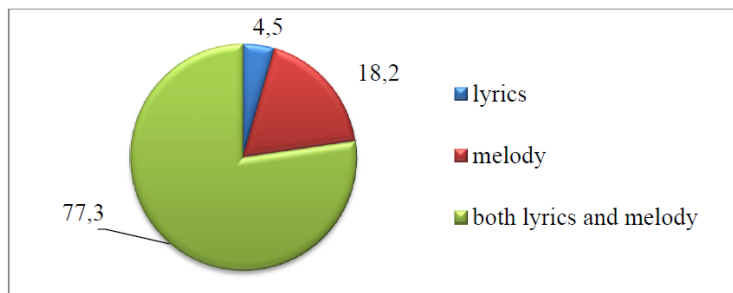


Figure 3 – Ratio of importance of lyrics and melody of songs

The survey results demonstrated that young people are active listeners of songs. Nearly 80 % of respondents stated that both lyrics and music are important. More than half of the respondents pay attention to the lyrics (54.5 %), and for

4.5 % of respondents, lyrics is more important than music. 68.2 % of respondents stated that they ponder the meaning of the song, but only 43 % of them were outraged by mistakes in the lyrics of songs.

As a result of analysis of British and American songs, the following mistakes were founded in their lyrics:

**Abbreviation:** *Oh, baby it's alright, now you ain't gotta flaunt for me* (Timbaland «The way I are»); *I wanna be that guy, I wanna kiss your eyes; I wanna drink that smile, I wanna feel like I'm* (Ed Sheeran «Shivers»); *So I'm gonna fight, gonna give it my all; Gonna make you fall, gonna sock it to you* (Gwen Stefani «Hollaback girl»);

**Skipping part of a word:** *But now we're rockin' on the dance floor, actin' naughty* (Rihanna «Don't Stop The Music»); *'Cause I know that you're living a lie; That's okay baby 'cause in time you will find...* (Justin Timberlake «What goes around comes around»); *I'm givin' you hundreds, fuck it; Somethin' we just gotta get into; Sign first, middle, last, on the wisdom tooth; Niggas wishin' that the pussy was akissin' booth* (Doja Cat «Kiss Me More»);

**Incorrect coordination of sentence members:** *I don't wanna hear you lie tonight; Now that I've become who I really are* (Ariana Grande «Break free»); *He doesn't play for the money he wins; He don't play for respect* (Sting «Shape of my heart»); *She's got a ticket to ride; But she don't care* (The Beatles «Ticket to Ride»);

**Double negation:** *I don't never wanna fight yeah, you already know* (Justin Bieber «Boyfriend»); *I ain't got no money; I ain't got no car to take you on a date* (Timbaland «The way I are»); *All the riches baby, won't mean anything; Don't need no other baby* (Gwen Stefani «Rich girl»);

**Incorrect forms of pronouns:** *Take a good look, you're bound to see That you and me were meant to be* (The Beatles «Martha my dear») *All your lovers' revenge; You and me could write a bad romance* (Lady Gaga «Bad romance»); *Me say wah man down; When me went downtown; Cause now imma criminal criminal criminal* (Rihanna «Man down»);

**Omission of a personal pronoun at the beginning of a sentence:** *When it comes to me; (I) Like to know what's in your mind* (Backstreet boys «I wanna be with you»); *Tell the judge please give me minimal; (I) Run out of town none of them can see me now* (Rihanna «Man down»); *(I) Don't want to think about it; (I) Don't want to talk about it; I'm just so sick about it; (I) Can't believe it's ending this way; (I'm) Just so confused about it* (Justin Timberlake «What goes around comes around»);

**Omission of a part of a predicate:** *When you going to get your act together?...; You still tryna ride this train?* (Jennyfer Lopez «Ain't your mama»); *I(have) got money in my hands that; I'd really like you to blow* (Justin Bieber «Boyfriend»); *You had me in the palm of your hand; So why your love went away* (Justin Timberlake «What goes around comes around»);

**Incorrect formation of the past tense:** *You cheated girl My heart bledded girl; So it goes without saying that you left me* (Justin Timberlake «What goes around comes around»); *Boy I like you just the way you are; Let me see you strip* (Timbaland «The way I are»);

**Incorrect formation of plurals:** *Wildchilds,lookin' good; Living hard just like we should* (Kesha «Die young»);

**Incorrect spelling of letters in words, which may affect spelling:** «T» to the «A» to the S-T-E-Y, girl you tasty (Fergie «Fergalicious»);

**Double indicating the grammatical tense:** *Can you handle me the way I'm are?); I don't need the G's or the car keys* (Timbaland «The way I are»);

**Omission of a preposition:** *About this boy I knew so well; Back in the day* (that) *was cool and all* (Rihanna «Photographs»);

**Creating words that do not exist in the language:** *The beat that I'mbangin' delicious;Fergalicious definition: make them boys go loco* (Fergie “Fergalicious”).

The ratio of language errors and deviations in the studied English songs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Mistakes in English songs

Mistakes in the lyrics	N (%)
Abbreviation	46 (31%)
Skipping part of a word	45 (30.4%)
Incorrect coordination of sentence members	16 (10.8%)
Double negation	15 (10.1%)
Incorrect forms of pronouns	7 (4.72%)
Omission of a personal pronoun at the beginning of a sentence	6 (4.05%)
Omission of a part of a predicate	6 (4.05%)
Incorrect formation of the past tense	3 (2.02%)
Incorrect formation of plurals	1 (0.67%)
Incorrect spelling of letters in words, which may affect spelling	1 (0.67%)
Double indicating the grammatical tense	1 (0.67%)
Omission of a preposition	1 (0.67%)
Creating words that do not exist in the language	1 (0.67%)
Total	148(100%)

Source: authors based on the analysis of English songs' lyrics.

The most frequent mistakes in the lyrics of the songs are abbreviations of words and word combinations, omission of parts of words, as well as improper coordination of sentence members.

If we talk about the speech incompetence and speech illiteracy in the lyrics of some English songs, and teach language-learning students to notice mistakes, they will become selective in their choice of songs and will not repeat the identified mistakes.

### Conclusion

The frequency of language errors in songs is caused by various reasons. Sometimes, the lyrics simply need to fit in the rhyme or melody. Language errors in the lyrics of songs can be bad for learners who assume the incorrect grammar and lexis in the songs and subconsciously use them in practice.

Having studied the song texts, we can conclude that modern English-language songs have many cases of violation of grammatical and lexical norms. Most frequent language errors in the lyrics of the songs are abbreviations of words and word combinations, omission of parts of words, and improper coordination of sentence members. We agree with Pomazanov (2019) that “the danger of these supposedly harmless mistakes is that they have filled television, radio and the Internet, resulting in a massive increase in illiteracy, especially among young people, since the state of speech culture is influenced by the mass media”.

It is self-evident that teachers should concentrate attention on songs during their teaching and point out language errors. This contradicts with Voldanova (2019) in that “pointing out mistakes in songs can cause students to lose confidence in or respect for grammar rules when they learn they can be broken”. To overcome negative effects of language errors on students, teachers should provide additional information on situations in which deviations from language norms are acceptable and teach to concentrate on language errors in the lyrics of songs.

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## АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІНДЕГІ ӘНДЕРДЕГІ ҚАТЕЛІКТЕР МЕН АЙЫРМАШЫЛЫҚТАРДЫҢ ТІЛ ҮЙРЕНУШІЛЕРГЕ ӘСЕРІ

*Ән айту және олардың сөздерін жаттау шет тілдерін үйренудің бір жолы, әрі негізгі оқу процесіне жақсы қосымша болып табылады. Алайда ән мәтініндегі тілдік қателер тіл үйренушілерге*

*үлкен зиян келтіруі мүмкін. Зерттеудің мақсаты – британдық және американдық танымал әндердегі тілдік қателерді сипаттау және тіл үйренушілердің оларға деген көзқарасын зерттеу. Зерттеу әдістемесі тіл үйренушілер арасында жүргізілген сауалнамаға және ағылшын тіліндегі ән мәтіндерін талдауға негізделген. Сауалнама нәтижесі жастардың әннің белсенді тыңдаушысы екенін және олардың көпшілігінің пікірінше, сөзі де, музыкасы да маңызды екенін көрсетті. Респонденттердің жартысынан көбі тілдің дұрыс қолданылуына әрдайым мысал бола бермейтін ән мәтініне назар аударады. Ән мәтінінде жиі кездесетін қателер – сөздер мен сөз тіркестерінің қысқартулары, сөз бөліктерінің түсіп қалуы, сондай-ақ сөйлем мүшелерінің дұрыс келмеуі.*

*Кілтті сөздер: ағылшын тілі, әндер, қателер, ауытқулар, мәтіндер.*

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## **ОШИБКИ И ОТКЛОНЕНИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКИХ ПЕСНЯХ И ИХ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ ЯЗЫК**

*Пение песен и заучивание их текстов – это и способ изучения иностранных языков, и хорошее дополнение к основному учебному процессу. Однако языковые ошибки в текстах песен могут причинить большой вред изучающим язык. Целью исследования является описание языковых ошибок в британских и американских популярных песнях и изучение отношения к ним изучающих язык. Методология исследования основывалась на опросе, проведенном среди изучающих язык, и анализе текстов англоязычных песен. Результаты опроса показали, что молодые люди являются активными слушателями песен, и, по мнению большинства из них, важны как текст, так и музыка. Более половины респондентов обращают внимание на тексты песен, которые не всегда являются примерами правильного использования языка. Наиболее частыми ошибками в текстах песен являются сокращения слов и словосочетаний, пропуск частей слов, а также неправильное согласование членов предложения.*

*Ключевые слова: английский язык, песни, ошибки, отклонения, лирика.*

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