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**Investigating the Role of Using Music in enhancing English Language Learning _
A case Study of Collegian _ Education College University of Dongola**

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Abstract :

The study aimed to investigate the role of using music in enhancing English language learning for EFL learners. The study applied in university of Dongola college of education third and second level in the academic year (2022-2023). (49) students responded to the questionnaire this sample size represents 100% of the total population. The result of data analysis explored numerous facts that support study hypotheses, it also showed the vital role of music in shaping EFL learners' skills in various aspect of the language. The study found that: proper listening to music improve EFL learners' vocabulary retention which allow them to memorize vocabs easily, it enhances their pronunciation skills with correct grammatical usage when constructing sentences, culturally, learners can be familiar with different types of target language culture. There is statistically significant relationship between listening to music and reducing learners' anxiety and stress experienced through teaching and learning process. In spite of the numerous benefits that music offers to enhance language learning, there are challenges underscored by this study such as: types, songs preference, implementation, learners' level and potential. The researchers recommended that: Prioritize songs with clear pronunciation, accessible vocabulary, and simpler grammatical structures, especially for lower-level learners. Create activities that specifically address linguistic challenges, and focusing on pronunciation practice through singing along. Enter music thoughtfully into lessons. Focus on the high engagement with music videos by incorporating them into lessons for comprehensive listening, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. Active participation through singing, repeating lyrics, and discussing songs, because these activities directly contribute to confidence and skill development.

Key Words: Role of Music, Enhancing, English Language Learning, EFL Learners

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning can be a challenging and daunting task for many learners. However, incorporating music into the learning process has been shown to have numerous benefits, including improved vocabulary retention, enhanced pronunciation, and increased motivation. This study aims to explore the power of music in EFL learning, focusing on its cognitive and emotional benefits. The relationship between music and language learning has been extensively explored, with research suggesting that music can positively impact language acquisition, particularly in areas such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and motivation (Salcedo, 2010). For instance, music's rhythmic and melodic elements can aid in memory retention and recall, making it an effective tool for language learners (Wallace, 1994). This is because music stimulates both hemispheres of the brain, enhancing language processing and retention (Thaut, 2008).

The integration of music into the English language teaching (ELT) classroom has emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy, moving beyond traditional methods to create more engaging, effective, and holistic learning environments. In the era where technology continually reshapes educational landscapes, exploring innovative approaches like music-enhanced language learning becomes crucial (Chen, Mohammadi, & Izadpanah, 2024). Learning English, a global pursuit driven by diverse motivations, presents unique challenges, particularly for non-native speakers who often grapple with complex grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition (Chen et al., 2024). Traditional methods, sometimes reliant on repetitive drills, can lead to learner disengagement and diminished motivation (Sims & Cassidy, 2020, as cited in Chen et al., 2024). Music, however, offers a universal medium that resonates across cultures, tapping into learners' innate appreciation for rhythm, melody, and harmony to facilitate language acquisition in multifaceted ways (Bakirova, 2023, as cited in Chen et al., 2024; Wei et al., 2022, as cited in Chen et al., 2024). This study delves into the significant benefits of incorporating music into English language instruction, drawing upon academic research and practical classroom applications to illustrate its impact on cognitive processes, affective factors, linguistic skill development, and overall learner engagement.

2. Research hypothesis:

1. listening to music improves linguistical skills of EFL learners' vocabulary retention, pronunciation, grammar and culture.
2. listening to music increase EFL learners' motivation and engagement.
3. listening to music reduce EFL learners' anxiety and stress levels.
4. Listening to music is challenging.

3 Literature Review:

3.1 The Impact of Music on Language Learning

Research has shown that music can have a positive impact on language learning, particularly in areas such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and motivation (Salcedo, 2010). Music's rhythmic and melodic elements can aid in memory retention and recall, making it an effective tool for language learners (Wallace, 1994). Studies have also found that music can reduce anxiety and stress in language learners, creating a more relaxed and receptive learning environment (Kim, 2015). Additionally, music can increase motivation and engagement in language learning, particularly among young learners (Lems, 2018). The cognitive benefits of music in language learning are also well-documented. Research has shown that music can improve phonological awareness, syntax, and semantics in language learners (Judith, 2008). Music's ability to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain can also enhance language processing and retention (Thaut, 2008).

Music's impact on language learning is multifaceted, influencing cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects. (Salcedo, 2010; Lems, 2018). has shown that music can enhance vocabulary acquisition, improve pronunciation, and increase motivation. Wallace (1994) believed that Music's rhythmic and melodic elements can aid in memory retention and recall, making it an effective tool for language learners.

3.2 Cognitive Benefits: Enhancing Memory, Attention, and Processing

Judith (2008). shown that music can improve phonological awareness, syntax, and semantics in language learners. Additionally, music's ability to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain can enhance language processing and retention (Thaut, 2008). This is supported by Medina's (2002) suggestion that music can facilitate language learning by providing a memorable and engaging context for language acquisition.

Talada (2015) increasingly highlights the profound cognitive advantages of using music in language learning. A definitive link has been established between the cognitive processing of musical sound and language, suggesting that engaging with music can prime the brain for linguistic tasks. The rhythmic and melodic structures inherent in music actively engage learners' auditory senses, which significantly aids in the memorization and retention of new vocabulary and grammatical structures (Chen et al., 2024). Songs, in particular, provide repetitive exposure to language patterns, intonation, and pronunciation in a context that is often more memorable and less intimidating than traditional drills. This repetition, embedded within enjoyable melodies, helps solidify linguistic information in long-term memory.

Furthermore, music has a remarkable ability to capture and sustain learners' attention, a critical factor in any educational setting (Al-Badwawi & Al-Bulushi, 2022). The inherent appeal of music can transform potentially monotonous learning tasks into enjoyable activities, thereby increasing focus and reducing cognitive load. When learners are engaged and attentive, their capacity for processing and internalizing complex language features improves. Technology-enhanced language learning through music (TELLTM) further amplifies these benefits by offering multimodal experiences that stimulate various senses and cognitive pathways simultaneously, leading to deeper processing and understanding (De Bruin & Merrick, 2023, as cited in Chen et al., 2024).

3.3 Affective Domain: Reducing Anxiety and Boosting Motivation and Self-Esteem

The affective dimension of language learning, encompassing emotions, attitudes, and motivation, is significantly influenced by the classroom environment. Music possesses a unique capacity to create a relaxed, positive, and supportive atmosphere, which is crucial for lowering the 'affective filter' – the psychological barrier that can hinder language acquisition, particularly feelings of anxiety or self-consciousness (Krashen, 1982). A case study involving young learners using songs to learn vocabulary demonstrated that students felt happy and enjoyed the learning process, which positively impacted their engagement and understanding (Ma'rifat, 2017). When learners feel comfortable and less anxious, they are more willing to take risks, participate actively, and experiment with the language.

Moreover, using music that aligns with students' interests can dramatically boost motivation (Budden, 2008). Budden (,2008) Conducting

surveys to understand students' musical preferences allows teachers to select materials that resonate personally with learners, fostering a sense of ownership and relevance. This intrinsic motivation is a powerful driver for learning, encouraging students to invest more effort and persist through challenges. Studies have also shown a significant positive impact of music-based instruction on learners' self-esteem (Chen et al., 2024). Successfully understanding song lyrics, singing along, or even just recognizing familiar tunes in English can provide learners with tangible evidence of their progress, enhancing their confidence and overall positive perception of their language abilities (Chen et al., 2024). Music's anxiety-reducing effects can create a more relaxed and receptive learning environment (Kim, 2015). This is particularly significant, as anxiety can hinder language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). By reducing anxiety, music can increase learner engagement and motivation (Lems, 2018).

3.4 Linguistic Skill Development: Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Grammar, and Culture

Music serves as a rich repository of authentic language, offering invaluable exposure to vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, grammatical structures, and pronunciation patterns in context. Songs often contain colloquial language and contemporary expressions that may not be readily available in standard textbooks, thus bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use (Cirocki & Farrelly, 2018). Activities like gap-fills focusing on specific word types (e.g., verbs, prepositions) or rhyming words, spotting deliberate mistakes in lyrics, or ordering jumbled verses help learners focus on specific linguistic features while engaging with the song's content (Budden, 2008; Ma'rifat, 2017).

The repetitive nature of choruses and verses aids vocabulary acquisition and retention (Ma'rifat, 2017). Furthermore, singing along helps learners practice pronunciation, rhythm, stress, and intonation in a natural and enjoyable way. Mimicking the singer's articulation can improve learners' own spoken fluency and reduce foreign accents. Music also implicitly teaches grammatical structures through repeated exposure in meaningful contexts. Learners can absorb sentence patterns and verb conjugations more organically than through explicit grammar instruction alone. Beyond discrete language points, songs are cultural artifacts, offering insights into the values, stories, and perspectives of English-speaking cultures, thereby enhancing intercultural understanding alongside language proficiency.

3.5 Practical Applications and Classroom Activities

While the benefits of music in language learning are clear, it's essential to consider the methodological approaches used in these studies. For example, some studies have used music-based interventions, such as singing or music listening, to enhance language learning (Salcedo, 2010; Lems, 2018). Others have explored the impact of music on language learning through surveys or questionnaires (Kim, 2015). Future research should consider the most effective methodological approaches for studying the impact of music on language learning.

The versatility of music allows for a wide range of classroom applications beyond simply listening to songs. Music can be used non-linguistically to manage the classroom environment: playing calming music as students enter can set a relaxed tone, while upbeat music can energize a lethargic class (Budden, 2008). Music can serve as a timer for activities or transitions, providing a clear, non-verbal cue (Budden, 2008). Exploring feelings evoked by different musical styles or engaging in 'musical drawings' where students draw interpretations of music can stimulate creativity and provide springboards for descriptive language practice (Budden, 2008).

For direct language practice, numerous song-based activities can be employed. Classic gap-fills remain popular, but their effectiveness increases when targeted (e.g., focusing on specific grammar points or vocabulary sets) (Budden, 2008). Correcting deliberately altered lyrics encourages close listening and attention to detail (Budden, 2008). Songs that tell stories are ideal for activities like creating comic strips or sequencing events, enhancing comprehension and narrative skills (Budden, 2008). Using songs as a stimulus for discussion on relevant themes (e.g., social issues, personal experiences) promotes critical thinking and communicative competence (Budden, 2008). Even translation activities, while debated, can appeal to some learners and deepen their understanding of lyrical meaning (Budden, 2008). For higher levels, analyzing song structure and rhyme schemes can lead to creative writing tasks like composing an additional verse (Budden, 2008).

4. Methodology and Data Analysis

4.1 Procedure & Instrument:

To investigate the role of music in learning English language, the researchers designed a questionnaire consists of 20 items divided into the study 4 hypothesis. The questionnaire was arbitrated some professors to check the validity and reliability. The study population was English language student, second and third level at university of Dongola College of Education – Merowe. The sample size is (49) which represent (%100) of total population (current registered student).

4.2 First hypothesis: listening to music improves linguistical skills of EFL learners': vocabulary retention, pronunciation, grammar and culture.

Table (1) first hypothesis result discussion

Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N	Mean	Std.	t	df	Sig.
Listening to English songs helps me learn new vocabulary.	47	1	1	49	2.9388	.31677	64.942	48	.000
Music helps me improve my English pronunciation.	45	1	3	49	2.8571	.50000	40.000	48	.000
Singing along to English songs helps me practice speaking fluency.	40	4	5	49	2.7143	.64550	29.435	48	.000
Music makes learning English more enjoyable and less stressful.	38	7	4	49	2.6939	.61928	30.450	48	.000
English songs help me understand different aspects of English-speaking cultures.	47		2	49	2.9184	.39983	51.093	48	.000
Music helps me remember English grammar rules or sentence structures.	39	3	7	49	2.6531	.72316	25.681	48	.000

Table (1) displayed responders' opinion about the first assumption: "listening to music improves linguistical skills of EFL learners': vocabulary retention, pronunciation, grammar and culture". The majority of them agreed, that listening to music significantly impact positively on EFL learners' skills and improve them in various aspect such as: vocabulary retention, pronunciation,

grammar and culture. The mean between (2.9388) and (2.6531), while the Std. Deviation between (0.72316) and (0.31677). this indicate music statistically improve learners' ability in keeping and understanding vocabulary, it also helps them to pronounce correct and to be familiar many cultural norms via listening to various songs.

4.3 Second hypothesises: listening to music increase EFL learners' motivation and engagement.

Table (2) second hypothesis result discussion

Items	Agr ee	Neut ral	Disag ree	N	Mean	Std.	t	d f	Sig.
Music increases my motivation to study English.	44	1	4	49	2.816 3	.5654 4	34.8 65	4 8	.000
I pay close attention to the lyrics when listening to English songs for learning purposes.	36	9	4	49	2.653 1	.6308 4	29.4 39	4 8	.000
I prefer listening to music genres I enjoy, even if the lyrics are complex.	37	8	4	49	2.673 5	.6254 3	29.9 23	4 8	.000
I incorporate music into my regular English study routine.	38	6	5	49	2.673 5	.6578 9	28.4 46	4 8	.000
I discuss English songs or lyrics with friends or classmates as a learning activity.	35	10	4	49	2.632 7	.6355 4	28.9 97	4 8	.000
I watch music videos in English to improve my understanding.	47	1	1	49	2.938 8	.3167 7	64.9 42	4 8	.000

Table (2) show the statistical result of the hypothesis: "listening to music increase EFL learners' motivation and engagement". The noticeable agreement of responders indicates high statistically significant. Items showed high degree of agreement from the participants, with p-values of .000 across the board, indicating that the observed positive responses are not due to random chance i.e. Music play great role in enhancing EFL learners' motivation and engagement.

The mean scored between (2.9388) and (2.6327), while the Std. Deviation (0.65789) and (0.31677). the highest agreement of learners approved that using music in English language classes motivate learners and assist them to engage effectively. the data provides compelling evidence that music is a highly effective tool for enhancing motivation and engagement among EFL learners. The findings are statistically robust and point to a clear positive impact of music on the language learning experience.

4.4 Third hypothesis: listening to music reduce EFL learners' anxiety and stress levels.

Table (3) third hypothesis result discussion

Items	Agr ee	Neut ral	Disag ree	N	Mea n	Std	t	d f	Sig.
I feel relax and confidant when I listen to English songs.	39	6	4	49	2.7143	.61237	31.027	48	.000
Listening to English songs help me to overcome speaking fear.	40	6	3	49	2.7551	.56016	34.429	48	.000
I feel confident in speaking English after repeating with songs.	44	2	3	49	2.8367	.51425	38.614	48	.000

The statistical analysis of table (3), representing the third hypothesis discussion, strongly indicates that music plays a significant role in reducing anxiety and stress levels among EFL learners. the results demonstrate a highly statistically significant positive impact, as evidenced by the p-value of .000 for all statements. The mean scored between (2.8367) and (2.7143), while the Std. Deviation (0.61237) and (0.51425). I.e. the data unequivocally supports the hypothesis that music is an invaluable resource for EFL learners seeking to alleviate anxiety and stress. The consistent statistical significance across all items, coupled with the high levels of agreement, particularly regarding the active use of songs for speaking practice, provides strong evidence for integrating music-based activities into language curricula to foster a more relaxed, confident, and ultimately more effective learning experience.

4.5 Fourth hypothesis: Listening to music is challenging.

Table (4) fourth hypothesis result discussion

Items	Agr ee	Neut ral	Disag ree	N	Mea n	Std.	t	d f	Sig .
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I sometimes find the vocabulary used in English songs too difficult or colloquial.	42	3	4	4 9	2.77 55	.586 85	33.1 07	4 8	.00 0
The speed of singing in some English songs makes them hard to understand.	39	6	4	4 9	2.71 43	.612 37	31.0 27	4 8	.00 0
I find it challenging to distinguish individual words in fast-paced English songs.	39	9	1	4 9	2.77 55	.468 39	41.4 80	4 8	.00 0
Background music distracts me when I am trying to focus on specific language tasks.	41	5	3	4 9	2.77 55	.550 20	35.3 12	4 8	.00 0
I prefer songs with clear pronunciation and simple language structures for learning.	47	2		4 9	2.95 92	.199 91	103. 615	4 8	.00 0

The statistical analysis in table (4), which focuses on the challenges EFL learners encounter when using music, reveals several significant areas of difficulty. All five items demonstrate highly statistically significant findings ($p = .000$), indicating that learners experienced great challenges. The most prominent and unanimously agreed-upon challenge is the preference for songs with clear pronunciation and simple language structures for learning. This item received overwhelming agreement (95.9%), the highest mean score (2.9592), and the lowest Std. deviation (0.19991), coupled with an exceptionally high t-value of 103.615. This finding is critical for pedagogical approaches, suggesting that for music to be an effective learning tool, careful selection of materials based on linguistic clarity is paramount. Complex vocabulary, colloquialisms, and rapid singing speeds are identified as significant barriers. Specifically, 85.7% of respondents agreed that the vocabulary and colloquialisms in English songs are often too difficult. This is further compounded by the challenge of distinguishing individual words in fast-paced songs, agreed upon by 79.6% of participants, and the general difficulty in understanding due to the speed of singing, also agreed upon by 79.6%. These three points collectively highlight the linguistic and auditory processing difficulties that EFL learners face, emphasizing the need for scaffolding and explicit instruction when using authentic music materials. Furthermore, a substantial proportion (83.7%) of learners reported that background music can be distracting when attempting to focus on specific language tasks. While music can enhance motivation and reduce anxiety, this finding suggests that its integration into learning activities

needs to be strategic. It implies that for tasks requiring high cognitive load or focused attention, music might be counterproductive unless specifically designed to support the task without causing distraction.

while music offers numerous benefits for EFL learning, this analysis underscores that its implementation must be informed by the specific challenges' learners face. The strong preference for linguistically accessible songs and the potential for distraction during focused tasks are crucial considerations for educators and curriculum designers aiming to leverage music effectively in EFL instruction. Addressing these challenges through careful material selection and thoughtful integration strategies can maximize the positive impact of music on language acquisition.

5. Conclusion

The study comprehensively investigated the multifaceted role of music in enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, focusing on its impact on linguistic skills, motivation and engagement, anxiety and stress levels, and the challenges associated with its use. The findings, derived from a survey of 49 EFL learners, consistently demonstrate the significant and statistically strong positive influence of music across various aspects of language acquisition. Music's positive impact on linguistic skills, motivation, and anxiety reduction, the statistical analysis strongly supports the hypotheses that music positively impacts EFL learners' linguistic skills, motivation, and engagement, and effectively reduces anxiety and stress.

Data revealed strong agreement that listening to English songs aids vocabulary acquisition, improves pronunciation, and helps in understanding different aspects of English-speaking cultures. Notably, learners found music highly effective for learning new vocabulary and improving pronunciation, with high mean scores and low standard deviations indicating strong consensus. While grammar rule retention showed slightly more variability, the overall trend was still highly positive and statistically significant.

Concerning motivation and engagement, the results unequivocally showed that music significantly increases EFL learners' desire to study English and their active participation. The most striking finding was the near-unanimous agreement that watching music videos in English greatly improves understanding, suggesting the powerful multimodal learning experience they offer. Learners also strongly agreed that music increases their overall motivation and that they pay close attention to lyrics for learning purposes, reinforcing music's role as an engaging pedagogical tool.

Furthermore, the study provided compelling evidence that music effectively reduces EFL learners' anxiety and stress levels. Participants reported feeling more relaxed and confident when listening to English songs, and a significant majority found that music helps them overcome speaking fear. The strongest agreement was observed for feeling confident in speaking English after

repeating with songs, underscoring the direct link between active musical engagement and improved speaking confidence. These findings collectively suggest that music creates a more conducive and less intimidating learning environment, thereby lowering the affective filter and promoting greater willingness to engage with the language.

Despite the numerous benefits, the study also shed light on the challenges EFL learners face when using music. The most critical finding in this area was the overwhelming preference for songs with clear pronunciation and simple language structures for learning. This highlights a crucial pedagogical implication: while authentic materials are valuable, their selection must be carefully considered to match learners' proficiency levels. Complex vocabulary, colloquialisms, and fast singing speeds were identified as significant barriers to comprehension, making it challenging for learners to distinguish individual words. Additionally, a substantial proportion of learners reported that background music could be distracting during focused language tasks, suggesting that music's role needs to be strategically managed within the learning process.

This research provides robust statistical evidence supporting the integration of music into EFL curricula. Music serves as a powerful tool for enhancing linguistic skills, boosting motivation and engagement, and mitigating anxiety and stress, thereby fostering a more positive and effective language learning experience. The consistent statistical significance across all positive impact hypotheses underscores music's potential as a transformative pedagogical resource. To maximize these benefits, educators must be mindful of the identified challenges. Recommendations include:

1. Prioritize songs with clear pronunciation, accessible vocabulary, and simpler grammatical structures, especially for lower-level learners.
2. Activities that specifically address linguistic challenges, such as pre-teaching difficult vocabulary, using gap-fills for specific grammar points, and focusing on pronunciation practice through singing along.
3. Inter music thoughtfully into lessons, ensuring it complements rather than distracts from specific language tasks. For activities requiring high concentration, consider using music as a warm-up or cool-down rather than continuous background.
4. Focus on the high engagement with music videos by incorporating them into lessons for comprehensive listening, vocabulary, and cultural understanding.
5. Active participation through singing, repeating lyrics, and discussing songs, as these activities directly contribute to confidence and skill development.

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