Mapping the methodological field of ‘discourse analysis’ in music education research

In our paper we will present the findings of a review study about the use of ‘discourse analysis’ in music education research. ‘Discourse analysis’ (or comparable terms) labels a range of approaches, with fundamental similarities and differences (Carbaugh, 2005; Wodak et al 2012, Woofitt, 2005, Angermuller et al 2014). The similarities concern a focus on analysing language to explore ideology, hegemony and power relations, and a view upon language as constructing reality as well as being socially constructed. Differences between the approaches concern first of all what is meant by discourse resp. in which form discourse becomes the subject of analysis. A linguistic approach of discourse analysis focuses more narrowly on texts analysing semantic and pragmatic aspects which leads to studies about the choice of words, grammar, cohesion, sentence structures and so on. Discourse can on the other hand be viewed more widely as language in use including sociological or ethnographical perspectives. In many cases, this approach leads to studies not only about spoken and written words but to research that is interested also in acts and codes, how group members learn these codes, and how groups employ these codes and acts to distinguish from one another. The question, what is meant by ‘discourse’, marks one axis which is helpful for us to map the methodological field of discourse analysis in music education research. Other axis and marking points will be further elaborated in the paper.

Thorolf Krügers PhD-thesis from 1999 marks the first ‘discourse analysis’ in the Nordic countries, and was followed by several Norwegian studies that all draw upon Michel Foucault’s approach towards discourse analysis, and especially upon his interest in the relation of power and knowledge (Krüger, 2000; Nerland, 2003; Apeland, 2004; Schei, 2007). Foucault is also an important point of reference in discourse studies from overseas, not at least by Brent Talbot, (2013) and Roger Mantie (2012). In Sweden, discourse analyses in music education research is undertaken from both discourse theoretical- and discourse psychological approaches (Holmberg, 2010; Rostwall & West, 2001). Discourse analysis in music education from the Nordic area includes studies from music teaching in compulsory school, church music, higher music education and music- and art schools., in many cases referring to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), developed among others by Ruth Wodak, Teun Van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough in early 1990s. In Germany, there are, as yet, only a few published studies using discourse analysis (f.e. Bugiel 2015 referring to Keller 2011).

This paper is a part of the work in the research group DAPHME; Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, Sweden.

References


