

## HARMONIZING LEARNING: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOFT MUSIC IN ENHANCING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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### Abstract

This study investigates how soft music can improve educational outcomes and second language acquisition. It investigates how it affects listening comprehension, fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and word memory. The goal is to find out if background music can make a classroom more productive and interesting. Two groups of English philology students, ages 18 to 21, participated in the study. One group, consisting of 17 students, studied with gentle background music while the other group did not listen to any music. Surveys, interviews, and pre- and post-tests were all part of the mixed-methods strategy. The study emphasizes how gentle music can be used as a technique to boost motivation, lower anxiety, and increase cognitive function in language instruction. Research indicates that music can be a useful addition to traditional language learning techniques.

### Key words

Word memory, listening comprehension, language learning, and soft music, pronunciation accuracy, language acquisition.

### Introduction

A vital component of human communication, language learning is also essential to social and cognitive development. While structured grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation exercises are the main focus of traditional teaching methods, new research has looked into other ways to improve the learning process.<sup>176</sup>The use of soothing music as a technique to aid language learning is one such

1. <sup>176</sup> Krashen, Truscott (1982) Principles and Practice: Affective Filter Hypothesis. University of Southern California, Pergamon Press.

strategy. It has been discovered that music, especially gentle and soothing tunes, can enhance memory retention, promote a tranquil learning atmosphere, and help with pronunciation and comprehension.

The ability of quiet music to engage both hemispheres of the brain and promote a balance between analytical and creative processes underlies its involvement in language learning. According to neuroscientific research, music improves cognitive abilities by triggering brain circuits linked to language processing and memory. Soft music can also lessen stress and anxiety, which are major obstacles to successful language acquisition, enabling students to participate more actively and self-assuredly.

From early childhood education to adult language acquisition, the use of soothing music in language learning environments has shown beneficial in a variety of educational scenarios. According to studies, background music can enhance motivation, focus, and general engagement, which will make learning more pleasurable and successful. Additionally, both native and foreign language learners have made extensive use of music-driven learning techniques including singing and rhythmic repetition to strengthen linguistic structures.

This study examines how soft music affects language learning, emphasizing its general advantages and educational results. This study intends to demonstrate the value of music as an adjunctive tool in language instruction by examining previous research and real-world applications, providing guidance on how to use it successfully to improve linguistic competency.

### **Literature review**

The cognitive, emotional, and educational benefits of music have been highlighted in a number of studies that have examined the connection between music and language development. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, a calm and pleasurable setting promotes language acquisition whereas stress and anxiety impede it. Research has shown that soft music, which is frequently played in the background, can reduce affective barriers and increase language learners' openness to new information (Medina, 1993).

According to research by Schön et al. (2008), music reinforces auditory patterns, which are crucial for language learning and improves phonological awareness and linguistic memory. Similarly, Patel (2008) contends that music is a useful instrument for enhancing speech fluency and pronunciation since its rhythm and intonation closely mirror linguistic prosody. According to Li and Brand (2009),

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2. Schön et al. (2008) «Songs as an aid for language acquisition» Cognition Vol. 106, pp. 975-983
  3. Patel, Aniruddh D. (2008) Music, Language, and the Brain. New York, Oxford University Press.
  4. Li and Brand (2009) «Effectiveness of Music on Vocabulary Acquisition, Language usage and Mainland Chinese ESL learners», Ohio Music Education Association, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 73-84

students who listened to background music during language classes had better vocabulary recall and understanding than those who were in silent environments.

Furthermore, research on the Suzuki Method and Total Physical Response (TPR) highlights how music can reinforce language structures through multisensory engagement and repetition (Asher, 1969). These results imply that soft music is a useful supplement to language learning techniques since it can improve motivation, focus, and cognitive processing.

According to the literature, soft music fosters linguistic skills, enhances memory retention, and creates a favorable learning environment, all of which have a positive impact on language acquisition. By looking more closely at its pedagogical uses and advantages in contemporary language instruction, this study aims to expand on previous research.

### **Methods**

We will dive into an experiment through a mixed-methods, data-driven approach that examines the role of soft music on language development and educational attainment. Participants:

- Two groups of students from the English philology faculty (group numbers: 2302 and 2303)
- (Ages:18-20)
- The subjects are learning French as their second language in tertiary education
- The first group will be the experimental group (n=17) & the second group will be the control group (n=17)

While the control group studied in a conventional, music-free setting, the experimental group engaged in language sessions with soothing, instrumental music playing in the background. All of the participants had never used the target language before.

To gauge the participants' development, the study employed a pre-test/post-test design. The pre-test evaluated baseline hearing, pronunciation, and vocabulary knowledge. The post-test assessed the same parameters following a 4-week intervention period. Surveys, interviews, and task performance evaluations were among the techniques used to collect data. A questionnaire about how music affected their learning experience—including aspects like motivation, focus, and stress reduction—was also completed by participants in the experimental group.

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data. The experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test results were compared

using statistical analysis. To learn more about how participants perceived the impact of music on their educational experience, a thematic analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaires and interviews was conducted.

## Results

In comparison to the control group, the experimental group demonstrated a notable improvement in language acquisition, namely in vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy, according to the quantitative analysis. The experimental group's vocabulary test mean score increased by 16%, whereas the control group's score increased by 6%. Similarly, the experimental group's pronunciation accuracy increased by 13% while the control group's improved by 4%. With a 10% increase in test scores compared to a 3% increase in the control group, listening comprehension also shown a significant improvement in the experimental group.

Participants in the experimental group reported feeling more motivated, less nervous, and more concentrated throughout the language learning sessions, according to qualitative data collected from participant questionnaires and interviews. Many people said that the music produced a relaxing atmosphere that improved their ability to focus and lessened their frustration. The majority of participants in the experimental group (80%) concurred that the music improved their overall educational experience.

## Discussion

This adds to the body of evidence supporting the theory that providing a stimulus of soft music helps to facilitate language learning and ultimately improves educational outcomes. The results of this study indicate that soft music has a positive effect on vocabulary retention and some components of listening comprehension (i.e., lemmatization, pronunciation, and listening comprehension). This is confirmed by the fact that pupils in the experimental group demonstrated a significant increase (as opposed to pupils in the control group) in overall scores.

The way the brain uses music to activate both sides of the brain, and that music generally enhances the ability to remember may help explain why people who participated even when listening to music better recalled and understood information presented verbally.<sup>177</sup>

These findings of anxiety reduction and increased motivation in the experimental group also align well with the literature on music as a means to defeat emotive learning obstacles. According to Krashen (1982), a person's affective filter must be on low to acquire a language, and soft music seems to create an

5. <sup>177</sup> Asher (1969) «The Total Physical Response Approach to Second Language Learning», The Modern Language Journal, Vol. 53, No.1, pp. 3-17.

6. Brutton, S. R., Angelis, P. J., & Perkins, K. (1985). Music and memory: Predictors for attained ESL oral proficiency. Language Learning, 35, 299-313.



environment conducive to this. These are really exciting results, but we should remember that it was a very academic, contrived controlled study, and this may not generalize to real-life, informal learning settings, or other populations.

### Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that soft music effects are shown in the improvement of vocabulary recall accuracy, correct pronunciation, and improved listening abilities. Soft music can also reduce affective barriers while increasing motivation and focus, which eventually leads to better language acquisition during diverse lessons. Based on the findings, language teachers can adopt the use of music for their teaching praxis to support language learning in a more fruitful manner.

There is a need to research further on the use of soft music over a greater timescale within language learning as well as what specific music characteristics may be at play in improving its efficacy. Additionally, future research should explore the effects of music on younger and older learners and in other learning contexts.

As the research has demonstrated, soft music is an emerging mechanism for facilitating language learning and boosting learning productivity in educational settings.

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