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How Do Children Relate To Eurythmy When It Is Taught In Their Mother Tongue?

From a young age I fell in love with my language, isiXhosa, which is one of the 11 official languages of South Africa. My grandmother was a wonderful story-teller and, through her words, images and characters came to life within me.

Now as an adult and as a Eurythmist, I have come to realise how important it is to hear stories in your mother tongue and especially at a young age. The imagination is best nourished when one can relate to what one hears and is able to form pictures from the heart.

Through my training, which has been in English, I have carried the question of how it is for children to learn in a language that is not the one that is the closest to their feeling-life.

In my research and teaching practicals, I became aware of the immediate connection that the children had with me and also with the Eurythmy when they received it through their language of isiXhosa and I also observed how much stronger they were able to work in their limbs. I realised how important the vowels and consonants are in terms of where they are placed in words and how we are led, either through a 'flow' or through a 'form' experience at the beginning of a word and how the children would have a very different experience and picture of the word in their own language as opposed to English. For example, one would say 'ubhuti' (brother) if your brother was not with you and 'bhuti' if he was right by your side.

It has been heart-warming to experience how Eurythmy taught in a mother-tongue can bring pictures so alive within the child and I think my grandmother would have loved Eurythmy too!