

Music Producers, Knowledge and Multimodal Communication in the Recording Studio

Abstract

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This short paper presents and discusses an ongoing pilot project studying communication and collaboration between producers and singers in the recording studio. From a knowledge perspective, it is assumed that 'the formal, the informal and the tacit are embedded in and inseparable from the ongoing interaction of the participants' (Heath, Luff & Knoblauch, 2004). It is therefore necessary to, in addition to the verbal/vocal, also examine multimodal and embodied means of social interaction – such as gesture, facial expression and gaze. In this, the specific conditions established by the mediated setting of studio communication via 'talkback' systems and soundproofed glass windows are considered. Furthermore, the communicative use of artifacts, tools and technology needs to be studied, in order to get a deeper understanding of how creative and collaborative work is organized in the studio. This includes how the musical sound (live or recorded) and related technologies are used for interactional purposes besides mere artistic expression.

The study of the activities in the studio is, on a micro level, being performed using multi-camera documentation and multimodal interaction analysis. On a macro level, in-depth interviews and stimulated recall sessions, focusing on the role of the producer, are used for getting the participants' perspective on how they view their own role regarding e.g. situational, institutional, strategic and knowledge-related matters. Preliminary results touch on issues concerning how power relations, agency, status and (often tacit) knowledge are negotiated. The joint workflow of collaborative and creative processes, as well as communicative resources, choices, and strategies are illuminated. The continued plan for this project is to include a larger variety of proficiency and professional levels, and musical genres. Given the increase in studies on contemporary media societies, such as consumer habits, media cultures and technologies, more research is correspondingly called for on issues concerning collaborative media production processes.

References

Heath, C., Luff, P. & Knoblauch, H. (2004). Tools, technologies and organizational interaction: The emergence of "workplace studies." In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Osrick & L. Putman (Eds), *The Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 337-359). London: Sage.