

Embodied musical meaning-making and multimodal viewpoints in a trumpet master class



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Abstract

This paper analyzes how an instructor in a trumpet master class exploits multimodal viewpoints while addressing sound in verbal and/or visuospatial terms in order to conceptualize the interpretation of a piece of music. We show how musical meaning emerges as both an abstract and locally situated, embodied discursive activity, in which speech is connected with metaphorical hand gestures and the material world. Multimodality of musical meaning involves not only abstract gesture and speech about musical ideas, but also implies the concrete use of material objects and actions, such as the instrument, the (breathing) body of the trumpet player, as well as reference to the musical score. Viewpoint is a central issue in this conceptual process: both teacher and student constantly put themselves in the shoes of the performer, simultaneously abstracting over and embodying both their own and the other's body-in-music as they perform and both verbally and gesturally address past and future trumpet playing.

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1. Musical meaning as a multimodal activity in social interaction

The ethnomusicological vision of music has changed the externalist perspective on music-making by its emphasis on the modes of musical interaction rather than on music as a mere auditory object (Finnegan, 1989; Cross and Tolbert, 2009). Ethnomusicology values the role of bodily expression and responses in music communication. Musicians' gestures, body posture and facial expressions during ensemble rehearsals and concerts (King and Ginsborg, 2011; Poggi, 2002, 2011; Gritten and King, 2006:3) are considered cognitive and perceptual cues for the collective understanding of music (Schutz, 2008). Ethnomusicology's social shift "from paper to the embodied world" (Hospelhorn and Radinsky, 2016:4) radically changed the approach of the offline, exclusively philological musicological study of reception of music, in which musical performances are supposedly reduced to the faithful reproduction of a composer's musical score (Meyer, 2008:25; Hultberg, 2000; Bautista et al., 2009). Ethnomusicology paves the way for online musical performance, which may serve as an access point to our approach: the study of musical interactions as multimodal and embodied phenomena. Our linguistic goal is to better understand the interplay between bodily performance and speech. This bodily performance is to be understood in relation to both instrumental production (i.e. the use of the body in producing the sound or physical reference to the instrument-object) and the role of body movements and gesture in setting

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up a joint interpretation of the written score. As such, this paper wishes to fill two gaps. First, it gives a central position to spoken language in musical interactions (Merlino, 2014:421; Davidson and Good, 2002:189). Surprisingly, the analysis of musical performance (Ashley, 2014:1436–1437) has not yet systematically taken into account the role of language in creating agreement on musical performance and the role of the body is limited to joint musical action as a non-propositional form of bodily coordination (Phillips-Silver and Keller, 2012; Glowinski et al., 2013). Second, it brings in the relation between speech and material artefacts such as the musical score. Multimodal interaction analysis of music, surprisingly, has not taken into account reference to printed musical scores in music teaching, as if the fixed script of the score has nothing to do with the more spontaneous way common ground between speech participants is built in interaction (Clark, 1996:202). As a consequence, the rather fragmented process of preparing concerts and the necessary talk leading to such performance in rehearsing or teaching, with its typical sequentiality of playing excerpts, interruptions, explanations, discussions and repetitions occurring between teachers (or conductors) and students (or musicians) over a score and an instrument, are largely left out of the picture in both linguistic and musical interaction analyses.

Our approach to language in musical interaction is inspired by two research traditions: second-generation cognitive linguistics (CL), and the micro-analytic approach to embodied multimodal meaning in conversation analysis (CA), at first sight incompatible fields of inquiry (Langlotz, 2015:8–10). Both approaches are complementary in their shared focus on the fully contextualized, embodied and socio-cultural embeddedness of usage events (Halverson, 2013:37). Still, their empirical evidence concentrates on different aspects of meaning-making. CL's corpus-based focus has only recently shifted from systematizing over monomodal, static and dematerialized constructional representations of meaning to authentic ongoing meaning dynamics (Langacker, 2001; Brône et al., forthcoming; Feyaerts et al., 2017b), whereas CA has only recently started to consider conceptual meaning as relevant to interaction. Our dynamic cognitive perspective benefits from CA's fine-grained descriptions of naturally occurring data and its focus on interactional meaning-making in a material world (Deppermann, 2012:748; De Stefani and Sambre, 2016). This paper combines both approaches, identifying conceptualization as the outcome of a multimodal linguistic process, "in which the cerebral, bodily, social and historical attributes of a performer all converge, and if we choose to regard this convergence as an expression of the performer's mind, then we must remember that the mind is neither driving the body nor confined within the head" (Clarke, 2002:69).

2. Objectives of the research: intersubjective convergence over multimodal viewpoints in music

This paper offers a detailed description of musical meaning in interaction as a co-expressive (McNeill, 2005:22–23), dynamic and multimodal process. Individual participants may conceive of one perceptual experience from different angles and represent their viewpoint grammatically (Langacker, 1991:501–502). Such conceptualization does not exclude secondary perspectivation (Verhagen, 2005, 2008a:139); constructions may provide indirect access to and represent other perspectives (Verhagen, 2008b:310). As a result, discourse potentially implies a network of mixed or embedded viewpoints on objects or events (Dancygier and Vandelanotte, 2016).

A central cognitive issue then is how the complexity of viewing arrangements may constantly "allocate, maintain or shift" (Verhagen, 2016:3) viewpoints over different speakers, as discourse unfolds and conceptual information is updated over time (Langacker, 2008:30 and 70; Langacker, 2001). Joint musical meaning implies reaching conceptual agreement and bringing together potentially different viewpoints on a complex scene. Despite CL's mainly visual take on perception, Langacker (1987:122–123) provides a musical example of a conceptual viewpoint: while listening to a trumpet solo with piano accompaniment, different conceptualizers may focus on different parts in the music, which ultimately leads to different foregrounding or backgrounding of the same experience. Conceptualization and perspectivation occur across several expressive channels or semiotic modalities (Langacker, 2009:427; Schoonjans et al., 2016; Sweetser, 2012:11–12; Langacker, 2009:6): "[...] they can all figure in linguistic units abstracted from such events. Although each has a measure of autonomy, the various ways of coordinating and connecting them are an important dimension of language structure." (Langacker, 2008:462). In line with Clark's (1996) *joint action hypothesis*, according to which any language use qualifies as an interactive process, Feyaerts et al. (2017a) present a corpus-based analysis of so called comical hypotheticals (Winchitz and Kozin, 2008) in terms of an intersubjectively construed viewpoint phenomenon. In this type of interactional humor, which Clark (1996:368) categorizes as 'staged communicative acts', conversation partners assume a mutual agreement to the idea of overtly fantasizing about imaginary and funny experiences ("just imagine Mozart coming through that door, shaking his head, and then asking you to play that phrase again..."). In utterances like these, a full conceptualization of the usage event necessarily includes an intersubjective perspectivation across different 'layers of meaning' (Clark, 1996), where the primary or basic layer corresponds to the concrete communicative situation between speaker and hearer (the 'ground' as Langacker calls it). Yet, in many staged communicative acts like comical hypotheticals, but also in sarcasm, irony, lying, teasing and many others, interlocutors do not necessarily act and communicate in line with the expectations and norms of that specific situation. Accordingly, in order to successfully realize a common humorous interpretation, they implicitly agree – based on their mutually

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