

Learning Foreign Languages Through Songs: An Engaging And Effective Approach

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Abstract: Music significantly supports foreign language learning by enhancing phonetic awareness, improving pronunciation, and strengthening intonation skills. The rhythmic and repetitive structure of songs facilitates vocabulary retention. Music also boosts learner motivation, reduces stress, and creates an engaging environment, making language acquisition more effective and enjoyable.

Keywords: Foreign language learning; songs; music-based learning; language acquisition; vocabulary development; pronunciation improvement; listening comprehension; motivation; learner engagement; pedagogical strategies; authentic materials; communicative competence; multimodal learning.

Introduction: In addition to traditional methods of learning a foreign language, modern and creative approaches yield even more effective results. One of these is the method of learning a language through songs (music). Music has always accompanied humanity, influencing and enriching various aspects of life, including education. Music is a form of speech that crosses language barriers and connects people around the world. It is a universal means of communication across cultures and one of the best tools for language learning. By listening to songs, we can acquire linguistic information. When learning a language through music, listening to songs in the target language helps learners master grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Moreover, singing along helps enrich one's vocabulary and improves memorization. Numerous studies and tests have shown that music supports the development of language learning, enhances memory, and improves concentration. Learning foreign languages can often be quite challenging. However, many learners consider music an effective way to strengthen language skills. Melody, lyrical repetition, and rhythm help not only in memorizing vocabulary, but also in understanding grammatical structures and idioms. Below, we will examine the cognitive benefits of learning languages through music:

1. **Improving memory.** Music stimulates the areas of the brain associated with memory. Melodies and rhythms make it easier to memorize words and phrases, which is extremely important when learning a new language.
2. **Developing listening skills.** Music in the target language helps learners better perceive and distinguish various sounds and intonations.
3. **Increasing motivation.** Music can make foreign language learning more enjoyable, which strengthens the learner's motivation to continue studying.
4. **Reinforcing grammar rules.** Through song lyrics, one can find examples of verb tenses, word order, and other grammatical structures.
5. **Introducing culture.** Every language reflects a unique culture, and songs can serve as a bridge to understanding it.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of using music in language teaching. For example, research conducted by the University of Edinburgh shows that students who listen to songs in the target language are able to memorize vocabulary and grammatical structures better and use them correctly. A study published in *Brain and Cognition* revealed that musical training improves children's

attention and working memory, which are two essential skills for language learning. To make the most of music as a tool for language acquisition, the following strategies can be applied:

Selecting songs appropriate for the skill level: It is important to choose music that matches the learner's language proficiency. For beginners, simple songs with clear lyrics are ideal. Through the thoughtful integration of learning methods, students can not only strengthen their linguistic competencies but also increase their enjoyment and engagement in learning new languages. Supported by positive feedback and practical research confirming its effectiveness, it becomes clear that music is not merely a teaching aid but an enriching way to acquire a foreign language.

Using songs in foreign language classes can be an effective way to facilitate language learning. In language teaching, music has a wide range of applications. It is a valuable tool that uses listening materials that are analyzed and repeated simultaneously. Foreign languages and music are considered to develop sensitivity to the surrounding world and enhance students' creative abilities. Music is a strong source of motivation and has a comforting and soothing effect.

Language enables nations to understand one another better, promotes intercultural appreciation, and helps people explore the world. Music influences our lives in many ways and serves not only as a source of education but also as an effective means of spending our leisure time. If teachers know how to use music effectively in their lessons, they can achieve informational and formative educational goals more successfully. Well-chosen songs can even reinforce grammatical structures of the language. Therefore, we believe that music should become an integral part of all stages of foreign language teaching.

Music uses rhythmic and melodic patterns to enhance memory and support the retention of new language elements. Songs often rely on repetition, which helps consolidate vocabulary and grammatical structures. The association of language with melodies makes these elements more memorable, as the brain can recall musical texts more easily than individual words.

Singing along with songs provides learners with correct pronunciation and intonation patterns. Music naturally emphasizes the stress and rhythm of the language, helping learners acquire a more authentic accent and fluency. Music improves listening skills by requiring learners to focus on lyrics and melodies. This active listening enhances auditory discrimination, enabling students to better recognize and understand pronunciation and subtle nuances of meaning. During

singing, learners imitate the pronunciation and rhythm of native speakers, which supports accuracy in pronunciation and naturalness in speech. Music provides exposure to real language use, including conversational expressions and cultural references. This exposure helps learners understand and use the language in real-life contexts.

Music lessons offer a range of advantages for foreign language education—from improving pronunciation and listening skills to increasing motivation and engagement. By selecting appropriate musical materials and designing effective activities, teachers can use the power of music to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. When students immerse themselves in the rhythms and melodies of a new language, they not only enhance their linguistic abilities but also develop a deeper understanding of the culture associated with that language. Thus, music serves as a valuable tool in the language-learning process, enriching and making the journey of acquiring a new language more enjoyable.

Around the world, there are various methods of learning foreign languages through music, and here we will examine the most effective one:

1. Method name: Shadowing with Music

Shadowing is a language-learning method based on listening to a song and simultaneously repeating it softly with a slight delay. It is used as one of the most effective techniques in language schools in Japan and Canada.

2. Why is it effective?

- It naturally develops pronunciation and intonation.
- It makes it easier to understand fast speech.
- It reinforces vocabulary through listening.
- It creates a “speech automation channel” in the brain.
- It makes the learning process enjoyable and rhythmic.

3. Song example: Stromae — “Papaoutai”

This song is one of the best options for French learners practicing shadowing. It is rhythmic, fast, and rich in repeated expressions. From a phonetic perspective, it is ideal for practicing sounds such as ‘ou’, ‘è’, ‘oi’, ‘au’.

4. Stages of Shadowing

1. Listen to the song once without text — to feel the melody.
2. Listen with lyrics — mark the key expressions.
3. Shadowing — listen to the song and repeat with a 0.5–1 second delay.

4. Natural pronunciation test — recite 2–3 lines from the lyrics without music.

5. **Key phrases for Shadowing**

- Dites-moi d'où il vient...
- Où t'es, papa, où t'es ?
- Enfin je saurai où aller...
- Papaoutai... papaoutai...

The role of music in learning foreign languages holds special importance as a multifactorial and scientifically grounded tool for developing language competencies. The rhythm, melodic structure, and repetition found in music enhance phonological awareness, significantly optimizing pronunciation, intonation, and auditory perception processes. Authentic language materials presented through songs help reinforce lexical and grammatical units within a natural context. In addition, the affective influence of music increases learners' motivation, reduces stress, and strengthens the communicative effectiveness of instruction. Therefore, music is regarded as an integrative, multifunctional, and highly effective pedagogical tool within language teaching methodology.

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