

The perception of the similarities and differences of the music phrase by 2nd grade students

Perception is one of the most significant psychological processes appearing in early childhood. One of the first perceptions of the child are sound perceptions – non-music and music. The consequent reactions point to a discernment of the difference of several features of sound (above all, dynamics and timbre). Sensory music abilities appear among the first, i.e. the ability to perceive and differentiate the basic characteristics of sound (pitch, duration, dynamics, timbre). Children feel these characteristics unconsciously, instinctively, from a very early age. Further music activity aids the development of music abilities and the quality of music perception.

This development is particularly intensive in the period between the 7th and 10th year of age, when the child experiences music through organized music education at public schools. This period notes a faster development of the rhythmic and sound-pitch perception skills, as well as the psychological processes of attention, observation and music memory, which dialectically correlate to the development of music abilities.

Therefore, we decided to carry out a detailed research in some classes of 2nd graders in the elementary schools in Gostivar:

Elementary School “Mosha Pijade” on 22.05.2004 (Albanian class – 33 students)

E.S “Bratstvo i Edinstvo” on 25.05.2004 (Macedonian class – 21 students)

E.S “Goce Delchev” on 26.05.2004 (Macedonian class – 24 students)

E.S “Goce Delchev “ on 27.05.2004 (Albanian class – 26 students)

E.S “Petre Jovanovski” on 28.05.2004 (Turkish class – 17 students)

Several elements were included in the research: perception and comparison of models, recognition of music characteristics, and comprehension of more complex structures (form, harmony).

We shall present one segment of our research: the comprehension of changes in a music phrase that is to be perceived, memorized and compared to another one (same or different).

The changes involved the following parameters:

1. 1. Specific means of music organization (logics) (Мазел, Лео. 1983. О природе и средствах музыки. Москва: Музыка p. 15-16)

- *mode*
- *rhythm*
- *meter*

2. Less specific means (Mazel, ibid. 21-22):

a) timbre characteristics of the music tone:

- *register*
- *timbre*

b) characteristics of the music tones which relate it to non-music sounds or processes:

- *tempo*
- *articulation*
- *dynamics*

Apart from these parameters, the following were included:

- perceiving *change of pitch*
- perceiving a *precisely repeated model*

The exercise for registering changes of pitch was included as a separate element since its interval leaps were not set in a particular model. Register and timbre characteristics resulting from melodic intervals were prominent in this exercise.

Hypothesis: Generally, this population comprehends the changes in the less specific music means (tempo, timbre, articulation, loudness) with greater ease. The change in *pitch* was also comprehended because of the intentional, illogical and thoroughly changed way of leading the melody, together with its unstable ending (as opposed to the model).

We also assumed that the comprehension of the *precisely repeated model* would be easier because of its logics and simplicity, where the second bar is a mere repetition of the first.

Techniques of research:

Perceiving the changes in the music phrase was tested through playing the two samples which should have been differentiated.

Description of research:

The students heard 10 samples of the basic model (phrase) and its various repetitions (with the exception of the second example where the repetition was the same).

The model was simple and logical: a four-bar pattern in c-major, in a 2/4 beat, with a movement in eighth notes, quarter notes and usually a half-note at the end.

The variations based on the change of the parameters were based on the same model construction and retained the simplicity and logics (example no.1). The melody remained the same (excluding the change of pitch), and in two models the rhythm and meter were altered. In order to perceive the remaining so-called less specific music means a change occurred in the tempo, dynamics, articulation or timbre in the same rhythmic and melodic pattern.

The answers were to be recorded on a piece of paper where they were given in a pictorial, multi-colored form (example no.2). The answers were marked after each played model and its repetition (correct or changed).

Manner of work:

The paper was given to each student and the meaning of the forms and manner of marking the answers was explained.

Before the playing of the model, the difference between “same” and “different” was explained and shown through several examples (identical, change of pitch, change of tempo and change of dynamics). We demanded an oral answer from the students to verify their understanding.

At the end, we explained: “If you feel any slight changes, the melody is different”.

The models were played only once. After the played model and its variation, the students circled the chosen answer.

The models were given in the following order.

- change of pitch
- precisely repeated model
- change of tempo
- change of mode
- change of dynamics
- change of rhythm
- change of register
- change of timbre

- change of meter
- change of articulation

Results (according to the number of correct answers in each parameter)

E.S “Mosha Pijade” (33 students attended)

precisely repeated model	change of tempo	change of timbre	change of pitch	change of register	change of dynamics	change of articulation	change of meter	change of rhythm	change of mode
33	33	33	31	29	28	25	16	3	0

E.S “Bradstvo Edinstvo” (21 students attended)

change of articulation	change of pitch	change of tempo	change of register	precisely repeated model	change of dynamics	change of timbre	change of rhythm	change of meter	change of mode
19	18	16	16	14	14	14	10	9	7

E.S “Goce Delchev” (24 students attended)

Change of tempo	change of register	change of pitch	precisely repeated model	change of timbre	change of dynamics	change of rhythm	change of mode	change of meter	change of articulation
22	22	20	20	20	17	15	12	11	11

E.S “Goce Delchev” (27 students attended)

precisely repeated model	change of tempo	change of register	change of pitch	change of dynamics	change of timbre	change of meter	change of mode	change of articulation	change of rhythm
27	26	25	23	19	18	16	13	8	6

E.S „Petre Jovanovski” (17 students attended)

precisely repeated model	change of dynamics	change of pitch	change of mode	change of rhythm	change of register	change of timbre	change of tempo	change of articulation	change of meter

16	16	15	15	15	14	14	13	9	7
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Complete results (according to the number of correct answers in all parameters)

Total of students: 122

precisely repeated model	change of tempo	change of pitch	change of register	change of timbre	change of dynamics	change of articulation	change of meter	change of rhythm	change of mode
110	110	107	106	99	94	72	59	49	47

The total results of 122 students present the following:

Specific music means (from the lowest to the highest number of correct answers):

mode(47), rhythm (49), meter (59).

Less specific music means (from the lowest to the highest number of correct answers): *articulation (72), dynamics (94), timbre (99), register (106), tempo(110).*

The change in *pitch* saw the largest amount of correct answers – 107, as well as the perception of the *precisely repeated model* – 110.

The results prove our hypothesis that at this age the changes in the less specific music means are more detectable.

Analyzing the results individually, we note exceptions from our assumptions:

In E.S “Petre Jovanovski (17 students were present) 15 correct answers were noted in the perception of models with the change of the *mode*, whereas the lower number – 9 – was seen in the perception of the change of *articulation* (one of the less specific means).

In E.S “Goce Delchev” the change of *articulation* was also difficult to detect for the two classes (11 out of 24 and 8 out of 27 correct answers).

E.S. “Bratstvo i Edinstvo” noted the largest amount of correct answers (19 out of 21) for the same task (*articulation*), whereas a the number of correct answers declined (14 out of 21) in the *precisely repeated model* task.

Nevertheless, these results supported our hypothesis.

Apart from examining the level of music perception in children (through the perception of specific and less specific music means of expression) the results from our research gave us more precise instructions for our further work.

