

TOSCANO FUENTES, Carmen María. *Estudio empírico de la relación existente entre el nivel de adquisición de una segunda lengua, la capacidad auditiva y la inteligencia musical del alumnado*. Tesis presentada en el Departamento de Filología Inglesa. Universidad de Huelva. Septiembre de 2010. (Tesis doctoral dirigida por la Dra María del Carmen Fonseca Mora).

Very appropriately, this thesis presents music as an attempt to enhance the experience of L2 learners in the classroom. It sets out to analyse the role played by music in language teaching and learning and shows how previous studies support findings that account for superiority of settings where music was used for language teaching. The results argue convincingly that there is a relationship between L2 acquisition, auditory ability and musical intelligence.

Specialist knowledge and understanding of the literature is immediately and continuously apparent and the findings are supported by statistical analysis and interpreted in a valid way; both quantitative and qualitative data provide a complete picture of the issues being addressed. This thesis makes a very strong case for using music in the foreign language classroom and

highlights the importance of considering individual differences in this context. It also draws on how music can help students with special needs learn a foreign language –a topic that it is yet to receive the attention it deserves– and rightly states that if the appropriate learning approach is in place anyone can learn foreign languages.

On a structural level, the thesis consists of seven chapters, which include an introduction, four theoretical chapters, the study and the conclusion. It is worth noting that the thesis is built upon a very solid theoretical foundation but is never inclined to over-theorise. In brief, Chapter 1 acts as the introduction of the dissertation; Chapter 2 focuses on the influential factors in language learning and pays special attention to the individual differences that might affect the acquisition of languages. It also highlights salient features of mother tongue and foreign language contexts. Chapter 3 examines linguistic aptitude and introduces measurements of language learning aptitude. It also identifies characteristics of good language learners. The first part of Chapter 4 focuses on the theory of multiple intelligences to improve teaching, followed by a section on the relationship between music and language. The importance of auditory input in the foreign language classroom closes the chapter. Finally, Chapter 5 deals with the implications of using music in the foreign language context and concludes with an examination of two language teaching approaches that incorporate music: Suggestopedia and the Tomatis method.

The Study was carried out in a school that offered pre-school and primary education to children from 3 to 12 years of age. Teaching was affected by the lack of facilities for languages and music, which is not uncommon in the Spanish education system. A total of 49 students in their final year of primary education participated in the study. Data was compiled through the use of questionnaires, interviews and direct observation of lessons. Three were the hypotheses that the empirical study sought to test:

- H1 Students with better auditory skills will learn the foreign language more effectively.
- H2 Learners with more advanced auditory abilities will demonstrate higher levels of musical intelligence.
- H3 The use of activities that involve music will make the teaching and learning of languages more effective.

The three hypotheses were confirmed. Students who obtained better results in the auditory ability section of the Pimsleur's language aptitude test also achieved better grades in English language and they also got higher marks with regards to musical intelligence. It also seems that most of the students' motivation increased as a result of incorporating musical activities in the foreign language classroom. From the concluding remarks of the thesis, it is clear that the use of instrumental music and tasks related to songs are an efficient resource in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language and can assist in the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking. In sum, a mul-

timodal approach is regarded as the favoured teaching method, a stronger emphasis on auditory input needs to be implemented and motivation should be an essential part of the foreign language context.

The findings and potential pedagogical implications add to the current body of research in foreign language teaching and learning. A thorough bibliography and very comprehensive annexes complete the work. In terms of presentation,

it is nearly impeccable. Overall the quality of the investigation is very high and its originality can be gauged from its interdisciplinary nature combining three areas such as second language acquisition, auditory skills and musical intelligence. Above all, the novelty of the thesis lies in its two-year study and its subsequent implementation at university level, which demonstrates the author's highly commendable work in the area of language teaching and research.