2015

Setting the Right Tone: Benefits of Music-based Instruction in the ESL Classroom

Mollie Talada

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**Setting the Right Tone: Benefits of Music-based Instruction
in the ESL Classroom**

Mollie Talada

**Thesis submitted
to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
at West Virginia University**

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Masters of Arts in
TESOL**

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**Morgantown, West Virginia
2015**

Keywords: TESOL; Music; ESL

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ABSTRACT

Setting the Right Tone: Benefits of Music-based Instruction in the

ESL Classroom

Mollie Talada

Research has shown a definitive link between the cognitive processing of language and of musical sound. Music has also been shown to be an effective teaching tool in the ESL classroom. Despite the theoretical studies that draw connections between musical aptitude and linguistic ability, few studies have shown the efficacy of using music to improve student motivation and self-confidence, as well as students' perceptions of learning. The aim of this thesis was to bridge the gap between research and pedagogy and to provide student perceptions of the use of musical tasks in three aspects of their learning: (1) student self-confidence and lowering of the affective filter in language learning, (2) student motivation, and (3) students' perceived efficacy of the tasks in improving their overall proficiency and language skills. The study was carried out over the course of two semesters in two communication skills courses in an Intensive English Program at a large, state institution in the United States. Forty-five students from a variety of language backgrounds participated in the study. Student perceptions were recorded and measured by a pre-study questionnaire in which the students responded to questions regarding their perceived proficiency level, their confidence level, and motivation to learn English, as well as questions about their background (prior English experience, prior instruction in music, etc.). The students completed learning journals during each unit, which prompted them to set goals for themselves for the unit, to track their learning (vocabulary, concepts taught, activities, etc.), and lastly, to assess their own learning, and whether or not they had achieved their goal. Each class took a post-study questionnaire upon completion of the units of study, responding to questions regarding the three areas of research (self-confidence, motivation, and perceived efficacy), and whether or not they perceived the musical tasks to have been helpful in improving these areas. The results showed that the students perceived the music-based learning to be beneficial to their self-confidence, motivation, and improvement of their proficiency, particularly in the areas of listening, reading, and pronunciation, but also in regards to other skill areas including accuracy and cultural understanding. Students' positive comments reflected their enjoyment of the activity with only two students responding negatively to the music-based learning. It is hoped that these data will help fill some of the current gaps in the research and provide a new perspective for teachers to consider regarding the implementation of musical tasks in the language classroom.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Scott and Karla, who instilled in me a love of music and a passion for learning. Thank you for always reminding me to dream, study, and fly.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me in this endeavor. First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee for their expertise, guidance, and advice throughout this process. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Cynthia Chalupa, without whom this project would not have been possible. Thank you for your patience and guidance throughout the entire process, and for all the times you put your life on hold to help me make my research better. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me turn my small ideas into research. Thank you Dr. Susan M. Braidt for your expertise and constructive feedback and observations. Your comments and advice made my research and my writing stronger. Last but not least, I want to thank Dr. John E. Crotty for his unwavering support throughout my academic career at WVU. Whether serving as my accompanist or helping me edit my thesis chapters, you have continued to inspire me to keep practicing, working, and learning.

I would like to thank Stacy S. Fint, the Program Director of the Intensive English program, for providing me the opportunity to teach in the IEP and conduct this research. I would also like to thank all of my students who participated in the research. Additionally, I would like to thank my colleagues in the IEP for all of their advice and support throughout the process.

I am also grateful to Dr. Xiangying Jiang, my academic advisor, for her guidance and encouragement throughout my graduate studies, and to Dr. Sandra Stjepanovic, the Graduate Programs Coordinator, for all of her advice and assistance from my application to the conclusion of my studies.

Lastly I would like to express my sincere thanks to my friends and family. Thank you to my parents for always believing in me and supporting me in all of my goals and aspirations and to my friends for all of the words of encouragement and moral support. Finally, I would like to thank Chase Kennedy for all of the patience, love, and support during this process, and for setting aside so much to support me in my goals and my studies.

None of this would have been possible without all of your contributions. I cannot thank you enough!

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CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION

Rational

In the research on modern foreign language education, the connection between language and music has been made for decades. These studies provide various methodological perspectives and assert the benefits of musical skill in language learning. At the most basic level, some research reveals that music and language are processed in the same area of the brain and that musical expertise plays a role in discriminating pitch in languages (Bidelman, Gandour, & Krishnan, 2011; Levitin & Menon, 2003). Many studies explore the internal cognitive processing of music and speech sounds. Musical aptitude has been shown to be predictive of beginning readers' ability, and those who lack pitch perception skills are impacted in their perception of speech sounds; in addition, there are many other cognitive ties between the fields of music and language that have been demonstrated by studying various groups of language speakers and learners as well as musicians (Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, & Levy, 2002; Jones, Lucker & Zalewski, Brewer, & Drayna, 2009). Research on conditions such as Williams Syndrome¹ have shown further links between language and musical ability. Famous sufferers of Williams Syndrome have shown extraordinary gifts in musical ability, such as Gloria Lenhoff, a woman who can memorize and perform extremely intricate professional-level vocal pieces in 25 languages despite testing at an IQ of 55 and facing difficulties in many everyday tasks (Comments on the Musical Potential of People with Williams Syndrome, 2014).

¹ A genetic condition characterized by verbal and musical skills well above the non-verbal and visuo-spatial skills of those with the syndrome, as well as an affinity towards music and a sociable personality along with the ability to create complicated sentences and communicate at the level of someone with a significantly higher IQ score (Don, Schellenberg, & Rourke, 1999).

While many of these studies cite similarities in the mental processing of music and language and the prevalent connection of musical and language skills, as well as other anomalies such as musical talent and language savants, they do not conclusively propose causality between musical and linguistic abilities. It is nonetheless telling that much of this research places musical and language abilities side by side. Studies such as these outline the connections between music and language, and lay the foundation for future research on the interactions of music and language as well as in other related areas such as music and foreign or second language pedagogy.

The link between music and language learning has implications in the scientific realm as well as in the potential of a shared pedagogy between music and language. Music can be an effective tool in the language classroom, helping students to learn and retain text (Legg, 2009; Salcedo, 2010). The basic similarities between the pedagogy of teaching music and teaching language to students are abundant. Music students work to learn a different language from their first language (written musical notation) and to understand this language without “translation” just as foreign language learners navigate a new language with their teachers’ help and often without translation (Speh & Ahramjian, 2010). Both language and music students must learn a wide range of technical and syntactical rules and accurately employ their learned technique, but they strive to move from a mentally taxing word-by-word or note-by-note use to a more fluid and fluent “performance” of these skills to communicate a message. According to Speh and Ahramjian (2010):

Individual words make up language, but communication is much more than a series of phonemes, just as the impact of a piece of music far exceeds the individual notes of

which it is composed. Learning these systems of notes and syllables lays the foundation, yet fluency comes when the student plays the musical phrase or utters the sentence as a whole, within a larger cohesive context. At some point, the student must leave behind the security of symbols on a page, and put these elements into play – all the while keeping form and technique in mind. (p. 38).

The authors assert not only a vital connection between pedagogy of music and language teaching but also the fact that instructors in both fields must work toward similar goals with their students such as fluent performance or communication and comprehensibility, as well as the ability to monitor and correct errors. These performance skills are vital to the long-term success of language students, particularly those learning the language in an English as a Second Language (ESL) setting or those who are already immersed in the target language environment. These findings provide a foundation for exploring the use of music in language learning; despite the current data, however, music-based instruction is not widely utilized in language classrooms (Engh, 2013, p. 113). Though the needs of each field are clearly not identical, it is important to observe the possible uses of existing strengths of music pedagogy in the field of language teaching and explore the uses of music in language learning.

Another connection between music and language comes from research based upon Krashen's Monitor Model (1982), including the Affective Filter Hypothesis (as cited by Lin, 2008). The Affective Filter Hypothesis posits that students may face difficulties in their language acquisition due to negative affective variables. The affective filter, a metaphorical wall that, when high or strong due to stress, anxiety, self-consciousness, a lack of student motivation, or other emotional variables, can impede learning (Krashen, 1982). Krashen (1982) stated,

“even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device” and contrarily, “those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter” (p. 31). According to Krashen, much of the research of these affective variables focus on one of three areas: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, finding that motivated learners, those with self-confidence and “a good self-image,” and those with low anxiety tend to do better in second language acquisition (p. 31). Various studies reveal the ability of music to lower the affective filter by helping students to relax and receive the language input more easily (Merriam, 1964; Coe, 1972; Claerr & Gargan, 1984, Wilcox, 1995). According to Murphy (1992), pop songs, for example, (with their similarities to conversational language, repetition, and sometimes slower rate of language) can contribute to lowering the affective filter based on the aforementioned qualities conducive to learning; the simplicity of the songs, “their highly affective and dialogic features, and their vague references (ghost discourse), allow listeners to use them in personally associative ways” (p. 771). Other studies such as de Groot’s (2006) on vocabulary learning and retention examine background music during instruction, finding that more learning took place when unobtrusive background music was being played than in a silent environment. This also speaks to the potential of the use of music as a learning aid, especially for adolescents, who face problems with self-confidence, or students who are in a new learning environment that may be stressful, such as the case of ESL students in an Intensive English Program (IEP).

One primary gap in the existing research can be seen in the lack of empirical data on the use of musical tasks in the classroom. Some of the aforementioned articles do not offer a

definitive argument for the use of music due to the brief nature of the study (Salcedo, 2010) or the use of impractical tasks (Legg, 2009); however, many studies offer evidence in the direction of the benefits of music in the classroom. In addition, studies rarely consult the students' perceptions of their learning and motivation in such tasks. Based on the preliminary findings and support for the connection and use of music in language education by many researchers, it is important to determine the uses that music actually has in a language classroom, why it is not currently more sought-after and used by teachers, and how the implementation of music can be beneficial to language teachers and the field of language learning. This study aims to address the gaps in current research as well as shed light on the perceptions of ESL students in the context of an IEP. In an IEP setting, students are learning in an ESL context in which they are immersed in the language and culture of the United States. In contrast, a foreign language context suggests that students live in their home culture and take language instruction for a limited period of time each week, and they are likely not exposed to English outside of the classroom. The choices made in the selected lessons and the concepts studied here were based on the ESL and IEP contexts and took into account the setting and policies of the university-sanctioned program.

Goals of the Study

This thesis aimed to bridge the gap between research and pedagogy by investigating students learning in a musically rich language classroom with traditional and musical tasks. In addition, students evaluated aspects of their own learning, thereby highlighting their own feelings on their learning and the tasks presented. This study took as its basis the following three research questions:

1. Does music help increase student self-confidence and lower the affective filter in learning the language?
2. How does the use of music in the classroom affect student motivation to learn?
3. Do students perceive the use of music in language instruction as instrumental in improving their overall proficiency?

To learn more about these research questions, students answered questions related to the affective filter, motivation, and learning and efficacy using two questionnaires (pre- and post-study questionnaires) and kept a learning journal, in which they were prompted to set goals for the units, track the topics and vocabulary learned, and assess and write reactions to classroom material and their learning during the course of the semester. The learning journal helped determine student perceptions of each of these factors in combining music and language teaching. By answering these questions, the study aimed to fortify the existing research about the benefits of music in language teaching by contributing the students' own ideas about how helpful or enjoyable such an environment could be for students.

Importance of the Study

The present study offers further insight into the use of music in the classroom and fills a gap in the research by providing empirical data about the efficacy of musical tasks as well as feedback from students on these tasks. The data gained from the research can provide a better understanding not only of how these tasks can be useful, but also how they can help students beyond the realm of grammar, vocabulary, or other explicit instructional needs and explore the emotional side of their learning and learning environment such as their affective filter and personal motivation.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One will outline the issues surrounding the study and the goals of the research as well as the importance of the study in the field. Chapter Two is a review of the literature, providing a history of research and findings in the fields of music and language. Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study, including the participants, instruments, data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter Four presents the results, including the answers to the stated research questions. Lastly, Chapter Five summarizes and discusses the study's findings as well as its limitations, and the implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2-REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The connection between music and language is not a new concept, and many different aspects of this connection have been explored for decades. Both music and language are integral parts of all world cultures in various capacities, and are both connected to significant moments within the cultures (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010; Patel, 2008). Music has been used, even in place of spoken language, to tell stories and pass them on between generations and cultures. Music, just like language, assists in forming one's identity and character as well as benefiting emotional and social well-being, particularly during adolescence (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007). Music and language have been examined in many different areas including ethnomusicology, musical and linguistic research, as well as interdisciplinary research "in musicology, acoustics, linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, psychology, and anthropology, and continues to inspire conferences, symposia, and research across these disciplines" (Feld & Fox, 2014, p. 26). Given this interdisciplinary research along with studies in the field of education, there is a clear basis for the further exploration of music and language, particularly in the language classroom.

Music as a tool in the language classroom has been proposed by some for various purposes since as early as the 1960s (Engh, 2013). As discussed in Chapter One, a variety of research examines the connections between music and language both in their shared features and characteristics, as well as on cognitive level. Other research delves into the connections between the two fields in terms of ability as well as research related to the affective filter and motivation. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2010) stated:

Music has the potential to humanize, personalize, and energize a learning environment or experience; elicit positive feelings and associations for learners; and engage learners in conceptual learning and knowledge construction. However, even with music's historical and societal context, and clear benefits for learning and human development, we have removed music as an instructional strategy . . . (p. 58-59).

Studies of the connection between the fields of music and language, as well as of the similarities in pedagogies and the benefits of using music as an instructional tool, have been conducted for years, but no clear consensus on the practical use of this research has been determined. It is important, therefore, to examine the current research in order to move from a theoretical understanding of the benefits of combining music and language study to paths of implementation.

Music and Language Connections

Cognitive research reveals similarities in music and language at a basic level.

Advancements in technology and neuroscience and increased interest in the topic from studies like the 'Mozart Effect' becoming more popular (Campbell, 1997; Hetland, 2000; Rauscher, Shaw & Ky 1993, 1995) have called attention to the field and to the crossover between music and the brain (as cited by Engh, 2013). The consensus of cognitive science research conveys that there are important connections between the fields of music and language. Patel (2003) stated:

Like language, music is a human universal involving perceptually discrete elements organized into hierarchically structured sequences. Music and language can thus serve as foils for each other in the study of brain mechanisms underlying complex sound

processing, and comparative research can provide novel insights into the functional and neural architecture of both domains (p. 674). (as cited by Engh, 2013, p. 116).

Many components of music and language are similar. While previously, researchers argued that music and language were discrete functions, recent research and neuroimaging data show that they are processed in the same area of the brain and must, therefore, be recognized in a similar manner (Bidelman, Gandour, & Krishnan 2011; Levitin & Menon, 2003; Engh, 2013).

Levitin and Menon's (2003) study investigated how the brain processes certain musical concepts, finding that participants demonstrated "focal activation" in a region of the brain that has been linked to the processing of language (spoken and signed) in previous research, supporting many previous studies with similar findings (p. 142). Furthermore, Gordon, Schön, Magne, Astésano, and Besson (2010) examined whether individuals process speech and music simultaneously or independently when listening to music. Participants were played 120 pairs of words sung by a baritone in one of four conditions: same word and same melody, same word and different melody, different word and same melody, and different word and different melody. The researchers state that both processes interact with one another, and the study provides further evidence for the "shared neural processing resources between the phonological/semantic aspects of language and the melodic/harmonic aspects of music" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 1). The research showed that when the target word was different from the prime word, the participants committed more errors and had slower reaction times in determining that the words were different. Different melodies also resulted in "larger negative components," pointing to the relationship between music and language and the effects of the "allocation of attention and memory resources" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 8). Researchers also found that there was interactive

processing of both the “linguistic and musical dimensions in song, which occur simultaneously in sung words,” and similar processes seem to be involved in accessing both spoken and sung word meaning (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 9). Based on the performance in the tasks and although all words in this study were sung, similar processes appear to be used to access the meaning of both sung and spoken words. According to these researchers, these findings along with the findings of other related studies could be coming closer to answering the question of why songs have been historically intertwined in human activity. Based on the variety of similarities between music and language as well as their many cognitive ties, these commonalities “may be involved in a number of song-related behaviors that have shaped human nature” such as parents singing to babies or children in order to bond or the use of melody as a mnemonic device (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 10). Gordon et al. (2010) gives us the theoretical basis for the connection of music and language while calling attention to the historical and sociological aspects of music and language acquisition. The studies mentioned above do not comprise an exhaustive list, but they are representative of the theory that music and language are closely related and should be considered so in the exploration of ways to improve upon or develop new methods in the field of language teaching.

As illustrated by Tillmann, (2012), music “can be described as sequences of events that are structured in pitch and time. Studying music processing provides insight into how complex event sequences are learned, perceived, and represented in the brain” (p. 568). Based on the temporal aspect of sound, expectations, structural integration, and cognitive sequencing are all crucial to the perception of music and in this regard, music and language are also connected (Tillman, 2012). Both music and language feature pitch and time. Some languages naturally rest

more of an emphasis on pitch (i.e., tone languages Chinese or Vietnamese) and others on rhythmic elements such as duration, isochrony, or specific stress. Regardless of the language, intonation, pitch, and prosody are prevalent and necessary to deduce words, determine word boundaries, and understand the speaker's intent or other necessary cues related to meaning (Tillman, 2012). Speakers must be able to decipher these facets of language in order to understand others and be understood, just as musicians must be able to perceive similar musical notions in order to understand and participate in music making with others. Without this knowledge, miscommunications and misunderstandings can potentially occur. This is evident when speaking with a non-native English speaker who does not yet understand English intonation. Speakers, especially from a background with dissimilar intonation, may refrain from lowering their pitch at the end of a statement. This can often lead to periods of silence because both the non-native speaker and the native speaker are having trouble understanding their roles in speaking and turn-taking due to the lack of or insensitivity to intonation cues on the part of the non-native speaker.

Another study by Goswami (2012) presents the similarities between the perception of speech and of music. Musical entrainment “or [a] ‘phase-locking’ activity,” in which brainwaves or the “firing patterns” become aligned with the acoustic input is believed to assist in signal parsing and encoding (p. 57). Musical entrainment and rhythms of speech processing are both multimodal, “for example we perceive both auditory and visual rhythm and we create linguistic rhythms with our articulators, hence entrainment to speech [like musical entrainment] is multimodal” (p. 57). Auditory prosody, a critical factor in speech rhythm and segmentation, requires the “accurate perception of syllable structure” (p. 57). According to Goswami (2012),

the “oscillatory networks in auditory cortex entrain to acoustic input by aligning their firing patterns, so that they are firing in-phase with the rhythmic structure of acoustic signals” and are thus able to track speech dynamics (p. 58). In addition, it was observed by Trehub & Hannon (2006) that humans possess non-specific general perception mechanisms related to both music and language. Trehub hypothesized that if one primary mechanism perceives “rhythm and metrical structure,” furthered by rise time perception, the possibility exists that the clearer and more definitive rhythms of music could be used to assess children’s learning and processing of the rhythm of language.

Research shows that factors such as musical expertise play a role in aspects of language such as discriminating pitch (discussed below) and aspects of speech, such as pitch perception, working memory, and phonological production (Bidelman, Gandour, & Krishnan, 2011; Posedel, Emery, Souza & Fountain, 2012; Engh, 2013; Levitin & Menon, 2003). Ettlinger, Margulis, and Wong (2011) assert that although many of these studies utilized trained musicians with varying amounts of formal instruction, aspects of both music and language can be learned implicitly, and so there are more connections related to implicit memory than were previously explored. Their reviews of empirical studies related to the implicit memory system of music and language show that explicit training is not necessary to process music or language and that in addition to trained musicians, “everyday music listeners should be examined to ascertain that the results are not due to formal musical training alone or trained musicians possessing a genetic difference” (Ettlinger, Margulis & Wong, 2011, p. 7).

In sum, the similarities in the perception and cognitive processing of music and language lay the foundation for future research in the use of music in language acquisition. These

similarities link the two fields in terms of cognition, processing, perception, aptitude, and skills, and music and language remain connected through historical and cultural means as well.

Musical and Language Skills

Building upon the knowledge that music and language share similarities in the location and form of processing, various studies show that not only are music and language connected, but that musical skills and musical deficits are respectively tied to language ability or difficulties in aspects of language (Bidelman, Gandour & Crishnan, 2011; Levitin & Menon, 2003).

Researchers have shown that musical aptitude can be predictive of beginning readers' ability and other skills, and those who lack pitch perception skills see an impact in their perception of speech sounds (Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, & Levy, 2002; Jones, Lucker, Zalewski, Brewer, & Drayna, 2009). Considering the research about the connection between music and language cognition and on other similarities between the two fields, researchers have investigated the role of musical skills in various aspects of language ability. Anvari, Levy, Trainor, and Woodside (2002) conducted a study designed to examine the connection between music and reading ability in order to determine how this link impacts reading development in young children of four and five years of age. This age was chosen because both musical and reading skills develop rapidly during this time and because children of this age typically enjoy musical experiences and activities. The participants were given musical tasks that targeted rhythm, melody, chord processing, and phonemic awareness tasks "known to predict reading success" along with the reading subtest of the Wide Range Achievement Test 3, an early reading development test, in five 20- to 30-minute sessions with the tasks given in the same order (Anvari et al., 2002, p. 114). The tests and regression analyses of the data show that perceptual skills in music are related to

success in reading and phonological awareness. Based on regression analyses, researchers found that even when “the variance shared with phonological awareness is removed,” musical perception is still predictive of positive reading skills (Anvari et al., 2002, p. 126). The authors assert that, “musical perception appears to tap auditory mechanisms related to reading that only partially overlap with those related to phonological awareness, suggesting that both linguistic and nonlinguistic general auditory mechanisms are involved in reading” (p. 111). The authors also note, however, that these are young children who are just beginning to read, and so the results cannot be generalized to all readers.

Other studies focus on the effects of musical training rather than just aptitude for music. Strait, Parbery-Clark, Hittner, and Kraus (2012) examined the effect of musical training on the neural encoding of speech in background or other noise. Because children often learn language when surrounded by other sounds, it is important to be able to distinguish the noise from the target speech. The study shows that musicians do possess an advantage for processing speech in the midst of noise “during pivotal developmental years” (in the case of this study, ages seven to thirteen) and that musicians’ perception and neural encoding “are driven in a top-down manner by strengthened cognitive abilities with training” (p. 191). This could be meaningful for first language learners who struggle with these aspects of language acquisition (for example, due to a disability or impairment) as well as second language students who could benefit from assistance in this area of language learning.

Sleve and Miyake (2006) examined differences among adult second language learners, taking into account whether or not the individual learners had received previous musical training. The researchers assessed the adults’ second language proficiency by examining their receptive

and productive phonology, syntax, and lexical knowledge along with other factors such as time spent immersed in the target language, phonological short-term memory, and other elements that could affect proficiency. The researchers found that, similar to the studies above, musical ability was predictive of receptive and productive phonological ability in the second language, though it did not explain all differences between the learners. The researchers proposed that musical ability can help adult learners overcome the various hurdles that accompany learning a language later in life because “individuals who are good at analyzing discriminating, and remembering musical stimuli are better than other people at accurately perceiving and producing L2 sounds” (p. 679).

Milovanov, Pietila, Tervaniemi, and Esquef (2010) specifically investigated discrimination and productive skills and their relation to musical aptitude in Finnish adults. The participants were given a pronunciation test, a phonemic listening discrimination task, and the Seashore test (a standardized musical aptitude test that separates musical skills into pitch, duration, timbre,² rhythm, loudness, and tonal memory efficacy) to investigate their abilities. The findings show that participants all performed well on the listening tasks, but the participants with higher musical aptitude were better able to produce English sounds and words than those with a lower aptitude. Arellano and Draper (1972) similarly investigated children's' abilities in pronunciation and discrimination in the musical features of language to determine if these abilities presented a connection with their Spanish accent or their ability to comprehend spoken Spanish. The researchers found that, “musical ability and Spanish accent achievement are strongly related, even when their common relationship with IQ is taken into consideration” (p.

² The characteristic quality of a sound, independent of pitch and loudness, produced by a particular instrument or voice; tone color

114). More evidence is needed to determine how widely generalizable these findings are; however, it is valuable to note the various findings regarding the discovered correlation between the ability to hear and produce second language sounds with musical ability. This is especially important when considering Slevin and Miyake's (2006) proposal that musical abilities have helped older language learners better overcome the difficulties of learning second language pronunciation. This is a struggle for many individuals learning a second language and a factor that can be demotivating for some or lead to shyness or embarrassment when speaking in the second language. Findings that music and pronunciation are connected could pave the way for more research in the same area, providing more information regarding what language benefits exist from musical ability across various ages and skill levels.

Milovanov, Huotilainen, Esquef, Alku, Välimäki, and Tervaniemi (2009) investigated elementary school children (10-12 years of age) to examine their pre-attentive processing ability in both music and speech, showing that the musical subjects were more efficient in their processing of the musical features found in both speech and language. The authors even proposed the possibility that because of the ability of music lessons to assist with the development of sensitivity to musical components of speech, music could also help children with difficulties such as dyslexia. Through the study of music, learners develop auditory skills, which support or overcome weaknesses in visual perception that hinder comprehension of the language. The authors also assert that classroom music use also had an additional benefit on spelling skills among participants. Finally, Thompson, Schellenberg, and Husain (2004) presented experiments that show that music lessons can also help "promote sensitivity to emotions conveyed by speech prosody" and that those with musical training in childhood may be better able to decode prosody

in adulthood, an important aspect in second language learning (p. 46). Based on links between music and speech prosody (as well as other domains like music and emotion) the researchers conducted three experiments, predicting that formal musical training would heighten the ability to decode emotions that are transmitted to the listener through prosody. “Because music and speech prosody represent two domains that are auditory, communicative, and linked with emotion, transfer effects between domains are much more likely than [other domains]” (Thompson, Schellenberg, & Husain, 2004, p. 47). The results of their first experiment showed that adults with musical training in childhood could better identify emotions in tone sequences.³ In the second experiment, musically trained adults were able to identify sadness and fear more successfully than untrained adults both in their own language as well as unfamiliar languages such as Tagalog and “prosody-mimicking tone sequences” (58). In their third and final experiment, the researchers studied the ability of six-year-olds to decode prosodic elements and studied them again a year later when they were seven years old after they had taken art, keyboard, singing, or drama lessons, or received no lessons of any kind (depending on their assigned condition). All groups, other than the children with no lessons, were expected to practice at home between their lessons. Researchers expected the drama students to do the best because the lessons focused on conveying ideas and emotion through the voice. The surprising result showed that children who took keyboard lessons did better than the other groups, including those who received voice lessons. This is likely because the keyboard provides precise pitches and intervals whereas in singing lessons, much of the focus rests on non-prosodic vocal output and pitches can be estimated; however, there are other possible explanations. The researchers do

³ “Tone sequences [were designed] that mimicked the pitch and temporal structure of spoken phrases” (p. 49).

mention that the results might, in part, stem from the fact that outside of the research environment, individuals drawn to music lessons naturally have a good sense of emotions and prosody. The research as a whole provides additional evidence for the close relationship of music and prosody and presents the possibility that musical training can be beneficial for understanding prosody in speech as well as improving their emotional intelligence and becoming better able to understand the emotional intent conveyed through speech prosody.

These studies support the interconnectedness of music and language and show that musical skills can help learners acquire the sound structure of a new language as well as support language skills including vocabulary, and perception. They also show that musical training, especially in early years, can help with first language acquisition as well as with learning other languages later in life by improving and supporting these skills necessary for language use and comprehension. Although some studies focus on first language learning and children, the skills needed to identify features (especially musically related features such as prosody and pitch) in the first language would also help in the learning of a second language. The studies vary greatly by native language and age, but they demonstrate that musical skill can assist various aspects of language learning, from deciphering sound to pronunciation. The importance of these findings lies in the implications for teachers and learners alike, as these studies develop the base for the true nature of the connection between music and language.

The studies of Bidelman, Gandour, and Krishnan (2011) and Marie, Kujala, and Besson (2012) examined musicians and speakers of languages with particular features related to musical concepts. Bidelman et al. (2011) compared English-speaking amateur musicians, English-speaking non-musicians, and native Mandarin Chinese speakers to differentiate between changes

in pitch in spoken language and tuning discrepancies, and determine how much linguistic experience benefits encoding of musical pitch and chords. Results show that musicians were the most discriminatory of the triads; however, Chinese participants were better able to discriminate than non-musicians, showing “superior encoding” in both musician and Chinese participants, and that both music and linguistic pitch are beneficial to the brain in music processing (Bidelman et al., 2011, p. 4). While the abilities of tone-language speakers are helpful in making pitch distinctions and are beneficial to processing sounds and pitch, it is not enough to provide a benefit for music listening in this form in the way that musical training can. The researchers state that the musicians were the only group to “truly make use of this information at a perceptual level” (Bidelman et al., 2011, p. 8). These studies show another way in which musical and language abilities are connected, but still point out that musical skill provides benefits in the domain of language that language alone cannot.

The study by Besson et al. (2012) was similarly designed to determine the effect of linguistic ability or “expertise” on pre-attentive and attentive processing and to examine or test for the “domain specificity of language” (separate processing of language by a language-specific system) by examining the role of linguistic expertise and its influence on harmonic sounds (Besson et al., 2012, p. 448). The study examined speakers of Finnish, a quantity language to determine if the expertise of duration inherent to a speaker of a such a language improved participants’ ability to process changes in duration in harmonic sounds “at the cortical level” (Besson et al., 2012, p. 448; Lehiste, 1965). In Finnish, duration is a phonemically contrastive cue; that is, in Finnish, long and short vowels, long consonants (only in intervocalic positions), and short consonants (in word-initial and word-final position) are phonemically

contrastive cues (Lehiste, 1965). As hypothesized, Finnish non-musicians and French musicians showed similar results throughout the study causing the researchers to argue for the idea of “common processing mechanisms for duration in speech and in harmonic/musical sounds” (Besson et al., 2012, p. 454). A finding not predicted by the researchers was the fact that in deviation involving tone, the Finnish participants performed similarly to the French musicians even though Finnish is not considered a tone language. The researchers suggest this might be a result of slight pitch changes that accompany durational changes in the language. Results show that musical expertise influences pre-attentive and attentive processing of duration and frequency, two important factors in music. They also demonstrate that linguistic expertise influences pre-attentive and attentive processing of duration because this is most applicable to the Finnish language, supporting the common processing of duration in both music and harmonic sounds as well as speech sounds.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, various studies investigated people with a lack of musical aptitude to determine whether this deficit affects their language ability. In a study by Jones, Lucker, Zalewski, Brewer, and Drayna (2009), the researchers examined adults with and without pitch perception issues, in this case, problems recognizing incorrect notes in popular melodies. The participants were individually given eight tests of phonological processing and “all five measures of phonological awareness” (“auditory word discrimination, elision, phoneme reversal, blending words, and blending non-words”) were found to show a “highly significant difference” between the two groups (Brewer et al., 2009, p. 230). The researchers explained that the tone-deaf participants showed “significant deficits in phonological awareness” and concluded that individuals with deficits in the perception of musical pitch and sounds are negatively

impacted in their perception of speech sounds. The participants' difficulty with speech sounds was attributable to the deficits that impair functions necessary for processing certain aspects of speech. This study provided important insights into the possibilities of assisting language learners who may need particular help and attention with difficulties in pronunciation and speech recognition. By examining the results of these studies, it is clear that there is not only a connection between the way language and music are processed and that resources are shared between these functions, but also that musical skills directly relate to success in at least some aspects of language acquisition including pitch perception and phonological awareness. The research asserts the benefits of musical skills in language learning. A substantial remaining question, however, is the exact correlation between these skills. It is necessary to determine the amount of musical aptitude or musical training that is needed to begin to exhibit these benefits in language ability and in order to better understand how widely these findings can be generalized. These studies provide a base for understanding the range of abilities that do seem to contribute to or correlate with language ability.

Learner Motivation and the Affective Filter

Motivation can come in various forms and varies widely among students, particularly in different language learning settings. There are clear differences between ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, and therefore, the motivations will certainly be different for some students. EFL students may not have native speakers to interact with, but may very much want to acquire a job that will require English proficiency. Students in an ESL setting may have more drive to communicate with native speakers because they are around them often and have many opportunities to socialize or receive native input. This motivation plays an important role

in the learning of the language and impacts their effort and other factors that can affect their learning.

Two predominating factors in language teaching are student motivation and the classroom environment. Gardner's (1985, 2000) Socio-Educational Model of second language acquisition points out two types of attitudes (integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situations) and the third factor, motivation (as cited by Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Integrativeness "refers to an openness to identify, at least in part, with another language community" and was thought to influence second language acquisition because it requires learners to appropriate some aspects of the other culture including sounds, word orders, behavioral features, and other parts of this culture. Thus, it was proposed that learners "who want (or are willing) to identify with the other language group will be more motivated to learn the language than individuals who do not" (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 172). The learners' attitudes toward the learning situation is related to "the individual's reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught" because these attitudes are relative to the other attitudes students may have about the class or the instruction (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, pp. 172-173). Lastly, motivated learners show that they are moving toward a particular goal through persistent effort in their learning and in tasks, enjoyment of the activities presented, and the use of learning strategies to help themselves learn and achieve their goals. Motivated learners also "[experience] reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure" and acknowledge these successes and failures in order to better understand their roots and improve or maintain successful trends or habits (p. 128). The Socio-Educational Model asserts that the two types of attitudes both support learner motivation, but only have an indirect effect on motivation as the motivation itself is the

cause of achievement in the second language. All of these variables affect student success and overall motivation to improve their skills and their proficiency.

Another factor in motivation is the source of the learners' motivation itself. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory the model considers different types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) (as cited by Vallerand, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is often referred to as "doing something for its own sake" (Reiss, 2012, p. 152). This motivation comes from within. The learner or participant is truly interested in what they are undertaking and are choosing to do it because they simply want to do the activity. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, comes from the outside, such as money, victory, good grades, or other sources. The theory also posits a third orientation, amotivation, in which the individual "is [in] the state of lacking an intention to act . . . behavior lacks intentionality and sense of personal causation" (Shaikholeslami & Khayyer, 2006, p. 814). According to the self-determination theory, if an individual is intrinsically motivated to participate in an activity and he or she is then offered an extrinsic incentive such as money, this will undermine that individual's enjoyment of the activity (Reiss, 2012; Vallerand, 2000). Reiss (2012) provides an example, citing a child who enjoys playing baseball and is intrinsically motivated to do so. If this child is offered money for winning, the self-determination theory says the child will be "likely to play baseball less in the absence of extrinsic incentive" (p. 152). These types of motivation are important factors in the ways in which students approach their learning and are also relevant when considering what aspects of their motivation a course or task can target.

Motivation directly impacts if and when students choose certain learning strategies. Motivation also influences how much the students will make efforts to interact with native

speakers and how much input they receive, as well as other factors of their language learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Knowing students' motivations, whether integrative such as enjoyment or a desire to interact with native speakers, or instrumental like future work plans, is an important part of helping students to become motivated learners (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Motivation concerns a variety of factors, including emotions and attitudes, and determines how much effort students put into their learning. It can be a crucial determining factor in the success or lack thereof of a learner (Engh, 2012). Based on the nature of motivation and its effect on student learning, providing students with sources of motivation could make a significant difference both in the amount of effort they put into their own learning, and their participation in the learning process both inside of the classroom as well as in their autonomous learning. Likewise, positive feelings, confidence and stress levels, and other personal factors heavily influence students' ability to learn.

One source of possible motivation is the use of music and songs in the language classroom. Cook (1997), for example introduces the usefulness of songs and "language play" for both children and adult learners, speaking of nursery rhymes or other rhythmic verse as well as the fact that young children enjoy familiar stories and can often quickly learn rhymes and songs by heart (p. 228). Cook (1997) points out that despite the popularity and extensive use of rhymes and songs with native and some non-native speaking children, they do not apply to the widespread belief in communicative teaching. This may be because there is often repetition and rote learning without an understanding of the words and their true meaning. It is, however, a phenomenon that can be understood by many when thinking back to their education as a young child and the fact that many nursery rhymes, poems, and songs learned in early youth can still be

recalled many years later. Despite any initial doubt as to the meaning of the words or phrases, the repetition of the songs and the fact that many can repeat these songs verbatim years later shows that at some point, the words and meanings were internalized. While the concept of play may vary between the age groups, adults can also engage in this language play through reading stories or fiction as well as rhymes and songs. Slavin (2012) discusses the role of play in learning, stating that, “play is also associated with creativity, especially the ability to be less literal and more flexible in one’s thinking” (p. 63). Vygotsky (1978) also expressed the importance of play because it provides a path of exploration for thinking beyond where one may normally function (as cited in Slavin, 2012). Vygotsky asserted “In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (as cited in Slavin, 2012, p. 63).

Research has shown that music can be a motivating factor for a variety of reasons. Most importantly is the authenticity of music and its universal enjoyment, but there are also the many situations in which language learners encounter music in their daily lives, both in their native language and possibly in the target language as well (Cook, 1997; Engh, 2012; Mishan, 2005). Pope (1995) specifically stated that rock songs are beneficial for students because they are short and accessible. Moreover, their authentic nature allows learners to examine vocabulary and build from the meaning (as cited by Engh, 2012). “The poetry of rock music provides a valid authentic text (Abrate, 1983; Griffie, 1992); and that this “rock poetry” may be considered an example of inclusive literature (Ferradas Moi, 1994, 2003)” (as cited by Engh, 2012, p. 118). Singing songs in the classroom (rather than passively listening or reading lyrics), especially with children, can create a positive and fun way for students to internalize new language, even if it is

not meaningful at first, as with childhood rhymes discussed above (Richards, 1975). It is important to remember, however, that some students, regardless of their interest in listening to music, may be uncomfortable or even demotivated if they are pressured to sing. If distributed throughout a course, it may be possible to create a comfortable environment for the students to sing, providing them benefits such as allowing them to learn intricacies of the language itself while providing a new way to study and practice.

These aforementioned studies all point to the possibility of the motivational effect of music in the instruction of language. There is little empirical evidence in support of music as a motivational tool for language learning. Musical tasks that could be motivational may include language play and activities that differ from formal or traditional instruction, which add elements of pop culture and other components of the songs that may speak to the students on a more personal level or resonate more with their personal interests in their daily lives.

As stated above, a significant factor in student motivation and student learning is the emotional state and comfort level of the learner. Krashen (1982) presented his Monitor Model, outlining his five basic hypotheses including the Affective Filter Hypothesis which, based upon research in SLA, argues for the importance of a comfortable learning environment in which the student is not anxious, has self-confidence, and is motivated in order to keep the affective filter low. According to various researchers (Merriam, 1964; Coe, 1972; Claerr & Gargan, 1984; Wilcox, 1995; Murphey, 1992) music and song in the classroom can help to reduce negative factors and help lower the affective filter due to the fact that, for most people, music is enjoyable, and the tasks add variety to the typical classroom routine. In addition, songs can help promote a “relaxed, informal atmosphere and [provide] a high interest, non-threatening atmosphere for

learning” (Claerr & Gargan, 1984, p. 5). The often slower speed of songs relative to speech as well as the repetition of words can make listening and attempting to comprehend the language easier than a typical conversation. Combined with the potentially motivational nature of songs in the learning process, songs could prove a helpful addition to various language backgrounds, settings, and individual learners.

Other studies support the less overt use of music in the classroom for the purpose of lowering the affective filter. Kang & Williamson’s (2013) study proposed that playing background music in the classroom can help aid second language learning, finding the use of music had a positive effect on learners. In this study of Mandarin Chinese and Arabic learners, participants were given materials including CDs which featured learning activities and melodies. The music led the subjects learning Mandarin to improve their recall and translation tasks. Participants using music showed significantly higher achievement overall as well as a “borderline significance” in higher enjoyment in daily work and their overall enjoyment of their learning. Those learning Arabic, however, did not perform as well. A variety of factors could have been influential, for example, the floor effect (the overall performance in Arabic was significantly worse than the Chinese learners) or a relation in the use of music when learning tonal or non-tonal learning. More research is needed to investigate the effect of background music on the affective filter more closely. Studies have, on the other hand, also concluded music to be a distraction and a hindrance to memory for some, especially music with words or music played at a high volume, likely due to the similarities between music and language processing (Kang & Williamson, 2013). These issues such as music hindering memory can be avoided by careful choices of music, deciding when to include music in the classroom, and playing music at

a low volume. When used as background music, for example, it can provide stimulation, “an effect that is most often ascribed to the music providing a boost in psycho-physiological arousal and mood” (Kang & Williamson, 2013, p. 729). Wang (2013) reported similar findings with a young Chinese girl. The girl reportedly “regarded [music participation] as a playful activity . . . spontaneously” trying to learn the song through multiple listenings, imagining herself as a singer through the use of popular songs at home (Wang, 2013, p. 132). The researchers suggest that this is due to the fact that language skills can be developed through music (Wang, 2013). While the subject of this study belongs to a younger age group, play is still an important factor in language learning among young and adult learners (Cook, 1997).

Finally, an important part of motivation and maintaining a low affective filter is the use of music to prompt study or exposure to language outside of the classroom, or, for students such as the young girl in Wang’s (2013) study, to promote autonomous learning. Musical tasks and activities can be used to supplement a nontraditional learning environment, whether the learner is self-teaching the language or is enrolled in an online course (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010). Dunlap & Lowenthal (2010), explored the use of digital music in online courses to improve learners’ experiences, finding that when educational experiences are offered that differ from traditional or formal types of experiences, learners may find the tasks more fun and interesting and such tasks may be more effective in accessing a place of personal interest and in getting the attention of learners. Through song, the same necessary repetition of traditional activities can be achieved without the monotony that can sometimes accompany these tasks due to the fact that the repetition in songs is “rendered pleasant by factors of rhythm, melody, and emotional content” (Gatti-Taylor, 1980, p. 465).

These factors all help to lower the affective filter, raise motivation, and therefore provide a more effective learning environment for the students. Also motivating are the cultural aspects of these songs and the musical experiences for learners. Much can be learned through listening to songs from the target culture such as a song about a historical period or a specific subject or event. Song lyrics provide an example of an authentic text that can teach students about a subject or event or the cultural perspectives related to something. Gatti-Taylor (1980) points out that songs are a more accessible medium from which students can learn because they have attributes, such as rhythm and tone, which heighten learner awareness.

Many songs exist that offer a perspective on a global event such as a war or other conflict, political unrest or discussions in the political narrative of a particular time. By using songs as a base for the discussion of such events or topics, students may learn a different perspective and find the music to be a more motivating or entertaining method of delivery for some information. Using music to teach culture, grammatical foundations, and other aspects of language could be more attention-getting, interesting, and motivating for students than reading or hearing the same information from a textbook. Cheung (2001) outlines this distinction and argues for the use of popular culture in various forms to promote motivation and improve the formal textbook learning that is common in many aspects of language teaching. Cheung (2001) points out that in many foreign language settings, there exists a lack of motivation due to “classroom [language]” which is somewhat removed from real language usage (p. 55). This in turn feeds into a lack of motivation because students may feel that what they are learning is not useful or usable in the real world. Through music and its cultural implications, students can learn the language while engaging with the culture in a more authentic and meaningful way.

Teachers can, therefore, be mindful of their students as individuals with personal interests and incorporate meaningful cultural tasks into the learning environment through music so as to “[establish] a relaxing and pleasurable learning atmosphere” and to allow for active participation by each individual in their learning process (p. 60).

Evidence from the Classroom

As outlined above, the link between music and language learning has implications both in the scientific realm as well as in the potential of a shared pedagogy between music and language. When examining the pedagogy of a music class and a language class, and the experience of the students in these classes, there are many similarities (Speh & Ahramjian, 2010). In both cases, one must learn a new system of sounds and learn to read and write with new symbols or at least symbols in a different form. Speh & Ahramjian (2010) also point out common qualities between the music and language classes, for example, in the fact that both language and music are “more than just a sum of [their] parts,” and the individual symbols or words do not equate to real communication of a message in either domain (p. 78). Learners must recognize a variety of symbols and understand their meaning, learn and follow rules, and understand nuances, yet be able to ‘perform’ without allowing these things to get in the way of performance. Just as successful musicians must do more than read symbols from a page, successful language learners also must leave the comfort of books or dictionaries, and use the language in an authentic context. Based on the connections and similarities between music and language and the implications of the effect of musical skills on language, studies have been conducted to investigate various types of pedagogical uses for music in the language classroom. In addition to

these factors, it is important to remember that both learners of music and learners of language often face some amount of performance anxiety.

Pedagogy and methods in music and language also show similarities. Krashen's (1989) Natural Approach, specifically the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, promotes the difference between learning (a conscious learning process resulting from teaching) and acquisition (unconscious processing of meaningful input). The three components of the approach also translate to musical learning: learners must be provided with comprehensible input, their anxiety must be reduced, and learners must have opportunities to communicate (as cited by Speh & Ahramjian, 2010, p. 38). The Suzuki method (1983), a method for teaching string instruments to children, is based on the observation that children are able to learn their native language easily and in a very short period of time. This method derives from traditional music education to help students acquire musical proficiency in the same way they understand and become fluent in their native language (as cited by Ahramjian & Speh, 2010). Bilash (1996) describes the similarities between the two models and the implications for teachers. Just as Krashen stresses the concept of acquisition versus learning, Suzuki asserted a belief that all children are capable of achieving "superior abilities" through "an enriching environment and encouragement provided by their caretakers" (as cited in Bilash, 1996, pp. 60-61). Suzuki himself likened the process of music education to language acquisition stating "All Japanese children speak Japanese!" (as cited in Bilash, 1996, p. 61). Suzuki, like Krashen, pointed out the clear success of children from all language backgrounds to acquire and use their first language through a series of gradually advancing steps, such as those described in Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, which states that we acquire rules and aspects of language in a certain order (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden,

2013). The parallels between Krashen and Suzuki remain apparent by comparing many of Krashen's hypotheses to the teaching philosophies of the Suzuki method. These include the importance of input and an enriching environment, the exposure of students to various concepts, and their ability to internalize, produce, and monitor their skills or production. These parallels shed light on another important connection between music and language and the shared pedagogy of the two fields.

These findings have instigated research into the implementation of music as a tool in the language classroom in order to enhance learners' language learning experience. A study by Salcedo (2010) investigated the use of songs in the instruction of texts. The study sought to determine whether or not there is a significant difference in text recall when using songs, in delayed text recall when text is studied through song instead of speech, and in "the occurrence of involuntary mental rehearsal (din) after listening to song rather than text" (Salcedo, 2010, p. 23). The results of the study show that the students using songs had better text recall than those simply reading the text; however, the songs did not have an effect on delayed recall, and the researcher stated this may have changed with more instruction and time. The group did, however report much higher occurrences of the din in their questionnaires, although some students chose not to participate in the questionnaire. Many claimed that they found the songs stuck in their heads and were unable to control the repetition of the songs. This "prolonged practice" plays an important role in students' acquisition and appears to be a "more efficient way to trigger mental rehearsal" which may be a "more effective method to stimulate the language acquisition process" (Salcedo, 2010, p. 27). The concept of mental rehearsal is also supported by Vygotsky's perspective of inner speech internalization, and the role of language in learning, problem solving,

and regulation as one works to incorporate a skill or action in both the first and second language (as cited in Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 1998). Thus, according to Salcedo (2010), this study is further proof that music offers pedagogical value in regards to both text recall and the din. Salcedo (2010) suggests that music and songs could replace “excessive readings,” which could contribute to a reduction in performance anxiety as well as improvement in pronunciation.

A similar study by Legg (2009) investigated whether or not teaching vocabulary and phrases through singing would help students memorize and comprehend the French vocabulary in the Modern Foreign Language (MFL) classroom, and if music could help “accelerate” students’ learning (Legg, 2009, p. 1). During the study, the Non-Music group studied a poem by traditional methods of reading, rereading, asking questions, etc. while the Music group studied the poem in the form of a song by “rehears[al] and perform[ance]” of the music (Legg, 2009, p. 5). The results indicated that the Music group performed slightly better than the Non-Music group, but had more “tightly-grouped” scores (participants scored in a more narrow range). Based on the data, the researchers suggest that results would continue in this manner and that the study appears to support the idea of integrating songs into other language classrooms (or even other courses that need vocabulary practice); however, this was not explicitly studied or investigated. Though the study appears to be overgeneralized, it offers insight into the application of song in instruction to multiple contexts. Both of these studies show, however, that music can be an effective tool in the language classroom, helping students to learn and retain text (Legg, 2009; Salcedo, 2010).

A series of studies by Schön et al. (2008) also compared language learning of spoken and sung speech sequences, proposing that, “compared to speech sequences, a consistent mapping of

linguistic and musical information would enhance learning” (p. 975). The participants in the study listened to a “continuous stream of syllables” (either spoken or sung) and were told to avoid analyzing the sounds (Schön et al., 2008, p. 977). They were then asked to determine by pushing a button, which of two strings of syllables would most likely be a word from the language. The addition of music (tones assigned to syllables) did help them learn to differentiate between syllables (64 percent correct in this experiment) whereas speech alone did not (48 percent correct and close to chance). The results support the hypothesis, showing that especially in the early stages of learning, music and song can support learners through motivation as well as segmentation and structure.

Kanel (1997) also investigated the use of music as a listening task, focusing specifically on comparing the efficacy of using songs as a listening task with traditional listening activities. The findings revealed that both a group using traditional exercises and a group using song gap-fill exercises improved equally and made a great deal of progress. On a post-study questionnaire, however, the group exposed to songs in their lessons expressed more interest in English and more enjoyment of the tasks. Sevik (2012) also examined listening practice with songs, using ‘Listen and Do’ songs for young learners, in other words, songs that require physical involvement and response from the students, similar to Total Physical Response lessons which focus on the use of speech in conjunction with action (Richards and Rogers, 2001). Sevik (2012) explains that various features of songs reinforce language acquisition, for example “their rhythmic and repetitive nature and the joy that the association between melody and content brings to the learning activity” (p. 11). For young children, songs—particularly ‘Listen and Do’ songs—can be helpful both for learning and to help the students feel comfortable by sharing a

common experience and completing actions along with their teacher. Sevik provides a three-stage approach to presenting the songs: 1) pre-teaching which provides students with context and an introduction to the vocabulary; 2) combining activities with teaching such as multiple listenings and other methods; and 3) providing follow-up or post-teaching activities such as a game with the vocabulary words or actions from the music, or acting out the movements and asking the students to name the commands. The ‘Listen and Do’ method can help students, especially young learners, develop their listening skills in an interesting and engaging way. These ideas can transfer to music-based instruction as the lesson can be structured to include multiple methods, and the music can be used to teach one or more of the steps outlined above. While this was designed more for young children, it is possible that something similar could be incorporated into a class with older students, especially in the form of games, which seem to be successful with most age groups.

These studies provide examples of how music can be integrated into the pedagogy of language classes and illustrate the benefits in motivation and the reduction of negative factors, as well as the improvement to various language skills provided by such integration. While some of the studies were not longitudinal (Legg, 2009) or widely generalizable (Wang, 2013) they provided information about the benefits of integrating music into language classrooms and the different ways in which music can be beneficial to students. Despite the breadth of data in the fields of music, language, and interdisciplinary research, music is not widely applied in language classrooms (Engh, 2013, p. 113).

Few studies investigate the perspective of the learners in a classroom setting using music; however, some do exist. Lê (1999) investigates learner perception in Vietnamese EFL students,

positing that music would enhance the learning environment “due to its affective power” (p. 1). The results of the student interviews, and the teachers’ reflection notes show that the students valued the music, and that the use of music was successful both from an aspect of pedagogy as well as a form of intercultural experience. Harwood (1998) discussed the importance of context in children’s learning, stating that it affects the content learned as well as the way in which it learned. While this is discussed more specifically in the context of music in this case, it is an important implication for music in the language classroom. Student perceptions of the musical intervention could differ for a variety of reasons.

As Lê (1999) states, despite the benefits and the enjoyment of the students in the musical activities, there is some concern about the message and values of some of the Western music being listened to by the students. Choosing appropriate songs for a particular group of learners is crucial to the successful application of music in a classroom. One Vietnamese student in Lê’s (1999) study stated, “Some American songs are easy to understand, some are very hard. Sometimes I feel rather funny to sing songs about wanting to make love We dare not sing them so openly” (p. 8). This comment calls attention to the cultural implications for certain types of songs and the comfort level of the students. If the objective is to lower the affective filter and enhance classroom learning, it is clearly counterproductive to give students music that makes them uncomfortable. Likewise, the age of learners is also a consideration. Grimshire (2012) discusses the differences in older adults learning a language, stating that often textbooks and other features of a classroom can be directed towards young adults rather than middle-aged learners. These differences, in addition to cultural differences, should also be taken into account

to make an effort to find musical activities that can be understood and related to by all members of a classroom.

Based upon these findings, musical tasks can be useful in many settings and for various purposes for language learners. There are limited studies, however, that specifically focus on classroom use of musical tasks and unfortunately, some studies use created music based on their curriculum, something that is impractical for most language teachers who do not have access to a team of musicians and composers to help create their lessons. In addition, there is a lack of generalizable data due to the limited settings of these studies, and the studies rarely touch on the learners' perceptions or opinions about the learning process. This study seeks to specifically address some of the pedagogical gaps in the research.

The Present Study

Based upon the literature in both music and language research, it is clear that there is a connection in cognitive processing, pedagogy, and the crossover between language and music. Although music and many aspects of language learning have been positively linked, teachers do not often look to music as a valuable pedagogical tool in classroom settings. A significant gap exists in the implementation of practical applications and methods for music in the language classroom. Problems arise in the studies completed regarding the classroom use of music as a tool for teaching language in that some are not generalizable; others are too short-term, or are specific to a language group or setting. More studies of classroom tasks that may be useful and of the implementation of these research findings are needed to make music an accessible option for all teachers, not only teachers with access to a great deal of resources or those with a musical background. Additionally, it is important to compile more information about the perceptions of

students of varying ages and in different learning contexts. Perhaps if a few important gaps in the research are addressed, music might find a more inclusive position within language pedagogy (Engh, 2013, p. 113).

Based on the correlational findings of the current research and support for the connection and use of music in language education of many researchers, it is important to determine more specifically what the role of music in a language classroom is, why it is not currently more sought-after and used by teachers, and how the implementation of music can be beneficial to language teachers and the field of language learning.

The present study was designed to answer some of the questions discussed above and with the goal of investigating learner perceptions of musical tasks and instruction. The musically-rich lessons were created to improve students' language skills, lower their affective filter, and improve motivation. Based on the aforementioned gaps in research, more studies are needed to determine the ways in which music can be useful in a language classroom. In particular, students' perceptions have been overlooked, and thus, this study aims to examine students' opinions about the musical tasks and the efficacy of the lessons as well as their enjoyment, in order to better determine the benefits of music as a language teaching tool in an ESL setting.

CHAPTER 3-METHODOLOGY

Participants

The research participants consisted of forty-five students in two communication skills classes in an Intensive English Program (IEP) at a large state institution in the United States. The research was carried out with two separate classes over the course of two semesters. The students included in the final results came from ten different countries and included speakers of Chinese (4), Japanese (7), Portuguese (1), and Arabic (25). Of the students, the participants consisted of twenty-one males and seventeen females. The group consisted of adult students who ranged from only recently having graduated from high school in their home countries to students who had already obtained a bachelor's or even a master's degree from their country prior to enrolling in the IEP. The students also had varying experiences with prior music education, ranging from no instruction at all to years of private instruction on a musical instrument, with almost all expressing an interest in listening to music (at least music from their home country). The students were placed at an Intermediate High level according to the proficiency descriptors of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). They had different prior experiences learning English and had been studying in the IEP for varying lengths of time. Based on some extenuating circumstances (students dropping out, testing into or out of the class, etc.) eight students' data could not be included in the study.

Procedures

Data collection took place during the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters. Participants completed a pre-study questionnaire (see Appendix A) regarding their perceptions of their proficiency level, motivation, and comfort level with English as well as their prior experience

with music both in and out of a classroom setting. During the course of the semester, the students were instructed in alternating units of study, two units of study with no music and two units that focused on instruction through music, including songs, lyrics, and other forms. The non-music units were intended to acquaint the students with the IEP setting and the type of instruction in the IEP because the students' came from different educational backgrounds. During all of the units of instruction, students kept a learning journal (see Appendix B), in which they were prompted to determine the learning goals they had prior to the unit and describe what and how they were learning throughout the unit. Finally, students completed a self-assessment of their success in reaching their set goals during the unit. After completing the last unit, participants were given a post-study questionnaire (see Appendix C), which asked them to assess their own learning through musical tasks during the semester, their preferences, and to provide any other insight they had on their experiences learning with music. These questionnaires and learning journals were designed based on the research questions and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012), which can be seen in the categories of questions on the questionnaires.

Each unit of study included four lessons and a unit review and was constructed from the class textbook, *Top Notch 3*, with supplemental activities and assignments (see Appendix D). Students were first given the pre-study questionnaire, which contained questions concerning their current level of English proficiency, their confidence in their language skills, their personal motivation, and other background information about each student (language background, prior musical study, etc.). Following each unit, the students were given a unit exam and completed a speaking activity (presentation, group project, etc.) to test their presentational and interpersonal speaking. During the first semester, four units were studied in the class. Considering time-

constraints, data was collected on only two units (the first two units described below) of study in the second semester.

In the first unit of instruction, students discussed cultural differences and behaviors, highlighting vocabulary related to customs, politeness, and requesting cultural information. The unit was taught primarily from the information and lessons in the textbook with traditional classroom activities such as short readings, listening exercises, and incomplete dialogues for practice. At the end of this unit, the students took a unit exam and completed a dialogue presentation with other classmates in order to practice polite conversation, role-playing two couples who meet on vacation and discuss their trips, the local culture, and local tourist destinations. The vocabulary and dialogue from the book were the main focus of all of the lessons. Each unit of the book provided instruction on specific grammatical forms. However, because all students in the IEP receive grammar instruction in a grammar class; communication skills teachers often do not stress the grammar from this book, because it sometimes conflicts with the teachings or order of teaching of the grammar class. This particular unit provided instruction on tag questions, and therefore students were taught and tested on forming tag questions as well as the communicative aspect of tag question intonation and meaning.

The second unit, a music-based unit, discussed holidays, events, and traditions from around the world, focusing on holiday vocabulary, holiday classifications (religious, historical, seasonal), and holiday celebrations and traditions (Saslow & Ascher, 2011c). In addition, this unit also contained a lesson about weddings and wedding vocabulary related to the event and the people involved. The grammar lesson in this unit focused on thought groups and clauses. The musical tasks designed for this unit consisted of an activity, using lyrics and the accompanying

music to identify thought groups in a song (after practicing with the book and performing a listening exercise). The song chosen featured very distinct short phrases and sentences with clear thought groups and was intended to help students practice basic distinction of thought groups by reading the lyrics, listening to the music, and then marking the pauses in the lyrics, first, as a prediction, and second, as a confirmation after listening. Also in this unit, lyrics and music were used related to weddings. The songs selected (Skater Boy by Avril Lavigne, Love and Marriage performed by Frank Sinatra, Rude by Magic, Rude: A Father's Response by Benji Cowart, and Marry Me by Train) were intended not only to teach vocabulary related to course topics, but also to create a cultural discussion by examining the themes more in depth in order to bring out the natural diversity among a student population from many different backgrounds. The chosen songs discussed wedding traditions, customs, or beliefs, including the idea that love is necessary for marriage, the tradition of a man asking the woman's father for permission to marry, and the possible stereotypical responses of the father when asked for permission to marry his daughter. These lyrics were skimmed for general meaning, and then the students read the texts while listening to music. The music was periodically stopped to determine students' comprehension of the meaning, and they were guided in a discussion about each point. At the conclusion of the unit, students were given a unit exam, and they were asked to do presentations in small groups (two to three students) on a shared holiday or event in their culture.

The third unit of instruction was taught in much the same way as the first unit and focused on life plans and grammatical lessons about the past. Students practiced with sentence formation, such as, "I thought I would be a doctor, but I couldn't pass the school entrance exam." They also discussed job and career vocabulary, and conducted interviews. Like the first unit, this

unit was taught with traditional methods from the book, including reading, listening, and dialogues. The unit also presented new vocabulary and a small amount of grammar. The unit concluded with a unit exam and a one-on-one interview with the students in which they had to describe their skills, talents, career aspirations, plans for the next five years, and other related information.

The fourth unit was also a music-based unit and focused on controversial topics. The unit was designed to develop vocabulary for politely disagreeing or expressing different views as well as vocabulary related to global issues and some political words. In this unit, the students studied vocabulary related to politics, laws, and world issues. The students were also presented with vocabulary and pragmatic instruction on appropriate ways (and times) to disagree with someone politely and to bring up a controversial subject. In addition, the unit included examples of world issues and a related reading passage. During this unit, the students worked with songs and their lyrics to examine world issues and world views concerning the Vietnam War, modern society (and if, when, and how to affect change), and other cultural views. The students read the lyrics, listened to the song, and discussed the meaning and relevant historical information. Students were given a written exam on the contents of the unit. For their final speaking activity, students worked in groups and formed teams to debate various issues, such as the pros and cons of banning of smoking on campus or the use of cell phones while driving.

Throughout the music units, the students were also given an optional activity for practice at home. Students were shown the website “Lyrics Training,” which allows students to practice vocabulary and develop listening skills by typing individual words into the lyrics of a song while listening (“Lyrics Training,” n.d.). The songs available on the site include many popular songs in

a variety of languages from many different countries. The site contains many popular U.S. and British songs about a variety of topics and subjects, ranging in difficulty from easy to very difficult. Although some songs are naturally more challenging than others due to speed, vocabulary, etc., the difficulty level can be set or selected for each song. The website provides a score based on how fluently the student completed the lyrics (how many times the song was paused or a section was repeated) and how many times students had to skip a word. As an optional activity, students were assigned a song related to the lesson(s) of the week to complete using Lyrics Training and a deadline to submit score sheets from the website. Students who submitted a score sheet received one participation point (equal to half of a class period of participation credit), and the student with the highest score received one additional point.

The primary intention of this assignment was to increase motivation while providing a listening exercise for students (listening to music) in which they practiced writing, typing, and spelling the missing words in the lyrics. Because the students had varying access to technology outside of class, the assignment was optional rather than required. The assignment was self-paced because some of the students come from a background with non-Roman alphabets and were not able to type well or at all in English, especially in a timed setting. This gave all students, particularly those with less typing skill or those who needed additional time for comprehension a greater chance to participate. The students could practice the exercise and try to improve their score as many times as they wanted to repeat the exercise. The score sheets were submitted at the end of every week, and the week's "winner" was announced at the beginning of the following week. This was designed as a self-paced assignment to help boost motivation to practice and study the topics outside of class.

The music and songs chosen for the lessons were authentic rather than didacticized specifically for the classroom. The choices of song were built around the content of the textbook provided by the program as well as with the consideration of the individual learners and backgrounds in the classroom.

The first research question, regarding whether or not students' self-confidence increased and the affective filter was lowered was answered through the responses on the surveys and to some extent, the learning journals, but also through teacher notes on the class environment and student participation grades. The second question, related to the students' motivation was also determined through their learning journal responses, their post-study questionnaire, and teacher notes and student participation grades as well. Lastly, the third research question of the students' perceptions of the efficacy of music in language instruction was assessed both by the students' responses on the student learning journals and the post-study questionnaire.

Instruments

The instruments in this study consisted of two questionnaires. Prior to beginning the instruction, participants completed a pre-study questionnaire regarding their perceptions of their proficiency level, their personal motivation, and their comfort level with English, as well as their prior experience with music in and out of a classroom setting. During the semester, a learning journal for each of the four units was completed by the students as part of the course. The learning journal allowed them to determine the learning goals they had prior to the unit as well as what and how they learned throughout the unit and lastly, an assessment of their success in reaching their set goal(s) during the unit. After completing the final unit, participants were given a post-study questionnaire asking them to assess their own learning throughout the semester,

assert their preferences, and provide any other insight they might have on their experiences learning with music.

Data Analysis

The results from the data collection were analyzed quantitatively based on students' responses on the questionnaires to the following categories: perceptions of their own learning, their own motivation, and their feelings about the music-based instruction in the course. The students' pre- and post-study questionnaires and the learning journals were analyzed to determine the participants' perceived efficacy of instruction through musical means in an ESL classroom based on the three research questions. Teacher notes and student participation grades throughout the four units also make up a component of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4-RESULTS

Chapter Four examines the results of the student questionnaires and the learning journals completed for each of the units. In the analysis, participants from both semesters were examined as one group. Some discrepancies occur between the number of participants and the data submitted because not all participants completed all surveys. All data collected are in direct response to the research questions proposed in this study:

1. Does music help increase student self-confidence and lower the affective filter in learning the language?
2. How does the use of music in the classroom affect student motivation to learn?
3. Do students perceive the use of music in language instruction as instrumental in improving their overall proficiency?

The chapter is organized according to response sections on the pre- and post-study questionnaire, which have been analyzed separately, as well as responses in the students' learning journals. Data from groups of questions that are thematically related were then compared with data from the analysis based on sections of the questionnaire and on responses in the learning journals in order to form a more well-rounded understanding of the study's results.

Pre-Study Questionnaire

The pre-study questionnaire was designed to determine the students' perceptions of their proficiency level, their general motivation to learn English, and their confidence level in their English-language skills. The students then answered questions about their experience with the use of music and language (English) in combination with their personal use as well as for the purpose of English instruction. Lastly, the students answered questions regarding their previous

experience in English and musical training, including their prior formal instruction, their interest level, and other aspects of their background in these areas to provide a more well-rounded understanding of their previous experiences.

Proficiency

In the first section of the questionnaire, students answered questions regarding their English proficiency. Students addressed their perceived proficiency level in listening, reading, speaking, writing, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. These questions were designed using a Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to form an understanding of the students' individual proficiency levels by asking students to self-assess their own proficiency at the outset of the study. The questions were also designed to reflect the standards associated with the level in which they were placed.

Table 1

Pre-Study Questionnaire - Students' Perceived Proficiency

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	I can understand simple speech on familiar or everyday topics in personal and social contexts.	42.11%	42.11%	13.16%	2.63%	0.00%	38	4.24
2	I can understand short, simple texts about topics with which I am familiar.	47.37%	47.37%	2.63%	2.63%	0.00%	38	4.39
3	I can understand academic presentations on topics that are familiar to me.	18.42%	52.63%	21.05%	5.26%	2.63%	38	3.79
4	I can speak easily about familiar topics dealing with everyday life.	36.84%	31.58%	21.05%	7.89%	2.63%	38	3.92
5	I can write basic texts on familiar topics in all of the major time frames.	10.81%	59.46%	21.62%	8.11%	0.00%	37	3.73

6	I can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to working with non-native speakers of English.	13.16%	39.47%	31.58%	15.79%	0.00%	38	3.50
7	I am familiar with U.S. culture and the basic differences between it and my native culture.	26.32%	47.37%	18.42%	7.89%	0.00%	38	3.92

As shown in the table, there was a range of responses representing the students' perceived proficiency level. Very few students, however, identified themselves as greatly struggling with language skills as represented by the very few students who selected "strongly disagree" in relation to any of the skills. In written comments, students noted they could navigate familiar conversations, both speaking and listening, as well as familiar texts relatively well. On the other hand, far fewer students expressed this level of proficiency in their understanding of academic speech as well as in their writing ability. In both cases, however, almost half of the students still selected "agree," indicating the perception of a relatively high proficiency level in these two aspects of their language abilities. Fewer students selected "strongly" agree when asked about their familiarity with U.S. culture; however, the majority selected "agree," expressing that they had a sound understanding of culture in the United States. No students indicated a severe lack of cultural understanding. Participant evaluations of their proficiency correlated with the language level (Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High) of the courses they were taking.

Student responses to their prior English experience varied greatly, from students studying only one year to students who had been studying for eighteen years. Table 2 provides this distribution.

Table 2
Pre-Study Questionnaire - Previous English Study

#	Answer		Response	%
1	One year		5	13%
2	Two years		5	13%
3	Three years		2	5%
4	Four years		3	8%
5	Six years		2	5%
6	Seven years		8	21%
7	Eight years		4	11%
8	Nine years		2	5%
9	Ten years		3	8%
10	Twelve years		1	3%
11	Thirteen years		1	3%
12	Fourteen years		1	3%
13	Eighteen years		1	3%
	Total		38	100%

It is important to note that students may have understood the question differently or considered different aspects of “study” to mean the same thing; thus, some students may have listed one year referring to their one year of intensive English study despite having had previous English lessons or less rigorous English training in the past. Likewise, the student who claimed eighteen years of previous English study may have been referring to all of the English training in varying capacities he or she received.

Motivation

In the second section of the questionnaire, students responded to questions about their personal motivation to learn English. These questions also corresponded with each of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) as well as pronunciation and cultural knowledge.

Also included was one question about the students' general communication and their motivation to communicate with others using English. Table 3 provides a synopsis of the results of students' motivation to learn English.

Table 3

Pre-Study Questionnaire - Motivation

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	I enjoy communicating with others in English.	68.42%	28.95%	2.63%	0.00%	0.00%	38	4.66
2	I enjoy listening to basic texts (e.g. TV shows, newscasts, and stories) in English.	31.58%	55.26%	5.26%	7.89%	0.00%	38	4.11
3	I enjoy reading simple or familiar texts in English.	31.58%	50.00%	13.16%	2.63%	2.63%	38	4.05
4	I enjoy speaking about familiar topics like school, work, free time, etc. in English.	34.21%	42.11%	18.42%	5.26%	0.00%	38	4.05
5	I enjoy writing basic texts on topics with which I am familiar.	21.05%	57.89%	21.05%	0.00%	0.00%	38	4.00
6	I want to achieve a native-like pronunciation and be understood by people not accustomed to speaking with non-native speakers.	68.42%	21.05%	7.89%	2.63%	0.00%	38	4.55
7	I want to learn more about U.S. culture.	39.47%	39.47%	13.16%	5.26%	2.63%	38	4.08

The majority of students indicated that they enjoyed communicating with others in English.

Likewise, the majority expressed a desire to achieve native-like pronunciation in English and to be understood by people who do not regularly interact with non-native speakers. Most students also expressed agreement with statements regarding their enjoyment of listening, reading, and writing basic or familiar texts. Fewer expressed strong agreement relating to their understanding of culture; culture and reading were the only two categories in which any students selected “strongly disagree.” Overall, the students expressed a great deal of motivation to communicate

with others using English and to achieve a high level of pronunciation in order to be understood by a wide variety of people.

In reporting their interest level in learning English, twenty-five students (66 percent) stated that they were “very interested” in learning English, eleven students (29 percent) said they were interested, and only two students (five percent) rated their interest level in learning English as indifferent. Students also were asked to give the reason that best described why they were learning English. As shown in Figure 1 below, the most common reasons students had for learning English were reported equally as “General Interest” and “Academic Purposes,” followed by “Professional Purposes.”

Figure 1. Students' reasons for English study

Student responses to this question mirror the general trend in the program, where many plan to attend the university to study and remain in the United States for work or return to a job in their home countries with their English skills and their degree from a U.S. institution. Students were able to choose more than one option in this category, and many chose either academic or professional purposes in combination with general interest. Those who chose “other” gave

varying reasons for their learning, including getting a good grade on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, communicating with all people (rather than just family members), and wanting to learn English because they want to become integrated into life and culture in the United States.

Affective Filter

In this section of the pre-study questionnaire, students were asked to rate their level of confidence in their abilities to perform language skills, in pronunciation, and in their ability to handle situations that are culturally different from their own culture. Table 4 below provides an overview of student responses.

Table 4
Pre-Study Questionnaire - Affective Filter

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	I am confident with my current listening skills.	21.62%	43.24 %	13.51%	16.22%	5.41%	37	3.59
2	I am confident in my ability to understand what I read.	21.05%	42.11 %	28.95%	7.89%	0.00%	38	3.76
3	I am confident speaking English with native speakers unaccustomed to speaking with non-native speakers of English.	15.79%	36.84 %	31.58%	15.79%	0.00%	38	3.53
4	I am confident that people can understand my meaning when I write.	29.73%	51.35 %	18.92%	0.00%	0.00%	37	4.11
5	I am confident in my pronunciation of English.	10.53%	36.84 %	26.32%	21.05%	5.26%	38	3.26
6	I am confident in situations that are culturally different from my native culture.	27.03%	43.24 %	16.22%	10.81%	2.70%	37	3.81

Student responses varied more regarding their confidence in their language abilities than in the previous questions regarding proficiency level and motivation. Generally, students expressed agreement with the statements that they were confident in all skills including pronunciation and

culturally new situations; however, far fewer selected “strongly agree” in any category, especially regarding their confidence in their pronunciation.

Music and Language

In the last section of the pre-study questionnaire, questions were designed to determine students’ previous experience with music as well as their experience with music and language-learning in combination, and their reaction to that experience. Table 5 provides a summary of the student’s responses to the music and language portion of the questionnaire.

Table 5

Pre-Study Questionnaire - Students’ Experience with Music and Language

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	I listen to music in English to improve my listening skills.	36.84%	26.32%	28.95%	5.26%	2.63%	38	3.89
2	I read lyrics of music to improve my reading skills.	42.11%	28.95%	18.42%	7.89%	2.63%	38	4.00
3	I sing texts in English to improve my speaking skills.	31.58%	36.84%	21.05%	7.89%	2.63%	38	3.87
4	I make up songs in English to help me learn.	15.79%	23.68%	21.05%	31.58%	7.89%	38	3.08
5	I sing songs in English to help me improve my pronunciation.	39.47%	34.21%	13.16%	10.53%	2.63%	38	3.97
6	I listen to music or read lyrics in English to help learn more about the culture.	7.89%	34.21%	44.74%	7.89%	5.26%	38	3.32

As shown in the table above, the results vary greatly and are the most widely distributed of any of the sections. Close to one-third of the students reported that they strongly agreed that they had previously used music and/or lyrics to improve their listening, reading, speaking, and pronunciation skills, and an almost equal number chose “agree” in these categories particularly speaking (36.84 percent) and pronunciation (34.21 percent). While the majority of students selected that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they had previously read

lyrics or listened to music to learn about the culture, 34.21 percent of students stated that they agreed with the statement. Few students selected “disagree” or “strongly disagree” in any of the categories. Results were divided in response to the question about making up songs to learn; over 30 percent of participants chose “disagree” in this category.

In addition to the questions related to their language skills, students were asked to answer questions regarding previous experience with music in order to determine their musical background. Eleven students stated that they had previously had formal musical instruction whereas 27 students had never had any musical instruction before. Of the students who had a musical background, their experience ranged in duration from five months to eight years. The instruments students had studied included piano (7), guitar (4), drums (1), singing (1), general music, including solfège⁴ (1) and other musical skills. Some students reported having studied more than one instrument. Students described their interest level in music with the majority of students ranking their interest at “very interested” (44 percent) or “interested” (28 percent) as shown in Figure 2 below.

⁴ A method of teaching pitch and sight-singing by assigning notes to a sol-fa syllable

Figure 2. Students' Interest Level in Music

Students were also asked whether or not they listened to music in the target language. Twenty-six students (68 percent) stated that they did listen to music from the United States, and twelve students (32 percent) stated that they did not. Students were also asked to give their reason(s) for listening to music from the United States as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Reasons for Listening to Music from the Target Culture

The students were given the following choices: they listened to music because they liked the lyrics, the music, both the music and the lyrics, or they were given the option to respond that

they did not listen to music at all. Sixteen students (42 percent) stated that they liked listening to the music for the music itself whereas only four students (11 percent) responded that they listened to the lyrics. Eleven students (29 percent), however responded that they liked both the lyrics and music. Only seven students (eighteen percent) stated that they did not listen to music. When asked if they could understand what they were listening to, 63 percent responded positively that they could understand the lyrics of the music they listened to or heard.

Finally, students were asked whether or not they had ever used music for the purpose of learning a language. Fifty-eight percent of students responded that they had used music to learn a language in the past. The students were asked to describe what experience they had with music as a way to learn language. The answers varied from autonomous learning to class-led activities in classes they had taken as children. One reported using music lyrics in another English course at the university. Many students reported having listened intently to the lyrics to try to understand the meaning. One student responded “I listen to the music and read it in my phone to learn some words and practice and to use that [*sic*] words in my real life.” Many students also gave a response related to using songs to improve their pronunciation. Another student stated, “I use [*sic*] to listen to English song’s [*sic*] years ago, songs that I like, so, when I listen, I sing, and when I sing, I get to know how to pronounce the word! It was fun and now I tell everyone who wants to learn how to speak English [*sic*], do the same as what I did!” Other students reported learning vocabulary or phrases by comparing the lyrics to their first language, practicing various skills including reading, pronunciation, and “to feel other cultures.” One student specifically mentioned writing the lyrics for practice, and another student stated that in elementary school, they sang English songs to understand more about the culture. Overall, the students listed a wide

variety of reasons for using music; however, only three students named a class in which a teacher had used music to teach English. One student, however, used the comment to express concern for and doubt about the use of music to improve language stating “How can I understand words when someone say [*sic*] them faster” and that they only had time to listen to music possibly two times throughout the week. The fact that the twenty-one other students responded that they had previously used music to learn language (primarily) autonomously speaks to the fact that this is already a method used by students and a very small number of teachers. While many of the students who responded to this question did not provide an opinion regarding their experience, a few students made opinion-based statements, responding that it was fun; it had helped them; they had learned new words, etc.; however, it was primarily a simple recitation of previous experience.

Post-Study Questionnaire

After the students completed the units, they were given a post-study questionnaire to determine if the musical tasks had helped them to learn English. The skills listed in the questions corresponded to the pre-study questionnaire and were grouped into the same categories as in the pre-study questionnaire. The results are shown by their categories as above.

Proficiency

In the category of proficiency, students were asked to answer questions about the same skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing, accuracy, pronunciation, and cultural knowledge) and whether or not they had perceived that the musical tasks presented in class had helped them with each area. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Post-Study Questionnaire - Students' Perceived Efficacy of Musical Tasks

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	Using music in the classroom helped me improve my listening skills.	70.27%	24.32%	2.70%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.61
2	Using music in the classroom helped me improve my reading skills.	27.03%	48.65%	18.92%	2.70%	2.70%	37	3.97
3	Using music in the classroom helped me improve my speaking skills.	37.84%	32.43%	16.22%	10.81%	2.70%	37	4.03
4	Using music in the classroom helped me writing skills.	11.11%	22.22%	30.56%	30.56%	5.56%	36	3.09
5	Using music in the classroom helped me improve my accuracy in English.	16.22%	59.46%	21.62%	0.00%	2.70%	37	3.86
6	Using music in the classroom helped me improve my English pronunciation.	45.95%	45.95%	5.41%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.33
7	Using music in the classroom helped me learn more about the target culture.	21.62%	35.14%	37.84%	2.70%	2.70%	37	3.72

As shown in the table above, a majority of students (70.27 percent) strongly agreed that the musical tasks improved their listening skills and almost all of the remaining students (24.32 percent) said that they agreed. Almost half of the students (45.95 percent) responded that they strongly agreed with the statement that music helped their pronunciation, and an equal percentage selected “agree” regarding this statement. Over half of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that music helped them to learn about culture. The majority of students did not, however, indicate that their writing skills had been improved by the musical task, with results widely spread across the scale and only 33.33 percent of students selecting strongly agree or agree. The songs consisted of a variety of difficulty levels and a range of simple to more complex vocabulary in order to offer some challenges to the students without making the songs too arduous to comprehend, particularly when regarding culture through music. Thus, the songs

should not have provided the students with such a false sense of security that they felt their proficiency level had improved due to the simplicity of the songs.

Students were also asked to specify the aspects of their language that they found had been helped the most by the musical activities in class. Listening was most frequently listed as an area that had been improved by the use of music, followed by pronunciation and speaking. The results are shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Aspects of Language Most Helped by Music in the Classroom

As can be seen in the Figure 3 above, the categories generally mirror the students' Likert-scale responses previously discussed.

Motivation

In regard to student motivation, the post-study questionnaire was designed to determine what, if any, effect the musical tasks had on the students' motivation. Students were asked if the musical tasks encouraged them to practice or work on a particular skill or aspect of their language. Results can be seen in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Post-Study Questionnaire - Motivational Effect of Musical Tasks

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	Using music encouraged me to practice my listening skills.	75.68%	21.62%	0.00%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.69
2	Using music encouraged me to practice my reading skills.	27.03%	43.24%	21.62%	5.41%	2.70%	37	3.89
3	Using music encouraged me to practice my speaking skills.	62.16%	16.22%	18.92%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.39
4	Using music encouraged me to practice my writing skills.	8.11%	29.73%	43.24%	10.81%	8.11%	37	3.26
5	Using music encouraged me to study grammatical concepts in English.	16.22%	48.65%	29.73%	2.70%	2.70%	37	3.78
6	Using music encouraged me to practice my English pronunciation.	48.65%	40.54%	8.11%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.36
7	Using music encouraged me to learn about the target culture.	13.51%	35.14%	40.54%	8.11%	2.70%	37	3.50

Again, the majority of students reported favorable results about music's effect on their listening skills. Thirty-six students (out of 37 who completed the post-study questionnaire) stated that they strongly agreed (28) that music encouraged them to practice their listening and almost all of the remaining students (8) stated that they agreed with this statement. Students also responded relatively positively to the statements regarding their speaking and pronunciation while students were least motivated to practice their writing skills.

Affective Filter

Students were asked to respond to questions regarding their confidence in their skills. Responses were elicited in terms of confidence level in order to ask about the affective filter in a manner that could be understood by intermediate speakers of English. Students were asked if the use of the musical tasks in the classroom had helped them feel more confident in their language skills and understanding. An overview of the results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Post-Study Questionnaire - Music's Effect on the Affective Filter

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses	Mean (on a 1-5 scale)
1	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my listening skills.	70.27%	21.62%	5.41%	0.00%	2.70%	37	4.58
2	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my reading skills.	29.73%	45.95%	16.22%	5.41%	2.70%	37	3.97
3	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident practicing speaking skills.	51.35%	29.73%	13.51%	2.70%	2.70%	37	4.28
4	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident practicing writing skills.	10.81%	35.14%	35.14%	16.22%	2.70%	37	3.39
5	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident practicing accuracy in using English.	32.43%	40.54%	21.62%	2.70%	2.70%	37	4.03
6	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my pronunciation.	59.46%	27.03%	8.11%	2.70%	2.70%	37	4.44
7	Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my understanding of the target culture.	27.03%	32.43%	29.73%	8.11%	2.70%	37	3.75

Again, the majority of students selected strongly agreed (26) or agreed (8) when asked if the musical tasks helped them to feel more confident in their listening skills; improved speaking and pronunciation through music were the most helpful in improving students' confidence. As above, the musical tasks did not seem to be effective in aiding students with their confidence in writing.

Student Comments

The last portion of the post-study questionnaire asked students to elaborate on any topic they may have marked with strongly agree or disagree. Students' responses varied widely, but many commented that they felt the musical tasks had been generally helpful for their English proficiency and knowledge as a whole (see Appendix E). Nineteen students mentioned that the

musical activities helped specifically with their listening. Ten students said it helped their pronunciation, and seven students mentioned that their speaking skills had improved because of the use of music in the classroom. Five students mentioned feeling more confident because of the musical tasks. One student explained that the musical activities helped them to feel more comfortable talking in class and to understand the lessons. In addition, five students referred to the musical activities as fun or enjoyable. One student called the activities an “interesting” way to learn. Other students also cited the ability to use the musical tasks in their free time, not just in class or for class-related activities. Another student referred to the tasks as an “important” way to learn, and a different student explained that listening to music is a motivation to learn, stating that the songs “make [the student] want to listen and understand more.”

In one comment by a student, he expressed that while he had reservations about using musical tasks to learn language, he had changed his mind about the benefits of music as a tool to learn a language, stating that, “first, I didn’t think it’s not useful but now I think it’s useful so I strongly agree [*sic*].” Only two students stated that they did not like the musical activities or listening to the music in class, one in particular stating that music is forbidden in his religion. Interestingly, when looking at the students’ other responses, one student agreed with many of the statements about music’s improvement of his skills, particularly listening and pronunciation, and that it helped him to feel more confident in his listening skills. The student who stated that music was forbidden selected “strongly disagree” in all categories on the post-study questionnaire; however, when asked what areas of his language had been most helped by the musical tasks, the student stated that his cultural understanding was helped most. This student’s comment provides unexpected insight into the attitudes of students from various backgrounds. It

is important to note, however, that even a student such as the one above perceived benefits from the instruction. Although it was to be expected that some students might not find the music-based instruction interesting, motivating, or helpful in improving their proficiency or individual skills, such a response was not typical. Only one other student expressed that she did not like the music-based instruction and that she strongly disagreed with the questions, stating, “I don’t like the music and I don’t listening the music, just in class [*sic*]. Also I don’t writing any music [*sic*].” It is interesting to note, however, that the student’s likert-scale responses reflected a different attitude. She selected “agree” in at least one of the questions under motivation, affective filter, and proficiency, and made no selections of “strongly disagree” in the entire post-study questionnaire. While she did respond more negatively than many other students, it would appear that her written response reflects more of a personal attitude toward the instruction and music itself than her perception of the efficacy of the musical tasks. Despite two students’ negative attitudes toward the concept of the use of music in the classroom, it was perceived by an overwhelming majority of students to have benefited their language learning and to have helped them to improve in various aspects of their language skills.

Learning Journals

The learning journals from both the music and non-music units provide information as to the perceptions of the students as well as the parts of class that were most helpful in achieving their learning goals. As stated previously, the learning journals gave the students opportunities to set goals for themselves, track their learning, and comment on their achievement as well as what helped and did not help them to work towards or achieve their goals. Many questions in the learning journals were open-response questions, allowing the students to elaborate and provide

their thoughts about their own improvement as well as about the lessons and tasks used in the classroom.

The students' responses in the pre-study questionnaire were corroborated by their learning journal responses. Speaking was a consistent goal throughout the units, and this was also an area on which many student comments were focused. When asked during the first unit what they wanted to improve throughout the unit of study, 23 of the 37 students stated the improvement of their speaking as a goal in addition to improving confidence in speaking and fluency. Speaking was the goal most mentioned by students for each of the four units. The post-study questionnaire also reflected the students' perceived achievements of goals. It is important to note that here, the students listed speaking, listening, pronunciation, and reading as the most improved skills by musical tasks, which corresponded with the areas in which the students felt they needed or wanted to improve the most.

Likewise, up to 38 percent of students named listening as a goal in the learning journals. The students were given the option to write their goals rather than choose from a list, so some students chose other skills as a goal as well such as speaking or cultural understanding; however, close to 20 percent of students listed speaking and listening collectively as their goals in three of the four units of study. Students responded that their listening skills were something they felt had been helped most by the music-based instruction. This is an important connection and implication for the use of music in the language classroom to improve vital skills, particularly in an IEP setting.

Students noted in the post-study questionnaire that reading the lyrics was perceived to have helped their reading skills. Learning journals reflected that 86 to 100 percent of students

ranked reading as “important” or “very important.” Four students mentioned the benefits of the musical activities on their reading skills, and some related this to vocabulary improvement as well.

It is also important to note, however, the students consistently stated that time in class and teacher help were some of the most beneficial parts of their learning. The students were allowed to answer with more than one response and in the music units, students specifically named the musical tasks (class activities, Lyrics Training, etc.) as being helpful in learning and achieving the goals they had set for themselves. It is also important to note that, because the students are at an intermediate proficiency level, their comments are not always an accurate portrayal of what they intended to say.

Student Variables

Both the pre-study and post-study questionnaires were examined based on variable, including gender, language, and country of origin, in order to determine whether or not any patterns of difference in the students’ perceptions existed when cross-tabulated results. A chi-square test was used to determine any significance that might exist among and across various groups. In the post-study questionnaire, there were two questions that revealed a significant difference between men and women. In responses to the statement, “Using music encouraged me to practice my writing skills” there was a significant difference between men and women, $\chi^2 (4, N = 35) 10.35, p = 0.03$. Likewise, there was a difference in gender regarding responses to the affective filter statement “Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident practicing writing skills”, $\chi^2 (4, N = 38) 9.78, p = 0.04$. There were no significant differences among the students’ countries of origin in the post-study questionnaire; however, one motivation-related

statement resulted in a significant difference among languages. The responses to the statement “Using music encouraged me to practice my writing skills, resulted in a difference when examining the students’ first languages, $\chi^2 (16, N = 35) 33.99, p = 0.01$. It is important to consider the disproportionality of groups of students when considering this data. In some instances, there was only one student that represented a particular country or language group, and the groups did not always consist of equal numbers.

CHAPTER 5-DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The data outlined in Chapter Four provides evidence that the majority of students participating in the study found musical tasks in the classroom helpful. Students believed that they improved significantly in all skills with the exception of writing, for which ratings of improvement were lower. Students ranked speaking and listening as well as pronunciation skills as their most improved areas with 94 percent choosing listening, 69 percent for speaking, and 83 percent selecting pronunciation. By contrast, only 14 percent felt that their writing had improved through the use of music. Although the participants were taking a communications class, which focuses on all four skills, given the receptive nature of music-based instruction it is not surprising that students felt that they had improved less in writing than in listening and reading. Interesting to note, however, is that they reported improved speaking; this fact seems to be attributable more to development in pronunciation than to spoken fluency. These results indicate that more work can be done on developing writing skills through music-based instruction, a topic which will be discussed in more detail below. Responses regarding confidence and motivation in each of the skill areas reflect students' perceptions of improvement. Students felt more confident and motivated when using speaking, reading, listening, and pronunciation than they did when writing.

The first research question asked: Does music help increase student self-confidence and lower the affective filter in learning the language? While Krashen (1982) stated that self-confidence was a main category of affective filter research, the term was also used to make the concept of the affective filter more accessible in its meaning to the intermediate IEP students in the study. The results of the post-study questionnaire revealed that the majority of students felt

that music-based instruction improved their confidence in their language skills: listening (91.66 percent), reading (77.78 percent), speaking (83.34 percent), and accuracy (75 percent). Students also noted increased confidence in their pronunciation (99.78 percent) and cultural knowledge (61.11 percent) based on their work with music in language learning. Scores were slightly lower for increased confidence in writing (47.22 percent) through music-based instruction. This is not surprising given that students completed activities that focused more on listening and reading comprehension than on the productive skills. These numbers were corroborated by student comments regarding their confidence level. One student stated that the tasks helped him to feel more confident and able to understand better the speech of native speakers. Another commented that, not only did the music help him understand the lessons, but it made him feel, “more comfortable talking in the class.”

Research question number two asked: How does the use of music in the language classroom affect student motivation to learn? The results of the post-study questionnaire revealed that the majority of students felt that music-based instruction encouraged them to learn: listening (97.22 percent), reading (72.22 percent), speaking (80.56 percent), and grammatical concepts (66.67 percent). Students noted increased motivation to improve their pronunciation (91.57 percent) and cultural knowledge (50 percent) based on their work with music in language learning. Again, scores were slightly lower for increased motivation in writing (40 percent) through music-based instruction. Ratings for increased motivation in writing were divided; the majority of students choose “agree” (11) or “neither agree nor disagree” (15). Students’ comments supported these percentages. Five students noted that the tasks were “fun,” “interesting,” or that they enjoyed the activities. Another student stated that music encouraged

him to learn more. One student stated that he began to use music in his free time to study and practice his English. His responses to the motivation questions on the post-study questionnaire all indicated that he was motivated by the musical tasks; the student selected “agree” in the questions pertaining to writing, grammatical concepts, and the target culture and selected “strongly agree” for all other skills. Another commented “I want to listen more and understand more!”

Oxford and Shearin (1994) assert that motivation is clearly important for language learning but also that “it is crucial to understand what our students' motivations are” (p. 12). The data and comments from this study show that students' motivations are both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. One student commented:

I think using music to learn English helps in many field [*sic*]. For example it will let you have vairaty of vocabulary [*sic*]. Also it help a lot to improve the listening skills wich it important for acadmic life [*sic*].

While this student clearly outlines extrinsic motivations for learning the language, numerous comments showed that continued practice with the language was often intrinsically driven by enjoyment for the music. Another student noted:

Music helped my listening skill very well. I always listen to music while riding the bus, studying and relaxing. Understanding rylics meaning improved my reading and knowledge [*sic*].

Many of the students found the music motivating, commenting that it was “enjoyable,” “helpful,” and “interesting.” Their comments also reflected that the use of music inspired them to continue learning. One student stated, “I strongly agree the music helped me to improve my

listening skills because the sing faster and make my I want to listen and understand more [*sic*]. ”

These comments demonstrate that music was a clear factor in maintaining and increasing motivation among the participants of the study and are supported by research such as that of Schön et al. (2008) that assert the benefits of musical instruction on motivation such as the ability of songs to peak students’ interest due to their affective content and the joint use of linguistic structures along with melody and rhythm. Teacher notes on the students’ participation and behavior during these tasks also showed an increase in engagement, corroborating the students’ responses that the tasks were motivational for them in many ways. They also show that music helps bridge the gap between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. While music-based instruction clearly conforms to the parameters of classroom-based teaching, students continued to practice at home using music; this additional practice demonstrates a heightened intrinsic motivation to learn the language outside of class.⁵ If musical tasks are motivating enough to encourage students to continue to practice their language skills independently, their language skills will improve and lead to further motivation to learn.

Teacher notes of student behavior in class underscore student responses in the post-study questionnaire, and student participation grades reflect more participation during the lessons containing musical tasks among many of the students. When considering this data, it is important to keep in mind that the participation grades of the students are based on the class syllabus and the expectations of student participation in the class which states that students are to participate in all activities (individual, partner, small group, class, etc.) with any and all

⁵ During the non-music units, students completed structured reading and comprehension exercises, Ted Talk videos, and listening exercises at home. For the purposes of this study, students were only asked to link their feelings of motivation to music-based instruction and not to make comparisons. Therefore, data linking motivation and more traditional homework activities is not included here.

classmates, and also provides provisions for lowering students' grade based upon negative contributions to the class, such as cell phone use, or the use of their native language when interacting with classmates (expectations in line with the policies of the IEP in which the students were enrolled). Thus, other factors could contribute to a lower participation grade; however, high participation grades do represent participation and engagement among the students. While participation for some of the naturally engaged students stayed consistent, there were weeks during the musical instruction in which participation grades were consistently higher. Based on teacher notes about the class sessions, there was an increase in engagement among the students during the use of musical tasks. The use of music inspired even the most reserved students to speak and participate more than when they worked with a reading text or traditional lecture. The students appeared more attentive and engaged in the lessons during musical tasks as well. There was a clear difference in the students' attitudes and participation in the classroom when musical activities were introduced.

The third research question asked: Do students perceive the use of music in language instruction as instrumental in improving their overall proficiency? Nearly all of the students reported that their ability in at least one of the four language skills had improved because of work with music. The results of the post-study questionnaire revealed that the majority of students felt that music-based instruction helped them to improve their skills: listening (94.44 percent), reading (77.78 percent), speaking (74.29 percent), and accuracy (75 percent). An overwhelming majority of students also noted improvement in their pronunciation (91.66 percent) and cultural knowledge (58.33 percent). Scores were again lower for improvement in

writing (40 percent). The students clearly felt that music played a crucial role in improving their overall language proficiency and their ability to communicate.

Given the nature of listening and reading, music, specifically songs, provide ideal material and approaches to teaching these skills. As Shrum and Glisan (2005) note, “Listening and reading are active cognitive processes that require an interplay between various types of knowledge” (p. 183). Listeners and readers use a variety of strategies and skills when working with reading and listening texts such as, background knowledge and experiences, discourse knowledge, short-term memory retention, and their ability to use a variety of strategies to bring meaning to the comprehension task (Shrum and Glisan, 2005).

The positive ratings in improved self-confidence that students gave in the study may be linked to three important characteristics of music-based instruction. First, music-based instruction was likely successful for the majority of students because the music used was familiar to them prior to its use in class. Many, although not all, of the students had been exposed to U.S. pop music in their home cultures or during the course of their studies in the United States, so individual songs, and often their meanings, were already familiar to them. Given their experiences with the music prior to and outside of the class, students may have felt more comfortable with the tasks involving unknown material. Because of this familiarity, the material may have seemed less threatening than a traditional lecture or reading assignment from a textbook and therefore improved student confidence in the learning process. In addition, music draws on non-linguistic background knowledge that the majority of students possessed. Even if vocabulary items and grammatical structures were unfamiliar, the structure of songs and the

themes present in the lyrics of a given genre (e.g., pop music) were predictable, which helped students hypothesize about the meanings of unknown words and grammar forms.

Second, the repetition offered by lyrics provides multiple exposures to linguistic structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which provides students ample opportunity to practice when working with a single song and thus, supports short-term memory retention. After several listenings, the forms, lexical items, and pronunciation of words become more familiar and are more easily memorized and internalized through repetition. According to Salcedo (2010), the repetitive nature of music “provides prolonged practice with the language” and thus can be a “more effective way to trigger mental rehearsal that may in turn stimulate language acquisition” (p. 119). Ramsey (1980) further explains that through mental rehearsal, students practice silent repetition, grammar rules, and error correction; all of these activities have been shown to lead to greater success in language learning (as cited in Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Schön et al. (2008) also support the idea of the benefit to segmentation and structure provided by music and song in addition to other benefits like an increase in motivation among many students. Likewise, previous pedagogical findings support the notion that language skills can be directly benefited by musical tasks, a fact that (when combined with the students’ favorable perceptions of their own learning and the efficacy of music-based instruction) creates important implications for the classroom use and autonomous opportunities that music-based instruction and musical tasks can provide (Schön et al., 2008; Herrera et al., 2011; Lê, 1999; Sevik, 2012).

Third, the mnemonic features of music reinforce learning for a number of learning styles. Using melody, rhythm, and rhyme in music to remember grammar forms and vocabulary bolsters the learning process and allows students to draw on other strengths while also individualizing

their learning strategies. According to Pindale (2013), “Music can be used as a mnemonic device to improve verbal memory because it consists of melodic and rhythmic structures that group a large amount of information into smaller units” (p. 3). The use of pop music in particular incorporates catchy word groupings and tunes which are easy for students comprehend and store. The fact that these tasks can also “trigger mental rehearsal” and may help learners internalize the language input through the rhythm and rhyme of songs plays an important role in the efficacy of these tasks.

Nearly every student response positively endorsed the use of musical tasks to improve their confidence, motivation, and proficiency. The data provide important implications for the language classroom because they demonstrate that students believe that they can benefit from the use of musical activities in a variety of ways, especially in listening, reading, and pronunciation. Notes on student behavior and student participation grades likewise revealed the benefits of using music-based instruction. Students appeared to experience moments of realization or understanding while listening to a song and following along with the lyrics. They also seemed to find the use of music to better understand a rhythmic aspect of English speech effective as evidenced by the aforementioned reactions to the tasks.

Music also played an important role in the mediation of culture. Although some of the activities were geared toward developing accuracy or a particular skill, they also exposed students to authentic texts and incorporated cultural learning. Students were encouraged to bring to bear the knowledge of their native cultures on the aspects of U.S. culture depicted in the songs. The discussions based on these topics revealed the culturally unique practices of weddings and marriage, traditions, and views of war and conflict. In a unit titled Holidays and

Traditions, students listened to songs related to marriage. These musical tasks led to an animated discussion among the varied student population in which they discussed the concept of marriage, the importance of marriage to them personally, and the societal significance of marriage. Also discussed were wedding traditions and the perceptions of these traditions through the lens of other cultures. This was a task in which the students could be observed taking more risks in expressing ideas and becoming more willing to speak in class, possibly due to the fact that they felt a personal connection to the topic and/or the music. The same was true of a unit titled Controversial Issues. While the controversial nature of the topics might normally arouse caution in students and dissuade them from participating, the music dissolved cultural barriers and encouraged students to talk more freely. In this unit, students listened to the “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die Rag,” a protest song by Country Joe and the Fish (McDonald, 1967). This song provided students with an opportunity to talk about the subject of war without focusing primarily on dates and the mechanics of war, topics that might be highlighted in historical texts. Instead, they focused on the pros and cons of anti-war protest, the meaning of the war for U.S. culture, the emotional impact of the draft and the war on the American psyche, and conflicting responses to the war. The music communicated the emotion that defined the period of U.S. history in a way that an historical text could not, particularly for students with intermediate English skills. The songs captured the complex collection of ideas and feelings in language that students could comprehend. Being able to communicate about a complex idea with intermediate language skills is in itself a motivating factor because students likely felt like they could contribute to a discussion that otherwise would have been inaccessible to them. This use of music as a conveyor

of cultural knowledge at all linguistic levels reveals its importance as an instructional medium and as content.

The students' learning journals generally align with the student responses on the pre- and post-study questionnaires and the teacher's notes. The skills students stated were most improved by music-based instruction were also consistently listed as being very important to many individual students. The students consistently ranked speaking, listening, reading, and confidence in speaking as important or very important in their learning journals and their goals for each unit generally mirrored this statement as well. It is important to note that the aspects of their language skill that the students' considered to be very important were the skills in which students perceived the most benefits from the music-based tasks. This presents an important implication for the use of music-based instruction or musical tasks in language classrooms, particularly in classes in which the primary goal of the class or course is to improve communication skills.

Limitations of the Study and Areas of Further Research

The results of this study offer a unique contribution to the field given the significant lack of empirical evidence about the use of musical tasks in the language classroom and information regarding students' attitudes and perceptions of these tasks. The strengths of the study lie in the fact that classes from two semesters were included in the study, and students who participated in the study received instruction in units both with and without musical tasks so they had a better understanding of the institutional setting and instruction. This helped to provide more common knowledge of instruction before students were asked to assess instruction, particularly music-based instructional tasks. In addition, this study examined student perceptions in three aspects of

learning: affective filter and confidence, motivation, and perceived proficiency. This three-pronged approach provides a broader view of students' response to the efficacy of music-based instruction.

There are several limitations to this study. One limitation comes from the student population itself. With a majority of Arabic-speaking students in each class, the results must be considered with this in mind. It is possible that in another language context with students from a larger variety of backgrounds or language groups that the results may differ. Another important limitation to consider is the time frame that dictated a shorter data collection in the second semester. While the students received the same instruction in the first two units, they did not receive the same number of units of instruction in the semester. The results, however, are relatively consistent between semesters; thus, the difference in instruction did not appear to greatly change the results in the second semester. It is also important to note that the data from the learning journals did not always provide as much information as was hoped for in the student responses. Some of the open-ended questions resulted in students providing little detail; for example, in answering the question of what had been most helpful in reaching their goals, some students wrote "everything" or when asked what was not helpful, students replied "nothing." Students also took cues from the examples given in the question and many did not stray from the written examples provided to help prompt them to answer the questions. Thus, it is important in future studies of this kind to design the learning journal in a way that can better elicit helpful and insightful information from the students.

The study was tailored for an IEP setting and based upon the curriculum set by the university at which it was carried out. Thus, while much of the study can likely be generalized

for some purposes, because the study specifically examined the use of these tasks in an Intensive English setting, the information provided by the study cannot be generalized to apply to all language classrooms. Another potentially confounding variable comes from the fact that the teacher/researcher and students worked closely together throughout the research. This interaction could influence the students and affect a variety of personal factors which could have implications for the research. The students' positive or negative feelings could be affected by their relationship with the teacher or their feelings toward the class.

More research is required on the effects of music-based instruction on proficiency. Empirical data regarding the effects of music-based instruction on language learning is needed to clarify to what degree it may actually improve proficiency. Given the time constraints of the study, data regarding actual changes in student proficiency were not possible. In the future, one could examine the benefits of music-based instruction on the four skill areas, pronunciation, and cultural knowledge. This would require a pre- and post-test to determine if music-based instruction had actually improved language performance as compared to traditional instruction. Nevertheless, this study is important in its contribution to the understanding of how students perceive the effects of music on their learning and its link to improved motivation to learn.

Based on the discovered benefits to motivation of the musical tasks in the classroom, particularly the online music training (Lyrics Training), more research is required to determine how music can be used to facilitate autonomous learning outside of the classroom. If viable means for working with music motivate students to continue their language study outside of the classroom can be verified, then teachers will have the ability to expand classroom teaching or promote student-centered or autonomous learning. In the case of an IEP, especially one in which

the language populations are heavily disproportionate, it is common for many students to live with family members or other students from their culture who speak their first language. Thus, it is not uncommon for students to speak their first language and complete any out-of-school activities (watching television or movies, listening to music, conversing with friends, etc.) solely in their first language. This makes it difficult for many students to resist the urge to speak in their first language during activities and class time, and it certainly makes it easy for students to speak their first language at any given time throughout the day, especially after their classes have ended. Likewise, students in a foreign language setting face similar temptations and can use their first language with one another and the teacher if necessary. Although ESL students are immersed in the language and the culture, because of the ease in which students can use their first language, it is important that students spend at least some amount of time outside of class practicing their second language skills and working to improve their proficiency.

Finally, it would be beneficial to compare the findings of this study with a quantitative study that more closely investigates student performance as compared with their perceptions of their abilities. It is possible that students may have overestimated themselves or the benefit of a particular task because it was interesting or motivational for them, and so their perception may not align with the reality of the improvement of their skills. Such a study could be viewed in combination with the data of the present study in order to gain more information into how well student perceptions and students' true performance actually align. It is possible that there would be a strong correlation due to the findings related to the benefit of musical tasks on the affective filter and motivation; however, it is important to build a more complete understanding of the

benefits to teachers and students of using musical tasks in the classroom. Such quantitative research may help provide some missing answers related to music in the classroom.

Conclusion

Overall, this study helps to fill gaps in the current research by providing an overview of the perceived benefits of using musical tasks to teach ESL, as well as by contributing students' perspectives, and provides further direction for research in the fields of music and language and related disciplines. It is clear that musical tasks can be a helpful addition to a traditional classroom and traditional learning strategies or instructional methods from the perspective of lowering the affective filter, motivating students and encouraging engagement and participation in the classroom.

This research has uncovered differing opinions toward music in the language classroom. It has, however, also shown that even students who may not believe in the ability of music to help them improve and learn may change their ideas about the benefits of musical tasks as at least one participant mentioned in this study. It is clear when examining the role of music education in the school systems and the cultural attitudes towards music both in the United States and abroad, not every country believes that music is a constructive use of learners' time or a viable method for learning; thus, it is important to show students how music-based instruction can be beneficial for them.

This study shows that musical tasks can help students become more comfortable in their participation, promote communication across cultures, improve motivation, and provide an effective learning strategy for some learners. The student responses regarding using music in their free time along with previous findings of autonomous learning through songs and learners'

often playful and spontaneous approach toward music provide important implications for the use of music-based instruction for both in-class learning as well as autonomous learning through musical tasks to help students gain language skills outside of the classroom (Wang, 2013).

Activities like music listening assignments, responses to the message of a song, or tasks such as Lyrics Training provide new and interesting ways to prompt autonomous learning and motivate students to practice their language skills out of class.

Gatti-Taylor (1980) stated:

If we look upon songs as speech acts, lyrics become a form of heightened language, because the rhythm and tone of the words receive added emphasis, thanks to their union with music . . . they are easily accessible to the students, who sometimes find them to be a more authentic linguistic experience than a contrived memorized dialogue. (p. 465).

With this in mind, using these authentic, culturally rich musical tasks can be of great benefit to students. Providing students with encouragement and motivation to continue learning while helping them to improve their confidence and proficiency is a desirable goal for any language educator. Music in the language classroom can be an important addition to help students and teachers achieve their goals.

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Appendix A

Pre-Study Questionnaire

Dear student, thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please read the descriptors for each category and mark the one that best describes you. Please be advised that this survey will not affect your grade in any way, so we encourage you to be honest.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Proficiency					
I can understand simple speech on familiar or everyday topics in personal and social contexts.					
I can understand short, simple texts about topics with which I am familiar.					
I can understand academic presentations on topics that are familiar to me.					
I can speak easily about familiar topics dealing with everyday life.					
I can write basic texts on familiar topics in all of the major time frames.					
I can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to working with non-native speakers of English.					
I am familiar with U.S. culture and the basic differences between it and my native culture.					
Motivation					
I enjoy communicating with others in English.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy listening to basic texts (e.g. tv shows, newscasts, and stories) in English.					
I enjoy reading simple or familiar texts in English.					
I enjoy speaking about familiar topics like school, work, free time, etc. in English.					
I enjoy writing basic texts on topics with which I am familiar.					
I want to achieve a native-like pronunciation and be understood by people not accustomed to speaking with non-native speakers.					
I want to learn more about U.S. culture.					
Affective Filter					
I am confident with my current listening skills					
I am confident in my ability to understand what I read.					
I am confident speaking English with native speakers unaccustomed to speaking with non-native speakers of English.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident that people can understand my meaning when I write.					
I am confident in my pronunciation of English.					
I am confident in situations that are culturally different from my native culture.					
Music and Language					
I listen to music in English to improve my listening skills.					
I read lyrics of music to improve my reading skills.					
I sing texts in English to improve my speaking skills.					
I make up songs in English to help me learn.					
I sing songs in English to help me improve my pronunciation.					
I listen to music or read lyrics in English to help learn more about the culture.					

1. I have been studying English for _____ years.

2. Describe your interest level in learning English. Please check one.

_____ very interested _____ interested _____ indifferent _____ not interested

3. Which of these reasons best describes why you are learning English?

___ professional purposes ___ general interest ___ academic purposes

___ to communicate with family members ___ other: _____

Musical Instruction

1. I have had formal music instruction. Yes ___ or No ___ (Please check one)

2. If you answered yes to Question 1, how many years of formal music instruction have you had? _____

3. On what instrument(s) have you had formal music instruction?

4. Describe your interest level in music. Please check one.

_____very interested _____interested _____indifferent _____not interested

Music and Language

1. I listen to music from the target culture. Yes ___ or No ___ (Please check one)

2. I understand the lyrics in the music from the target culture. Yes ___ or No ___

3. I listen to music from the target culture because

___ I like the lyrics ___ I like the music ___ I like both ___ I don't listen to it

4. I have used music to learn a language. Yes ___ or No ___

5. If you answered yes to question 4, describe your experience using music to learn a language.

Appendix B

Learning Journal (Unit 1, 6, 7, and 9)

Learning Journal - Unit ____

A. Before you start: My Goals

1. How important are these aspects in your learning?

	not so important	important	very important
Listening			
Reading			
Speaking			
Writing			
Cultural Knowledge			
Confidence in Speaking			
Confidence in Writing			

2. What do you want to improve during this unit?

3. What can help you to reach your goals? (e.g., “writing flashcards”)

4. How much time will you need to reach your goals?

B. During the unit

1. What new vocabulary or structures are you learning? How are you learning them?

2. What is difficult for you? Why?

3. What are the ten most important vocabulary items for the topic of this work cycle? Write the word and a definition in English, using strategies like synonyms, opposites, etc.

Word	Definition
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

C. After the unit

1. Have you reached your goals? yes partly no

2. What has helped you to reach your goals? (time spent in class, help from the teacher, studying at home, homework, musical activities, online music practice, etc.)

3. What was not helpful?

4. What would you do differently next time in order to better achieve your goals?

5. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix C

Post-Study Survey

Dear student, thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please read the descriptors for each category and mark the one that best describes you. Please be advised that this survey will not affect your grade in any way, so we encourage you to be honest.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Proficiency					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my listening skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my reading skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my speaking skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my writing skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my accuracy in English.					
Using music in the classroom helped me improve my English pronunciation.					
Using music in the classroom helped me learn more about the target culture.					
Motivation					
Using music encouraged me to practice my listening skills.					
Using music encouraged me to practice my reading skills.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Using music encouraged me to practice my speaking skills.					
Using music encouraged me to practice my writing skills.					
Using music encouraged me to study grammatical concepts in English.					
Using music encouraged me to practice my English pronunciation.					
Using music encouraged me to learn about the target culture.					
Affective Filter					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my listening skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my reading skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more comfortable practicing speaking skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more comfortable practicing writing skills.					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more comfortable practicing accuracy in using English.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my pronunciation.					
Using music in the classroom helped me feel more confident in my understanding of the target culture.					

1. Please elaborate on the items for which you marked “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree

2. Using music in the language classroom has helped me *most* in these areas (please check all that apply):

Appendix D

Units of Instruction

Non- MusicUnits	
Unit 1 - “Make Small Talk”	Unit 6 - “Life Plans”
<p>Goals of the Unit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make small talk 2. Describe a busy schedule 3. Develop cultural awareness 4. Discuss how culture changes over time <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related vocabulary (etiquette, punctuality, offensive, polite/impolite, table manners, etc.) • Grammatical Structures (tag questions, past perfect) • Cultural knowledge (dinner etiquette, changes in culture over time) <p>Additional Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening Activities • Youtube Videos (News, Coverage of cultural events) • Reading Assignments • Group Research work 	<p>Goals of the Unit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain a change in life and work plans 2. Express regrets about past actions 3. Discuss skills, abilities, and qualifications 4. Discuss factors that promote success <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related vocabulary (talents, skills, experience, experience, knowledge, etc.) • Grammatical Structures (was/were going to/ would, perfect modals and reduction of “have” in perfect modals) • Cultural knowledge (workplace etiquette, tips for effective work habits from American CEO, etc.) <p>Additional Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening Activities • Youtube Videos (TedTalks) • Reading Assignments • Interview

MusicUnits	
Unit 7 - “Holidays and Traditions”	Unit 9 - “Controversial Topics”
<p>Goals of the Unit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wish someone a good holiday 2. Ask about local customs 3. Exchange information about holidays 4. Explain wedding traditions <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related vocabulary (wedding vocabulary, types of holidays, holiday activities, etc.) • Grammatical Structures (adjective clauses, thought groups, etc.) • Cultural knowledge (holiday traditions, how holidays are observed, etc.) <p>Musical Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skater Boy - Avril Lavigne (thought groups) • Love and Marriage - Frank Sinatra (culture) • *Rude - Magic (culture/marriage traditions) • Rude, A Father’s Response - Benji Cowart (culture/marriage traditions) • *Marry Me - Train (culture) <p>*Lyrics Training Activity</p>	<p>Goals of the Unit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring up a controversial subject 2. Discuss controversial issues politely 3. Propose solutions to global problems 4. Debate the pros and cons of issues <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related vocabulary (political vocabulary, types of governments, expressing agreement/disagreement, etc.) • Grammatical Structures (non-count nouns, verbs followed by objects and infinitives, etc.) • Cultural knowledge (global issues, critical thinking, problem solving) <p>Musical Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With A Little Help From My Friends - The Beatles (stress-timed language) • I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin-to-Die-Rag - Country Joe and the Fish (culture, topic of war) • Waiting on the World to Change - John Mayer (culture, global issues, activism) • *Gimme Shelter - The Rolling Stones (culture, controversial topics) <p>*Lyrics Training Activity</p>

Appendix E

Complete List of Student Comments (Post-Study Questionnaire)

Text Response
so from strongly agree but never strongly disagree
Using music in classroom is helpful to my listening too much because when I hear a music I relize some words that could not know to pronounce it. but after I hearded it I relize an American pronounce.
strongly agreei listening, speaking, pronunciation because I think these help me alot
-Using music in class room helped me improve my listening skill.
*I'm agree with that because it's helped me alot with my listning skill.
-Using music in class room helped me improve my writing skills.
*I'm disagree because it's not helped me with writing skills.
Strongly disagree, because I don't like the music and I don't listening the music, just in class. Also I don't writing any music.
using music in the classroom helped me improve my speaking skills
because it has a storg accient
I think listen to music help me to improve listening in English.
Using music is good for my listening. I can practice listening with my favorite song. I can enjoy it! and improve my listening skills.
I feel strongly agree that listening music can improve your listening, reading speaking, pronunciation, writing because when you sing you have to read the lyrics and practice the correct pronunciation.
Honestly, I improve my english because of listening music and singin.
Because music is include melody, lyrics, situational...,it makes me to have a lot of pictures in my mind and helps me to remerber the words, pronunciation, even grammar
It's very useful because it would into memory easily. Moreover, it's fun to listen to music. First, I didn't think it's not useful but now I think it's useful. so, I strongly agree.
music helped my listening skill very well. I always listen to music while riding the bus, studying and relaxing. Understanding rylics meaning improved my reading and knowledge
I think using music encouraged me to learn English, because It's enjoyable and helpful for me.
Using music is helpful my listening skills because songs are separate with section, so it's easy to understand.
Strongly agree: listening, reading, speaking, pronunciation, culture.
Strongly disagree: nothing
I think I strongly agree with that's also should we have a very nice teacher for that class, because if we don't have a good teacher, then will never learn anything. In addition, I belive the music in classroom will work for communication skills especailly!
I think that I'm agree with the main idea, because I believe that it's very helpful, fun and intersing way to Learn english spcialy to improv the listening and pronunciation.
Music Forbien in my religion.
I think music is improving our listening section very well, then the pronunciation so that we can pronoun the word corectly. But I do not believe it helped my reading section because it's almost a simple words for me

Proficiency - "I thing using music in class helped my pronunciation"

Motivation - I strongly agree music helps practice my listening skills and speaking skills "because when you listen you sing, when you sing, you pronwnce"

Affective filter - music helped me feel more confident in my listening and pronunciation.

What makes me choose strongly agree for pronunciation or listening because that really can I use it every time even my free time also maes my exent good

using music in the classroom helped me feel more comfortable practicing accuracy is using English. because every time I do better.

I strongly agree the music helped me to improve my listening skills because the sing faster and make my I want to listen and understand more. And also it's made me confident and more understand when native english speande and thanks

It's helping to leran English faster and it helps me to improf my listening, speaking, writing, self cornfidence, and cultura target

I think using music to learn English helps in many field. For example it will let you have vairaty of vocalary. Also it help a lot to improve the listening skills wich it important for academic life.

using music in the classroom helped me improve my listening skills because the music contains many words I can listen so I can listen more. and I try to catch the word to understand the music. And it not bored.

strongly agree. Because it help me alot to understand the lessons and make me feel more comfortable talking in the class and it helped me to understand in an easy way.

I think music is very important way to learn English.

Proficiency for improve my listening, reading and pronunciation is one strongly agree

I think to use "lyrics.com" is good idea to improve grammer.

In general, I learned a lot from listening music in the class because we focus of words and grammar thing and it is good to practice and improve my English language skills.

i strongly agree because I feel confident of the way we learn.