

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC-BASED LEARNING ON VOCABULARY RETENTION IN EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract. *Learning a new language can be both exciting and challenging, especially for young EFL students striving to expand their vocabulary. This study explores how music-based learning can transform the language acquisition process, making it not only effective but also deeply engaging. By integrating songs and rhythmic exercises into lessons, students showed remarkable improvement in remembering new words, demonstrating that music has the power to connect emotion and cognition. Beyond academic gains, the experience boosted learners' confidence and enjoyment, creating a positive environment where curiosity and creativity thrive. The findings suggest that when education resonates with the heart as well as the mind, vocabulary retention becomes more natural, lasting, and meaningful. Additionally when vocabulary is acquired with interactive musical methods, students learn how to use them actively, thereby improving their fluency. This research underscores the potential of music as a bridge between language learning and emotional engagement, highlighting a path toward more inspiring and human-centered classrooms.*

Keywords: *music-based approach, emotional engagement, language proficiency, vocabulary memorization, cultural exposure, clear pronunciation and contextualized lexical input.*

Annotatsiya. *Yangi tilni o'rganish, ayniqsa, so'z boyligini kengaytirishga intilayotgan ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida (EFL) o'rganuvchi yoshlar uchun bir vaqtning o'zida ham qiziqarli, ham murakkab jarayon hisoblanadi. Ushbu tadqiqot musiqaga asoslangan ta'lim yondashuvi til o'zlashtirish jarayonini qanday qilib samarali va shu bilan birga qiziqarli tusga keltirishini o'rganadi. Dars jarayoniga qo'shiqlar va ritmik mashqlarni integratsiya qilish natijasida o'quvchilarning yangi so'zlarni eslab qolish ko'rsatkichlari sezilarli darajada yaxshilangani aniqlandi. Bu esa musiqaning hissiyot va tafakkurni o'zaro bog'lash qudratiga ega ekanligini ko'rsatadi. Akademik yutuqlardan tashqari, ushbu yondashuv o'quvchilarning o'ziga bo'lgan ishonchi va darslarga qiziqishini oshirib, qiziquvchanlik hamda ijodkorlik rivojlanadigan ijobiy muhitni shakllantirdi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, ta'lim jarayoni nafaqat onga, balki qalbga ham ta'sir qilganda, lug'at boyligini o'zlashtirish yanada tabiiy, uzoq muddatli va mazmunli kechadi. Bundan tashqari, interaktiv musiqiy metodlar orqali o'zlashtirilgan so'zlar o'quvchilar tomonidan faol qo'llanila boshlaydi, bu esa ularning nutq ravonligini oshirishga xizmat qiladi. Tadqiqot musiqaning til o'rganish va hissiy faollik o'rtasida ko'priq vazifasini bajarish imkoniyatini yoritib, yanada ilhomlantiruvchi va insonparvar ta'lim muhitlarini yaratish yo'lini ko'rsatadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *musiqaga asoslangan yondashuv, hissiy faollik, til kompetensiyasi, lug'at boyligini eslab qolish, madaniy tanishuv, aniq talaffuz, kontekstual leksik input.*

Аннотация. *Изучение нового языка может быть одновременно увлекательным и сложным процессом, особенно для молодых учащихся EFL, стремящихся расширить свой словарный запас. В данном исследовании рассматривается, как обучение на основе музыки может преобразовать процесс овладения языком, делая его не только эффективным, но и глубоко увлекательным. Благодаря включению песен и ритмических упражнений в занятия учащиеся продемонстрировали значительное улучшение в запоминании новых слов, что подтверждает способность музыки соединять эмоции и когнитивные процессы. Помимо академических достижений, этот опыт повысил уверенность учащихся в себе и их удовольствие от обучения, создавая позитивную среду, в которой развиваются любознательность и креативность. Результаты показывают, что когда обучение затрагивает не только разум, но и чувства, усвоение лексики становится более*

естественным, устойчивым и осмысленным. Кроме того, при освоении словарного запаса с помощью интерактивных музыкальных методов учащиеся учатся активно использовать новые слова, что способствует развитию их беглости речи. Данное исследование подчеркивает потенциал музыки как моста между изучением языка и эмоциональной вовлеченностью, открывая путь к более вдохновляющей и гуманно ориентированной образовательной среде.

Ключевые слова: музыкально-ориентированный подход, эмоциональная вовлеченность, уровень владения языком, запоминание словарного запаса, знакомство с культурой, четкое произношение, концептуализированный лексический материал.

Introduction. In a world of globalisation and enhanced social interactions among all countries and people from different aspects of life, learning a foreign language such as English is more important than ever before. That is why the whole world is considering English language learning, communicating freely to be a very important activity.[1.113] As all of us know, learning English involves multiple cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes, which traditional teaching methods sometimes struggle to address effectively. In recent years, educators and researchers from different countries have turned to more innovative and engaging pedagogical approaches, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, to overcome common challenges such as low motivation, limited vocabulary retention, and anxiety in language acquisition.

One particularly promising strategy is music-based learning, which combines rhythm, melody, and emotion to support linguistic development.[1.120] Music has long been recognized as a universal cognitive tool with deep connections to language processing. Research shows that music can act as a powerful mnemonic device [4.450], facilitating memory encoding and vocabulary acquisition more effectively than some traditional drills. For example, the rhythmic and melodic elements in songs help learners internalize new words and phrases more naturally and enjoyably, tapping into both cognitive and affective domains of learning.

Empirical studies also support these theoretical foundations. Interventions involving musical elements in EFL classrooms have demonstrated positive effects on listening comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and student motivation. In one classroom action research conducted with 7th-grade learners, the use of English songs significantly improved both listening skills and vocabulary recognition scores after systematic engagement with carefully selected music materials. Additional research highlights the dual-coding benefits of combining verbal content with music, showing that the repetition and contextual cues inherent in songs significantly aid vocabulary retention.[5.303]

Beyond experimental formats, music is also widely regarded as an effective autonomous learning tool. Qualitative investigations among Indonesian EFL students reveal that many learners prefer using English songs outside the classroom to enhance their vocabulary memorization and cultural exposure, particularly when songs include clear pronunciation and contextualized lexical input. These findings suggest that music not

only supports classroom instruction but also promotes learner autonomy and self-driven practice.

Globally, educators are integrating music into language pedagogy in diverse ways. In regions like Southeast Asia, including Indonesia and Ghana, music-based language activities are becoming part of everyday teaching routines to engage learners emotionally and academically. In Ghana, research on the relationship between music and language has even examined how songs could be used to support both linguistic revitalization and cognitive comparison between language and musical structures, reflecting the broader educational potential of music beyond mere entertainment.

While traditional educational technology methods such as computer-based learning and mobile apps continue to expand in mainstream classrooms, music remains a unique medium that combines cognitive engagement, emotional involvement, and cultural relevance in foreign language learning. This study, therefore, investigates how music-based learning supports vocabulary retention among EFL learners, aiming to provide evidence-based insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to make language learning more effective, motivational, and student-centered.

Beyond the classroom, modern technology offers learners a wealth of resources to support music-assisted language learning. Platforms such as Duolingo, Memrise, Spotify, and YouTube enable students to listen, repeat, and practice English songs at their own pace, fostering autonomy and self-directed learning. These methods complement traditional instruction, making language learning more immersive and emotionally engaging.[3.5]

In Uzbekistan, opportunities for music-based learning are emerging, particularly in urban schools and universities that integrate multimedia and interactive techniques. English clubs and online lesson modules using songs have shown promise in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. However, in rural and under-resourced areas, such methods are still limited, highlighting the need for research that explores the effectiveness of music-based strategies for EFL learners in diverse contexts.

Given these global trends and local conditions, exploring music-based learning is both timely and crucial. Understanding how musical interventions impact vocabulary retention can provide educators with evidence-based strategies to create more engaging, motivating, and effective language learning environments, bridging gaps between traditional teaching methods and contemporary, student-centered approaches.

Literature Review. Recent studies show that music-based learning is an effective method for improving vocabulary retention in EFL learners. Engh (2013) explains that music reduces anxiety and increases motivation by combining emotional and cognitive processes. Karim et al. (2022) also found that English songs help learners remember vocabulary more easily through rhythm and repetition.

Ramadhanti and Farida (2025) report that songs improve vocabulary acquisition by providing repeated exposure to authentic language. Melinda et al. (2025) confirm that using songs in lessons significantly increases vocabulary retention, especially among school learners. Lestari and Hardiyanti (2020) highlight that students also use songs outside the classroom, which supports independent learning.

Fadhila (2022) shows that songs increase engagement and improve vocabulary mastery at the elementary level. Ansah et al. (2022) note that music also supports cultural and linguistic development. In addition, digital platforms like YouTube and Spotify make music-based learning more accessible and effective.

Overall, the literature confirms that music-based learning improves vocabulary retention, motivation, and learner engagement, although more research is needed in different educational contexts.

Research Methodology. In order to see the effectiveness and efficiency of music in learning foreign languages, in particular English for students in schools as well as universities different methods were used in the process. The research was implemented in many stages including many students even those who are from Navai region, Khatirchi district. The first research Design was quasi-experimental. This study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of music-based learning on vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. A pre-test and post-test approach was implemented to measure changes in students' vocabulary knowledge after exposure to music-based instructional interventions.[5.105] The participants included 150 learners in total: 100 school students from grades 8 to 11 at School No. 69, Xatirchi District, Navai Region, and 50 university students from Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, first and second-year cohorts. Among the school students, there was a balanced distribution across grades, and both groups included learners with beginner to intermediate English proficiency.

English songs selected for relevance to target vocabulary and ease of comprehension. A total of 10 songs were used during lessons. Vocabulary tests: Each pre-test and post-test consisted of 30 questions designed to assess recognition, understanding, and usage of newly introduced vocabulary. Questions included multiple-choice items, fill-in-the-blank sentences, and matching exercises. Survey questionnaire: A short survey was conducted to gather learners' perceptions of the effectiveness and enjoyment of the music-based learning intervention.

Pre-test administration: Students completed a 30-question vocabulary test to measure baseline knowledge. The test duration was 1 hour. Music-based learning sessions: Over a period of 4 weeks, students participated in music-based lessons three times per week, 30 minutes each session. During these sessions, learners listened to English songs, engaged in vocabulary exercises based on the lyrics, and participated in interactive activities to

reinforce retention. Post-test administration: After completing the instructional sessions, the same vocabulary test was administered to assess improvement in vocabulary retention.

Survey: Students completed a short survey to evaluate the perceived effectiveness, engagement, and enjoyment of the music-based learning method.

After implementing all of the stages and methods the collected data was analysed. The vocabulary test results were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to compare pre-test and post-test scores, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize survey responses, highlighting learners' perceptions of motivation, enjoyment, and perceived benefits of music-based learning.

Analysis and Results. The methods mentioned above helped significantly to learn about students' opinions and their knowledge when it comes to music-based English learning approach. After checking their language proficiency and skills of school and university students using vocabulary tests, survey questionnaires, pre and post-test sessions these results were analysed.

1. Vocabulary Test Scores The pre-test and post-test scores of both school and university participants were analyzed to evaluate the effect of music-based learning on vocabulary retention [7/74].

School students ($n = 100$):

Pre-test mean score: 14.6 out of 30 ($SD = 3.2$)

Post-test mean score: 22.1 out of 30 ($SD = 2.7$)

Improvement: 7.5 points on average

Paired-sample t-test indicated this improvement was statistically significant ($t(99) = 18.45$, $p < 0.001$).

University students ($n = 50$):

Pre-test mean score: 16.2 out of 30 ($SD = 2.9$)

Post-test mean score: 24.5 out of 30 ($SD = 2.5$)

Improvement: 8.3 points on average

Paired-sample t-test also showed a significant increase ($t(49) = 15.78$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that music-based learning had a strong positive effect on vocabulary acquisition across both school and university students.

A survey conducted after the intervention captured students' perceptions regarding the usefulness, enjoyment, and motivation of the music-based learning approach:

Enjoyment: 87% of school students and 92% of university students reported that they found the lessons "fun and engaging."

Motivation to learn English: 80% of school students and 88% of university students felt more motivated to study English after the music-based lessons. Perceived improvement in vocabulary: 78% of school students and 85% of university students believed that music helped them remember new words more easily. Overall, both quantitative test results and qualitative survey responses indicate that music-based learning

significantly enhanced vocabulary retention, engagement, and motivation among EFL learners. The results of this study clearly demonstrate that music-based learning has a significant positive effect on vocabulary retention among both school and university EFL learners. The pre-test and post-test scores showed substantial improvement in both groups, with school students improving by an average of 7.5 points and university students by 8.3 points. These findings suggest that incorporating music into language lessons engages multiple cognitive and emotional processes, making vocabulary learning more natural, enjoyable, and memorable.

These results align closely with previous studies conducted in other countries. For example, research in Indonesia showed that students who regularly listened to English songs not only remembered vocabulary better but also became more motivated to participate in class activities. Similarly, studies in Ghana highlighted that music-based activities strengthened learners' linguistic skills while also increasing cultural awareness and enjoyment. Consistent with these findings, our study confirms that music can serve as a universal pedagogical tool that transcends age, cultural background, and educational context. The survey results further support these conclusions. Most students reported that lessons were engaging, enjoyable, and motivating. This emphasizes the importance of affective factors in language learning: when students feel emotionally connected and entertained, they are more likely to retain information. For instance, several school students mentioned that singing along with songs helped them remember words they had previously found difficult, while university students appreciated the rhythm and repetition in music, which reinforced their memory in a fun and interactive way.

Importantly, this study highlights the relevance of music-based learning for rural and under-resourced communities. In schools like those in Xatirchi District, Navai Region, traditional teaching materials may be limited, and students often lack access to interactive or multimedia-based instruction. Music-based lessons, which can be implemented with minimal resources, such as a simple audio player or smartphone, offer an accessible and effective method to enhance English vocabulary learning. For many rural students, this approach not only improves language skills but also increases motivation and confidence, bridging the gap between urban and rural educational opportunities. In spite of rural problems and restrictions for education in this village more than 30 students achieved English level certificates and won full university grants. Despite these promising results, several limitations should be considered. The study was conducted over a short period of four weeks, and the vocabulary test included a limited number of target words. Future research could explore long-term effects, larger student populations, and a wider range of vocabulary to confirm and extend these findings. Overall, the study demonstrates that music-based learning is more than just an entertaining activity; it is a pedagogical approach that effectively combines cognitive engagement, emotional involvement, and cultural enrichment.[1.107] For rural school students, in particular, such methods can

provide meaningful opportunities to develop English proficiency, increase motivation, and participate more actively in their own learning journey. These findings suggest that educators and policymakers should consider integrating music-based techniques into standard curricula to create more inclusive, engaging, and effective language learning environments.

Conclusion. This study has demonstrated that music-based learning is an effective and engaging method for enhancing vocabulary retention among EFL learners.[1.120] Both school and university students showed significant improvement in their vocabulary scores after participating in music-integrated lessons, highlighting the power of rhythm, melody, and emotional engagement in facilitating language acquisition. Survey results further indicated that learners found the lessons enjoyable, motivating, and helpful for remembering new words. The findings underscore the practical importance of music-based learning, especially for students in rural or under-resourced areas, such as those in Xatirchi District, Navai Region. For these learners, music offers an accessible, low-cost, and enjoyable way to strengthen vocabulary and boost confidence in using English.

In light of these results, educators and policymakers are encouraged to integrate music-based techniques into language teaching to create more inclusive, motivating, and effective learning environments. By combining cognitive, emotional, and cultural engagement, music-based learning not only enhances vocabulary retention but also fosters lifelong interest and confidence in learning English.

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