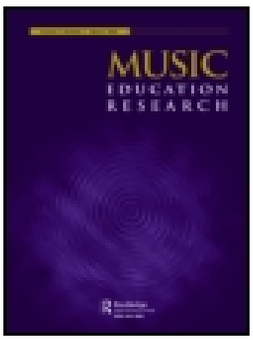

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# 'Taste the value of each note': verbal teaching strategies in guitar masterclasses

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**ABSTRACT**

Our study examines the impact of student performance level, student gender and content matter on the verbal strategies (literal language, technical instruction and images and metaphors) teachers use in guitar masterclasses. After recording and transcribing 60 guitar masterclasses, of which 40 were selected for the final sample, we operationalised the variables as follows: independent judges evaluated students' performance levels, and the content taught and the verbal strategies used by teachers were categorised using the software NVivo 10. Statistical tests (two-way ANOVA, the Mann–Whitney *U*-test and the Kruskal–Wallis test) suggested that the content presented by the teacher may determine the type of verbal strategy used in the classroom. The results indicate that music education research has used images and metaphors as an umbrella concept, and this may hide specificities of the teacher's verbal discourse.

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**KEYWORDS**
Images and metaphors; guitar; musical instrument teaching; verbal strategies; gender bias; expressive music learning

## Introduction

Research on instrumental music teaching suggests that teachers spend at least a third of their time using verbal explanations in their classes (Tait 1992). Consequently, spoken language plays a fundamental role in expanding students' knowledge (Meissner and Timmers 2019). Conversely, although music teachers know a lot about expressivity, they find it difficult to verbalise musical expressiveness in a way that is entirely comprehensible to students (Lindström et al. 2003). González and Payri (2017), for instance, highlighted the limitations of verbal language when players of wind instruments and singers try to explain how parts of the performer's internal body (i.e. vocal tract, diaphragm and air column) must be put to work to give an expressive performance. Even figurative language, a verbal form commonly used to relate the objective aspects of performance to the subjective world of the student (Juslin and Persson 2002), cannot always generate intelligible teaching (Schippers 2006).

Given the complexity of this subject, researchers have proposed different approaches to studying verbal strategies adopted by teachers in various instrumental music teaching environments. Woody (2006a) submitted 36 pianists to three instructional conditions to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching musical expressivity: (1) aural modelling, (2) verbal instruction using concrete musical properties and (3) verbal instruction using images and metaphors. Although none of these three instruction modes were consistently better than the others, the author observed an interesting difference between concrete musical properties and images and metaphors as verbal strategies.

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Whilst concrete musical instruction can, for the most part, effect change in expressivity with good consistency, the metaphor/imagery approach generally effects a considerable change in performance, but not necessarily in the direction a teacher would expect. Laukka (2004) suggests that the degree to which teachers use these strategies is probably linked to their beliefs on the nature of musical expression.

Karlsson and Juslin (2008) set and described four categories of feedback that teachers use to respond to their students' performances: (1) verbal instructions (comments focused on the technical or acoustic features of students' performances); (2) modelling (teacher's performance serving as a model to the student); (3) outcome feedbacks (comments focused on the quality of the student's performance, that is, whether a performance is good or bad; however, no information is provided about why) and (4) metaphors (the use of figurative language to focus on the expressive qualities of the student's performance). Through an observation of 12 video-recorded music lessons with viola, vocal and guitar students, the authors found that teachers widely used outcome feedback and verbal instructions, although individual differences could be found in their use of feedback types, and lessons were primarily devoted to technical issues and music notations. Creative metaphors are typically used after students had overcome the technical aspects of note learning (Wolfe 2019).

Systematic associations between acoustic and music structure topics – such as pitch, dynamic, timing, timbre, articulation and phrasing – and the vocabulary musicians use to discuss and teach music has been elucidated (Leech-Wilkinson and Prior 2014; Wallmark 2019; Wolfe 2019). Barten (1998) proposed three broad categories that instructors' motor-affective references fall into. Movement and action metaphors describe the type, speed, and velocity of movement (e.g. 'it's lurching', 'it gains momentum gradually'), indicate specific actions (e.g. 'sting', 'toss it off'), and suggest a kinaesthetic experience (e.g. 'it has to be lighter'). Indeed, there is robust empirical evidence showing that musical parameters strongly affect students' perception of motion imagery (Eitan and Granot 2006). Attitude metaphors allow music to impersonate human qualities. These attitudes are divided into demeanour (e.g. extroverted, imprudent), emotion (e.g. angry, passionate), and a sense of tendency and direction (e.g. inevitable, not too hurried). Human and non-human action metaphors portray human activities (e.g. 'you're out swatting flies'), animal actions (e.g. 'like a bird in flight'), mechanical actions (e.g. 'it sounds like a sledgehammer') and movements in nature (e.g. 'like wind in your sails').

Burwell (2006) demonstrated that vocals teachers and musical instrument teachers differ in the amount of metaphorical and literal language instructions they deliver to their students. When compared to students of musical instruments, singers receive more instruction through metaphorical language than they do through literal language. To achieve this result, the author transcribed 67 tutorial classes taught at a conservatory and conducted interviews with teachers and students. A more intensive use of images and metaphors in singing classes, previously flagged by Stollak and Alexander (1998), may be due to the fact that students learning instruments perceived more ambiguity when presented with figurative statements than they did with literal statements (Sheldon 2004).

More recently, Ivaldi (2016; 2018) selected a sample of 18 one-to-one lessons to explore the interactions between students and teachers. Based on an approach known as conversation analysis, the author showed how certain elocutions and short expressions used during class (e.g. 'mhm', 'uh huh', 'okay', 'well done', 'almost there', 'excellent') are crucial to the meaning and interpretation of the teacher–student discourse. For instance, the author suggests that an acknowledgement token such as 'okay' indicates that an evaluation is about to follow and a simple 'uh huh' during the student's performance can encourage them to keep playing.

Burwell (2005) mentioned that the types of questions raised by teachers (e.g. disguised instruction, rhetorical questions or exploratory questions) may provide students with significant encouragement to participate in dialogues during class. While conducting an action research project, Meissner (2017) collected data from nine instrument teachers – herself included – over a few weeks to investigate the strategies they used in facilitating children's learning of expressive musical

performance. The author suggests that 'teacher enquiry and discussion together with the explanation of expressive devices are at the heart of teaching children expressive music performance' (14). Based on a collective case study with five instrument teachers and ten children, Brenner and Strand (2013) emphasised on repertoire to argue that young performers can be taught musical expressivity as a foundational part of the process of learning technique, interpretation and creativity. On that account, the authors indicated that 'verbal instructions were not given in spoken tones; rather, the teachers sang verbal instructions as a model with many repetitions to help students remember both the model and the instruction' (87).

Adopting the control and experimental group methodology, Meissner and Timmers (2019) showed that the dialogic approach, in which teachers pose open questions with the aim of starting a conversation on the expressive character of music, could improve general expressivity. Duke and Henninger (1998) previously used the same methodological design to show that students who have taken classes where verbal language is used only for negative feedback achieved results similar to students whose lessons utilised verbal language for corrective instruction directed at their performance.

Research has demonstrated that the vocabulary musicians use when talking about musical performance can be potentially influenced by the musician's gender and main instrument (Leech-Wilkinson and; Prior, 2014, 37). Furthermore, in a study with 84 undergraduate and graduate music students, aged 18–44, Woody (2006b) stated that the vocabulary used by music teachers, especially the references they make to extramusical terms, should match students' performance level and must be age-appropriate. Thus, in order to offer a fuller, more reasonable, and current explanation of what shapes the verbal interactions between teachers and students in a musical instrument class, music education research must continue considering the extent to which each of these factors play a role in this complex teaching environment. In this regard, studies in music education settings have focused on musical instruments that are considered traditional within the conservatory culture (e.g. piano, violin, clarinet, cello, and flute). However, there is evidence showing that teaching non-traditional instruments (e.g. acoustic guitar, electric guitar, saxophone, and drums) extract different verbal behaviours from the teacher (Burwell 2006). Besides that, studies have neglected contexts in which the familiarity between teachers and students is absent (e.g. masterclasses with internationally renowned performers), while research indicates that a musicians' verbal behaviour may vary according to the degree of familiarity between them (Ginsborg and King 2012). Taking this neglected scenario from research in music education as its starting point, this study aims to investigate the impact of three variables – (1) student performance level, (2) student's gender and (3) content matter of the verbal strategies that teachers use in a guitar masterclass environment – (1) literal language, (2) technical terminology (referring to concrete musical properties) and (3) images and metaphors).

To guide the investigation, we propose three hypotheses: (1) students' performance levels influence the kind of verbal strategies the teacher uses (literal language, technical terminology, or images and metaphors); (2) content matter influences the kind of verbal strategies the teacher uses and (3) students' genders influence the kind of verbal strategies the teacher uses.

The first and second hypotheses are based on evidence that the content taught by the teacher may be related to the performance level of the student or musical group (Whitaker 2015). Furthermore, previous studies show that some content (such as posture and muscle relaxation) is taught significantly more often using a specific teaching strategy (Zorzal and Lorenzo 2019). Evidence that led to the third hypothesis includes results showing that male and female students have different perspectives on master classes on musical instruments (Long et al. 2012; Long et al. 2012). Female students, who usually have more experience as listeners than performers in masterclasses, are more likely to report a hostile, intimidating atmosphere in such a teaching format (Long et al. 2014). To a certain extent, such perceptions may be related to the teaching strategies used, since research indicates that some verbal behaviours (e.g. use of humour) may vary according to the teachers' and students' genders (Zhukov 2013).

The hypotheses formulated above are used to answer the following research question: Which variables influence the type of the verbal strategies that teachers employ in guitar masterclasses? It is reasonable to adopt guitar masterclasses as an object of interest because the guitar is considered a non-traditional conservatory instrument (Burwell 2006). Moreover, masterclasses are viewed as natural teaching environments in which high-profile teachers instruct students in the presence of an audience. In general, teachers and students do not maintain regular contact either before or after the class (Creech et al. 2009; Long et al. 2012; Long et al. 2014; Long et al. 2012).

## Methodology

### *Data collection and initial sample characteristics*

First, we approached the institutions responsible for organising the educational and musical events and the teachers and students for their consent. To ensure the absence of familiarity between teachers and students, we only selected masterclasses taught by teachers who were not staff members of the institution hosting the event. To collect data, we opted to record audio and video, with the researcher located in the audience. This allowed for a subsequent data review, increasing the reliability of interobserver analysis (Daniel 2006). Prior to recording, we informed all participants that the aim of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies used in musical instrument classes. Anonymous participation was guaranteed.

This process resulted in the recording of 60 masterclasses. Ten teachers were involved, each teaching between five to seven masterclasses. The teachers (all male) were aged between 34 and 60. Sixty students (37 males and 23 females; aged between 17 and 56) attended the classes.

### *Data treatment*

The recorded masterclasses underwent a complete transcription process based on the guidelines established by Daniel (2006). As such, all transcriptions include the following:

- Definitions of the beginning and the duration of each verbal dialogue event
- Speaker identifications (whether it was a teacher, a student, a member of the audience, or someone other than them)
- Identification of non-verbal events important for understanding the context (e.g. exchange of a less comfortable chair or turning off noisy air conditioning devices).

After completing the transcriptions, the teachers' verbal behaviours were categorised according to the three main types of verbal strategies identified in the literature (Laukka 2004; Schippers 2006; Woody 2006a). The definitions of these categories are as follows:

- Images and metaphors: verbal instruction using images and metaphors to create a relationship between something that belongs in the music-making context and something that belongs outside of it. This relationship may be highly subjective (e.g. 'think of the flow of this music as a river of calm waters'), situated between pure imagination and logical thinking (e.g. 'imagine a violinist executing this phrase'), or even a direct comparison (e.g. 'his hand must be in the shape of a shell').
- Literal language: denotative use of language. All lines that do not create figurative relationships through which to understand the music-making context are included in this category.
- Technical terminology: verbal instructions using concrete musical properties and concepts (e.g. notes, chords, pulse, dynamics, timbre, harmony and analysis), and the basic and complex aspects of musical expression characterising the language of music (e.g. forte, piano, rallentando, ritardando, ritenuto, legato, crescendo, decrescendo – including adjectives systematically used to

talk about acoustic properties of the sound, such as dolce, metallic and bright). Technical terminology differs from literal language in how it is related to musical keywords. Thus the idea surrounding these keywords was considered as technical terminology. The following masterclass transcript extract provides an example of this difference: 'Guitar lives from resonating. If you try to avoid it from resonating, it'll sound near nothing' (categorised as literal language). 'Imagine, if you perform all **quavers rests** in Villa-Lobos work as they are written, there will be almost no sound' (categorised as technical terminology; music-related keyword in bold. Teacher 1, female pre-intermediate student).

Initially, two researchers, working independently, carried out the process of verbal strategy categorisation. Cohen's (1960) Kappa coefficients (measures of agreement between the researchers) for the categorisations were satisfactory ($.57 < k < .73$) for all categories.[1] Each category was measured according to the percentage of its duration relative to the total duration of the masterclass. The verbal excerpt presented below serves as an example. It was categorised as images and metaphors and comprised of 45 s of a masterclass that was 28 min and 35 s long.[2] In this masterclass, the teacher worked on *Nocturno*, by the Spanish composer Frederico Moreno Torroba.

> Have you ever seen those films that show camel caravans, like this? Lawrence of Arabia is out there, in the desert. Think of that kind of nocturne, okay? Think of a kind of peaceful step of the camel, in slow motion. And think of a tempo as if you have … Have you ever been in a desert? How about the Caatinga, haven't you either? Man, in the desert, the horizon is the most impressive thing. It is the end of the horizon. You look at that sky in a beautiful, wonderful dark blue. (Master class transcript extract. Teacher 2, male upper-intermediate student)

We categorised the students' performance levels on a scale of one to five: basic (Level 1), pre-intermediate (Level 2), intermediate (Level 3), upper-intermediate (Level 4) and advanced (Level 5). A step-by-step process was used to attribute the students' performance levels. Initially, random video excerpts of their performances during the 60 masterclass recordings were extracted. These excerpts were then presented to a body of five independent judges at two different times. The judges were guitar teachers with no relationship to the students, the researchers, or the teachers who taught the masterclasses. The first time, each of the 60 excerpts lasted only ten seconds, and the judges, gathered in the same room, were directed not to take notes of the performances they heard. The objective of this stage in the process was to offer a general picture of the sample so that the assessor could assess the limits between the strata of this variable.

After a brief recess, the judges were reunited, given a classification record, and asked to attribute one of the levels described above to each of the 60 excerpts. At this stage, the excerpts lasted 30 s each, and they were presented in a different order than they appeared in the previous stage. Students' whose performance excerpts received at least three identical classifications were included in the analysis. However, to ensure that all levels contained the same number of masterclasses, the level with the lowest number of identical classifications determined the number of masterclasses for the other levels. This resulted in eight masterclasses at each level – in other words, 40 masterclasses in the final sample. Table 1 shows the information on students' characteristics and their respective performance levels.

The language used by the teachers was also categorised according to the content they taught in the masterclasses. For this stage, a third researcher joined the two who were responsible for categorising the verbal strategies. Following the same guidelines as the previous stage, these three researchers worked independently, referring to the list of musical content definitions shown in Table 2. Kappa coefficients for the categorisations ($.53 < k < .68$) were satisfactory for all content-matter categories.[3] However, teacher's personal experience had a coefficient of .47 and was, therefore, excluded. The researchers used the NVivo 10 software to categorise the verbal strategies and the musical content types taught.

**Table 1.** Students' characteristics by performance level.

| | Sex | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Performance level** | Male | Female | **Age mean** | **Standard deviation** |
| **Level 1** | 3 | 5 | 26.13 | 12.65 |
| **Level 2** | 4 | 4 | 22.01 | 2.43 |
| **Level 3** | 7 | 1 | 24.94 | 4.23 |
| **Level 4** | 6 | 2 | 24.79 | 1.81 |
| **Level 5** | 7 | 1 | 21.98 | 3.05 |

## Analysis and results

We analysed the first set of data to determine the type of verbal strategies used according to the five different students' performance levels. A two-way repeated measures ANOVA did not identify a statistically significant interaction between the three types of verbal strategies and the five performance levels established for the students: $F(8, 105) = 1.29$, $p = .26$. D'Agostino and Pearson's normality test, with $\alpha = .05$, ensured the normal distribution of the sample. This data is presented in Figure 1.

**Table 2.** Description of the content taught by the teachers during the masterclasses (adapted from Zorzal and Lorenzo 2019).

| Type of content | Description |
|---|---|
| **Tuning** | General and specific guidelines on the instrument's tuning |
| **Music theory** | Guidelines on the formal aspects of the work performed by the student, such as musical reasoning, harmonic analysis, phraseological analysis, understanding of musical texture, etc. |
| **Work–composer context** | Explanations on the geographical, social, political, and/or cultural context in which the work was composed<br>Biographical information about the composer of the work performed by the student<br>References to other editions or interpretations of the work performed by the student<br>References to other musical, theoretical, or literary works to help students with interpretation and/or the technical performance of the work studied.<br>Suggestions and guidelines to develop a musical repertoire |
| **Metacognition** | Guidelines aimed at promoting reflexive behaviour, self-assessment and self-regulation. These guidelines include strategies for improving musical and behavioural skills in general. Some examples of these skills are as follows: concentration, memory, first-sight reading, planning practice activity, personal presentation, on-stage behaviour, and concern for the stylistic and musical preferences of the public<br>Strategies in the emotional field that may alter valence of the students' emotional states (whether positive or negative) include motivational content, stage fright approaches, as well as extrinsic feedback that reinforces certain aspects of the students' behaviour |
| **Expressive dimension** | Guidelines for the conscious handling of expressive music resources such as pulse, pace, tempo, timing, accentuation, articulation, dynamics, timbre, vibrato, sustain, etc. |
| **Technical dimension** | Guidelines for the conscious handling of the music's technical resources. These strategies may be specific to the left hand (posture, leaps, openings, digitation, and execution of ornaments and links), or the right hand (posture, angle of attack and digitation), focused on coordination between hands, or proposals to create technical stages to perform the work (decrease in tempo, fingering technique) |
| **Reading errors** | Remarks on the reading errors committed by the student |
| **Teacher's personal experience** | These concern the moments when the teacher shares his individual experiences with the students |
| **Diagnostic evaluation** | These comprise questions by the teacher to obtain personal information about the student |
| **Posture and relaxation** | Guidelines on the general principles of body posture and muscle relaxation during musical performance. It addresses questions relevant to the act of sitting, leg position, back inclination, instrument position on the students' body, physical problems common to musicians (repetitive strain injury, focal dystonia, and musculoskeletal inflammation in general), the need for rest breaks, etc. |
| **Instrument and accessories** | Explanations on the materials the instrument is made from (types of wood, pegs, strings, etc.)<br>Guidelines on accessories used by guitarists during performance (anti-skids, leg rests, foot stand, etc.) |
| **Nails** | Content relevant to the size and shape of the students' nails. This description includes subjects such as nail files and nail filing shapes, artificial nails, nail treatment products, etc. |

However, as Figure 1 suggests, the verbal strategies show a statistically significant within-subjects effect: $F(2, 105) = 50.86$, $p < .0001$. A deeper analysis of the Bonferroni post-test comparison shows that images and metaphors and technical terminology differ for all levels except Level 3. Similarly, images and metaphors differ from literal language for all levels except Level 5. Finally, no significant difference appeared between technical terminology and literal language for any of the five levels.

When verbal strategies were investigated according to the content taught, the results showed that some kinds of content were more often taught using literal language (e.g. nails, posture and relaxation), whereas for other content (e.g. music theory and reading errors) the use of technical terminology was predominant. Images and metaphors were used more sparingly across all musical content. Nevertheless, images and metaphors are a verbal strategy that occupies a noteworthy space in the teaching of metacognition, music theory, work–composer context, and the expressive dimension. Figure 2 presents the percentage distribution of verbal strategies to address each content category, regardless of the specific time used within the class, and Table 3 presents the results of the Kruskal–Wallis tests, with Dunn's comparative post-tests for all column pairs, for each verbal strategy according to the content taught by the teacher (further statistical details are provided by Figures S1 to S11 – supplementary material – in the online version of this article).

Subsequent tests evaluated the effect of student gender on the use of teachers' verbal strategies in two different conditions. In the first set of analyses, Mann–Whitney U-tests examined how the teachers used verbal strategies across gender without taking into account which type of content was taught with each verbal strategy. As displayed in Figure 3, these results show that student gender did not produce a statistically significant effect on the percentage of class time the teacher spends using literal language ($p = .40$), images and metaphors ($p = .28$) and technical terminology ($p = .09$).

In the second set of analyses, the Mann–Whitney *U*-tests investigated the effect of student gender on teachers' verbal strategies for each type of content taught. Regardless of the content, we found no influence of student gender on the use of technical terminology and literal language as verbal strategies (statistical details of these analyses are provided by Figures S12 to S21 – supplementary material – in the online version of this article). Nonetheless, the results show that teachers are more likely to use images and metaphors to teach the expressive dimension to male students than female students (as displayed in Figure 4). In other words, the student's gender seems to be an intervening variable between the type of content taught by the teachers and the verbal strategies they used when employing images and metaphors to teach expressivity. However, these results must be seen with caution. Bear in mind that, within this study's sample, there is a substantially lower number of female students in the three higher levels. This uneven number of male and female guitar students in intermediate and more advanced levels of performance could potentially affect the results.

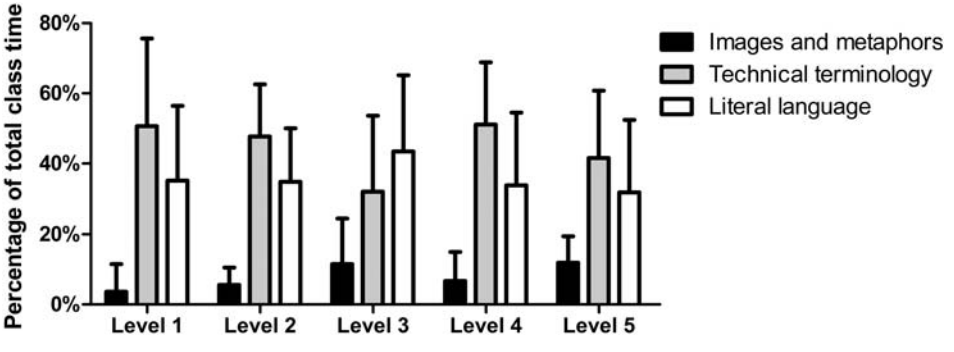


**Figure 1.** Use of verbal strategies by student performance level.

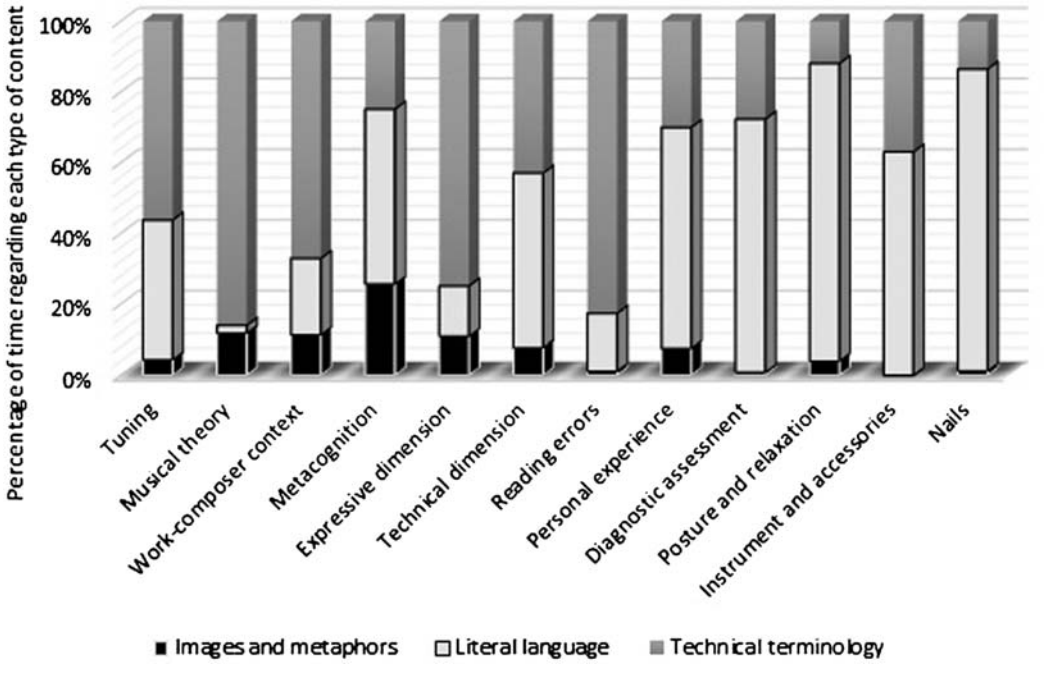


**Figure 2.** Use of verbal strategies by type of content taught.

## Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of students' gender and performance levels and the type of content taught on the verbal strategies that teachers use in a guitar masterclass environment. In general, we found that the students' performance levels did not significantly interact with the teachers' verbal behaviour, but two effects regarding the verbal teaching strategies deserve attention. The first indicates that students at the intermediate level (Level 3) were the only ones who received instructions using images and metaphors in an amount similar to instructions using technical terminology. It is known that possible ambiguity perceived in figurative statements may be resolved with the complementary use of musical terminology (Sheldon 2004). In comparison, students at the intermediate level, as observed by Woody (2006b), tend to 'translate imagery examples into explicit plans for the sound properties of their performance' (134). The results of this study suggest that when teaching intermediate students, teachers use technical terminology as a verbal strategy to explain the musical equivalent of instructions given using images and metaphors. Nonetheless,

**Table 3.** Statistical predominance of verbal strategies by type of content taught.

| Content taught by the teacher | Statistical predominance of verbal strategies | (*p*-value & Kruskal–Wallis statistic) |
|---|---|---|
| Tuning | Technical terminology and Literal language | (= .0061 & 10.19) |
| Music theory | Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 50.45) |
| Work–composer context | Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 33.59) |
| Metacognition | Literal language | (= .0045 & 10.82) |
| Expressive dimension | Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 60.47) |
| Technical dimension | Literal language and Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 47.99) |
| Reading errors | Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 34.18) |
| Diagnostic evaluation | Literal language | (<.0001 & 52.44) |
| Posture and relaxation | Literal language | (<.0001 & 31.25) |
| Instrument and accessories | Literal language and Technical terminology | (<.0001 & 18.56) |
| Nails | Literal language | (= .0004 & 15.78) |

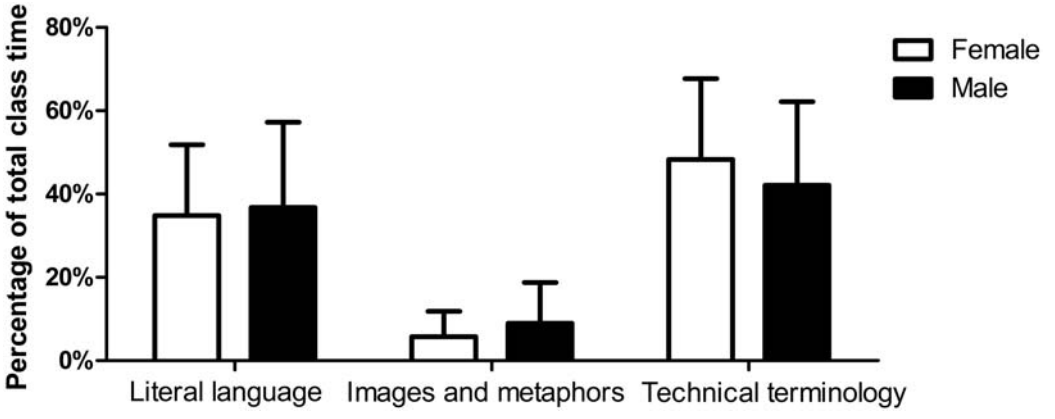


**Figure 3.** Teachers' use of verbal strategies for male and female students.

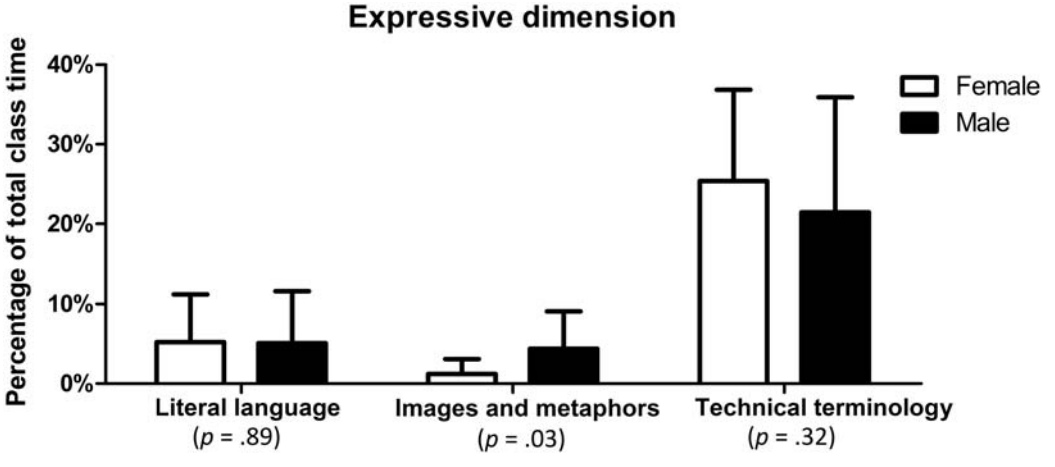


**Figure 4.** Percentage of class time for female and male students when teaching the expressive dimension using verbal strategies.

more research is needed into the content of the verbal strategies used in instructing intermediate-level students.

The second noteworthy effect is that the more advanced students (Level 5) were the only ones for whom instructions using images and metaphors did not differ from instructions using literal language. This result suggests that images and metaphors gain ground as a teaching strategy when teachers deal with more advanced students. This can occur because advanced students have overcome some technical difficulties that are both more frequently addressed using literal language and closely linked to the students' initial levels of musical performance (e.g. posture; Zorzal and Lorenzo 2019). Moreover, advanced students have already developed a repertoire of extra-musical templates that allow them to easily relate the acoustic parameters of sound to the figurative terms used by the teacher to communicate the emotions expressed by the music (Sloboda 1996; Juslin and Laukka 2000). Indeed, there is empirical evidence to suggest that some figurative uses of language (e.g. emotional analogies) are used more frequently in the instruction of musical expressivity for advanced students (Zorzal 2020).

The content taught by the teacher seems to be a decisive variable in the use of verbal teaching strategies. Not surprisingly, technical terminology was the strategy chosen for teaching content – such as tuning, music theory, work–composer context, the expressive dimension, and reading

errors – because these types of content are closely linked to the musical vocabulary. Literal language was the strategy chosen to deal with content unrelated to a specific musical vocabulary, such as diagnostic evaluation, posture and relaxation, and nails. Furthermore, content that was technical in nature, such as the instrument and its accessories, was equally addressed using literal language and technical terminology. This type of content seems to require the use of mixed forms of discourse for improved understanding.

In masterclass environments, the types of content discussed in the previous paragraph tend to circumscribe questions that demand a certain degree of immediacy in the solution proposed by the teacher. For this reason, they mostly require literal language and/or technical terminology as verbal strategies, as these strategies are more direct and communicate the teacher's intentions in more objective detail (Woody 2006a).

Both images and metaphors and the content defined in this study as metacognition deserve special attention. Images and metaphors are used with caution in masterclass situations because of the real possibility that it will be incorrectly understood by students (Schippers 2006; Sheldon 2004), as well as the absence of familiarity between teachers and students. Thus, teachers using this verbal strategy have to consider three main factors. First, images and metaphors must be appropriate for the students' age and level of performance (Bonastre, Muñoz, and Timmers 2017). Second, questions on the students' cultural background must also be considered adequate. Third, the content that images and metaphors are used to explain must be clearly defined. Once the content is defined, images and metaphors may have one of the following four objectives: (1) entirely technical or context-free motion (related to movement outside of a musical context; that is, as in specific movement and action metaphors in the first category presented by Barten [1998]); (2) technical, with aesthetic intentions, or contextual motion (related to movement of a musical nature); (3) solely referring to expression, aesthetics or musical meaning; or (4) related to mood (Schippers 2006; Sheldon 2004; Zorzal 2020). It is possible that certain content is better understood when it relates to one of these four objectives. For example, posture and relaxation could be taught using images and metaphors with a purely technical aim or context-free motion (e.g. 'you must relax your shoulder as if you had a twelve round boxing fight ahead'). More research is necessary in this regard.

Content defined as metacognition showed marked differences in relation to other content when it came to the teachers' verbal strategies. It is known that metacognition content is used to promote autonomy among students and the process of getting this autonomy relates to the larger questions of behaviour and musical skills, which are associated with long-term development (Jorgensen 2000). Knowing that a large proportion of the metacognition content instructions used images and metaphors, this result suggests that images and metaphors may be a long-lasting strategy to address the broad questions that students can review during their musical development (Woody 2006a). An example of this long-term perspective of images and metaphors as a verbal teaching strategy may be found in the excerpt below, in which a teacher works on 'Bagatelle n° 3', by William Walton, with a 22-year-old student. It is notable that the teacher's choice of verbal expressions (such as drinking wine) is associated with the maturity of adult life.

> I think you are missing out on tasting the music a little more. I get the feeling that you are so concerned about playing the next note that you are not stopping to enjoy the note that you've just played. Hold each note longer, listen to the dissonance. Do you know when you drink that special wine? Ah! Delicious. Taste the value of each note. (Master class transcript extract. Teacher 2, male advanced student)

In a broader analysis, the students' gender did not have an overall effect on verbal teaching strategies. It must be pointed out, however, that all the teachers in this study were male, and all of them adopted similar verbal behaviours towards students of both sexes. Previous research also did not identify significant gender differences in the general verbal behaviour of teachers and students in musical instrument classes (Zhukov 2013). Nevertheless, although still inconclusive, this study suggests that the language teachers used to explain how to consciously handle the expressive aspects

of music seems more imaginative for male students. Conversely, this language appears to be slightly more technical with female students in the same context. This may occur because 'the interpretative community which shapes musical taste is normatively the preserve of a strong male network' (Long et al., 2012, 302), and may be one of the reasons why female students reported a hostile, intimidating climate in the masterclasses (Long et al. 2014). Therefore, a gender-based difference in the teachers' verbal behaviour when it comes to teaching musical expression is pending confirmation; making it a matter worthy of more research.

## Conclusion

Answering the research question posited in the introduction of this paper, the results suggest that the type of verbal strategy used by teachers in guitar masterclasses may be strongly influenced by the content they taught. There is a possibility that teachers might use images and metaphors in unequal measure when dealing with male and female students learning musical expression. Should this possibility be confirmed, it would help to explain why female students often report hostile environments in masterclasses, thereby opening further avenues for study. It seems that images and metaphors, in particular, are a verbal strategy that may also vary according to the content taught by the teacher or the students' performance levels. The implications of these findings for instrumental music education are as follows: (1) they reveal the need for a possible systematisation of verbal strategies to prepare new guitar teachers; (2) for reflecting upon the way teachers use images and metaphors when teaching expressivity to male and female students; and (3) for a better understanding of images and metaphors as a verbal strategy for teaching guitar.

However, methodological limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, masterclasses with internationally renowned performers are substantially different from those delivered in one-to-one weekly lessons. Therefore, these findings may not represent exactly what happens on a daily basis in a music studio or conservatory. Second, a significantly higher number of male guitar students in the intermediate and more advanced levels of performance could potentially impact the perception of the verbal strategies teachers employed through images and metaphors. There are likely cultural and historical reasons for the low female participation rate in more advanced levels of guitar performance, but such a discussion is outside the reach of this study.

Images and metaphors are a verbal strategy worthy of greater attention. In the investigations conducted in this area, images and metaphors are often used as an umbrella term that may hide the specificities of the teachers' verbal discourse. For example, the figurative form of language used to teach posture when playing the instrument may be completely different from the figurative form of language used to teach the melodic contour of a musical phrase. Further investigation is needed into the types of figurative language used by the teacher (e.g. analogy, metaphor, euphemism, hyperbole, synaesthesia) and their relationships with other variables present in an instrumental music teaching environment (e.g. cultural background, type of musical instrument, teaching context, and the teacher's gender). Finally, the students' perspective on music teachers' verbal discourse presents an interesting subject for future research.

## Notes

1. Measures of agreement between the researchers for each verbal strategy are provided in Table S1 – supplementary material – in the online version of this article.
2. This excerpt was operationalised with a value equal to 2.62%. The use of percentage values is supported by the fact that the final duration of a masterclass may vary substantially. Thus this form of operationalisation minimised the effects that excessively long master classes could have on the entire sample.
3. Measures of agreement between the researchers for each content matter are provided in Table S2 – supplementary material – in the online version of this article.

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