

What can writing activity and musical practice tell us about each other?: A preliminary study on linguistic and musical confluences

Violeta Magalhães
Centro de Linguística da Universidade do Porto

Theoretical background or Context

The relationship between language and music has been widely studied, particularly regarding the beneficial contributions of musical practice to the development of various aspects related to learning to read and write (Gordon et al., 2015). Additionally studies have also sought to highlight similarities and overlaps between linguistic and musical processing in historical (Brown, 2000), psycholinguistic (Martins & Pinto, 1979; Slevc et al., 2009) and neurocognitive terms (Patel, 2010).

Aims

This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the above presented relationships. Thus, the aim of this communication is to demonstrate that writing activity and musical practice, at least in the early stages of both activities, can trigger similar cognitive processes.

Methodology

We will base our communication on the proposal of Girolami-Boulinier (1988 as cited in Pinto, 1998, 2017) and of Pinto (1998, 2017) to establish that writing activity primarily depends on the following conditions: the exploration of the physiological qualities of sound; the abstraction, symbolisation and classification conditions; the role attributed to the practice of reading and the motor aspect. Regarding musical practice, readings such as Patel (2010), Levitin et al. (2018) or Busse et al. (2020) will allow us to think that the same conditions may also apply to musical practice. In order to approach our goal, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of Musical Initiation (5 participants) and the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (6 participants). These interviews were then submitted to a content analysis, in order to identify the types of exercises, strategies, processes and difficulties involved in the course of both contexts.

Results/Findings

The main results confirm the aim of this work, revealing that musical practice in the context of Musical Initiation seems to promote similar skills to the ones needed for a successful entry into the writing activity. Our findings indicate an overlap between both contexts, being thus possible to identify several similarities in the gathered records in what concerns the conditions (see above) involved in writing and musical practice. These findings may also suggest that writing activity and musical practice can share a possible mutual and beneficial influence that may contribute to a better performance of the child in these two activities.

Conclusions/Final considerations

With this work, we intend to contribute to the explanation of the relations between language and music, emphasizing the relevant relationships that are established between writing activity and musical practice and that may reflect potential positive effects on the learning and development of both activities. Additionally, exploring such

connections will allow a better understanding of what underlies writing and musical practice in terms of linguistic, musical and cognitive processes. These considerations may help educators and researchers to enhance children's creativity and performativity in both activities, thus creating more enriching, positive and productive contexts, which will hopefully contribute to the development of linguistic and musical skills.

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