Teaching English Through Music and Songs

Innovative Strategies for Developing Language Skills through Music, Creativity, and Interactive Learning in the EFL Classroom



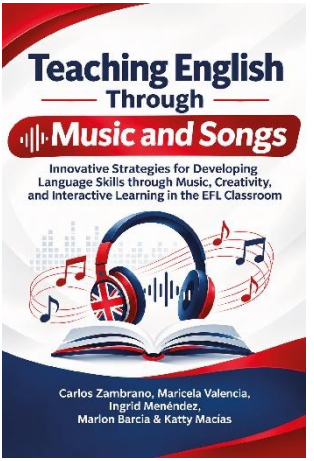
Carlos Zambrano, Maricela Valencia,
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Synopsis

The book *Teaching English Through Music and Songs: Innovative Strategies for Developing Language Skills through Music, Creativity, and Interactive Learning in the EFL Classroom* presents a pedagogical approach aimed at strengthening English language teaching through musical experiences in Ecuador's General Basic Education and Baccalaureate levels. The publication examines the relationship between music and language learning from cognitive and pedagogical perspectives that contribute to understanding its role in developing communicative competence. Across five chapters, it addresses strategies for expanding vocabulary and improving listening comprehension through songs selected according to students' ages and language proficiency levels. It also examines instructional procedures for developing pronunciation and oral fluency through rhythmic activities that encourage active classroom participation. The proposed approach incorporates digital resources and creative projects that connect English language learning with cultural experiences familiar to Ecuadorian students. Furthermore, it presents formative assessment procedures for monitoring linguistic progress and academic motivation. Its practical orientation provides teachers with instructional resources for designing inclusive learning experiences that address educational diversity and promote meaningful English language acquisition. Particular attention is given to classroom applications that support student engagement and strengthen communicative skills across different educational stages within Ecuador's national school system.

Keywords: language teaching, music education, active learning, basic education, secondary education

Sinopsis

El libro *Teaching English Through Music and Songs: Innovative Strategies for Developing Language Skills through Music, Creativity, and Interactive Learning in the EFL Classroom* presenta una propuesta pedagógica orientada a fortalecer la enseñanza del inglés mediante experiencias musicales en la Educación General Básica y el Bachillerato del sistema educativo ecuatoriano. La obra examina la relación entre música y aprendizaje lingüístico desde perspectivas cognitivas y didácticas que permiten comprender su contribución al desarrollo de competencias comunicativas. A través de cinco Chapters se analizan estrategias para ampliar el vocabulario y mejorar la comprensión auditiva mediante canciones seleccionadas según la edad y el nivel de dominio lingüístico del estudiantado. También se abordan procedimientos para desarrollar la pronunciación y la fluidez oral mediante actividades rítmicas que favorecen la participación activa. La propuesta incorpora recursos digitales y proyectos creativos que vinculan el aprendizaje del inglés con experiencias culturales cercanas a los estudiantes ecuatorianos. Asimismo, plantea mecanismos de evaluación formativa para valorar los avances lingüísticos y la motivación académica. Su orientación práctica ofrece al profesorado herramientas para diseñar experiencias inclusivas que respondan a la diversidad educativa y promuevan un aprendizaje significativo del inglés en instituciones escolares ecuatorianas.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de idiomas, educación musical, aprendizaje activo, educación básica, educación secundaria

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Introduction

Music has maintained a meaningful presence in language education because of its capacity to connect auditory perception with linguistic expression and emotional engagement. Songs provide recurring patterns of vocabulary and pronunciation within memorable communicative experiences. Murphy Odo (2022) examined the influence of English songs on second language lexical learning through a quantitative meta-analysis, contributing evidence to the academic discussion surrounding music-assisted instruction. Such research provides a basis for examining musical practices as purposeful components of English language teaching across different educational stages.

Within Ecuador's educational system, English instruction in General Basic Education and Bachillerato requires pedagogical approaches responsive to learners' linguistic development and classroom experiences. Students encounter English through formal instruction while their exposure to meaningful communication may differ considerably across educational institutions. Music offers a familiar cultural medium through which teachers can organize language practice. Mannarelli and Serrano (2024) examined vocabulary learning through songs in an EFL classroom, providing a relevant research perspective for considering musical activities within Ecuadorian school education.

The relationship between musical experience and language development extends beyond vocabulary acquisition. Musical rhythm and melodic organization provide opportunities for learners to attend to speech patterns and distinguish linguistic sounds. Zhang et al. (2023) investigated singing as a means of supporting second language pronunciation and vocabulary learning among adolescent learners. Their work contributes to the pedagogical rationale for integrating songs into classroom

instruction. Such integration requires careful attention to learner characteristics and the linguistic purposes guiding each musical activity.

The academic justification for music-based English instruction also concerns learner participation and emotional engagement. Language learning involves sustained practice and the willingness to communicate despite uncertainty about linguistic performance. Kim et al. (2024) examined learners' perceptions of music listening and its relationship with foreign language anxiety. Their research offers a perspective on the emotional dimensions of musical experiences in language education. For Ecuadorian teachers, attention to learner confidence can inform classroom practices that encourage participation and respectful interaction.

The principal objective of this book is to examine and organize innovative pedagogical strategies for developing English language skills through music and songs in Ecuadorian General Basic Education and Bachillerato classrooms. More specifically, the work addresses vocabulary development and listening comprehension alongside pronunciation and oral communication. It also considers creative learning activities and assessment procedures. Busse et al. (2021) investigated grammar learning through singing among primary school learners, illustrating the value of examining particular linguistic outcomes when evaluating music-based instruction.

Several research questions guide the discussion developed throughout the book. In what ways can musical activities support vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension among school learners? Which instructional procedures can strengthen pronunciation and speaking fluency through songs? What forms of creative participation contribute to meaningful language production? How can teachers assess linguistic progress and learner motivation during music-based instruction? These questions connect pedagogical planning with research evidence.

Chang (2024) examined different song practice modes and vocabulary retention, providing a relevant contribution to questions concerning instructional design.

Chapter 1, Music and Songs as Pedagogical Tools in English Language Teaching, examines cognitive and linguistic processes associated with musical learning experiences. It addresses musical intelligence and language processing while considering pedagogical approaches appropriate for EFL instruction. Particular attention is given to song selection and the development of inclusive learning environments. Palmer et al. (2022) presented a framework for culturally relevant and responsive music teaching. Their contribution informs the discussion of cultural representation and educational participation within musical classroom practices.

Chapter 2, Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition and Listening Comprehension Through Songs, concentrates on lexical development and auditory language processing. The discussion considers repetition and musical mnemonics alongside collocations and authentic lyrical expressions. It also addresses inferential listening and differentiated instructional tasks. Tilwani et al. (2022) investigated implicit vocabulary learning through songs with attention to spoken-form recognition and collocation recognition. Their research supports a focused examination of lexical learning processes and the design of musical activities for learners with differing proficiency levels.

Chapter 3, Developing Pronunciation, Speaking Fluency, and Oral Communication Through Music, addresses phonological awareness and the development of intelligible speech. It examines rhythm and intonation together with connected speech and oral performance. Sugiura and Hori (2025) investigated auditory musical rhythm as a cue for second language pronunciation learning. Chapter 4, Creative and Interactive Song-Based Activities for the EFL Classroom, extends the discussion toward collaborative

learning and digital resources. Zhang and Hasim (2023) provide a research perspective on gamification in EFL and ESL instruction.

Chapter 5, Assessing Language Learning Outcomes and Student Motivation Through Music-Based Instruction, examines procedures for evaluating linguistic development and classroom engagement. It addresses performance-based assessment and analytical rubrics alongside learner reflection and classroom action research. He et al. (2022) investigated students' motivation for rubric use in EFL assessment environments, informing the discussion of transparent evaluation practices. Across its five chapters, the book connects research literature with pedagogical applications intended to support English teachers working in Ecuadorian basic and upper secondary education.

Chapter 1

Music and Songs as Pedagogical Tools in English Language Teaching

Music has long accompanied human communication through its capacity to convey emotions, preserve cultural experiences, and establish connections between individuals. Within English as a Foreign Language education, its presence raises questions about the relationship between artistic expression and language development. Songs offer familiar forms of expression that can enter the classroom without losing their cultural character. Their educational significance, however, deserves examination beyond enjoyment. Understanding their pedagogical possibilities requires attention to learning processes and the decisions guiding classroom practice.

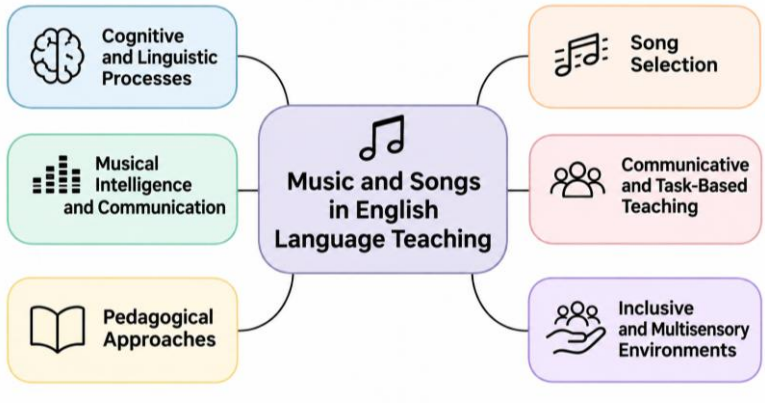
English language teaching increasingly recognizes the importance of learning experiences that engage students intellectually and encourage meaningful participation. Musical materials can contribute to such experiences because they bring language into contact with recognizable human situations. A song may express longing, disagreement, celebration, or uncertainty through words that acquire meaning within an expressive whole. For learners who encounter English mainly through formal instruction, such material can introduce different ways of experiencing language and recognizing its communicative possibilities.

The educational relationship between music and language begins with questions about human perception and learning. Both domains involve the interpretation of organized sound, although their purposes and conventions differ. Choi et al. (2025) examine cognitive and perceptual perspectives on music to language transfer among Cantonese English bilingual children. Their investigation provides a relevant point of departure for considering connections between musical experience and linguistic abilities while recognizing the need to distinguish perceptual relationships from broader communicative achievement.

Beyond perceptual relationships, music raises important questions about individual differences in learning. Students enter the classroom with varied experiences of singing, listening, and participating in musical traditions. Their responses cannot be explained through musical aptitude alone. Language proficiency, personal confidence, and opportunities for interaction also influence engagement. Recognizing such variation encourages teachers to consider musical experience as one possible contribution to language education rather than assuming that every learner will respond in the same manner.

Figure 1

Music-Based Foundations of English Language Teaching



The pedagogical use of songs also invites closer examination of the evidence supporting language development. Musical materials may attract attention and encourage repeated encounters with English expressions, but educational outcomes require careful interpretation. Murphy Odo (2022) examines the influence of English songs on second language lexical learning through a quantitative meta analytic review. This contribution brings an empirical dimension to discussions that might otherwise depend on classroom impressions. It also reinforces the importance

of connecting instructional choices with identifiable linguistic outcomes.

Questions about learning outcomes naturally lead to the organization of classroom experiences. Teachers must determine what learners will accomplish through musical participation and what forms of language use will demonstrate progress. Busse et al. (2021) investigate grammar learning through singing in an intervention involving primary school EFL learners. Their work contributes to the examination of musical activities within formal instruction. It also invites consideration of the relationship between structured learning opportunities and the communicative purposes that give classroom language meaning.

Pedagogical planning cannot be separated from the selection of musical materials. Songs differ in linguistic accessibility, expressive character, and the cultural experiences they represent. A familiar melody may invite participation while its lyrics introduce meanings that learners cannot readily interpret. Teachers therefore face decisions involving educational appropriateness and cultural understanding. Allan (2022) discusses culturally responsive teaching through world music, offering a perspective that encourages attention to musical traditions and the responsibilities associated with their classroom representation.

Cultural considerations become particularly significant in classrooms where learners bring different identities and educational experiences. Music can create opportunities for recognizing such diversity, although participation requires more than the presence of varied musical traditions. Palmer et al. (2022) develop a grounded framework for culturally relevant and responsive music teaching. Their contribution draws attention to the educational relationships surrounding musical experiences. For English language instruction, these concerns invite reflection on representation, participation, and respect for learners' cultural knowledge.

The physical and social conditions of the classroom further influence the educational possibilities of music. Learners differ in their sensory preferences, confidence, and access to instructional resources. Some may welcome collective singing while others participate more effectively through interpretation or written expression. Such differences require flexibility without weakening language learning expectations. An inclusive environment allows students to engage through appropriate forms of participation while maintaining shared educational purposes and recognizing the varied experiences they bring to learning.

Taken together, these considerations establish a foundation for examining music and songs within English language pedagogy. The chapter addresses relationships between musical and linguistic abilities before considering instructional approaches, material selection, communicative tasks, and inclusive learning environments. Its central concern is the educational reasoning that connects musical experiences with language development. Through attention to research and classroom practice, the discussion considers conditions under which music can contribute meaningfully to English learning across diverse educational settings.

1.1. Cognitive and Linguistic Processes Involved in Music-Assisted English Language Learning

Music engages cognitive and linguistic processes that shape the way learners perceive, organize, and retain a foreign language. In English language learning, musical experiences create opportunities for auditory information to become meaningful through patterned exposure and active interpretation. Melody and rhythm influence the processing of speech while encouraging learners to recognize relationships between sound and meaning. Their educational value becomes particularly evident when musical input supports the gradual development of linguistic awareness

within purposeful classroom activities and communicative learning experiences.

The relationship between musical perception and language processing begins with the brain's sensitivity to acoustic patterns. Both activities require listeners to distinguish variations in pitch, duration, intensity, and temporal organization. During musical engagement, learners encounter recurring sound structures that may strengthen their attention to phonological distinctions in English. Pitychoutis et al. (2026) examine mechanisms connecting musical instruction with language development, emphasizing the importance of structured pedagogical sequences. Such connections provide a foundation for understanding music as a resource for linguistic processing.

Auditory attention plays a significant role in determining which elements of spoken English learners notice and interpret. Musical activities can direct attention toward particular syllables, vowel qualities, and consonant combinations through repeated exposure to recognizable acoustic sequences. When learners listen with a specific linguistic purpose, they begin to distinguish meaningful differences within continuous speech. Such focused engagement may be particularly beneficial for learners who struggle to identify word boundaries or recognize familiar expressions when encountering natural patterns of spoken communication.

Working memory contributes to language acquisition by temporarily maintaining auditory information while learners interpret and organize linguistic material. Musical structures can provide predictable sequences that facilitate the mental rehearsal of unfamiliar English expressions. Rhythm may help learners maintain the order of syllables while melody offers additional cues for recalling verbal material. However, these benefits depend on the relationship between musical complexity and instructional demands. Excessive stimulation may divide attention and interfere

with the processing of unfamiliar vocabulary or grammatical structures.

The acquisition of English vocabulary involves more than remembering isolated lexical forms. Learners must establish connections between pronunciation, meaning, grammatical function, and appropriate usage. Musical repetition can support these connections when words appear within understandable verbal sequences. Pitychoutis et al. (2026) discuss measured learning gains associated with music based pedagogical practices, drawing attention to the instructional conditions underlying successful outcomes. Vocabulary development therefore depends on meaningful encounters with language rather than the mechanical reproduction of memorable musical passages.

Phonological awareness develops as learners become increasingly capable of identifying and manipulating the sound structures of English. Musical rhythm can draw attention to syllable prominence while melodic movement may encourage sensitivity to variations in pitch. These experiences become linguistically productive when learners distinguish musical patterns from the prosodic conventions of spoken English. Teachers must therefore consider the relationship between musical expression and natural pronunciation. A memorable melody does not necessarily reproduce the stress patterns required for intelligible everyday speech.

Language comprehension also depends on the learner's ability to anticipate incoming information. Familiar rhythmic structures may establish expectations that support the segmentation of auditory input into manageable units. Such expectations can reduce uncertainty during listening, particularly when learners encounter unfamiliar pronunciation or connected speech. Nevertheless, comprehension requires active interpretation rather than passive exposure. Learners must connect acoustic signals with lexical knowledge and situational meaning. Musical

predictability becomes educationally valuable when it contributes to these broader processes of understanding spoken English.

The relationship between emotion and cognition deserves particular attention because language learning frequently involves uncertainty and sustained mental effort. Musical engagement may influence learners' willingness to attend to unfamiliar sounds and participate in verbal activities. Emotional involvement can also make particular learning experiences more memorable. Yet enjoyment should not be confused with linguistic achievement. As the pedagogical analysis of Pitychoutis et al. (2026) indicates, educational outcomes require attention to instructional mechanisms and observable learning gains beyond immediate classroom enthusiasm.

The processing of grammatical information introduces another dimension of music assisted learning. Recurrent linguistic sequences may help learners notice relationships between word order, verb forms, and sentence structure. Such noticing becomes more productive when musical exposure is accompanied by opportunities to examine meaning and compare alternative expressions. Repetition alone cannot guarantee grammatical understanding. Learners need to recognize the functions of linguistic patterns across different communicative situations. Musical material can facilitate initial recognition while subsequent language use supports more flexible grammatical knowledge.

Understanding the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in music assisted English learning requires recognizing their interaction within instructional practice. Auditory perception, attention, memory, phonological awareness, and linguistic interpretation operate together rather than independently. Their contribution varies according to learner proficiency and the demands of particular activities. Pitychoutis et al. (2026) highlight the relevance of pedagogical mechanisms and carefully organized learning sequences. Effective instruction therefore depends on

aligning musical experiences with identifiable language objectives and opportunities for meaningful communicative development.

1.2. The Relationship Between Musical Intelligence, Language Processing, and Communicative Competence

Musical intelligence offers a valuable perspective for examining individual differences in English language learning. It involves sensitivity to tonal relationships, rhythmic organization, and expressive qualities that shape musical understanding. Within foreign language education, these abilities may influence the perception and interpretation of spoken communication. Their significance extends beyond recognizing acoustic patterns. Musical sensitivity can contribute to learners' awareness of expressive variation, particularly when speech conveys attitudes and interpersonal meanings that require careful interpretation during authentic communicative exchanges.

The relationship between musical intelligence and language proficiency should be understood through the interaction of perceptual abilities and learning experiences. Individuals with developed musical sensitivity may demonstrate greater awareness of subtle acoustic differences within spoken language. However, musical aptitude does not automatically produce communicative competence. Language learning also requires semantic knowledge, grammatical understanding, and social judgment. Choi et al. (2025) investigate music to language transfer among Cantonese English bilingual children, providing an empirical perspective on the relationship between musical and linguistic processing.

One particularly relevant connection concerns the interpretation of prosody as a communicative resource. Spoken English communicates intentions through changes in intonation, emphasis, and vocal expression. These features help listeners distinguish uncertainty from confidence or recognize whether an utterance functions as a request. Musical intelligence may support

sensitivity to such expressive distinctions. Nevertheless, successful interpretation requires knowledge of conversational circumstances. Learners must understand that similar acoustic patterns can communicate different intentions depending on interpersonal relationships and situational expectations.

Musical and linguistic abilities may also intersect through perceptual transfer, although the conditions governing transfer remain important. Experience with musical distinctions does not necessarily lead to equivalent improvements across every language task. Choi et al. (2025) approach this relationship from cognitive and perceptual perspectives, examining bilingual children's performance rather than assuming a universal connection. Their research encourages careful consideration of which abilities might be shared across domains. Such distinctions prevent educators from interpreting musical proficiency as evidence of broader linguistic achievement.

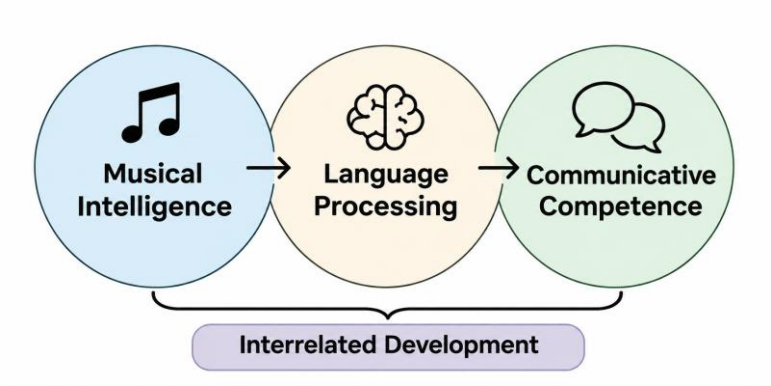
Communicative competence introduces demands that extend beyond accurate recognition of speech sounds. Learners must select appropriate expressions, interpret conversational intentions, and respond coherently to changing interactions. Musical experiences may contribute to this development when they involve attentive listening and meaningful interpersonal coordination. Group performance, for example, requires participants to monitor others and adjust their contributions. Yet the educational value of such coordination depends on whether learners subsequently apply comparable responsiveness during spoken English exchanges with other people.

The social dimension of musical intelligence becomes particularly relevant when examining interactional competence. Musical participation often involves recognizing shared timing and responding to expressive signals from others. Comparable processes occur during conversation as speakers negotiate turns and interpret pauses. These similarities create opportunities for

pedagogical connections without establishing direct equivalence between musical and conversational abilities. In English language classrooms, learners benefit when teachers explicitly relate collaborative musical experiences to turn taking, conversational responsiveness, and appropriate participation in interpersonal exchanges.

Figure 2

Connections Between Musical and Communicative Abilities



Individual differences further complicate the relationship between musical intelligence and communicative development. Learners vary in their musical backgrounds, linguistic proficiency, cultural experiences, and confidence during oral interaction. A student with limited musical training may nevertheless demonstrate considerable conversational sensitivity. Conversely, an accomplished musician may experience difficulties interpreting unfamiliar English expressions. Research examining bilingual populations, including Choi et al. (2025), provides a useful basis for investigating these relationships while recognizing that findings from particular learner groups require cautious educational interpretation.

Cultural knowledge adds another layer to the relationship between musical expression and communicative competence.

Musical traditions shape expectations about rhythm, emotional expression, and socially meaningful performance. Language communities likewise develop conventions governing politeness, emphasis, and interpersonal distance. Learners therefore need opportunities to distinguish personal interpretations from culturally appropriate communicative meanings. Musical sensitivity may encourage attention to expressive variation, but intercultural competence requires reflection on the social expectations guiding English usage across diverse communicative environments and relationships.

From an instructional perspective, musical intelligence can inform differentiated learning without becoming a fixed classification of students. Teachers may recognize musical sensitivity as one possible resource for developing expressive language abilities. However, instruction should remain accessible to learners with different aptitudes and experiences. The cognitive and perceptual distinctions examined by Choi et al. (2025) reinforce the importance of investigating specific relationships rather than assuming uniform transfer. Educational decisions consequently require attention to observable linguistic performance and individual learning needs.

The relationship between musical intelligence, language processing, and communicative competence ultimately depends on the interaction of perceptual sensitivity with meaningful language experience. Musical abilities may contribute to recognizing expressive features of speech, while communicative development requires learners to interpret and employ those features appropriately. Their integration becomes educationally relevant when perceptual awareness informs purposeful interaction. Understanding these relationships allows English language educators to acknowledge musical strengths without overlooking the linguistic, social, and cultural knowledge necessary for effective communication.

1.3. Music-Based Pedagogical Approaches for Meaningful Language Learning in EFL Settings

Music based pedagogy in English as a Foreign Language education requires a deliberate connection between musical experiences and meaningful language use. Its effectiveness depends on instructional decisions that transform songs into opportunities for interpretation, interaction, and linguistic development. Teachers must consider what learners are expected to understand and communicate through each activity. Within this perspective, musical materials acquire educational relevance when they serve identifiable learning purposes and encourage students to engage with English beyond memorized expressions or performances.

A communicative approach provides a useful foundation for integrating songs into purposeful language instruction. Rather than treating musical texts as isolated listening exercises, teachers can organize activities around messages that learners interpret and discuss. Songs may introduce personal experiences, social relationships, or familiar situations that invite authentic responses. Their pedagogical value increases when students explain interpretations and exchange opinions. Such activities establish a relationship between musical content and communicative intentions while allowing learners to practice English through meaningful classroom interaction.

Task based language teaching offers another framework for organizing musical activities around achievable communicative outcomes. Learners might compare interpretations of a song, negotiate the meaning of unfamiliar expressions, or prepare a response to its central message. Each task requires language to accomplish a recognizable purpose. Murphy Odo (2022) examines the influence of English songs on second language lexical learning through quantitative meta analysis. This research provides relevant

evidence for considering vocabulary development within pedagogical approaches that employ musical materials.

Meaningful vocabulary instruction requires attention to the relationship between lexical knowledge and communicative application. Songs can introduce expressions within recognizable situations that help learners interpret their intended meanings. However, lexical familiarity gained through listening should be extended through productive language activities. Students might explain a phrase in their own words or employ newly encountered vocabulary during discussion. Such practices encourage learners to move beyond recognition toward flexible usage while maintaining a connection between musical input and language development.

Content based instruction can also benefit from musical materials that address themes relevant to learners' academic and personal interests. Songs concerning environmental issues, cultural identity, or interpersonal relationships may introduce subject matter that encourages sustained discussion. Their selection should reflect linguistic accessibility and educational relevance rather than popularity alone. When musical content connects with curricular themes, learners can develop language through the examination of meaningful ideas. This approach creates opportunities for integrating subject knowledge with purposeful English communication.

Scaffolding remains necessary when musical materials present linguistic demands beyond learners' current proficiency. Teachers can provide guiding questions, visual references, or brief explanations before students encounter unfamiliar lyrics. Support should gradually decrease as learners demonstrate greater independence in interpretation and communication. Murphy Odo (2022) reviews quantitative evidence concerning song based lexical learning, offering a research foundation for examining instructional applications. Nevertheless, classroom implementation requires

attention to learner readiness and the relationship between musical input and instructional objectives.

Collaborative learning provides opportunities to transform musical interpretation into shared language construction. Small groups can examine contrasting meanings within lyrics and develop explanations supported by textual evidence. Through discussion, learners encounter alternative perspectives and negotiate appropriate linguistic choices. The teacher's role involves guiding participation without controlling every response. Collaborative musical activities become particularly productive when students have genuine reasons to communicate and when their contributions influence the development of a shared understanding or completed classroom task.

Creative language production represents a further pedagogical possibility when learners adapt musical materials for personal expression. Students may rewrite selected lyrics, develop alternative narratives, or compose brief verbal responses inspired by musical themes. Such activities require decisions about vocabulary, meaning, and communicative intention. Creative freedom should remain compatible with attainable language objectives. Teachers can establish manageable expectations that encourage experimentation while providing constructive feedback. The resulting work offers opportunities to examine linguistic choices within personally meaningful communicative situations.

Assessment within music based pedagogy should focus on evidence of language learning rather than musical performance quality. Teachers may examine learners' ability to interpret expressions, communicate ideas, or employ vocabulary appropriately in new situations. Short reflective tasks and oral exchanges can reveal learning that remains unnoticed during collective singing. Murphy Odo (2022) contributes quantitative evidence concerning lexical learning through English songs. Such research supports the importance of examining language outcomes

while distinguishing educational achievement from enjoyment or participation.

The integration of music into EFL pedagogy becomes meaningful when instructional approaches respond to learners' linguistic needs and communicative purposes. Communicative tasks, collaborative interpretation, and creative production provide different opportunities for engaging with musical materials. Their effectiveness depends on coherent planning and careful assessment of learning outcomes. Teachers must remain attentive to the relationship between musical content and language objectives. Within such conditions, songs can contribute to classroom experiences that encourage purposeful participation and sustained linguistic development.

1.4. Song Selection Criteria Based on Linguistic Complexity, Learner Proficiency, and Cultural Relevance

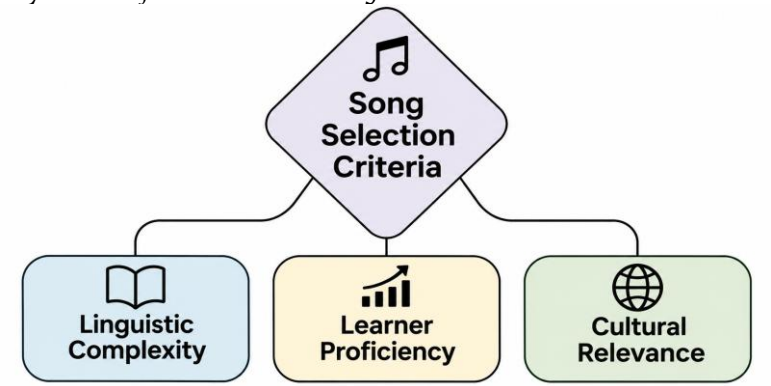
Selecting appropriate songs for English as a Foreign Language instruction requires careful consideration of linguistic demands, learner characteristics, and cultural meaning. A song may attract students through its melody while presenting language that exceeds their current abilities. Another may contain accessible vocabulary yet offer limited opportunities for meaningful communication. Teachers therefore need selection criteria that connect musical materials with instructional intentions. Such decisions influence whether learners can engage productively with lyrics and develop understanding through purposeful classroom experiences.

Linguistic complexity represents an important consideration because songs differ considerably in vocabulary, grammatical organization, and discourse structure. Some lyrics employ familiar expressions and relatively transparent sentence patterns. Others depend on figurative language, unusual word

order, or references that require considerable interpretation. Teachers should examine these features before introducing a musical text. The central question concerns whether learners possess sufficient linguistic resources to understand its main message while encountering manageable elements that extend their existing knowledge of English.

Figure 3

Key Criteria for Educational Song Selection



Learner proficiency provides a necessary reference for evaluating the accessibility of musical materials. Beginning students may benefit from songs containing recognizable vocabulary and clearly articulated expressions. Intermediate learners can engage with more varied grammatical patterns and moderately complex meanings. Advanced students may examine ambiguity, metaphor, and culturally situated language. Nevertheless, proficiency levels should guide rather than rigidly determine selection. Individual differences in listening experience and lexical knowledge can influence learners' responses to the same musical text.

The relationship between pronunciation and musical arrangement also deserves attention during selection. Instrumental intensity, vocal effects, and rapid delivery may obscure words that

learners would otherwise recognize. Teachers should consider whether the recording permits students to identify relevant linguistic features without excessive effort. Clear vocal production can support listening activities, although natural variation remains valuable at appropriate proficiency levels. Musical arrangements should therefore be evaluated according to their compatibility with the intended language task and learners' auditory capabilities.

Cultural relevance introduces considerations that extend beyond linguistic accessibility. Songs carry social meanings shaped by their communities of origin and the experiences of their performers. Allan (2022) examines culturally responsive approaches to teaching world music, emphasizing educational questions associated with musical traditions and classroom representation. For English language educators, this perspective encourages thoughtful selection of materials that acknowledge cultural identities. Songs should offer opportunities for respectful interpretation rather than presenting unfamiliar communities through simplified or stereotypical representations.

Learners' cultural backgrounds should inform selection without restricting exposure to unfamiliar musical traditions. Familiar themes may encourage participation because students recognize experiences reflected in the lyrics. However, carefully introduced songs from other communities can broaden cultural understanding and support intercultural communication. Teachers need to consider whether students possess sufficient background knowledge to interpret unfamiliar references. When necessary, brief cultural explanations can establish meaningful connections between the musical text and the social circumstances surrounding its production.

Authenticity represents another relevant criterion when choosing songs for language instruction. Commercial recordings may expose learners to naturally occurring expressions and diverse varieties of English. Yet authentic materials can contain

grammatical departures, regional vocabulary, or references that complicate interpretation. Educational suitability should not depend entirely on whether a song was created for native audiences. Teachers must evaluate its potential to support meaningful language use. Adapted materials may sometimes provide greater accessibility without diminishing the educational value of musical engagement.

Ethical considerations become particularly important when songs represent cultural experiences beyond those familiar to the classroom. Teachers should examine the origins of musical materials and avoid removing culturally meaningful expressions without explanation. Allan (2022) addresses issues surrounding culturally responsive world music education, offering a perspective relevant to respectful classroom practice. Appropriate selection involves acknowledging the people and traditions associated with musical works. Such awareness can prevent cultural misunderstanding while encouraging learners to approach unfamiliar expressions with curiosity and respect.

Practical classroom conditions also influence the suitability of selected songs. Available instructional time, recording quality, and access to reliable lyrics can determine whether an activity proceeds effectively. Teachers should consider whether a song permits manageable preparation and provides sufficient material for the intended learning objective. Age appropriateness and potentially sensitive themes require similar attention. A linguistically accessible recording may still be unsuitable when its content conflicts with learners' developmental needs or the educational expectations of their institution.

Effective song selection ultimately requires professional judgment informed by linguistic analysis and cultural awareness. Teachers must balance accessibility with opportunities for intellectual engagement while considering the diverse experiences learners bring into the classroom. Allan (2022) reinforces the

educational importance of culturally responsive musical practices. Within EFL instruction, these considerations encourage the selection of songs that respect cultural meaning and support attainable language objectives. Careful evaluation allows musical materials to become purposeful resources for learning.

1.5. Integrating Musical Experiences into Communicative and Task-Based Language Teaching

Integrating musical experiences into communicative and task based language teaching requires a clear understanding of the relationship between classroom activity and purposeful language use. Musical participation can create situations in which learners exchange information and negotiate meaning through English. However, instructional value depends on the communicative demands embedded within each activity. Teachers must design experiences that move beyond collective performance toward meaningful interaction. Such integration allows music to become part of classroom communication rather than an independent recreational activity.

Communicative language teaching emphasizes learners' ability to express intentions and interpret messages within meaningful social situations. Musical experiences can contribute when they generate authentic reasons for exchanging ideas. Students might discuss the emotional perspective of a song or explain differing interpretations of its narrative. These exchanges require attention to meaning and appropriate language choices. The teacher facilitates communication by establishing understandable purposes while allowing learners sufficient independence to formulate responses and sustain interaction with their classmates.

Task based instruction provides a practical structure for transforming musical experiences into purposeful learning sequences. Each task should involve a recognizable communicative

goal that learners accomplish through language. For example, groups might organize a musical presentation for a particular audience and justify their decisions in English. Successful completion depends on exchanging information and reaching agreement. The musical element establishes a shared point of reference while the task creates opportunities for spontaneous communication and collaborative problem solving.

The relationship between musical participation and grammatical development deserves particular consideration within communicative instruction. Busse et al. (2021) investigated grammar learning through singing in an intervention involving primary school EFL learners. Their research provides a relevant basis for examining the contribution of musical activities to grammatical instruction. Within task based lessons, teachers can connect recurring grammatical patterns with communicative purposes. Learners then encounter grammatical forms as resources for expressing meaning rather than isolated structures requiring mechanical reproduction.

Pre task preparation can establish the linguistic conditions necessary for successful musical interaction. Teachers may introduce expressions that learners will need when describing preferences or negotiating decisions. Brief demonstrations can clarify expectations without determining every subsequent response. Preparation should also establish the communicative purpose of the activity. When students understand what they must accomplish, they can direct their attention toward appropriate language choices. Such preparation supports participation while preserving the openness that characterizes meaningful task based communication.

During task performance, musical experiences can provide opportunities for learners to manage interaction with increasing independence. Students may collaborate on adapting a musical narrative or preparing spoken explanations for selected lyrics. Their

discussions require clarification requests, agreement, and occasional reformulation of ideas. Teachers should observe communicative processes without interrupting every linguistic error. Selective assistance can maintain interaction when difficulties arise. The immediate priority remains successful communication, with opportunities for more focused linguistic examination following task completion.

Post task reflection provides an opportunity to examine linguistic choices made during musical activities. Learners can reconsider expressions that created misunderstanding or identify grammatical patterns needed for clearer communication. Busse et al. (2021) offer an empirical reference for considering singing within grammar instruction among young EFL learners. Their work encourages attention to the relationship between musical practice and specific learning outcomes. Reflection becomes productive when learners connect formal accuracy with communicative effectiveness rather than treating correction as an isolated exercise.

Assessment within communicative musical tasks should examine the quality of language use and the achievement of intended outcomes. Teachers can observe whether learners communicate relevant information and respond appropriately to others. Performance criteria should distinguish linguistic achievement from musical ability to avoid disadvantaging students with limited musical experience. Feedback may address intelligibility, grammatical appropriateness, and interactional participation. Such assessment recognizes the communicative purpose of the activity while providing evidence that can guide subsequent instructional decisions.

Adapting musical tasks to different proficiency levels requires attention to the complexity of expected communication. Beginning learners may exchange brief preferences or describe familiar musical experiences using supported expressions. More proficient students can negotiate interpretations and defend

decisions through extended discussion. The underlying communicative purpose can remain comparable despite differences in linguistic demands. Teachers should also consider group composition and participation patterns. Appropriate differentiation allows students with varied abilities to contribute meaningfully without reducing interaction to predetermined responses.

The integration of musical experiences into communicative and task based instruction depends on coherence between learning objectives and classroom interaction. Musical materials can establish shared experiences that motivate language use, while carefully designed tasks provide direction for communication. Research by Busse et al. (2021) contributes to understanding the relationship between singing and grammatical learning in EFL education. Effective integration requires teachers to connect musical participation with purposeful communication and opportunities for observable linguistic development.

1.6. Designing Inclusive and Multisensory Learning Environments Through Music and Songs

An inclusive music enriched EFL classroom begins with the recognition that learners experience sound, language, and participation differently. Some respond to melody, while others rely on written words, movement, or visual cues to follow an activity. Effective design therefore offers several routes into the same learning goal without requiring identical forms of participation. The teacher's responsibility is to anticipate barriers and provide meaningful choices that preserve both linguistic expectations and each learner's sense of belonging.

Multisensory instruction can connect listening with visual representation, bodily movement, and spoken expression. A lyric displayed beside a recording may help learners follow unfamiliar words, while a gesture can clarify an action or relationship. Yet

additional sensory input is not automatically beneficial. Crowded screens and competing sounds may overwhelm attention. Teachers need to coordinate modes carefully so that each contributes a distinct function and learners can focus on the English they are expected to understand.

Cultural responsiveness shapes whether musical participation feels accessible and respectful. Palmer et al. (2022) present a grounded framework for culturally relevant and responsive music teaching, placing cultural considerations within educational practice. For EFL teachers, that perspective invites attention to whose musical experiences are represented and whose preferences influence classroom decisions. Inviting students to share their knowledge can broaden the available repertoire, provided participation remains voluntary and no learner is expected to represent an entire community.

Physical access deserves consideration before musical activities begin. Learners with hearing differences may benefit from readable lyrics, visual rhythm markers, or opportunities to experience vibration where appropriate. Students with mobility limitations should be able to participate without performing prescribed movements. These adjustments require consultation rather than assumptions about individual needs. A classroom becomes accessible when teachers offer equivalent ways to demonstrate understanding and ensure that no essential language objective depends on a single physical response.

Sensory comfort matters equally. Loud recordings, flashing visuals, and repeated collective singing can create discomfort for some students even when classmates appear enthusiastic. Adjustable volume, predictable activity sequences, and quieter alternatives can make participation manageable. Teachers can explain transitions in advance and allow learners to choose between listening, speaking, or written responses when objectives permit. Such flexibility protects access to learning without turning

individual differences into public explanations or treating every preference as a problem.

Language diversity introduces another dimension of inclusive design. EFL learners may bring different home languages, literacy experiences, and familiarity with English pronunciation. Written lyrics can support some students, while images or brief oral explanations may be more useful to others. Teachers should avoid equating quick verbal responses with greater understanding. Allowing preparation time and varied response formats gives learners a fairer opportunity to demonstrate meaning, particularly when the musical material contains unfamiliar expressions or references.

Participation patterns require deliberate attention because musical confidence can shape classroom visibility. Confident singers may dominate group activities while quieter students remain observers. Teachers can distribute responsibilities across lyric interpretation, visual design, spoken explanation, and collaborative decision making. Palmer et al. (2022) frame culturally responsive music teaching as a matter for purposeful educational practice. In EFL settings, equitable roles can help learners contribute through different strengths while maintaining shared responsibility for communicating ideas in English.

Digital resources can expand access when selected carefully. Captioned performances, adjustable playback speed, and synchronized text may help learners revisit difficult passages at a manageable pace. However, technological availability varies across schools and households. Activities should remain workable when devices or internet connections are limited. Teachers also need to check caption accuracy and readability before relying on digital materials. Accessibility depends on practical reliability as much as on the number of features a resource offers.

Table 1

Conceptual and Pedagogical Foundations of Music and Songs in English Language Teaching

Chapter Components	Core Concepts and Pedagogical Implications
Cognitive and Linguistic Processes Involved in Music-Assisted English Language Learning	Musical experiences engage auditory perception, attention, memory, and phonological awareness. Their pedagogical value depends on structured activities that connect sound processing with meaningful linguistic development.
The Relationship Between Musical Intelligence, Language Processing, and Communicative Competence	Musical sensitivity may support the perception of expressive speech patterns and prosodic distinctions. Communicative competence additionally requires linguistic knowledge, interpersonal awareness, and culturally appropriate language use.
Music-Based Pedagogical Approaches for Meaningful Language Learning in EFL Settings	Communicative activities, collaborative interpretation, and creative language production connect musical materials with purposeful learning. Instructional effectiveness depends on clear objectives and opportunities to apply language in meaningful situations.
Song Selection Criteria Based on Linguistic Complexity, Learner Proficiency, and Cultural Relevance	Appropriate song selection considers vocabulary demands, grammatical complexity, pronunciation clarity, and learner proficiency. Cultural authenticity and respectful representation contribute to educational relevance and intercultural understanding.
Integrating Musical Experiences into Communicative and Task-Based Language Teaching	Musical activities support purposeful communication when organized around achievable tasks. Collaborative interaction and guided reflection connect grammatical development with authentic language use and observable learning outcomes.
Designing Inclusive and Multisensory Learning Environments Through Music and Songs	Inclusive musical instruction recognizes differences in sensory access, cultural backgrounds, and learning preferences. Flexible participation formats and accessible resources promote equitable opportunities for language development.

Note. The table presents the conceptual relationships and instructional considerations addressed in Chapter 1.

An inclusive assessment approach should permit varied demonstrations of comparable linguistic achievement. A learner might explain a song's message orally, annotate selected lyrics, or prepare a short written interpretation. Criteria can focus on

comprehension, appropriate expression, and clarity rather than vocal confidence or musical technique. Feedback should identify what the learner communicated successfully and what language needs further development. This approach makes assessment more informative while reducing the risk that unrelated performance demands obscure progress.

Designing an inclusive multisensory environment requires ongoing observation and adjustment rather than a fixed collection of accommodations. Teachers can ask learners which supports help them participate and review whether activities create avoidable barriers. The culturally responsive framework discussed by Palmer et al. (2022) reinforces the value of examining educational choices through learners' experiences. When access, dignity, and language goals guide planning together, musical experiences can support participation without requiring students to learn in identical ways.

Chapter 2

Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition and Listening Comprehension Through Songs

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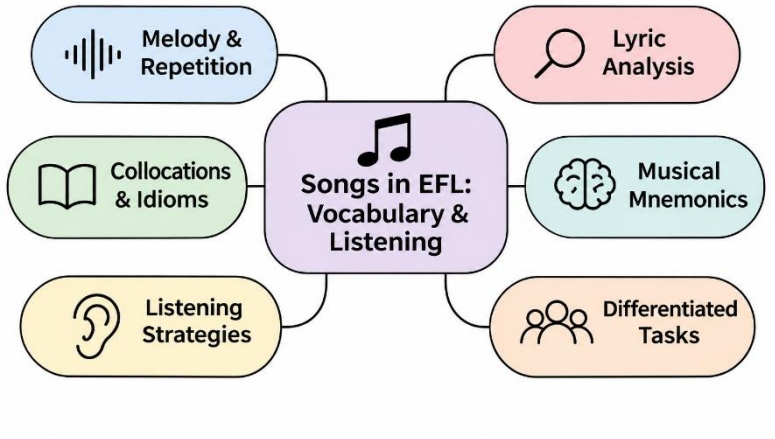
Vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension occupy a central position in English as a Foreign Language education because both abilities influence how learners understand and participate in communication. Yet their development often presents difficulties when classroom instruction separates linguistic knowledge from meaningful auditory experiences. Songs offer an alternative environment in which words and spoken messages become accessible through musical expression. Their educational potential invites closer examination of the relationships between language exposure, cognitive engagement, and the gradual development of communicative competence.

The integration of songs into language instruction reflects growing interest in learning experiences that connect linguistic development with meaningful participation. Musical materials introduce vocabulary within expressive situations that can capture attention and encourage sustained engagement. Mannarelli and Serrano (2024) examined the contribution of songs to vocabulary learning in an EFL classroom, offering a relevant perspective on their instructional value. Their research encourages consideration of musical experiences as purposeful resources within broader approaches to developing English language proficiency.

Vocabulary knowledge involves more than recognizing isolated words or recalling their dictionary definitions. Learners must understand relationships between expressions and recognize the circumstances in which particular combinations become appropriate. Authentic lyrics provide opportunities to encounter language shaped by communicative intention and conventional usage. Tilwani et al. (2022) investigated implicit vocabulary learning through songs, examining spoken form recognition, form meaning connections, and collocation recognition. Their work draws attention to the different dimensions involved in developing lexical knowledge through musical exposure.

Listening comprehension introduces additional demands because learners must interpret spoken information while managing the continuous movement of language. Musical performances create distinctive listening conditions through variations in pronunciation, vocal delivery, and expressive intention. Students need to recognize audible linguistic information while connecting it with broader meaning. Pratiwi and Yaw-kan (2025) investigated English learning through songs among seventh grade students. Their educational focus provides a relevant connection between musical activities and the development of language skills during classroom instruction.

Figure 4
Vocabulary and Listening Development Through Songs



Understanding spoken language also requires sensitivity to meanings that extend beyond explicitly stated information. Lyrics frequently communicate personal experiences through indirect references and emotionally charged expressions. Learners must interpret relationships between words and recognize intentions that remain partially unstated. Babayev (2025) discusses learning English through songs, contributing to the broader examination of music within language education. Such perspectives invite

consideration of listening as an interpretive activity shaped by linguistic evidence and meaningful engagement with musical messages.

The educational value of musical activities becomes particularly relevant when learning is expected to continue beyond immediate classroom participation. Recognizing vocabulary during a familiar performance does not necessarily guarantee independent recall during later communication. Teachers must consider the relationship between different practice conditions and the persistence of acquired knowledge. Chang (2024) examined vocabulary retention through songs by comparing listening, singing, and oral reading. This research provides a foundation for discussing instructional practices associated with vocabulary learning over time.

Learners also differ in their ability to manage linguistic information during musical activities. English proficiency and cognitive resources may influence the demands experienced when processing unfamiliar vocabulary. Consequently, instructional planning requires attention to individual learning characteristics rather than uniform expectations. Lu and Murao (2023) investigated working memory and English proficiency in vocabulary learning with background music among Chinese EFL learners. Their findings contribute to discussions concerning individual differences and the conditions surrounding music related learning.

A meaningful approach to song based instruction requires teachers to make deliberate decisions about learning objectives and classroom participation. Musical appeal alone cannot determine whether a particular activity addresses learners' linguistic needs. Selection should consider the accessibility of language and the opportunities available for comprehension and expression. Teachers also need to recognize when instructional guidance may support understanding or restrict independent interpretation.

These decisions influence the educational quality of musical experiences across different proficiency levels.

The relationship between vocabulary development and listening comprehension deserves particular attention because progress in either area can influence the other. Greater lexical familiarity may help learners recognize spoken expressions, while meaningful listening experiences can provide opportunities to refine vocabulary knowledge. Songs create circumstances in which these processes interact through authentic verbal messages. Their contribution becomes more educationally relevant when classroom activities encourage learners to connect auditory recognition with understanding and increasingly independent language use.

This chapter examines the pedagogical relationship between songs, lexical development, and listening comprehension within EFL instruction. Attention is given to musical features associated with vocabulary learning and to the interpretation of conventional and figurative expressions. The discussion also addresses listening strategies, inferential understanding, mnemonic practices, and differentiated instruction. Together, these areas provide a framework for considering the instructional decisions through which musical materials can support meaningful language learning across varied classroom circumstances.

2.1. Lexical Acquisition and Vocabulary Retention Through Melody, Rhythm, and Repetition

Vocabulary acquisition becomes more meaningful when learners encounter unfamiliar words within musical experiences that engage attention and encourage repeated exposure. Songs provide a distinctive environment where language unfolds through recognizable patterns of sound and expression. Melody gives words an acoustic identity, while rhythm establishes predictable sequences that support recognition. For EFL learners, such features can make vocabulary encounters more memorable. The

relationship between musical structure and verbal meaning therefore deserves consideration when examining vocabulary development in classroom settings.

Melody contributes to lexical learning by connecting verbal expressions with recognizable sequences of pitch and duration. When students hear unfamiliar vocabulary within a song, melodic contours may provide additional cues for remembering particular expressions. These connections become especially valuable when learners encounter the same material across several listening sessions. Musical phrasing can also help students perceive boundaries between meaningful language units. Through repeated exposure, previously unfamiliar expressions may gradually become recognizable elements of their developing lexical knowledge over time.

Rhythm offers another pathway through which musical experiences may strengthen vocabulary retention. Regular patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables draw attention to the temporal organization of spoken English. Learners begin to notice recurring word combinations and the placement of prominent syllables within familiar expressions. Such awareness can facilitate recognition during subsequent listening activities. Rhythm also provides a framework for rehearsing vocabulary aloud, allowing students to coordinate pronunciation with established musical patterns while developing greater familiarity with lexical forms.

Repetition plays a central role in transforming initial vocabulary encounters into more durable knowledge. Unlike mechanical drills, repeated language within songs often appears as part of an anticipated musical sequence. Familiar choruses invite learners to revisit words without necessarily experiencing each repetition as a separate exercise. Mannarelli and Serrano (2024) examined vocabulary learning through songs in an EFL classroom, contributing evidence to discussions of their instructional

potential. Their research supports further consideration of repeated musical exposure in vocabulary teaching practices.

The relationship between repetition and retention also depends on the quality of learners' engagement with language. Hearing a word repeatedly does not guarantee that its meaning will become accessible during independent communication. Students benefit when musical exposure is accompanied by opportunities to connect expressions with relevant situations and personal understanding. A familiar lyric may initially be remembered as part of a complete phrase. With additional practice, learners can begin recognizing individual words and using them beyond the song.

Musical repetition may be particularly useful when vocabulary appears within meaningful combinations rather than isolated lists. Songs frequently present expressions through recurring grammatical patterns and predictable relationships between words. Such arrangements allow learners to encounter vocabulary alongside its typical linguistic surroundings. Mannarelli and Serrano (2024) investigated the contribution of songs to vocabulary learning, drawing attention to their relevance as classroom resources. This perspective encourages teachers to consider lexical combinations when selecting musical materials for sustained language development activities.

Retention becomes more educationally valuable when learners can retrieve vocabulary after the immediate musical experience has ended. A student who remembers a chorus may recognize its words during playback yet struggle to recall them independently. Classroom activities should therefore create opportunities for retrieval without continuous musical support. Completing sentences from memory or reconstructing familiar expressions can reveal developing lexical knowledge. These practices help distinguish recognition prompted by melody from vocabulary that learners can access in other situations.

The effectiveness of musical vocabulary instruction also depends on selecting language that matches learners' proficiency and communicative needs. Songs containing excessive unfamiliar vocabulary may overwhelm attention, even when their melodies are appealing. Conversely, material that offers manageable lexical demands can encourage learners to notice expressions and revisit them confidently. Teachers should consider pronunciation clarity and the frequency of target words within the lyrics. Appropriate selection creates conditions in which musical enjoyment can coexist with purposeful vocabulary learning.

An important consideration concerns the gradual movement from collective musical participation toward individual lexical independence. Singing with classmates can make unfamiliar expressions accessible through shared rhythm and familiar melodic cues. Nevertheless, students need opportunities to demonstrate understanding beyond coordinated performance. Mannarelli and Serrano (2024) provide a relevant research contribution to discussions of song based vocabulary instruction in EFL settings. Their work invites attention to the learning outcomes associated with musical activities rather than participation alone during lessons.

Melody, rhythm, and repetition can contribute to vocabulary development when their distinctive functions are recognized within instructional planning. Melody may strengthen associations between sounds and expressions, while rhythm organizes verbal sequences into recognizable patterns. Repetition creates further opportunities for familiarization and retrieval. Their educational value becomes clearer when learners demonstrate understanding beyond the original musical material. For teachers, the central consideration is whether musical experiences help students develop lexical knowledge that remains accessible across communicative situations.

2.2. Developing Lexical Awareness Through Collocations, Idiomatic Expressions, and Authentic Song Lyrics

Lexical awareness develops when learners begin recognizing relationships between words rather than treating vocabulary as independent units. Authentic song lyrics provide opportunities to observe expressions within naturally occurring patterns of language use. Familiar combinations often carry meanings that cannot be understood through individual words alone. Through attentive listening, students can notice recurring lexical partnerships and their communicative purposes. Such encounters broaden vocabulary knowledge by revealing the relationship between word choice, conventional expression, and meaning in everyday communication.

Collocations represent an important dimension of lexical competence because fluent communication frequently depends on conventional word combinations. Expressions such as make a decision or take a chance illustrate relationships that learners may overlook when studying vocabulary separately. Song lyrics can introduce comparable patterns within memorable communicative situations. Tilwani et al. (2022) examined collocation recognition alongside spoken form recognition and form meaning connections in research involving Iranian EFL learners. Their investigation provides a relevant basis for considering phrase level vocabulary learning.

Recognizing collocations requires learners to develop sensitivity to linguistic combinations that sound natural within particular situations. A grammatically acceptable expression may still appear unusual when its words do not follow conventional usage. Lyrics can expose students to such distinctions through recurring phrases embedded in meaningful utterances. Teachers may encourage learners to identify words that frequently appear

together and examine their relationships. Over time, attention to conventional combinations can strengthen lexical judgment and support more appropriate expression.

Idiomatic expressions introduce another dimension of lexical awareness because their meanings frequently extend beyond literal interpretation. Phrases associated with affection, disappointment, or personal determination often appear in popular music. Learners encountering such expressions may initially interpret individual words without recognizing the intended message. Guided discussion can help them connect figurative language with the situations represented in a song. This process encourages flexible interpretation and reveals the cultural conventions through which everyday English communicates personal experiences.

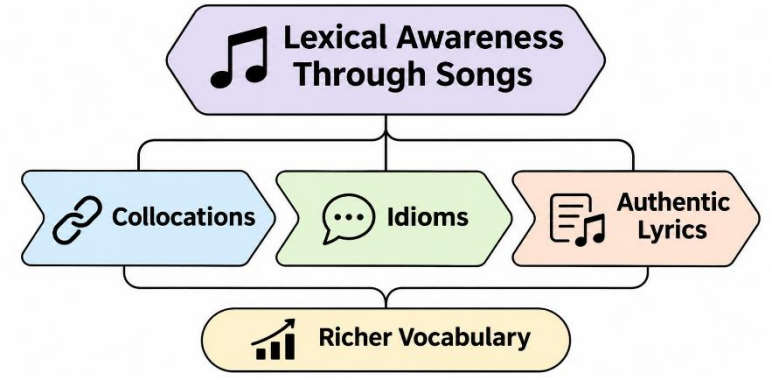
Authentic lyrics also expose learners to language shaped by artistic intention and social relationships. Songwriters frequently select expressions for emotional resonance or conversational familiarity rather than instructional simplicity. Consequently, learners may encounter contractions, informal vocabulary, and culturally recognizable references. These features offer valuable material for examining register and communicative appropriateness. Teachers should nevertheless distinguish conventional expressions from unusual artistic choices. Such distinctions help students appreciate creative language without assuming that every lyrical construction represents ordinary English usage.

The development of lexical awareness benefits from attention to relationships between spoken forms and their associated meanings. Learners may recognize familiar words individually yet fail to identify them when they occur within connected expressions. Tilwani et al. (2022) investigated implicit vocabulary learning through songs by examining spoken form recognition, form meaning connections, and collocation

recognition. Their research highlights distinct dimensions of lexical knowledge that deserve attention when evaluating what students learn from musical language encounters during instruction.

Interpreting idiomatic language also involves understanding the emotional and cultural circumstances surrounding an expression. A phrase communicating heartbreak may carry different implications depending on the speaker's attitude and the situation described. Students can examine such relationships by discussing the intentions behind selected lyrics. Comparing literal interpretations with intended meanings encourages more careful reading of figurative language. This interpretive work becomes particularly valuable when learners encounter expressions whose meanings depend heavily on shared cultural knowledge.

Figure 5
Lexical Awareness Through Authentic Lyrics



Classroom activities can strengthen collocational awareness by encouraging learners to examine patterns rather than memorize complete lyrics without reflection. Students might identify recurring word partnerships and compare them with alternative combinations. Short discussions can address differences in meaning or appropriateness. Such tasks invite learners to make

informed lexical choices. The research focus adopted by Tilwani et al. (2022) reinforces the relevance of collocation recognition as a dimension of vocabulary learning through musical materials.

Authentic songs require careful pedagogical selection because linguistic richness does not automatically guarantee accessibility. Lyrics containing dense figurative language or unfamiliar cultural references may distract learners from the intended lexical focus. Teachers can address this difficulty by selecting manageable passages with expressions that serve identifiable communicative purposes. Brief explanations may clarify unfamiliar references without replacing independent interpretation. Students then have room to examine language closely while developing confidence in their ability to understand authentic expressions.

Developing lexical awareness through songs ultimately involves recognizing the conventional and expressive relationships that shape language use. Collocations reveal preferred combinations, while idiomatic expressions demonstrate the interpretive flexibility required in communication. Authentic lyrics bring both dimensions into contact with recognizable human experiences. When learners examine these features thoughtfully, vocabulary knowledge can extend beyond isolated definitions. Their growing sensitivity to lexical patterns may support more accurate interpretation and increasingly natural language choices across communicative situations.

2.3. Strengthening Listening Comprehension Through Bottom-Up and Top-Down Processing Strategies

Listening comprehension requires learners to interpret spoken language while managing information that disappears almost immediately after being heard. Songs offer an engaging setting for developing this ability because their verbal messages unfold within structured musical performances. Understanding

lyrics involves identifying acoustic details and constructing meaning from broader linguistic knowledge. These complementary processes are commonly described as bottom-up and top-down processing. Their coordinated use can help EFL learners approach unfamiliar listening material with greater confidence and interpretive accuracy.

Bottom-up processing begins with attention to the acoustic features that constitute spoken language. Learners identify individual sounds, syllable boundaries, word forms, and grammatical relationships before constructing larger meanings. In songs, this process can become demanding because pronunciation interacts with musical phrasing and vocal expression. A familiar word may sound different when sustained across several notes. Carefully designed listening activities can therefore direct attention toward specific sound sequences and help students recognize language within continuous musical performances.

Top-down processing draws upon existing knowledge to interpret incoming language and anticipate possible meanings. When listening to songs, students may use titles, familiar themes, or previous experiences to form expectations about the message. Such expectations guide interpretation when individual words remain unclear. Pratiwi and Yaw-kan (2025) investigated English learning through songs among seventh-grade students, providing a relevant educational perspective on musical activities. Their work contributes to discussions about using songs to support language learning in school environments.

Effective listening involves interaction between acoustic recognition and interpretive expectations rather than exclusive dependence on either process. A learner might recognize several words in a verse but misunderstand their relationship without considering the broader message. Conversely, familiarity with a song's theme may encourage plausible interpretations that the actual lyrics do not support. Instruction should encourage students

to compare initial predictions with audible evidence. This balance promotes careful listening while reducing dependence on incomplete assumptions about meaning.

Before listening, teachers can activate relevant knowledge through brief discussions about the subject of a selected song. Students might examine its title or consider situations associated with its central theme. These activities establish expectations without revealing the complete message. During the initial listening, learners can focus on identifying the general purpose or emotional direction of the lyrics. Such preparation supports top-down interpretation and creates a meaningful foundation for subsequent attention to specific linguistic details.

A second listening can shift attention toward bottom-up recognition through carefully selected tasks. Students may identify missing words, distinguish similar sounds, or recognize grammatical markers within short passages. The purpose is to develop acoustic discrimination without overwhelming learners with excessive detail. Pratiwi and Yaw-kan (2025) examined the educational use of songs with younger English learners. Their research offers a relevant point of reference for considering structured musical activities within classroom language instruction and listening practice.

Connected speech presents particular difficulties because spoken words rarely appear as clearly separated units. Consonants may blend across word boundaries, while unstressed vowels become less prominent in natural pronunciation. Musical performance can intensify such variations through changes in tempo and vocal delivery. Learners benefit from examining short lyrical passages where these features influence recognition. Comparing what they initially hear with the written lyrics can reveal discrepancies and gradually improve their ability to identify spoken expressions.

Listening comprehension also depends on learners' capacity to monitor understanding and revise interpretations when new information becomes available. A student may initially misunderstand a phrase but recognize its intended meaning after hearing the following line. Teachers can encourage this process by asking learners to explain which acoustic or semantic clues informed their decisions. Such reflection makes listening strategies more deliberate. It also helps students recognize uncertainty as a normal part of interpreting unfamiliar spoken English.

The progression from guided listening toward independent comprehension requires gradual adjustments in instructional support. Initially, teachers may provide vocabulary cues or focused questions to direct attention toward meaningful information. As learners become more proficient, these supports can be reduced. Pratiwi and Yaw-kan (2025) contribute to the discussion of songs as resources for English learning among seventh graders. Their educational focus provides a useful connection to classroom practices that encourage sustained engagement with spoken language.

Developing listening comprehension through songs requires purposeful coordination between sound recognition and meaning construction. Bottom-up strategies help learners identify linguistic information, while top-down strategies support interpretation through existing knowledge and reasonable expectations. Neither process operates independently during authentic listening. Classroom instruction can strengthen their interaction through progressively demanding activities that encourage verification and reflection. As students become more attentive to acoustic evidence and communicative meaning, they develop greater independence when interpreting spoken English.

2.4. Using Lyric Analysis and Contextual Clues to Develop Inferential Listening Skills

Inferential listening enables language learners to interpret meanings that speakers communicate without expressing them directly. Songs provide opportunities to develop this ability because lyrics frequently present incomplete narratives, emotional references, and implied relationships. Understanding such messages requires more than recognizing familiar vocabulary. Learners must connect linguistic evidence with the circumstances surrounding an utterance. Through guided lyric analysis, students can examine these relationships and develop greater sensitivity to meanings that remain beneath the surface of spoken expression.

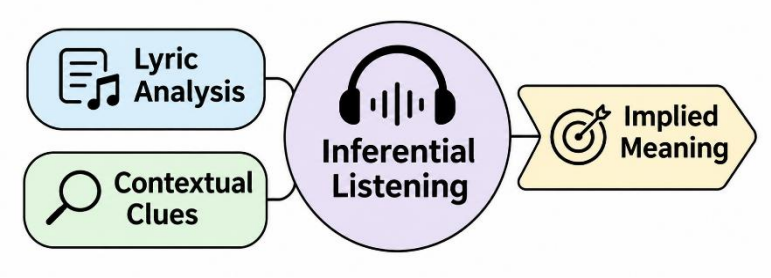
Lyric analysis encourages learners to examine the relationship between individual expressions and the larger message conveyed through a song. A seemingly straightforward statement may acquire additional meaning when interpreted alongside preceding lines. Changes in perspective can also reveal relationships between speakers or indicate shifts in emotional intention. Teachers can guide students toward identifying these connections through focused questions. Such activities develop inferential reasoning by encouraging learners to justify interpretations through evidence drawn from the lyrics.

Contextual clues become particularly valuable when listeners encounter unfamiliar expressions or incomplete information. References to places, personal experiences, or changing circumstances can help learners reconstruct meanings that are not immediately apparent. Rather than interrupting comprehension whenever an unfamiliar word appears, students can consider surrounding information and evaluate possible interpretations. Babayev (2025) discusses learning English through songs, providing a relevant perspective on music as a language

learning resource. This connection supports examining lyrical meaning through purposeful classroom engagement.

Inferential listening also requires attention to emotional meaning conveyed through vocal performance. A singer may express uncertainty through a hesitant delivery or communicate determination through changes in vocal intensity. Such features can influence the interpretation of words whose literal meanings remain unchanged. Learners should examine these acoustic signals alongside the lyrics rather than treating musical expression as definitive evidence. Comparing vocal delivery with verbal content encourages careful interpretation and helps students distinguish emotional impressions from supported conclusions.

Figure 6
Developing Inferential Listening Through Lyrics



Narrative songs offer opportunities for learners to reconstruct events and identify relationships that remain partially unstated. A character's actions may become understandable through references distributed across several verses. Students can examine these details and consider what they reveal about motives or consequences. Teachers might ask learners to identify turning points or explain why a speaker adopts a particular attitude. These questions encourage sustained attention to the developing narrative while strengthening the interpretation of implicit information.

Figurative language can deepen inferential listening when learners examine its contribution to the overall message. Metaphorical references often communicate experiences indirectly and require interpretation beyond their literal wording. Babayev (2025) addresses the educational relationship between music and English learning, offering a relevant foundation for considering meaningful engagement with songs. Within classroom practice, students can compare possible interpretations of figurative expressions and determine which reading receives stronger support from surrounding lyrical evidence and communicative circumstances.

The development of inferential skills benefits from opportunities to discuss interpretations with classmates. Different listeners may notice separate details or assign contrasting meanings to an ambiguous expression. Structured discussion allows students to explain their reasoning and reconsider assumptions when alternative evidence appears. Teachers can encourage respectful disagreement while maintaining attention to the language itself. Such exchanges demonstrate that interpretation involves evaluating available clues rather than accepting every personal impression as equally convincing or linguistically justified.

Effective lyric analysis requires teachers to balance interpretive freedom with appropriate guidance. Excessively detailed explanations may prevent learners from developing independent reasoning, while completely open tasks can produce interpretations disconnected from linguistic evidence. Questions should therefore direct attention toward identifiable clues without determining the answers beforehand. Students might consider what a speaker implies or why particular information remains unstated. Gradually reducing guidance allows learners to approach increasingly complex lyrical messages with greater interpretive independence.

Assessment of inferential listening should consider the reasoning behind students' responses rather than their ability to reproduce predetermined interpretations. Learners can explain which expressions informed their conclusions and identify uncertainties that remain unresolved. Babayev (2025) contributes to broader discussions concerning the educational use of music for English learning. This perspective provides a relevant connection to evaluating meaningful engagement with musical materials. Assessment becomes more informative when students demonstrate an ability to support interpretations with recognizable evidence.

Inferential listening develops through sustained attention to the relationship between audible language and implied meaning. Lyric analysis provides opportunities to examine emotional signals, narrative connections, and expressions whose significance depends on surrounding information. Contextual clues guide interpretation when direct linguistic evidence remains incomplete. Through carefully structured activities, learners can strengthen their ability to form reasonable conclusions and reconsider uncertain assumptions. Such competence supports more thoughtful comprehension of spoken English across varied communicative situations.

2.5. Promoting Vocabulary Retrieval and Long-Term Retention Through Musical Mnemonics

Musical mnemonics offer a purposeful means of strengthening vocabulary retrieval by associating verbal information with memorable auditory patterns. Within EFL instruction, their value extends beyond the immediate recognition of words during listening activities. Learners need to recover lexical information after the original musical stimulus has disappeared. Carefully designed mnemonic experiences can support this transition by connecting target expressions with distinctive melodic structures. Such associations provide additional retrieval

cues that may facilitate access to vocabulary during later communication.

The effectiveness of musical mnemonics depends partly on the relationship between encoding and subsequent retrieval. When learners associate vocabulary with a familiar tune, the melody may become a cue for recovering particular expressions. However, remembering a musical sequence does not necessarily demonstrate independent lexical knowledge. Students must gradually separate the target vocabulary from its original auditory support. This distinction matters when evaluating whether musical learning produces accessible knowledge rather than temporary recall tied to performance.

Different forms of musical practice may influence the opportunities learners receive to retrieve vocabulary. Listening encourages recognition, while singing requires coordinated production of remembered verbal sequences. Oral reading introduces another form of engagement with written language. Chang (2024) investigated vocabulary retention through songs by examining listening, singing, and oral reading as distinct practice modes. This comparison provides a useful foundation for considering whether instructional variation can support vocabulary learning through different forms of participation.

Mnemonic activities become more purposeful when learners actively reconstruct language rather than depend entirely on repeated playback. A teacher might pause a familiar song before a target expression and invite students to supply the missing words. Later activities can remove the melodic prompt and require retrieval through a meaningful sentence. Such progression changes the demands placed on memory. Learners move from recognizing predictable verbal sequences toward producing vocabulary when fewer external cues remain available.

Long-term retention requires attention to the timing of retrieval opportunities. Vocabulary recalled immediately after a musical activity may become less accessible when practice is discontinued. Teachers can address this possibility by revisiting target expressions across separate lessons. Brief retrieval tasks allow students to recover earlier vocabulary without repeating the complete musical experience. The intervals between activities can gradually increase. Such scheduling encourages learners to strengthen access to lexical knowledge beyond the immediate learning session.

The choice of practice mode deserves particular attention because musical participation can involve different levels of cognitive engagement. Singing may encourage learners to reproduce complete expressions, whereas oral reading provides visible linguistic support. Listening can direct attention toward auditory recognition without requiring overt production. Chang (2024) examined these practice conditions in relation to vocabulary retention among second language learners. The study offers a relevant research perspective for selecting classroom activities according to intended learning outcomes.

Musical mnemonics can also support retrieval when learners participate in creating their own memory cues. Students might associate a difficult expression with a short melodic phrase or adapt familiar rhythmic patterns to organize related vocabulary. Such activities require deliberate decisions about the relationship between sound and meaning. Personal involvement may make mnemonic associations more distinctive. Teachers should nevertheless ensure that creative choices preserve accurate pronunciation and appropriate usage of the target language.

A significant instructional concern involves transferring remembered vocabulary into situations where musical cues are unavailable. Students may reproduce expressions accurately while singing but hesitate when using them during conversation.

Retrieval activities should therefore extend beyond musical performance. Learners can answer questions or complete short communicative tasks requiring previously studied vocabulary. These experiences encourage flexible access to lexical information. Successful transfer becomes evident when students retrieve appropriate expressions without relying on the original melody.

Evaluating vocabulary retention requires distinguishing immediate performance from knowledge maintained over time. Delayed retrieval activities can reveal whether learners continue recognizing and producing expressions after musical practice has ended. Chang (2024) contributes to this discussion through research examining different practice modes and vocabulary retention through songs. Teachers can draw upon this research focus when designing assessments that consider recognition and independent production. Such evidence helps identify which vocabulary remains accessible after instructional support has been withdrawn.

Musical mnemonics can contribute to durable vocabulary knowledge when memorable auditory associations are combined with deliberate retrieval practice. Their instructional value depends on helping learners recover expressions under increasingly independent conditions. Listening, singing, and oral reading provide different opportunities for engagement, while delayed activities examine the persistence of learning. Through thoughtful sequencing, teachers can encourage vocabulary to remain available beyond familiar musical performances and become increasingly useful during spontaneous English communication.

2.6. Designing Differentiated Song-Based Listening Tasks for Diverse EFL Proficiency Levels

Differentiated listening instruction recognizes that EFL learners approach musical materials with varying linguistic resources and processing abilities. A song that offers manageable

comprehension demands for one student may create considerable difficulty for another. Effective task design therefore requires attention to proficiency differences without fragmenting the shared classroom experience. Teachers can preserve common learning objectives while adjusting the complexity of listening activities. This approach encourages meaningful participation and allows students to develop comprehension through appropriately demanding musical experiences.

Proficiency differences influence the amount of linguistic information learners can process during a listening activity. Beginners may struggle to identify familiar words within continuous speech, while more advanced students can attend to subtle relationships between expressions. Working memory also affects the temporary maintenance of incoming information. Lu and Murao (2023) investigated working memory and English proficiency in vocabulary learning with background music among Chinese EFL learners. Their research highlights relevant individual differences in music related learning conditions.

For beginning learners, differentiated tasks should emphasize accessible language and clearly defined listening objectives. Short lyrical passages with recognizable vocabulary can reduce unnecessary processing demands. Students might identify familiar expressions or match selected phrases with visual representations. Written options may provide additional support when auditory recognition remains uncertain. Teachers should avoid requiring extensive interpretation before learners can identify basic linguistic information. Carefully limited tasks create opportunities for successful participation while establishing foundations for more demanding listening experiences.

Intermediate learners generally benefit from activities requiring greater independence in identifying and organizing information. Teachers can introduce tasks involving incomplete transcripts or recognition of relationships between related

expressions. Students may compare alternative interpretations and justify their responses through audible evidence. At this level, instructional support can become less explicit without disappearing entirely. Differentiation should respond to demonstrated comprehension rather than predetermined assumptions about ability. Such flexibility allows learners to encounter manageable difficulty while extending their listening competence.

Advanced learners require opportunities to engage with complex language and subtle communicative intentions. Songs containing varied registers or ambiguous expressions can support demanding listening tasks when selected carefully. Students might examine shifts in speaker perspective or distinguish literal statements from implied attitudes. They can also evaluate the relationship between linguistic choices and communicative purpose. These activities move beyond basic recognition while maintaining attention to listening comprehension. Greater proficiency permits more independent analysis without eliminating the need for guidance.

Differentiation also involves considering the cognitive demands associated with musical accompaniment. Background sound may influence attention differently depending on learners' individual characteristics and the requirements of a particular task. Lu and Murao (2023) examined the relationship between working memory, English proficiency, and vocabulary learning with background music. Although their investigation concerns background music rather than lyric based listening instruction, it provides a relevant basis for considering individual cognitive differences when planning musical learning activities.

A practical differentiation strategy involves assigning varied tasks while maintaining a common listening text. Beginners might identify selected words, intermediate learners could reconstruct meaningful phrases, and advanced students may interpret relationships across verses. This arrangement allows

learners to participate in the same musical experience without facing identical linguistic demands. Teachers can also provide optional transcripts or targeted vocabulary support. Shared materials encourage classroom cohesion while differentiated expectations acknowledge meaningful differences in language proficiency.

Flexible grouping offers another means of responding to learners' developing listening abilities. Students may work with peers who require comparable levels of support during focused activities. At other moments, mixed proficiency groups can encourage collaborative interpretation and exchange of listening strategies. Group membership should remain adaptable because performance varies across tasks and musical materials. Teachers need to monitor participation carefully so that confident learners do not consistently dominate responses or assume responsibility for others' comprehension.

Assessment within differentiated listening instruction should reflect common learning goals while recognizing differences in task complexity. Teachers can evaluate whether students identify relevant information or interpret meaning according to their current proficiency. Lu and Murao (2023) provide a useful research perspective on individual variation in music related vocabulary learning. Their attention to proficiency and working memory reinforces the value of examining learner characteristics. Assessment evidence can then inform adjustments to instructional support and task demands.

Differentiated song based listening tasks require thoughtful alignment between learner abilities and the demands of musical language. Appropriate adjustments may involve linguistic complexity, available support, response expectations, or opportunities for collaboration. The objective is to maintain meaningful engagement while allowing students to progress from their current level of competence. Through responsive planning

and ongoing assessment, teachers can create listening experiences that accommodate individual differences and encourage sustained development across diverse EFL classrooms.

Table 2

Instructional Approaches to Vocabulary Acquisition and Listening Comprehension Through Songs in EFL Classrooms

Instructional Focus	Pedagogical Contributions to EFL Learning
Melody, Rhythm, and Repetition	Musical patterns support lexical recognition and strengthen associations between sounds and meanings. Repeated exposure encourages vocabulary retention and facilitates subsequent retrieval.
Collocations, Idiomatic Expressions, and Authentic Lyrics	Authentic song lyrics expose learners to conventional word combinations and figurative language. Guided analysis develops lexical awareness and promotes appropriate language use.
Bottom-Up and Top-Down Listening Strategies	Bottom-up processing strengthens sound recognition and linguistic decoding. Top-down processing supports meaning construction through prior knowledge and interpretive expectations.
Lyric Analysis and Inferential Listening	Contextual clues and lyrical interpretation help learners identify implied meanings and emotional intentions. Evidence-based reasoning strengthens inferential listening comprehension.
Musical Mnemonics and Long-Term Vocabulary Retention	Melodic associations provide retrieval cues for previously learned vocabulary. Varied practice modes and delayed retrieval activities encourage independent recall and durable lexical knowledge.
Differentiated Song-Based Listening Tasks	Instructional adjustments accommodate differences in English proficiency and cognitive processing. Flexible tasks and targeted support promote meaningful participation and progressive listening development.

Note. The table presents the principal instructional dimensions addressed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3

Developing Pronunciation, Speaking Fluency, and Oral Communication Through Music

The development of oral communication in English involves a gradual transformation of linguistic knowledge into meaningful spoken expression. Learners must coordinate auditory perception, pronunciation, and language formulation while responding to communicative situations that frequently unfold without preparation. Music offers a distinctive educational environment for supporting such development through experiences that connect listening with vocal participation. Within EFL classrooms, songs can create opportunities for learners to engage with spoken English while developing greater awareness of its expressive and interpersonal dimensions.

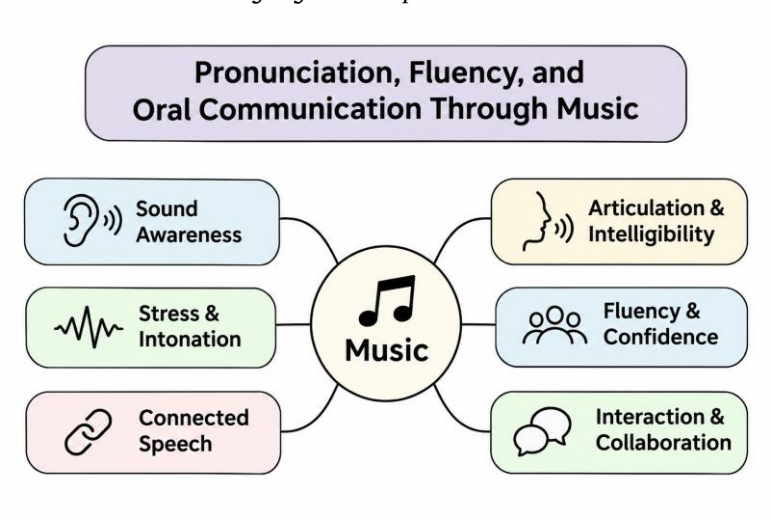
Pronunciation learning begins with the ability to perceive distinctions that may remain unfamiliar to speakers of other languages. Before learners can produce certain English sounds consistently, they need opportunities to recognize their acoustic characteristics within meaningful language. Wang and Liu (2025) investigated phoneme categorization through English song lyrics among EFL underachievers. Their research brings attention to the relationship between musical materials and sound recognition, providing a relevant foundation for examining the perceptual processes underlying pronunciation development.

Beyond individual sounds, spoken English depends on patterns of prominence and vocal movement that influence comprehensibility. Word stress, sentence rhythm, and intonation shape the organization of speech while communicating relationships between ideas. Musical experiences can draw learners' attention to such patterns through structured auditory and vocal activities. Sugiura and Hori (2025) examined auditory musical rhythm as a cue for second language pronunciation learning, considering individual differences that may influence learners' responses to rhythmic support during instruction.

Natural spoken communication also requires sensitivity to the continuous character of language. Words interact through

linking and sound modification, creating pronunciation patterns that may differ considerably from their written representations. Musical recordings provide opportunities to encounter such variation within meaningful vocal performances. Sun et al. (2024) investigated cross domain prosodic priming between music and speech through electrophysiological evidence. Their research offers a perspective on the relationship between musical and linguistic processing without directly establishing classroom learning outcomes.

Figure 7
Music-Based Oral Language Development



The physical dimension of pronunciation introduces another consideration for language teaching. Producing intelligible English requires coordinated articulatory movements that learners gradually refine through attentive practice. Singing can provide opportunities for controlled vocal production while encouraging awareness of the relationship between sound and physical movement. Zhang et al. (2023) investigated singing as a resource for second language pronunciation and vocabulary learning among Chinese adolescent ESL learners. Their findings contribute to

understanding the educational possibilities of structured musical participation.

Yet accurate pronunciation represents one aspect of successful oral communication. Learners must also retrieve language efficiently and sustain expression without excessive interruption. Fluency develops through practice that gradually reduces the effort required to formulate spoken messages. Kitjaroonchai and Sukman (2025) examined the effects of English songs on speaking performance through lexical complexity, accuracy, and fluency. Their investigation provides a relevant research perspective for considering musical activities within broader approaches to developing spoken language competence.

The emotional experience of speaking deserves equal consideration because linguistic knowledge does not automatically translate into classroom participation. Learners may hesitate when they anticipate mistakes or feel uncomfortable expressing themselves before others. Music can contribute to classroom environments where participation becomes more approachable through shared experiences. Kim et al. (2024) examined perceptions and attitudes toward music listening in foreign language learning alongside language anxiety. Their research draws attention to emotional conditions that warrant consideration when designing oral activities.

A meaningful connection between musical learning and oral communication requires opportunities to move beyond reproduction toward independent expression. Familiar songs may provide linguistic material for classroom exchanges, but communicative development depends on learners making their own choices. Dialogues and collaborative tasks can encourage students to interpret situations and respond to others. Such activities also introduce unpredictability, an essential characteristic of authentic conversation. Teachers therefore need to balance

instructional guidance with opportunities for learners to exercise communicative initiative.

The educational value of music also depends on recognizing differences among learners and classroom environments. Previous language experiences, musical familiarity, and individual confidence can influence participation in vocal activities. Effective instruction requires thoughtful selection of materials and sensitivity to varying learning needs. Teachers must consider whether particular activities support identifiable language objectives rather than assuming that musical engagement automatically produces improvement. This pedagogical responsibility becomes especially important when connecting enjoyable classroom experiences with observable progress in oral communication.

The chapter examines music as a pedagogical resource for developing the interconnected abilities involved in spoken English. Its discussion moves from phonological perception toward pronunciation control and increasingly independent communication, recognizing the different demands associated with each dimension. Research concerning musical rhythm, singing, speaking performance, and learner anxiety informs the discussion while maintaining attention to classroom application. Throughout the chapter, musical activities are considered in relation to purposeful instruction and the development of intelligible, confident communication.

3.1. Phonological Awareness and Sound Discrimination Through Musical Rhythm and Melody

Phonological awareness begins with the ability to recognize that spoken language consists of distinguishable sound patterns. For learners of English as a foreign language, developing such awareness requires sustained attention to acoustic features that may differ considerably from those of their native language.

Music provides an accessible environment for cultivating auditory sensitivity because rhythm and melody organize sounds into recognizable sequences. Through repeated listening, learners gradually perceive distinctions that ordinary classroom speech may leave unnoticed during initial exposure.

The relationship between musical perception and phonological development becomes particularly meaningful when learners encounter unfamiliar English consonants and vowels. Musical phrases encourage attentive listening by presenting sounds within predictable rhythmic structures. Such regularity allows students to concentrate on subtle differences in articulation without becoming overwhelmed by linguistic complexity. A melodic sequence can also make individual syllables more perceptually prominent. Consequently, learners begin identifying sound boundaries and recognizing recurring phonetic features through experiences that combine auditory attention with musical engagement.

Sound discrimination deserves particular attention because learners frequently interpret unfamiliar phonemes through categories established by their first language. When English sounds resemble native language sounds, differences may remain difficult to perceive. Wang and Liu (2025) examined the use of English song lyrics in relation to phoneme categorization among EFL underachievers. Their research provides a relevant foundation for considering songs as materials for focused phonological instruction, particularly when learners need opportunities to distinguish unfamiliar sounds within meaningful verbal sequences during listening activities.

Rhythm contributes to phonological awareness by drawing attention to the temporal organization of spoken English. Strong and weak beats provide an auditory framework through which learners can recognize syllabic prominence and differences in duration. When students clap or tap alongside carefully selected

musical passages, they experience the relationship between rhythmic movement and spoken sound patterns. Such activities can sharpen their perception of syllable boundaries while encouraging active listening. The instructional value lies in connecting physical timing with conscious auditory observation.

Melody offers another pathway for developing sound discrimination through variations in pitch and vocal movement. Musical contours can direct attention toward changes in vowel quality and the acoustic characteristics of sustained sounds. When a vowel is extended within a melodic phrase, learners have additional time to notice its auditory properties. Teachers can use such moments to compare sounds that students commonly confuse. Nevertheless, melodic extension requires careful interpretation because singing may alter the natural duration and quality of spoken vowels.

The selection of musical materials influences the effectiveness of phonological awareness activities. Songs with clear vocal articulation and moderate tempos generally provide more manageable listening conditions than recordings dominated by instrumental accompaniment. Teachers should also consider the phonemic contrasts represented in particular lyrics. Wang and Liu (2025) place phoneme categorization at the center of their investigation into English song lyrics and EFL learning difficulties. Their focus reinforces the relevance of selecting musical input according to identifiable perceptual learning objectives.

Effective classroom practice requires moving beyond passive exposure toward deliberate auditory comparison. Learners might listen to two short musical phrases containing contrasting phonemes and indicate whether the target sounds match. Subsequent listening can direct attention toward the specific acoustic differences responsible for their judgments. The teacher may gradually reduce musical support to determine whether discrimination remains accurate in ordinary speech. Such

progression helps students transfer perceptual attention from highly structured musical material to less predictable spoken language encountered elsewhere.

Individual differences also shape the development of phonological awareness through musical instruction. Some learners readily identify rhythmic patterns but struggle to distinguish unfamiliar vowel contrasts. Others perceive melodic variation accurately while experiencing difficulty locating syllable boundaries. These differences call for flexible listening tasks and opportunities to revisit particular sounds. In considering learners with lower English achievement, Wang and Liu (2025) draw attention to a population for whom phoneme categorization merits investigation through song lyrics as instructional material.

Assessment of sound discrimination should examine perceptual accuracy rather than musical performance. Students need not demonstrate singing ability to reveal meaningful progress in phonological awareness. Teachers can employ brief listening tasks involving sound identification, phoneme matching, or recognition of contrasting syllables. Recordings presented without melodic accompaniment offer a useful means of checking whether learners recognize target sounds beyond familiar songs. Repeated assessment across different voices and linguistic environments can provide a clearer picture of developing auditory sensitivity over time.

Ultimately, musical rhythm and melody offer complementary resources for strengthening the perceptual foundations of English pronunciation. Their educational contribution depends on purposeful listening activities that connect musical organization with identifiable speech sounds. As learners become increasingly attentive to phonemic contrasts, they acquire perceptual knowledge that can inform subsequent pronunciation practice. The investigation by Wang and Liu (2025) provides a relevant research connection between English song

lyrics and phoneme categorization, supporting further pedagogical consideration of music within EFL phonological instruction.

3.2. Developing English Word Stress, Sentence Rhythm, and Intonation Through Song Performance

English pronunciation involves more than producing individual sounds accurately. Speakers must also organize syllables, distribute emphasis, and shape vocal pitch according to communicative intentions. For EFL learners, these prosodic features often present difficulties because familiar patterns from their first language influence spoken production. Song performance creates opportunities to experience English prosody through coordinated vocal practice. By connecting musical timing with linguistic expression, students can develop greater awareness of the rhythmic and melodic characteristics that contribute to intelligible communication.

Word stress represents an essential component of English pronunciation because variations in syllabic prominence influence lexical recognition. During song performance, learners encounter stressed syllables within recurring patterns of musical emphasis. Teachers can draw attention to the relationship between prominent syllables and their surrounding unstressed elements. Careful selection remains necessary because musical compositions sometimes place emphasis differently from natural speech. When lyrical stress corresponds with ordinary pronunciation, singing provides learners with repeated opportunities to practice prominence through coordinated vocal production.

The pedagogical relationship between musical rhythm and pronunciation has attracted research attention. Sugiura and Hori (2025) investigated auditory musical rhythm as a cue in second language pronunciation learning while examining its relationship with individual differences. Their research offers a relevant perspective for designing activities that connect rhythmic

information with spoken production. Within classroom practice, rhythmic cues can help learners coordinate stressed syllables and speech timing, although their usefulness should be considered alongside learners' differing responses to musical guidance.

Sentence rhythm introduces another dimension of pronunciation development because English speakers alternate prominent and reduced elements across connected speech. Learners accustomed to assigning similar weight to every syllable may initially produce speech that sounds unusually segmented. Songs can make patterns of prominence more accessible through carefully structured vocal repetition. Performing short lyrical phrases allows students to experience differences between stressed content words and less prominent grammatical elements while maintaining continuity across the utterance during guided pronunciation practice.

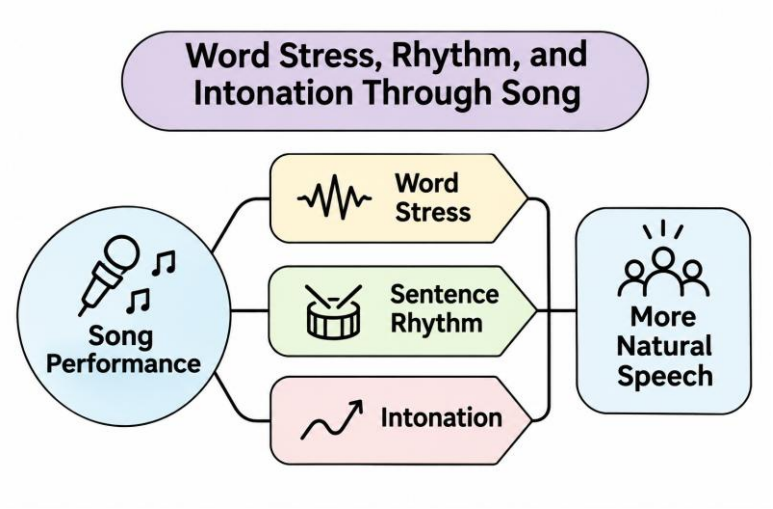
The transition from musical rhythm to natural sentence production requires deliberate instructional attention. Teachers can begin with short lyrical passages whose rhythmic organization resembles conversational English. Students first perform the phrases with musical accompaniment before repeating them as ordinary speech. Removing the melody encourages learners to preserve appropriate stress relationships without depending on musical notes. This comparison also reveals instances where composers modify linguistic rhythm for artistic purposes, helping students distinguish musical interpretation from conventional spoken pronunciation patterns.

Intonation contributes meaning to spoken English by communicating attitudes, intentions, and relationships between ideas. Song performance offers opportunities to experiment with pitch movement while developing vocal confidence. However, melodic direction does not necessarily correspond to conversational intonation. Teachers must therefore guide learners in recognizing differences between musical pitch sequences and

speech intonation patterns. A useful activity involves performing a lyrical statement before expressing its meaning conversationally, allowing students to consider the communicative functions of changing vocal contours.

Learners respond differently to rhythmic support, particularly when coordinating speech movements with external auditory signals. Sugiura and Hori (2025) explicitly addressed individual differences in their investigation of musical rhythm and second language pronunciation learning. Their research focus highlights the importance of considering learner variability when planning performance activities. Some students may benefit from a steady beat, whereas others require slower rehearsal or additional spoken models. Flexible pacing allows teachers to accommodate different levels of rhythmic confidence.

Figure 8
Prosodic Development Through Song Performance



Collaborative song performance can extend prosodic practice beyond individual repetition. When students rehearse in pairs or small groups, they must coordinate timing and maintain

shared patterns of emphasis. Alternating lyrical lines creates opportunities to practice phrase boundaries and respond to another speaker's vocal delivery. Teachers can encourage students to observe whether prominent words remain intelligible during group performance. Such interaction introduces a communicative dimension to pronunciation practice while preserving the structured support provided by music.

Feedback becomes particularly valuable when learners begin transferring rehearsed prosodic patterns into spontaneous speech. Rather than correcting every departure from an idealized model, teachers can prioritize features that affect comprehensibility. Short recordings allow students to compare their sung and spoken versions of the same passage. Attention may focus on misplaced word stress or inappropriate pitch movement. Guided self evaluation encourages learners to recognize patterns in their production and make informed adjustments during subsequent speaking activities.

Developing prosodic competence through song performance requires sustained movement between musical expression and authentic spoken communication. Rhythmic rehearsal can support pronunciation practice when learners understand which features belong to English speech and which arise from musical composition. The work of Sugiura and Hori (2025) provides a research perspective on auditory rhythm and learner differences within pronunciation development. Through attentive instruction, song performance can become a productive setting for refining stress placement, rhythmic coordination, and expressive intonation.

3.3. Improving Connected Speech, Linking, and Sound Reduction Through Authentic Musical Input

Connected speech presents a distinctive challenge in English language learning because words rarely retain their isolated

pronunciation during natural communication. Sounds interact across boundaries, syllables become compressed, and familiar expressions acquire unexpected acoustic forms. For EFL learners accustomed to carefully articulated classroom models, such variation can complicate listening and speaking. Authentic musical recordings provide opportunities to encounter these processes within meaningful language. Their value lies in revealing the continuous movement of spoken English through naturally occurring vocal transitions.

Linking represents one of the most noticeable features of connected English speech. When speakers join adjacent words, consonants and vowels frequently interact to create uninterrupted articulatory sequences. Songs can expose learners to these transitions through memorable phrases that encourage repeated observation. A teacher might select recordings containing expressions such as “turn it on” or “take it away.” Listening closely to their production helps students recognize that written word boundaries do not necessarily correspond to audible pauses during communication.

The relationship between musical prosody and speech processing offers a theoretical perspective on such instructional practices. Sun et al. (2024) investigated cross domain prosodic priming from music to speech using event related potentials. Their research provides neurological evidence relevant to interactions between musical and linguistic prosodic processing. Although this investigation does not directly establish improvements in connected speech through songs, it supports examining whether musical experience can influence attention to temporal and structural features within spoken language during listening.

Sound reduction creates additional difficulties because unstressed elements frequently undergo changes in vowel quality or duration. Common grammatical words may sound considerably different from their citation forms when embedded in fluent

speech. Authentic songs occasionally preserve such reductions within recognizable expressions. Teachers can guide students to compare written lyrics with actual vocal delivery and identify weakened syllables. This process encourages attention to the acoustic realization of language rather than reliance on spelling during listening comprehension activities.

Elision further illustrates the dynamic character of connected speech. In particular phonetic environments, speakers may omit sounds that appear in the written representation of an expression. Learners encountering these forms without preparation can mistakenly interpret them as unfamiliar vocabulary. Musical recordings provide material for examining such differences when vocal articulation remains sufficiently clear. By comparing carefully selected phrases with their written versions, students can observe the conditions under which sounds disappear while the intended meaning remains recoverable.

Assimilation introduces another layer of complexity because neighboring sounds may influence one another during rapid articulation. Changes in place of articulation can make familiar word combinations sound unexpectedly different. Teachers can select lyrical passages containing naturally occurring assimilatory patterns and encourage students to notice the relationship between adjacent consonants. Short listening comparisons help learners distinguish conventional pronunciation variation from inaccurate production. Instruction should emphasize intelligibility and recognition rather than requiring imitation of every phonetic detail encountered in recordings.

Authentic musical input requires careful interpretation because singing and conversational speech follow different production constraints. Melodic demands may prolong vowels or alter consonant timing, while artistic phrasing can interrupt expected patterns of reduction. Sun et al. (2024) examined interactions between musical and linguistic prosody, offering a

useful research perspective for considering connections between these domains. Nevertheless, classroom instruction must distinguish genuine connected speech phenomena from pronunciation changes produced primarily by musical performance conventions.

Instructional sequencing can help learners move from recognizing connected speech toward producing it appropriately. Initial activities may involve identifying linked words within short recordings before comparing them with spoken versions. Students can then rehearse selected expressions at a comfortable pace and gradually increase their speaking rate without sacrificing clarity. Recording their attempts allows them to examine articulatory transitions and unnecessary pauses. Such practice develops control over connected speech while maintaining attention to meaning and communicative purpose.

The diversity of musical recordings also creates opportunities to examine pronunciation variation across English speaking communities. Different performers may realize linking and reduction according to regional accents, stylistic preferences, or performance conditions. Exposure to carefully chosen examples can broaden learners' expectations of acceptable spoken forms. Teachers should avoid presenting one recording as a universal pronunciation standard. Instead, comparisons can demonstrate that connected speech reflects flexible articulatory processes shaped by linguistic environment and individual speaking habits.

Developing connected speech competence ultimately requires learners to interpret continuous acoustic information without depending on clearly separated words. Authentic musical input can contribute to this development when selected examples reflect recognizable features of natural pronunciation. Research by Sun et al. (2024) provides evidence of relationships between musical and speech prosodic processing, although pedagogical applications require independent evaluation. Through guided

listening and spoken rehearsal, learners can develop greater sensitivity to linking, reduction, and articulatory continuity.

3.4. Strengthening Articulatory Accuracy and Pronunciation Intelligibility Through Singing and Vocal Practice

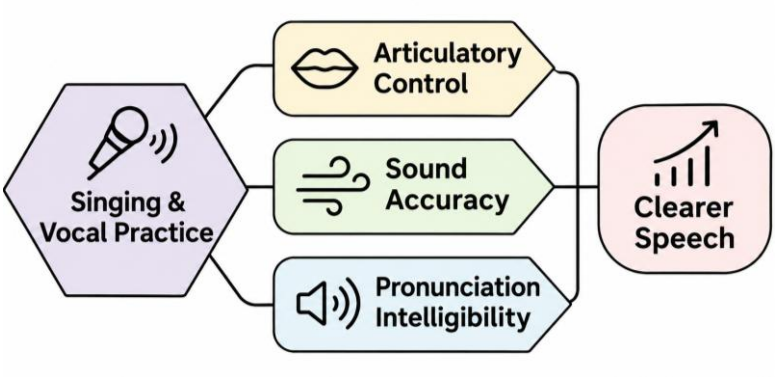
Articulatory accuracy develops when learners gain conscious control over the movements involved in producing English speech sounds. For EFL students, unfamiliar consonant configurations and vowel positions can create persistent pronunciation difficulties. Singing offers a practical setting for examining these movements because sustained vocal production encourages attention to breathing and oral coordination. Through guided vocal practice, learners can observe the physical demands of pronunciation while developing greater consistency in producing sounds that contribute to comprehensible spoken communication across different learning situations.

The production of English vowels requires precise adjustments in tongue height, lip position, and muscular tension. Singing can make these articulatory features more noticeable when learners sustain selected vowel sounds under teacher supervision. Extended phonation provides additional time to monitor oral positioning and compare contrasting vowel qualities. However, sustained musical vowels may differ from their ordinary spoken realizations. Teachers should therefore connect vocal exercises with natural speech models to prevent learners from developing exaggerated or inappropriate pronunciation habits.

Research examining singing in language education provides a relevant foundation for articulatory instruction. Zhang et al. (2023) investigated the effects of singing songs on second language pronunciation and vocabulary learning among Chinese adolescent ESL learners. Their findings support the pedagogical potential of singing for pronunciation development within the

population studied. This evidence encourages teachers to consider structured vocal activities as learning opportunities while recognizing that successful pronunciation instruction also depends on appropriate sound selection and guided practice.

Figure 9
Articulatory Accuracy Through Vocal Practice



Consonant production introduces distinct challenges because accurate articulation often depends on brief movements and carefully coordinated airflow. English fricatives and consonant clusters may require adjustments unfamiliar to learners from different linguistic backgrounds. Vocal exercises can isolate these difficulties before incorporating target sounds into meaningful song phrases. Teachers might encourage students to observe tongue placement and airflow during controlled repetition. Once accurate production becomes more consistent, short melodic sequences can provide opportunities to practice difficult articulations.

Breath management also deserves attention because respiratory control influences the stability of vocal production. Singing naturally encourages learners to coordinate inhalation and exhalation across phrases of varying length. Such practice may help students maintain adequate airflow when producing sustained vowels or consonants requiring continuous friction. Nevertheless,

classroom activities should prioritize comfortable phonation rather than demanding professional singing techniques. Brief breathing exercises followed by spoken rehearsal can establish useful connections between respiratory coordination and pronunciation control during communication.

Pronunciation intelligibility provides an important criterion for evaluating the educational value of vocal practice. Accurate articulation becomes meaningful when listeners can recognize intended words without excessive effort. Zhang et al. (2023) examined pronunciation learning alongside vocabulary acquisition through singing, highlighting the relevance of musical activities to linguistic development. Within classroom instruction, teachers can extend this perspective by evaluating whether practiced sounds remain recognizable in ordinary speech. Listener comprehension should guide correction more consistently than expectations of native accent imitation.

Individual articulatory difficulties require targeted practice rather than uniform repetition of entire songs. A learner struggling with dental fricatives may need explicit guidance concerning tongue placement, whereas another may require assistance with vowel distinctions. Teachers can identify recurring errors through short diagnostic recordings and select vocal exercises accordingly. Musical phrases should contain manageable combinations of target sounds and familiar vocabulary. This approach allows students to concentrate on specific movements without losing the communicative meaning of their utterances.

Feedback during singing activities should remain precise and supportive because excessive correction can interrupt vocal confidence. Teachers can demonstrate an articulatory movement before inviting learners to repeat the target sound at a comfortable pitch. Visual cues and brief explanations may clarify movements that students cannot easily perceive through listening. Peer observation can also encourage awareness when conducted

respectfully. The objective is to develop reliable articulatory habits while preserving the enjoyment and participation associated with musical learning.

The transfer of articulatory skills from singing to speaking requires deliberate opportunities for comparison. Students may initially produce a target vowel accurately during melodic rehearsal but struggle to maintain its quality during spontaneous conversation. Teachers can address this difference by gradually removing musical accompaniment and introducing short communicative exchanges. The research of Zhang et al. (2023) offers empirical support for investigating singing as a pronunciation learning activity, although transfer across speaking conditions requires careful instructional attention.

Singing and vocal practice can contribute to pronunciation development when articulatory precision remains connected to intelligible communication. Their educational value depends on appropriate vocal demands and opportunities to apply rehearsed movements beyond musical performance. Learners benefit from recognizing the physical characteristics of unfamiliar sounds while developing greater control over their production. With consistent guidance, singing becomes a practical resource for refining articulatory accuracy and supporting clearer English speech across varied communicative situations and classroom interactions.

3.5. Building Speaking Fluency and Oral Confidence Through Musical Repetition and Interactive Performance

Speaking fluency develops through repeated opportunities to express meaning with increasing ease and continuity. For many EFL learners, spontaneous communication remains difficult because retrieving vocabulary and organizing sentences demand considerable mental effort. Musical repetition offers a structured environment where familiar language sequences become

progressively easier to produce. Songs provide predictable verbal patterns that reduce immediate processing demands during practice. Through regular participation, students can strengthen their ability to sustain speech while gradually developing confidence in their communicative abilities.

The relationship between musical activities and speaking development has received growing attention in language education. Kitjaroonchai and Sukman (2025) examined the effects of English songs on EFL learners' speaking performance through lexical complexity, accuracy, and fluency. Their research provides a relevant empirical perspective for understanding the potential contribution of songs to oral language development. Within classroom instruction, musical repetition can be organized to encourage increasingly independent speech production while maintaining meaningful connections between practiced expressions and communicative purposes.

Repeated performance can support the gradual automatization of frequently used linguistic sequences. When learners encounter familiar expressions across several rehearsals, they may retrieve them with less conscious effort. This growing familiarity can reduce interruptions caused by searching for individual words or grammatical structures. Teachers can encourage students to practice short lyrical exchanges before adapting their language to new situations. Such progression helps transform rehearsed verbal patterns into resources for communication beyond the original musical material.

Oral confidence develops alongside fluency when learners experience speaking as a manageable social activity. Group singing can reduce the visibility of individual errors because responsibility for performance is distributed among participants. Students who hesitate during conventional speaking exercises may feel more comfortable contributing within a shared musical task. However, participation should remain sensitive to individual preferences.

Teachers can offer alternatives such as rhythmic speaking or paired performance to accommodate learners who experience discomfort with singing publicly.

Interactive musical performance introduces opportunities for meaningful exchanges rather than continuous reproduction of memorized lyrics. Call and response activities allow students to alternate speaking roles while maintaining predictable communicative structures. Teachers can gradually replace fixed responses with learner generated expressions that preserve the intended meaning. This adjustment encourages spontaneous language selection within a supportive framework. As participants become more comfortable, exchanges can expand into brief conversations that require attentive listening and increasingly flexible oral responses.

Fluency instruction benefits from distinguishing speech continuity from linguistic accuracy. Learners may communicate effectively despite occasional grammatical errors or hesitation. Kitjaroonchai and Sukman (2025) considered fluency alongside lexical complexity and accuracy when investigating speaking performance through English songs. Their analytical focus highlights the value of examining multiple dimensions of oral production. Classroom activities can therefore prioritize uninterrupted expression during initial performance before introducing selective feedback that addresses recurring language difficulties without discouraging participation or experimentation.

The design of performance tasks influences whether musical repetition develops communicative independence. Activities limited to memorized singing may strengthen familiarity with particular expressions without necessarily improving spontaneous speech. Teachers can introduce variations that require learners to modify lyrics according to personal experiences or classroom situations. Students might replace familiar phrases with original statements while maintaining an accessible rhythmic

structure. These modifications encourage active language construction and create opportunities to practice speaking beyond predetermined verbal sequences.

Collaborative performances can strengthen oral confidence by creating opportunities for supportive peer interaction. Small groups may prepare short musical dialogues in which participants negotiate wording and organize speaking turns. Such preparation requires learners to express preferences and respond to suggestions through English. During performance, shared responsibility can encourage participation from students who rarely volunteer during individual speaking activities. Teachers should distribute speaking opportunities fairly so that confident performers do not unintentionally dominate the communicative experience.

Assessing fluency development requires attention to observable changes in speech production across comparable tasks. Teachers can examine hesitation frequency, speaking rate, and the ability to maintain coherent utterances. Short recordings collected during different instructional periods may reveal progress that learners overlook in everyday participation. Research by Kitjaroonchai and Sukman (2025) provides a relevant basis for considering measurable dimensions of speaking performance in song based instruction. Assessment should also acknowledge confidence through voluntary participation and communicative persistence.

Musical repetition and interactive performance can contribute to speaking development when learners gradually assume greater responsibility for producing original language. Familiar songs offer an accessible starting point, while collaborative exchanges encourage communication beyond rehearsed material. The educational contribution of musical practice becomes more meaningful when fluency is evaluated through authentic speaking opportunities. With carefully organized activities, EFL learners can develop greater verbal continuity and confidence while

participating in increasingly independent oral communication across classroom situations.

3.6. Promoting Spontaneous Oral Communication Through Song-Inspired Dialogues, Role-Plays, and Collaborative Tasks

Spontaneous oral communication requires learners to construct meaning while responding to unpredictable contributions from others. Unlike rehearsed performance, genuine interaction demands immediate decisions about language and communicative intention. Songs can provide meaningful starting points for developing such abilities through situations drawn from their narratives and emotional themes. When teachers transform musical material into interactive tasks, students encounter opportunities to express personal interpretations and negotiate meaning. The resulting exchanges encourage communicative independence while maintaining connections with familiar linguistic material.

Song inspired dialogues allow learners to transform lyrical narratives into conversations that require original responses. A song describing friendship or disagreement might become the basis for an exchange between characters with contrasting perspectives. Students can identify the underlying situation before developing questions and responses appropriate to their assigned roles. Teachers should encourage natural conversational language rather than reproducing complete lyrical passages. Such adaptation requires learners to interpret meaning and make independent linguistic choices during purposeful interpersonal communication.

The emotional conditions surrounding classroom participation influence learners' willingness to engage in oral exchanges. Kim et al. (2024) examined music listening in foreign language learning with particular attention to learner perceptions, attitudes, and language anxiety. Their investigation provides a

relevant perspective for considering the emotional dimensions of music based instruction. Although listening experiences differ from interactive speaking tasks, understanding learners' responses to music can inform the design of supportive environments for oral participation.

Role plays extend musical narratives by introducing communicative situations that demand negotiation and personal decision making. Students might imagine conversations occurring before or after the events described in a song. Each participant receives information or intentions that other group members do not initially know. Such arrangements encourage clarification requests and unexpected responses. Teachers can support the activity through brief preparation without prescribing complete scripts. The central objective remains meaningful interaction rather than accurate reproduction of predetermined dialogue.

Collaborative tasks offer another opportunity to develop spontaneous communication through shared problem solving. Following a musical listening activity, groups might design an alternative ending to the song's narrative or discuss competing interpretations of its message. Participants must explain their preferences and negotiate decisions before presenting their collective work. Productive disagreement can encourage learners to reformulate ideas and respond to alternative viewpoints. These exchanges create opportunities for communication that extends beyond the language originally encountered.

Learner anxiety deserves careful consideration when organizing interactive musical activities. Kim et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between music listening experiences and language anxiety alongside participants' attitudes and perceptions. Their research directs attention toward emotional factors that may influence engagement with language learning activities. Teachers can respond by establishing predictable participation procedures and allowing brief preparation before

spontaneous exchanges. Such arrangements may make unfamiliar communicative demands more manageable without eliminating the unpredictability necessary for meaningful interaction.

The effectiveness of song inspired interaction depends partly on the quality of questions used to initiate discussion. Questions requiring factual recall generally produce limited responses and may restrict opportunities for negotiation. Open ended prompts invite students to interpret motives or defend alternative decisions. A teacher might ask whether a character acted reasonably or invite learners to propose another response to a conflict. These questions encourage extended contributions while allowing participants to draw upon their experiences.

Classroom interaction also requires attention to participation patterns and conversational responsibility. Confident speakers may dominate collaborative activities unless teachers establish expectations for balanced contributions. Assigning rotating responsibilities can encourage quieter learners to initiate questions or summarize group decisions. However, excessive procedural control may reduce conversational authenticity. Teachers should therefore provide enough structure to support equitable participation while preserving opportunities for unexpected exchanges. Observing group interaction can reveal whether students are genuinely responding to one another.

Assessment of spontaneous communication should examine learners' ability to sustain meaningful exchanges rather than reproduce memorized expressions. Relevant indicators may involve initiating conversations, responding appropriately, requesting clarification, and adjusting messages when misunderstandings occur. Teachers can observe these behaviors during collaborative performances and provide focused feedback afterward. The work of Kim et al. (2024) also encourages attention to learner perceptions and anxiety when interpreting classroom

participation. Communicative development should be considered alongside individual willingness to speak.

Table 3

Music-Based Instructional Approaches for Developing English Pronunciation, Speaking Fluency, and Oral Communication

Instructional Focus	Pedagogical Applications and Learning Outcomes
Phonological Awareness and Sound Discrimination	Musical rhythm and melody support the recognition of English phonemes and acoustic contrasts. Guided listening activities strengthen auditory discrimination and learners' ability to distinguish unfamiliar speech sounds.
Word Stress, Sentence Rhythm, and Intonation	Song performance provides opportunities to practice syllabic prominence and speech rhythm. Structured vocal activities develop awareness of intonation patterns and support more natural spoken expression.
Connected Speech, Linking, and Sound Reduction	Authentic musical recordings expose learners to pronunciation patterns found in continuous speech. Focused listening and oral rehearsal strengthen recognition of linking and reduced forms while supporting smoother articulation.
Articulatory Accuracy and Pronunciation Intelligibility	Singing and controlled vocal exercises encourage awareness of tongue placement and airflow. Targeted pronunciation practice supports accurate sound production and improves the comprehensibility of spoken English.
Speaking Fluency and Oral Confidence	Musical repetition and interactive performances encourage increasingly continuous speech production. Collaborative activities provide opportunities to retrieve familiar expressions and develop confidence during oral participation.
Spontaneous Oral Communication and Collaborative Interaction	Song-inspired dialogues and role-plays encourage independent language production. Collaborative tasks strengthen conversational responsiveness and meaning negotiation while promoting active participation in communicative situations.

Note. The instructional approaches draw on research by Wang and Liu (2025), Sugiura and Hori (2025), Sun et al. (2024), Zhang et al. (2023), Kitjaroonchai and Sukman (2025), and Kim et al. (2024). The pedagogical applications integrate research perspectives with classroom practices discussed throughout Chapter 3.

Chapter 4

Creative and Interactive Song-Based Activities for the EFL Classroom

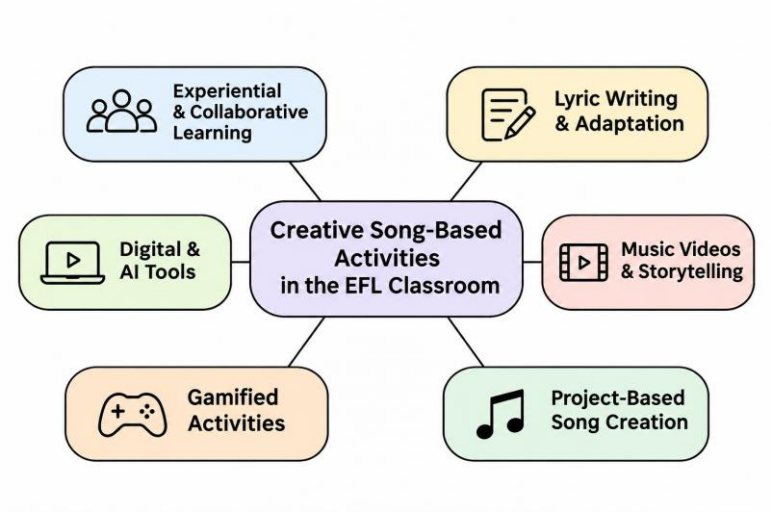
Music offers a distinctive educational space where language can be experienced through participation, interpretation, and creative expression. Within English as a Foreign Language classrooms, songs provide opportunities to move beyond conventional instructional routines and engage learners in purposeful communication. Their pedagogical potential becomes particularly evident when musical experiences invite students to make decisions and develop original responses. Designing such experiences requires an understanding of the relationships among linguistic development, artistic engagement, and the social dimensions of learning.

The movement toward creative musical instruction reflects a broader recognition that language acquisition benefits from meaningful experiences involving active participation. Students bring different interests and cultural experiences into the classroom, which influence their responses to musical materials. Effective teaching acknowledges such diversity while establishing shared communicative purposes. Fündeling and Stadler Elmer (2025) examine strategies for guiding collective singing, providing a useful perspective on the instructional decisions involved in facilitating musical participation and maintaining productive learning environments.

Creative engagement with songs also creates opportunities for learners to develop a stronger relationship with language production. Musical expression encourages attention to the intentions behind words and the audiences who receive them. Through carefully designed activities, students can discover that linguistic choices carry personal and social significance. Tobias et al. (2015) examine project-based learning in music education, offering a relevant foundation for understanding creative musical work as an educational process connected to purposeful participation and meaningful outcomes.

Technological developments have further expanded the possibilities for integrating music into language instruction. Digital environments provide access to diverse musical resources and interactive experiences that can accommodate different learning preferences. Their educational contribution depends on the relationship between technological functions and instructional intentions. Liu et al. (2024) investigated digital gamification among EFL learners, considering language achievement alongside enjoyment and second language identity. Their research highlights relevant dimensions of engagement when examining technology-supported language learning experiences.

Figure 10
Creative Approaches to Song-Based EFL Learning



The growing presence of artificial intelligence in educational environments introduces additional questions about creativity and instructional responsibility. Automated systems can assist with preparing learning materials and generating language practice opportunities. Nevertheless, their contributions require careful evaluation because technological efficiency does not guarantee educational relevance. Teachers must consider the

accuracy and appropriateness of generated materials while protecting learners' opportunities for independent expression. Human judgment remains essential when technological resources influence the direction and quality of musical learning.

Musical experiences also invite consideration of the multiple forms through which learners interpret and communicate meaning. Images, movement, spoken language, and narrative structures can interact with sound to create complex communicative experiences. Such relationships require thoughtful instructional organization. Sun et al. (2024) investigated the influence of background music on reading comprehension while considering lyrical language and study habits. Their work provides a relevant perspective on the importance of auditory conditions when learners process linguistic information.

Motivation represents another significant consideration in developing interactive musical instruction. Enjoyable classroom experiences can encourage participation, although engagement must remain connected to identifiable learning purposes. Playful structures offer possibilities for maintaining attention and supporting repeated encounters with language. Zhang and Hasim (2023) systematically reviewed empirical research concerning gamification in EFL and ESL instruction. Their analysis provides a foundation for examining the educational value of game elements beyond immediate enthusiasm or visible classroom participation.

The relationship between collaboration and individual responsibility becomes especially important when musical learning extends across multiple sessions. Shared creative work requires students to coordinate decisions and respond constructively to different perspectives. Digital resources may facilitate such processes when they support clear educational objectives. Temel and Cesur (2024) examined gamification with Web 2.0 tools in online EFL learning environments, addressing motivation and academic achievement. Their research contributes to discussions

concerning engagement within digitally mediated language instruction.

Implementing creative musical instruction requires attention to the practical conditions that shape classroom experiences. Learners differ in musical confidence, linguistic proficiency, and access to technological resources. Teachers must therefore establish achievable expectations while preserving opportunities for experimentation and personal contribution. Assessment also requires sensitivity to the distinction between artistic performance and language development. Recognizing different forms of progress helps maintain an inclusive environment where musical activities remain accessible and educationally meaningful for diverse learners.

The present chapter examines the pedagogical possibilities of creative and interactive song-based instruction through interconnected approaches to classroom practice. Attention is directed toward experiential participation, collaborative production, digital engagement, multimodal communication, and purposeful musical projects. Each dimension contributes to understanding the instructional decisions that connect artistic activity with language learning. Together, they establish a framework for developing classroom experiences in which students engage with English through meaningful communication and sustained creative involvement.

4.1. Designing Student-Centered Musical Activities Through Experiential and Collaborative Learning

Student-centered musical activities create opportunities for learners to engage with English through purposeful participation rather than passive reception. Within the EFL classroom, songs become flexible resources for constructing meaning through movement, interaction, and shared decisions. Effective activity design begins with learners' interests, linguistic

abilities, and previous musical experiences. Teachers can then establish tasks that invite experimentation while maintaining clear language objectives. Such an approach recognizes that meaningful learning develops when students actively shape their experiences and contributions.

Experiential learning offers a practical foundation for transforming musical participation into language development. Students encounter linguistic patterns through singing, listening, improvising, and responding to musical prompts. These experiences acquire educational value when learners examine their choices and connect their observations with communicative purposes. A teacher might encourage students to modify familiar expressions within a melody and discuss the resulting changes in meaning. Reflection therefore becomes part of musical engagement, allowing learners to recognize relationships between expression and intention.

Collaborative musical tasks extend individual participation into a process of shared linguistic construction. Small groups can negotiate song arrangements, distribute performance responsibilities, and make collective decisions about expressive choices. Such interactions require students to clarify intentions and respond to alternative viewpoints. The collaborative dimension also introduces an authentic reason for using English during preparation. Rather than treating communication as an additional exercise, learners employ language to accomplish musical goals that depend on mutual understanding and coordinated effort.

The teacher's role requires particular attention when designing activities that combine musical guidance with learner autonomy. Fündeling and Stadler Elmer (2025) conceptualize song leading through strategies that help organize and support collective musical participation. Their perspective offers a useful basis for considering instructional guidance as a responsive practice. Teachers can demonstrate an initial musical pattern before

transferring selected decisions to students. Gradually reducing direct intervention creates space for independent contributions without sacrificing the structure necessary for productive engagement.

Meaningful student choice strengthens the relationship between musical activity and personal investment. Learners may select themes, propose rhythmic variations, or determine the communicative purpose of a short performance. However, choice requires thoughtful boundaries to remain educationally productive. Providing several manageable alternatives helps students exercise autonomy while working toward shared language outcomes. A classroom composition task, for instance, might allow groups to choose their message while requiring accurate expressions of preference, agreement, or personal experience in English.

Participation patterns deserve careful consideration because collaborative musical work can unintentionally privilege confident performers. Some learners readily volunteer to sing while others prefer composing lyrics or coordinating group decisions. Rotating responsibilities creates opportunities for varied forms of contribution. Fündeling and Stadler Elmer (2025) examine strategies associated with guiding song participation, offering a relevant perspective for organizing inclusive musical experiences. Teachers should therefore recognize quieter contributions and establish conditions where linguistic experimentation remains accessible to students with differing confidence levels.

The physical and social organization of musical activities influences the quality of student interaction. Flexible seating can support face-to-face negotiation, while designated rehearsal areas may reduce unnecessary interruptions. Equally important are expectations concerning attentive listening and respectful responses to unfinished ideas. Students need sufficient time to test possibilities before presenting their work publicly. When classroom

routines protect experimentation from premature judgment, collaborative groups can develop greater confidence in expressing unfamiliar language through musical performance and discussion.

Assessment within experiential musical activities should examine the learning process alongside observable outcomes. Teachers can document participation, monitor communicative exchanges, and invite learners to explain decisions made during collaborative tasks. Brief reflective statements provide evidence of linguistic awareness that performance quality alone cannot reveal. Students might identify expressions they successfully negotiated or describe difficulties encountered when adapting lyrics. Such evidence allows assessment to acknowledge individual progress while preserving the exploratory character of creative musical work in classroom practice.

Sustaining productive collaboration requires teachers to balance preparation with responsiveness to unexpected developments. A group may discover an effective rhythmic pattern that changes the direction of its original composition. Another may need additional support when disagreements interrupt progress. Fündeling and Stadler Elmer (2025) emphasize the strategic dimensions of song leading, a perspective relevant to instructional adjustments during collective music making. Responsive guidance enables teachers to address immediate needs while preserving students' responsibility for their musical decisions.

Designing student-centered musical activities ultimately involves creating conditions where learners can exercise agency within purposeful educational structures. Experiential engagement provides opportunities to test language through action, while collaboration gives those actions a meaningful social dimension. The teacher maintains coherence by aligning musical choices with communicative objectives and recognizing different forms of participation. Through carefully planned opportunities for reflection and shared responsibility, students can experience

English as a language used to create, negotiate, and communicate together.

4.2. Creative Lyric Writing and Song Adaptation for Meaningful Language Production

Creative lyric writing offers EFL learners an opportunity to transform familiar language into personally meaningful expression. Unlike conventional exercises that prioritize predetermined answers, songwriting invites students to consider what they genuinely want to communicate. Words acquire particular significance when they must convey an idea within a musical phrase. This process encourages deliberate vocabulary selection and greater attention to linguistic nuance. The resulting compositions reflect developing language competence while allowing individual perspectives to become visible through creative production.

Song adaptation provides an accessible entry point for learners who may initially find original composition intimidating. Working with an existing melody reduces some creative demands while establishing recognizable rhythmic boundaries. Students can replace selected phrases, modify narrative perspectives, or develop alternative endings that reflect their experiences. Each adjustment requires attention to meaning and linguistic form. Through such transformations, familiar musical material becomes a framework for producing original language without requiring advanced musical knowledge or extensive technical preparation.

The relationship between lyrical meaning and musical structure introduces productive constraints into language learning. Students must consider syllable distribution, word stress, and the natural flow of spoken English when fitting expressions to melodies. A grammatically accurate sentence may require revision because its rhythm feels awkward when sung. Such moments encourage learners to compare alternatives and make informed

linguistic decisions. Musical constraints therefore create authentic reasons to refine language while maintaining the communicative intentions behind each composition.

Project-based approaches offer a valuable framework for organizing extended lyric writing activities. Tobias et al. (2015) examine the implementation of project-based learning within music education and highlight opportunities for connecting curricular objectives with meaningful creative work. Applied to EFL instruction, this perspective supports songwriting projects organized around recognizable communicative purposes. Students might develop songs addressing environmental concerns or everyday relationships. Their compositions become tangible products through which linguistic knowledge can be applied and communicated to an audience.

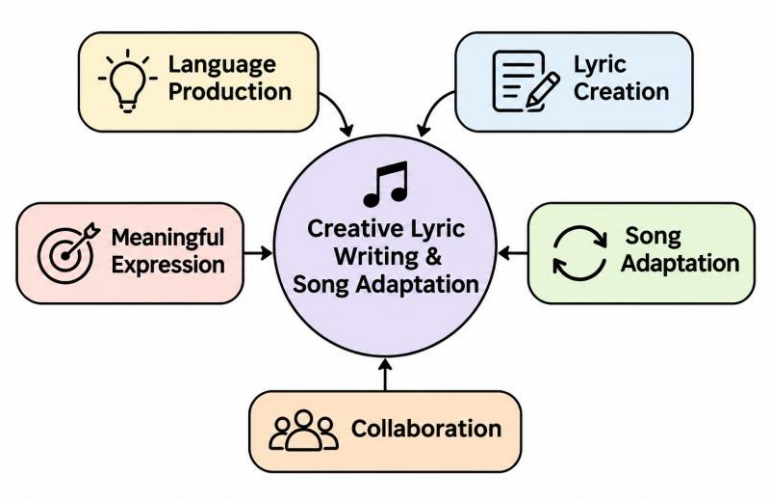
Effective lyric writing tasks benefit from carefully selected language resources that support expression without determining every creative decision. Teachers may provide thematic vocabulary banks, useful grammatical patterns, or examples of figurative language. These resources function as starting points rather than rigid templates. Students should retain opportunities to depart from suggested expressions when their intended meanings require different choices. Such flexibility encourages linguistic experimentation while ensuring that learners possess sufficient support to develop coherent and understandable lyrics.

Revision occupies a particularly meaningful position in songwriting because linguistic choices become immediately noticeable through performance. When students sing their drafts, unclear expressions and unnatural phrasing often attract attention. Peer responses can identify passages that communicate effectively or require further refinement. Tobias et al. (2015) situate creative musical work within project-based educational practices, providing a relevant foundation for iterative development. Successive

revisions allow learners to improve linguistic precision while preserving the expressive character of their original ideas.

Narrative songwriting can deepen language production by encouraging students to organize experiences into coherent sequences. Learners may construct fictional situations, describe personal memories, or represent contrasting perspectives through verses and refrains. These decisions require attention to temporal relationships and consistency of viewpoint. A repeated chorus can reinforce the central message while successive verses introduce new information. Through narrative composition, students practice maintaining coherence across extended stretches of language rather than producing disconnected sentences for isolated grammatical exercises.

Figure 11
Lyric Writing and Meaningful Language Production



Digital tools can expand creative possibilities when their use remains connected to clear linguistic purposes. Simple recording applications allow students to listen critically to their pronunciation and revise passages that obscure intended meanings.

Shared writing platforms can facilitate collaborative editing and preserve earlier drafts for comparison. Technology should remain subordinate to the composition process rather than dominate instructional attention. Its educational contribution lies in making language choices more visible and supporting thoughtful decisions throughout creative development.

Presenting original lyrics to an audience introduces a communicative dimension that extends beyond classroom correction. Students must consider whether listeners can understand their message and recognize its intended emotional tone. Tobias et al. (2015) discuss project-based learning within music programs, offering a useful perspective on creative work developed toward meaningful outcomes. In EFL classrooms, modest performances or recorded presentations can provide authentic purposes for revising language while respecting differences in confidence and artistic preference.

Creative lyric writing and song adaptation establish a productive relationship between linguistic accuracy and personal expression. Students learn that effective communication involves selecting words capable of carrying meaning within particular expressive conditions. Musical composition makes such decisions tangible through repeated experimentation and revision. When instructional expectations remain clear yet flexible, learners can develop increasingly independent approaches to language production. Their songs become evidence of thoughtful communication shaped by linguistic knowledge, creative intention, and sustained engagement.

4.3. Integrating Digital Music Platforms, Interactive Applications, and AI-Assisted Tools into EFL Instruction

Digital music technologies have expanded the possibilities for designing interactive learning experiences within EFL classrooms. Streaming platforms, educational applications, and

artificial intelligence tools provide varied ways to engage with songs beyond conventional playback. Their instructional value depends on purposeful integration rather than technological novelty. Teachers must identify the linguistic demands of each activity before selecting digital resources. When carefully aligned with learning objectives, technological environments can support differentiated participation and create additional opportunities for meaningful language practice.

Digital music platforms allow teachers to organize listening experiences around specific linguistic purposes. Curated playlists can introduce contrasting accents, conversational expressions, or thematic vocabulary through songs selected for accessibility and relevance. Students may revisit particular passages and compare interpretations at their preferred pace. Such flexibility supports closer attention to language features that might otherwise disappear during uninterrupted listening. Teachers can extend these experiences through guided annotations that encourage learners to connect musical passages with communicative meanings.

Interactive applications introduce responsive elements that can make language practice more engaging. Lyric completion exercises, synchronized listening challenges, and pronunciation activities provide immediate opportunities to test understanding. Liu et al. (2024) investigated digital gamification among EFL learners, examining language achievement alongside enjoyment and perceptions of an ideal second language identity. Their research offers a relevant foundation for considering motivational dimensions in technology-supported instruction. Musical applications can draw upon comparable principles when interaction serves recognizable linguistic purposes.

Gamified musical tasks require careful design to prevent competitive features from overshadowing language development. Points and timed responses may encourage participation, yet they

can also reward speed over thoughtful interpretation. Teachers should therefore combine immediate feedback with opportunities to reconsider incorrect answers. A lyric recognition activity might allow students to replay difficult passages before explaining their choices. Such adjustments preserve the engaging qualities of interactive applications while encouraging attentive listening and more deliberate linguistic processing.

Artificial intelligence introduces additional possibilities for adapting musical materials to learners' developing language abilities. Generative tools can assist teachers in preparing vocabulary exercises, simplifying instructional prompts, or producing alternative practice sentences around selected song themes. These applications require careful review because automated outputs may contain unnatural expressions or misleading explanations. Teachers remain responsible for evaluating linguistic accuracy and educational suitability. AI assistance becomes useful when it reduces preparation demands without replacing professional judgment or meaningful student participation.

AI-assisted feedback can also support learners during independent practice with song-related language tasks. Students might request explanations of unfamiliar expressions or compare alternative sentence constructions before incorporating them into creative activities. However, automated suggestions should remain open to questioning and verification. A generated correction may improve grammatical form while weakening the intended meaning. Encouraging learners to examine such differences develops critical awareness and reinforces their responsibility for linguistic decisions throughout the learning process.

Digital collaboration environments can connect musical activities with communication beyond scheduled classroom sessions. Shared annotation spaces allow students to discuss lyrical interpretations and exchange questions about unfamiliar

expressions. Liu et al. (2024) address the relationship between digital gamification and motivational dimensions of EFL learning, providing a useful perspective on sustained engagement. Teachers can apply related considerations when structuring online musical exchanges. Clear participation expectations help maintain purposeful interaction while preventing digital communication from becoming fragmented.

Accessibility deserves particular attention when integrating technology into music-based language instruction. Differences in internet connectivity, device availability, and digital familiarity can influence students' opportunities to participate. Teachers should provide downloadable materials or equivalent offline activities whenever possible. Captions and adjustable playback speeds may support learners with different processing needs. Such provisions require advance planning but contribute to more equitable instructional conditions. Technological integration remains educationally responsible when access to learning does not depend upon personal resources.

Evaluating digital musical activities requires evidence extending beyond application usage statistics or student enthusiasm. Teachers should examine whether learners demonstrate improved comprehension, more accurate language production, or greater independence during relevant tasks. Liu et al. (2024) investigated language achievement and affective dimensions within digitally gamified EFL learning, illustrating the value of considering multiple educational outcomes. Classroom assessment can adopt a similarly broad perspective through performance observations and learner reflections that connect technological participation with identifiable progress.

Sustainable integration of digital music resources depends on instructional coherence and informed professional judgment. Teachers must continually evaluate whether particular platforms contribute meaningful opportunities for linguistic engagement or

introduce unnecessary complexity. Artificial intelligence and interactive applications can extend learning possibilities when their functions remain transparent and manageable. Students also benefit from understanding the limitations of automated feedback and digital content. Within such conditions, technology supports musical language learning while preserving the central importance of human communication.

4.4. Developing Multimodal Language Tasks Through Music Videos, Storytelling, and Visual Expression

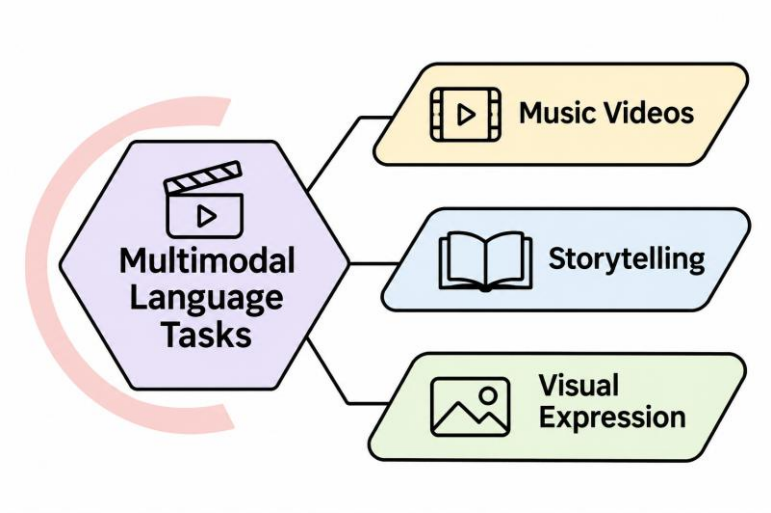
Multimodal language tasks expand musical instruction by connecting auditory experiences with visual representation and narrative interpretation. Music videos offer particularly rich material because learners encounter language alongside gestures, settings, and symbolic imagery. Such combinations invite students to examine relationships between verbal messages and visual information. Effective instruction requires purposeful attention to each mode rather than treating images as decorative additions. Through guided interpretation, learners can develop greater sensitivity to meanings communicated across different forms of expression.

Music video analysis can begin with observation before progressing toward linguistic interpretation. Teachers may initially present selected scenes without sound and invite students to predict relationships or possible events. Subsequent viewing introduces lyrics that confirm or challenge their expectations. This sequence encourages learners to distinguish visual evidence from personal inference. When students explain discrepancies between anticipated and actual meanings, they practice expressing uncertainty and supporting interpretations through language grounded in observable details.

The relationship between auditory input and visual attention deserves careful consideration during multimodal

activities. Sun et al. (2024) investigated the influence of background music on reading comprehension while examining lyrical language and study habits. Their research draws attention to factors that may shape cognitive engagement when music accompanies textual processing. Although music video interpretation involves different demands, teachers can use this perspective to consider whether simultaneous information sources support or complicate comprehension during particular classroom tasks.

Figure 12
Multimodal Learning Through Music and Visual Narratives



Storytelling activities provide opportunities to transform musical impressions into coherent narratives. After viewing a music video, students may reconstruct events from an unfamiliar character's perspective or describe incidents that occur between visible scenes. Such tasks encourage attention to narrative continuity and the linguistic expression of relationships between events. Learners must decide which details deserve emphasis and which remain uncertain. The resulting stories reveal their ability to organize information while interpreting visual and musical cues.

Visual expression offers an alternative pathway for learners who communicate more confidently through images before developing extended verbal explanations. Storyboards, illustrated sequences, and symbolic drawings can represent interpretations of selected songs. Students subsequently explain their visual decisions using appropriate English expressions. The transition from image construction to verbal explanation creates a meaningful communicative requirement. Teachers can encourage increasingly precise descriptions by asking learners to clarify relationships between visual elements and the emotions conveyed through music.

The selection of multimodal materials requires attention to cognitive demands and instructional accessibility. Videos containing rapid editing or dense symbolic imagery may overwhelm learners who are simultaneously processing unfamiliar English. Sun et al. (2024) examined relationships between musical background conditions and reading comprehension, highlighting the relevance of task conditions to information processing. Their findings concern reading rather than video learning directly. Nevertheless, the study supports careful consideration of auditory conditions when planning activities involving concurrent linguistic information.

Interpretive discussion becomes particularly productive when visual narratives permit more than one reasonable explanation. Students may disagree about a character's intentions or the significance of recurring images. Teachers can encourage evidence-based discussion by requiring participants to identify specific scenes that support their interpretations. Such exchanges develop the language of justification and qualified opinion. They also demonstrate that comprehension sometimes involves negotiating plausible meanings rather than identifying a predetermined answer from instructional materials.

Student-produced visual narratives can extend interpretation into original multimodal communication. Learners might create short video sequences or photographic stories accompanied by carefully selected musical passages. Each production decision should serve an identifiable communicative intention. Students need to consider whether images clarify their message and whether spoken narration contributes necessary information. This process encourages awareness of audience expectations while developing the ability to coordinate linguistic and visual resources within a coherent presentation.

Assessment of multimodal language tasks should distinguish linguistic achievement from technical production quality. A visually sophisticated presentation does not necessarily demonstrate effective English communication. Teachers can examine narrative organization, interpretive explanations, and the clarity of spoken or written contributions. Reflective questions may reveal why students selected particular images or modified their initial interpretations. Such evidence provides a more accurate account of language development than evaluations centered primarily on editing techniques or visual attractiveness.

Multimodal musical activities can deepen learners' understanding of language as a resource embedded within broader communicative experiences. Visual narratives invite interpretation while musical elements influence attention and emotional response. Effective teaching connects these dimensions through manageable tasks that require purposeful English use. Students gradually learn to examine relationships among words, images, and narrative intentions. Their developing competence becomes visible through interpretations and original productions that communicate meaning across interconnected expressive forms.

4.5. Gamifying Song-Based Learning Through Musical Challenges, Collaborative Competitions, and Interactive Quizzes

Gamification introduces structured elements of play into song-based language instruction, creating opportunities for learners to approach demanding tasks with curiosity and sustained attention. Musical challenges can transform familiar classroom exercises into purposeful activities governed by achievable goals and transparent rules. Their effectiveness depends on maintaining a clear relationship between game mechanics and linguistic development. When designed thoughtfully, playful activities encourage students to revisit difficult expressions and participate actively without reducing musical learning to entertainment.

Musical challenges can target specific language abilities through tasks requiring attentive listening and rapid interpretation. Students might identify altered lyrics, recognize expressions within short recordings, or reconstruct phrases from rhythmic clues. Each challenge should demand meaningful linguistic processing rather than mechanical guessing. Teachers can adjust difficulty by modifying playback conditions or providing graduated hints. Such variations accommodate different proficiency levels while preserving the intellectual engagement that makes a challenge worthwhile for learners across the classroom.

Research on gamified language instruction provides a foundation for evaluating its educational possibilities. Zhang and Hasim (2023) systematically reviewed empirical studies concerning gamification in EFL and ESL instruction, examining its implementation and reported learning outcomes. Their work offers a broader perspective on the pedagogical considerations associated with game-based approaches. Within musical instruction, such considerations encourage teachers to examine whether challenges

promote sustained language engagement rather than relying exclusively on immediate excitement or competitive participation.

Collaborative competitions can strengthen communicative practice when success depends on shared reasoning rather than individual speed. Teams might interpret ambiguous lyrical passages or solve vocabulary puzzles connected to musical excerpts. Participants must explain their proposals before submitting collective answers. This requirement creates opportunities for negotiation and clarification under manageable time constraints. Teachers should distribute responsibilities carefully so that confident students do not dominate decisions while quieter learners remain observers throughout the competitive activity.

Interactive quizzes offer immediate evidence of learners' understanding when questions address more than factual recognition. A quiz might ask students to distinguish implied meanings or select expressions appropriate to particular communicative situations. Carefully constructed alternatives encourage comparison between plausible interpretations. Feedback becomes especially valuable when it explains why an answer works rather than merely identifying correctness. Short discussions following difficult questions can transform individual responses into shared opportunities for examining language more closely.

Reward systems require particular care because visible rankings may influence participation differently across learners. Zhang and Hasim (2023) review gamification research in language education, providing a relevant basis for considering motivational and instructional outcomes. Teachers can reduce excessive competitive pressure by recognizing improvement and thoughtful contributions alongside successful answers. Group achievements may also acknowledge cooperation during demanding tasks. Such arrangements preserve the appeal of competition while preventing

performance rankings from becoming the dominant classroom concern.

The pacing of musical games influences both enjoyment and the depth of language processing. Brief recognition rounds may energize a class, but complex interpretation tasks require additional thinking time. Teachers should vary activity duration according to linguistic demands rather than maintaining constant urgency. Pauses between rounds allow students to reconsider unsuccessful responses and discuss alternative interpretations. Such moments are particularly useful when learners encounter unfamiliar pronunciation patterns or expressions whose meanings depend on surrounding lyrics.

Student participation in designing musical games can introduce an additional layer of linguistic responsibility. Learners may prepare quiz questions, establish scoring criteria, or develop listening challenges for classmates. Creating effective questions requires them to anticipate misunderstandings and distinguish acceptable answers from misleading alternatives. Teachers can review proposed materials before classroom use to ensure accuracy and appropriate difficulty. This responsibility shifts attention toward the quality of language decisions involved in constructing meaningful learning experiences.

Evaluating gamified musical instruction requires distinguishing visible participation from demonstrable language development. High scores may reflect familiarity with game formats rather than improved comprehension. Zhang and Hasim (2023) examine empirical research on gamification within language education, underscoring the relevance of systematic evaluation. Teachers can compare quiz responses with subsequent independent tasks to determine whether learning transfers beyond competitive situations. Learner reflections may also reveal which challenges encouraged useful strategies or exposed persistent difficulties.

Well-designed musical games can contribute to an engaging classroom atmosphere while preserving rigorous expectations for language use. Their educational value depends on carefully selected challenges and opportunities to examine responses after competition. Teachers should remain attentive to differences in confidence and willingness to participate publicly. When game structures encourage thoughtful engagement, learners encounter repeated opportunities to interpret English and refine their understanding through musical activities that remain purposeful and accessible.

4.6. Implementing Project-Based Learning Through Song Creation, Digital Performances, and Collaborative Music Production

Project-based learning provides an organizational framework for developing extended musical activities that connect language production with tangible creative outcomes. Within EFL instruction, students can undertake projects involving original songs, recorded performances, or collaborative musical presentations. These experiences require sustained engagement with English across planning and production stages. Teachers establish communicative objectives while allowing learners to determine appropriate artistic approaches. The resulting projects encourage purposeful language use through responsibilities that extend beyond individual classroom exercises.

Successful musical projects begin with a guiding question that establishes a meaningful communicative purpose. Students might investigate ways to express cultural identity through music or communicate community concerns to an international audience. Such questions provide direction without prescribing artistic decisions. Groups can develop production proposals identifying intended listeners and expected linguistic demands. Teachers review these plans to ensure feasibility and curricular alignment.

Early planning creates a foundation for managing creative ambitions within available instructional time.

Collaborative production requires clearly defined responsibilities that support participation throughout the project. Students may contribute as lyricists, vocal performers, audio editors, or coordinators responsible for organizing rehearsals. Responsibilities should reflect individual strengths while providing opportunities to develop unfamiliar abilities. Regular planning meetings allow groups to monitor progress and resolve practical difficulties through English. Such exchanges become integral to project completion because students must communicate decisions that influence the quality and coherence of their work.

Digital platforms can support project coordination by allowing learners to exchange drafts and manage shared production materials. Temel and Cesur (2024) investigated the effects of gamification with Web 2.0 tools on EFL learners' motivation and academic achievement in online learning environments. Although their study does not specifically address musical projects, it offers relevant evidence for considering digital engagement within language instruction. Teachers can draw upon these considerations when selecting accessible tools for collaborative musical production.

Song creation within a project requires students to coordinate linguistic intentions with broader production requirements. Decisions concerning musical style and intended audience influence the vocabulary and expressive register selected for each composition. Groups must also determine whether their message remains understandable when delivered through singing. Teachers can facilitate focused consultations addressing linguistic difficulties without directing every artistic choice. This balance supports meaningful student ownership while maintaining expectations for accurate and comprehensible English communication throughout production.

Digital performances introduce practical considerations that extend beyond conventional classroom presentations. Students must coordinate recording schedules and determine suitable arrangements for combining individual contributions. Basic editing tools can help integrate separately recorded material into coherent productions. Technical complexity should remain manageable so that language learning retains instructional priority. Teachers may establish production limits concerning recording length and editing requirements. Clear boundaries allow learners to concentrate on communicative quality rather than pursuing increasingly elaborate technical effects.

Project milestones help sustain progress during activities requiring several instructional sessions. Groups can submit initial proposals, demonstrate partial recordings, and explain revisions made after teacher feedback. Temel and Cesur (2024) examined motivation and academic achievement in digitally supported EFL learning, offering a useful perspective on maintaining engagement through structured technological activities. Within musical projects, transparent milestones can provide comparable organizational support. Their primary purpose remains guiding sustained effort rather than introducing unnecessary competition between groups.

Public presentation gives musical projects an identifiable communicative destination. Learners may share recorded performances during classroom exhibitions or through protected educational platforms. Audience responses can address message clarity and the effectiveness of linguistic expression. Teachers should establish appropriate privacy arrangements before distributing student recordings. Participation alternatives are important for learners uncomfortable with public vocal performance. A carefully managed presentation environment recognizes different preferences while preserving opportunities to communicate creative work to interested listeners.

Table 4

Pedagogical Approaches and Instructional Applications of Creative Song-Based Activities in the EFL Classroom

Pedagogical Approach	Instructional Applications and Contributions to EFL Learning
Experiential and Collaborative Musical Learning	Engages students in participatory musical experiences that encourage learner autonomy and shared decision-making. Develops communicative competence through meaningful interaction and reflective practice.
Creative Lyric Writing and Song Adaptation	Promotes original language production through lyric composition and adaptation. Strengthens vocabulary selection and grammatical awareness while encouraging personal expression and purposeful revision.
Digital Music Platforms and AI-Assisted Learning	Integrates interactive applications and artificial intelligence tools into musical instruction. Supports differentiated practice and independent learning through accessible digital resources and guided feedback.
Multimodal Learning Through Music Videos and Storytelling	Connects auditory information with visual narratives and creative representation. Develops interpretive abilities and narrative competence through activities requiring learners to communicate meaning across different expressive modes.
Gamified Song-Based Learning	Incorporates musical challenges and interactive quizzes to encourage active participation. Reinforces listening comprehension and linguistic accuracy through structured tasks that combine collaborative problem-solving with formative feedback.
Project-Based Song Creation and Digital Performance	Organizes extended musical projects involving composition and collaborative production. Develops communicative responsibility and sustained language practice through authentic creative outcomes intended for identifiable audiences.
Inclusive Participation and Instructional Guidance	Accommodates differences in linguistic proficiency and musical confidence. Establishes flexible participation structures that support equitable engagement while maintaining clear educational objectives.
Assessment and Reflective Language Development	Evaluates linguistic progress through observations and creative products. Encourages self-assessment and reflection while distinguishing communicative achievement from technical or musical performance quality.

Note. The pedagogical approaches reflect the instructional perspectives addressed throughout Chapter 4.

Assessment of collaborative musical projects should recognize both individual contributions and collective

accomplishments. Teachers can examine production portfolios containing drafts, planning records, and reflections on linguistic decisions. Group performances provide evidence of communicative achievement but may conceal differences in participation. Individual reflections help clarify responsibilities and learning experiences. Assessment criteria should therefore distinguish language development from musical sophistication. Such distinctions ensure that students receive recognition for meaningful English use regardless of their previous musical training.

Project-based musical production brings together extended language practice and the practical responsibilities associated with creating work for an audience. Students encounter English through planning discussions, production decisions, and explanations of their creative intentions. Teachers maintain instructional direction through clear objectives and responsive guidance. The completed project provides evidence of sustained linguistic engagement across interconnected tasks. Its educational significance rests in the opportunities learners receive to communicate purposefully while developing a shared creative product.

Chapter 5

Assessing Language Learning Outcomes and Student Motivation Through Music-Based Instruction

The educational value of music-based English instruction becomes clearer when classroom experiences are examined through evidence of learning. Songs may generate enthusiasm and encourage participation, yet their pedagogical contribution cannot be determined through enjoyment alone. Teachers need to understand what students learn, which abilities develop, and why particular activities influence their engagement. Assessment provides a means of investigating those questions while respecting the expressive character of musical learning and the varied experiences students bring into the EFL classroom.

Evaluating musical instruction requires an understanding of language development as a process shaped by cognitive demands, emotional experiences, and opportunities for communication. Conventional testing may capture particular aspects of achievement while overlooking the ways learners construct meaning during interactive activities. Performance-based approaches offer additional possibilities by examining language use within purposeful tasks. The central concern is whether assessment procedures can recognize linguistic progress without allowing musical ability or confidence to distort judgments about English proficiency.

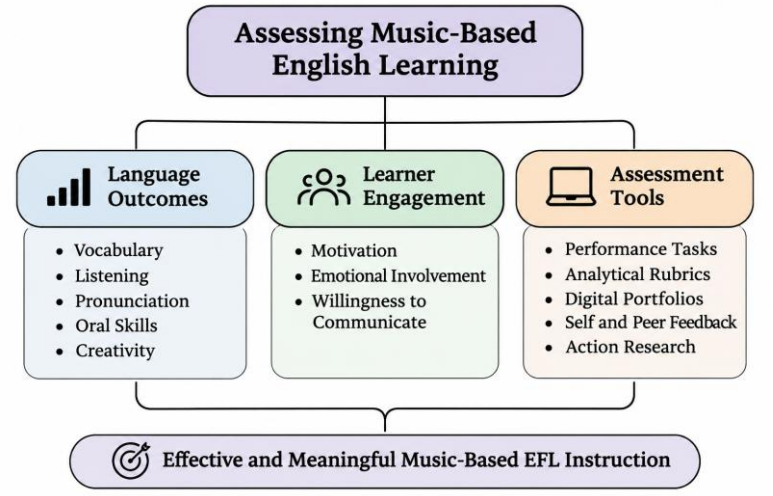
The relationship between assessment expectations and learner participation deserves particular attention. He et al. (2022) investigate students' motivation for rubric use within EFL assessment environments, directing attention toward learners' engagement with evaluative criteria. Their research provides a useful perspective for considering assessment as part of classroom learning rather than an activity reserved for measuring achievement. When expectations are understandable, students can interpret their performances more thoughtfully and recognize areas requiring further practice and improvement.

Language development through songs also raises questions about the nature of measurable progress. Vocabulary recognition

may improve before learners can employ unfamiliar expressions independently. Listening comprehension can develop through repeated exposure, although familiarity with a melody may conceal incomplete understanding. Pronunciation presents additional complexities because musical rhythm differs from conversational speech. Chust-Pérez et al. (2026) investigate the integration of music, gamification, and acoustic visualization in secondary EFL instruction, connecting musical learning with prosodic development and comprehensibility.

Figure 13

Assessment of Music-Based English Learning



Assessment becomes more demanding when students move beyond reproducing familiar language and begin constructing original expressions. Spoken performances involve decisions about grammatical accuracy, fluency, and communicative purpose. Creative tasks introduce further demands because learners must organize meaning while managing linguistic resources. Xing (2023) examines the processing of oral tasks with different complexity levels among EFL learners. This research perspective encourages careful consideration of task demands

when interpreting performance differences and establishing reasonable expectations for achievement.

Student motivation introduces another dimension that cannot be adequately understood through linguistic scores. Musical activities may create emotional connections with English and encourage participation among learners who remain hesitant during conventional speaking exercises. Yet positive responses are not necessarily sustained. Wang et al. (2026) investigate immediate and sustained effects of song-based language learning on academic development, cognitive engagement, and motivation. Their work provides a relevant foundation for examining engagement across different moments of instruction.

The emotional character of musical learning also requires sensitivity to individual differences. Students experience songs through personal preferences, cultural associations, and previous encounters with English. Some welcome opportunities for public expression, while others prefer reflective or collaborative activities. Assessment practices must recognize those differences without confusing visible enthusiasm with deeper engagement. Examining willingness to communicate alongside learners' reported experiences can reveal patterns that remain difficult to identify through classroom observation or performance scores alone.

Digital environments extend the possibilities for documenting learning by preserving evidence that would otherwise disappear after classroom activities. Recordings and written reflections allow students to revisit their language production and examine changes over time. Ju et al. (2024) identify an association between musical training and audiovisual integration in Chinese language processing. Although their findings concern a different linguistic setting, they offer a relevant perspective for considering multimodal experiences within reflective approaches to language learning.

The interpretation of assessment evidence becomes particularly meaningful when teachers investigate their own instructional decisions. Classroom action research offers a framework for examining whether particular musical strategies address identified learning needs. Renihan et al. (2024) systematically review intervention research concerning the linguistic effects of songs among younger second and foreign language learners. Their investigation reinforces the relevance of examining learning outcomes through systematic inquiry while remaining attentive to differences in educational settings and instructional procedures.

Throughout this chapter, assessment is approached as an ongoing professional responsibility that connects educational intentions with evidence of student development. Linguistic achievement and motivational experiences require distinct forms of investigation, although their interaction remains central to understanding music-based instruction. Careful evaluation can illuminate individual progress and reveal limitations in teaching practices. By attending to performance, learner perspectives, reflective evidence, and classroom inquiry, educators can develop informed judgments about the educational contribution of music to English learning.

5.1. Designing Performance-Based Assessment for Music-Integrated English Language Learning

Performance-based assessment in music-integrated English instruction begins with a clear distinction between participation and language development. Singing enthusiastically may indicate engagement, yet it cannot independently establish gains in pronunciation, comprehension, or communicative control. Assessment tasks therefore need to capture what learners accomplish through musical activity while preserving the linguistic purpose of instruction. A well-designed performance offers

observable evidence of language use in context, rather than rewarding confidence, musical talent, or familiarity with a particular song.

The first design decision concerns the language construct being assessed. Teachers might prioritize intelligible pronunciation, accurate stress placement, lexical selection, or the ability to sustain spoken interaction. Each target requires a task that makes the skill visible. When learners adapt song lyrics, for example, the assessment can examine grammatical choices and semantic coherence. Melody provides a working structure, but the criteria must remain anchored in English proficiency. Alignment protects assessment validity and clarifies instructional expectations.

Authentic classroom performances can range from interpreting a verse to presenting an original dialogue shaped by rhythm. Their value depends less on artistic complexity than on the opportunities they create for purposeful language production. A paired performance may reveal turn taking and responsive listening, whereas an individual recording can make pronunciation patterns easier to examine. Teachers should choose formats according to the specific evidence required and classroom conditions, including preparation time and access to technology.

Analytic rubrics make performance expectations explicit without reducing expressive work to mechanical scoring. Separate descriptors can address intelligibility, linguistic accuracy, vocabulary use, and communicative effectiveness. Musical timing may appear as a supporting condition when it affects language delivery, but it should not outweigh linguistic achievement. He et al. (2022) examine students' motivation to use rubrics in EFL assessment environments, highlighting learners' relationship with assessment criteria. That concern particularly matters when descriptors guide preparation and revision.

Rubric language should be readily understandable to learners before rehearsal begins. Broad labels such as excellent or satisfactory offer little guidance unless accompanied by observable descriptions. For pronunciation, a descriptor might identify whether key words remain intelligible despite occasional sound substitutions. For interaction, it might distinguish sustained responses from memorized exchanges. Students can then recognize what improvement looks like in practice. Carefully worded criteria also help teachers apply scoring judgments consistently across varied musical arrangements.

Assessment conditions deserve equal attention because public musical activities can expose differences unrelated to English ability. Some sing comfortably in public, while others communicate more effectively through spoken rhythm or recorded speech. Providing equivalent options can reduce the influence of stage anxiety without lowering linguistic standards. Preparation time should likewise be comparable across groups. When students select a format, teachers need to verify that every option generates sufficient evidence for learning outcomes and scoring criteria.

A productive assessment sequence separates rehearsal feedback from the judgment of completed work. During practice, teachers can note recurring pronunciation difficulties or unclear grammatical patterns and offer focused guidance. Short peer responses may identify passages that listeners find difficult to understand. The assessed performance then documents what learners can accomplish after revision. This sequence gives feedback practical value while maintaining a point of evaluation. It also prevents early mistakes from becoming permanent measures of achievement.

Meaningful student involvement in evaluating performances requires careful structure. Structured self-assessment can begin with learners reviewing recordings and locating specific moments that meet rubric descriptors. Peer

assessment works better when comments refer to observable language choices rather than artistic appeal. He et al. (2022) place student motivation in their examination of rubric use in EFL classrooms. Their focus supports treating assessment criteria as tools learners actively engage with, rather than instructions delivered by teachers alone.

Teachers also need systematic records that preserve evidence beyond immediate performance impressions. Brief recorded audio samples, annotated lyric drafts, and scoring notes document aspects of language production. Comparing an initial rehearsal with a substantially later recording may reveal changes in intelligibility or lexical control. Such comparisons require caution because task difficulty and rehearsal support can vary. A small collection of representative artifacts often provides a defensible account of achievement than a single memorable classroom presentation.

The quality of a performance-based assessment rests on the interpretations teachers make from its evidence. Scores should describe demonstrated language ability within the chosen task, not imply mastery across every communicative setting. Reviewing rubrics after implementation can expose ambiguous descriptors or criteria that privilege musical confidence. Learner reflections may also reveal whether expectations were understood. Through periodic refinement, assessment remains responsive to classroom experience while retaining clear standards for judging English development through music-supported performance.

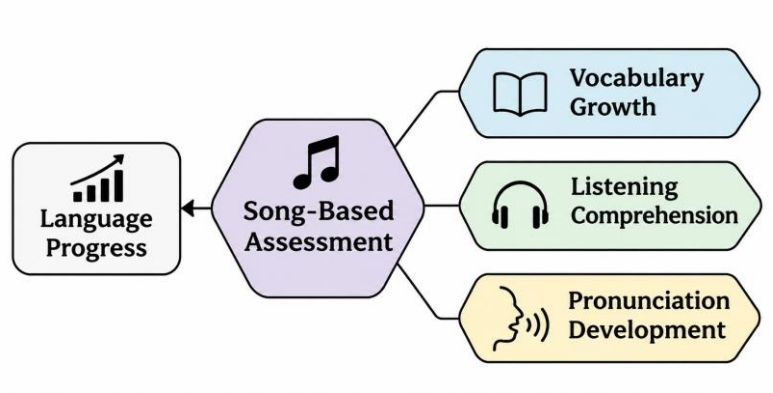
5.2. Measuring Vocabulary Growth, Listening Comprehension, and Pronunciation Development Through Song-Based Tasks

Measuring language development through songs requires attention to what learners retain, understand, and articulate beyond musical experience. Familiar melodies can support

successful participation even when individual words remain poorly understood. Assessment must therefore distinguish recognition during playback from independent language use. Vocabulary growth, listening comprehension, and pronunciation development demand related but different forms of evidence. Examining each dimension separately allows teachers to identify genuine progress without overlooking the connections that make song based instruction productive.

Vocabulary assessment can begin by identifying target expressions before learners encounter a song. Initial checks establish whether words are unfamiliar, partially understood, or already available for spontaneous use. After instruction, students might explain meanings, select appropriate expressions for new sentences, or recognize figurative language in unfamiliar passages. Repeating lyrics accurately provides evidence of recall, but productive vocabulary knowledge requires transfer. Delayed tasks are particularly informative because immediate recognition may reflect temporary familiarity with the recording.

Figure 14
Language Development Through Song-Based Tasks



Word knowledge develops unevenly, and assessment should acknowledge that variation. A learner may recognize an

expression when hearing its melody yet struggle to retrieve it during conversation. Another may understand its meaning without controlling its grammatical placement. Teachers can examine differences through short written responses and oral prompts drawn from everyday situations. Rather than treating every correct answer as equivalent, they can distinguish receptive knowledge from flexible production and monitor changes across successive learning activities.

Listening comprehension presents a different measurement problem because songs combine linguistic information with instrumental sound and expressive delivery. A learner who misses a phrase may be responding to unfamiliar pronunciation rather than lacking relevant vocabulary. Tasks should therefore move beyond filling gaps in printed lyrics. Identifying a speaker's intention, reconstructing a sequence of events, or distinguishing contrasting viewpoints can reveal deeper comprehension. Questions should remain answerable from audible language rather than assumptions about the song's theme.

Repeated listening can strengthen comprehension, although the number of exposures must be considered when interpreting results. An initial response may capture spontaneous understanding, while a later response reveals what learners can recover with additional auditory evidence. Comparing both can illuminate developing listening strategies. However, using the identical recording repeatedly risks measuring memory instead of transferable comprehension. Parallel excerpts with comparable linguistic demands offer a useful check on whether learners can interpret unfamiliar spoken material independently.

Pronunciation measurement requires attention to features that affect intelligibility rather than accent imitation. Teachers may examine vowel distinctions, consonant production, word stress, and timing of connected speech. Musical performance can make rhythmic patterns noticeable, but singing also lengthens syllables

in ways that differ from ordinary conversation. Assessment should therefore combine sung or rhythmically supported production with brief spoken samples. This comparison helps determine whether learners carry pronunciation gains into communicative situations beyond the original melody.

Recent research provides a relevant basis for examining prosodic development through multimodal instruction. Chust-Pérez et al. (2026) report improvements in prosody and comprehensibility when music, gamification, and acoustic visualization are integrated into secondary EFL classrooms. For assessment design, their findings direct attention toward audible speech features that listeners can evaluate. Pitch movement, stress organization, and phrasing deserve consideration when they influence meaning. Yet any measurement procedure must remain manageable within ordinary classroom teaching conditions and resources.

Acoustic displays can complement teacher judgments by making selected pronunciation patterns visible. A pitch trace may reveal whether a learner produces rising or falling intonation, while waveform comparisons can support discussion of timing. Such representations require careful interpretation because visual similarity does not automatically establish communicative effectiveness. Chust-Pérez et al. (2026) connect acoustic visualization with music supported pronunciation learning. Classroom assessment can draw on that approach while retaining intelligibility as the primary interpretive concern throughout.

Evidence becomes more meaningful when vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation measures are examined together without collapsing them into one score. A student might understand song lyrics accurately yet mispronounce unfamiliar words during discussion. Another may reproduce phrases clearly while misunderstanding their implications. Separate records expose differences and help teachers adjust subsequent instruction.

Short assessments administered at planned intervals can document individual trajectories, provided that task difficulty remains sufficiently comparable and scoring procedures remain consistent across occasions.

Interpreting growth requires restraint because improvements observed during musical tasks may not extend automatically to broader English communication. Teachers can strengthen their judgments through delayed vocabulary prompts, unfamiliar listening passages, and unscripted spoken responses. Patterns across measures provide a more credible account of learning than a polished performance alone. When assessment evidence reveals uneven progress, instructional decisions can address specific needs. Music then remains a productive learning resource while language development receives careful empirical attention.

5.3. Developing Analytical Rubrics for Oral Fluency, Linguistic Accuracy, and Creative Language Production

Analytical rubrics for music-based English learning require careful decisions about which dimensions of oral performance deserve independent evaluation. Fluency, linguistic accuracy, and creative production interact during musical activities, yet each reflects a distinct aspect of communicative competence. Their separation allows teachers to recognize meaningful differences in learner achievement. A student may speak confidently while producing grammatical errors, whereas another demonstrates precise language control through hesitant delivery. Effective rubrics acknowledge both profiles without reducing performance quality to impressions.

Oral fluency descriptors should capture the continuity and organization of spoken language rather than reward speed alone. Learners performing rhythmic dialogues or adapting lyrical passages may demonstrate fluency through manageable pauses and

connected expressions. Excessive emphasis on rapid delivery can disadvantage students who prioritize thoughtful formulation. Assessment criteria should distinguish hesitation that interrupts communication from pauses serving expressive purposes. This distinction becomes particularly important when musical timing influences speech patterns and creates expectations that differ from conversation.

Linguistic accuracy requires descriptors that identify the extent to which grammatical and lexical choices support intended meaning. Rather than counting every deviation equally, teachers can consider whether errors obscure communication or reflect developmental experimentation. A learner who constructs original lyrics may attempt unfamiliar structures and occasionally produce inaccurate forms. Such attempts deserve careful interpretation. Rubrics should reward appropriate language control while recognizing that more demanding production tasks naturally create opportunities for errors during performance.

Task complexity also influences the relationship between fluency and accuracy. Xing (2023) examines EFL learners' processing of oral tasks with different complexity levels, drawing attention to the demands involved in spoken production. This perspective matters when comparing rehearsed musical dialogues with spontaneous lyrical improvisation. Both activities generate useful evidence, but their cognitive requirements differ considerably. Rubric descriptors should reflect those differences so that learners are evaluated against expectations appropriate to the assigned communicative task.

Creative language production introduces another dimension that cannot be adequately assessed through grammatical correctness. Originality becomes educationally meaningful when learners manipulate English to communicate recognizable ideas or establish unexpected connections. In lyric rewriting, creativity may appear through inventive imagery or

purposeful changes in perspective. Teachers should examine whether linguistic choices contribute to coherent expression rather than judging artistic sophistication. A modest but meaningful adaptation can demonstrate greater communicative achievement than an elaborate composition dependent on memorized phrases.

Performance levels become useful when descriptors describe observable differences rather than vague degrees of quality. For fluency, progression might concern the frequency and communicative effect of interruptions. Accuracy levels can distinguish occasional errors from persistent difficulties affecting interpretation. Creative production may be evaluated through relevance, coherence, and independent linguistic choices. Each level needs enough specificity to support consistent judgment without becoming excessively restrictive. Teachers should avoid descriptors that combine unrelated qualities within a single scoring category.

Weighting assessment dimensions requires attention to the purpose of each musical task. A pronunciation focused dialogue may reasonably prioritize fluent delivery and intelligible expression, while lyric composition places greater demands on accuracy and creative formulation. Weighting should be established before performance and communicated clearly to learners. Xing (2023) highlights the relevance of task complexity to oral language processing. Consequently, assigning identical scoring proportions across activities with different demands may produce misleading comparisons of student achievement.

Rubric development benefits from examining actual student performances before adopting descriptors permanently. Teachers can review representative recordings and identify where scoring distinctions become uncertain. A hesitant response containing original language may expose limitations in a descriptor that equates fluency with overall proficiency. Comparing independent judgments can reveal inconsistent interpretations.

Discussion among teachers then helps refine performance levels and establish shared expectations. Such calibration improves reliability while preserving room for professional judgment about individual communicative contributions.

Learner participation can make analytical rubrics more accessible when students examine brief performance samples and discuss the language features represented. Guided comparison encourages them to notice differences between understandable speech and precise grammatical construction. It also helps clarify why creative expression receives separate consideration. However, student judgments need structured guidance because personal preferences for musical styles can influence evaluation. Teachers should redirect attention toward linguistic evidence and ensure that learners understand the meaning of each criterion.

Analytical rubrics remain valuable when their scores inform instructional decisions rather than merely classify performances. A profile showing strong creativity alongside limited grammatical control can guide targeted language practice without discouraging experimentation. Persistent fluency difficulties may indicate a need for supported interaction beyond rehearsed musical delivery. Across successive tasks, changing performance profiles reveal areas of development and continuing difficulty. Careful interpretation allows assessment to respect expressive individuality while maintaining defensible standards of English language achievement.

5.4. Examining Learner Motivation, Emotional Engagement, and Willingness to Communicate in Music-Based Instruction

Learner motivation in music-based English instruction deserves examination beyond visible enthusiasm during classroom activities. Students may enjoy a familiar song without developing greater commitment to language learning. Others participate

quietly while experiencing meaningful personal involvement. Assessing motivation therefore requires attention to sustained effort, perceived relevance, and readiness to engage with demanding tasks. Music creates opportunities for emotional connection, but its educational influence depends on the relationship between individual experience and purposeful language participation over time.

Emotional engagement often becomes apparent through learners' responses to musical themes and expressive possibilities. A song addressing friendship or personal aspirations may encourage students to connect English with experiences they consider meaningful. Yet emotional responses vary according to cultural familiarity and individual preferences. Teachers should avoid interpreting smiling or enthusiastic singing as universal indicators of engagement. Brief reflections and voluntary comments can provide richer evidence of whether musical activities generate interest, identification, or emotional distance.

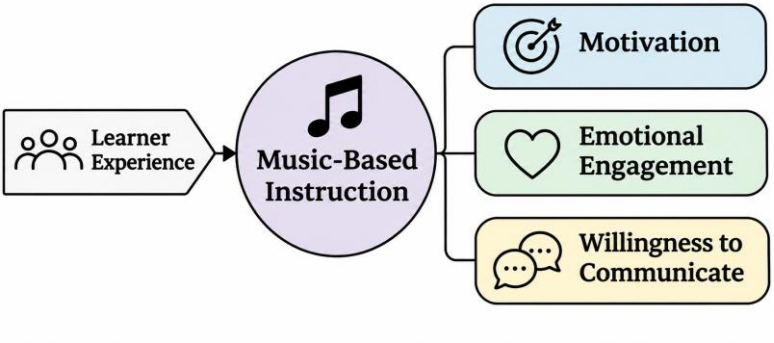
Motivation also involves the reasons learners choose to invest effort in language activities. Some appreciate music because it reduces the perceived formality of classroom communication. Others value opportunities to select songs or contribute original expressions. Wang et al. (2026) investigate immediate and sustained effects of song-based learning on EFL learners' motivation and cognitive engagement. Their research provides a relevant perspective for examining whether positive classroom responses extend into more persistent patterns of learning involvement.

Willingness to communicate represents a related but distinct dimension of student experience. A motivated learner may hesitate to speak because of anticipated criticism or uncertainty about linguistic ability. Musical activities can provide shared material that makes participation feel more manageable. However, group singing does not necessarily indicate readiness for

independent communication. Teachers should examine whether learners initiate exchanges, respond voluntarily, or contribute ideas when musical support gradually decreases during subsequent speaking activities in class.

Classroom observation can document communicative behavior when teachers distinguish voluntary participation from responses produced under direct instruction. Frequency of contributions offers useful information, although the quality and circumstances of interaction also matter. A brief spontaneous question may reveal greater communicative initiative than an extended memorized performance. Observation records should therefore capture opportunities for participation alongside actual responses. Without considering available opportunities, teachers risk interpreting silence as unwillingness when classroom arrangements have restricted individual expression.

Figure 15
Motivation and Engagement in Music-Based Learning



Emotional safety influences whether learners transform musical involvement into spoken interaction. Public performance may encourage some students while intensifying anxiety for others. Allowing preparation in pairs or small groups can provide opportunities to develop confidence before addressing larger

audiences. Teachers should examine changes in participation across different arrangements rather than assuming that every learner benefits equally from collective singing. Respecting personal boundaries also prevents assessment practices from turning emotional expression into an obligation.

Measuring motivational change requires evidence gathered at different moments of instruction. Short questionnaires can examine perceived enjoyment, willingness to continue learning, and confidence in using English. Reflective journals may reveal experiences that standardized responses overlook. Wang et al. (2026) address both immediate and sustained outcomes of song-based learning, reinforcing the value of considering change over time. Repeated measurements can help distinguish temporary excitement from engagement that persists beyond individual musical activities.

Student autonomy deserves particular attention because personal choice can influence emotional investment. Selecting a musical genre or deciding which message to express may strengthen learners' sense of ownership. Nevertheless, unrestricted choice can create difficulties when preferred songs contain language beyond current proficiency. Teachers can offer carefully selected alternatives while preserving meaningful decisions for students. Assessment should examine whether greater autonomy corresponds with sustained effort and communicative initiative rather than treating choice itself as proof of motivation.

Interpreting motivational evidence requires sensitivity to differences between expressed attitudes and observable behavior. A student may report strong enjoyment while avoiding unfamiliar speaking tasks. Another may describe limited interest in singing yet participate actively in lyric interpretation. Such discrepancies deserve investigation rather than immediate correction. Combining reflections with participation records and informal conversations can reveal more nuanced patterns. Teachers should

also recognize that motivation fluctuates with task demands and relationships within the classroom community.

Examining motivation and willingness to communicate ultimately requires attention to the learner's developing relationship with English. Musical experiences may contribute to greater confidence when students perceive progress and encounter opportunities for meaningful expression. However, positive emotions should not be treated as automatic evidence of linguistic achievement. Wang et al. (2026) connect song-based learning with motivational and academic outcomes, offering a basis for considering both dimensions. Careful assessment preserves their differences while examining their interaction.

5.5. Integrating Digital Portfolios, Self-Assessment, and Peer Feedback into Musical Learning Experiences

Digital portfolios offer a practical means of documenting language development across musical learning experiences. Unlike isolated classroom performances, they preserve evidence of preparation, experimentation, and revision. Students can collect audio recordings, annotated lyrics, and brief reflections that reveal changing relationships with English. Their educational value depends on purposeful selection rather than the accumulation of materials. Each artifact should illuminate a recognizable learning process and contribute to an account of individual progress across successive instructional activities.

Portfolio organization requires a structure that learners can understand and maintain independently. Entries may contain an initial recording, a revised version, and a short explanation of changes made during practice. Dates and task descriptions help establish the sequence of learning. Teachers should avoid elaborate digital requirements that distract from language production. A manageable platform with accessible recording and annotation functions can support meaningful documentation while respecting

differences in technological familiarity and available classroom resources.

The combination of auditory and visual evidence deserves consideration when designing portfolio activities. Ju et al. (2024) report an association between musical training and stronger audiovisual integration in Chinese language processing. Although their investigation does not directly establish outcomes for EFL portfolios, it offers a relevant perspective on multimodal language experiences. Students may benefit from examining recordings alongside written transcripts or visual representations of speech. Such combinations can make particular features of language production more accessible.

Self-assessment becomes meaningful when learners examine specific evidence rather than offer general impressions of their abilities. Listening to an earlier recording may reveal pronunciation patterns that were difficult to notice during performance. Comparing successive lyric drafts can expose changes in grammatical control or vocabulary selection. Teachers can guide reflection through focused questions about identifiable improvements and remaining difficulties. The process encourages students to explain their judgments using observable features of their own language production.

Reflective entries should remain concise enough to encourage regular participation. A learner might identify one pronunciation difficulty, describe a successful revision, and explain the strategy used during rehearsal. Such observations provide evidence of developing awareness without requiring lengthy written reports. Teachers should also permit spoken reflections when written English proficiency limits expression. The purpose is to understand learners' interpretation of their progress while maintaining opportunities to practice meaningful communication through different forms.

Peer feedback adds a social dimension to portfolio development by allowing students to encounter alternative interpretations of their performances. Partners may notice unclear expressions or effective phrasing that performers overlook. Feedback becomes more productive when it identifies a particular moment and explains its communicative effect. General praise offers encouragement but limited instructional direction. Teachers should establish respectful response conventions and discourage comparisons based on musical talent, personal confidence, or preferences unrelated to language learning.

Collaborative review can benefit from combining written lyrics with recorded performances. Ju et al. (2024) examine audiovisual integration in relation to musical training, drawing attention to connections between auditory and visual language information. In EFL classrooms, displaying a transcript during peer review may help learners locate words that listeners found difficult to understand. However, the research does not establish that such procedures automatically improve feedback quality. Their effectiveness requires observation within classroom practice.

Digital feedback also creates responsibilities concerning privacy and student ownership. Voice recordings can reveal personal information or expose learners to unwanted evaluation beyond the classroom. Teachers should establish clear access permissions and explain whether recordings will be retained or deleted. Students need opportunities to review materials before sharing them with peers. Where internet access is unreliable, locally stored recordings or shared classroom devices may provide workable alternatives without compromising the educational purpose.

Portfolio assessment requires criteria that recognize development without rewarding the quantity of uploaded material. Teachers can examine the relevance of selected artifacts, the accuracy of reflective judgments, and the extent to which feedback

informs revision. A carefully documented improvement may demonstrate more learning than numerous recordings presented without explanation. Periodic conferences can clarify discrepancies between student perceptions and observable evidence. Such conversations also provide opportunities to negotiate realistic learning priorities for subsequent activities.

Integrating portfolios with self-assessment and peer feedback creates opportunities for learners to participate more actively in evaluating their language development. The process works best when documentation remains connected to purposeful musical tasks and manageable classroom routines. Teachers retain responsibility for interpreting evidence and ensuring equitable expectations. Over time, selected recordings and reflections can reveal changing communicative abilities alongside growing evaluative awareness. Their value lies in making learning visible without diminishing personal expression.

5.6. Evaluating the Pedagogical Effectiveness of Music-Based Instruction Through Classroom Action Research

Classroom action research provides teachers with a systematic approach to investigating whether music-based instruction produces meaningful improvements in English learning. Its value lies in examining instructional decisions within the everyday realities of teaching. Rather than relying on general impressions of successful lessons, educators identify specific learning concerns and gather evidence about their interventions. This inquiry connects pedagogical intentions with observable outcomes while recognizing that classroom conditions influence the effectiveness of particular musical activities.

A productive investigation begins with a focused question grounded in an identifiable classroom difficulty. Teachers might examine whether rhythmic speaking activities improve participation among hesitant learners or whether repeated song

interpretation strengthens listening comprehension. Questions should address outcomes that can be observed within a realistic instructional period. Excessively broad inquiries make interpretation difficult because several learning processes may change simultaneously. Defining a manageable research problem helps establish appropriate evidence and keeps classroom investigation connected to teaching.

The research literature can inform intervention design without determining classroom decisions in advance. Renihan et al. (2024) systematically review intervention studies investigating the linguistic effects of songs among preschool, primary, and secondary language learners. Their work establishes a relevant research foundation for examining song-based teaching through observable learning outcomes. Teachers can use such scholarship to formulate questions and identify possible assessment measures while recognizing that published findings may not transfer directly across educational settings.

Planning an intervention requires specifying the musical activities, instructional duration, and language outcomes under investigation. A teacher examining vocabulary retention might organize several lessons around selected songs containing comparable lexical demands. Another investigating oral interaction could introduce structured musical exchanges during regular speaking practice. Documenting instructional procedures helps distinguish planned activities from adaptations made during teaching. Such records become particularly valuable when unexpected classroom responses require modifications that may influence the interpretation of learning results.

Evidence collection should reflect the research question rather than the convenience of available instruments. Short language assessments can document measurable changes, while observation notes reveal participation patterns that scores may overlook. Student interviews can clarify experiences that remain

difficult to interpret through behavior alone. Combining different sources allows teachers to examine whether findings converge or reveal contradictions. However, excessive data collection can interrupt instruction and produce records that become difficult to analyze meaningfully.

Establishing a credible baseline is particularly important when evaluating instructional effectiveness. Initial assessments should document learners' abilities before the musical intervention begins. Later measures need comparable demands so that differences are not explained primarily by task difficulty. Where feasible, teachers may examine parallel activities without musical support to investigate alternative explanations. Renihan et al. (2024) focus on substantive linguistic effects in intervention research, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing observable learning from participation.

Classroom action research also requires attention to developments that numerical scores cannot adequately explain. A modest improvement in pronunciation may accompany greater willingness to attempt unfamiliar expressions. Conversely, enthusiastic participation may occur without corresponding gains in comprehension. Teachers should document such patterns rather than forcing every observation into a predetermined interpretation. Reflective notes written shortly after lessons can preserve instructional details and unexpected responses that might otherwise disappear from subsequent analysis or reporting.

Analysis becomes more informative when teachers examine variation among learners instead of relying entirely on class averages. Differences in prior proficiency, musical familiarity, and opportunities for practice may influence responses to instruction. A strategy benefiting confident speakers may offer limited support to students who require additional preparation. Comparing individual trajectories can reveal whose learning needs remain insufficiently addressed. Such findings encourage

instructional adjustments grounded in evidence rather than assumptions about the universal appeal of music.

Table 5

Assessment Dimensions and Pedagogical Applications in Music-Based English Language Instruction

Assessment Dimension	Pedagogical Applications and Evaluation Criteria
Performance-Based Assessment	Evaluates English proficiency through authentic musical tasks. Emphasizes observable language performance and alignment between instructional objectives and assessment criteria.
Vocabulary Development	Measures lexical recognition, contextual understanding, retention, and independent word use through song-related activities and delayed assessment tasks.
Listening Comprehension	Examines learners' ability to identify spoken information and interpret meaning through structured listening activities with varying levels of linguistic complexity.
Pronunciation Development	Assesses speech intelligibility, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. Considers the transfer of pronunciation skills from musical activities to spoken communication.
Oral Fluency and Linguistic Accuracy	Uses analytical rubrics to evaluate speech continuity and grammatical control. Accounts for task complexity and communicative effectiveness.
Creative Language Production	Evaluates originality, linguistic appropriateness, and coherence through lyric adaptation and other expressive language tasks.
Learner Motivation and Emotional Engagement	Examines sustained interest, emotional involvement, and perceived learning value through reflective activities and repeated motivational measures.
Willingness to Communicate	Observes voluntary participation and communicative initiative across individual and collaborative musical activities.
Digital Portfolios and Reflective Assessment	Documents language development through recordings and annotated artifacts. Encourages self-assessment and evidence-based reflection on individual progress.
Peer Feedback and Collaborative Evaluation	Promotes constructive evaluation through structured peer responses. Encourages learners to identify communicative strengths and areas requiring improvement.
Classroom Action Research	Investigates instructional effectiveness through systematic observation and comparative assessment. Supports evidence-informed adjustments to music-based teaching practices.

Note. Assessment dimensions reflect the pedagogical approaches developed throughout Chapter 5.

The cyclical character of action research allows findings to inform subsequent instructional decisions. After reviewing

evidence, teachers may adjust song difficulty, modify listening procedures, or redistribute opportunities for oral participation. A revised intervention can then be examined through another period of observation and assessment. This process requires openness to unfavorable findings. When a musical activity produces limited progress, its instructional value should be reconsidered rather than defended through selective interpretation of classroom evidence.

Evaluating music-based instruction through action research ultimately depends on transparent reasoning about what the collected evidence can support. Small classroom investigations rarely establish broad causal conclusions, particularly when participants and teaching conditions cannot be controlled. Their contribution lies in generating informed decisions within identifiable educational circumstances. Careful documentation allows colleagues to examine the procedures and consider their relevance elsewhere. Through sustained inquiry, teachers can refine musical instruction while maintaining accountability for language learning outcomes.

Conclusions

Music and songs offer meaningful pedagogical possibilities for strengthening English language learning in Ecuadorian General Basic Education and Bachillerato. Their educational value rests on the relationship between auditory experiences and purposeful linguistic practice. Musical activities can support vocabulary development while encouraging active participation in classroom communication. Effective implementation requires clear learning objectives and appropriate instructional planning. Teachers therefore play a central role in transforming familiar musical experiences into structured learning opportunities that respond to students' educational needs.

The development of vocabulary through songs benefits from repeated exposure to meaningful language within recognizable musical patterns. Melody and rhythm can facilitate lexical recognition and provide opportunities for learners to revisit unfamiliar expressions. Listening comprehension also receives attention through activities involving prediction and interpretation of lyrical messages. Such practices become educationally relevant when teachers establish connections between musical content and communicative objectives. Vocabulary learning consequently gains greater purpose when students apply acquired expressions beyond musical reproduction.

Pronunciation development represents another valuable dimension of music-based English instruction. Musical rhythm provides opportunities to practice syllable stress and speech patterns through guided repetition. Singing can also encourage attention to intonation and connected speech. Nevertheless, accurate pronunciation requires more than musical imitation. Learners benefit from explicit feedback and opportunities to transfer practiced sounds into spontaneous communication.

Instructional activities should therefore connect rhythmic performance with meaningful oral interaction while respecting differences in students' linguistic proficiency and confidence.

Speaking fluency develops through sustained opportunities for meaningful oral production. Songs can provide linguistic models that learners adapt during dialogues and collaborative performances. Such activities may reduce hesitation by offering familiar expressions and predictable language patterns. Greater communicative independence requires students to move beyond memorized lyrics toward personally constructed messages. Teachers can facilitate this progression through carefully sequenced speaking tasks. Musical participation consequently becomes a starting point for developing confidence and communicative competence in English.

Creative musical activities expand the possibilities for student participation by connecting language production with personal expression. Lyric adaptation and collaborative composition encourage learners to make linguistic decisions while communicating ideas. Digital resources can broaden participation through interactive tasks and multimedia production. Their educational contribution depends on purposeful integration rather than technological novelty. Teachers must consider accessibility and available resources when designing activities. Creative engagement becomes meaningful when linguistic accuracy and communicative intention receive balanced attention.

The incorporation of music into English instruction also requires sensitivity to cultural diversity and students' educational experiences. Musical preferences differ across age groups and communities. Appropriate song selection therefore demands attention to language proficiency and cultural relevance. Ecuadorian classrooms can benefit from activities that connect English learning with familiar musical traditions while introducing diverse cultural expressions. Such practices encourage intercultural

awareness and respectful participation. Educational inclusion remains dependent on accessible materials and flexible instructional procedures.

Assessment plays an essential role in determining whether musical activities contribute to intended language learning outcomes. Performance tasks and analytical rubrics can provide evidence of vocabulary development and oral communication. Listening comprehension requires assessment procedures aligned with specific linguistic objectives. Student portfolios and reflective activities may complement teacher observations by documenting learning processes over time. Meaningful evaluation should distinguish musical performance from language proficiency. Clear assessment criteria allow students to recognize their progress and identify areas requiring further practice.

Learner motivation deserves sustained attention within music-based language instruction. Enjoyable classroom experiences can encourage participation and strengthen students' willingness to engage with English. However, enthusiasm during musical activities does not automatically demonstrate linguistic achievement. Teachers need to examine motivational responses alongside observable learning outcomes. Student feedback can inform decisions about musical materials and instructional procedures. A balanced approach recognizes emotional engagement as an educational consideration while maintaining expectations for measurable language development.

The application of music-based strategies within Ecuadorian schools requires attention to institutional conditions and curriculum expectations. Differences in technological access and instructional resources may influence classroom implementation. Teachers can adapt musical activities to available materials without compromising their linguistic objectives. Professional reflection and classroom inquiry can support informed decisions about instructional effectiveness. Further empirical

research within Ecuadorian educational institutions would help determine which musical approaches produce meaningful learning outcomes across different ages and proficiency levels.

Teaching English through music and songs offers a pedagogical perspective grounded in meaningful participation and purposeful language practice. Its contribution depends on the relationship between instructional intentions and students' demonstrated linguistic development. Across vocabulary learning and oral communication, musical experiences can enrich classroom interaction when supported by thoughtful planning and evaluation. For Ecuadorian basic and upper secondary education, the continuing task is to cultivate learning environments where creativity and linguistic development reinforce one another through accessible educational experiences.

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“Music and songs transform the English classroom into a dynamic space for language learning, creativity, and meaningful communication.”

EDITORIAL SAGA

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