"You MAY take the note home an'… well practise just that" – Children's interaction in contextualizing music teaching

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ABSTRACT

The article takes 'music as symbol' as its analytical point of departure, described by Jorgensen (2003). In doing so, we stress the role of symbolic functioning in music, focusing at how children understand and make sense of music in talk and practice. The aim of this text is to theoretically explore the nature of dialogical music education. In order to do so, we reuse empirical data from a previous study. These data contain four children's instructional interaction in a teaching activity, that is, the task to teach each other singing songs. Further, we examine our data through the lenses of two theoretical concepts, based on communication theory: double dialogicality and communicative formality. Our interactional data point at the contextual nature of musical sense making. The children's communication was not only merely interpersonal in nature. Rather, it also clearly referred to an embedded cultural context that existed beyond the local interactional context. This article illustrates how such kind of music-educational sense making is socially constructed in action.
Keywords: children, singing, context, teaching, interaction, music as symbol, double dialogicality

Introduction

In this article, our concern is chiefly theoretical but we will demonstrate with empirical examples from a previous study (see Kullenberg, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, Kullenberg & Pramling, 2015), in order to contribute with a discussion about epistemological premises in children's musical peer learning. More precisely, the aim of this text is to theoretically explore and discuss how some children in music-pedagogical tasks co-construct joint meaning and musical knowledge, values and attitudes, without adults in the immediate vicinity. What ideas do they actually lean upon when engaging in the task of teaching each other songs, and how do they relate to the interdependence of contexts at stake, are here central questions to pursue in the next. The article is structured in the following way. In the following, we will set out this paper to briefly reflect on a particular approach to music: 'music as symbol' (Jorgensen, 2003). We use this approach as an overarching meta-perspective: an opening gateway into how to conceive musical learning and knowing analytically in the widest sense. In the following, we will clarify the theoretical concepts that we subsequently use in our analysis, that is, central concepts of the dialogue-theoretical perspective applied in this article. This perspective allows us to focus on the role of contexts and co-texts, in relation to the young participants' interactional peer work (i.e., in and through music and talk). Next, we report the empirical study in terms of research design, participants, transcription and method of analysis. Given this, we finally discuss the findings and their implications to music-educational research. Moreover, we here return to the notion of 'music as symbol' and what such a perspective on music means to the current study and, further, what it might imply for music-educational research in general.

As analysts in the field of music education, we adopt different perspectives to music, implicitly or explicitly. Jorgensen (2003) suggests five differing images of music, as presented in existing music research. One approach is to view *music as aesthetic object*, representing the classical Western philosophical approach to music, concerned with the inherent values of objectives in art forms. During the last decades, *music as practical activity,* has been a concept used in contexts where performing, listening, improvising and learning music is developed and, as such, it can be seen as a contrast to the idea of music as aesthetic object. Moreover, *music as experience* draws on Dewey and is also pertinent to phenomenological perspectives that address existential aspects of music. Music can further be referred to due to instrumental values, that is, the useful in music and musicality. Here the image *music as agency* is appropriate, for example, focusing on political or educational goals.

More recently, another image on music has turned up, often with a postmodern interest of deconstructing musical practices, pointing at dominant discourses with

help of critical theoretical perspectives: the image of *music as a symbol* (Jorgensen, 2003). In this image, the symbolic functions of music are taken as the centre of interest, focusing on how people understand music, and make sense of it in talk and practice. Through particular conceptual lenses as discourses or narratives that frame music, the specific meanings might be uncovered. The music-pedagogical task is here to critically explicate ideologically impregnated discourses or narratives, and to understand their wider significance in human life and culture (ibid.). Accordingly, it seeks to highlight taken for granted beliefs in music practices. In doing so, analyses of language use and influencing contexts are fruitful means for the analyst. With Jorgensen's words, in its cultural and ideological focus it seeks to explicate grounding discourses by which society and music are to be understood. That is, how discourse frames perception and impact understanding.

Jorgensen (ibid.) points at several strengths in this particular image of music. It provides the field with a contextual perspective on music that is broader than the view of music as an aesthetic object; that music refers to aspects beyond itself. There is no 'music alone' but rather a relational complexity between music, the musicians, learners, instructors as well as the cultures, concepts and contexts. Moreover, when distinguishing music as a symbol in Jorgensen's conceptualisation, there is an important potential to answer the question of the reasons for people's musical preferences. Another strength mentioned is the relational notion of the interconnectedness of the various cultural elements, telling us something about how music functions in its situated whole. In a similar vein, we argue for awareness of the role of cultural values and contexts at stake, as they are manifested in learners' and teachers' verbal interactions. Given this, we see a need to probe deeper into our empirical data and discuss this issue theoretically, in order to contribute with more knowledge on this particular aspect of music education.

Double dialogicality – the notion of interrelated co(n)texts

'Double dialogicality' is a theoretical concept within the epistemological (and ontological) framework of dialogism. It seems therefore reasonable to set out with a few words about the key implications of dialogism, as it is proposed in Linell's (2009) comprehensive book on the issue. Linell outlines a philosophy in which individuals are seen as fundamentally interdependent of each other; they are in other words other-orientated human beings. This dialogical philosophy is in conjunction with Mikhail Bakhtin, Ivana Marková and other dialogical thinkers. Moreover, people do

not only orient to each other (i.e., interpersonally) but also to expectations due to their situations and, more precisely, how they actually *define* their situations: how they define the meaning of the encounters, as they are placed in activity-specific framings. According to Linell, local interpersonal contexts are always located in a wider, more societal context, that is, a culturally established one. Mostly, those cultural-historical contexts contain activity types, such as formal education. Another examples of activity types in society are sport events, trials and health care in hospitals.

Linell's point is further to acknowledge the variety of talk genres entailed to these different activity types – the wider context in which interpersonal sense making is constituted. With his words, individuals' communication styles follow the types of activity involved: the communicative activity types (cf. Linell, 2010, 2011). Hence, he recognizes dialogicality in its double sense: the interpersonal dialogue with each other as it unfolds in the local situation, and how it is paralleled by the more implicit dialogue with cultural and contextual framings. Conventionalized activities function as co-texts in addition to the overt manifested communication between the interlocutors involved. It is thus a reductionist take to only recognize the unfolding social interactions between people, he argues. Instead, we should also pay attention to the other existing dimension of human dialogues: the orientation to sociocultural activities, that is, contextual resources. His term for this double dimension in dialogical sense making is *double dialogicality.* Adopting this perspective also means focusing the *contexts* involved in teaching and learning, something that is less often addressed in educational contexts. Lindgren (2013) argues that the context is important to take into account when analysing teaching and learning, not least since the context seldom is taken for granted when it comes to education. Consequently, it is essential for us to conceive of learning contexts in its interlinked complexity. Before moving on to the empirical the study some notions that concern communicative practices in school have to be introduced. In order to understand the children's kind of attitudes to music and knowledge, we need to address how students are 'talked into being' (Heritage, 1984) in education contexts of our time. In the next, we point at educational research findings, which bring learning and communication together. But first we probe into the issue of formality and its relation to the evaluative rhetoric that typically permeates educational dialogues. We also consider the task-centred teaching tradition in school, and in school music as well.

Communicative formality in the task culture of schooling

Communicative formality is a concept introduced by Linell (2011). He proposes a definition: "formality in a communicative activity is primarily that some distinct actions *have to* be accomplished, and in addition in a specific form, no matter if the particular case actually needs it or not" (Linell, 2011: 406). In contrast, communicative *informality* means to adjust the talk to the particular situational circumstance or to the addressee's need. Formality and informality in this dialogical sense are hence not defined as a generally strict social situation, with strict clothing or solemn facial displays, for example. To us, the concept is of relevance due to learning premises and their relation to language use. Arguably, language use cannot be analytically separated to learning and teaching, and is therefore a pivotal concern to scrutinize. Formal talk is typically embedded in institutional interaction, that is, a routinized, agenda-bound and mostly goal-oriented way of doing talk exchanges (see Linell, 1998, 2009, 2010, 2011).

In formal schooling teachers further direct their communication to constant assessments and their pre-planned assignments. Moreover, to be in school, and learn in school, is to be socialized into the knowledge values according to the typical institutional setting. The students are talked into being, to put it with Heritage's (1984) words. Children are trained to reason in certain ways in school, and to value their education (the teaching and the learning) according to these normative ideas of practising institutional knowledge development (cf. Bergqvist, 2001, 2010, 2012; Bergqvist & Säljö, 2004; Biesta, 2010).

This stands in stark contrast to everyday talk (Bernstein, 1990; Hodge, 1993; Matusov, 2009; Mehan, 1979). As Mehan recognized in his study of classroom interaction, various classroom arrangements impose constraints on interaction and on children, who have to operate within those constraints. Likewise, an informal talk style does not typically resonates well with the task culture at school that lends itself to a more formalized type of instruction, and general reasoning in the classrooms as well (Ericsson & Lindgren, 2010). However, this is not to state that formal instructional talk is qualitatively better than informal language, or the other way around. The point is rather to underline that learning is contingent on the type of learning activity and its contextual resources involved.

'The task culture' is a classroom-specific culture of standardized rules, orders, rigorous procedures and function regulative as discursive techniques for social control and student management, identified by Ericsson and Lindgren (2010). Here, the teacher-role function as the knowing expert who has to foster and teach the ones not knowing, that is, the students. The latter are then expected to be willing rule-followers. In the context of school music Ericsson and Lindgren (ibid.) discuss the counterproductive

effect when teacher-led attempts are made to generate creativity in the school-activity music making. Music making could be an appropriate task in which the students' preferences from everyday life can be realized. It was partly so, especially in the making of the lyrics: a given assignment without restrictions. However, coming to the issue of musical elements, the students were clearly restricted by procedural restrictions due to the regulated nature of the given assignments. For example, the authors illustrate how the students had to confine themselves and their musical creativity into a certain order of music making: to start with a cappella singing, even if they were used to, and motivated by, playing music instruments in this activity phase. If they tried to escape that conditional restriction, taking the chance to play on the keyboard, drums or the guitar, they were requested to "concentrate on the assignment instead", from the part of the teacher. Likewise, the students were requested to hand in assignments in a rigorous procedure, beyond negotiation. In an investigated school it was only one date that was appropriate to deliver the important assignments that constitute a basis for their evaluative mark in the final report card. If a student was sick that day s/he was told to deliver it anyway, by a classmate as suppliant or a taxi:

Frasse [the teacher] continues with a posed voice, meant to demonstrate a student's. "Then it's always some who says: but imagine if I break my leg precisely that day. But then you've to put your schoolwork in a taxi, and pump in everything. It has to be delivered that day" (Ericsson & Lindgren, 2010: 104, our translation).

Another manifestation of the task culture in school-specific discursive practises is a teaching that profoundly orients towards communication with *written language* (Säljö, 2000, 2013, 2015). School is characterized by the fact that it is a language-based activity form. Here the main activities are reading, writing and talking, according to Säljö (2000) and Bergqvist (2010). To succeed in school consequently means to succeed in learning to understand the procedures and the language used in this institutional world.

The empirical study

In this section we will present the empirical study in terms of design, participants, setting and method of analysis.

Our body of data consists of transcribed video observations of children in dyads (two and two) teaching each other to sing a song, without the immediate presence of an adult. Four children, aged 9–10, and here named Amy, Diana, Paul and Michael, participated in this study. In focus was the aim to explore children's co-constituted

knowledge processes and their perspectives of learning and knowledge, as they are established in their dyadic dialogues. The participant's pre-given task is to instruct each other to sing songs in pairs (two and two), without adults in their vicinity. We are interested in how they face this task collaboratively, and what musical meanings are negotiated, for example, what is in need of being addressed explicitly and verbally, and what remains implicit shared understandings in their joint task (i.e., to acknowledge which aspects of music and knowledge are taken for granted or not).

The young participants have been selected on the basis of their interest in participating in the study. We considered children of this age to be able to participate in the kind of task to be studied, on the basis on experience in music teaching. Therefore the school-music teacher who introduced the study to the children was asked if anyone was interested in participating, and handed on the information. The caregivers as well as the children signed an informed consent to participate and, following the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council, all participation was voluntary and all participants and the school setting are given pseudonyms when reporting the study. The study was initially planned to take place in the music room at the school. However, the children's wishes were to do their joint activities in the researcher's home, and it was accepted. The children were informed of the possibility to use what they found in the room that housed a piano, a computer, a TV, pens and paper sheets, among other material objects to use educationally. The children were asked to teach each other a song of their own choosing. They were told to decide without me when they wanted to stop the video-documented task in the room. So, the children's social roles in the social interactions were, to a large extent, pre-planned in accordance with the children's choices in dialogue with one of the researchers.

Finally, the five song activities were video-documented, transcribed in detail (with talk and gestures) and analysed in depth with an activity analysis focusing on talk-in- interaction, drawing on Linell (1998, 2010, 2011; cf. Kullenberg, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). This method of analysis implies a particular dialogue-theoretical framing and, consequently, resonates well with the theoretical reasoning in the following. It is accordingly 'dialogism' that here constitutes both our method and theory, assuming that being, thinking, talking, acting and learning, etcetera, are intrinsically conflated phenomena. Hence, it is the analyst's task to find out the relations between context- and activity-specific human acts, a reasoning that we think is quite in conjunction with Jorgensen's mentioned emphasis on interrelated contexts and language use in musical practices (when taking the approach 'music as symbol').

Results

The following centres on the corpus of data and the empirical analysis. As stated earlier, individuals' situated sense making, and knowledge building, are related to how they define the whole encounter – the pre-given task. Due to its conditional nature, such an activity-based encounter sets the frame for meaning making and the forms of talk as well. The children in the study are doing music (singing) within a teaching context. Hence, learning to sing a song collaboratively is not about pure acts in a sequential organization in words and tunes on a moment-to-moment basis, stripped of culturally conventionalized knowledge and language ideals. Rather, we will demonstrate how the children's acts are based on shared ideas of how to teach with words and signs, and how to sing songs.

In a school practice the participants orient to specific habits, routines, norms, rules and particular ways to talk and act. The children examined invoked several expectations and rules in a typical schooling style when jointly solving the pre-given task and, hence, organised their social situation as a formal school-music lesson. How to perform in school lessons was to a large extent the guiding norm for the attitude to music and to each other in the roles of teacher (instructor) and pupil (apprentice) respectively. We will delineate some of them below. Especially the salient features of *communicative formality*, *the evaluative talk genre* and *the task culture* identified will be illustrated in the next.

Formality

As mentioned earlier, formality has to do with both consistent and routinized, stable organizations of talk, interaction orders and other actions. Formality in this sense is a characterizing element of agenda-bound, institutional talk, implying specific patterns in verbalizing the task-oriented issues at stake (Linell, 1998, 2009, 2011). Further, agenda-bound talk means to participate in focal conversations, leaving less room for polytopical episodes with heterogeneous topic spaces on the floor. Instead, the conversational topics are somewhat homogenous, not allowing for topic initiations beyond the strict agenda to talk and sing the intended song in focus. The children in this study accepted the underlying idea of not indulging in other talk events than the goal-oriented ones. In that line they chose a task-oriented talk style that left no room (i.e., no topic-spaces) for personal discussions about things besides the music-peda-gogical or practical problem solving, for example, conversations that concern their home lives, common friends or not even explicit remarks on their common school-life. That did not mean excluding open-ended situations, as dealing with democratic

negotiations or creative, tentative collaborative attempts to deal with upcoming pedagogical situations. Rather, they preferred to stay on tasks in structured ways due to the topic-flow; to carry out terminating activities according to the particular communicative project introduced on the scene.

The four children also maintained their pre-planned social roles consistently as teacher and pupil during the sessions with few exceptions. Although there are episodes in which they step out from the strict teacher-pupil order, as when they suddenly meet unexpected computer-problems to solve, the overall encounters are imbued in the asymmetries in traditional teacher-pupil interactions. Due to that interactional order – the schooling style of organization, the children who enacted the pupil role expected the 'teachers' to give orders, request actions, explain things, ask and make constant assessments. This asymmetrical order, the dominance pattern, was in most cases seen as unproblematic in the dialogues, from the perspective of the participants. One expression of that is how the one who was critically evaluated by the leader in the expert role accepted the criticism and used to make a big effort to please the teacher.

The participants' way of posing question in question-answer patterns were also very typical in examined classroom interaction. They organized recurrent 'known information questions' (Mehan, 1979), that is, teacher questions directed to the student when the teacher already has the answer. For example, after the practise to memorize the song text, guided by Paul in the instructor role, Paul asked Michael (the apprentice) to answer him about the lyrical content in the song recently practised. This question was posed as a control-question, in order to request Paul's display of this specific knowledge. IRE sequences, common in traditional teacher-led classroom interaction (Mehan, 1979; Lindblad & Sahlström, 1999: 85), were also common in the children's pedagogical activities: teacher initiations (a known information question) followed by student reply, and pursued with a teacher evaluation as a response to the latter.

Some remarks on what Linell (2011) terms communicative formality now have to be reflected on. Drawing on the introduced definition above of institutional-like formality as something that has to be performed in the interactions, even if it does not seem to be necessary neither according to the situation, nor to the addressees as it happens, it can be concluded that the data corpus is permeated by such kind of data. There are several situations in which the children, due to the challenges evoked, demonstrate a rigid order, and a special language form rather than a more reflexive and flexible attitude. Instead, the utterances embody functional routines and tasks at stake. Below is one example. Amy here instructs Diana and wants her to continue with a particular practice although she cannot point to a concrete learning aspect to improve, and does not have Diana's support in the need of it either:

AD:43–56 THERE WAS NOTHIN' HARD ABOUT THAT (Amy teaches Diana)

43   A: let's do it again one two three
          ((stands up and takes her usual position in front of D.))
44   ["Come Julia we'll go with high heels on /…/ with nice shoes on."]
45   D: ["Come Julia we'll go with high heels on /…/ with nice shoes on."]
          ((they are singing together)) J
46   A: it´s good you came… we´ll carry on practising
47   but if there´s somethin´ you really think is hard,
          ((sits down in the sofa beside D.))
          I can make it a bit bigger
48   if there´s somethin´ you think's hard
49   D: no
          ((shakes her head and looks at A.))
50   A: aa
51   D: it was easy ☺ well it was… there was nothing hard
          about it ((looks at A.))
52   A: ((looks straight ahead)) then I'll write down some
          things...some things...three things you need to think about
53   I did it with Paul so that you practise listening a bit to it
54   you´ll be practising here
55   an' you can you MAY take the note home an´… well practise
           just that
56   D: mm ((nod))

In line 45 we can see how Diana ends up her singing with a smile on her face. Responding to that, Amy uttered an approval ("it's good…", 46). As the participants usually structure their activity phases, here we have a typical time slot for talk and work that is critical, with corrections and improvements. It usually has a transitional pedagogical function that leads to the next practice of the song as musicians. But in this case, Diana tells her leader in several ways that she has mastered her task already, and Amy, the leader, does not come up with anything to correct. Instead she tries to find a pedagogical challenge (a learning problem) to probe deeper into. She does it conversationally together with Diana (47–51). Again, no musical problem to solve turns up here. Consequently, exactly here is a potential choice to continue flexibly with other possible tasks and topics. Amy's choice looks different as it turns out, according to the turn design in 52–55. She chooses to continue the dialogue with a *routine* in these situations (according to my analysis of the whole corpus of data). To

go on with written language-activities, or other penetrating problem-solving issues, after performing the song the first or second time within their overall communicative project is customary. Notice how Amy addresses this text issue to Diana in 52–55. In the other parts of the encounter, Amy usually looks at Diana when she instructs but this time, when she is not meeting Diana's own expressed need / perspective, she does not look at her when she starts to talk. Further, when she qualifies her claim of urging Diana to read and think over "some things" (Sw. *lite saker*) (52) she refers to a routine she has followed with another learner (i.e., Paul). Still, she does not refer to the Diana's earlier attempts at singing. What Amy demonstrates in this episode is an example of being influenced by the activity form, an ability to achieve activity-sustained coherence. The situation definition here with the rigid order as guidance and the focus on specific tools (written text) and particular terms like 'practise' (Sw. *öva*) whatever the partner expresses, might altogether be interpreted as a kind of formality in the sense mentioned above.

The evaluative rhetoric

To continue with communicative teaching patterns, pedagogic rhetoric relies on rules of specialized communication that emphasize continuous evaluations in the pedagogic practice, as pointed at above. As the children under investigation also demonstrated, *evaluation* was one of the most recurrent sub-activities within the whole encounters, loaded with pedagogic meaning. Owing to this evaluative aspect, they organised their whole activity-structure in all sessions in a similar manner. That is, the core activity of performing a song as a 'pupil' in front of the 'teacher' was always followed up by an evaluation routine. The evaluation procedures were also very consistent regarding the type of critique and approval shown by the instructor. The ambition to work for improvement, enabling the pupils to improve the articulated musical problems, was thus a guiding principle in their joint tasks. The young instructors also displayed a systematic preference for a specific form of critical remark, using a rhetorical device in their critical utterances in which the problematic gist of their messages was prefaced by explicit approval. Their critique were thus embedded in a positively loaded message, mitigating the fact that the teacher was not pleased enough with the pupils' efforts:

AP:102–105 IT´S REALLY EASY WITH YOU BUT (Amy is teaching Paul)

102 A: it´s really easy with you
103   but IT'S just that you should get into the tune
         ((gestures with both hands)) so it´s not like
         "Come Julia come Julia with nice shoes on" like
104 P: mm
105 A: ☺ you see but it´s really good otherwise you can do all of it
         off by hea:rt (0.5) ((ruffles her hair)) YEA:H you can do it (.)
         all of it... so it just flows ☺

Amy, who instructs, begins her utterance by declaring that the pupil is really easy to work with, *but*... Here there are obviously still aspects of the pupil's song performance that the teacher seeks to come to grips with. This time she wants her pupil to attend to the melody in detail and initiates a topic glide (103) within the evaluative framing (to introduce a particular musical problem).

To sum up about evaluations in the children's music-pedagogical dialogues, two main variants of teacher evaluation with responsive features can be identified in the data. In the first of these sequentially organized turn-designs, the teacher takes the initiative to make a positive evaluation followed by confirmation or positive uptake from the pupil:

Teacher: positive evaluation
Pupil: confirmation / positive uptake

In the other interaction pattern, the teachers set out with a negative (critical) evaluation, with positive (non-critical) embedding. Sometimes the pupil inserts a very short response to this like "mm" or "yes" (Sw. *ja*). Latched to this assessment event is the teacher's unfolding correction or instruction directed to the child in the pupil-position. The fourth step is typically to proceed with a new song performance, either solo, as a pupil in front of the teacher, or together with the instructor in joint singing.

Teacher: negative evaluation (with positive embedding)
(Pupil: minimal response)
Teacher: correction / instruction
Pupil: performs the song

The task culture in action

One frequent procedure in the participants' work with the songs was to work met-hodically with one learning aspect at a time, or one mode (tonal and not tonal work) instead of practising an admixture of all learning aspects in the process of mastering the songs. Stepwise, as the learning sessions unfold, the instructors put the learning aspects together in more complex entities. It was also customary to encourage the pupils to imitate the teacher's song performance or song text reading, phrase by phrase. When doing so they also narrowed down the musical items pedagogically, that is, splitting up the music into manageable units:

PM:123–139 ONE SENTENCE AT A TIME (Paul is teaching Michael)

They take phrase by phrase in the same way throughout the whole song. M. imitates P. Not singing notes this time, but just with the words and the rhythm.

126 P: shall we say this then, that we´ll try to teach y- you one sentence
            at a time an´ then add another one to it
127 M: yeah an´ then we can go through it a few [times]
128 P: [yeah]
129 M: so I can learn it=
130 P: yeah
131 M: but then we have to go through the song a:n' the tune itself too
132 P: yeah later we can start with "I have" "I am a little
            gnat and Hubert is my name"
133 M: (xx)shall we sing it like thi:s now then with the tune (0.5)
134 P: mm
135   and then you must learn the tune too
136 M: "I am a little [gnat and Hubert is my name"]
137 P: [gnat and Hubert is my name"]
138   "I am a little gnat and Hubert is my name" ((now singing))
139 M: "I am a little gnat and Hubert is my name" ((now singing))

To take 'one sentence at a time' (Sw. *en mening först i taget*) was another way to provide scaffolding. This term does not traditionally refer to music but is adopted from the world of linguistic grammar. This term functioned conversationally (without a problematic interactional uptake) at the start, because the current teacher, Paul, built methodically on the sentences in the song, eliminating the focus on tonality at first.

But it turned out to be a non-specific term here that gave raise to a clarifying episode on this topic. Michael, the addressee, indicated that he expected them to work with the melody issue also. He then brought it up in the conversation.

The excerpts illustrate how focused the young interlocutors are, paying patient, consistent attention to the task in focus. They deal with it in a very systematic way, like building learning in blocks and steps methodically: lyrics without tonality at the one hand, tonality at the other. Similarly, small parts correctly first, followed by the consequent practise of bigger parts are the learning order not only in this sequence but also in the entire corpus of data. In addition, all children studied were very skilled in communicating about this particular learning process. Their method was scaffolding; to guide each other, helping the apprentice with supporting means along the way. To scaffold also means to regulate the intended learning with means as, for example, narrowing down in order to facilitate the learners' apprehension, or providing appropriate tools when it seems to be adequate.

To narrow down and decontextualize the music at stake is also deeply rooted in the school culture, as discussed earlier. It is in accord with Ericsson and Lindgren's (2010) findings, and with Rostvall and West's (2001) as well. Also, Mars (2012) found that her adolescent participants from Sweden, in contrast to the Gambian teachers and learners, use such pedagogical strategies when learning each other to sing and play songs. Notably, she also found that the Swedes differ in another salient point: in using written notations when trying to learn and teach music. The Swedes relied on the eyes (the visualizing way), accompanied by instructional talk, while the Gambians preferred to go by ear, without so much instructional talk. So, it is explainable why the children here displayed skills in both talking and writing in and through systematic tasks; transforming it into this totally new learning situation due to this explorative research project, left with each other in a room with a video-cam. Below we show an illustrative example of how the children deal with melodies and the written language as a teaching resource. Here Diana instructs Paul, arranging the scene like a school lesson centring on a literate convention:

    62 D: good
    63   but… you've some problems with it yeah
    64   hm… I'll write the lyrics for you so you can grip it an' look
    65 P: ((nods))
    66 D: whilst [I sing] ((takes a seat near an empty sheet))
    67 P: [((nods))] mm
    68 D: okay

Now Diana took her time to patiently write down the lyrics with a pen in a verbatim fashion, with Paul sitting beside, waiting. To be more precise, she writes, erases, and rephrases within more than two minutes. Then she said:

71 D: SO so you can look there while I'm singin' okay?
        ((gives him the written paper))
72 P: an' I'll sing along?
73 D: yes one two three

And so they sing the song *Dagny* once again. But the text use did not work out as helpful as expected this time:

75 D: have I forgotten? eh "On [Café' Seven the whole day"]
76 P: (xx) ((read from the paper)) "biscuits the whole day"
77   "biscuits the whole day" it says ((look at D.))
78 D: ((grabs his sheet and read loud))

Now they read intensely together, eager to find out the original version. Suddenly Paul calls out:

82 P: "the whole day" it says J

At this point Diana quickly puts the paper on the table again, picks up the pen and starts to correct her written mistake, but she has hardly begun before Paul takes the initiative to learn in a different way:

84 P: I would say it's easier for me without the paper... to learn it
85 D: yeah ((with a very weak voice)) we do so
86 P: actually
87 D: ((stands up)) one two three ["We didn't know what love was..."]
88 P: ["We didn't know what love was..."]
                                 ((they are singing together))

Here, the situation, as it unfolded, forced them to consider another learning strategy than centring on written lyrics.

Conclusions

The study referred to in this text addresses how musical knowledge is socially constructed, that is, created in peer collaboration with pre-given epistemic positions as 'teacher' and 'pupil' (i.e., instructor and apprentice). Here Jorgensen's (2003) approach 'music as symbol' has been a point of departure, pointing at how the idea of music, and music education, is conceived of in and through children's discourses in interaction. Accordingly, the analytical interest in this article is oriented to the participants' musical ideas and how the music at stake – the songs in action – is understood and expressed within the situated interactions. Phrased differently, we take an interest in the young participants' sense making, in and through talk and practice. Moreover, the focus to analyse the extended contextual level, the one that goes beyond the local interactions, is an attempt to interrelate contexts and co-texts. That means to acknowledge cultural elements in its complexity – a relational account in the sense Jorgensen (ibid.) accounts for. The dimension behind the interactional contexts between the interlocutors is the culturally established conventions of schooling, serving as a sense making frame of shared knowledge for the children to use as a learning resource when being left alone with the complex task to organize musical teaching and learning dialogically. The children in this study hence clearly defined their learning situation as an institutional activity type; a social practice imbued with communicative principles for formalized education, with routinized procedures, rules, social orders, instructions and assessments that adhere to such social life. In doing so, they orient to *the double* dialogicality (Linell, 2009), that is, the orientations to both the social interaction in situ and to the cultural, and historical, dimension. In the study referred to, the culture-historical embedding is manifested in the institutional conventions of schooling; the conventions that were put to the fore when the participating children organized their musical learning tasks. The results demonstrate how social order is consistently produced in the children's talk and practice. The school-specific asymmetry in interaction orders, with questioning and evaluating teachers and rule-following students on the scene, was salient in this study, although there was sometimes a temporary room for more democratic dialogues as well.

The implications of the findings thus highlight the meaning of young people's tacit sense making in an interesting way, we think. When scrutinizing the children's interpersonal dialogues it is salient how underlying, unspoken cultural values and routines are at play as educational sense making – even when they are left alone without any guiding adult person from a school, and an institutional setting equipped with classroom-specific tools to work with. Still the interplay between contexts, and co-texts, are present. Significant cultural resources are obviously recruited for subtle

shared understanding; an underlying premise for their educational dialogues at stake. This finding points to the educational relevance of not underscoring framing aspects of pedagogical situations, even when they remain verbally implicit, as in the current study. Hence, activity types, contexts and cultural practices might not be taken for granted but rather taken into consideration when theorizing learning and knowing in educational research. As Lindgren (2013) suggests, the contexts might be seen as a meaning-making premise for learning.

Music and education are, as we have tried to show, culturally and contextually embedded. Therefore children's formed musical perspectives need to be listened to and taken seriously. In music education, that implies being aware of the role of *framing* in schooling activities: to be aware of implicit, tacit knowledge resources that make sense for learners. However, we agree with Jorgensen (2003) pointing at the importance of also "breaking out of the little boxes of restrictive thought and practice" (p. 119) in order to challenge institutional knowledge ideals. Music education in the multicultural society of our time needs to incorporate a variety of ways of framing school activities.

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