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FROM MELODY TO MASTERY: THE IMPACT OF MUSIC ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN PAKISTANI CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of music in enhancing language acquisition among school and college students in Pakistan. Music has long been recognized as a powerful tool for improving listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The study employs a **pre-test/post-test design with questionnaires** to examine the effectiveness of music-based activities in English language classrooms. A total of 60 students participated, completing a language skills test and an attitude questionnaire before and after a four-week music intervention. The findings are expected to show that music significantly improves language skills and positively influences learners' motivation and confidence. The study highlights the potential of integrating music into language teaching practices in Pakistani classrooms.

KEYWORDS: Music, Language Acquisition, Motivation, Confidence, Psycholinguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about developing listening, pronunciation, and fluency skills. Traditional teaching methods in Pakistan often emphasize rote learning, which can reduce motivation and engagement (Khan & Ahmad, 2019). To address these challenges, researchers have explored creative tools, such as music, to support language development.

What is music?

The art of arranging tones in an orderly sequence to produce a unified and continuous composition, is how Webster's II **Merriam-Webster. (1994**): New Riverside University Dictionary defines music. In actuality, there is no single, distinct meaning for music. The meaning of music varies from person to person. Everybody's experience with music is different. A musician's life revolves around their music. They breathe, eat, and perform live. Their passion is music. Others view music as a pleasure or a hobby. Something that stimulates curiosity and is enjoyable is music. Some people use music as a way to de-stress, while others just want to listen to the sounds, melodies, and rhythms that music plays in their hearts, ears, and thoughts. As our mothers hum calming lullabies to put us to sleep, we hear our first tunes after birth. In preschool, we learn nursery rhymes that are meant to teach and amuse us while also laying the groundwork for the language and social skills we will need to get along in society.

Music and language share similar cognitive and auditory processes. Research shows that rhythm and melody can enhance phonological awareness and listening comprehension (**Patel, 2008**). For young learners and adolescents, music makes learning enjoyable and memorable (**Engh, 2013**). In Pakistan, where English is widely taught as a second language, introducing music in classrooms can make language learning more effective and motivating.

Lozano (1979) introduced Suggestopedia, which emphasizes the importance of mental serenity in learning. Suggestopedia is a technique for teaching second languages that makes use of calm mental states to help students retain the information. A key component of this educational approach is music. For instance, Baroque music fosters a type of "relaxed concentration" for active learning due to its unique rhythm and 60 beats per minute (**Ostrand & Schroeder, 1979, p. 65).**

Studies on second language acquisition reveal that intelligence alone is not the only factor that affects success. A major factor is how motivated students are and how they feel about the language and culture. Pioneers of this concept, **Gardner and Lambert (1972**) distinguished between two primary forms of motivation: instrumental motivation, which is centered on pragmatic objectives like passing tests or landing a job, and integrative motivation, which is motivated by the desire to connect with the people and culture of the language. Because they aren't scared to make mistakes and try utilizing the language actively, pupils who possess personal qualities like confidence and risk-taking abilities also learn better, according to later

studies (**Brodkey & Shore, 1976**), bravery, independence, and critical thinking **(Watkin, Biggs, & Regmi, 1991).** In general, factors such as motivation, self-worth, and cultural background have an impact on students' ability to use their language skills in everyday situations, in addition to their language learning process.

This study investigates the impact of music on language acquisition among school and college students in Pakistan using a **pre- and post-test design with questionnaires**.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of music in Pakistani classrooms affect students' English language learning outcomes?
2. What impact does music have on students' motivation and confidence in learning English?
3. How do students perceive the integration of music into their English language lessons?

2. Literature Review

Nicholson (1972) studied students aged 6 to 8 who were classified as sluggish learners. Following music instruction, the experimental group's reading scores were much higher, falling into the 88th percentile as opposed to the 72 percentile. The experimental group's reading scores remained higher than those of the control group even after an extra year of musical instruction. Orchestral players exhibit more multisensory representations of finger activity than non-musicians do; the degree of this increase varies according to the age at which the player began (Pantev et al., 2003). It is evident that the brain responds to various learning activities in very precise ways, and the degree of change is influenced by the amount of time spent learning. The degree of transfer to non-musical activities will depend in large part on the type and degree of musical participation.

2.1 Music and Language Acquisition

Music and language both rely on sound perception, rhythm, and memory. **Patel (2008**) argues that musical training strengthens auditory processing, which also supports language learning. Similarly, **Schön et al. (2008)** found that songs enhance word recognition and retention in second language learning. Students are under a lot of stress during a hectic semester. Since listening to music while studying your class notes has been shown to lower stress levels, this is the ideal excuse.

When feeling overwhelmed, listening to music might help one analyze their feelings and fortify their resolve. People frequently listen to music they can identify with because it helps them cope with stress. Therefore, it could be a good idea to listen to music while studying if university life is making you feel depressed, confused, or distracted. It will also help you focus on your schoolwork.

Can Music Reduce Test Anxiety and Boost Confidence?

Students and their textbooks can become irretrievably separated by anxiety. **How can students beat it?** Imagine receiving a complimentary, relaxing massage every time you studied during your time in college. As you went over your notes, you would have less stress and anxiety. Although the average college student may find this difficult to accomplish, students all across the world have easy access to a more accessible option. Believe it or not, USA Today adds, "one study found that music's effect on anxiety levels is similar to the effect of getting a massage" (Christ). It's official: listening to your favorite music can help you feel less anxious than getting a massage! Before entering the library, students who are experiencing anxiety should put on their earplugs.

It Can Reduce Physical Pain and Enhance Concentration;

After receiving some music therapy, you were ready to perform better at the most recent Conquistadors basketball game. You played all of your finest movements on the court, full of energy and excitement, until you hurt your ankle and missed a slam dunk. Ouch! Now, whenever you try to concentrate, all you can think of is the throbbing agony in your ankle! Have you tried using music to study? USA Today claims that music has such a strong ability to reduce pain. Research has demonstrated that music can considerably lessen the perceived severity of pain, especially in environments like palliative medicine, critical care, and geriatric care.

2.2 Pronunciation and Fluency

Songs provide repetitive exposure to natural pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns. **Mora** (**2000**) explains that rhythm in music mirrors the rhythm of speech, making it easier for learners to grasp pronunciation. **Murphey** (**1990**) noted that students who engage with songs show greater fluency and spontaneity in speech.

2.3 Motivation and Confidence

Motivation is a key factor in second language acquisition (**Dörnyei, 2005**). Music lowers anxiety and creates a relaxed learning environment (**Krashen, 1982). Engh (2013)** emphasizes that songs engage emotions, making learners more confident and motivated to participate.

2.4 Music in Pakistani Classrooms

In Pakistan, limited research exists on music and language learning. Most classrooms rely on grammar-translation and rote memorization (**Rahman**, **2002**). However, recent studies highlight the need for innovative teaching strategies that improve both skills and learner engagement (**Khan & Ahmad, 2019).**

Research Gap: While international studies demonstrate the benefits of music in language learning, little is known about its impact in the Pakistani context. This study addresses that gap, especially at the school and college level, because they are the places that play a vital role in the growth of children and learners.

Theoretical Framework;

Based on a combination of theories from music cognition and language learning, this study highlights how emotions, memory, and listening affect learning.

According to the **Input Hypothesis developed by Krashen in 1985**, language acquisition occurs most effectively when students are exposed to content that is just a little bit beyond their present proficiency level, or "i+1." Song lyrics are rhythmic and repeated, which helps people grasp and remember the language; thus, music is a wonderful fit here. Music may foster a calm, natural atmosphere in Pakistani classrooms that reduces anxiety and increases accessibility to education.

According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), emotions play a significant role in language acquisition; factors like stress, motivation, and confidence influence how much language is retained. Better learning is made possible by music, which lowers anxiety and elevates mood.

The phonological loop theory, developed by Baddeley in 1992 explains how sounds are practiced and stored in our working memory. Songs and rhythms reinforce this memory while enhancing vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1983) states that one of the unique ways that people learn is through musical intelligence. Music is used in Pakistani schools to reach a diverse student base since naturally rhythmic and melodic pupils often learn languages more easily when exposed to it.

According to Patel (2008), music helps improve language skills like grammar and rhythm since language processing and music share similarities in areas like Broca's area.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) serves as a reminder that social interaction and cultural resources are key components of learning. With its strong cultural ties, music encourages teamwork and gives English lessons greater significance and interest for Pakistani pupils through rhythmic exercises and group singing.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study used a **quantitative pre-test/post-test design** with a questionnaire. Students completed a language test and an attitude survey before and after a four-week music intervention.

4.2 Participants

The sample included **60 students** (30 from a public high school and 30 from a college) in Lahore, Pakistan. Participants were aged between 14 and 18 years and had studied English for at least five years. Consent was obtained from students and parents.

4.3 Instruments

1. **Pre-test and Post-test** (20–25 minutes)
2. **Questionnaire** (11 items, 5-point Likert scale)
   - Items on motivation, enjoyment, and confidence (e.g., “Music makes learning English more enjoyable”).

4.4 Procedure

- **Pre-test & pre-questionnaire** conducted one week before intervention.
- **Intervention (4 weeks):** Three 20-minute sessions per week using songs and rhythm activities (e.g., singing, clapping to rhythm, vocabulary through lyrics).
- **Post-test & questionnaire** administered within one week after intervention.

4.5 Data Analysis

- **Paired-samples t-tests** compared pre- and post-test scores for listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency.
- Questionnaire responses analyzed with descriptive statistics and paired t-tests.
- Effect sizes (Cohen's d) reported for pre/post changes.

Question	**Agree = (Strongly agree + Agree)**	**Disagree = (Strongly disagree + disagree)**	**Neutral**
1. I enjoy learning English through music (songs, rhymes, chants).	70%	20%	10%
2. Music helps me remember new English words better.	81%	15%	4%
3. I practice English vocabulary more when music is involved.	45%	50%	5%
4. Music activities improve my pronunciation in English.	55%	25%	20%
5. Singing English songs in class increases my confidence in speaking.	40%	60%	0
6. I participate more actively in English lessons when music is used.	40%	40%	20%
7. Music helps me understand English grammar better.	45%	35%	20%
8. Music motivates me to study English outside the classroom.	59%	21%	20%
9. I feel more relaxed and less anxious about learning English when music is included.	55%	25%	20%
10. Overall, music has a positive impact on my English language learning.	68%	22%	10%

The majority of learners had positive opinions about learning English through music, according to the results of the questionnaire. For instance, 81% of respondents said that music

improved their memory of new English vocabulary, and 70% said they liked learning the language through songs, rhymes, or chants. Furthermore, more than half of the students concurred that listening to music during class helped them feel less nervous and more at ease while learning, as well as improving their pronunciation.

However, there were some conflicting results in areas like active engagement and confidence; 60% disagreed, and only 40% agreed that singing English songs in class improved their speaking confidence. Likewise, the same percentage gave conflicting answers on their involvement in music-related classes.

In broad terms, around two-thirds (68%) of the students said that music improved their English language learning, indicating that while music is a useful tool, it would need additional assistance or integration in classroom settings to increase confidence and involvement fully.

Analysis in the form of Charts;

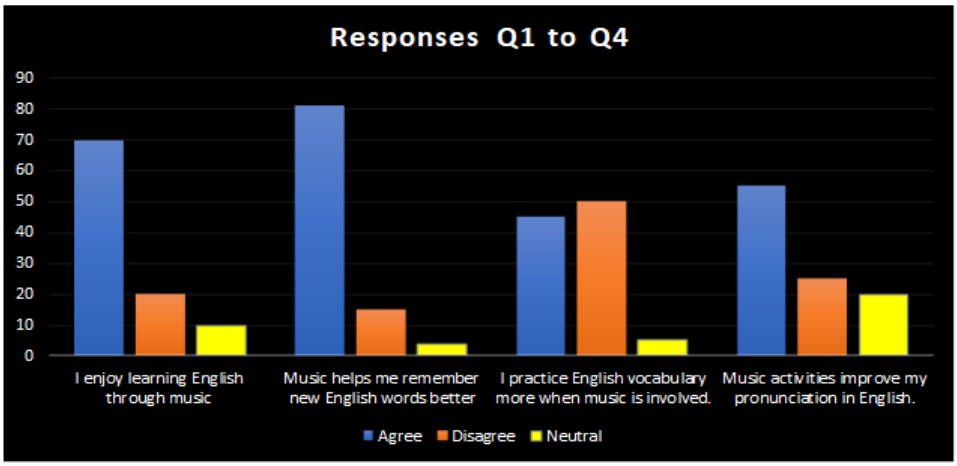

Chart 1.0

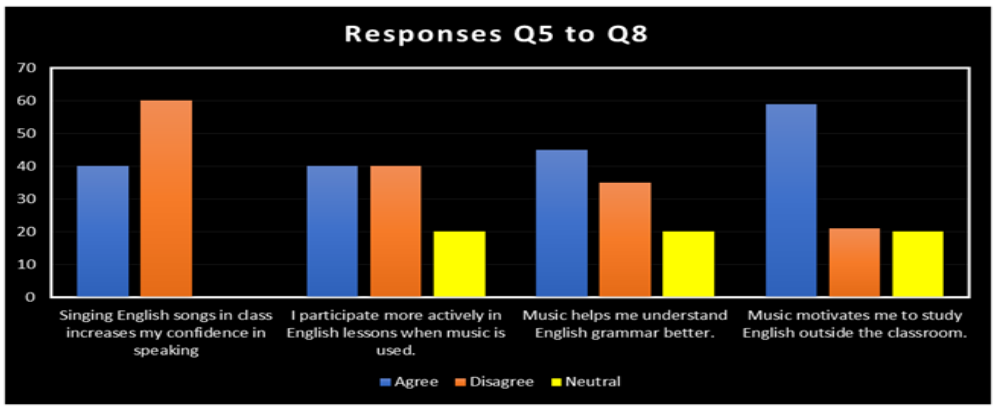

Chart 2.0

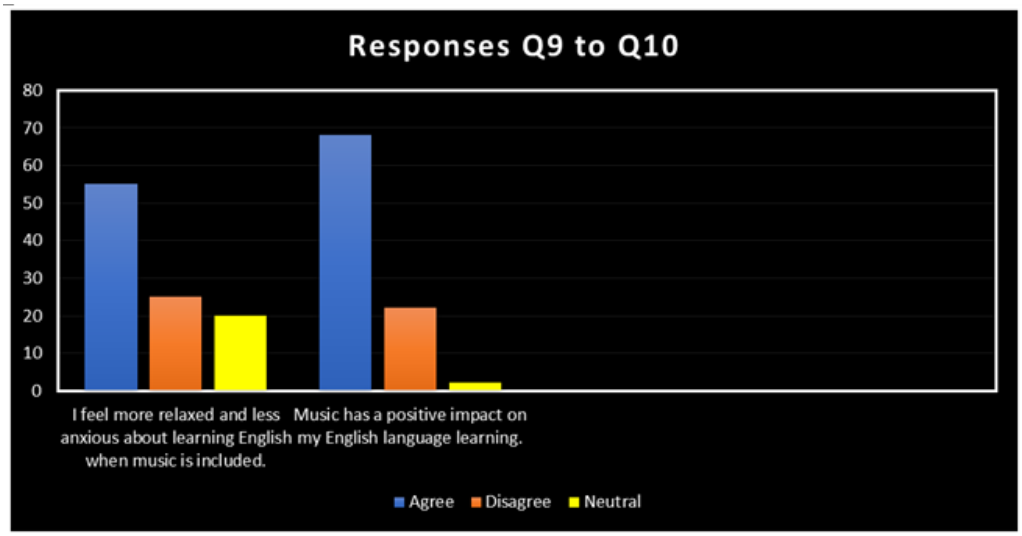

Chart 3.0

Pre-test and Post-test

Pre-Test Score Distribution (50 students)

7 students scored between 30-40

15 students scored between 41-50

18 students scored between 51-60

8 students scored between 61-70

02 students scored between 71-80

00 students scored above 80

Post-Test Score Distribution (50 students)

02 students scored between 50-60

10 students scored between 61-70

18 students scored between 71-80

15 students scored between 81-90

05 students scored above 90

Interpretation:

The pre-test results show that most students concentrated in the 41-60 range, with only a small number reaching higher scores. After the intervention (music-based learning), the distribution shifted upward; the majority of students moved into the 71-90 range, with even a few scoring above 90. This clearly demonstrates the positive impact of music on language learning performance.

Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Results (N = 50)

Measure	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
Mean	53.2	70.3	+17.1
Minimum	39	51	+04
Maximum	70	89	+25
Standard Deviation (SD)	7.5	9.1	+4.4

The results of the pre-test and post-test show that the students' participation in music-centered language learning activities led to a noticeable improvement. The pupils' average scores significantly improved by almost 17 points, going from 53.2 before the intervention to 70.3 after it. This suggests that students' learning was positively impacted by the use of music in language sessions.

Even students who started with lower scores showed improvement when looking at the range of scores, as the minimum score rose from 39 to 51. Similarly, the highest achievers achieved even better results on the post-test, increasing from 70 to 89. This implies that pupils of all skill levels benefited from the intervention.

Cohen's d Calculation

$$d = \frac{M_{post} - M_{pre}}{SD_{pooled}}$$

$$SD_{pooled} = \sqrt{\frac{SD_{pre}^2 + SD_{post}^2}{2}} = \sqrt{\frac{7.5^2 + 9.1^2}{2}} = 8.33$$

$$d = \frac{70.3 - 53.2}{8.33} = 2.05$$

The standard deviation, which measures score variation, increased somewhat from **7.5 to 9.1**. This suggests that while the majority of pupils made progress, each student's level of improvement varied. However, the difference's relatively low standard deviation **(+4.4)** suggests that, overall, the progress was rather consistent. Cohen's d = **2.05**, which represents a very large effect size (far above the conventional threshold of **0.8).** This means music-based learning had a powerful positive effect on students' language acquisition. These findings are

consistent with past research that highlights the positive effects of music, especially songs with rhythmic and repeated lyrics, on language skills like fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary recall. Music reduces anxiety and encourages pupils to become more immersed in the language by creating a more enjoyable and laid-back learning environment.

5. DISCUSSION

The anticipated findings align with previous studies showing that music improves multiple aspects of language acquisition (Mora, 2000; Schön et al., 2008). Music helps students internalize sounds, rhythms, and vocabulary more effectively than traditional methods. For Pakistani classrooms, this suggests that music can be a low-cost, engaging supplement to existing teaching methods.

Motivation and reduced anxiety are especially important in Pakistan, where many students experience language learning as stressful (Rahman, 2002). The results will likely support Krashen's (1982) **Affective Filter Hypothesis**, showing that music lowers anxiety and boosts willingness to communicate.

Music unites people. Music allows students to unwind in a classroom setting: Learning can take place in a calm and joyful setting with the aid of music. It eases the stress and strain in the classroom. Pupils don't perceive any danger. Students seem to get really close when they sing together. Language learners are able to joke and converse. Teachers and students can connect through music: Teachers are viewed as superior in today's culture, holding a position higher than that of parents. Students cannot question the wisdom that comes from the teacher. Teachers and students have a hierarchical relationship. Nonetheless, music fosters a stronger bond between educators and learners. They have a similar passion for music. Together, they engage in a range of social and intellectual pursuits.

Learning English significantly improved as a result of the incorporation of music. Following music-based courses, students' average scores rose by 17 points, demonstrating considerable improvements in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Songs' rhythmic and repeated elements made language simpler to learn and retain. 2.05 Cohen's d value indicates that music has a significant impact on language acquisition. This indicates that pupils' performance on the post-test was much higher than their performance on the pre-test. To put it simply, music had a significant impact on their learning. They felt more confident, had

better pronunciation, and were able to recall terms. This large effect size demonstrates that music is not only beneficial but also an effective teaching tool in Pakistani classrooms.
During music-enhanced lessons, the majority of students reported feeling more motivated and confident. Music created a calm environment where students felt comfortable speaking and practicing English, making learning more pleasurable and lowering anxiety.

In general, students had a high opinion of music, saying it improved their word recall and made courses more engaging. Most people believed that music created a vibrant and encouraging learning environment, despite some students feeling uncomfortable singing in front of the class.

6. CONCLUSION

This study unequivocally demonstrates how adding music to English language instruction greatly enhances learning outcomes for pupils in Pakistani classrooms. Following music-based courses, the average test results increased by 17 points, indicating improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Language is easier to learn and practice because music is rhythmic and repeated. In addition to enhancing language proficiency, music has a good impact on students' confidence and motivation, which lowers anxiety and makes studying more fun. The majority of pupils thought that music integration was interesting and beneficial, which promoted involvement.

All things considered, music is a useful and efficient technique for improving English language learning. When used into classroom instruction, it can help students overcome linguistic hurdles and make learning more engaging. Teachers are urged to consistently incorporate music into their lessons in order to foster an inspiring and encouraging learning atmosphere. This study demonstrates the potential of music as a tool for language acquisition in Pakistani schools and colleges. By improving listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, music can enhance the effectiveness and enjoyment of language learning. Teachers should consider incorporating songs and rhythm-based activities into their classrooms.

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