

Dr Karen M. Ludke

Department of English and
History, Edge Hill University, UK
& AIRS Project, Psychology
Department, University of Prince
Edward Island, Canada

karen.ludke@edgehill.ac.uk



Edge Hill
University



Multilingual Families



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND

Musical activities for early language learning in multilingual contexts

Konferencja: Wielojęzyczne Rodziny - lingwistyczny skarb Europy
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Rationale



Arts activities can support language learning



Songs can support verbal memory



- Studies have shown memory benefits for songs and other musical presentations of verbal material in the native language (Tillmann & Dowling, 2007; Wallace, 1994; Yalch, 1991), including for word lists (Thaut *et al.*, 2008).
- Memory for verbal material lasts longer and can be relearned more quickly if it was originally learned through a song (Rainey & Larsen, 2002; Calvert & Tart, 1993).
- Most studies suggest that the benefits for music are greatest for verbatim verbal memory tasks, perhaps due to the rhythmic structures of music (Purnell-Webb & Speelman, 2008), which may improve the efficiency of neural firing patterns (Thaut *et al.*, 2008).

Children's comments



- 'It's been fun and different...if we were to learn new words when we sang, we got the song stuck in our heads and it helped us learn the words. They were really good songs and we got to make up some of our own songs as well.'
- '[My favourite part was] singing all together. It was a really fun song and even more fun to sing it.'
- 'I think I was a successful learner because I widened my vocabulary using the song in just a few days.'
- 'Singing because I felt confident to sing loud and I liked the feeling of confidence.'



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Do you speak music?
Parlez-vous musique?
Sprichst du Musik?

The EMP-L project:

- Uses songs and musical games to creatively support first and foreign language learning, including language awareness
- Supports learning outcomes in both music and language skills at the primary level through the holistic integration of these subject areas

Activity 1



1.

TIK	TAK	TIK	TAK	TIK	TAK	TIK	DUN
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

2.

TAKA	DUN	TAKA	DUN	TIK		DURU	TAK
------	-----	------	-----	-----	--	------	-----

3.

TIK	TAK	TIK	DUN	TIK	DURU	TIK	DUN
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	------	-----	-----

Activity 1: Tak Tak



This flexible rhythm activity can link to languages by using different rhymes, syllables, new words, or song verses. Children and teachers can also create their own rhythms.

1.	TIK	TAK	TIK	TAK	TIK	TAK	TIK	DUN
	LE	CHAT	LE	CHAT	LE	CHAT	LE	CHIEN
2.	TAKA	DUN	TAKA	DUN	TIK		DURU	TAK
	L'EL-E-	PHANT	L'EL-E-	PHANT	LE		PA-PILL-	ON
3.	TIK	TAK	TIK	DUN	TIK	DURU	TIK	DUN
	der	Bär	das	Huhn	das	Küken	die	Kuh

Activity 2



Find or create a musical instrument –
anything that can make at least 3
distinct sounds

Activity 2



Once you've found your instrument,
decide which sound you like best and
what it reminds you of

Activity 2: 'Found' Instruments



Children can learn new vocabulary by naming their found instrument (nouns) and describing the different sounds it can make (verbs and adjectives).

Step 1: Walk around the room and look for or create an instrument that can make at least 3 distinct sounds. (Young children can be prompted to find sounds by scraping, shaking, tapping, blowing, etc.)

Step 2: Gather in a circle with the instruments.

Step 3: Concentrate on your favourite sound and decide what you associate with it (in the native language). Take time to find those words in the target language and write them down on the board.

Step 4: Using the list of words in the target language, the teacher or a child can say the words in sequence while the group performs the sounds.

Activity 3



Let's listen to this song in a foreign language and guess what it's about

ANA BELLA

Muzica: DUMITRU LUPU
Versuri: FLORIN PRETORIAN

♩ = 170



1. O FA- TĂ MI-CU- ȚĂSTĂ LA O MĂ-SU- ȚĂ JOS
2. AS-TĂZI PĂ- PU- ȘI- CA ÎM- PLI- NEȘ- TE PA- TRU LUNI.



PEN- TRU PĂ- PU- ȘI- CĂ A GĂ- TIT CE- VA CU SOS.
IN- VI- TAȚI LA MA- SĂ A- RE MULȚI PRI- E- TENI BUNI.



AZI E GOS- PO- DI- NĂ A FĂ- CUT ȘI BA- CLA- VA.
CĂ- TE-O PRĂ- JI- TU- RĂ SAU CĂ- TE UN CO- VRI- GEL



GUS- TĂ ȘI PĂ- PU- ȘA CA- RE-N-CE- PE A CÂN- TA
VA PRI- MI A- CE- LA CA- RE CÂN- TĂ-UNCÂN- TE- CEL.



A- NA BE- LLA CI- KI CI- KI CHA A- NA- BE- LLA E PĂ- PU- ȘA MEA



A- NA BE- LLA CI- KI CI- KI CHA PĂ- PU- ȘA MEA

Activity 3: Ana Bella



This Romanian song can teach children a few simple words in a new language, expand their language and intercultural awareness.

Step 1: The teacher introduces the Romanian song and briefly describes the content (see next two slides).

Step 2: Children listen to the song while following along with the words in the new language on the screen or their handout.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qo36AV3min0

Step 3: After listening to the song a few times, children can join in singing the chorus with the teacher as the recording plays.

Step 4: The teacher can encourage children to be 'language detectives' and to find Romanian words that look and sound similar to the English translation (e.g., 'mea' = my).

Ana Bella (English version)



1. A little girl / sits at a table, / dolls at her feet /
Cooking something with sauce / Today's housewife /
made a baklava. / Taste it and the doll / She begins to
sing.

Chorus: Ana Bella ciki ciki cha / Ana Bella is my doll /
Ana Bella ciki ciki cha / My doll (repeat)

2. The dolls' party, / It lasts four months / Food is
served / They have many good friends / How many
cakes / Or one pretzel / Will he have, / Who sings a
song? (*back to chorus*)

Summary

- More research is needed to explore how and why songs and music can support language learning.
- Nevertheless, musical activities and songs can be a valuable pedagogical tool for parents and educators, providing cognitive, emotional and motivational benefits to young language learners.
- It has been shown that learning phrases in a new language through singing can be more efficient than through speaking or rhythmic speaking.
- Singing together in a group can create a sense of community, build teamwork and increase learners' confidence.





Thank you!

More Information



The AIRS project:

www.airspace.ca

Educational resources for using music and songs in foreign language teaching:

www.karenludke.co.uk/resources/materials.html

Contact me directly: Karen.Ludke@edgehill.ac.uk