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Music as a Bridge to Literacy and Multiliteracies Development for Second Language Learners

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This Master's research aims to explore the development of language literacy and multiliteracies among adult learners in second language learning and teaching settings where music is used as the primary pedagogical tool. This research takes English as the primary target language, as the emergence of globalization, technology, and the information age has made English not only the popular choice for learning a second language but also a diverse linguistic form. This research focuses on musical and music-related modalities in second language learning and teaching spaces. It analyzes the effects of synesthesia, transduction, and transformation produced by transmodal, cross-modality, and switching between modalities on language teaching and learning based on multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural perspectives.

This Master's research is conducted within the context of The Multiliteracies Project, undertaken by Dr. Holloway at the University of Windsor and Dr. Gouthro at Mount Saint Vincent University. The Multiliteracies Project is funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Insight grant. The Multiliteracies Project studies the advancement of language educators' teaching philosophy and learners' comprehensive skill development by emphasizing the theory of multiliteracies, multimodality and sociocultural perspectives as applied to language teaching and learning practice. This Master's research draws upon the collected data in The Multiliteracies Project and conforms to its methodological framework. It employs qualitative research consisting of comparative case studies of traditional language classrooms and informal learning spaces, using purposive sampling to select research sites and participants. This Master's research sought clearance through the University of Windsor's Review of Ethics Board for purposes of secondary data analysis of the data collected for the larger study.

The crucial elements in contemporary literacy education are social diversity and multimodality, as pointed out in the multiliteracies theory proposed by the New London Group (1996). Both the original multiliteracies pedagogy and a key concept of the newer version, "*Knowledge Processes*" (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 74), offer a model for second language educators to think about how to move the theory of multiliteracies into practice and provide the new basics for new teachers and new learners in the context of new literacy. In addition, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) indicated that music is a valid mode of meaning-making. Jackendoff and Lerdahl (2006) manifested that there are similar commonalities between music and language by exploring the composition and structure of music and language from the musicological and linguistic standpoints and that they are both valuable social semiotic resources (van Leeuwen, 1999; Way & Mckerrell, 2017). Meanwhile, using musical and music-related modalities in English-based second language teaching environments has attracted a significant amount of scholarly consideration (Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011).

The delimitations of this Master's research have been narrowed and defined after searching and analyzing the large body of previous and current literature. This

Master's study sets adult learners as the primary population parameter, focuses on the progress of learners' simultaneous literacy and multiliteracies competencies in language learning settings with multimodal musical and music-related modalities as a tool, and considers educators' choice of music pieces and how to design music modalities into language teaching as a way to bridge the gap that exists in the literature. Through three dimensions of research questions, including educators, learners, and music, through a multiliteracies' lens the Master's study refines and delves into what kinds of musical modalities act on second language teaching and learning; how educators respond to cultural, language, and identity issues presented by musical works; how learners' language acquisition and multiliteracies competencies are enhanced; and whether they are able to transfer the skills learned to everyday life.

Five adult educators were involved in the Master's research; two are music teachers at an informal music institution; one teaches English as an Additional Language in a community-based English language classroom; one is a French language teacher at a French-as-an-additional language learning institute; and the last comes from informal learning spaces where music is incorporated with live documentary events. All of the data in this Master's research was collected and analyzed based upon the constructivist grounded theory outlined by Charmaz (2006; 2014) because this methodology, with its systematic process and flexible principles, enables researchers to move forward and go back to the data while interacting with the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). Participants' interviews, field observations, document analysis, and the secondary data of original film footage were the main methods applied to collect data, and interview coding, axial coding, and triangulation were used to analyze the data.

This Master's research illustrated the findings in two themes. First, multiliteracies: music helps construct the new learning environment. Under this theme, music as a tool helps create an intimate learning environment and a healthy teacher-student relationship from a sociocultural perspective. Educators promote positive interactions with learners by producing and creating different musical forms and activities that motivate and inspire them in their language learning. Learners can receive support from educators and peers and more equal opportunities in a language learning environment with music and music-related modalities. From a multiliteracies perspective, the study found that educators can skillfully implement the requirements of multiliteracies theory for new teachers into actual teaching practices. At the same time, educators apply, for example, one dimension of the "*Knowledge Processes*" within multiliteracies pedagogy, "*Experiencing the New and the Known*" (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 74), based on incorporating musical modalities, which allows learners to acquire knowledge and skills in the target language by connecting the known musical competencies to the unknown second language learning. More importantly, educators are adept at applying the voice of technology to language learning environments where learners can think independently, self-correct, take more responsibility for

learning, and become active learners. These respond to the strategies advocated by the multiliteracies theory for developing new learners.

The second theme is multimodality: music helps promote the recognition of a target language and diversity. Within this theme, this research demonstrated that when educators guide learners to integrate music-related modalities into different spaces, the synesthesia of both modes allows learners to transfer their language knowledge between different spaces in more expansive ways, motivating them to keep language learning habits outside of the classroom. The study also found that the educators used a combination of musical and physical modalities, leading learners to master the linguistic elements of the target language by focusing on the common semiotic resources of language and music. Nursery songs with simple melodies and moderate rhythms are the primary choice of educators to teach learners to master knowledge through singing the target words with the melodies. When learners are in an environment where tactile modalities and music are combined, they can experience the diverse cultures that music carries. In addition, educators critically analyze and select appropriate music pieces to avoid cultural appropriation. In the meantime, educators encompass the cultural and social phenomena represented in music into the language learning environment, developing learners' critical thinking through music, and thus creating an inclusive language learning environment.

Overall, this Master's research confirms that music as a second language learning aid in a language learning environment and facilitates learners' language acquisition effectively. The hybrid forms integrated with music and different modalities created by educators allow learners to become aware of and learn about linguistic and cultural diversity through music (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Musical and music-related modalities in second language learning contexts introduce innovative and insightful approaches to second language teaching and learning and foster an enlightening and dynamic second language education.

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