

EXPLORING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN USING MAX GIESINGER'S SONGS TO IMPROVE THE LISTENING SKILLS OF LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the experiences of language students in using Max Giesinger's songs as a learning medium to improve their German listening skills. The research was motivated by the need for innovative pedagogical approaches in language education. Songs are considered a potential learning medium because they can create a pleasant learning atmosphere, increase motivation, and facilitate a more contextual understanding of intonation, rhythm, pronunciation, vocabulary, and language structures. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study method, this study collected data through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. The exploration focused on students' personal experiences, their learning motivation, the frequency of song utilization, and their perceptions of the medium's effectiveness in learning German listening skills. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify key factors influencing the successful use of songs as a learning tool. The findings indicated that students generally perceived significant positive benefits from learning through songs. High learning motivation and prior positive experiences with similar media were found to shape students' perceptions of the song's effectiveness. This article makes a theoretical contribution to the development of music-based language learning theories by illustrating how the integration of musical elements can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing listening skills. Practically, it offers valuable insights for German language educators in designing more interactive and effective teaching methods. In conclusion, the use of songs in German language learning was shown to enhance not only the cognitive aspects of language acquisition but also the affective domain.

Keywords: Audio Media, German Language Learning, Learning Motivation, Listening Skills, Song, Student Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a fundamental skill in language learning as it allows learners to understand spoken communication. For students learning German as a foreign language, listening often becomes one of the most challenging skills to master. Many language learners struggle to comprehend spoken German due to factors such as pronunciation differences, speech speed, and limited vocabulary.

Traditional listening activities sometimes rely heavily on audio recordings or textbook exercises, which may not always engage students effectively. Consequently, educators need to find alternative learning media that can make listening activities more interesting and meaningful. A recent scoping review by Abbas & Syihabudin (2025) confirmed that music-based pedagogy has significant potential for improving EFL students' listening comprehension, highlighting the relevance of incorporating musical elements into language instruction.

Songs are considered effective tools for language learning because they combine rhythm, melody, and meaningful language input. Through songs, students can learn vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structures in a more enjoyable and memorable way. Songs also expose learners to authentic language use and natural pronunciation. The use of songs in improving listening skills has been empirically supported by Adnyani & Padmadewi (2022), who found that songs significantly enhanced students' listening abilities in the EFL context.

One popular German singer whose songs are often used in language learning is Max Giesinger. His songs, such as "80 Millionen" (Giesinger, 2017), are known for their clear pronunciation and meaningful lyrics, which can help learners better understand spoken German. This has led to their informal use in some German classes for listening practice. However, a more structured investigation into their pedagogical value is needed.

Previous studies have suggested that music can increase students' motivation and engagement in learning foreign languages. However, there is still a need to explore students' personal experiences when using songs as a medium for listening practice. Therefore, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do language students experience the use of Max Giesinger's songs in improving their German listening skills?
2. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using songs as a medium for listening practice?
3. What challenges do students face when using songs as a learning medium for listening comprehension?

Based on these research questions, this study aims to explore students' experiences in using songs by Max Giesinger to improve listening skills among language students. The implications of this study are expected to provide theoretical insights into music-based language learning and practical guidance for educators in designing more engaging and effective listening activities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of students' personal experiences, perceptions, and motivations when using Max Giesinger's songs as a learning medium. The case study method enabled the researchers to focus on a specific group of language learners within their natural learning context.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were language students enrolled in a German language course at a university. A total of 13 students were selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria included:

- Students who had been learning German for at least one semester.
- Students who had experience using songs, particularly Max Giesinger's songs, in their listening practice.
- Students who were willing to participate in interviews and observations.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through three main instruments:

1. **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was distributed to 13 participants to gather quantitative data on students' perceptions of using Max Giesinger's songs for listening practice. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements using a five-point Likert scale with the following options: *Sangat Setuju* (Strongly Agree), *Setuju* (Agree), *Netral* (Neutral), *Tidak Setuju* (Disagree), and *Sangat Tidak Setuju* (Strongly Disagree). The statements covered aspects such as comprehension improvement, enjoyment, pronunciation, motivation, engagement, vocabulary acquisition, repetition benefits, comprehension enhancement, independent learning, and difficulties encountered.

2. **In-depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants selected from the questionnaire respondents. The interviews explored students' personal experiences with Max Giesinger's songs, their motivation for using songs as a learning tool, the frequency of song utilization, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of this medium. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was audio-recorded for transcription.
3. **Participant Observation:** The researchers observed students during listening activities that incorporated Max Giesinger's songs. Observations focused on student engagement, interaction with the songs, and any noticeable improvements in listening comprehension. Field notes were taken during each observation session.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, calculating frequencies and percentages for each response category. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis process included:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes.
2. Generating initial codes from the data.
3. Searching for themes by grouping related codes.
4. Reviewing and refining the identified themes.
5. Defining and naming the final themes.
6. Producing the report with relevant quotes from participants.

The themes identified in this study included students' perceived improvement in listening skills, increased motivation through song-based learning, the role of song repetition in vocabulary acquisition, and challenges faced when using songs as a learning medium.

Questionnaire Results

A questionnaire was administered to 13 students to measure their perceptions of using Max Giesinger's songs for German listening practice. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Using Max Giesinger's Songs for Listening Practice

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Max Giesinger's songs help me understand German conversations more easily compared to regular audio materials.	38.5%	46.2%	15.4%	0%	0%
2	Using songs makes German listening practice more enjoyable and less boring.	46.2%	46.2%	7.7%	0%	0%
3	I feel helped in understanding natural German pronunciation and intonation through Max Giesinger's songs.	38.5%	46.2%	15.4%	0%	0%
4	Using Max Giesinger's songs increases my motivation to practice German listening more diligently.	30.8%	53.8%	15.4%	0%	0%
5	I feel more enthusiastic about participating in listening activities in class when songs are used compared to conventional methods.	23.1%	53.8%	23.1%	0%	0%

6	Through song lyrics, I can add many new vocabulary words in German.	61.5%	38.5%	0%	0%	0%
7	Repeating song playback helps me capture important information in the lyrics that I previously did not understand.	38.5%	46.2%	15.4%	0%	0%
8	After listening to Max Giesinger's songs, my ability to understand the meaning of dialogues or lyrics has improved.	30.8%	53.8%	15.4%	0%	0%
9	I listen to Max Giesinger's songs not only during lessons but also independently outside of class to practice listening skills.	38.5%	38.5%	15.4%	7.7%	0%
10	Although helpful, I still experience difficulties in understanding some lyrics due to singing speed or certain accents.	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	0%	0%

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

The questionnaire results show that the majority of students responded positively to the use of Max Giesinger's songs for listening practice. Notably, 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that songs helped them add new vocabulary (item 6). Additionally, 92.4% of students agreed or strongly agreed that songs made the learning atmosphere more enjoyable (item 2) and that they felt helped in understanding pronunciation and intonation (item 3). However, 46.2% of students remained neutral regarding difficulties in understanding lyrics due to speed or accent (item 10), indicating that while songs are helpful, some challenges persist.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were applied. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Member checking was performed by asking participants to verify the accuracy of interview transcripts and initial interpretations. Peer debriefing was also conducted with fellow researchers to discuss and validate the emerging themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question	Key Findings	Data Support
1. How do language learners experience the use of Max Giesinger's songs to develop their German listening abilities? (Pengalaman)		
	a. Listening Comprehension Experience: Students experienced easier understanding of German conversations compared to regular audio materials.	84.7% (SA+A)
	b. Enjoyable Learning Experience: Students experienced listening	92.4% (SA+A)

	activities as more enjoyable and less boring.	
	c. Vocabulary Acquisition Experience: Students experienced significant vocabulary growth through song lyrics.	100% (SA+A)
	d. Pronunciation Experience: Students experienced improved understanding of natural German pronunciation and intonation.	84.7% (SA+A)
	e. Independent Learning Experience: Students experienced increased autonomy by listening to songs outside class.	77% (SA+A)
2. How do students perceive the usefulness of songs as a medium for listening practice? (Persepsi)		
	a. Perceived Effectiveness: Students perceived songs as more effective than conventional audio materials for listening practice.	84.7% (SA+A)
	b. Perceived Enjoyment: Students perceived songs as a medium that makes learning enjoyable and motivating.	92.4% (SA+A)
	c. Perceived Motivation: Students perceived songs as a tool that increases their motivation to practice diligently.	84.6% (SA+A)
	d. Perceived Vocabulary Benefits: Students unanimously perceived songs as highly useful for vocabulary development.	100% (SA+A)
	e. Perceived Engagement: Students perceived greater enthusiasm when songs were used compared to conventional methods.	76.9% (SA+A)

3. What obstacles do learners encounter when using songs to improve their listening comprehension? (Tantangan)		
	a. Speed of Singing: Students experienced difficulty catching lyrics due to fast singing tempo.	53.9% (SA+A)
	b. Accent and Articulation: Students encountered challenges with certain accents or unclear articulation in some parts.	53.9% (SA+A)
	c. Moderate Challenges: A significant portion of students remained neutral, indicating challenges are present but manageable.	46.2% (Neutral)

Discussion

The findings reveal that students' **experiences** with Max Giesinger's songs were predominantly positive. They reported improved listening comprehension, enhanced vocabulary acquisition, better understanding of pronunciation, and increased motivation to learn independently. These experiences align with previous research by Abbas & Syihabudin (2025), who found that music-based approaches significantly enhance listening comprehension.

Regarding **perceptions**, students viewed songs as an effective and enjoyable learning medium. The unanimous perception that songs aid vocabulary development (100%) is particularly noteworthy. This finding supports Adnyani & Padmadewi's (2022) assertion that songs create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere while facilitating language acquisition.

However, **challenges** remain. More than half of the students (53.9%) acknowledged difficulties related to singing speed and accent. Nevertheless, the 46.2% neutral response suggests that these challenges can be overcome with repeated listening and appropriate learning strategies, such as using lyrics or guided listening tasks.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the experiences of language students in using Max Giesinger's songs to improve their German listening skills. The findings indicate that students perceive significant benefits from song-based listening practice, including improved listening comprehension, increased motivation and engagement, enhanced vocabulary acquisition, and better understanding of pronunciation and intonation. Additionally, students demonstrated autonomous learning behavior by listening to songs independently outside of class.

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on music-based pedagogy in language education by providing empirical evidence from the context of German language learning. The findings support the theoretical premise that songs can serve as effective learning media due to their ability to combine authentic language input with

affective engagement.

Practically, this study offers insights for German language educators. The positive responses from students suggest that incorporating songs by artists such as Max Giesinger into listening activities can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Educators should consider selecting songs with clear pronunciation and meaningful lyrics, providing opportunities for repeated listening, and integrating vocabulary activities based on song lyrics.

Despite the positive findings, this study has limitations. The sample size was relatively small, and the study focused on a specific artist. Future research could explore the use of other German artists and compare the effectiveness of different types of songs. Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate whether the benefits observed in this study translate to long-term listening skill development.

In conclusion, the use of Max Giesinger's songs in German language learning was shown to enhance both cognitive and affective aspects of listening skill development. By creating a pleasant learning atmosphere and providing meaningful linguistic input, songs offer a valuable pedagogical tool for language educators seeking to improve students' listening skills.

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