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PSYCHOLINGUISTIC FACTORS AND THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: SCHOLARLY APPROACHES

The aim of this study is to examine works concerning the influence of music on the process of second language acquisition within a psycholinguistic context. It examines how musical characteristics — such as genre, tonality, and text structure — influence the cognitive and emotional processes underlying language learning, particularly memory, attention, and motivation. By carrying out a thorough analysis of theoretical and empirically-based studies in the fields of psycholinguistics and applied linguistics, this work aims to identify scientifically grounded mechanisms through which music contributes to second language acquisition. In addition, it aims to outline psycholinguistically grounded approaches that optimize language learning through musical influence and improve the learner's communicative and cognitive competence.

The relationship between music and second language learning has become an area of increasing research interest in recent years, particularly from a psycholinguistic perspective. Psycholinguistics focuses on the mental processes involved in language acquisition, specifically in terms of perception, memory, attention and emotional engagement. As music also has an impact on these processes, many researchers have begun to investigate how musical elements can contribute to second language development. A systematic review of the literature has shown that music has a significant and positive impact on second language acquisition, by improving memory, increasing motivation and enhancing fluency, as well as creating an emotionally favourable environment for language learners. Nevertheless, the literature review also demonstrates that this topic remains complicated and open to debate, as different studies focus on different musical and psychological factors.

According to Hulstijn [4, p. 1], second language learning depends on both explicit and implicit forms of knowledge. Explicit knowledge implies a conscious understanding of grammatical principles, whereas implicit knowledge evolves gradually over time through practice and repetition, until the learner is able to use the language in an automatic manner. This process of automatisation is central to psycholinguistic theory, and can be strongly affected by music. When learners sing songs or rhythmically repeat phrases, they use the same cognitive mechanisms that help to form automatic language skills. Memorization through repetition is facilitated by melody, leading to faster retrieval of words and expressions. Towell and Dewaele [8, p. 10] also found that fluency in a second language depends not only on grammatical knowledge but also on learners' ability to process language in real time. They noted that speech rhythm and speed are closely linked to fluency, and therefore, rhythmic training using music can establish a natural flow of speech.

Moreover, Rieb and Cohen [6, p. 3] proved that songs and musical exercises can improve learners' pronunciation, intonation, and stress patterns. They also found that melody and rhythm make it easier to remember new words and structures, as they activate both hemispheres of the brain and strengthen memory connections. Similarly, Grimm [1, p. 5] analysed the influence of different musical genres and tonalities on concentration

and learning outcomes. His research demonstrated that calm and balanced music, such as classical or instrumental pieces, supports attention and vocabulary retention, while lively genres like pop or jazz increase energy and motivation during communication activities. The tonality of the music was also found to have an emotional effect — songs in a major key tend to create a positive mood that makes students more open to learning and less afraid of making mistakes, while music in a minor key can help with focus and introspection during reading or writing tasks.

Stokes [7, p. 2] emphasized the emotional and motivational role of music in the classroom. His work supports Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which posits that learners acquire language more effectively when they feel relaxed, confident, and emotionally secure [5, p. 30] . Music helps to lower anxiety and creates a friendly learning environment [5, p. 152]. It also encourages creativity and personal expression, which are often limited in traditional grammar-based approaches. When learners connect emotionally to songs, they tend to remember the language more effectively because emotional experiences are stored in memory for a longer time. These findings suggest that music can serve not only as a teaching tool but also as an emotional support mechanism that facilitates better learning conditions overall.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, the effectiveness of music in language learning can be explained by the way the brain processes rhythm and sound. Music and language both depend on patterns of pitch, timing, and stress. When learners listen to or sing songs, their brains process these patterns simultaneously, reinforcing connections between sound and meaning. This dual processing helps to develop phonological awareness — the ability to recognize and produce the sounds of a language — which is essential for understanding spoken language and improving pronunciation. The analysis of the literature showed that musical activities engage multiple areas of the brain, including those responsible for emotion, movement, and memory, which makes the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

Despite these positive results, numerous open questions and areas for further investigation remain. One of the primary gaps in currently available research is the lack of detailed studies comparing the effects of different musical genres and tonalities on language learning outcomes. For example, while some studies mention that classical music helps with concentration, [2, p. 22] others suggest that some music can disrupt concentration and create certain moods which may provoke less altruistic states of mind [3, p. 10]. More systematic comparisons are needed to understand which types of music are most effective for particular language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Another issue is the individual differences among learners. Psycholinguistic research indicates that memory capacity, personality type, and learning style all impact how individuals respond to musical input. Some learners may find music helpful, while others may become distracted by it. This creates an interesting area for debate about whether musical learning methods should be applied universally or adapted to each learner's cognitive and emotional profile.

Another research gap concerns the duration and long-term effects of musical learning. Many studies measure short-term improvements in memory or pronunciation, but fewer focus on whether these effects last over time. Longitudinal studies are necessary to determine whether continuous exposure to music yields lasting benefits in second language proficiency. Furthermore, there is little agreement on how to integrate music effectively into teaching. Should songs be used as separate activities, or should music be

embedded in the main structure of lessons? How can teachers combine musical and psycholinguistic principles to design effective language programs? These are ongoing debates that require interdisciplinary research between linguists, psychologists, and educators.

Finally, future research should pay more attention to neurocognitive mechanisms behind the influence of music on language acquisition. Although there is strong evidence that both music and language share brain networks related to rhythm and sound, the exact ways in which these systems interact remain unclear. New brain imaging technologies may help elucidate how musical input influences memory encoding, attention, and emotional regulation during language learning. Such studies would deepen the psycholinguistic understanding of how musical experiences shape linguistic ability.

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