

The contribution of prosody to intelligibility, comprehensibility and accentedness in foreign language acquisition: can music help?

Degrave, Pauline

The purpose of this paper is to review recent research illustrating the importance of prosody in foreign language acquisition, and to examine whether music might help in this learning process. The paper begins by defining prosody and by examining foreign language prosody acquisition, stating the difficulties for learners and the potential effect of non-target prosody on communication, notably on comprehensibility, intelligibility and accentedness. A subsequent section focuses on Dutch prosodic characteristics and the problems foreign language learners may encounter in acquiring them. Based on this general description of foreign language prosody acquisition, the paper then zooms in on the link between music and prosody, and on the potential effect of music training, musical abilities or the use of music in the foreign language classroom on foreign language prosody acquisition. The paper ends with a short discussion on avenues for future research.

Key words: prosody, music, songs, foreign language acquisition