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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE BODY MODALITY OF MUSIC STUDENTS DURING THE LISTENING TO A MELODIC FRAGMENT AND ITS SUBSEQUENT SUNG INTERPRETATION

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Background

For embodied music cognition, the human body plays a determining role in musical production, perception and understanding (Leman, 2008). When listening to music, people react with accompanying movements such as clapping, head swaying or imitating the instrumental performance. The latter, known as motor-mimetic sketching, is part of what is known as playing 'air instruments' (Godøy, Haga and Jensenius, 2006), an instrumental mimesis where the corporal actions of the instrumental performance are recreated without having physical contact with an instrument. In this manifest behavior, one can observe essential characteristics of the covert mental images associated with the musical experience. It would be expected then that such characteristics are reflected in a real sung rendition of the same piece

Aims

To analyze the correspondence between characteristics of the instrumental mimesis of music students, while listening to a melodic fragment, and those of its later sung reproduction.

Method

12 music students participated, performing the instrumental mimesis corresponding to their main instrument, during the audition of a fragment of Danzón No.2 (Arturo Márquez) and then performing a sung version of their melody. The mimesis was videorecorded, and microanalyzed with ELAN, applying the functional gestural typology (Cadoz, 1988) and LMA system. The audio recorded sung versions were transcribed aurally and analyzed with Sonic Visualizer, according to degree of adjustment with the model (pitches and rhythms), dynamic, articulation and temporality (expressive parameters).

Results

Mimesis analysis shows three mimesis types, according to the quantity and quality of movements: T1) precise movements focused on performance; T2) moderately precise movements, mainly linked to the attribution of meaning; and T3) scanty and imprecise movements. Two action-oriented modes were found: M1) as a process of extension of the mind and M2) as aerial performance in real time. When the mimesis corresponds to T1, the sung versions show a good recovery of the characteristics of the musical fragment, with low variability of the expressive parameters. When the mimesis corresponds to T2, the sung versions show a lower recovery of the model and a greater expressive variability.

Conclusions

The different types and modalities of the instrumental mimesis and their progress throughout the task, allowed to visualize which characteristics of the music the participants resonated with, and this was reflected in the sung versions. This practice could be considered as constituting a valuable resource in the formation of the musician because, on the one hand, it reveals aspects of the listener's experience, and on the other, it facilitates the conscious awareness of the meanings implied in his or her corporality, thus providing the student with more levels of analysis.

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