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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 46(0)

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Publication Date

2024

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Peer reviewed

Viewpoint as metacognitive strategy in musical improvisation and multimodal meta-discourse

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Abstract

We explore how viewpoint phenomena interact with metacognition during dynamic, intertwined processes of thinking, speaking, gesturing, and improvising music. Taking a perspective on experienced or solely imagined situations involves physical and/or conceptual positioning within or outside a spatial, narrative or mental context, whereby speakers typically employ various bodily articulators to signal simultaneous or shifting viewpoints. Tapping into how viewpoint frames thought processes, we propose that shifting viewpoints are a metacognitive strategy to explore contextual possibilities through semiosis, embodied in gestures and other body movements. Changing viewpoints on an unfolding situation, including one's own mental activities, allows for both re-experiencing scenarios and exploring new ideas and perspectives. This theoretical groundwork prepares our empirical research into how metacognition and viewpoint jointly drive musical improvisation. Applying cognitive semantics and Peirce's semiotics, we present preliminary analyses of musicians' improvisation and their multimodal meta-discourses (including motion-capture data), thus exploring cognitive-semiotic processes in musical creativity.