CultureCase

Singing can facilitate foreign language learning

This research was conducted by **Karen M. Ludke, Fernanda Ferreira and Katie Overy** at the **University of Edinburgh** and **the University of South Carolina, USA**

Summary

This research examines the phenomenon of language acquisition. The paper concludes that 'a 'listen-and-sing' learning method' can improve verbatim memory for spoken foreign language phrasing. This improvement was not associated with other factors such as the student's gender, age, mood or other competencies associated with memory or musical training.

The special impact of singing on language acquisition

In this study 60 adult participants were randomly divided into three groups: speaking, rhythmic speaking, and singing. They then listened to 20 ‘pair-associated phrases’ in English and an unfamiliar language (Hungarian) and were given an opportunity to practice the phrases, before completing a series of production, recall, recognition and vocabulary tests. The main finding was that 'singing was more effective as a learning condition than either speaking or rhythmic speaking'. The findings were in contrast to a previous emphasis on rhythm as 'the most supportive element of a musical presentation method for linguistic skills and memory in the native language'.

New possibilities for classroom practice and research

Whilst educators have championed the use of music to support language-learning for many years, this is the first study to provide empirical evidence for

its benefits. It opens up new possible lines of research, including the wider benefits of 'singing in a foreign language for classroom learning and for educational practice at a range of age and skill levels'.

This summary was written by **Richard Mason, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

singing **language** **learning**

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