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Music as a Tool for Foreign Language Learning in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education. Proposing innovative CLIL Music teaching approaches.



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The present paper aims at promoting pedagogical reflection by providing the theoretical foundations on the connections between foreign language learning and music, which shapes a CLIL Music program named MOVIC (Movement & Music in English). It also encourages the implementation of CLIL Music approaches in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The paper focuses on the benefits that music brings to EFL classrooms, as well as it contextualizes the current situation in the Spanish education system and the pedagogical possibilities that the use of music encompasses. Finally, it presents the EFL approach to MOVIC, together with a sample activity, and it provides a series of pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers and policymakers.

KEYWORDS:

English; Music; CLIL; innovation

Aquest article té com a objectiu promoure la reflexió educativa proporcionant els fonaments teòrics sobre les connexions entre l'aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres i la música, el qual configura els pilars d'un programa CLIL de Música en anglès anomenat MOVIC (Movement & Music in English). També pretén fomentar els enfocaments CLIL de música a les aules d'anglès com a llengua estrangera. L'article presenta els avantatges que la música aporta a l'aula d'anglès, a més de contextualitzar la situació actual del sistema educatiu espanyol i les possibilitats pedagògiques que comporta l'ús de la música. Per últim, presenta l'enfocament pedagògic de MOVIC, juntament amb un exemple d'activitat, i seguidament exposa un seguit d'implicacions pedagògiques per a educadors de llengües estrangeres i polítiques educatives.

PARAULES CLAU:

anglès; música; AICLE; innovació

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) in Spanish primary schools is considered one of the most relevant subjects in the curriculum due to the importance that this language has gained for career and personal development (Torras-Vila, 2016). However, numbers from the CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) indicate that 61.4% of Spanish adults claim to be unable to speak or write in English (CIS, 2014). Similarly, data from The European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC) reported poor results among those students who had limited opportunities for meaningful interactions through the target language (among them, Spanish students). The same study concluded that 63% of Spanish students could not understand oral English after finalizing compulsory secondary education (INEE, 2012). Thus, many factors should be adjusted and evaluated to improve students' proficiency in the so-called "lingua franca" (Caine, 2008).

At present, Content and Language Integrated Language (CLIL) has become a relevant teaching approach all over Europe (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019) and, very remarkably, in Spain. This approach became one of the most widespread strategies expected to help beef up students' low command of English (Somers & Evnitskaya, 2014). In the case of Catalonia, as Escobar Urmeneta and Nussbaum (2010) argue, there is a strong demand among Catalan society for foreign language learning (FLL). Policymakers and institutions strive to contextualize language within meaningful content-based learning opportunities that help students see language as a communication tool to provide them with the demanded skills to live in a multilingual Europe.

In this paper, I will try to theoretically test an innovative approach to the teaching of EFL through Music activities which I developed and which is directed at students in the Early Childhood and Primary education stage. This innovative approach is called MOVIC (*MOVement & MusIC through English*). Such a program was designed in the belief that there is a wide range of musical possibilities beyond the common use of songs in the EFL classroom (Viladot & Casals, 2018). Having worked as a primary teacher in Catalonia, having specialized in the teaching of Music and, later on, having researched FLL, the idea of bringing such dual knowledge together seemed creative and inspirational. Furthermore, by bringing together music and foreign language teaching, the integrative didactic approach I propose is in line with the *Recommendation of the Parliament and of the Council on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning* (Commission of the European Communities, 2006) and with Casals and Viladot's (2011) call for the development of good teaching resources that deepen into the music-English binomial. In this regard, the MOVIC program stands on the belief that language sectors use "only a small part of the whole range of possibilities offered by music" (Viladot & Casals, 2010, p. 4).

There is a vast amount of research dealing with the connections between Music and languages (Casals & Viladot, 2011; Ćirković Miladinović & Milić, 2012; Lee, 2009; Viladot

& Casals, 2018). According to Lee, "the shared aspects of music and language development are so numerous that the most effective instruction is that which combines the two" (Lee, 2009, p. 30). Using musical activities as the starting point for planning L2 objectives (e.g., contextualized phrases, structures, or specific vocabulary) might reinforce the quality of interactions which Escobar Urmeneta (2012) refers to when describing Content-Rich Language Learning (CRL) contexts. In this vein, some studies specifically focus on CLIL and Music, considering them two powerful approaches that, when combined, spawn powerful pedagogical benefits (Ćirković Miladinović & Milić, 2012; Willis, 2013).

Given this reality, the objective of the present article is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to provide a robust theoretical framework that supports the use of Music in the foreign language classroom and, on the other hand, calls for the need to develop and implement CLIL Music approaches that integrate foreign languages and Music. The benefits behind the use of Music for FLL purposes are listed through a thorough bibliographic revision of research done based on the typology of activities that constitute MOVIC as a program (section 2). Thereafter, a broad overview of the leading music activities and SLA approaches that shape the MOVIC program are presented and described (section 3). Finally, implications for educators are discussed (section 4).

2. Literature: Music as a tool for language learning

The theoretical framework presented in this section was developed on the basis of the activities that constitute MOVIC as a program. Considering the typology of activities used in this program (see section 3), this section presents a bibliographic revision with salient theoretical foundations that address the benefits of using music and research that reinforces the need for CLIL Music teaching practices.

Music seems to enhance learning processes, and it is connected with our brain's capacities (Lee, 2009). The neuroscientist Stefan Koelsch (2005) stated that:

"Human brain processes music and language with overlapping cognitive mechanisms, in overlapping cerebral structures [...] that music and speech are intimately connected in early life, that musical elements pave the way to linguistic capacities earlier than phonetic elements and that melodic aspects of adult speech to infants represent the infants' earliest associations between sound patterns and meaning, and between sound patterns and syntactic structure" (Koelsch, 2005, p.211).

From a neurological standpoint, there seem to be strong connections between language and music. There seem to be positive effects of music training on brain and cognitive development in children between 3 to 5 years old (Neville et al., 2008). Even when using music as a background resource

while students work on creative writing tasks appears to boost children's imaginative capacities, leading to richer texts with more fantasy and more comprehensive vocabulary (Brewer, 1995). Therefore, even the most uncomplicated activity in the EFL classroom can take advantage of music: expressive activities through movement or even through drawing or writing with background music can already boost students' language learning capacities.

Concerning language and music, there seem to be powerful connections between them as they are both used for communication, have a rhythmic nature, and are orally transmitted (Griffie, 1995). Music is considered one of the nine *Multiple Intelligences* listed by Gardner (1983), who pointed out that individuals have different aptitudes and that all of them should be cultivated in schools. In line with the proposals of the "European Music Portfolio project: A Creative Way into Languages (EMP-L)", linguistic work can be developed through music-related activities, which include not only singing but also a wider range of possibilities (Viladot & Casals, 2010). In fact, musical activities seem to be a powerful resource to promote foreign language acquisition. García and Juan (2015, p. 88-89) classify the benefits of music for language teaching purposes as *linguistic*, *affective* and *physical*. Firstly, according to these authors, linguistic benefits include vocabulary learning, listening and speaking skills, pronunciation, language functions and auditory discrimination, among others. Secondly, songs also encompass affective benefits that derive from fun activities that motivate and engage students, creating a lively atmosphere in the classroom. Finally, using songs and music in the classroom also seems to be beneficial to breathe and control one's voice, or to improve students' coordination through the combination of singing with movement.

Following, some of the theoretical foundations and empirical studies that support the use of music in FLL contexts are presented. First, section 2.1. is dedicated to the powerful relation between singing and listening to songs with lyrics (a spread EFL teaching practice) and FLL. Next, section 2.2.

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aims to introduce the benefits of using musical activities and resources other than songs in the EFL classroom. Section 2.3. puts forward further aspects that boost FLL when using music: affective factors as well as human and holistic aspects such as community and creativity.

2.1. Singing and listening to songs with lyrics

The use of songs in EFL classrooms, whether through singing or listening to songs with lyrics, is a widely popular resource among foreign language teachers. Casals and Viladot (2011) address a reality: foreign language teachers and Early Childhood education teachers often use musical resources in their classrooms. The authors imply a link between the use of music resources and the first stages of FLL. At the same time, they reassure that this kind of input does not lose effectiveness at more advanced educational stages and, thus, should be promoted with older students as well. In fact, the reasons supporting the use of songs for foreign language purposes are numerous. Songs can help students to work on vocabulary, grammar, speaking, pronunciation, listening, reading, and even writing (Ludke, 2009). In this sense, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) state that songs contribute to automatizing language development processes. They refer to "automaticity" as "a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 473), a cognitive reason that supports the use of songs in the classroom. Furthermore, songs provide opportunities for repetition without boredom (García & Juan, 2015). Language learning and singing can complement each other. When we sing, not only are we practicing the language, we are also acquiring music skills such as volume, pauses, stress, tone, pitch, and rhythm. In the same vein, singing and listening to songs in a foreign language boosts students' linguistic capacities through "enchanted melodies, varying rhythm and image-evoking lyrics, which appeal to multidimensional development of human intelligence" (Shen, 2009, p. 90).

Two aspects that come hand in hand with the use of songs in FLL contexts have been widely researched and, thus, are presented in the next sections, namely, the effect of songs on the acquisition of new sounds and intonation patterns, and memory reinforcement and the acquisition of vocabulary.

2.1.1. Listening and Speaking skills: new sounds and intonation patterns

Through the practice of listening to (or singing) songs, children acquire different rhythms and intonation patterns that foster their listening skills (Millington, 2011). Similarly, rhythm, intonation and melody help to acquire foreign language pronunciation, since music can be effective in improving *phonetic skills* in a variety of ways (Ludke, 2009). Research on the impact of songs in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation has been carried out with different age

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ranges. However, regardless of the students’ age, the issue we raise in this article remains the same: “there is probably not a better nor quicker way to teach phonetics than with songs” (Leith, 1979, p. 540).

Saffran, Loman and Robertson (2000), as cited in Lee (2009, p. 30), carried out a study that found that “infants possess learning and memory abilities for music parallel to those they possess for language.” Spicher and Sweeney (2007, p. 39) argued that “research into the connection between music and long-term memory provides an interesting and valuable basis for establishing a musical pedagogy that addresses pronunciation”. Concerned about the difficulties to achieve native-like pronunciation, an issue that has been questioned within the mainstream SLA field, (Cook, 2002; McKay, 2002), Spicher and Sweeney reported that folk music and its ability to stimulate long-term memory might be used effectively to learn target language (TL) patterns. By analyzing Hungarian folk songs, it was found that “the musical contours of the melodies reflected the prosodic patterns of the spoken language itself” (Kodály, in Spicher & Sweeney, 2007, p. 37). Following the same idea, Staum (1987), as cited in Spicher and Sweeney (2007, p. 40), showed that “musical stimulus creates a desired effect on a speaker’s intonation pattern” and stressed the importance of applying his results to L2 teaching in order to work on stress and duration. Therefore, no matter the students’ age, songs seem to be a powerful resource to help them distinguish new sounds and intonation patterns when learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, research on FLL seems to indicate that musical knowledge helps in the process of learning L2 pronunciation and intonation patterns. For example, Font-Rotchés and Cantero Serena (2009) considered melody or prosody a fundamental language element. Similarly, musical aptitude seems to contribute to the development of listening

and auditory discrimination skills as well as the mimetic reproduction of sounds and melodies (the capacity to imitate new sounds or melodies), vital skills for both learning fields (Peynircioglu et al., 2002). Gilleece (2006) indicates that there is a direct relationship between musical and linguistic aptitudes, which leads to the assumption that music skills may facilitate the acquisition of foreign language pronunciation. Several studies indicate that learners with musical aptitude seem to pronounce better in a foreign language (Milovanov et al., 2004; Milovanov et al., 2010; Peynircioglu et al., 2002; Spicher & Sweeney, 2007). In a study carried out by Peynircioglu et al. (2002), children in the high musical aptitude group did much better in phoneme deletion tasks than those in the low musical aptitude group. The researchers pointed out that success in manipulating linguistic sounds might be related to awareness of distinct musical sounds. Even though they referred to the participants’ first language, results might be extendable to second language learning. Milovanov et al. (2004, p. 718) showed that “the pupils with specialization in music were found to pronounce English better than pupils who did not specialize in music education”, while they resolved that “music and linguistic abilities may share neural resources”. In a different study, Milovanov et al. (2010) aimed at analyzing L2 production and discrimination skills and their connection to musical aptitude, which seemed to be strongly correlated. They argued that “the role of musical aptitude seemed to occupy an important position in explaining the individual differences in varying phonemic production skills” (p. 59).

Thus, it is essential to bear in mind this reality in order not to leave behind the music-related objectives in EFL classrooms, as such objectives might contribute to the development of students’ music skills. Such music skills might help them to acquire foreign language phonemes, intonation patterns and sounds. Accordingly, learners might better acquire the L2 pronunciation by listening to new vocabulary within intonation patterns and English prosody, while they can use them in contextualized sentences with significant meaning.

2.1.2. Memory and vocabulary acquisition

Singing and listening to songs also seem to contribute to *memorizing* information and acquiring *vocabulary* (Kuśnierek, 2016; Ludke, 2009). Music can captivate us through time and space. Music and rhythm are part of young children’s language learning processes, as “they make it much easier to imitate and remember language than words which are ‘just spoken’” (Moya et al., 2003, p.75).

Numerous studies researched the relationship between music and memory. For example, Kuśnierek’s (2016) study with primary school students speaks in favour of using songs in language teaching as music seemed to foster lexicon memorization. Research with adults may also provide valuable insights into the benefits of music for FLL purposes. Thus, experimental research with adults reported that participants showed better long-term memory when a series of

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words were sung rather than presented in the spoken version (Rainey & Larsen, 2002, p. 184). The authors attributed their results to the fact that “the memory for the lyrics and melody in a song are integrated to some extent”. Likewise, Wallace (1994) carried out several investigations which gave support to the assertion that melody enhances text recall, while McElhinney and Annett (1996), as cited in Rainey and Larsen (2002, p. 175) argued that “the integration of melody, rhythm, and text provided by the musical presentation may enhance recall by promoting better organization of the information.” Schön et al. (2008) found that word boundary learning was significantly enhanced when listening to a continuous stream of nonsense words which were sung, instead of heard in a monotone speech. Their main claim was that “learning a foreign language, especially in the first learning phase wherein one needs to segment new words may largely benefit from the motivational and structuring properties of music in song” (Schön et al., 2008, p. 982). Lee (2009, p. 30) also reported that while working on call and response songs with young learners, we would “help to improve memory, encourage the social skill of taking turns, reduce anxiety and increase confidence”.

Another strong case for using songs to enhance FLL was made by Medina (1990), whose results noted that songs could increase vocabulary acquisition. Medina powerfully addresses the importance of songs in the EFL classroom, asserting that they should be used more often to learn and teach words in the TL. New words will serve as comprehensible input that might contribute to the acquisition of other terms. In relation to this, Murphey (1992) highlights the significance of what happens when songs get stuck in one’s head: that human beings foster “earworms,” explaining what happens when we can recall a song we listened to many years ago. Finally, Murphey (1987) argues that younger children might retain more and better if songs and actions are combined, which is why songs can be accompanied by gestures and movements (Forster, 2006).

2.2. Music teaching practices that go beyond singing

There are plentiful musical resources other than songs that might also benefit FL teaching and learning. Listening to music, rhythmic vocalization, dancing and moving, reading music, improvising and composing, playing instruments, conducting music and exploring sounds are other types of musical activities that open up infinite possibilities and resources (Viladot & Casals, 2018). While songs are often used as a widespread resource in EFL classes, these are often the only musical resource employed (Casals & Viladot, 2011).

As presented in the introduction, CLIL Music approaches that reinforce musical aspects and skills commonly forgotten in the EFL classroom could benefit from broadening the scope of possibilities to blend these two fields and to improve EFL teaching practices through innovation. Several researchers have addressed this issue. Willis (2013), for instance, presents a series of CLIL Music activities for EFL teachers while providing arguments why these can also contribute to EFL teaching. These activities address musical aspects such as composing and performing class music (story-based music or musical pictures), making musical patterns or listening and experimenting with sounds, apart from learning and performing songs and rhymes.

The “European Music Portfolio: A Creative Way into Languages”, a Comenius multilateral project, which was part of the European Framework of the Lifelong Learning Program (Commission of the European Communities, 2006) and developed during the 2009-2012 period, was a powerful attempt to shed some light on the interrelationship between music and language. It worked towards the integration of these two fields in the classroom while advocating against the disciplinary compartmentalization of knowledge. It aimed to empower teachers to use music and language as two potent compelling learning tools that, when integrated,

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led to creative, communicative, and cultural activities that had strong holistic educational potential (Viladot & Casals, 2018). Following this call, Viladot and Casals (2010), Casals and Viladot (2011), Viladot and Cslovjcek (2014) offer a wide range of pedagogical proposals addressing CLIL Music within the context of the European Music Portfolio.

Similarly, Ćirković Miladinović & Milić (2012) address the role of emotions, motivation and students' mood as key factors to support CLIL Music approaches. They present an example of using a specific music composition in an EFL class: "The Carnival of the animals", a musical suite of fourteen movements by Camille Saint-Saens that becomes the music-content focus of an EFL class. Hence, a wide range of musical activities can enormously benefit FL learning contexts. Whether through rhythmic games, movement activities to acquire the ability to keep the beat, performing, playing instruments or dancing, foreign language learning and teaching can be widely explored within every of these exemplary activities.

2.3. Factors beyond the typology of music activities: further aspects that boost FLL

When using music as a tool for foreign language teaching and learning, some of the negative aspects that are usually present in the FL classroom (e.g., low levels of motivation, high levels of anxiety...) seem to be minimized if music comes into play. Sections 2.1. and 2.2. showed the broad scope of music teaching practices that can positively impact FLL. The following subsections aim to go beyond the linguistic factors that can be improved through activities like the ones presented so far (singing, listening, playing instruments, performing creations...) and outline research on how music contributes to further aspects that seem to be favorable for the EFL classroom.

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2.3.1. Affective factors

Being a widely researched field, it is thus paramount to address these issues when discussing FLL. While focusing on the musical aspects of a song or its meaning, students might find it easier to use language more naturally in the classroom, and anxiety levels, which is usually found in L2 classrooms, might eventually fade. The use of Music and teaching practices that aim to enhance students' musical skills through singing, dancing, performing or listening might boost their investment in EFL classroom activities. In fact, music seems to affect our emotions (Griffiee, 1995; Ćirković Miladinović & Milić, 2012). MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012, p. 103) highlight the role of language anxiety and emotions in the L2 classrooms, describing language anxiety as “the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue”. Using the TL to sing and to move around the classroom having a good time might encourage students to feel less anxious and more confident using the L2. As explained above (see section 2), García and Juan (2015) refer to affective and physical factors when discussing how music can contribute to a better classroom atmosphere.

Using the TL as a communicative tool to enhance musical knowledge and practices appears to be a helpful tool to reduce anxiety in the L2 classroom, to provide relaxation and, as a consequence, to improve language learning (Griffiee, 1995; Lo and Li, 1998; Shen, 2009). As Saber and Fahandejaadi (2016, p. 82) state, “music lowers affective barriers and assists in making students more relaxed, thereby more receptive to language learning”. Furthermore, music seems to have therapeutic functions as it promotes self-esteem, whether it is through self-satisfaction (Gaston, 1968) or group work (Abril & Gault, 2008).

According to Spicherand Sweeney (2007, p. 36), “language anxiety studies suggest that anxiety primarily inhibits listening and speaking in the TL, often for fear of sounding wrong.” In fact, Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) reported that “no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does” while they strongly advice teachers to do their best to make the learning context as anxiety-free as possible.

In the same vein, children and teenagers are easily engaged when music comes into play. The topic of music seems to draw the attention of youngsters and, in fact, numerous empirical studies have shown how the use of music increases students' motivation towards FL learning. Millington (2011, p. 136) addresses students' interest in music and songs in particular, as they “bring variety to the everyday classroom routine,” and it is this variety what “stimulates interest and attention”.

Thus, music education influences students' motivation (Hallam et al. 2015; Hinshaw et al., 2015). Regarding this idea, the construct of investment rather than motivation might better suit the teaching and learning approach this article stands for. Inspired by Bourdieu's (1991) work,

Norton developed the construct of investment (Norton, 1997), believing that it better explains and describes the complexity of reasons for wanting to master a target language. It is precisely because the identity approach explores SLA as a sociocultural practice that motivation is investigated as something related to social relations and individuals' interactions and life practices.

Finally, an empirical study by Baumgartner et al. (2006) showed the extent to which music can provoke emotions. In this sense, having fun in the English classroom through dancing, singing, performing, or listening to music pieces might help change the view that many L2 students have towards learning languages, which is generally seen as a mere subject and not as a motivating tool for communication.

2.3.2. The human side: personal bonds, community and creativity

Last but not least, this article pretends to make a strong claim towards the importance of music education among future generations of world citizens. Raising individuals with values such as empathy, self-esteem, self-knowledge, and respect towards oneself and others is not an easy task. However, it is, without a doubt, essential for our future society. The work on personal values and the development of interpersonal relations should be integrated into educational institutions' day-to-day life. In this sense "the connections music makes between thinking, learning and emotions" (Davies, 2000, as cited in Lee, 2009, p. 30) might positively contribute to such a task.

Moreover, the awareness of such connections should encourage all teachers to include music in their lesson plans, school projects, and community service projects as much as possible. Music seems to be a tool to comprehend better one's culture (Campbell et al., 2007). Also, by using songs and listening activities from various cultural backgrounds in the CLIL Music class, students can develop a sense of otherness, tolerance and open-mindedness towards foreign cultures (García and Juan, 2015; Gillespie et al., 2014).

In this sense, a good classroom atmosphere is also achieved when strong personal bonds are created and when a sense of community is constructed. Music is a tool that enhances personal connections as children or teenagers sing, play, dance or listen to music together. It creates community, and it is this sense of community that shapes societies. Music is a powerful tool not only to promote a lively atmosphere in the classroom but also to furnish a sense of rootedness and interconnectedness among children and, thus, among future citizens (Jorgensen, 1995). Following this idea, the need to educate children holistically by providing them with the necessary tools to manage emotions, make decisions, and reflect on personal practices is another issue that should not be left aside when discussing education.

As seen in section 2.3.1., music has been identified as a

key factor to improve classroom atmosphere. Music has always been considered a social and community practice that connects individuals. So, undoubtedly, making music, singing together or dancing together in the classroom are highly social activities that create a sense of community. In this sense, and following the identity approach to SLA (e.g., Norton, 1997), creating a classroom community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in which the target language is used to engage in music activities might make it easier for students to feel legitimate users of this language and might encourage them to normalize the use of the L2. In fact, empirical studies analyzing the role of music in certain communities support the idea that music enhances communities' sense of belonging (Boyd, 2018). Similarly, Marsh (2012) states that music education contributes to feeling part of a group and to a sense of community. Eerola and Eerola's (2014) and Marsh's (2012) studies, although done in two very different settings, argue that music education fosters coexistence and satisfaction within schools.

To conclude, the values that the 21st century schools should promote have been addressed from many different perspectives. When discussing what it means to be educated in today's world, Robinson & Aronica (2016) put creativity at the core of the discussion. This author argues that it is creativity and the critical thinking it encompasses what helps individuals to find new ways of doing things and reflecting on the results of personal decisions. Therefore, the use of music in schools might be a source of endless possibilities to encourage artistic creation and everything that goes along with it (Viladot & Casals, 2018).

3. MOVIC: Movement and Music in English. A CLIL music proposal

The theoretical framework presented in the previous section was developed on the basis of the activities that constitute MOVIC as a program: singing, the practice of rhythmic skills, the ability to keep the beat, listening, creative and artistic expression through music and performances, as well as the partnership between music, self-awareness, otherness and emotional intelligence, body expression and dancing.

MOVIC is an English teaching program that aims to help children in Early Childhood and Primary Education learn English through meaningful and contextualized musical activities. These activities are primarily directed at working on fundamental musical aspects such as the beat, rhythm, sound qualities, musical awareness and body expression. All music activities in this program are embedded within foreign language teaching practices that focus on meaning rather than form. They incorporate EFL teaching strategies such as interactional language scaffolding, the use of corrective feedback, language support, provision of abundant comprehensible input for students and encouragement of output production (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019).

Following, the EFL teaching and learning approaches that shape MOVIC and constitute its main pillars are presented. Notwithstanding, the following EFL teaching approaches are embedded within the musical content that is taught at all times.

Communicative Language Teaching

MOVIC focuses on communication and gives importance to how language is used practically, promoting meaningful and real interactions such as dialogues or roleplays that lead to increased motivation, natural learning opportunities and positive personal relationships (Littlewood, 1981). Similarly, all activities provide plenty of opportunities for repetition and comprehensible input as well as encourage output production.

Task-based language learning

MOVIC communicative activities follow the pedagogical structure developed by Willis (1996) which consists of a pre-task, task and post-task, independently of the music content that is being conveyed.

Total Physical Response

MOVIC activities are inspired by the Total Physical Response teaching method, “built around coordination of speech and action” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This approach to teaching intends to reduce anxiety through lively and psychomotor activities that can help learners comprehend, organize and store linguistic input (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar, 2018).

Content-Rich Language Learning

Content-Rich Language Learning (CRL) is also known as Language-Driven CLIL (LD-CLIL) or soft CLIL (Escobar Urmeneta, 2012). MOVIC activities consider the students’ interest, motivation and fun as its content core, turning the activities into meaningful and relevant communication contexts. To keep children engaged, it is not the linguistic

goals that shape MOVIC but the content goals. The selection of language items is, thus, determined by the musical content being conveyed.

Game-based learning

A wide range of music games are used in MOVIC. Games often provide a meaningful framework in which musical activities are developed and carried out. Games involve entertainment, motivation and knowledge practice. Hence, a balance is found between the subject matter and the game play (Plass et al., 2015).

Storytelling

Music listening activities used in MOVIC can be easily connected to themes or topics that can, in turn, be introduced or further explored through stories. Stories provide endless opportunities for input and output production through repetition and emphasis on new vocabulary and expressions (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar, 2018).

The use of music in FL classrooms appears to set up a stress-free, natural and meaningful environment that seems to facilitate the process of L2 acquisition (Willis, 2013). In this sense, the purpose of MOVIC follows Stephen Krashen’s distinction between learning and acquiring a language. That is, we can say that Krashen’s (1987) Input Hypothesis supports the use of music in the L2 classroom when music is used to help learners acquire the language instead of learning it.

3.1. Sample MOVIC activity (author: Berta Torras Vila)

Following, a sample activity illustrating the dual teaching focus proposed by MOVIC is outlined. This activity can be adapted to different age levels, but the examples and objectives presented here are directed at Early Childhood Education (3-5 years old) or Primary Education students (6-8 years old).

Sample MOVIC Activity: Rhythmic patterns through food

Focus on:

language

- Specific vocabulary: food; tastes, verbs such as “breathe in, breathe out, relax...”; verbs such as “love, like, hate”; adjectives such as “delicious, good, bad, awful, yummy”; colours, adverbs of quantity...
- Specific structures and knowledge of language: I love ___ so much; My favourite food is ___; I like/don’t like/hate ___; comparatives; etc. (Adaptable to different ages and levels).
- Pronunciation and articulation

music

- To practice rhythmic patterns
- To identify rhythmic figures
- To read rhythmic figures
- To keep and interiorize the beat

This activity aims at “playing” with rhythmic patterns as students acquire vocabulary and structures and work on L2 pronunciation. It is usually an introductory activity that helps students feel part of a group, get comfortable around their peers, and settle into a shared class mood.

The teacher starts by asking their students to sit in a circle. First, the teacher shares simple relaxation techniques to set the mood of the class. The teacher performs all actions while exaggerating a bit to facilitate the comprehension of specific structures (e.g. “sit down nice and straight”, “breath in”, “breathe out”). Once everyone is ready and calm, the teacher starts a discussion by asking students food-related questions (e.g. “What’s your favourite food?”). This is a good moment to introduce vocabulary, as well as adjectives such as “sweet”, “sour”, “delicious”, “yummy”. After that, the teacher asks students to rub their hands by showing them the meaning of this sentence as he/she does it. The aim is to start having fun with this simple action, by asking students to do it slowly, fast, faster, more slowly... (every now and then the teacher can add a fun touch by suddenly saying “stop!”, which students find hilarious). The teacher then asks students to listen carefully and repeat. The teacher

plays rhythmic patterns and the students repeat. This activity consists of practicing rhythmic patterns using food-related vocabulary (e.g., cake, cake, chocolate cake; see **Figure 1**) and engaging in conversations about food. Some proposed words whose number of syllables match the music figures are shown in **Figure 2**.

This activity can be done as a group but also individually. The teacher asks a student “Do you like ___?”. After saying “let me think...”, he/she plays a rhythmic pattern that contains the food the student likes. Something similar can be done with structures such as “What’s your favourite food?”, “Who likes ice-creams?”, “Raise your hand if you like fruit”. Moreover, the teacher can ask for volunteers who want to read music by showing visual flashcards containing some of the rhythmic patterns that they have been practicing. The same activity can be carried out with musical instruments.

Having reviewed some of the most crucial EFL approaches that shape MOVIC and the primary musical skills that are worked on in this program as well as having provided a sample MOVIC activity, relevant pedagogical implications for teachers, learners and policymakers are outlined in the next section.

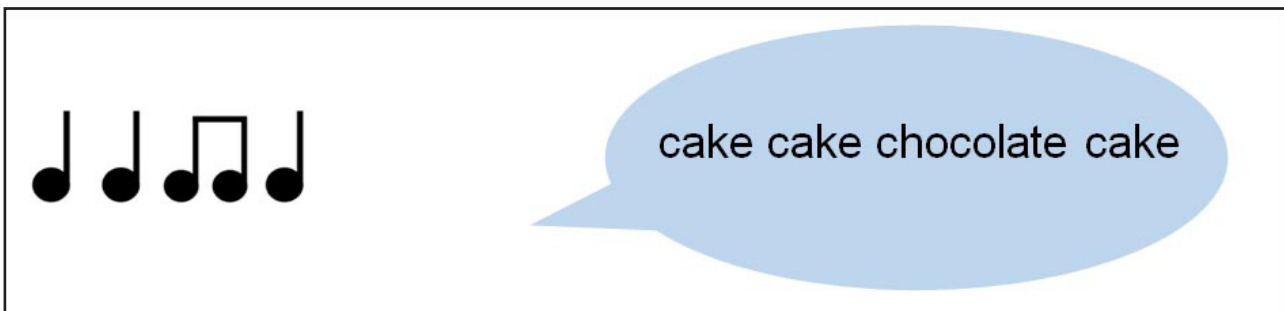


Figure 1. Rhythmic pattern





	<i>Cake</i>
	<i>Chocolate (muffin, cupcake...)</i>
	<i>Macaroni</i>
	<i>Banana (others: strawberry, spaghetti)</i>

Figure 2. Suggested words that match basic rhythmic figures

4. Implications for teachers and conclusion

To conclude, one might assume that there is a sufficient amount of research that proves the value of music as a tool for L2 teaching. The interdependence among these two curricular fields sets the rationale for taking a CLIL approach that has Music as its core. Hence, music content in CLIL settings not only can address music theory but it can also promote hands-on music teaching activities that focus on fundamental musical aspects such as the ability to keep the beat, rhythmic patterns, sound qualities, instrumentation or sensitivity. Therefore, teaching practices that consider the ideas presented in this article would be promoting a “truly integrated approach, with a dual focus of pedagogical attention” and providing learners “with all the assistance needed to comprehend, produce and negotiate academic messages in the TL adopted as the medium of instruction” (Escobar Urmeneta, 2011, pp. 203-204).

As presented in the introduction, CLIL has become a widespread approach all over Europe and, particularly, in Spain, where English language competence is still low. The urgent need for CLIL approaches and the ideas presented in this article leaves out a question we should ask ourselves. What teacher profile would be ideal for implementing CLIL Music approaches to give equal importance to (and have equal knowledge of) Music content and skills and English teaching strategies? In my opinion, teachers who implement this dual approach should either be English teachers with knowledge in music pedagogy (musical skills and their educational aspects should not be forgotten), or Music teachers with a good command of English who were trained in the fundamentals of foreign language teaching. Even though in Spain “the L2 competence required of CLIL teachers ranges from B2 to C1, depending on the legislation of each autonomous region” (Escobar Urmeneta, 2019, p. 14), having a good command of the language in CLIL settings is vital:

“one condition is indispensable if CLIL programs are to achieve success, namely that the teachers who carry it out in the classroom must have appropriate and sufficient training in not only subject content, but also in the L2 vehicle they will use to deliver that content” (Escobar-Urmeneta, 2019, p. 17).

Regarding this idea, Casals and Viladot (2011) argue for the need for collaborative work between teachers from both fields and the integration of content and language to establish real connections between these two school subjects and promote holistic learning. Viladot and Cslovjceksek (2014) go a step further and call for the need to develop creative teacher training programmes that are in line with the competence-based type of education that our current society strives for. According to Viladot and Casals (2010, p. 3), such connections should be considered when designing teaching approaches and practices, as “processes such as perceiving, listening, imitating and creating are basic elements of both language and music”. Last but not least, one of the main educational challenges nowadays is to move away from

discipline-based programmes and fragmented knowledge. In this sense, and following the ideas presented in this article, there is an urgent need for integrated approaches that promote interdisciplinary thinking and put music at the core of further learning opportunities (Viladot & Cslovjceksek, 2014).

The primary purpose of this paper was to state a case for developing EFL teaching practices that incorporate music as a language learning tool. It aimed at making a strong claim for the learning of music, as it presumably enhances other learning processes, including those related to foreign language learning. As demonstrated, several factors are intertwined and testify to the value of using Music to teach English. While working on musical aspects, learners seem to develop other skills that help them acquire the L2 more easily. Contextualized English learning through musical activities and skills, thus, seems to contribute positively to the acquisition of vocabulary, structures and pronunciation in the TL. Furthermore, the present article serves as a strong theoretical foundation to support diverse teaching practices and programs such as MOVIC, with the strong belief that foreign language classrooms should incorporate other music-related practices, apart from singing. As Casals and Viladot (2010, p. 5) argue: there is “a lack of good materials that go deeper into this partnership [of music and EFL], and a lack of training in relation to music resources”. In this sense, this article has been inspired by the objectives behind the European Music Portfolio, in that teachers are highly encouraged to “(re)discover the ability to motivate, develop and enhance language learning through music, in the broadest sense” and to “obtain the training and tools needed to expand the musical activities that are already carried out on a regular basis” (Viladot & Casals, 2010, p. 5).

Therefore, the present article aimed to remind the reader of the multiple connections between music and language that boost integrated teaching and learning approaches that give equal relevance to both Music learning and English learning. There is a wide amount of research presenting CLIL approaches, in which Music themes constitute the content to be taught. However, only a few consider hands-on music activities which focus on working on music skills (e.g., keeping the beat or tuning songs) or on sensitivity, creativity and performance. This article stands on the belief that meaningful activities like the ones presented and defended here are much needed in today’s society, as the compartmentalization of curriculum competences deprives future citizens of holistic learning opportunities. ■

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