

Music as a tool for improving first and second language acquisition

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Recent studies on the influence of music on language processing have attracted the attention of many scientists around the world. In the presentation, I will give background to the session “Where language and music meet in perception and performance.”

Therefore, I will provide data on the similarities and differences between music and language in perception and performance: music-language similarities/differences; how music can affect language (e.g. based on the activation of shared processes, on similar and overlapping pathways for music and language, recent data on the impact of music on first language acquisition processes, and similar processes in second language acquisition). The presentation will also contain data on the processes connected with attention, concentration, memory, auditory and phonological processes.

Then I will present data on the role of musicality in first and second language acquisition as well as recent data on the influence of music on second language acquisition. On the basis of recent discoveries by the main research centres involved in language, music and neuroscience research, the present current stage of knowledge on the language-music relationship will be provided. Some new directions for speech rehabilitation using music will also be discussed.

Among the research results from other laboratories, I will also briefly present the results of a study conducted by myself confirming the positive influence of music on second language acquisition in people who have a musical background, as well as evidence on the lasting effects of the exposure to music.

Finally, a review of possible explanations for the impact of music on language related processes will be presented. So, a general overview of the new approaches to the explanation of the sources of influence will be provided.

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