# 2019-Jurnal Internasional MJM (on Progress indexed Scopus)\_Revealing Students Experiences in Language Learning through Songs.

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# **Revealing Students' Experience on Learning a Language through Songs**

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#### Abstract

Organizing a learning process in this industrial revolution 4.0 is a challenge as one of the objectives is to improve the learners' creativity. This is different from the common language learning process objectives which are language skill mastery, and not prioritizing creativity. To face this fact, there have been learning innovations such as learning through songs. Actually, this kind of media have been used for long. However, the learners' experience of it has not been widely revealed. The learners' experience strengthens the theory and the innovation objectives ahead. For this objective, the survey was held. The data were collected through semi-open and open questionnaires continue with interviews to explore the learners' information deeper. The research findings show that some learners still remember the vocabularies they have learned five years before while they were sitting in the high schools. Most of the learners still remember the vocabularies they found in songs they learned in their first semester in the university (two and half years before). Further, three big effects of learning through songs are the feeling of being happy, motivated, excited and joyful while learning. Finally, all learners declare that there is some benefit of learning through songs both those related to linguistic sector and those related to non-linguistic sector. Even though, there are learners who feel worried, strange, doubtful and ashamed when learning using song media.

Keywords: German language learners, songs as media, song effects

#### Introduction

The industrial revolution 4.0 has implications on all fields including German Language learning process. The process should be innovative in order to increase the learners' creativity. This refers to the challenge to be faced in the future in which it is assumed that in five to ten years, everyone has to compete in a globalized world. In this kind of situation, it is impossible to let learners master only one field.

Creativity is one of the things needed to win such competition. The other aspects are the ability to communicate, the ability to solve problems and other soft skills (Gleason, 2018).

Creative learners are characterized by having high curiosity, being able to find problems, not avoiding challenges, being optimistic, exploring imagination, changing a problem into an opprtunity, being emotionally ready for accepting every problem, never giving up, and working hard (Harris, 1993). Further, it is said that there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and creativity level (Taylor, 1991; Getzels dan Jackson, 2000). Nevertheless, creativity enables learners to see opportunities and seize them with new ideas needed by all people in the globalized world. Therefore, the topics of creativity, song media, and language learning are very relevant discussed. Creativity can be built through innovative learning, one of which is using song media. Some experts say that songs as media can become a means of improving language skills and knowledge (Watrowski, 2002: Krashen 1983). However, in Indonesia it has not been revealed how the experience felt by students while learning languages with song media. Meanwhile, this experience can strengthen the theory and direction of learning innovation.

#### Research on Language, Song Media and Creativity

Several researches proving that songs are related to the process of learning a language are as follows. Boothe and West (2018) finds that the lyrics of a song do not only enhance the learners' mastery of vocabulary, listening skill, speaking skill and writing skill but also improve the learning process and grammatical varieties through auditory skills and rhythmical patterns. Those can be obtained through brain activity stimuli and imagination enhancement from the music and song lyrics. Music helps learners develop their skills needed in the learning process in a creative and innovative way. Through the varied and creative way, the capacity of language development is improved, the brains are stimulated in a unique way and the quality of the learning process is improved.

The contribution of music to language learning supports the results of previous studies. The research that Saricoban and Metin (2000) has done proves that music contains authentic and natural language that is familiar to everyone's ears. Songs offer precious sources that develop the learners' skill of listening, speaking, and writing. The reason of using songs is clear: a fun change of book-based learning, a common interest of the students and teachers as well as a pretty good media of learning presentation. Learning a language and music are interrelated as music and pronunciation are interrelated through sounds and are used to deliver message although a language is precise while music are often emotional Mora, 1999).

From the results of the research above there can be known the influence of music for language learners and creativity. In fact, song media is widely used in language learning in Indonesia. Outside the field of language, it also uses this media. An example is the gymnastics. In this field, song rhythms are used to differentiate heating, core, and cooling movements. What is not clear is how the expression of learners when learning languages through song media. That will be discussed below.

#### Method

This survey was an effort to reveal the German language learners' experience by using songs. The learners were students of Semester 5 in German Language Department. They consist of 72 students. Among them, 18 students had started to learn German language since they were in the high school while the others started to learn it in the university. This kind of condition made it possible to see the retention of the learning materials during 5 years in the brains of the students learning German language since their high school study and during 2.5 years in those of the students learning since their university study. Songs as a media of learning enables this retention (Hamilton, 2003).

The questionnaires were classified into semi- open and open questionnaire used to reveal the retention (semi-open), feeling while learning through songs (open) and the benefits gained (open). The

students' responses were examined in several things through interviews especially in revealing the creativity gained from learning through songs (Boothe and West, 2018). The data were then analyzed using the approached proposed by Miles (2010) which consisted of display, reduction, and conclusion drawing.

# **Result and Discussion**

Table 1

Material Retention

	Per	iods	Title Reme	mbrance	Ren	nember	
Aspects	2-3 years	5 years	Remember	Forget	Partially	Completely	Notes
Number of retention	56	16					
Title			60	12			Title: Fliegerlied, Wie Schön, dass du Geboren bist, Was soll ich ihr schenken die Prinzen, Zum Geburtstag, Guten Tag, Personal Pronomen, Ich bin cool, Ich bin Ausländer, Zum Geburtstag Viel Glück, Hansel und Gretel, Du, Warum, Vier Wande, Die Gedanken sind frei, Ich habe mein Herz in Heidelberg verleben, Hat dein Hut von Tante Ruth,
Lyrics					24	48	Edelweis.

Learning period and Remembrance of Songs

As presented in table 1 above, a number of students still remember all vocabularies contained in German songs they have learned more than 5 years before, when they were sitting in their high schools. Why are there only 16 students included in this group? Because there are only 18 students starting to learn German language since high school. Meanwhile, the others (54 students) started to learn German language in the university. This learners' learning experience strengthens the theory that song lyrics have retention in the learners' brains. This fact surely strengthens the theory and finding of the previous research as explained above. The same thing is experienced by learners with shorter period of learning, which is two years six months, counted since the survey was held. Among 54 students, 47 students still remember all they have learned including the writing, pronunciation and the way of singing the song they had learned. A few number of the learners say that there are several words of the song that they do not remember, especially those of the song of which lyrics were quite long. These learners admit that when they were learning it in the high school, they were not serious enough in memorizing the lyrics because they thought that it was just an intermezzo in their learning process. This fact reinforces Hamilton's statement (2003) that learning through songs enables strong memories of the material learned by learners.

#### Song lyrics that had been learned

The students who have started to learn German language since their high school have various song collection. However, the types of the song lyrics can be classified into two groups, those which are related to the learning materials and those which are not. Those related to the learning materials function to help the learners memorize the learning materials. Examples of this group are Warum, Guten Tag, Fliegerlied, Ic bin cool, Ich bin Ausländer. These song lyrics have specified characteristics such as repetition of certain words both in a long and short song lyrics. Below is an example.

#### Guten Tag

Guten Tag. Guten Tag

Halo wie geht's? Halo, wie geht's?

Danke, prima, gut. Danke, prima, gut.

Tschuüss auf wiedersehen

Those song lyrics, in the daily life, is a dialog between two persons asking about each other's condition. In German language learning process in high schools, that kind of dialog is given to the students at the beginning of the learning process when they are at the starting point of learning the language. Several lyrics of the song above are repeated. The same thing happens to longer lyrics as shown below.

Fliegerlied

Icb fliege, fliege, fliege, fliege wie ein Flieger

Bin so stark, stark, star, wie ein Tiger

Und so groß, groß, groß, wie ein Giraffe, so hoch

Und ich springe, springe, springe immer wieder Und ich schwimme, schwimme, schwimme zu dir rüber Und ich nehme, nehme, nehme dich bei der Hand Weil ich dich mag, und ich sage

Heute ist ein schöner Tag Heute ist ein schöner Tag

Heute ist ein schöner Tag

The song lyrics above have many repetitions in both the words and sentences. This song can be used as a means of memorizing verbs, adjectives, sentence patterns and adjective declination. The students also admit that they have ever learned songs with no title other than those with titles. Those songs contain grammars which are materials related to verb conjugation (sein, haben), colors, and numbers as shown in the example below.

Ich bin

Du bist

Er, sie, es ist

Wir sind

Ihr seid

Sie sie sind

The lyrics above contain only subjects and predicates, not sentence patterns related to German language grammars. Those lyrics are used to help students memorize verb conjugation "sein" for all personal pronouns.

Meanwhile, lyrics which are not related to learning materials are songs which are known world wide such as Du sung by Peter Maffay. This song is given to the students in both high schools and universities. The lyrics are as follow.

# Du

In Deinen Augen steht so vieles was mir sagt Du fühlst genauso wie ich. Du bist das Mädchen das zu mir gehört, ich lebe nur noch für Dich.

Du bist alles, was ich habe auf der Welt, Du bist alles was ich will. Du, Du allein kannst mich versteh'n. Du, Du darfst nie mehr von mir gehen.

Seit wir uns kennen ist mein Leben bunt und schön, und es ist schön nur durch Dich. Was auch gescheh'n mag ich bleibe bei Dir, ich laß Dich niemals im Stich.

Du - ich will Dir etwas sagen was ich noch zu keinem anderen Mädchen zu keinem anderen Mädchen gesagt habe. Ich hab' Dich lieb, ja ich hab' Dich lieb -Und ich will Dich immer lieb haben immer, immer nur Dich.

Wo ich auch bin, was ich auch tu, ich hab ein Ziel, und dieses Ziel bist Du, bist Du, bist Du.

Ich kann nicht sagen was Du für mich bist, sag daß ich Dich - Dich nie verlier. Ohne Dich leben das kann ich nicht mehr, nichts kann mich trennen von Dir.

The translation is as follows. In your eyes, there is so much that tells me You feel me I vou are the girl that belongs to me I live just for you You are everything I have in this world You are everything I want You, you alone can understand me You, you can never leave me

Since we knew each other, my life has been colorful and beautiful, And it is beautiful only because of you. Whatever happens, I'll stay with you, I'll never let you down.

You – I want to tell you something Which I do not have to any other girl Did not say to any other girl I love you, yes I love you And I always want to love you Always, always only you

Wherever I am, whatever I do, I have a goal and that goal You are, you are, you are.

I can't say what you are to me Say that I never lose you – you I can't live without you anymore Nothing can separate me from you

The song lyrics above are long enough, the sentences are likewise. However, almost all students admit that they can memorize these lyrics and are able to sing them well. Why is it so? Because this song is about a love story between two persons. Youth life is identical with this theme. Thus, students are easy to enliven the song and memorize its lyrics, as there is some natural emotion within the students. Other than songs of which lyrics are about love, in the universities, students also get some knowledge related to life. The titles of the songs are:

Wie Schön, dass du Geboren bist, Was soll ich ihr schenken die Prinzen, Zum Geburtstag, Zum Geburtstag Viel Glück, Hansel und Gretel, Vier Wande, Die Gedanken sind frei, Ich habe mein Herz in Heidelberg verleben, Edelweis.

#### Wie Schön, dass du Geboren bist

Heute kann es regnen, stürmen oder schneien Denn du strahlst ja selber wie der Sonnenschein Heut ist dein Geburtstag, darum feiern wir Alle deine Freunde freuen sich mit dir Alle deine Freunde freuen sich mit dir

Wie schön dass du geboren bist Wir hätten dich sonst sehr vermisst Wie schön dass wir beisammen sind Wir gratulieren dir, Geburtstagskind!

Wie schön dass du geboren bist Wir hätten dich sonst sehr vermisst Wie schön dass wir beisammen sind Wir gratulieren dir, Geburtstagskind!

Unsere guten Wünsche haben ihren Grund Bitte bleib noch lange, glücklich und gesund Dich so froh zu sehen, ist was uns gefällt Tränen gibt es schon, genug auf dieser Welt Tränen gibt es schon, genug auf dieser Welt

Wie schön dass du geboren bist Wir hätten dich sonst sehr vermisst Wie schön dass wir beisammen sind Wir gratulieren dir, Geburtstagskind!

Wie schön dass du geboren bist Wir hätten dich sonst sehr vermisst Wie schön dass wir beisammen sind Wir gratulieren dir, Geburtstagskind!

Montag, Dienstag, Mittwoch das ist ganz egal Dein Geburtstag kommt im Jahr doch nur einmal Darum lasst uns feiern, dass die Schwarte kracht

Heute wird getanzt gesungen und gelacht Heute wird getanzt gesungen und gelacht

Wie schön dass du geboren bist Wir hätten dich sonst sehr vermisst Wie schön dass wir beisammen sind Wir gratulieren dir, Geburtstagskind!

Song composer: Rolf Zuckowski 7 (https://www.google.com/search?q=wie+sch%C3%B6n+dass+du+geboren+bist&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-ab)

The translation is as follows. It might be raining, storming or snowing today Since you shine as the sun shines Today is your birthday, that's why we celebrate All your friends love you All your friends love you How beautiful you were born We would otherwise have missed you very much How nice that we are together We congratulate you, birthday girl! How wonderful that you were born We would otherwise have missed you very much How nice that we are together We congratulate you, birthday girl! Our good wishes have their reason Please stay for a long time, happy and healthy To see you so happy is what we like Tears are already there, enough in this world Tears are already there, enough in this world How wonderful that you were born We would otherwise have missed you very much How nice that we are together We congratulate you, birthday girl! How wonderful that you were born We would otherwise have missed you very much

How nice that we are together We congratulate you, birthday girl! Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday that does not matter Your birthday comes only once a year So let us celebrate that the rind is cracking Today people dance and laugh Today people dance and laugh How wonderful that you were born We would otherwise have missed you very much How nice that we are together We congratulate you, birthday girl! Song composer: Rolf Zuckowski (https://www.google.com/search?q=like+beautiful+the+du+born+bist&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&c

The song lyrics above express the joy of a family being blessed with a baby that they have been longing for. The situation in the song can be felt by the students because Indonesian culture also shows that each couple of husband and wife are always hoping for having a baby. Moreover, in Indonesia, the preciousness of having a baby is expressed in various metaphors such as anak adalah permata, anak adalah buah hati, and anak adalah buah cinta kasih. Those metaphors show how important children are for their parents. This kind of life-theme song is useful for developing the students' characters in order for them to be able to respect themselves more by digging their potentials as optimum as possible. The arising awareness will be beneficial for themselves and others. The kinds of words and sentence patterns used in the song are not simple but as it has the values of life which are familiar with the students' culture, it makes the students motivated to sing it.

Table 2 The Expressions of the students' feeling

Feeling	Frequency	
Нарру	62	
Worried	2	
Motivated	40	
Odd	8	
Excited	32	
Curious	16	
Frightened	2	
Doubtful	2	
Easy to memorize	2	

Not bored	6
Unique	4
Universal	2
Funny	14
Clamorous	4
Enjoy	2
Impressed	8
Joyful	22
Amazed	4
Merry	2
Varied	2
Not sleepy	2
Confused	8
Cheerful	10
Cool	12
Laugh	4
Lively	2
Stunned	2
Passionate	2
Motivated	6
Strange	4
Challenged	2
Creative	2
Enthusiastic	6
Sorrowful	2
Good	2
So so	2
Captivating	4
Lively	2
Ashamed	2

All students are able to express their feelings while learning German language by using songs well and clearly. Each of them express his/her feelings in five representative adjectives. The three first

expressions are happy, motivated, excited and joyful. There are 62 people felt happy to learn through songs. Learning through songs is fun, it is not like learning, and there is no threatened feeling. This is one of the student's happy feeling.

"learning through songs was so much fun, not threatening. It was not like studying while we got the knowledge. We got more vocabularies, cultural knowledge. We were able to sing a German song. It makes me more confident."

From that expression, it can be identified that the joyful feeling gained from songs does not only give the students a relaxed atmosphere. It also enables them to enrich their knowledge and strengthen their characters.

There are 40 students expressing their motivated feelings while learning through songs. Those feelings are expressed, among others, as follows:

"While learning through songs, all of my friends move, sing, and feel motivated to do it. It is necessary for us not to focus on listening and individual activities only. If all students in the class sing like that, the atmosphere of learning is motivating and we can hear our voice echo."

From that expression, it can be identified that students like to have variations in their learning process. Learning through songs was the students' need to be able to feel an activity done by all students in the class. The song they sang together boosted their motivation.

There are 32 students expressing their excited feeling about learning through songs. This kind of feeling lasted not only during the class but also afterwards. One of the students' expressions is as follows.

"I feel excited about learning through songs. Not only while I am singing. The songs have words which stimulated me to find the meanings in the dictionary. Besides, learning through songs makes me even more motivated to learn German language, study it at home and it even makes me feel motivated to go to German."

From that expression, it can be identified that learning through songs can motivate the students to learn independently. This is a very important impact on the students' future progress on learning. Besides, it can be identified that songs as learning media can improve the students creativity on developing their independent learning. That independence can be seen from the students' inner motivation as well as their willingness to learn more about what they have learned in various ways in their learning environment as well as their homes (Boothe and West, 2018). Even so, it turns out there are learners who feel worried, strange, doubtful and ashamed when learning using song media. This shows a weakness in learning with this media, besides its superiority. One solution to this situation is that the teachers need to give them the opportunity to sing in groups or in pairs, before learning independently with song media. The Teachers also need to provide learners who have doubts about the benefits of learning with this media. Everyone has stregths and weaknesses and that is why teachers must be aware to use several approaches in the class and find various tasks that associate more than one intelligence at one time (Brualdi, 2000).

German Language		Other than German Language		Notes
Туре	Frequency	Туре	Frequency	
Wortsatz	36	Joy	16	New vocabularies, fun learning,

Table 3

				Personal Pronomen, Adjectives, articles, Nomen, Imperative, Perfekt, fun teaching and learning
Grammatik	6	Entertaining	8	Grammatical learning, for entertainment
Aussprache	16	Motivation	8	Pronunciation learning, pronunciation improvement, motivation
Hörverstehen	6	Concentration	2	Boosting students' concentration, improving listening skills
Phonetik	2	Not boring	2	Making the class and learning process not boring
Struktur	2	Motivated	2	Motivated to go to German, easier to memorize German language grammatical structures
Budaya	4	Helping	8	Helping students to memorize German language vocabularies more easily
		Knowledge	18	Introduced to German cultures,

Wening Sahayu			13
			learning music and German songs, being able to sing a German songs
	Relaxed	2	Relaxing the students' mind
	Improving voice	4	Improving students' voice

All students explain the benefits they get from the songs they sang in the class. The benefits can be classified into two categories, those that were related to German language and those that were not. Those related to German language competency are the improvement of vocabularies, grammatical knowledge, pronunciation acquisition, the experience of listening to German native speakers, phonetical knowledge, knowledge of sentence pattern variation, and knowledge of German society cultures. Regarding the achievement of language competence at a higher level according to Baker (2013), it needs to be equipped with communicative competencies. Baker said that the targeted four major language acquisition skills include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skill, but learning a language in a higher level also need communication competencies.

In terms of vocabulary. Students get plenty of new vocabularies both those related to the lesson and those that were not. In terms of grammatical aspect, students feel it is easy to learn Personal Pronomen, Adjektiv, Artikel, Nomen, Imperativ, and Perfekt, as the use is directly applied in the daily life context. Other than that, the students also get more knowledge of sentence pattern variations from the songs. In terms of pronunciation, they get double benefits which are the knowledge and the application. By listening to the songs, the students understand the natural pronunciation of German language as how it is practiced in German society. This also means that they get the phonetical knowledge as well. In terms of cultural knowledge, the students can get it from songs as songs are means of delivering various things including German society daily life. In other words, songs contain some society cultures.

The other benefits gained by the students while learning through songs are the fun atmosphere, entertainment, spirit, concentration, varied situation, learning motivation, wide knowledge, relaxed atmosphere, and voice training. The last thing is very beneficial for those having some potential to sing. This is in line with the spirit of industrial revolution 4.0 which does not support someone to master only one sector in this globalized world. Everyone needs to have high motivation to learn along their lives.

#### Conclusion

#### **Research Contribution**

This survey tries to reveal learners' experience of learning German language through songs that have not been widely practiced in Indonesia. Thus, the results of the survey strengthen the theory and previous research in three things. First, in the students' brains, there is retention of German language learning materials learned through songs. Second, learning through songs gives positives impacts on linguistic and non-linguistic competencies. One of the most important things is that songs make the learning atmosphere fun, and motivating for learners to deepen their understanding by independent learning outside the class. this is clearly a characteristic of creativity. Third, learning through songs enable learners widen their competencies in other sectors which is vocal training. They are given an opportunity to recognize their individual potential they have not known before. This is a way to prepare them to live in the globalized world that needs more than one aspect mastery.

#### The objective of learning in the future

The implication of the conclusion above is that teachers need to try to improve the variation of the teaching and learning process by using songs. The targeted point of this is the improvement of the learners' creativity so they are willing to deepen their understanding of the learning materials independently. Other than that, songs give learners an opportunity to learn German language in a fun way that let the materials have some retention in the learners' brains. Besides, songs also let learners improve their linguistic competency. However, because not all materials are included in a song, it will be very beneficial if teachers can use their creativity by arranging the learning materials into a song that have been widely known in Indonesia. Moreover, the learning outcomes will even be better if the songs are those liked by young learners.

For the sake of learning innovation, it is necessary to reveal the learners' experience by using different approaches that are continued by trying out a new learning model so that a more-comprehensive language learning model can be developed.

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