



19 - 21 July 2024

London, UK

The Role of Art and Music in Enriching Adult Learning in Maltese as a Second Language

Dr. Jacqueline Żammit
University of Malta, Malta

Abstract

Currently, a considerable number of individuals from different backgrounds are being drawn to Malta due to its favourable environment for business, investment, and employment. This influx has led to a growing interest among expats in learning Maltese as a second language (ML2) to enrich their experience of working and residing in Malta. However, the intricacies of Maltese grammar, particularly challenging for second language (L2) learners unfamiliar with Arabic, can pose difficulties in the learning process. Furthermore, it's worth noting that the teaching of ML2 is an emerging field with limited existing research on effective pedagogical strategies. The realm of second language acquisition (SLA) can be notably demanding for adults, requiring well-founded interventions to facilitate learning. Among these interventions, approaches grounded in empirical evidence have incorporated artistic and musical elements to augment SLA. Both art and music have proven roles in facilitating L2 communication, aiding vocabulary retention, and improving comprehension skills. This study aims to delve into the utilization of music and art as catalysts for enhancing the progress of adult learners in mastering ML2. The research employs a qualitative methodology, employing a sample selected through convenience sampling, which encompassed 37 adult learners of ML2. These participants engaged in individual interviews. The data derived from these interviews were subjected to thorough analysis. The outcomes of the study underscore the substantial positive influence exerted by art and music on the academic advancement of adult ML2 learners. Notably, it emerged from the participants' accounts that the current ML2 curricula lack the integration of art and music. Therefore, this study advocates for the incorporation of art and music components within both traditional classroom settings and online ML2 courses. The intention is to bolster the academic accomplishments of adult learners in the realm of Maltese as a second language, bridging the current gap between theory and practice.

Keywords: academic accomplishment, mature learners, visual art, learning Maltese as a second language, musical involvement, acquiring a second language