

The Effects of Sad and Happy Background Music on Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency of EFL learners' L2 Speaking Skill with Working Memory Capacity in Focus

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In the literature, there have been conflicting results as to whether background music has facilitative or distracting effects on language related task performance (Groot & Smedinga, 2013). The study investigated whether happy and sad background music has any effect on complexity, accuracy and fluency of L2 speech among upper-intermediate English learners. It also studied whether Working Memory Capacity mediated the probable effects of the music on the dependent variables. The study was of a quasi-experimental, between-participants design. Ninety male and female English students were selected based on Oxford English Proficiency Test. The participants were randomly assigned to three groups of experimental 1 and 2 with instrumental sad and happy music, and control with no music. In the experiment session, their WMC were measured through a math span test. Next, they read a story on a screen. Then they narrated the story in English while the music is playing. Finally, for triangulation of data, the participants did a self-report questionnaire. The complexity, accuracy, and fluency of their speech were analyzed based on Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2011). The results showed that under happy background music condition, the participants were significantly more fluent and accurate than the control group. Moreover, the participants produced more correct verb forms under sad background music condition. However, WMC had no correlation with the variables. In addition, there were no significant differences between the groups in terms of complexity. This research will not only add to the literature on the effects of background music on different tasks involving emotions, but it can also propose a role for it while speaking in a second language. It may have insights on the role of music in second language.

- Ahmadian, M.J. and Tavakoli, M. (2011) The effects of simultaneous use of careful online planning and task repetition on accuracy, fluency, and complexity of EFL learners' oral production. *Language Teaching Research*, 15.1: 35-59, doi:10.1177/1362168810383329.
- De Groot, A. M., & Smedinga, H. E. (2014). LET THE MUSIC PLAY!. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 36(04), 681-707.