

From the sounds of languages to the development of a plurilingual phonological awareness: An experimental study with young children

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Résumé

Dans les dernières années, face à la diversité linguistique et culturelle des sociétés actuelles, des chercheurs de différents pays ont expérimenté des activités d'éveil aux langues dans les premières années de scolarité, tout en défendant l'importance de ces mêmes activités sur les capacités métalinguistiques des enfants, ainsi que sur leurs attitudes envers différentes langues, cultures et sujets (Armand, Maraillet et Beck 2003, Candelier *et al.* 2004).

Nous présentons ici les résultats d'un atelier réalisé avec 138 enfants portugais (entre 3 et 8 ans) du préscolaire et de l'école primaire qui ont communiqué avec des chansons en différentes langues, dans des activités de découverte de nouveaux sons et de nouveaux paysages linguistiques.

Au-delà du développement des attitudes positives envers la diversité linguistique et culturelle et l'apprentissage des langues en général, les objectifs de l'atelier étaient surtout de développer la conscience phonologique, entendue comme partie de la compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle (Coste, Moore et Zarate 1997).

Nous discuterons ici les résultats de cette étude, dans le sens d'approfondir le rôle de la diversité linguistique dans le développement d'une 'conscience phonologique plurilingue', ainsi que dans le sens d'identifier des activités à mettre en place avec des enfants de cet âge.

Mots-clés

Conscience phonologique; diversité linguistique; apprentissage des langues; compétence plurilingue; enfants.

1. Introduction

Societies are nowadays increasingly multilingual and multicultural. Diverse people, speaking different languages, sharing distinct cultures, values, points of view, and lifestyles are now closer to each other, establishing all kinds of interactions amongst them.

These societal transformations are even clearer in an enlarged and boarder-free Europe, due to the steady mobility of the European citizens across the continent and the admission of people from all around the globe (EC 2008a).

As a result of this changing linguistic and cultural landscape, new questions are now being raised by European researchers, policy makers, and teachers alike, namely, “how to prepare European citizens for intercultural encounters and for an impending mobility? ».

According to the documents brought forward by the Council of Europe, the answer seems to lie in a lifelong education, starting from a very young age, and aiming at the development of a plurilingual and intercultural competence (Coste, Moore and Zarate 1997, Byram 1997, CE 2001).

In practice, European researchers and teachers of different countries have been actively pursuing this goal by designing, implementing and experimenting school materials (*vide* the European projects *Evlang*, *Eole* and *Ja-Ling*), with very positive results. In fact, based upon the language awareness movement of the 1980’s (Hawkins 1987), these awakening to languages projects have been extremely helpful in promoting children’s sense of recognition and valorisation of the Other, in fostering children’s ability to reflect upon languages, and in enhancing their cognitive, metalinguistic and language learning abilities.

Bearing in mind this context, it is our aim with this article to share possible ways of educating children and preparing them, in both linguistic and behavioural terms, for an active and democratic citizenship in the current multilingual societies.

In this sense, we will start this article by providing the theoretical background to our research, in what concerns linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe, language policy, early language learning and phonological awareness. We will, then, present our research, describing the plurilingual workshop *Rhythms of the world, sounds of languages*, a didactic approach on linguistic diversity and language awareness in the early years. Finally, we will reflect upon the workshop’s impact, as far as children’s attitudes, behavior and development of metalinguistic skills (namely a plurilingual phonological awareness) is concerned. This will allow us to identify concrete ways of integrating linguistic and cultural awareness activities in the preschool and primary school curricula.

2. A multilingual and multicultural society: challenges and opportunities

Over the past fifteen years, and especially since the millennium, societies have undergone major changes due to globalization, technological advances, freer and faster access to information and the mitigation of geographical borders (Giddens 2005, Wolton 2004).

In Europe, an important sign of these changes is the greater mobility of its citizens. In fact, increasingly more people interact with their counterparts from other countries, while growing numbers live, work and study outside their home country (EC 2008a).

This process is further reinforced by the enlargement of the European Union, which is now composed by 27 Member States and 500 million citizens, speaking 23 official EU languages and about 60 other regional and minority languages, and writing in 3 different alphabets.

In addition, there has also been an increment in immigration, resulting in a wide range of languages (circa 175 migrant languages) permeating our societies and reshaping the linguistic and cultural landscape of the 'old continent' (EC 2008a, Orban 2008).

This plurality of languages, which is an essential feature of Europe, can be the source of innumerable challenges. For instance, it can widen the communication gap between people of different cultures, exclude monolingual speakers from accessing better working and living conditions, thus increasing social divisions and creating social tensions.

In a dubious response to these challenges, some believe that communication between Europeans would benefit if there was a common language, a sort of *lingua franca* that would facilitate dialogue, discussion, argumentation, and understanding between all the community members (van Parijs 2007).

However, as we have seen in the precedent centuries, the imposition of a *lingua franca* destined for communication only, whether it was Greek, Latin, Arabic or French, has never reached the ideal of pre-Babel times, be it for political, military or economic reasons.

In reality, the main hindrance for the success of a common language is that languages are no pure communication means, but rather express an identity, a point of view, being associated with a particular history and culture. In this sense, there is the danger that by promoting a *lingua franca*, citizens are given the false impression of successful communication and are distracted from the importance of understanding other people in the complexity of their language and culture (Byram 2008:27).

From our point of view, the current linguistic landscape of Europe presents itself not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to encourage European citizens, from a very young age, to contact with and learn different languages, thus developing this sense of understanding towards Others that is essential for democratic citizenship, integration and social cohesion (CEU 2008). In fact, by learning the languages of our counterparts (whether they are foreign, regional or minority languages), we can draw the best out of diversity. As Orban (2008) suggests, “[b]y providing new insights they [languages] can dispel our prejudices; they can make us more tolerant and understanding. These are the attitudes upon which a strong and sustainable society is founded.”

Another benefit of learning a diversity of languages is the preservation of these unique repositories of human knowledge. European languages are precious assets that embody the European identity, the memories, feelings, sensitivities, behaviour and the world visions of a group of people. If any of these languages disappears, a lot more than simple words are lost; we become culturally impoverished and lose thousands of years of human experience and knowledge contained in that language (Skutnabb-Kangas 2002).

From what we have stated, it becomes clear that the adequate language education policies need to be thoroughly designed by those in power positions, in order to recognize and preserve the rich linguistic and cultural diversity present in our societies and across Europe and, at the same time, help us prepare for the challenges this new situation represents.

3. Embracing linguistic and cultural diversity: in theory and in practice

The European Commission and the Council of Europe, in particular, have been addressing the issue of multilingualism in a comprehensive manner.¹ In the recent years, several projects, documents and events have been carried out by these organizations with the purpose of promoting a more diversified learning of languages, favouring the European citizens' mobility, recognizing their competences, and celebrating the European Union's aspiration to be 'united in diversity'.

Amongst the events, we emphasize the European Year of Languages (2001), the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) and the annual European Day of Languages (celebrated on September, 26), whose role in making young people, in particular, aware of other universes, cultures and outlooks has been clearly praiseworthy.

In parallel with these events, the Council and the Commission of the European Communities have produced and divulged a multiplicity of documents, from which we underline the *Common European Framework of References for Languages* (2001), the *Language Portfolio* (2001), the *Action Plan: Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity* (2003), and the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (2007).

These documents set forth the linguistic dimension of becoming European – more than learning languages, and acquiring a communicative competence in at least two foreign languages in addition to his or her mother tongue (EC 2002), European citizens are urged to develop a plurilingual and intercultural competence from an early age, i.e., to learn different languages, to different degrees, in different ways, at different periods of their life, thus building up their linguistic repertoire (Coste *et al.* 1997).

Plurilingualism is thus understood not only as a capacity inherent to all human beings to learn and use more than one language, but further as an educative value which is the basis for linguistic tolerance and positive acceptance of diversity (Beacco and Byram 2007:17). Indeed, as Beacco (2004:40) points out, “[i]f one recognizes the diversity of languages in one’s own repertoire and the diversity of their functions and values, that awareness of the diversity one carries within one is such as to foster a positive perception of other people’s languages.”

In this sense, an education for plurilingualism is a valuable contribution to make students aware of their own plurality, allowing them to develop a richer personality and to be willing to accept and embrace other linguistic and cultural experiences.

¹ The newly appointed High Level Group on Multilingualism is a clear indicator of a heightened awareness, on the part of the European Commission, of the increasing importance of the multilingual challenge for the European project.

Taking these theoretical remarks into account, and understanding that it is within the school that the necessary innovations need to take place, the Council of Europe, through the efforts of the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, has promoted the implementation of didactic projects of awakening to languages (*éveil aux langues*, in French) in European schools, in order to create opportunities for students, particularly in the first years of schooling, to interact with different languages and cultures.

The European projects *Evlang*, *Eole* and *Ja-Ling* (see Candelier 1998, Candelier *et al.* 2004, Perregaux 1998) are clear examples of how to build up a plurilingual and intercultural competence in the early years. Through a comparative work with languages, particularly migrant languages present in the classroom, children were stimulated, via these projects, to discover differences and similarities, to learn new words and identify new sounds, to experience new cultures, taste new foods and understand new outlooks on the world.

This newly acquired broader view on linguistic and cultural diversity, allowed children to cultivate a sense of understanding and respect towards different languages, cultures and speakers, to embrace diversity within the classroom walls, and to be willing to learn languages in the future (Armand, Maraillet and Beck 2003, Perregaux 1998).

Moreover, the effects of these projects were also regarded at (meta)linguistic, (meta)communicative and (meta)cognitive levels. In fact, children adopted an attitude of curiosity towards languages, reflecting upon inter and intra linguistic phenomena, being able to observe and reason, and reaching interesting conclusions on what brings languages together and drives them apart (Armand *et al.* 2003, Armand 2005, Candelier 2005).

In this sense, these type of activities fostered children's language awareness (Hawkins 1987), and helped them acquire an "education of the ear", indispensable for "doing things with words", such as exploring contrasting structures, discriminating nuances of meaning or matching new sounds to written symbols (Hawkins 1981:53).

4. Developing a plurilingual phonological awareness in the early years

Some of the linguistic skills referred to above may be included under the designation of 'phonological awareness', i.e., the ability to recognize, distinguish and manipulate the basic sound structures of the languages (such as syllables and phonemes).

As it has been suggested by numerous researchers, this ability has a fundamental role in children's success when learning how to read. Indeed, it seems likely that an awareness of the phonological structure of speech is necessary to 'crack the code' of an alphabetic system (Liberman 1989).

Furthermore, longitudinal studies demonstrate that an inferior performance in preschool tests measuring phonological or metaphonological skills may presage future reading problems in the first grade (Mann and Liberman 1984, Carlisle *et al.* 2002, Alloway *et al.* 2005).

Recent studies also suggest that there is a significant relationship between phonological awareness and vocabulary learning in an alphabetic system (Aguiar and Brady 1991, Metsala 1999, de Jong, Sevek and van Veen 2000). According to these

studies, an increased sensitivity to phonemes would contribute to the creation of more stable short-term representations of new words in phonological memory, thus enhancing vocabulary retention in a foreign language (see also Gathercole and Baddeley 1990).

Based on these findings, it is mandatory that preschool and primary school teachers direct efforts, in order to include in their daily activities tasks relating to the discovery of the phonological principle, the improvement of phonological awareness and the development of a 'plurilingual phonological awareness'.

According to what we have previously mentioned, awakening to languages' activities can perform this role. Hence our belief that by introducing activities of contact with different languages, we can improve children's awareness and manipulation of different sounds in different languages, therefore increasing their linguistic repertoire, promoting their language learning abilities and developing their plurilingual competence.

In the next section, we will present a workshop aiming at shedding more light into this issue, as we attempt to develop children's plurilingual phonological awareness through the contact with European songs.

5. Rhythms of the world, sounds of languages: an experimental study with young children

5.1 Background and nature

Early foreign language learning has become an integral part of the primary school curriculum in numerous European education systems. Whilst this is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, this development is nevertheless restricted to the teaching of one foreign language and culture, usually a mainstream one (EC2008b).

In Portugal, teaching of the English language in primary schools has largely been the norm, since its implementation in 2005. Similarly, in the preschool curricula, there is a specific reference to the teaching of one foreign language, which has been clearly assumed by the majority of teachers to be the English language (ME 1997: 73).

Given that today's classrooms are becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural², formal education can no longer aim at meeting the needs of a non-existing homogeneous group of monolingual students. In this sense, more than teaching one foreign language in the early years, it is important to awake to diversity, thus contributing for the development by all children, irrespective of their origin, of attitudes of curiosity and valorisation of differences and of Others.

In this context, the L@LE (Open Laboratory for the Learning of Foreign Languages) at the University of Aveiro, has been promoting and carrying out, since its foundation in 1999, a series of workshops consisting in awakening to languages' activities and aiming at the development of communicative, plurilingual and intercultural competences by students from preschool up until higher education.

² In Portugal, it is estimated that 90.000 children from a migrant background attend compulsory education, and the highest turnout occurs in primary school with about 36.730 students coming from very different countries and speaking many different languages (www.acidi.gov.pt).

Integrated in this laboratory and taking into account our PhD project,³ we created a plurilingual workshop, whose main aims were twofold: to develop the children’s plurilingual phonological awareness, on the one hand, and to foster positive attitudes towards linguistic and cultural pluralism and towards language learning, on the other hand. In particular, we expected to increase the children’s ability to discriminate and perceive linguistic and non-linguistic sounds, to identify and discriminate different European languages, to discover similarities and differences between different language families, ultimately fostering their ability to learn other phonetic systems.

The nature of this workshop was exploratory, since it was not our intention to perform a very strict analysis of the results, but rather to have a perception of the children’s reactions to the activities and of their role in the development of a plurilingual phonological awareness. Additionally, it was impossible to make an evaluation of children’s phonological awareness prior and after the implementation of the workshop.

Nonetheless, in the presence of very interesting data, we concluded that it would be useful to share the activities carried out and the observations we made with a larger audience.

5.2 Participants

The workshop *Rhythms of the world, sounds of languages* was put into practice in May 2008, as part of the ‘Supervision Practice Week’⁴. During this period, a total of 138 children, belonging to two preschool classes and four primary school classes, attended this workshop at the university.

The number of children who participated in the study, their age and gender distribution is shown in the following table.

Preschool children			Primary school children		
<i>Number</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>
20	3 - 5	M 12; F 8	24	6 - 7	M 13; F 11
20	3 - 6	M 13; F 7	24	6 - 7	M 12; F 12
			25	7 - 8	M 14; F 11
			25	7 - 8	M 14; F 11

Table 1. Number, age and gender distribution of the participants.

In terms of the children’s linguistic background, there were two multilingual and multicultural classes, being composed by immigrant children or children from a migrant background. Several children came from Brazil, Spain and Venezuela; one

³ Mónica Lourenço (2008-2011). “Linguistic diversity and phonological awareness: contributions for the learning of foreign languages”. Supervisor: Professor Ana Isabel Andrade. PhD fellowship from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (BD 38201/2007).

⁴ During ‘Supervision Practice Week’, trainee teachers present their didactic projects in the areas of languages, sciences and music, to groups of preschool and primary school children from the city and outskirts of Aveiro, who head towards the University during a week in May.

child had recently arrived from Ecuador and another one came from India. Other children had parents who were born in Germany, France or Spain (Catalonia).

The majority of the children were aware of the existence of different world languages, mainly identifying European languages, such as English, French, Spanish, German and Italian. They were also familiar with several words in these languages, for instance, ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, ‘yes’, ‘bonjour’, ‘merci beaucoup’, ‘hola’, ‘buenos dias’, ‘chica’ and ‘ciao’.

5.3 Description of the workshop

In the words of Tavares (2002: 220), learning a language is similar to making a journey. We travel to the destiny we choose, we find some obstacles, we move forward, we get lost, we find unexpected places and unexpected people...

This metaphor paved the way for the creation of this workshop, since it was through a one-hour long plurilingual musical journey that children made contact with other languages, other cultures, other sounds and other worlds.

The journey began in the music classroom. The children, sitting over carpets and pillows, kept their eyes closed, while listening carefully to a sequence of musical instruments (piano, guitar, flute, xylophone, drums). After memorizing the sequence, the children replied it by putting pictures of the correct musical instruments on the wall.

The next stop was ‘a loja do Mestre André’ (Master Andrew’s store). The children practiced their auditory discrimination skills by identifying the musical instruments played in a popular children’s song from Portugal – *Foi na loja do Mestre André*. They confirmed or inferred their hypotheses by watching the song’s video.

A pause in the journey ensued, in the shape of a dialogue. The children were asked to identify the language of the song (Portuguese) and mention other languages they had contacted with, heard of, or wanted to learn. The dialogue allowed the children to make their individual and collective linguistic biographies, thus being aware of language diversity and reflecting upon the importance of language learning.

The journey restarted with a visit to some European zoos where the children met a red-head mermaid, two dancing penguins, a football-fanatic cow with one shoe, and a chocolate-loving mouse that played chess. These characters appeared in the videos of popular children’s songs in English, French, German and Spanish. With the help of colourful rackets (each representing a given language), the children tried to identify the languages of the songs, based on their phonetics and lexical features. Simultaneously, they discovered and pronounced unusual sounds, learned new words and compared them in different languages.

It was now time for an active stop. With the help of pictures representing some words that appeared in the music videos, the children played the games ‘sound intruders’ and ‘plurilingual intruders’. In the first game, they had to find the non-rhyming Portuguese word in a group of four (e.g. ‘telefone’, ‘saxofone’, ‘xilofone’, ‘piano’). In the second game, they had to identify the plurilingual odd-one out, i.e., the word that didn’t belong to the same language as the other words (e.g. ‘mermaid’, ‘fish’, ‘sea’, ‘pingouin’).

As the journey approached its end, it was time for an evaluation. The children were given a sheet of paper where they made a drawing about what they had learned and what they had liked the most.

The journey ended with the children happily waving and repeating goodbyes in the targeted languages.

In the following table we present a brief overview on the workshop's aims, activities and materials.

Rhythms of the world, sounds of languages

Age: 3 to 8 years old

Time: 60 minutes

Languages: English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish

Aims

- to foster children's linguistic and cultural awareness
 - to develop a plurilingual phonological awareness
 - to develop children's ability to learn other phonetic systems
 - to increase the children's ability to discriminate and perceive linguistic and non-linguistic sounds
 - to recognize the existence of similarities and differences between words of different languages
 - to foster a sense of respect and valorization of the Other (its language and culture)
 - to motivate children for foreign language learning
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Activities

- listening to / identifying non-linguistic sounds representing musical instruments
 - listening to popular children's songs in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish
 - identifying / discriminating foreign languages
 - playing the game 'Sound intruders' (rhyming words in Portuguese)
 - playing the game 'Plurilingual intruders'
 - making a drawing 'What did you learn today?'
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Materials

- Portable computer, sound columns and projector
 - Sounds of musical instruments: available online in <www.dsokids.com/2001/composerchart.htm>
 - Videos of the children's songs *Under the sea*, *Le Ragga des Pingouins*, *Die kleine Kuh von Malibu*, *Foi na loja do mestre André* and *Susanita tiene un ratón*, available online in <www.youtube.com>
 - Pictures of musical instruments
 - Colorful rackets
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- Picture cards (Games: Sound intruders and plurilingual intruders)
 - Worksheet ‘What have you learned today?’
 - Pencils, color pencils, sharpener, erasers, blu/white tack
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Table 2. Workshop’s aims, activities and materials.

5.4 Results

As previously mentioned, it was not our aim to make a thorough and exhaustive analysis of this workshop. In this sense, data collection was limited to participant observation, written registers made after each group session, children’s drawings on what they had learned in the workshop, and enquires filled in by the teachers, regarding a characterization of the groups, an evaluation of the workshop, and their views on phonological awareness and awakening to languages.

Regarding our goals and bearing in mind the dimensions the awakening to languages approach seeks to develop (Candelier 1999:237), we will perform our analysis based on:

- 1) metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities;
- 2) representations and attitudes towards languages, speakers and language learning.

In what concerns metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities, we verified that the children were capable of discriminating both non-linguistic sounds referring to musical instruments, and linguistic sounds related to words and phonemes in some major European languages. In the latter case, they were able to identify and distinguish, without hesitation, English, French, German and Spanish songs and to associate keywords to the right language. For instance, they knew that ‘Fussballschuh’ was a German word, while ‘mermaid’ was an English word, as demonstrated in the game ‘plurilingual intruders’.

In addition, according to the registers we made after each workshop, children were able to identify and pronounce typical sounds in other languages, non-existent in Standard European Portuguese, such as the phonemes [x] in the Spanish word ‘ajedrez’ (‘chess’), and the phoneme [tʃ] in the Spanish word ‘chocolate’. They also discovered ‘plurilingual homophones’, i.e., similar-sounding words in different languages, but having different meanings. This is the case of the words ‘fish’, in English, and ‘fixe’ (‘cool’), in Portuguese, or the humorous ‘Kuh’ (‘cow’), in German, and ‘cu’ (‘butt’), in Portuguese.⁵

Children’s awareness of the similarities and differences between languages was also visible in the way they recognized proximities between the Romance languages

⁵ It is worth mentioning that the older children also realized that the same sound can have different graphic representations in different languages. For instance, the sound /k/ can be written as a <c> in the Portuguese word ‘cão’ (‘dog’), or as a <k> in the German word ‘Kuh’ (‘cow’).

(e.g. the Portuguese and Spanish words for ‘mouse’ - ‘rato’ and ‘ratón’), as opposed to the Germanic languages (e.g. the Portuguese ‘sereia’ and the English ‘mermaid’).

Regarding the children’s representations and attitudes towards languages and language speakers, we noticed in our dialogues that the children were aware of language diversity, regarding this diversity as a positive asset. They also revealed linguistic culture and showed respect towards differences, valuing the knowledge of their migrant classmates. In fact, in one of the groups, children were surprised that their recently-arrived Ecuadorian classmate knew the Spanish song *Susanita tiene un ratón* by heart. This sense of awareness turned into respect and admiration, resulting in the inclusion of this child, who was from then on asked to teach her eager classmates some Spanish words.

This attitude is also a clear indicator of the children’s willingness to learn other languages, in order to better communicate with their classmates or to be able to sing along their favourite foreign-language songs. Another evidence for this statement comes from the children’s drawings. Indeed, many children, particularly the older ones, attempted to label the pictures they drew in the final workshop activity with the correct foreign word, as shown in *Figure 1*. Nonetheless, the strongest proof comes from their reactions, their enthusiasm, their smiles and the way they left the music classroom singing the songs and saying ‘tschus’, ‘adios’ or ‘bye bye’.



Figure 1. Drawing of a preschooler who attempted to label her pictures with the correct foreign words.

6. Concluding remarks

In this exploratory study, we have aimed at sharing the results of the plurilingual workshop *Rhythms of the world, sounds of languages* with a larger audience. We have identified the possibilities of this didactic approach, in what concerns children’s attitudes towards languages and the development of metalinguistic skills, namely a plurilingual phonological awareness.

From what we were able to observe and based on the data we collected, we verified that children, even at a young age, are able to identify, discriminate and

manipulate sounds in different languages. It is our belief that the development of these skills might be an advantage for future language learning.

Additionally, through the contact with linguistic and cultural diversity, children revealed an increased awareness of otherness and a sense of respect towards language diversity and towards language speakers, particularly in relation to their migrant classmates. We believe that these attitudes may form the basis for a positive integration of diversity in the current multilingual societies, and prepare children for future intercultural encounters.

Finally, the results of our workshop could also be felt at the level of children's motivation for foreign language learning. In fact, by resorting to interesting, diversified, active and children-centred activities, it is possible to turn foreign language learning into a pleasurable and effective experience.

It is worth mentioning that these are clearly exploratory results that have to be taken with a grain of salt. In fact, further research and a new methodology for data collection is needed, in order to evaluate children's phonological awareness prior to and after the implementation of the workshop, for instance.

Nonetheless, the benefits of an awakening to languages' approach in the early years, both in monolingual and multilingual classrooms, seem to be unequivocal. In this sense, an integration of linguistic and cultural diversity in the preschool and primary school curricula, and the articulation of awakening to languages' activities with other curricular areas, is more and more peremptory. The strategies to develop the type of competences we have stated above should be diversified, active and motivating, such as telling stories, listening to songs, playing educational games, with different languages and even different writing systems. Hence the urge to educate teachers for the development of a plurilingual and intercultural competence, making them aware of their role at the core of the teaching community and of the need to value and develop diversified linguistic-communicative repertoires.

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