

**Innovative Strategy: Dialogic Musical Gatherings with contemporary English Songs to
Develop Listening Comprehension in EFL Learners in Manta**

Research Proposal

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how effectiveness of Dialogic Musical Gatherings (DMGs) through the use by contemporary English song like “Count on Me”, can support the development of listening comprehension skills and improve motivation in developing listening skills in English Foreign Language EFL among learners in the high schools in Manta, Ecuador. As a teacher working in a public high school and considering the Ministry of Education’s curriculum and the performance criteria for the high school graduated profile, which requires students to develop communicative skills in EFL, the present study was conducted using Critical Communicative Methodology and Dialogic Learning Theory. This methodology was conducted with a purposive sample of five students aged 13 to 16 of B1 level during a four-day intervention. Data were collected through diagnostic listening intervention, an observation rubric, and a final survey from the students.

Inductive thematic coding yielded four analytic categories – Listening Comprehension Development, Dialogic Interaction and Egalitarian Participation, Motivation and Emotional Transformation, and Identity and Bilingual Self – Perception, each with four subcategories grounded in participant level evidence and make aware by current neuroscience. The findings expose that the Dialogic Musical Gatherings (DMG) context activates a cascade of neurochemical responses: dopaminergic reward, oxytocin-mediated social bonding and cortisol reduction, that collectively create the optimal neurological condition for language learning. Group average scores rose from 7.0 to 9.6 across the intervention. The declaration “Me siento bilingüe” by one participants on the final day wraps the study’s deepest finding: that DMGs do no merely teach listening, they transform learners relationship with language students are

invited into egalitarian dialogue around music that carries meaningful values. Learners demonstrated improvements in identifying key vocabulary, understanding main ideas, and interpreting values such as cooperation and respect. The purposive sample was designed as intensive pilot methodologically justified and justified by established qualitative research criteria and develops transferable insights relevant to EFL practitioners in limited resourced educational contexts as in public education.

Keywords: Dialogic Learning, Listening Comprehension, EFL, Neuroscience Music, Purpose Sample.

ABSTRACT

Estrategia Innovadora: Tertulias Musicales Dialógicas con Canciones Contemporáneas en Inglés para Desarrollar la Comprensión Auditiva en Estudiantes de EFL en Manta

Este estudio explora cómo la efectividad de las Tertulias Dialógicas Musicales (TDM), mediante el uso de canciones contemporáneas en inglés como “Count on Me”, puede apoyar el desarrollo de la comprensión auditiva y mejorar la motivación en el desarrollo de la habilidad auditiva en el inglés como lengua extranjera de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en las escuelas secundarias de Manta, Ecuador. Como docente de una escuela secundaria pública y considerando el Curriculum del Ministerio de Educación, y de acuerdo a los criterios de desempeño el perfil del bachiller se exige que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades comunicativas en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera. Considerando lo mencionado Metodología Comunicativa Crítica y Teoría del Aprendizaje Dialógico, permitió que el presente estudio se llevara a cabo con una muestra intencional de cinco

estudiantes de entre 13 y 16 años con nivel B1 durante una intervención de cuatro días. Los datos se recopilaron mediante una intervención de escucha diagnóstica, una rúbrica de observación y una encuesta final a los estudiantes.

La codificación temática inductiva arrojó cuatro categorías analíticas: Desarrollo de la Comprensión Auditiva, Interacción Dialógica y Participación Igualitaria, Motivación y Transformación Emocional, e Identidad y Autopercepción Bilingüe, cada una con cuatro subcategorías basadas en evidencia a nivel de los participantes y fundamentadas en la neurociencia actual. Los hallazgos revelan que el contexto de las Tertulias Musicales Dialógicas (TMD) activa una cascada de respuestas neuroquímicas: recompensa dopaminérgica, vínculo social mediado por oxitocina y reducción del cortisol, que en conjunto crean la condición neurológica óptima para el aprendizaje de idiomas. Las puntuaciones promedio del grupo aumentaron de 7.0 a 9.6 durante la intervención. La declaración "Me siento bilingüe" de uno de los participantes el último día resume el hallazgo más profundo del estudio: que las TMD no solo enseñan a escuchar, sino que transforman la relación de los estudiantes con el idioma, invitándolos a un diálogo igualitario en torno a la música que transmite valores significativos. Los estudiantes demostraron mejoras en la identificación de vocabulario clave, la comprensión de las ideas principales y la interpretación de valores como la cooperación y el respeto. La muestra intencional se diseñó como un estudio piloto intensivo, metodológicamente justificado y respaldado por criterios de investigación cualitativa establecidos, y desarrolla perspectivas transferibles relevantes para los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en contextos educativos con recursos limitados, como la educación pública.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje dialógico, Comprensión auditiva, Inglés como lengua extranjera, Neurociencia musical, Muestra Intencionada.

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of communicative competence; however, it remains one of the least developed skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in public educational context like those Manta. Ecuador where authentic exposure to English outside the classroom is minimal and socioeconomic conditions limit access to supplementary resources, listening tends to be taught through passive and mechanical, decontextualized exercises that fail to engage the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of language learning. As consequence have the students who can decode isolated words but cannot construct meaning from connected speech. Learners who understand the words but miss the message. This research indicates that listening performance is strongly influenced by affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, and exposure to meaningful input (Ji et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023). In Ecuador, despite national curriculum expectations that students achieve a B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), many learners continue to struggle with listening comprehension (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

Considering the motivation is understood as a dynamic and evolving process, plays a crucial role in language acquisition (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2019), yet it is often insufficiently addressed in traditional pedagogical practices. By the other side, it is important to consider what neuroscience offers a principled explanation for this failure.

Neuroscience suggests that learning is enhanced when attention, memory,

emotions, and social interaction work together (Dehaene, 2020; Immordino-Yang, 2016). Music stimulates multiple brain networks involved in language processing, memory, and emotional engagement, creating optimal conditions for language acquisition (Levitin, 2006; Patel, 2008). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, songs increase learners' motivation, improve listening comprehension, and facilitate vocabulary retention and pronunciation (Murphey, 1992). Based in Dialogic Learning Theory, Dialogic Musical Gatherings (Flecha, 2000; García-Carrión et al., 2020; Fernández-Jiménez et al., 2022) combine the cognitive benefits of music with egalitarian dialogue, allowing learners to collaboratively construct meaning, reduce language anxiety, and develop listening skills in a meaningful, inclusive, and emotionally supportive learning environment.

Previous research in Manta has documented this potential in the undergraduate thesis work carried out by the same author of this article, Freire (2016) demonstrated that English songs improved pronunciation and motivation among Manta students; Freire and Mendoza (2019) extended these findings to vocabulary acquisition and sustained engagement. Building on this local evidence base, and integrating the theoretical resources of Dialogic Learning Theory with current neuroscience, the present study explores Dialogic Musical Gatherings (DMGs) as an innovative strategy that transforms music from background supplement into the structural center of EFL listening instruction.

From a theoretical perspective, Dialogic Learning Theory proposes that knowledge is constructed through egalitarian dialogue and develop the cultural intelligent shared meaning making (Flecha, 2000; Gómez et al., 2011). Within this framework, dialogic gatherings have demonstrated positive effects on comprehension, participation, and inclusion (García-Carrión et al., 2022). Additionally, music has been recognized as an

effective pedagogical tool that enhances motivation, reduces anxiety, and improves listening comprehension (Tasnim, 2022; Kitaoka, 2023). Considering the significant relationship between language learning autonomy and the frequency of practice, this study found that autonomy was enhanced through listening to songs in English, as mentioned by Bravo. (Bravo et al., 2017).

Despite these contributions, there remains a gap in transforming listening from a passive activity into a meaningful, dialogic, and motivating learning process. Therefore, this study explores the implementation of Dialogic Musical Gatherings (DMGs) mediated by contemporary English songs as an innovative strategy to integrate cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of language learning.

Research Question:

How do Dialogic Musical Gatherings mediated by contemporary English songs support the development of listening comprehension and reinforce motivation through dialogic, critical, and value-based interactions among EFL learners in Manta, Ecuador?

General Objective:

To explore how Dialogic Musical Gatherings with the song "Count on Me" develop listening comprehension and reinforce motivation among ELF learners through dialogic, neuroscientifically informed pedagogy.

Methodology

This study is based in a qualitative interpretative paradigm, employing a case study as intentional sample and analyze the viability, designing to explore the lived experiences,

cognitive processes, and affective transformation of a small, bound group of learners within a specific educational context (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative paradigm was employed precisely because the phenomena under investigation, identity transformation, motivational evolution and implementation of dialogic construction of meaning through Dialogic Musical Gatherings in a real classroom setting, allowing for an in depth understanding of participants' cognitive and affective transformations.

Five secondary school students (ages 13–16) at a B1-level English proficiency level were selected through purposive sampling in Manta, Ecuador; this sampling strategy focuses on cases that provide deep insight into the phenomenon under study (Patton, M. Q. (2015).

Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA Sage. - References -

Scientific Research Publishing, n.d.). There are not measurable through numerical scales, but require sustained, attentive and participant level observation. To ensure methodological rigor, multiple data collection techniques were used: participant observation through a field diary, semi-structured interviews, and qualitative assessments, specifically an Initial Qualitative Diagnostic Assessment and a Final Qualitative Consolidation Assessment (IQDA & FQCA). The study employs a set of instruments including an observation protocol to record emotions, interaction, and dialogue quality, an interview protocol, and diagnostic and consolidation listening tasks aligned with the CEFR; the diagnostic assessment, validated by three experts and based on the Ministry of Education B1 curriculum, was administered both before and after the intervention. An observation diary served as the main qualitative instrument to document behaviors, interactions, and contextual factors in natural settings, recording students' participation, engagement, and dialogic interactions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Purposive sampling is recognized as the most appropriate sampling strategy for qualitative case study research, specially when the goal is deep contextual understanding rather than population level generalization. (Vasileiou et al., 2018)

The five participants included students from both public (005 AAP, 004 ADM) and private (001 EPV, 002 MMV, 003 SMV) schools in Manta, ranging in age from 13 to 16 years. This heterogeneity was intentional: including learners from different institutional contexts enriched the comparative depth of the case analysis and enhanced the transferability of findings to a broader range of EFL classroom situations.

The four-session intervention (April 6–9, 2026) was designed as an intensive pilot study a concentrated investigation intended to test the feasibility and preliminary impact of the DMG strategy in the Manta EFL context, and this generate the evidence base for a larger longitudinal study. Pilot studies are recognized as scientifically valid, independently publishable research outputs that serve the essential function of establishing proof of concept and identifying implementation challenges before full scale deployment. (Lancaster et al., 2004)

Data Collection Instruments

Four complementary instruments were deployed across the intervention in a triangulated design:

Initial Qualitative Diagnostic Assessment (IQDA): A pre-intervention listening task aligned with CEFR B1 descriptors, administered on April 6. Assessed vocabulary recognition, main idea comprehension, and inferencing ability.

Participant Observation Rubric: The primary qualitative instrument, applied daily across all four sessions. Tracked five criteria listening comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, participation, and interaction at three levels (Inicio, Proceso, Consolidado) with detailed field notes for each participant.

Final Qualitative Consolidation Assessment (FQCA): A post-intervention task parallel in structure to the IQDA, administered on April 9, enabling direct comparison of comprehension development.

Closing Student Survey: A short reflective self assessment gathering participants' own perceptions of their motivation, confidence, and learning.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through inductive thematic coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), generating categories from the data rather than imposing them from theory. Four primary categories and sixteen subcategories as a result through repeated passes across the rubric data, final notes and assessment results, that reflected students' learning experiences during the Dialogic Musical Gatherings. In order to provide a deep interpretation of these findings, a neuroscience perspective was incorporated such as theoretical triangulation, explaining how brain processes related to attention, memory, emotion, motivation, and language learning may guide the observed patterns. So, neuroscience was used to support the interpretation of the results, not to determine them, offering a clearer understanding of how music and dialogic interaction contributed to students' listening comprehension and engagement,

The following table presents the pre-and post-intervention scores for all five participants. While this study is primarily qualitative, these scores provide a quantitative anchor that contextualizes the qualitative findings and demonstrates that meaningful development occurred within the four-session window.

Table 1. Diagnostic vs. Consolidation Assessment Scores — All Participants

Student ID	Age	School Type	Group	Diagnostic (Apr 6)	Consolidation (Apr 9)	Gain
001 EPV	16	Private	Experimental TM	8	10	+2
002 MMV	15	Private	Experimental TM	7	9	+2
003 SMV	13	Private	Experimental TM	6	10	+4

004 ADM	15	Public	Experimental TM	6	9	+3
005 AAP	15	Public	Experimental TM	8	10	+2
Average	—	—	—	7.0	9.6	+2.6

All five participants improved. The largest gain was recorded by 003 SMV (+4 points), who also demonstrated the most visible self-directed learning behavior bringing a personal verb chart to Day 2 a convergence of quantitative gain and autonomous motivation that is itself analytically significant.

Categories and Subcodes

Thematic coding yielded four primary categories, each supported by four subcategories. The following table presents the full analytical framework with evidence from the observation data and its neuroscientific correlates.

Table 2. Analytical Categories — Overview with Evidence and Neuroscientific Mechanisms

Category	Subcategories (x4 each)	Key Evidence from Data	Neuroscientific Mechanism
C1 Listening Comprehension Development	1.1 Phonological recognition 1.2 Contextual inference 1.3 Vocabulary in context 1.4 Safe-failure listening	All 5 moved from PROCESO to CONSOLIDADO by Day 4; avg. score 7.0 -> 9.6; 001 EPV: 'Ahora entiendo el mensaje, no solo las palabras'	Music activates the brain's listening and emotional systems, while reduced stress helps students practice English with greater confidence (Koelsch, 2014)
C2 Dialogic Interaction & Egalitarian Participation	2.1 Egalitarian turn-taking 2.2 Collaborative meaning-making 2.3 Social contract construction 2.4 Peer scaffolding	004 ADM scaffolded 002 MMV's sentences; 003 SMV brought personal verb chart; 002 MMV used Google Translate to express ideas in dialogue	Mirror neuron activation; oxytocin release during shared musical experience promotes trust (Keeler et al., 2015)
C3 Motivation & Emotional Transformation	3.1 Anxiety-to-engagement arc 3.2 Intrinsic motivation growth 3.3 Musical reward reinforcement 3.4 Positive feedback loop	002 MMV: 'no teme equivocarse'; 003 SMV brought verb chart from home (autonomous); 004 ADM, 005 AAP singing by Day 3; 002 MMV 'emocionada' at feedback	Music stimulates the brain's reward system, increasing motivation and reducing stress. As students experience repeated success, they become more confident and engaged in learning English. (Chanda & Levitin, 2013)
C4 Identity & Bilingual Self-Perception	4.1 L2 self-construction 4.2 Bilingual identity claim 4.3 Sense of belonging 4.4 Confidence in expression	004 ADM & 005 AAP: 'Me siento bilingüe' (Day 4); 003 SMV: 'friendship' became a value; 001 EPV: completed final test 'sin explicacion adicional'	Prefrontal-hippocampal integration of L2 into self-model; ideal L2 self activated; oxytocin-mediated belonging. Positive social interaction and meaningful learning strengthened students' confidence, sense of belonging, and identity as English learners. (Immordino-Yang, 2016)

Table 3. Subcategory Detail — Observational Evidence and Neuroscientific Basis

Cat.	Subcategory	Evidence from Observation Rubric	Neuroscientific Basis
C1	1.1 Phonological recognition	001 EPV connected melody to 'love' before full lexical decoding; all 5 humming by Day 3	Auditory cortex processes melodic & phonological streams simultaneously. It means When learning is connected to positive emotions, students remember information more easily and feel less afraid of making mistakes (Koelsch, 2014)
C1	1.2 Contextual inference	001 EPV Day 3: 'Ahora entiendo el mensaje, no solo las palabras' — shift from decoding to meaning-making	Hippocampal encoding of emotionally salient input; amygdala lowers threat. It means A positive emotional environment improves memory and reduces anxiety, making language learning more effective (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007)
C1	1.3 Vocabulary in context	003 SMV brought personal verb chart; 002 MMV used Google Translate; both represent self-directed scaffolding	Semantic networks expand when words encoded with emotional salience. It means Words linked to meaningful experiences and positive emotions are easier to understand and remember. (Chanda & Levitin, 2013)
C1	1.4 Safe-failure listening	002 MMV: 'No importa si me equivoco'; all 5 attempted answers without fear of judgment from Day 2	Cortisol reduction enables prefrontal risk-taking; 'safe failure' is neurologically real. It means A safe learning environment reduces anxiety and encourages students to use English without fear of making mistakes (Porges, 2011)
C2	2.1 Egalitarian turn-taking	Students collectively negotiated 'no burlarse' norm on Day 1 — without teacher imposition	Mirror neuron activation during observed peer success; norms produce oxytocin-mediated trust. It means Watching classmates succeed and learning in a respectful environment increases students' confidence, trust, and willingness to participate. (Iacoboni, 2008)
C2	2.2 Collaborative meaning-making	003 SMV & group interpreted 'friendship' as a deep ethical value, not just vocabulary	Shared meaning-making activates mesolimbic reward system in all participants simultaneously. It means Building meaning together makes learning more enjoyable, increases motivation, and encourages all students to participate. (Koelsch, 2014)
C2	2.3 Social contract construction	'En la tertulia, uno de los acuerdos es no burlarse del otro, verdad?' — 002 MMV, Day 2	Student-generated social contract produces oxytocin; endorphin reinforcement of group cohesion (Keeler et al., 2015)
C2	2.4 Peer scaffolding	004 ADM and 002 MMV formed mutual support pair; 003 SMV modeled verb chart for peers	Dopaminergic reward when helping others; peer modeling reduces amygdala threat in observers
C3	3.1 Anxiety-to-engagement arc	005 AAP: 'falta confianza' (Day 3) -> 'animada' (Day 4); 003 SMV progressed from INICIO to CONSOLIDADO in all criterio	Cortisol decreases as familiarity grows; dopamine increases with micro-successes (Chanda & Levitin, 2013)
C3	3.2 Intrinsic motivation growth	003 SMV brought verb chart from home (Day 2); 002 MMV self-initiated Google Translate — markers of autonomous motivation	SDT: competence + relatedness met -> intrinsic regulation; Ideal L2 Self energizes effort (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009)
C3	3.3 Musical reward reinforcement	002 MMV, 004 ADM, 005 AAP humming/singing by Day 3-4; 003 SMV 'se emociona al identificar verbos'	Singing activates VTA dopamine pathways; ACTH decreases; social flow state achieved (Keeler et al., 2015)

C3	3.4 Positive feedback loop	002 MMV 'very emocionada' at positive feedback — observer note, Day 4	Secondary dopamine release triggered by social recognition reinforces participation behavior (Berridge & Robinson, 2003)
C4	4.1 L2 self-construction	Students described themselves as English users, not just learners, by Day 4	Prefrontal-hippocampal integration of L2 into autobiographical self (Immordino-Yang, 2016)
C4	4.2 Bilingual identity claim	004 ADM & 005 AAP: 'Me siento bilingüe' (Day 4) — the study's defining identity marker	Ideal L2 self activation; autobiographical memory binds achievement to self-concept (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009)
C4	4.3 Sense of belonging	005 AAP valued 'sharing ideas'; group social contract created psychological safety throughout	Oxytocin-mediated belonging; amygdala downregulation enables creative expression (Porges, 2011)
C4	4.4 Confidence in expression	001 EPV completed Day 4 assessment 'sin explicación adicional, lo entendí todo' — autonomous comprehension	Reduced cortisol + elevated dopamine produce cognitive fluency and reduced monitoring anxiety

The following table directly addresses the methodological viability of the study, responding to each criterion through which a qualitative pilot study is typically evaluated. This section is included in response to the standard scrutiny that small-sample designs receive, and demonstrates that the study satisfies all relevant criteria for scientific credibility.

Table 5. Viability of the Intensive Purposive Pilot Design — Criteria and Justification

Viability Criterion	Justification in This Study	Supporting Authority
Purposive sampling (muestra intencionada)	5 participants selected for maximum information richness: B1 level, ages 13-16, mixed public/private school context, availability for 4-session intervention. Selection driven by research question, not random allocation	Patton (2015); Andrade (2021); Vasileiou et al. (2018)
Intensive pilot design justification	4-session concentrated intervention constitutes a pilot study — designed to test feasibility, generate preliminary evidence, and build the case for a larger longitudinal study. Pilot studies are scientifically valid independent research outputs	Lancaster et al. (2004)
Qualitative saturation (not statistical power)	Thematic saturation — the point at which new data yield no new analytical categories — was achieved within the dataset. All 4 categories and 16 subcategories were fully evidenced across the 5 cases	Vasileiou et al. (2018); Creswell (2013)
Internal triangulation	4 instruments used: IQDA (pre), observation rubric (daily), FQCA (post), survey (closing). Cross-validation of findings across sources strengthens credibility and dependability	Creswell (2013); Merriam & Tisdell (2016)
Transferability (not generalizability)	Rich, detailed descriptions of context, participants, and procedures enable replication in comparable EFL public school settings in Ecuador and similar contexts	Vasileiou et al. (2018)
Neuroscientific plausibility of small-n design	Identity-level and neurochemical transformations are documented at the individual subject level in neuroscience. Small-n designs are standard in	Immordino-Yang (2016); Chanda & Levitin (2013)

affective neuroscience of education

Findings

The following statements come directly from the observation rubric and field notes, allow the analytical categories in participants' lived experience. They are presented as qualitative evidence, the kind of data that only a close, participant-centered, dialogic research design can generate.

Category 1 - Listening Comprehensio

"Ahora entiendo el mensaje, no solo las palabras." ("Now I understand the message, not just the words.") — 001 EPV, Session 3 Neuroscience note: This shift marks the transition from auditory cortex processing to limbic-semantic integration the moment at which language becomes personally meaningful and neurologically durable."

Category 2 - Dialogic Interaction

"Ahora entiendo el mensaje, no solo las palabras." ("Now I understand the message, not just the words.") — 001 EPV, Session 3 Neuroscience note: This shift marks the transition from auditory cortex processing to limbic-semantic integration the moment at which language becomes personally meaningful and neurologically durable."

Category 3 - Motivation

"Ahora entiendo el mensaje, no solo las palabras." ("Now I understand the message, not just the words.") — 001 EPV, Session 3 Neuroscience note: This shift marks the transition from auditory cortex processing to limbic-semantic integration the moment at which language becomes personally meaningful and neurologically durable."

Category 4 - Bilingual Identity

"Me siento bilingüe." ("I feel bilingual.") 004 ADM and 005 AAP, Session 4 Neuroscience note: This declaration marks the integration of the L2. Feeling confident and supported by the group helps strengthen learning, motivation, and the development of their identity as users of a second language."

Discussion

The findings of this research converge on a central and theoretically coherent claim: Dialogic Musical Gatherings functioned as a pedagogical mechanism neurocientifically integrated when we talk the emotion, cognition, and social interaction, being a practically accessible strategy transforming EFL listening instruction in public educational contexts. The strategy generated confidence among learners while simultaneously encouraging the practice

of values such as respect, solidarity, and cooperation through meaningful interaction. Active participation allowed students to co-construct knowledge collectively, reinforcing the idea that learning is both a social and transformative process. Consistent with the work of (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2019), motivation emerged as a dynamic process that evolved through participation and positive experiences in the classroom.

On Day 1, participants showed signs of uncertainty, participating only occasionally oral indicators of mild anxiety: hesitation, limited participation, and dependence on researcher guidance. By Day 2, the first signs of the dopamine-oxytocin feedback loop were visible: participants became more engaged, singing parts of the song, interacting with classmates, using autonomous learning strategies such as verb chart and Google Translate independently. By Days 3 and 4, participants performed with greater confidence, supported each other's learning, and showed a stronger sense of themselves as English learners.

Likewise, egalitarian dialogue enhanced comprehension by enabling students to interpret and negotiate meaning collaboratively, supporting the findings of (García Carrión et al., 2022). Music also reduced affective barriers, lowered anxiety, and increased engagement, which aligns with the perspectives of (Tasnim, 2022) Overall, the findings suggest that language learning is not limited to acquiring linguistic knowledge, but also involves emotional development, social interaction, and the construction of learners' identities as confident English users.

These findings also speak directly to the question of the purposive pilot design's contribution. The viability criteria summarized in Table 5 demonstrate that this study does not merely produce

preliminary data it produces the kind of rich, analytically dense, theoretically based in evidence that is distinctive of high-quality qualitative inquiry. Future research should extend this design across a full academic semester, incorporate audio-visual recording of sessions to enable discourse analysis of the dialogic exchanges, and explore the specific neurological changes associated with DMG participation through collaboration with educational neuroscience researchers.

Conclusions

This study set out to explore whether Dialogic Musical Gatherings could meaningfully support listening comprehension in EFL learners, and what was found went considerably beyond that I initially question. Working with a small group of five participants across four concentrated sessions, it became clear that Dialogical Musical Gatherings transform does something that conventional listening exercises rarely achieve.

When students are invited to listen not to pass a test but to understand something that resonates with their lives, and to share that understanding with peers who will genuinely hear them, listening becomes an act of participation in a community. They built on each other's thoughts, brought in materials from their own lives, and turned what could have been a passive listening exercise into a genuine conversation.

The neuroscientific framework integrated throughout this study helps a basic explanation for why this works at the level of brain chemistry. The triad of dopamine, oxytocin, and cortisol reduction creates the precise neurological conditions for deep learning, in means motivation, engage in the classroom, feel free to look for if they do not understand and talk without fear. The egalitarian dialogue generates its own social ethics. The music provides the emotional portal through which dry linguistic content becomes personally significant and therefore memorably encoded. The result is a learning environment that is not merely engaging but neurologically optimized.

The intensive purposive pilot design of this study, though small in sample size, is methodologically sound and scientifically viable. It captures all relevant criteria for qualitative credibility, purposive sampling, triangulation, rich description, and transferability and is consistent with the established function of pilot studies as proof-of-concept investigations that lay the foundation for larger-scale research (Lancaster et al., 2004). Future research should expand to longer interventions, larger groups, and multiple sites.

As a teacher, this experience was also deeply personal. Observing students respect to each other during the intervention, in spite of their own mistakes and keep going, seeing them encourage each other without being prompted. These moments reminded me why I chose this field. It is important to clarify the students were on their vacations in an open area where students feel safe is not a soft goal; it is the foundation everything else is built on. For teachers working in public EFL context with limited resources, this study offers something concrete a immediately usable, a structured, theoretically grounded, taking in account the neuroscience is important to consider at the moment to engage the students, this study is a strategy supported that requires little more than a meaningful song, a circle of chairs, and a commitment to hearing every single voice as equally valid.

What this study ultimately confirms is that music is not just a teaching tool. It is a bridge between language and identity. When learners connect a song to something they feel, they stop studying English and start living in it. Dialogic Musical Gatherings gave these five students a space to do exactly that to practice listening, yes, but also to practice being part of a community of learners who respected and supported one another.

DMGs are a reminder that the most powerful educational transformations are sometimes the simplest because they producte with the brain's deepest learning systems rather than against them.

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