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The effectiveness of using songs and music to foster motivation and language development in the young English L2 classroom

*Effekten av att använda sånger och musik för att främja motivation och
språkutveckling i det unga andraspråks klassrummet*

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Abstract

Teachers work with large student groups and their job is to make their pupils' grow and evolve in their learning every day, even though the students may not be interested in the subject at all. How can teachers manage to do this with such a variety of students? What tools can be used to motivate as many of them as possible to achieve the most favourable learning outcomes? Music is a universal language that most people enjoy and for children it is even a natural part of growing up. Music can be a pleasant and fun element in the classroom, so we want to investigate if teachers could take advantage of this and use music and songs as an effective motivator to foster second language development. In the national curriculum, Skolverket states that teachers need to build upon the pupil's confidence in their own ability to use language in different situations and for different purposes (Skolverket, 2011). What happens with the classroom environment when music is used and what happens to the pupils? There is research pointing to the benefits of using music in second language learning however, there exists some disagreement among researchers if music could improve language development or if it is just a fun activity. Researchers also discuss on how to use music in the classroom in the most valuable way. In the current study, we explore and provide an overview for the possible advantages of using music. We also investigate the effectiveness of different musical approaches for facilitating language learning for young children in an educational context. In particular, we will discuss how songs and music can motivate young English language learners in their process and how the second language development can benefit from this.

Key terms: *Second language acquisition (SLA), English as second language (ESL), songs, singing, music, Music-based teaching, motivation, young learners, teaching techniques, scaffolding*

Individual contributions

We hereby certify that all parts of this essay reflect the equal participation of both signatories below:

The parts we refer to are as follows:

- Planning
- Research question selection
- Article searches and decisions pertaining to the outline of the essay
- Presentation of findings, discussion, and conclusion

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1. Introduction

Many studies describe music as the first intelligence to emerge. Young children are naturally inclined to hum melodies, rhyme, sing songs and move to rhythms at a very young stage in life (Gardner, 1993). The child experiences rhythms long before language is taught; it starts in the mother's womb where the child hears the heartbeat. This results in a congenital susceptibility for music (Bayless & Ramsey, 1991). Leutwyler (2001) discovered that "music with a quick tempo in a major key brought about all the physical changes associated with happiness in listeners". Hence, music is something that is naturally enjoyable for most people, especially children. Songs are in fact language mixed with rhythm and sounds; therefore, using them in the English language classrooms could be a successful teaching tool. It is crucial to remember that "students' motivation and interest is essential for learning" (Gardner, 1985; Iantorno & Papa, 1979; Williams & Burden, 1997).

It is believed that in second language acquisition, songs can reduce affective barriers and anxiety and therefore help students who are inhibited in their learning process (Merriam, 1964; Coe, 1972; Claerr & Gargan, 1984; Wilcox, 1995). By bringing music into the classroom the curiosity of the students is awoken. Curiosity creates motivation and interest which leads to heightened attention and this is where new learning occurs (Posne, 2008). Music can transform any room to a pleasant and positive learning environment in which students can flourish academically, socially and emotionally. It becomes interesting when we can take advantage of something that is pleasant and fun for the children and using it as a teaching technique to achieve a favourable language development for the students. Pedagogical materials have long supported songs as effective tools for improving learners' pronunciation of both individual speech sounds and supporting the acquisition of stress and intonation patterns. Music is a language that can be taught just as any other. In the national curriculum, it is stated that some of the tools that should be used for learning music in school are rhythm, tone and dynamics, pitch, tempo, periods and time signatures (Skolverket, 2011). These are very similar to language learning tools. Research in cognitive science and neuroscience have found a large amount of connections between music and language, indicating on some overlap in brain functions (Patel, 2003).

It is well known that student motivation and interest is essential for general learning across disciplines (Gardner, 1985; Iantorno & Papa, 1979; Williams & Burden, 1997). Motivation is

also known to be critical to success in the language learning classroom (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Young children are constantly exposed to English without knowing it through social media, movies and music etc. Such multimedia channels are enjoyable and motivate children to learn the language. However, it is difficult to motivate the same children to practice English in school. One way to achieve this motivation could be by combining the enjoyable parts of English that they practice at home with the English language class in school.

In the national curriculum, Skolverket states that music serves as an efficient tool for the pupils to express themselves in other ways than the classical methods that they might be used to in school (Skolverket, 2011). This might open doors for students that have been inhibited to express themselves before. As a teacher you have as many personalities and ways to express these as you have students in your classroom, and we must try to capture and nourish them all. Teaching should give pupils the opportunity to use music as a form of expression and a way of communication. Further, in the national curriculum it is stated that to expand the knowledge of the English language, it is important for the children to gain confidence in their own ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes (Skolverket, 2011). Since music can serve as a motivational and pleasant tool for engaging the students, it could be a great way of achieving the confidence that the syllabus requires. Research has found that through the integration of music and songs into the second language classroom, students feel much less restrained in using English. For instance, some very shy students seem more confident when singing rather than speaking English (Gan & Chong, 1998).

The idea of using songs and music as a teaching-tool in the English language-learning classroom is not new. Researchers as Bartle (1962), Richards (1969) or Jolly (1975) have long discussed the use of music in second language classrooms for both its linguistic benefits and for the motivational interest it creates for young learners. In a survey involving 4696 teachers from 144 countries, Garton, Copland, and Burns (2011) examined how many of the teachers used music in their classroom. They found that 66.9 % reported that they are using songs in the classroom often or even in every lesson. But still, songs have received little attention in the research community. Many recommendations and pedagogical texts are based on little or no support from empirical studies. For many years the educational system in Sweden has been structured on isolated skill drilling where very little room was left for multimodal teaching. This could be one of the reasons why there is very little research about using music as a scaffold for learning language. This then effects the teachers that already use music as a

teaching tool in the classroom since there are not enough empirical research telling them how to do it correctly. Teachers often use songs in their classrooms based on their own intuition instead of actual guidelines that are proved to work.

Even though there are not many empirical studies on this matter, researchers that do talk about music as a scaffold for language learning, are not always in agreement. They discuss whether music can help children flourish in their language learning or whether it will hinder them instead. Many studies, for example one made by Castro Huertas and Navarro Parra (2013), have found largely positive results for groups regarding the effects of songs on learner motivation, but mixed results for individual students. Castro Huertas and Navarro Parra claim that some students can benefit from music while others will just be distracted and unfocused because of the playful environment that music provides. But on the other hand, they also discuss that thanks to the pleasant and fun learning environment that music provides, we could teach students language without them even knowing about it. Due to the repetitive nature of songs and the frequency with which they are sung, we can facilitate the unconscious acquisition of language.

The national curriculum lists songs, tales and poems as mandatory core content in the listening and reading reception part of learning the English language (Skolverket, 2011). Given this, and the increasing focus placed on English education for young children over the world, the use of resources such as music should be examined carefully and supported by empirical research in order to lead to positive outcomes.

2. Aim and Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to explore music and songs as a teaching tool in the ESL classroom for young learners. What are the benefits, regarding language development, of using songs and music in the classroom? Can music and songs motivate young second language learners in their process? Different types of texts and sources will be researched, analysed and compared with the national curriculum and science that covers the question.

Our specific research questions are thus as follows:

- What are the effects, regarding motivation, of using music and songs in the young ESL classroom?
- What are the effects of using music and songs for the students' language development in the young ESL classroom?

3. Methods

In this study we have collected articles relevant for our research question and our primary method has been electronic search in educational databases. We started our research by reviewing various texts in order to get an overview of the research situation. We continued by searching for the primary sources that we needed, in research databases named ERIC via EBSCO, ERIC via ProQuest, Education Research Complete ERC and the search engine Google Scholar.

3.1 Search Delimitations

At the start of our project we began searching generally through databases to see what research we could find regarding our topic. We limited our searches to only young students learning English as a second language as well as only peer-reviewed texts. We began in the Education Research Complete ERC database where we combined the terms “vocabulary” and “pronunciation” and “songs”. We found one interesting secondary source that we saved and used for the introduction. Later we continued searching for “music-based teaching” and “ESL” in the same database which gave us 42 hits, of which we used one as a secondary source.

We changed database to ERIC via EBSCO and searched for “music as a teaching tool” as well as “ESL”, which gave us two interesting secondary sources. Later we did a search on ERIC via ProQuest for “music” and “ESL” and “motivation” which gave us our first primary source. The focus of this article was how music can motivate children in their ESL learning, hence it was very relevant for us. We also tried using the search terms “second language” and “young learners” and “music” in the same database but found nothing we wanted to use.

We wanted to see what Google Scholar had to offer so we tried searching for “music second language learners” and got over 2 000 000 hits. We did not have time to look through all of these, but we found one secondary source that we thought was interesting.

We went back to ERIC via EBSCO and searched for “Second language learners” and “music” or “songs”, which gave us 1970 results and one specifically that we decided to use as a primary source for our text.

Our last five primary sources were found in Google Scholar. We combined search terms such as “effects of singing”, “ESL”, “young learners”, language learning, “music”, “songs”, “motivation” and “pronunciation” which gave us the research needed to complete our survey. We finished with seven studies in total which are presented in a table under the title “Inclusion Criteria”.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

We included only peer-reviewed empirical studies with clear methods and results to be sure that the information was relevant and trustworthy. We chose to only use articles including young learners up to elementary school. There was one primary source including kindergarten children that was included because it was also concerning older children and the text was very much relevant to our topic.

Articles from all over the world were included since we wanted to see how music is used around the world to learn the English language. There was no exclusion of timeframes since we were interested in seeing how research has been evolving around our question.

3.3 Exclusion Criteria

We excluded all articles that were concerning older children or adult students. Exclusions were also made when the texts were concerning music as a different kind of scaffold, for example as a therapy tool. It was crucial that the texts were concerning English as a second language. There were also texts bringing up issues with selective deafness and other language barrier diagnoses which we decided to exclude to prevent the research area becoming too broad. Some of the articles were full of lesson plan ideas not discussing our problematic issue, hence these were excluded as well. Other articles talked generally about music as a positive element for children but not bringing up the second language acquisition and therefore these were not selected as sources to use. There was a lack of specifically Swedish research on this research area which is also why we include studies from all around the world.

A summary of the Inclusion and Exclusion is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

AREA OF INTEREST	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES	NUMBER OF REFERENCES USED
Language development	3	3
Motivation	4	2
Both	2	2
Other	2	0

4. Results

In this part we present seven studies that investigate the use of music and songs as teaching tools to develop young second language learning. We will focus on various aspects of our area of interest, trying to connect the findings to gather valuable results for our survey.

Using music and songs in the young ESL classroom

Studies have shown that music and songs have positive benefits on learning a new language. For instance, Aguirre, Bustinza and Garvich (2016) investigated the influence of songs on motivation for learning English as a second language. They also researched how music supports the language development by improving grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary for the students. The participants in this study were 56 third grade pupils. The authors chose to do a study in two third grade classrooms at a private catholic school that teaches English as a second language. The students were divided in half into two classrooms, one which involved the use of music and songs and one which did not.

Aguirre, Bustinza and Garvich introduces a method that include both observations and questionnaires. The researchers observed the students and filled in templates regarding their motivation, participation, interest and attention. The questionnaires were of two types and were given to the students at the end of class. One was given to the student group that worked with music and the other one to the group without. The questions were focused on two things; firstly, the students had to take stand on what they thought about learning English in general concerning interest, importance and motivation. Secondly, they had to answer on what they thought about the use of songs in class concerning their own interest, songs in general, class environment and the frequency of song use. The questionnaires show us the students' viewpoint on this, and the observations show what the researchers noticed. The findings revealed that students were more willing to learn English as a second language in classes with music and songs. In the classes that did not use music, students had a hard time focusing and feeling interested in the topic. The students seemed to get distracted easily and felt unmotivated. When music was used pupils participated actively and seemed to be highly interested in what they were doing. The results also showed that the students carried out their tasks with more energy and enthusiasm in the classroom where music was used. In conclusion

Aguirre, Bustinza and Garvich found that there is a clear correlation between songs and students' motivation.

Schunk (1999) conducted a similar study where she brought up important arguments on why music and songs are great tools to use in the classroom. The difference of this study was that Schunk focused on how music and songs can improve vocabulary skills for the students. Also, she had a multimodal take on her research by combining music with other teaching-tools. The main purpose of this study was to see what the effects of singing together with hand-signing as a teaching-technique had on receptive vocabulary skills on students. Schunk chose to do this by inviting students to complete a pre-test and a post-test for targeted vocabulary words. Pupils were divided into four research groups and got to participate in sessions where they practiced the targeted vocabulary embedded in song lyrics. In one group students were asked to repeat spoken lines and at the same time imitating each sign paired with the targeted vocabulary. The other group practiced the text by repeating sung lines instead and at the same time matching each sign paired with the vocabulary. Group 3 used sung text only and group 4 only involved spoken text. A pilot study was made by Schunk to examine the efficacy of the research protocol and design for the main study. After overlooking the results of the pilot study, changes were made to get a more evolved main study. The participants of the main study were 80 early elementary school students from three different schools. The findings of the study indicate that all test groups showed significant gains in their receptive vocabulary skills. The combination that got the highest score was the one with singing paired with signing, and because of this Schunk stresses that it is of benefit to combine these two for language development. The combination of spoken text with signs got the second highest score and according to Schunk this might tell us that using signs may in fact be more effectful on learning acquisition than singing. Even so, the group where participants sang without using signs still produced a better result than the spoken-text only group.

To conclude, this study found that significant benefits can be gained from using a multimodal way of teaching and that the use of singing paired with signing could be the most efficient way for learning second language acquisition. Therefore, the oral part of the second language learning can be improved effectively by singing and signing. Schunk also mentions the motivational aspect of music by saying that the learning atmosphere improved thanks to the playful approach that music has. Music creates a positive learning environment in which students feel motivated to learn and this could be the reason for the significant improvement on the targeted vocabulary within all four conditions. Schunk claims that singing and signing

creates a holistic learning experience for the pupils which could be one of the reasons why students who participated in the research improved their receptive identification of the targeted vocabulary words. Studies like this show that children using games, songs and stories are more motivated to learn in school and therefore they can flourish in their second language acquisition.

Another similar article, written by Chou (2014), also discusses multimodality as a favorable educational method to achieve vocabulary skills. Chou states that games, songs and stories have great benefits on learning English vocabulary for young students. The research took place in a primary school in Southern Taiwan. Seventy-two children in the ages eight to eleven participated in the research together with four teachers. The students took a course in English where the aim was to develop their second language vocabulary, to learn marker sentences and learn about other cultures through five famous international festivals. The children were divided into four groups based on their grade from a pre-test. For every festival six vocabulary words and two marker sentences were taught to the students. The goal with this survey was to teach the students 30 words and 10 marker sentences. Every lesson concerning festivals were 100 minutes long and only 10 minutes break was allowed. The festival lessons included storytelling about the festivals and related vocabulary, a formal presentation of the vocabulary and marker sentences as well as three games which would develop the students' vocabulary. The lessons also involved songs which they would sing, listen to and move their bodies to. Chou says that mixed methods were used in this research such as classroom observation and semi structured interviews.

Before the course, as mentioned, the students took a pre-test on the vocabulary that they were about to learn. Chou mentions that by the end of the course a new test was made, and it was structured in a way to see what the students have learned through games, songs and stories. He was interested to know if the students had developed their vocabulary and if the festival lessons were of help in getting more fluent in the English language. In his findings he could see that games, songs and stories seemed to be effective tools to encourage pupils to interact with the teacher in the second language. Chou could see how these scaffolds developed the students' turn-taking skills in oral discussions and therefore it could be highly beneficial for improving young students' communication abilities. Further, Chou could see from the interviews that students with lower score felt more motivated to learn English with the use of games, songs and stories. Children with both low and high score believed that singing songs and moving with the rhythm were great tools for learning the language. In addition to that,

Chou could see from the classroom observations that the students had more fun and therefore were more motivated to learn. Even if pupils performed differently across the four groups on the vocabulary test, more than 80% of the students agreed that singing English songs and listening to stories related to the festivals assisted them in understanding the English language and the teaching content.

Chou concludes the research by saying that games, songs and stories can be valuable to young students learning English vocabulary if those activities are incorporated with clear teaching and clear learning intentions. Chou continues by saying that isolated skill drilling, for example to learn vocabulary, is common worldwide since we have a known culture that values personal success based on academic performance. If teachers used approaches such as learner-centered games, songs or stories this could potentially reinforce young pupils' classroom motivation and generate positive attitudes towards learning English.

A study made by Fisher (2001) also proves that music is a valuable tool for students' second language acquisition. Fisher writes about the advantages and disadvantages of using and not using music in classrooms and the effect it can have on the pupils' speaking and reading abilities. The reporter carried out his research in a school where 80 children and their teachers participated. The children had English as a second language and Spanish as their first language. The research took place in four classrooms and included children from kindergarten to elementary school. Since there were pupils in elementary school and because the research was highly relevant for our study, the decision was made to include it even though the children were rather young. Each class consisted of 23 children and none of them were fluent English speakers. The teachers structured the literacy block into reading aloud, guided reading, writing, independent reading and working with words. All the teachers planned it together and taught it at the same time but in different ways. Two of the four teachers used music during the literacy block while the other two did not. Fisher mentions that one reason for teachers not using music in the classroom was that they did not have access to a CD-player in the classroom.

This research involved three types of assessment. The first one was named SOLOM, which was based on speaking proficiency. The second one called the Yopp-Singer test offers a score based on the number of correct phoneme segmentation activities that the pupils correctly have produced. The last one was called DRA, where the students had to re-tell what they had read. In each research, one of the four teachers had to observe the students. The classroom

observations took place in two of the classes each week that had music and one that did not. The observations were carried out twice a month for 19 months and each lasted between 60-100 minutes.

Fisher says that the results of these assessments show that using music in the classroom can be an efficient tool for the pupils to evolve in the English language. Even though long-term outcomes from these four classroom experiments cannot be determined, the findings so far show that teachers should combine music with their literacy instruction. Fisher also mentions that it is important that the teachers know why they have chosen specific songs in the classroom. The songs they choose should be connected to the curriculum themes or language structures. Therefore, the teacher needs to know the importance of the selected song for useful learning material. The teachers should select songs for the purpose of constantly developing the English language, and the songs should also be chosen to motivate the students as much as possible. A follow-up study on these 80 students to determine if the effects on language development will happen would be interesting.

In a different research article by Pérez Niño (2009) we can read about the findings from a study at Universidad Nacional de Colombia in the second language courses. Pérez Niño wants to show how young pupils in the ESL classroom can develop their oral production by using music as a pedagogical tool. The participants of this study were students from 10 to 15 years old. These pupils took three English classes, two with their regular teacher and one with a specialized music teacher. The specialized teacher taught the English language by using musical instruments and by singing with the students. Pérez Niño gathered information for his study by using field notes, diaries, video recordings and interviews. Through these he could describe each one of the activities carried out by the music teacher. He chose to research five lessons, in which three of them used music as a tool.

The results of this survey showed, just as Chou and Fisher already mentioned, the importance of choosing songs for the classroom wisely. The teacher in this survey used popular pop and rock songs that were recognizable for the pupils. This resulted in children enjoying the listening activities. Pérez Niño states that thanks to the motivational aspects of music, it is a successful tool to use in the classroom. He believes that the children in his research were more confident in their use of English thanks to the enjoyable environment that music provides. He also mentions that the repetitive nature of songs helped the students to get accustomed to the pronunciation and the intonation of the language.

Salmon (2010) is yet another researcher that talks highly about music as a teaching tool. Her findings show that children's explorations with music is an efficient way to expand their thinking and writing and therefore a great tool for engaging them in literacy. Salmon explains how music can be used as a scaffold, for instance, for fostering thinking and self-expression. The survey was built upon teacher observations of the students in various music integrated situations with the goal to improve future education. The participants were children from six to nine years old and the research was observed in a Reggio-inspired school as well as at a summer reading camp. Salmon observed an experiment where both teachers and children participated to see how the music is connected to children's thinking, reading and creative writing. The teachers had activities with music to engage the children in writing and thinking activities. Salmon clarifies that the teachers also wrote a review of the children's reactions and that the observations were videotaped and photographed for further analysis.

Salmons concludes that music is an excellent tool for language growth and comprehension because of the clear relation between songs and literacy. Salmon states that music is in many ways connected with social and cognitive improvement. When young pupils listen to songs and get the opportunity to connect these with language and literacy, teachers can identify or create their ZDP (The Zone of Proximal Development). This way teachers can scaffold their writing, listening and oral language. ZDP is based on Vygotsky's theory (1978). Salmon continues by saying that music and songs can generate visualisation. Visualisation or imagery is an important element for language development and comprehension. Music also has the potential to activate children's prior knowledge which would help teachers avoid missing students' understanding. Bearing all this in mind, music is an effective meta-cognitive tool that can be used to scaffold children's language and literacy development.

Moradi and Shahrokhi (2014) likewise conducted a study in order to investigate to what extent music affects children's second language development. Their research was focused on how it can affect students' pronunciation including vowels, consonants, diphthongs, triphthongs, intonation and stress patterns. Moradi and Shahrokhi discuss how in Iran less importance is given to teaching pronunciation in comparison to other skills. Therefore, they want to explore music as an interesting teaching technique for this issue. They also stress the fact that teaching and learning pronunciation is often seen as a boring activity for both students and teachers; hence music could be used as a motivator for learning.

Thirty elementary students from a private school in Isfahan participated in the study. The students were between the ages nine to twelve and were all at the beginner level of pronunciation. The participants were assigned in two groups, 15 of them in the control group and 15 in the experimental group. A book called “Song time 3” was the selected main material for both groups. Other resources used were a placement test, a pre-test, a post-test and voice recordings. “Song time 3” was taught to the experimental group along with music, where pupils listened to the songs, repeated them and memorized them. In the control group they read the same text from “Song time 3” but without the use of music. The teacher read the songs and the students repeated and memorized. In comparing the results from the pre-test and the post-test, Moradi and Shahrokhi could see that the students in the experimental group had better results in pronunciation, intonation and stress pattern recognition than the control group. The conclusion of the survey tells us that songs can play an important role in both language accuracy and fluency. Moradi and Shahrokhi explain that through this survey they noted the motivational aspect of music as very positive. Music motivated pupils to imitate the sounds in the exact manner as they are produced by the singer. The children appear more confident though the music and can learn how to pronounce different sounds and words in a relaxed atmosphere, where they can use English without fear of being criticized. Moradi and Shahrokhi emphasize the fact that Iranian teachers need to become aware of the effects of music upon language learning in order to improve the pronunciation part of the ESL process.

5. Discussion

In this section we will present a discussion of our findings starting with the motivational aspect of music and songs followed by the part where we discuss possible language development from the use of music and songs.

5.1 Motivation

Throughout our research we have found clear evidence that music and songs support the motivation for young ESL students. Music motivates students to participate in second language learning and therefore they pay closer attention, which then hopefully leads to a beneficial language development. Every one of the articles we included established that music works as a brilliant motivator for children to participate in class (Aguirre, Bustinze & Garvich, 2016; Schunk, 1999; Chou, 2013; Fisher, 2001; Pérez Niño, 2009; Salmon, 2016; Fereshteh & Shahroki, 2014). Aguirre, Bustinze and Garvich found that when music was used in the classroom, pupils participated actively and seemed to be interested in what they were doing. Students carried out their tasks with increased energy and enthusiasm. Both Schunk and Chou discuss the learning atmosphere which they believed can be improved by the playful and fun approach that music has. They found that music created a positive learning environment in which students felt motivated to learn. Moradi and Shahroki detected significant improvements of the student's motivation through their research. Children would appear more confident when music was used and learnt how to pronounce different sounds and words in a relaxed atmosphere where they could use English without fear of being criticized. As mentioned, in the national curriculum, Skolverket states that it is crucial for the children to gain confidence in using the English language in different situations and for different purposes (Skolverket, 2011). Through our research we found that music can in fact be the tool needed to achieve this confidence.

Chou continues by mentioning that thanks to the motivational aspect that music provided, students can learn English if the activities are incorporated with clear teaching and learning intentions. Many of the other researchers also stress the fact that teachers must be aware of the importance of which songs they choose. Pérez Niño mentions this by saying that to motivate the children in a favourable way it is crucial to choose songs which students can connect to.

The teacher in his survey used popular pop and rock songs that were recognizable for the pupils. This resulted in children enjoying the listening activities, hence paying more attention.

5.2 Language development

Concerning the research question, asking if music is an efficient tool for language development, it is hard to determine. Throughout our research we found that it would be beneficial to experiment on this for a longer period of time to conclude if children actually improve in their second language acquisition. Fisher supports this theory by saying that even though the findings from his study so far show that combining music with literacy instruction has positive outcomes, long-term outcomes cannot be determined. A follow-up study on these students to determine if the effects on language development happen, would be useful. Our findings, together with the findings from our articles, suggests that there needs to be more empirical research on this matter to be able to determine the long-time effects of music in the ESL classroom.

There were not too many studies that saw actual proof of language development in their research. (Schunk, 1999; Chou, 2013; Fisher, 2001; Pérez Niño, 2009; Salmon, 2016; Fereshteh & Shahroki, 2014) where researchers that detected some kind of improvements in language acquisition. Schunk saw that all test groups in her study showed significant gains in their receptive vocabulary skills. In one test group concerning her research she combined singing together with hand-signing which ended up getting the best result in vocabulary development of all the test groups. Because of this Schunk emphasizes that it is of benefit to combine these two for a positive language development. Another research that supports the use of multimodal teaching is Chou who talks about learning language and enhancing motivation through games, songs and stories. He discovered that by incorporating music and songs in the classroom students seemed encouraged to use the English language more in class, to communicate with the teacher and with their peers. Chou underlines the fact that games, songs and stories can be valuable to young students learning English vocabulary if those activities are incorporated with clear teaching and learning intentions. It appears that a valuable way to improve second language acquisition is to mix different types of teaching techniques to get the most favourable development. Using a more multimodal way of teaching

mixing teaching tools such as music and songs together with for example hand-signs, pictures, stories, games, colours etc.

Pérez Niño found that the repetitive nature of songs can work as a positive element in second language acquisition since this helps the students grasp the pronunciation and the intonation of the language. Fereshteh and Shahroki also found clear evidence of language improvements thanks to the use of songs within their survey. The students in the experimental group of the survey had better effects on pronunciation, intonation and stress pattern recognition than the control group that did not use music. Fereshteh and Shahroki therefore concludes that songs can play an important role in both language accuracy and fluency. Salmon also mention that when young pupils listen to songs and the connections with language and literacy that these songs have, teachers can identify or create their ZDP. This way teachers can scaffold their writing, listening and oral language. Salmon continues by discussing how music and songs can generate visualisation. Visualisation or imagery is an important element for language development and comprehension. They mention that music has the potential to activate children's prior knowledge which would help teachers avoid missing students understanding. Fisher is convinced, together with many of the other researchers, that it is highly important to choose songs that lead to beneficial outcomes in language acquisition. He supports this by saying that songs chosen must be connected to the curriculum themes or language structures. The findings from Fishers study show us that it is unclear if the addition of music to language acquisition, that is not tied thematically or developmentally, would positively impact the students' language development. Bearing all of this in mind he still concludes his findings by saying that in the classrooms that used music as a scaffold, the music always complemented the instruction rather than detracted from it.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of our research was to explore how music and songs could be used as a teaching tool in the ESL classroom for young learners. The specific research questions that we wanted to find the answers to were, what the effects are of music and songs on young students' language development in ESL classrooms and what the effects are of music and songs on young students' motivation in ESL classrooms. We found clear evidence of music being an efficient tool to heighten the children's motivation towards the English language learning. When music is used in the ESL classroom, children seem to be more interested in what they are doing and carries out their tasks with improved confidence, energy and enthusiasm (Aguirre, Bustine & Garvich, 2016). This has a lot to do with the enjoyable environment that music provides. We also found that the activates chosen needs to be incorporated with clear teaching and learning intentions. The songs need to be chosen internationally by the teacher bearing in mind that they also must be meaningful for the students to be able to motivate them. When songs are chosen it is crucial that they are connected to the curriculum themes and language structures (Chou, 2013; Fisher, 2001).

Concerning our question about the language development, we found that it is difficult to determine whether music is a useful tool or not. We believe that the language development process happens too slowly, therefore, to get a clearer answer for this it would be valuable to experiment on this matter for a longer period. Only a few of the articles chosen in our survey found strong improvements in language development. They found that music has positive effects on the pronunciation, intonation and stress pattern recognition (Pérez Niño, 2009; Fereshteh & Shahroki, 2014). It appears that a valuable way to improve second language acquisition is to mix different types of teaching techniques to get the most favourable development. Using a more multimodal way of teaching mixing scaffolds such as music and songs together with for example hand-signs, pictures, stories, games, colours etc. Our findings, together with the findings from our articles, suggests that there needs to be more empirical research on this matter to be able to determine the long-time effects of music in ESL classroom. We would find it interesting to conduct a further investigation on how music and songs could be of use for the second language acquisition and how this would be done for actual language development.

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