

THE HAND, THE EYE, AND THE BOW: EMBODIED MULTIMODAL DEPICTING IN CELLO MASTER CLASSES

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Depictions, as recently identified and defined by Clark, are physical scenes people create and display with a single set of actions at a single place and time, for others to use in imagining the scenes depicted (Clark, 2016: 324–325). Situated in staging theory (Clark, 2016), the framework of depicting promises the potential of unifying numerous linguistic phenomena thus far approached individually, such as quotation, demonstration, iconic gesture, and constructed action (Cormier, Smith, & Sevcikova, 2013; Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 1992; Streeck, 2009), all of which involve depicting as a common denominator.

To better understand how depicting works in real-life interaction, we examined video recordings in the context of musical instruction, an arena particularly rich in information communicated multimodally. This is attributable to the nature of the interaction, namely that the instructor often needs to communicate nonverbal information on musical interpretation or techniques to the student. Specifically, we zoomed in on two 70 minute-long cello master classes (Masterclass Media Foundation, 2007, 2008), in both of which the cellist Steven Isserlis instructs a student on the interpretation of a musical piece. Selected segments were coded for speech (including humming and vocal mimicry; cf. Perlman & Cain, 2014; Hsu, Anible, & Occhino-Kehoe, 2016), gesture (manual, facial, and bodily; following the MUMIN coding scheme [Allwood et al., 2007]), eye gaze (cf. Rossano, 2012), and importantly, interaction with artifacts (e.g. musical instrument, score, and music stand). Systematic patterns were found where the instructor, when depicting, uses the cello bow as an extension of his arm. That is, the instructor would sometimes stage a depiction with the cello bow still held in his right hand, incorporating the bow in the depiction, as if it were part of his limb. Such phenomenon is especially common in depictions where the instructor attempts to illustrate the metaphorical contours of musical phrases, echoing the recent finding that musical instruments can be used as material anchors in musical instruction (Sambre & Feyaerts, in press), as well as the speaker's propensity to construe physical tools (e.g. car and bicycle) as extensions of their body (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Equally pervasive are depictions where the instructor's eye gaze and manual gesture converge. When depicting a musical concept with a manual gesture, for instance, the instructor would often follow his own gesture with gaze. In numerous cases, these two phenomena co-occur: The instructor's gaze would follow his own bow-incorporated depiction.

Bringing in the additional dimension of artifact incorporation to multimodal depicting, the results reveal how different modalities can be creatively coordinated by the language user to jointly stage depictions to facilitate the addressee's comprehension. The use of the cello bow as an extension of the arm also suggests

the highly embodied nature of musical instruction. As a preliminary qualitative case study, the present project will benefit from further quantitative and experimental investigations—on, among others, the instructor’s gaze-gesture convergence and instructor-student interaction—as well as comparisons to other types of instruction settings.

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