

Article

Analyzing the Applicability of Preschool Curriculum Using Children's Songs from the Perspective of Preschool Teachers: An example of the Song "Taxi Tango"

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Abstract: We explored the characteristics of children's songs appropriate for adaptive curriculum from the perspective of Preschool teachers using the song 'Taxi Tango'. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six preschool teachers who used 'Taxi Tango' in teaching. These preschool teachers lacked specialized musical backgrounds and exhibited a positive attitude toward aesthetic education. Their teaching encompassed various age groups of students and employed instructional approaches such as thematic teaching, project-based teaching, and learning center-based teaching. A shared enthusiasm for 'Taxi Tango' among preschoolers and preschool teachers was found. Preschool teachers highlighted the song's high repetition in lyrics and melody and the dynamic musical elements for aesthetic education within the curriculum. The distinctive dynamic design of the song contributed to the creation of diverse musical activities and enhanced the quality of teaching and motivation. The song's unique dynamic design fostered independent learning and exploration among preschoolers and cultivated music exploration and expression. A children's song appropriate for education must be simple and comprehensible with distinctive musical characteristics for aesthetic education through diverse activities.

Keywords: Aesthetics Education, Children's Song, Music Education, Preschool Curriculum

1. Introduction

Dalcroze, Kodaly, Orff, and Gordon emphasized the significance of singing in music teaching (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009). Singing is one of the most natural forms of musical expression for humans and is a crucial means of expressing and communicating emotions. Singing is a routine part of a child's daily life, especially in preschool. Singing is a direct tool for experiencing the beauty of music and a common and intuitive means of expression. Children's songs play a vital role in preschool (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997; Liao & Campbell, 2014) as they inspire children's aesthetic experiences and language abilities through both lyrics and melodies (Dincel, 2017; Pound & Harrison, 2003). Children's songs have long been regarded as powerful tools for promoting children's learning and development. Music and songs enhance children's development in language skills, social abilities, and emotional expression (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Pound & Harrison, 2003). Singing children's songs in preschool appears to be a natural and straightforward activity with educational implications beyond temperament cultivation. Therefore, children's songs are important in early childhood education.

In 2017, Taiwan introduced a new preschool curriculum emphasizing the cultivation of the educational concept of "benevolence" in children to nurture health and social responsibility (Ministry of Education, 2017). The curriculum was designed based on the interaction between individuals and their living environment in the six domains of learning and corresponding abilities for young children. The courses were comprised of six major domains: physical movement and health, cognition, language, social studies, emotions, and aesthetics. The aesthetic domain encompasses visual arts, music, and dramatic play as three mediums. The objectives of the aesthetic domain include fostering children's appreciation for the beauty of exploration, enjoying aesthetic experiences and artistic creations, expressing rich imagination, and responding to and appreciating artistic creations (Lin, 2021). In the aesthetic domain, children develop three key abilities: "exploration and awareness," "expression and creation," and "response and appreciation" (Table 1). Exploration and awareness emphasize the child's use of keen senses and perception to explore the beauty in their surroundings and be aware of changes. Expression and creation refer to their imagination in the various forms of

artistic mediums such as unique expressions and creations. Response and appreciation involve personal or collective feelings and preferences towards diverse artistic creations in their living environment (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Table 1. Three major media and objectives in the field of aesthetics in Taiwan.

Media	Objectives
Visual arts	Exploration and Awareness Expression and creation Response and appreciation
Music	
Dramatic play	

The implementation principles of the aesthetic domain in the new curriculum underscore the importance of the instincts of children to respond to the surrounding aesthetic stimuli. This is achieved through the interactive process of “doing” and “receiving,” allowing children to appreciate the joy and satisfaction of the soul (Lin, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2017). Consequently, the new curriculum emphasizes the exploration and manipulation by children to ensure that all teaching activities provide positive experiences and feelings for them. However, from the perspective of “doing” and “receiving,” merely singing children’s songs seems insufficient to meet the expectations of the curriculum, suggesting the need for the development of a diverse range of musical activities (Liao, 2022). Hence, the content and characteristics of children’s songs become particularly crucial.

In the content and implementation principles of the preschool curriculum, a distinctive children’s song is expected to play an important role in promoting aesthetic education in preschool. Ideal Characteristics of Children’s Songs (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Liao, 2022; Niland, 2012; Pound & Harrison, 2003) are as follows.

- (1) **Lyrics:** The meaning, depth, and length of the lyrics must be appropriate for the children’s development and life experiences. The content must be lively, expressive, and aligned with the curriculum. The length of the lyrics is preferably one or two phrases.
- (2) **Rhyme:** Many children’s songs have rhyme, and those with rhyme are easier to learn.
- (3) **Melody:** The length of the song must be eight to sixteen measures, preferably in two beats, followed by four beats, and then three beats. The pitch must range from the third note to the fifth note. A pentatonic scale starting with sol-mi can be used.
- (4) **Vocal Range:** The vocal range must be from middle C to high C, and the lower range is more conducive to developing head voice singing.

According to Liao (2022), despite the confidence and willingness of preschool teachers to teach children’s songs, challenges exist in integrating them with the curriculum. The main issues include preschool teachers’ lack of musical teaching competence and the difficulty of aligning traditional or current children’s songs with the curriculum. Therefore, children’s songs for preschool use must cater to children’s preferences and meet the requirements of preschool teachers. If preschool teachers find a song useful, they are interested in incorporating it into the curriculum. Conversely, no matter how pleasant a song may be, if it is not practical, preschool teachers will not use it.

Due to the limited ability of preschool teachers in activity design, they tended to engage in repetitive singing or lead imaginative movements reflecting lyrics (Kelly, 1998; Gharavi, 1993; Greata, 1999; Temmerman, 1998). As most preschool teachers lack a strong musical background, it results in a lack of confidence in leading music activities and an inability to provide diverse musical experiences for children (Greata, 1999; Liao, 2022; Liao, 2014 & Campbell; Liao & Wei, 2012, 2013). In the curriculum, education is conducted in an integrated manner (Ministry of Education, 2017), and music must be integrated into the curriculum. Therefore, a distinctive children’s song will be an effective teaching material.

Many scholars and practitioners (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Campbell & Lum 2007; Liao, 2022; Pound & Harrison, 2003; Sinagal, et. al., 2018; Young 2007) believe that a good children’s song must be integrated into daily life and combined with early childhood curriculum. Preschool teachers must incorporate good children’s songs into the curriculum which play a significant role in children’s learning and development. Chen (2008, 2011) surveyed the use of music materials in preschools in central Taiwan and found that commonly used songs needed improvement in pitch range, melodic intervals, number of measures, musical form, and source. In Liao’s (2022) research, preschool teachers felt increased pressure in music activities after curriculum implementation, but they were willing to enhance their musical competence. Although the internet provides easy access to teaching materials, preschool teachers find it challenging to provide music that meets curriculum standards, given their limited capabilities.

The abundance of existing music materials has brought the dilemma of choice for preschool teachers. The main problem was that most music materials were arranged from the perspective of music learning, using terminology and symbols that preschool teachers found difficult to understand (Liao, 2022). Moreover, these materials do not originate from the educational goals of the

curriculum’s aesthetic domain, making them inappropriate for most preschool teachers. Generally, preschool teachers’ confidence and competence in music teaching are relatively insufficient, and musical competence requires being transformed into preschool teaching (Liao & Wei, 2012, 2013; Greata, 1999). Since the primary goal of the curriculum is not only music learning but also the cultivation of key competencies, designing children’s songs appropriate for preschool teachers to use can shorten the transition time and ultimately improve the teaching quality in the aesthetic domain of domestic preschools. However, from the perspective of preschool teachers, the conditions or elements for the preschool use of children’s songs must be defined. This remains unresearched relatively. Therefore, through the exploration of the widely adopted song ‘Taxi Tango,’ developed by Professor Meiying Liao in line with the curriculum’s spirit, we investigated the characteristics of a children’s song to enhance teaching efficacy from the perspective of preschool teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

For an in-depth and comprehensive of the characteristics of children’s songs for preschool curricula from the perspective of preschool teachers, we interviewed participants.

2.1. Participants

Since we explored how preschool teachers used “Taxi Tango” in teaching, we adopted a purposive sampling approach to recruit preschool teachers who had used this song in preschool. Six preschool teachers were recruited in Taiwan, with teaching experience ranging from three to fifteen years. None of them have received formal music training, but they had positive views on aesthetic education in preschool. The preschool teachers at public and private preschools implemented various teaching approaches such as thematic instruction, project-based approach, or learning-center approach (Table 2). Their classes included mixed-age and age-specific groups, and all of them had used the song ‘Taxi Tango.’ Following research ethics, preschool teachers signed a research consent, and the interview data were presented anonymously in the research report, ensuring confidentiality and ethical standards were maintained throughout the study.

Table 2. Background of participants.

Teacher Code	Sex	Teaching Approach	Age Group	Preschool Characteristics
A	Male	Thematic instruction	5-6 years old	Private
B	Female	Thematic instruction	5-6 years old	Private
C	Female	Thematic instruction	4-5 years old	Private
D	Female	Thematic instruction	3-4 years old	Private
E	Female	Learning-centered approach	3-5 years old	Public
F	Female	Project-based approach	4-6 years old	Public

2.2. Analysis of Song ‘Taxi Tango’

Mei-Ying Liao, a music educator in Taiwan, wrote numerous children’s songs for preschool curricula as part of a project funded by the National Science Council in 2018. These songs were characterized by their alignment with children’s daily experiences and their ability to facilitate diverse musical activities. Since 2018, through promotion efforts, many preschools have adopted this material with ‘Taxi Tango’ (Fig. 1) receiving particularly favorable feedback. Therefore, we analyzed the musical score of ‘Taxi Tango’, and the result showed that the key is E-flat major, the range is in one octave, and the style is Jazz, conveying a spirited and lively atmosphere. The song comprised eight bars with a simple rhythm and melody. Lyrics are repeated emphasizing ‘Taxi Tango’ and ‘Ba Ba Ba’. Emphasis is placed on dynamics with accents on beats (Bar 2, 4, and 8) and a crescendo (Bar 5 and 6). Extended instrumental break of eight bars is included for creative rhythmic exploration.

Taxi Tango

詞曲：廖美瑩

The musical score for 'Taxi Tango' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains the melody with lyrics 'Ta - xi Tan - go' and 'Ba Ba Ba' (represented by beeper symbols). The bottom staff of the first system contains the bass line with lyrics 'Ba Ba Ba' and 'Ta - xi Tan - go'. The second system also consists of two staves, continuing the melody and bass line. The lyrics 'Ba Ba Ba' and 'Ta - xi Tan - go' are repeated. Chord symbols (Eb, Fm, Bb) are placed above the notes in the first system.

Fig. 1. Score of Taxi Tango (“Ba Ba Ba” means “Beep beep beep”).

2.3. Interview

To understand the reasons and effects of preschool teachers’ choosing ‘Taxi Tango,’ we utilized semi-structured interviews. Six preschool teachers participated in half to one-hour interviews. The interview included the following aspects:

- Recognition and feelings of preschool teachers toward ‘Taxi Tango’;
- Children’s feelings and initial reactions to ‘Taxi Tango’;
- Reasons for choosing ‘Taxi Tango’;
- Activity design involving ‘Taxi Tango’;
- Application time for teaching ‘Taxi Tango’;
- Children’s responses during ‘Taxi Tango’ activities.

In addition to the outlined interview, the participants provided a self-description to share additional insights or personal reflections related to their experiences with ‘Taxi Tango.’

2.4. Data Coding and Analysis

All of the interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed. The coding steps of Boeije (2010) were adopted.

(1) Open coding: First, the six preschool teachers were coded from A to F (Table 2), and the interviews with them were transcribed verbatim. The coded data were identified and marked for patterns or themes such as perceptions of the song by teachers and students, and reasons for choosing the song by preschool teachers.

(2) Axial coding: Related codes were grouped into sub-categories such as grouping all codes related to teaching methods under “teaching practices.”

(3) Selective coding: The most important or representative sub-categories were determined to form the final themes or categories, such as identifying “teaching effects” as one of the main themes.

According to the research questions, the coded data were classified based on themes and categories. The interrelationships between each theme or category such as the relationship between “teaching practices” and “teaching effects” were analyzed to summarize the characteristics of children’s songs appropriate for preschool teachers and preschool children. Experts were invited to validate the findings.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Perception of ‘Taxi Tango’ by Preschoolers and Preschool teachers

Interviews revealed that preschoolers and preschool teachers held a positive attitude toward the song ‘Taxi Tango.’ Preschoolers spontaneously moved to the rhythm of the song, finding it catchy and easily learnable.

“As soon as the music started, children instinctively began to move and dance, showcasing the strong rhythmic elements of the song.” (Interview with B)

“The upbeat jazz-style arrangement of the song created a natural and relaxed atmosphere, making it easy for children to follow and move without much guidance.” (Interview with D)

“The children quickly pick up the song after just a few repetitions, indicating its simplicity and effectiveness in engaging them.” (Interview with E)

“‘Taxi Tango’ appeared to be a song that required minimal instruction. After playing the music only twice, the children seemed to have fully mastered the song, demonstrating its ease of learning and retention.” (Interview with F)

The interviews reflected a positive reception towards the musical composition ‘Taxi Tango.’ Preschoolers demonstrated a pronounced innate enthusiasm, engaging organically through spontaneous movement, indicating a preference for its catchy and easily comprehensible attributes. The sonorous and rhythmic qualities of the upbeat jazz-style arrangement contributed significantly to a natural and enjoyable auditory milieu. Notably, the song’s pedagogical value manifested through its simplicity and effectiveness by the rapid comprehension and retention observed after minimal repetitions. ‘Taxi Tango’ is a widely embraced and pedagogically significant musical resource within the preschool educational setting. Concurring with these sentiments, preschool teachers consistently conveyed a sense of relaxation and joy associated with ‘Taxi Tango.’ Iterative listening sessions facilitated an understanding of the song’s structural intricacies and musical highlights for children and preschool teachers. The song, as described by preschool teachers, seamlessly promoted free movement within the preschool cohort, underscoring its rhythmic appeal, ease of acquisition, and the inherent joy experienced during singing and moving. Considering the aesthetic development goals articulated in the preschool curriculum, particularly the objective of fostering aesthetic enjoyment (Ministry of Education, 2017), ‘Taxi Tango’ fits as a composition for nurturing the holistic development of preschoolers.

The affirmative reception of ‘Taxi Tango’ underscores the pivotal role of selecting music for the developmental requisites and interests of preschoolers. The song’s capacity to captivate and engage children without exhaustive guidance suggests its potential incorporation into educational activities to enrich learning experiences. Preschool teachers need to leverage similar rhythmic and melodious elements in song choices, fostering active participation, spontaneity, and joy within the learning process. Furthermore, the expeditious mastery displayed by preschoolers implies an imperative recognition and endorsement of pedagogical simplicity, emphasizing easily accessible and enjoyable resources for efficacious musical exploration and expression. Therefore, a children’s song that is attractive to young children and appropriate for teaching must possess simple lyrics, repeatability, easy arrangement, and the inclusion of special musical elements.

3.2. Reasons for Selecting Song and Application

The reasons and applications of the song varied among preschool teachers. Those in the learning centers and working with a small class considered that young children independently engage in musical activities within the learning center. Consequently, the chosen song needed to possess distinctive musical elements while avoiding unnecessary complexity.

“Our class is in the learning center, so we prefer to choose a song that is easy to operate, like ‘Taxi Tango.’ In the learning center, children can naturally dance and play instruments.” (Interview with E)

“In our small class, we considered the children’s life experiences. We chose this song because one day, a student in our class was constantly playing with toy cars, and everyone showed a keen interest in cars. Luckily, I had come across this song in a workshop, so it turned out to be a perfect fit.” (Interview with F)

“I didn’t think too much about it; I found this song fun during a workshop. I used it in routine activities for my middle class. The children’s response to this song was quite enthusiastic. We incorporated it into movement expressions and creative activities like clapping and stomping. They always showed a desire to perform and were eager to share their discoveries. I find this song to be quite profound; it sounds simple, but it encompasses many musical elements. Unlike the songs we used to sing, which might become repetitive after a week, this song, surprisingly, kept them engaged for two months. It’s truly magical.” (Interview with B)

The preschool teachers with a thematic teaching approach chose ‘Taxi Tango’ due to its theme of transportation. This allowed the song to resonate with the children’s life experiences and connect seamlessly with the overarching theme. Consequently, during the thematic activities, ‘Taxi Tango’ exhibited a notably positive impact.

“For the thematic teaching approach, we focused on the theme of transportation. Thus, this song could connect with the children’s life experiences and align with the theme. ‘Taxi Tango’ worked quite effectively during thematic activities.” (Interview with B)

“This song was chosen mainly because it was not too long. First, it relates to the children’s life experiences, and second, its rhythm is distinct, and the melody is cheerful. Other children seemed to enjoy it when they heard it. Also, since the song is not too long, it’s easy for them to focus, which suits the current situation of the small class.” (Interview with B)

“I first heard this song three years ago when I was with a small class. We were doing a thematic activity related to a big gathering of toy cars, combined with a grand parade of floats. Initially, I thought it just happened to match my theme. Later on, I discovered that although the song is simple, its design, combined with dynamics, aligned well with the curriculum’s musical elements. Through guidance, children could experience diverse musical encounters, which was quite unexpected for me. In the past, children seemed to get bored after singing and moving to songs for a week. With this song, we managed to keep them engaged for two months, which was truly remarkable.” (Interview with A)

A teacher who typically had limited experience in providing musical activities for children participated in a program where she ventured into creating children’s songs. Through this initiative, she discovered that a distinctive children’s song ignited curiosity and encouraged the exploration of musical elements among young learners. Consequently, throughout the project, children were able to understand and experience dynamics and share these insights with their peers and families.

“At the beginning, I wasn’t confident that my limited musical knowledge would be accepted by the children. Personally, I had a weak background in music and was hesitant to explore it. So, initially, I wanted to find a simple song that both the children and I could resonate with. ‘Taxi Tango’ sparked the children’s interest right from the start. Through group discussions, I was amazed that they could discern variations in dynamics. Children actively explored intensity in their daily lives and surroundings, even incorporating it into loose parts and orchestral performances in the end. This experience has shown me that a simple song can guide profound musical exploration.” (Interview with B)

From these interviews, we determined the critical importance of song selection for instructional effectiveness. Preschool teachers must meticulously choose songs to ensure their adaptability, ease of learning, and capacity to spark children’s interest in learning. This also underscored the need for preschool teachers to continuously observe and reflect to meet the needs of children and for effective teaching experience. For the choice of a song, beyond fulfilling thematic requirements, it is demanded to consider its relevance to children’s life experiences and its ability to foster active participation (Ministry of Education, 2017; Liao, 2022; Lin, 2021). These insights highlight the significance of preschool teachers’ adaptability and understanding of children’s characteristics in successfully enriching educational experiences in music education (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Campbell & Lum 2007; Great, 2006; Liao, 2022; Pound & Harrison, 2003; Sinagal, et. al., 2018; Young 2007). The interviews with preschool teachers presented the diverse reasons and applications for the selection of the song ‘Taxi Tango.’ The considerations varied based on the preschool teachers’ teaching approaches, class settings, and thematic alignments.

1. Learning-Centered Approaches

Preschool teachers need to adopt a teaching focus on learning centers, particularly those working with small classes to prioritize the independence of young children in engaging with musical activities. Their preference for ‘Taxi Tango’ stemmed from its easy operability, allowing children in the learning center to naturally express themselves through movement and play with instruments. The song’s distinctive musical elements and avoidance of unnecessary complexity were crucial in the selection process.

2. Thematic Teaching Approach

For preschool teachers embracing a thematic teaching approach, the choice of ‘Taxi Tango’ was guided by its alignment with the theme of transportation. This strategic selection must resonate with children’s life experiences and seamlessly integrate in thematic activities. The positive impact of the song during these thematic sessions underscores its effectiveness in reinforcing and enhancing the overarching theme.

3. Project-Oriented Approach

Preschool teachers with a project approach, despite limited prior experience in providing musical activities, must participate in a program involving the creation of children's songs. Children's songs, exemplified by 'Taxi Tango' can spark curiosity and encourage exploration of musical elements among young learners. This increases the preschool teachers' confidence in introducing music and showcases the unexpected depth and engagement that a seemingly simple song could bring to children's musical experiences.

4. Unforeseen Profundity

Across different teaching approaches, the preschool teachers highlighted the unexpected depth and engagement that 'Taxi Tango' brought to the learning environment. Despite its apparent simplicity, the song's design, dynamics, and alignment with the curriculum's musical elements provided a multifaceted learning experience. The song's ability to keep children engaged for extended periods, as compared to traditional songs, demonstrates its unique and captivating impact on young learners.

5. Musical Exploration and Expression

The project-oriented approach, in particular, highlighted the transformative power of music in facilitating profound musical exploration among children. 'Taxi Tango' ignited children's interest and curiosity, leading to active exploration of musical elements such as dynamics. Even preschool teachers with limited musical backgrounds can guide children toward meaningful musical encounters through carefully chosen and well-designed songs.

The result of this study shows several implications for music education in early childhood settings. Firstly, preschool teachers must consider the adaptability, ease of learning, and thematic relevance of songs to ensure effective engagement and learning outcomes (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Campbell & Lum 2007; Great, 2006; Liao, 2022; Pound & Harrison, 2003). The unexpected depth and prolonged engagement observed with 'Taxi Tango' suggest that simplicity, coupled with distinctive musical elements, can be a key factor in successful song selection. Moreover, the diverse approaches are essential to emphasize the need for flexibility and creativity in integrating music into early childhood education. Whether through learning-centered, thematic, or project-oriented approaches, preschool teachers need to leverage music to foster independence, thematic alignment, and profound musical exploration among young learners. Additionally, the positive outcomes observed in the project-oriented approach underscore the benefits of engaging in collaborative projects related to music creation. This enhances the educator's confidence and provides young learners with unique and enriching musical experiences. The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted role of 'Taxi Tango' in early childhood music education and show its adaptability across different teaching approaches and its potential for profound musical exploration and expression among preschoolers. These findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective music integration in early childhood education.

3.3. Song Activity Design and Children's Responses

Preschool teachers acquire a diverse range of song activity designs through workshops or by referencing published music teaching materials. Interview results showed that they tailored these activities based on children's age, needs, interests, and previous experiences. The thematic approach to curriculum design integrated children's songs into the overall structure. They observed that the distinctive functions of this particular children's song aligned with the requirements of the early childhood curriculum. Beyond serving as a means to extend activities into other domains, the song fulfilled educational objectives in aesthetics. Through song engagement, children exhibited diverse expressions, confidently voicing their opinions and actively participating in musical and kinesthetic performances. The effective use of songs reflected their ease in grasping the essence of the melody, and responses and appreciations. The creativity of the children was observed in their listening map inspired by the song.

"Obviously, my impression of music was limited to background music. However, after participating in a music workshop and later joining an aesthetics program in preschool, I came across the song 'Taxi Tango,' and it seemed to open up my creativity. I have used this song in the same class for three years, adapting the content from 1st to 3rd year with increasing challenges each year. The children remained interested and engaged in the song for three years. For example, they were adept at changing the lyrics and enjoyed such creative adaptations. During group activities, those fond of music explore an outdoor music learning center, freely experimenting with percussion. Initially, they might hit randomly, but with guidance, they used loose parts to form a band. This process demonstrated that with the right song and diverse materials, children could creatively engage with music. I often observed from the sidelines, acting as an appreciative spectator. This once again astonished me at the unlimited creative potential of children. Although the children have grown a lot in these three years, and I have grown along with them, I realized that children's song could be simple yet profound. It's not just a matter of whether a song sounds good; there are subtle changes within the song. Such songs are excellent for conducting activities." (Interview with A)

“Young children liked the ‘Ba Ba Ba’ sound because they enjoyed the feeling of clapping, and the younger class handled it quite well. We also adept this song, for example, imagining different vehicle sounds liked ‘tank approaching, thump thump thump,’ using their favorite types of vehicles. I’ve noticed that children liked vocals, and through lyrics and repetitive singing, they could understand what the song is expressing.” (Interview with A)

“What makes this song special is the ‘Ba Ba Ba’ sound. Children started exploring through body movements, discovering where they could produce loud sounds. They explored different body parts and experimented with how to clap to produce varying levels of volume. Since we were focusing on the theme of the body, they were genuinely curious about how their bodies could create various sounds in response to music. Another function of this song was the relatively long interlude, which has a rock feel. Consequently, their rhythmic performance was excellent, and they even played creative body games, forming a taxi with several children moving together to the music. It was truly imaginative. When they requested to use instruments to perform this song, with the previous guidance, I found that they easily understood the expression of dynamics in the song. They played instruments confidently without needing my guidance, showing great self-assurance in their musical performances.” (Interview with C)

“As we were in the younger class, we initially incorporated routine activities. The first reason was that the rhythm was easy to grasp, and children naturally moved along with it. The second reason was the simple melody with highly repetitive lyrics, making it easy for children to sing along quickly. The third reason was that the song was not too long, so the children kept requesting ‘Taxi Tango.’ It seems like they could sing and dance to this song at any time. The younger class engages more in free play, and in the corners, they modify lyrics, creating different sounds. Thus, I found this song quite fascinating. In the younger class, as they explored their body parts through this song, connecting it to the melody, I felt they performed exceptionally well. When we were outdoors, they also experimented with tapping on various objects. They were quite adept at playing this song themselves.” (Interview with D)

The effectiveness of this song in the learning center or curriculum teaching was notable as revealed in interviews. Despite a rhythmically intense composition, it fostered a tranquil atmosphere within the learning space. The strategic arrangement of high-quality loose parts allowed children to explore diverse elements in creating auditory and visual representations of ‘Taxi Tango.’ Moreover, the song seamlessly integrated with visual arts through stamping techniques, showcasing a multidimensional approach to expressing musical elements. Consequently, this song was a valuable tool for teachers in designing both dynamic and contemplative activities. Particularly in curriculum teaching, children exhibited an increased awareness of the ambient sounds in their surroundings, showcasing a heightened sensitivity to the aesthetic aspects of sound.

“Using the loose parts arrangement method, children and teachers broadened their horizons, realizing that they could play in this way. We placed this song in the learning center. Finally, we could also paint with stones, creating ‘Taxi Tango’ artwork and using it in listening map activities. The children enjoyed this activity.” (Interview with A)

“The younger class started encountering this song, and as we moved to the middle class, we began creating a music learning center. The children’s first choice was this song. The younger class leaned towards physical expression, such as clapping hands. In the middle class, we added instruments and materials like loose parts. For example, they could tap very well.” (Interview with F)

“In the process of implementing the curriculum, I found that providing more diverse materials for children to choose from leads to different ideas. Some felt that using paper boxes was appropriate for the ‘Ba Ba Ba’ sound, while others thought that using metal boxes produced a louder and more ‘Ba Ba Ba’ sound. Some children even suggested using plastic bags together! This way, the sound became unique. Consequently, teachers followed the children’s ideas and provided plastic bags accordingly. Whenever there was a bottleneck in teaching, I looked back at the listening map. In fact, teachers could change various play methods, allowing more comprehensive integration between music, instruments, and body movements. I was surprised during the process when children kept seeking different volumes in the environment, actively discovering and solving problems. In the end, they performed an outstanding band performance on Parent’s Day, which surprised many parents. It turned out that school could be so life-oriented.” (Interview with D)

“Our class had a mix of middle and younger classes, with the younger class being more active and the middle class a bit quieter. Through rhythmic guidance, we introduced elements of the song, and later in the learning center, the middle class could create stamp paintings, which surprised me. We initially provided single colors, but they progressively played with mixed colors, showing that this song could be combined with visual arts.” (Interview with E)

“In the learning center, we tried incorporating loose parts that could be arranged and tapped. I observed that younger class children especially enjoyed exploring various sounds. While exploring, they also sang ‘Taxi Tango.’ After guidance, the middle-class children could creatively arrange ‘Taxi Tango’ and we also tried having them control the dynamics of the song. They grasped it very well because the song’s dynamics were clear.” (Interview with F)

The above results showed that the interviewees recognized that song activities could be simple and profound. It transcended the dichotomy of being merely pleasant and the realm of observing nuanced changes. Notably, preschool teachers have observed a heightened interest and sustained engagement from children in selected songs, spanning multiple years. Creative expressions such as lyric adaptation, kinesthetic performances, and instrumental play, showcase the enduring appeal and versatility of a well-chosen children’s song, enriching the diversity of educational activities designed by preschool teachers (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009; Dincel, 2017; Pound & Harrison, 2003; Liao, 2022).

The results indicated that the application of songs in learning environments and instructional frameworks yielded positive outcomes. These songs created dynamic and contemplative atmospheres and enhanced children’s sensitivity to the aesthetic aspects of sound. In early childhood education, many songs often serve a limited role as imitative rhythmic activities are focused on (Kelly, 1998; Gharavi, 1993; Greata, 1999; Temmerman, 1998). The interview results of this study presented the significance of selecting distinctive songs to achieve curriculum objectives. The design and application of song activities enriched children’s learning experiences and stimulated their creativity and musical expression. Preschool teachers, while guiding children in song activities, found joy in their role and were inspired to profound reflections on the critical role of songs in children’s development.

Preschool teachers adeptly leveraged song activities in early childhood education and employed diverse teaching methods and materials tailored to different age groups. The thematic orientation of songs and the utilization of loose parts enable children to manifest rich forms of expression, including lyric adaptation, movement exploration, and instrumental performance. These activities unleashed children’s creative potential. Preschool teachers emphasized the role of appropriate songs for the success of activities and underscored the effectiveness of providing diverse materials and guidance in nurturing children’s musical interests and expressive abilities. Despite initial apprehensions among preschool teachers about leading musical activities, a well-crafted children’s song not only alleviated their concerns but also allowed children to accumulate aesthetic experiences during free play, a practice worthy of emulation. This perspective aligned with the preschool curriculum (Liao, 2022; Lin, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2017). Furthermore, the application of songs extended beyond the classroom to learning centers and instructional frameworks, creating tranquil atmospheres. The use of loose parts offered diverse creative opportunities and helped visual art elements integrated. In the curriculum, such diverse artistic or interdisciplinary integration is encouraged (Liao, 2022; Lin, 2021). Considering the emphasis on children’s autonomous learning in the preschool curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017), distinctive children’s songs prompt children to engage in imaginative games through various activities in learning centers. This interdisciplinary application makes songs rich and multifunctional teaching resources to meet curriculum expectations and represent a trend and necessary implementation principle toward integrated instruction.

4. Conclusions

We explored the characteristics of children’s songs appropriate for preschool use through the analysis of the song ‘Taxi Tango.’ The results showed that preschoolers and preschool teachers had a positive reception towards ‘Taxi Tango,’ making it well-suited for the preschool curriculum. The reasons for its popularity included the following.

1. **Engaging Elements:** Preschoolers displayed a natural enthusiasm and active participation in ‘Taxi Tango,’ indicating the presence of captivating musical elements. The song’s lively rhythm and easily understandable musical elements allow children to effortlessly engage and maintain interest in the activity.
2. **Simple and Repetitive Design:** The song’s lyrics and rhythm are characterized by high repetition, deemed valuable in terms of simplicity and effectiveness. The straightforward structure of ‘Taxi Tango’ makes it easy for preschoolers to comprehend and remember for rapid learning outcomes in a short period. Such characteristics make it an ideal choice to quickly capture children’s interest and participation in the classroom.
3. **Adaptability for Diverse Activities and Promotion of Varied Expressions:** The song exhibits a layered sense of dynamics, addressing curriculum goals related to exploration/awareness, expression/creation, and response/appreciation in the aesthetic domain. Preschool teachers can leverage these functions to conduct diverse music activities. Preschoolers showcased varied forms of expression, including lyric adaptation and movement exploration in this study. Instrumental and loose parts allowed for independent learning. This implies that the song’s design not only stimulated creative potential but also provided diverse opportunities for expression, aligning with contemporary preschool curriculum expectations for enhancing aesthetic experiences.

4. **Adaptability to Different Teaching Approaches:** Interview results revealed that preschool teachers employed various teaching methods and materials, including child-centered, thematic, and project-oriented approaches. ‘Taxi Tango’ demonstrated its potential to thrive under these diverse teaching orientations, meeting the needs of different classes and teaching themes.

“Taxi Tango” has become an ideal song in preschool due to its captivating musical elements. Additionally, its simple yet effective structure and unique characteristic of promoting diverse expressions contribute to its suitability. Emphasizing aesthetic education in preschools and selecting children’s songs with these functions enhance the effectiveness of aesthetic teaching and foster the learning interest of preschoolers.

We examined a single song in this study. Additionally, due to the limited number of interviewees and the inclusion of three different curriculum models, broad generalizations were not made. However, preschool teachers’ expectations for children’s songs were found to encompass their practical applicability in teaching. While this study offers only preliminary discussions and suggestions, the results provide an understanding of related issues. Future researchers can delve into the practical application of children’s songs in current early childhood education settings through survey methodologies to understand how preschool teachers utilize these songs. This research approach allows for the identification of more children’s songs that align with preschool curricula and the incorporation of the songs into educational programs. Such efforts contribute to a seamless implementation of aesthetic education in preschools by providing a richer array of instructional resources.

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