



The Use of Music in English Language Learning: A Qualitative Analysis of Learning Anxiety and Attitudes among University Students

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the role of music in mitigating learning anxiety and shaping attitudes towards English language learning among university students using a qualitative approach. Employing focus group interviews as the primary research method, nine participants were engaged in in-depth discussions to gather comprehensive insights into their experiences. Through inductive content analysis, this study identified three categories: 'learning anxiety,' 'learning attitude,' and 'academic achievement.' Key elements and sub-elements were identified for each theme. The findings reveal a significant reduction in learning anxiety and a positive shift in attitudes towards English language learning when music was incorporated into the learning process based on suggestopedia. These results underscore the potential of music as an effective tool in English language education. This study emphasizes the need for educators to consider integrating music into their teaching methodologies and calls for further research to explore the potential benefits of this approach across various learning contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

English language learning can be a challenging task for learners due to the complexity of the language itself and various factors that can arise during the learning process. Especially for Korean university students, English learning holds significant importance not only as a mandatory course upon university admission but also for graduation and employment preparations, such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University (TEPS). Despite the extensive existing research on effective methods influencing the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, qualitative analyses

of learners' experiences have been relatively scarce. Indeed, while quantitative analyses offer insights, understanding the emotional intricacies and the unique interplay between musical emotionality and learning experiences calls for qualitative scrutiny. Previous studies have mostly focused on defining aspects of learners' experiences, such as research on interpreting anxiety (Yang, 2022), difficulties in English learning for elementary students (Lee et al., 2016), and awareness of the necessity of English speaking skills (Kim, B-S., 2020). However, studies that directly address learners' experiences of teaching and learning methods they encounter are limited. Furthermore, most previous research has primarily focused on the experiences of elementary English learners, with a significant gap in research on actual experiences of adult learners, specifically university students, in the process of English language learning.

The challenges in English language learning are closely related to learners' learning anxiety, as evidenced by numerous empirical studies (Jung, 1995; Jung & Kim, 2020; Kim, H-O., 2012; Park, 2002). Following the introduction of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986), studies on foreign language learning anxiety have been actively conducted, revealing a generally negative correlation between English academic achievement and learning anxiety (Byun & Jee, 2012; Kim, H-O., 2012; Oh & Kim, 2019). In other words, a lower degree of anxiety related to communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, which constitute foreign language learning anxiety, positively influences academic achievement. Therefore, practical approaches to reduce the critical factor of learning anxiety, which is a significant defining element in the learning process, need to be considered.

Regarding learning anxiety, the utilization of music has been reported to alleviate academic stress (Jang & Shin, 2016; Kim & Chong, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2018) and enhance attention (Baek & Lee, 2016), ultimately having a positive impact on learning attitudes and academic achievement (Colliander & Fejes, 2021; Kara & Arsel, 2013; Yuce, 2018). This highlights the need for systematic instructional design in the use of music as an effective tool in foreign language learning. However, many previous studies have solely quantitatively reported the positive effects of utilizing music in language learning on academic achievement. Nevertheless, there are limitations in conveying specific experiences of how music positively influences the learning process from the perspectives of learners or instructors. Thus, there is a need to analyze qualitative and multifaceted perspectives on why and how music influences learning anxiety and attitudes. This study aims to interpret learners' subjective experiences and derive the essence and implications of using music in English education. Therefore, the issues addressed in this study are as follows:

- (1) What learning experiences do university students have in English classes implemented with the music-utilized implicit teaching method, suggestopedia?
- (2) How does the music-utilized English class impact learning anxiety, attitudes, and academic achievement among university students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign Language Anxiety and Learning Attitudes

The emotional state of foreign language learners is recognized as a significant factor in foreign language education. Krashen's (1981) affective filter hypothesis posits that language acquisition is most successful when learners are in a relaxed state, free from learning anxiety. Paquette and Rieg (2008) further support this hypothesis by suggesting that learners who maintain a positive affective state are more engaged with language input, leading to increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and a favorable learning attitude. Conversely, negative emotional experiences such as fear, anxiety, or boredom can impede foreign language acquisition. Therefore, it is crucial to minimize the influence of the affective filter in foreign language education.

In line with these considerations, researchers have started investigating the potential of music to alleviate foreign language learning anxiety, although extensive research in this area is still needed. Studies have reported positive outcomes when music is utilized to reduce foreign language learning anxiety. For instance, Yuce (2018) found that music listening effectively reduced anxiety levels and helped learners overcome language-related difficulties. Jung (1995) discovered that using music as background stimuli during learning sessions decreased foreign language anxiety while enhancing pronunciation accuracy among beginner-level learners. Furthermore, research suggests that the impact of music on foreign language learning anxiety may vary based on learners' proficiency levels, indicating the need for tailored approaches (Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016).

Use of Music in Foreign Language Learning

The numerous studies have provided evidence for the efficacy of music as a tool in foreign language learning, encompassing a wide range of language skills and competencies. Music has been shown to enhance various aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary retention, pronunciation accuracy, listening comprehension, and oral fluency (Colliander & Fejes, 2021; Kara & Arsel, 2013; Yuce, 2018). Several studies (e.g. Moufarrej & Salameh, 2019; Nie et al., 2022; Tilwani et al., 2022) have examined the impact of music on vocabulary acquisition and overall language learning outcomes. While statistical evidence regarding the effectiveness of music as an educational tool for vocabulary acquisition is inconclusive (Hazel-Obarow, 2004), most findings indicate that learners exhibit heightened motivation and increased engagement when music is incorporated into the vocabulary learning process. These studies suggest that foreign language instructors play a pivotal role in creating a classroom environment that fosters active learner participation and a positive learning atmosphere.

One notable instructional approach that integrates music in foreign language learning is suggestopedia. Developed by Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov in the 1970s, suggestopedia combines music's arousing and relaxing qualities to facilitate learning in various educational domains, including foreign language education (Colliander & Fejes, 2021; Lozanov, 1978; Ramirez, 1986). However, empirical research on the effectiveness of suggestopedia in reducing foreign language learning anxiety and enhancing language acquisition remains limited. Moreover, most previous studies have predominantly investigated the impact of music on foreign language learning anxiety from a quantitative perspective, with insufficient attention given to capturing learners' lived experiences and perspectives.

In light of these previous research, incorporating music into foreign language learning holds promising potential for reducing learning anxiety and fostering positive learning attitudes. However, further research utilizing qualitative methodologies is warranted to gain a deeper understanding of how music influences learners' experiences and to explore effective instructional practices that maximize the benefits of music integration in various language learning contexts. While extensive research has highlighted the general benefits of music in language learning, there remains a conspicuous gap in literature specifically addressing the unique experiences and challenges faced by university-level learners, emphasizing the need for our study. By gaining insights from learners' perspectives and experiences, educators can develop comprehensive pedagogical strategies that optimize the utilization of music in foreign language education.

METHOD

This study selected participants from a total of 128 university students enrolled in “English Writing I” and “English Writing II” courses at D University located in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea. The following procedures were employed to select the participants for this study. This study employed an inductive content analysis approach (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) to analyze the diverse and dispersed opinions of the research participants. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the aim was to gain various insights into the impact of music integration in English classes on learners' experiences through inductive content analysis. Particularly, the study aimed to achieve an in-depth understanding of the utilization of music in relation to foreign language learning anxiety, learning attitudes, and academic performance, providing insights into how university students perceive the incorporation of music in foreign language learning.

Participants

In this study, the initial participant pool consisted of 128 university students. However, after careful consideration, nine participants were selected for the interview based on specific criteria. The selection process for the research participants is outlined as follows: Initially, the “English Writing I” and “English Writing II” courses were divided into sections, each comprising approximately 35 students. Among these sections, two (Sections B and D) incorporated music during the classes. A total of 23 students from these music-utilizing sections voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and demonstrated a clear understanding of the purpose of this study. From the pool of 23 students, three participants were chosen from each proficiency level (high, medium, and low). These selections were based on a combination of the students' self-evaluation, the instructor's evaluation, and individual tendencies observed during class participation. Moreover, the participants' foreign language learning anxiety levels were measured using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and this data was taken into account during the selection process. Table 1 presents the information about the selected research participants, including their English proficiency levels, learner characteristics, and average FLCAS scores, as evaluated by the instructor responsible for conducting the classes.

TABLE 1
Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Grade	Tendency	Learning Anxiety	English Proficiency (Self-evaluation)	English Proficiency (Teacher evaluation)
A	Female	20	2	Introvert	3.73	Low	Intermediate
B	Female	21	4	Introvert	4.41	Low	Intermediate
C	Female	22	2	Extrovert	3.91	Low	Intermediate
D	Female	22	3	Introvert	3.50	Intermediate	Intermediate
E	Female	21	2	Extrovert	2.95	Intermediate	Advanced
F	Male	23	2	Extrovert	2.68	Intermediate	Advanced
G	Male	24	2	Extrovert	1.32	Advanced	Advanced
H	Male	23	3	Extrovert	2.05	Advanced	Advanced
I	Male	25	4	Extrovert	1.95	Advanced	Advanced

Table 1 presents a summary of the selected participants for this study. The group consisted of nine university students, five females, and four males, with ages ranging from 20 to 25. The participants' English proficiency levels were assessed based on both self-evaluation and teacher evaluation, with the majority falling into the intermediate to advanced range. Regarding personality tendencies, three participants were categorized as introverts, while six were classified as extroverts. Notably, the participants' foreign language learning anxiety levels varied, with some reporting relatively low anxiety levels, and others displaying more pronounced anxiety. The selected participants represent a diverse range of characteristics, making them suitable for examining various factors related to foreign language learning and ensures a comprehensive exploration of the current research topic, which aims to investigate the impact of music on language learning outcomes and anxiety levels among university students.

Data Collection

For data collection, the researchers conducted Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) with a group of nine university students who had experienced English language learning through the use of music-based implicit teaching method, *Suggestopedia*. The FGIs were conducted in early June 2023 and revolved around semi-structured open-ended questions regarding the students' experiences with the use of music during their class time. Prior to the interviews, the researchers consulted with the course instructor to select students with similar English proficiency levels. These students were then grouped into subgroups of two or three participants, forming a total of four groups for the interviews. Each group interview lasted approximately 50 minutes on average and was conducted using the Zoom platform. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed into document files by the researchers for analysis purposes. The data collection process employed in this study is outlined as follows.

Classroom Instruction

The courses utilized in this study were "English Writing I" and "English Writing II," which are compulsory courses in the British and American Humanities major. The courses were conducted by a native English-speaking instructor. Two classes were conducted without utilizing music, while the other two classes implemented music-based implicit teaching method, *Suggestopedia*, from May 9th to June 2nd, 2023, spanning a total of 8 sessions. Both the music-based and non-music-based classes followed a similar teaching procedure; however, during the concert phase of the music-based classes, baroque music was introduced. In contrast, the non-music-based classes proceeded without any musical accompaniment during this stage.

The music-based classes consisted of five main stages. The first stage was the preparation stage, where creating a pleasant and comfortable learning environment was crucial. Therefore, the instructor ensured that the classroom environment was well-lit, quiet, and comfortable, while explaining the learning activities and objectives to the students. The second stage was the presentation stage, in which new learning content was introduced and explained. The instructor presented prepared

vocabulary lists and provided explanations using examples. The third stage was the concert session, where the learning content was read aloud with background music in a soothing and emotional voice. During this stage, it was important for the learners to adopt a relaxed posture and unconsciously absorb the learning content. The following fourth stage was the practice stage, in which the instructor engaged the students in various activities to apply and reinforce the learned material. Active participation from the students was encouraged during this stage. The final stage was the feedback and evaluation stage, where the instructors answered students' questions, provided feedback on the learned content, and evaluated their progress. While the primary focus of the courses was on writing, the implementation of suggestopedia aimed to holistically enhance the English learning experience, aiding not only in the writing process but also in vocabulary retention and comprehension, essential components of effective language learning.

In this way, suggestopedia, as described above, is an instructional approach that creates a comfortable learning environment. In particular, in the third stage, music played a vital role. Baroque music, specifically Bach's "Air on the G String" and "Brandenburg Concerto No. 3", was utilized as background music to assist learners in subconsciously absorbing vocabulary learning. Baroque music was selected due to its historical association with enhanced concentration and learning, often linked to the synchronization of its tempo with alpha brainwave frequencies.

Pre-interview with the Instructor

Pre-interview with the instructors was conducted as part of the participant selection process for the study, specifically for the courses "English Writing I" and "English Writing II." The pre-interview with the instructor focused on two main questions related to the students who participated in the music-based classes. The interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes.

- (1) What differences were observed in the English proficiency levels of the students who expressed their willingness to participate in the interview?
- (2) How did the students' introversion and extroversion in terms of their participation in the classes?

Based on the results of the pre-interview with the instructor, a purposeful sampling approach was employed to select participants for the learner interviews.

Interview with Learners

In order to examine the integrated and implicit meanings derived from the common attributes in individual learning experiences of university students who underwent eight sessions of instruction using suggestopedia, interviews were conducted from June 5th to June 16th, 2023, spanning a period of two weeks. The interviews were conducted through the Zoom platform with the consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview format, specifically in the form of focus group interviews. This focus group interview is advantageous for understanding group dynamics, collective perspectives, and shared experiences related to the topic at hand. The interactions and dialogues within the group can offer rich insights, revealing commonalities or differences in perceptions and experiences among participants. By using this method, the study aimed to gauge the collective sentiments about the impact of music in the language learning environment. The interview questions were as follows:

- (1) What was the most memorable moment for you during the English classes that utilized music? What was the reason behind its memorability?
- (2) Did you experience any observations or changes during the English classes that utilized music? If so, what were they?
- (3) Have you encountered any difficulties during the English classes that utilized music? If so, what were the challenges and how did you overcome them?
- (4) How did you perceive your academic performance and personal experiences during the English classes that utilized music?

While conducting the interviews with these questions, additional inquiries were made regarding which aspects of music were considered helpful in foreign language learning activities, which factors of music were perceived to have influenced the changes in learning experiences, and the reasons behind such perceptions. This allowed an exploration of the effects of English classes utilizing music on the students.

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted a content analysis study following Krippendorff's (2019) methodology to analyze the transcribed interview data. Initially, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in Korean, and then saved as document files. The researchers engaged in repeated readings of the transcribed content to identify units of meaning related to three main themes: foreign language learning anxiety (anxiety related to communication, tests, negative evaluation, etc.), learning attitudes (autonomy, motivation, interest, etc.), and academic performance. To achieve structural integration of central meanings, a four-step analysis procedure was employed.

Firstly, the collected audio data was transcribed and carefully reviewed multiple times to gain a deep understanding of learners' perceptions of their experiences in foreign language learning using music. Next, the transcribed text was segmented into meaningful units, and sections where the meanings were clearly revealed were highlighted. Subsequently, statements of meaning were conceptualized, and similar content was grouped into categories. Finally, the categories were systematically rearranged based on their alignment with the domains of 'foreign language learning anxiety,' 'learning attitudes,' and 'academic performance.' This analytical approach allowed for a thorough examination of the learners' experiences and perceptions concerning the impact of music on foreign language learning, shedding light on the connections between anxiety, attitudes, and academic performance in the foreign language learning context.

RESULTS

This study conducted interviews with nine participants and focus group discussions among students who participated in suggestopedia during the spring semester of 2023 for 'English Writing I' and 'English Writing II' courses. Based on the collected data, the researchers examined the influence of the suggestopedia on language learning anxiety, learning attitudes, academic performance, and the impact of music on these learning experiences and changes. Participants' responses were categorized into three themes: 'language learning anxiety,' 'learning attitudes,' and 'academic performance.' From each theme, key components and sub-components were derived. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
Experience of English Learning through Suggestopedia

Domain	Category	Main Components	Sub-components	
Affective	Learning Anxiety	Fear of Communication in English	Challenges arising from the mismatch between speech rate and music tempo Reduced anxiety regarding difficulty understanding the instructors' explanation	
		Fear of Evaluation	Alleviated evaluation anxiety Reduced in fear of making mistakes Enhanced perception regarding others' evaluation of me	
	Learning Attitude	Motivation	Increased learning motivation Increased sense of determination to work harder	
		Interest	Alleviation of boredom Relief from monotony in the classroom Emergence of interest in learning	
		Autonomy	Facilitated self-directed learning Acquired learning self-regulation	
		Attention	Attention dispersed by fast-paced music Subconsciously enhanced concentration	
	Linguistic	Academic Performance	Positive	Improved achievement Increased learning efficiency Enhanced memory
			Negative	Interfered with learning by fast

The results in Table 2 revealed three main themes: ‘language learning anxiety,’ ‘learning attitudes,’ and ‘academic performance.’ Under the theme of ‘language learning anxiety,’ participants reported experiencing challenges arising from the mismatch between speech rate and music tempo during suggestopedia sessions. However, they also indicated reduced anxiety concerning the difficulty of understanding instructor’s explanations with the presence of music. Moreover, suggestopedia effectively alleviated evaluation anxiety, reduced fear of making mistakes, and enhanced participants’ perception of others’ evaluation of their performance during language learning activities.

Regarding ‘learning attitudes,’ participants demonstrated increased learning motivation and a heightened sense of determination to work harder, attributing these positive changes to their experiences with suggestopedia. The use of suggestopedia also contributed to relieving boredom, overcoming monotony in the classroom, and fostering an emergence of interest in learning English. Additionally, the educational approach facilitated self-directed learning, empowering participants to regulate their learning process autonomously. The fast-paced music in suggestopedia sessions dispersed participants’ attention, leading to subconsciously enhanced concentration during language learning.

In the ‘academic performance’ domain, suggestopedia exerted positive effects, enhancing academic achievement, increasing learning efficiency, and improving memory retention among participants. However, some participants expressed concerns about fast-paced music interfering with their learning experiences and negatively affecting their performance during suggestopedia sessions. In summary, suggestopedia demonstrated its potential as an effective language learning approach for university students. It significantly reduced language learning anxiety, fostered positive learning attitudes, and positively influenced academic performance. The incorporation of music in the learning process played a crucial role in enhancing learning experiences. Nonetheless, challenges related to music usage were also noted. These findings offer valuable insights for educators seeking to create more engaging and supportive English language learning environments tailored to individual learners’ needs and preferences.

Music Use and Learning Anxiety

This study examined the impact of listening to Baroque music during class on English language learning anxiety among university students. The results revealed that learning anxiety manifested in three components: anxiety about communication, tests, and negative evaluations. Participants reported feeling anxious about not being able to respond to the instructor’s questions due to a lack of understanding, as well as experiencing anxiety during assessments conducted during class. Additionally, they expressed apprehension about receiving negative evaluations from their peers based on their behaviors. The followings are evidential excerpts from the interviews.

“When I listened to music during class, the anxious feeling of my heart pounding and racing whenever the professor asked a question seemed to lessen a bit.” (Participant B)

“I think I felt better when I listened to the first music (slow-tempo music). Since the professor teaches only in English, I always worried about not being able to understand. However, when I listened to such slow classical music, that feeling of anxiety seemed to diminish a bit, but not with the second music (fast-tempo music).” (Participant H)

“The emotions I experience while listening to music are particularly noticeable when I listen to slow music. The music’s smooth and gentle surface made me feel less nervous, especially when taking exams.” (Participant F)

“After I answer something, I worry that it might be wrong, and that makes me anxious about how my friends might perceive me. But while listening to music, I felt a subconscious reduction in that anxious feeling.” (Participant A)

As shown in the interview data above, the participants reported various learning experiences and positive effects of using music during class. Firstly, they reported a reduction in anxiety through music when faced with uncertainty about understanding the instructor’s questions or being unprepared to give appropriate answers. Secondly, despite feeling anxious throughout the class due to not fully demonstrating their learning abilities or making mistakes during evaluations, participants found that music served as a medium to somewhat decrease such anxiety. Thirdly, participants expressed apprehension about their behavior in class and how it might be negatively perceived by others, but they reported a decrease in this anxiety through the influence of music.

Change in Learning Attitude

The participants reported that listening to music during class while engaging in English learning experiences resulted in a positive change in their learning attitude, specifically in terms of “learning motivation,” “interest,” “self-directedness,” and “attention.” These subcategories of learning attitude provided insights into how music influenced their overall learning attitudes.

“Thanks to the experience of listening to Baroque music during class, my learning motivation has significantly increased. When I listen to music, the learning environment changes, and it seems to enhance my concentration. As a result, I could focus more on the class content, and my interest and curiosity grew, allowing me to feel more engaged in the learning process.” (Participant B)

“Since music creates a comfortable atmosphere, the overall learning environment felt improved, I think. Consequently, my confidence in learning increased, enabling me to study even harder.” (Participant H)

“Learning English while listening to music made me feel much more enjoyable, I think. Music adds fun to English learning, and it gives me a feeling as if I am playing a game.” (Participant I)

“The experience of listening to music during class had a significant impact on my learning motivation. When I listen to music, my mind becomes relaxed, and my concentration increases. As a result, I could immerse myself more in the class and better comprehend the content. However, I found that faster music sometimes disrupted my focus during the class.” (Participant D)

“In classes with music, I think my concentration significantly improved. Studying along with the rhythm and melody of the music increased my immersion, and I felt less distracted by surrounding noise or disruptions.” (Participant E)

“Having music during class seemed to increase my self-directed nature, I believe. It’s like I could better regulate my time during class. Music helped me maintain focus more easily and assisted in managing my learning. As a result, I gained more confidence in my abilities.” (Participant H)

Based on the interview data, it has been revealed that the use of music in English learning brought about the following changes in the participants’ learning attitudes: Firstly, it increased their learning motivation. Music provided enjoyment and inspiration, reinforcing their motivation for learning and fostering a positive attitude towards their studies. Secondly, it enhanced their interest in English learning. The elegant and harmonious ambiance of Baroque music, in particular, heightened their interest in class content and boosted their confidence in the learning process. Thirdly, it strengthened their self-directedness. Listening to music during class resulted in a more independent learning environment, empowering the learners to regulate and manage their studies effectively. Lastly, it improved their attention. Music helped create a sense of calmness, allowing the learners to maintain focus during study sessions. These findings indicate that using music in English learning has positive effects on learners’ motivation, interest, self-directedness, and attention, highlighting the beneficial impact of incorporating music in the learning process.

Perception of Academic Achievement

The final topic of this study focused on investigating the impact of using music in foreign language learning among college students on their academic achievement. Participants generally reported positive effects of music usage, but some also had negative experiences. These findings suggest that the effects of learning experiences may vary based on individual preferences and the diversity of learning approaches. Therefore, the study highlights the need to consider various factors when evaluating the effectiveness of using music in English language learning.

“The music played during class created an elegant and harmonious atmosphere, which made my learning experience itself positive. As a result, my confidence in English learning improved, and I believe it helped me achieve better results.” (Participant G)

“While learning vocabulary with music, I felt that the rhythm of the music helped me remember things better. As a result, I was able to achieve good grades on exams.” (Participant B)

“Studying with music as background seems to enhance my memory. Connecting the class content with music

makes it easier to understand and remember, which also helped me during exam preparation.” (Participant A)

“Having music made studying enjoyable and interesting at the same time, so the study hours became more pleasurable, and as a result, my academic performance also improved.” (Participant C)

“I feel that listening to music enhances language learning and writing for me. Personally, when it comes to very logical tasks, music doesn’t seem to help much. Activities that require continuous logical thinking may not be particularly aided by music. However, for tasks that involve simple memorization, I found that music was a bit effective.” (Participant G)

“Listening to music seems to enhance emotions, so when studying specific writing or language while listening to music, it tends to be more effective, I think. For example, when I listen to sad music, I find myself better at writing or understanding sad language expressions. It’s like the music influences the emotional aspect of my learning.” (Participant H)

“I noticed that when I listened to faster music, I tended to make more mistakes. The fast pace of the music made me feel a bit distracted, and I believe it affected my performance during exams.” (Participant G)

Based on the interview data, it has been observed that music has an emotional enhancement effect on language learning and writing. Particularly, when listening to sad music, participants reported that they could perform sad language expression or writing more effectively. Delving deeper, this emotional resonance with music might be attributed to the human brain’s intrinsic response to melodies and rhythms. Such a response can amplify the learning experience, bridging the gap between mere academic tasks and emotionally engaging activities. Moreover, the interview data from participants indicates the profound influence of music’s emotional impact on academic performance, suggesting that emotions evoked by music can set the stage for a more enriched learning environment. Additionally, music was reported to create a positive learning experience, enhancing confidence and leading to better outcomes. Using music as a background during studying improved memory, making vocabulary learning more effective and contributing to improved test scores, as stated by participants. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of music may vary depending on the nature of the learning process, and it may not have a significant effect in tasks requiring logical thinking. In summary, music adds emotional elements to language learning and writing, positively impacting attention, memory, learning motivation, attitude, and learning anxiety, thus demonstrating its positive influence on academic performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study conducted focus group interviews to analyze the impact of using music as an implicit teaching method on university students’ learning anxiety and attitudes in relation to the negative outcomes of anxiety in English learning on academic achievement (Kim, H-O., 2012; Oh & Kim, 2019; Park, 2002). By synthesizing the research findings, it was revealed that music has a positive influence on learners’ learning anxiety, attitudes, learning environment, and academic performance. While the above findings were supported by previous research, it is paramount to highlight that our conclusions also stem from the rich and nuanced perspectives gathered from the in-depth interviews with our participants. Their firsthand experiences and reflections provided invaluable context, emphasizing the real-world applicability and implications of our results. These results underscore the value and potential of using music as an implicit teaching method in English educational settings.

Firstly, the use of music during the learning experience helped reduce college students’ English learning anxiety. Similar to the findings of Dolean (2016), participants reported that listening to music reduced anxiety related to understanding questions or evaluations and alleviated anxiety about negative evaluations of their own behaviors. This indicates that music can provide learners with a sense of stability and positive psychological state, thus mitigating anxiety during the learning process (Colliander & Fejes, 2021; Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016).

Secondly, the use of music positively transformed learning attitudes. Participants mentioned that listening to music increased their learning motivation, enhanced interest, and improved their passion and self-directedness in learning, ultimately leading to improved concentration. This suggests that music serves as a valuable resource that makes the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful, positively impacting learners’ motivation and attitudes (Baylarova-alakbarova, 2022; Kara & Arsel, 2013).

Thirdly, music played a significant role in enhancing the learning environment. Participants mentioned that music created a relaxed and free atmosphere, allowing them to feel more comfortable and open to new experiences. This indicates that

appropriate selection and use of music can stimulate learners' creativity and interactions, fostering a positive learning environment (Colliander & Fejes, 2021; Ramirez, 1986).

Lastly, using music as an implicit teaching method also had a positive impact on academic achievement. When music was used as a background during learning, it enhanced emotional reinforcement in language learning and writing, improved memory for vocabulary learning, and increased learners' confidence, resulting in better outcomes. However, interview data have shown that individuals with higher English proficiency tend to perceive music's effects on language learning less positively, while those with lower English proficiency tend to perceive music's effects more positively, especially in terms of its potential to enhance attention and improve memory retention. This highlights that music strengthens the connection between learning and memory (Werner, 2018), serving as a useful element in promoting language proficiency (Hallam, 2010; Ramirez, 1986), especially for lower levels of students. In other words, the effects of music on language learning can vary significantly from person to person, and several factors should be taken into consideration, such as the type of music, the nature of the task, and individual preferences. It is essential to recognize that music should serve as a supplementary element in the learning process and be adjusted according to the learning objectives and context. While the incorporation of music appears promising, it is crucial to emphasize that the choice of music should align with the specific goals and contexts of the learning environment, ensuring it complements rather than distracts from the learning process. However, while these findings provide insights into the positive implications of music in learning, there are certain limitations to consider. One major limitation of this study is its reliance solely on qualitative data without the utilization of instruments to measure student emotional characteristics. Such instruments could provide a more granular understanding of how music affects individual emotional states and, subsequently, their learning. Future research might benefit from a combined approach, integrating both qualitative reflections and quantitative measures to provide a comprehensive view of the influence of music on language learning. Another limitation of this study revolves around its sample size. With a relatively small number of participants, there is a potential risk of limited diversity in experiences and opinions. This may influence the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. While the insights provided by the participants were invaluable, larger-scale studies with more diverse participant groups would help in substantiating and expanding upon the findings presented in this study.

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, the researchers can state that utilizing music as an implicit teaching method has a positive impact on English learning. Particularly, when using music with appropriate tempos (Baek & Lee, 2016; Lin et al, 2023), it can enhance learners' motivation and attitudes, improve the learning environment, and enhance academic achievement. Therefore, in educational settings, actively adopting implicit teaching methods like suggestopedia is crucial. Suggestopedia is an innovative teaching method that emphasizes relaxed learning environments. It utilizes various artistic mediums, especially music, to augment memory and learning. Considering the learning environment from various perspectives is also essential. However, it is important to note that this study also revealed some participants' negative experiences with the use of music as an implicit teaching method. This indicates the need to consider the diversity of learning experiences and individual differences. The effects of music can vary depending on individuals' personality traits and learning styles (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Furnham & Strbac, 2002), and the selection and implementation of music should be adjusted according to the nature and goals of the learning process. While the positive impact of music on learning was evident, it's important to highlight that we controlled for students' preferences for baroque music, which could have influenced their learning experiences and our findings. The effects of specific music genres, like baroque, might have distinct implications, and our study aimed to minimize the bias related to this particular preference. Hence, educators should flexibly tailor the application of music, taking into account learners' diverse demands and preferences (Degrave, 2019). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that this study focused on college-level English learners from one university, limiting generalizations to other age groups or learners with different proficiency levels. Therefore, further research is needed, including experimental studies or comparative research involving diverse learner groups, to more clearly evaluate the effects of using music as an implicit teaching method.

The findings of this study suggest that utilizing music as an implicit teaching method can have a positive impact on English and foreign language learning. Educators and learners should consider the learning environment from various perspectives and explore ways to select and utilize appropriate music for learning. It is important to diversify and customize the use of music, taking into account individual learners' preferences and learning styles. Furthermore, while this study sheds light on some aspects of the effects of using music as an implicit teaching method in English learning, a more comprehensive understanding requires further research and evidence. Therefore, future research should delve deeper into the interaction between music and learning, considering various aspects, including learners' academic performance and learning experiences. Additionally, further research is needed to investigate additional teaching and learning methods that consider various elements of music, such as rhythm, melody, and lyrics. Through such efforts, maximizing learners' learning experiences and outcomes and ensuring continuous and effective learning through music can be achieved.

In conclusion, this study implies that music as an implicit teaching method can positively influence language learning. To

optimize its effects, educators and learners should adopt a multifaceted approach, considering individual preferences and learning styles. Ongoing research and educational endeavors are essential to gain a deeper understanding of the interaction between music and learning and to explore additional strategies for incorporating music into teaching and learning. This will ultimately maximize learners' experiences and achievements and promote sustained and engaging learning through the use of music.

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