

Jelena Panić Grazio

Radio-Television of Slovenia

jelena.grazio@rtvslo.si

SLOVENE MUSICAL TERMINOLOGY IN TEXTBOOKS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT¹

The aim of this paper is to present the most important issues of the Slovene music terminology in the field of teaching music theory. The examples chosen tackle the problem of equating two or more terms with different meanings (e.g. *G-clef* and *treble clef*, *chord* and *triad*, terms that refer to patterns of accents and beats). The hypothesis of this paper is that the lack of any clear separation between terms and concepts is misleading for readers and possibly counterproductive in understanding the material. The chosen examples illustrate the link between synonymy and polysemy on one hand and terminological inconsistencies on the other.

1. Introduction

One of the most repeated claims is that music is a universal language. If this is true, then one could easily pose the question whether musical terminology is consequently also universal. On the one hand one can think of a lot of terms that musicians use on everyday basis and that are shared among languages (musical terms present in the same or similar forms in different languages, the so-called *internationalisms*, e.g. Italian tempo and mood markings, such as *adagio*, *largo*, *espressivo*), but on the other hand there are also a lot of basic terms that have very different meanings in different languages. A salient example is the con-

¹ This paper is based on the author's PhD thesis "Terminology in Slovene Music Textbooks from the Year 1867 to the Present". The thesis embodied the first systematic musicological research of the development of some basic Slovene music theory terminology between the years 1867 and 2014. It was defended on June 16 2017 at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

fusion created by the tones ‘h’ and ‘b’. What in English is ‘b’ is called ‘h’ in Croatian and Slovene. The tone ‘b flat’, on the other hand, is referred to as ‘b’ in Croatian and Slovene. Some would say that this kind of phenomenon can lead to communication problems. Another famous example concerns the terms which have the same origin, but totally different meanings. In English, *parallel keys* would be, for example, *C minor* and *C major*, but in Slovene *paralelni tonovski način* would be e.g. *C major* and *A minor*. In English A minor and C major would be called *relative keys*. Besides this kind of phenomenon, which is known as the ‘false friends’ problem, some other interesting aspects of musical terminology in Slovene are the topic of the this paper.

2. Interlinguistic and intralinguistic terminology issues

Apart from the phenomenon known as false friends, there is also a question of equivalence between different languages, which can be either partial or zero. One will come across these especially in cases of terms linked to a specific culture, group of people or meaning in ethnomusicology (good examples can be found in the terms of traditional instruments, e.g. in Croatia – *tamburica*, *diplika*, *sopile*). Alongside the terminological problem that one comes across when talking about the differences among languages, there are also a lot of terminological problems when only one language is under consideration. Such problems are synonymy and homonymy.

The roots of synonymy and homonymy lie in the relationship between the term, the concept and the object, but the definitions are those in which the root of the problem with synonymy and homonymy lies (Cabr e and Sager 1999: 107). It is important to note here that when things are being defined, it is not as terms or as objects, but as concepts, because the mental representations of them can vary significantly. So, the relationships between terms and concepts can be quite complex. For the same concept there can exist a lot of different terms, some of which are preferred, admitted or deprecated.² For example the Dorian mode. Some would say *Dorian mode*, others might say *Doric mode*. Both of them could

² This is what the ISO norm calls ‘normative status’ of terms (<http://inmyownterms.com/mysmartterms/mysmartterms-3-preferred-admitted-and-deprecated-terms-%EF%BB%BFiso-0241-1/>).

be correct, but if an agreement were made that *Dorian* is a better term, that solution would become a preferred term. Of course, *Doric mode* could still be used as an admitted term. But if there was another term, *Dorionic* for example, and an agreement were reached that although some author had made up the term and used it in his book, it should not be used anymore. Then that would become a deprecated term and one would not use it anymore to describe a concept. With this kind of phenomenon there is a problem of different terms (which are called variants) that denote the same concept. One can understand the possible complications. Variants can create uncertainty, because two different terms are being used with the same meaning. This can affect our understanding of the text negatively, which can be also cognitively very demanding. On the other hand, some would claim that it can promote learning, especially when one is learning a foreign language, because synonyms give you alternatives to name a specific concept. Some would also say that they can be good for authors, because it allows them to introduce more colour into their writing.

With homonymy the situation is just the opposite: the same term can denote different concepts and this can also create uncertainty, because one can never be sure about which concept the other is talking about, so it can affect his/her understanding negatively. On the other hand, homonymy cannot be completely avoided, because it is ever present in talking about the diachronic aspects of any type of terminology. Homonymy is most often found with terms that have a wide spectrum of meanings, for example music, sound and harmony. But, even some terms that one might find simple and concrete can lead to cases of homonymy.

The following graphic example is taken from the PhD thesis in which the author of this paper dealt with this question in connection with the development of certain terms and concepts. Although the example is written in Slovene, one can clearly see the number of directions in which definitions of the same concept (in our case of 'akord' (*chord*)) can go.

Shema 8: Definicije pojma akord.

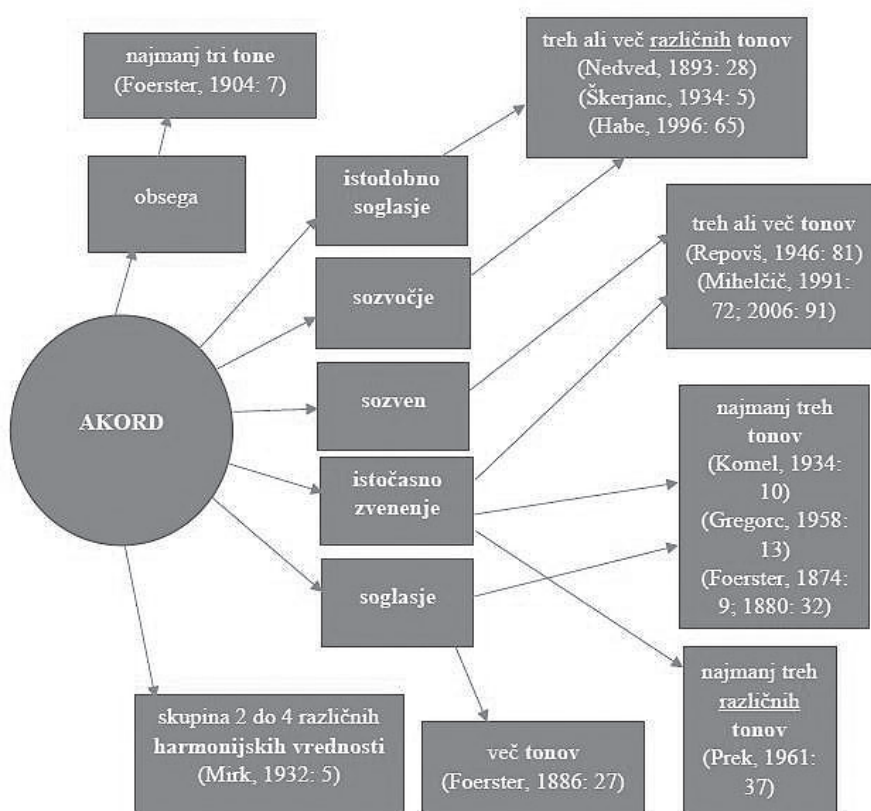


Figure 1. Definitions of the concept 'akord' (Grazio 2017: 182)

The conclusion to this section of the paper is to stress that one must be aware of the fact that when one is learning about music or when one is reading the textbooks and listening to teachers, one is not only learning about the concepts, but also acquiring terms and definitions that can spread over a really wide spectrum. These differences are closely linked to the people that are being addressed and this is an especially common case with textbooks because they can address pupils or students of very different ages. Definitions can also vary simply because of the authors, the writers of these textbooks. They decide which term they are going to use, and they decide how they will structure the definitions on the basis of their knowledge.

3. The specifics and the main terminological issues of Slovene musical terminology

In this chapter, some of the specifics of Slovene musical terminology will be presented. More detailed data regarding the analysis can be found in the PhD thesis of the author of this paper (Grazio 2017).

The analysis of the terminology used in Slovene musical textbooks published between 2004 and 2011 showed that 92% of musical terms are nouns, which is not unusual for any type of terminology since nouns usually constitute the basis of any terminological set. However, musical terminology is, in comparison to other terminologies, distinguished by its variety of adverbs, since there are a lot of terms for the ways in which a musical piece should be performed (tempo and mood markings, e. g. *allegro* or *adagio*). The analysis also showed that musical theory terms in textbooks are mostly multiword terms. This is because for every general term, for example *scale*, there is a large number of combinations comprising adjective and noun (*Dorian scale*, *major scale*, *minor scale* and *parallel scale*). Regarding the etymology of Slovene musical terms – the terms are either direct quotations (*appoggiatura*, *pavana*, *tempo*), entirely Slavic by origin (*prehajalni skok*, *nozvočje*) or they can have Latin, Greek or Italian foreign basis which is then adapted to target language (*modulirati*, *transponirati*) (Grazio 2017: 100–103).

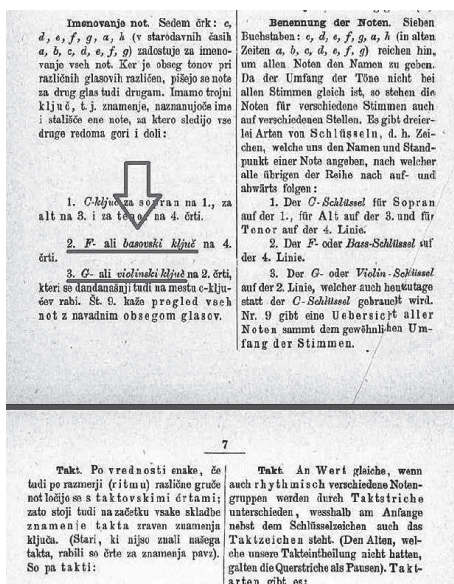
Slovene musical terminology underwent many changes from the late 1860s to this century. The terms changed their meanings a lot, so the concepts also changed the terms with which they were denoted. In case of Slovene terms the key factors for these changes were mostly sociolinguistic. Politics played a major role, because it had big influence on what was happening in the Slovene language. German, for example, played an important role in the development of Slovene musical terms in the late 19th century, and Croatian became influential in the second decade of the 20th century (after the first joint state in 1918 was founded). On the other hand, English has been the main influence in the last half a century, especially in fields such as popular music. The other main factor in the development of terms was the influence of authors who wrote texts about music; in the last 150 years textbooks have been written by different musicians with different attitudes toward the topic. The terminology they used was deter-

mined by their personal profiles and educations. For example, Anton Foerster, who is regarded as the founder of Slovene musical terminology was Czech by origin. He first lived for a short time in Croatia and then moved to Slovenia, and of course his terminology is very much influenced by these facts, while another important author of textbooks in the 1920s, Marko Bajuk, was a linguist by training and he was very critical of the influence that German had on Slovene language, so consequently his role models, when he was creating new domestic musical terms, were Croatian and Serbian authors (Ib.: 212–218).

The situation in Slovene textbooks today is as diverse and interesting as it was in the past. The data show that synonymy and homonymy are a very common occurrence. As was mentioned earlier, these occurrences could be a result of the terms themselves, since abstract terms are more liable to different interpretations than concrete terms. Also, more specific concepts come with more defined meanings than those that are less specialized or are even a part of everyday language (e.g. *sound, music*). Synonymy and homonymy can also be the result of the sociolinguistic factors mentioned above (such as politics, the influence of foreign languages) The last of the factors is purely linguistic. They can be linked to spelling problems. There are some terms in the Slovene language for which there is still no single accepted way of writing (e.g. the terms for the clefs – *G-ključ / g-ključ / G ključ*). Next, there is the problem of choice between a domestic and an international term (e.g. *gigue – žiga, paralelni dur – vzporedni dur*) and the choice between a shorter and a longer term (e.g. *razvezni znak – razveznik, taktovski način – takt*). The final factor is linked to variability in longer terms. As I found out in my research, longer terms are far more akin to different variations and synonyms. A good example is the term *frigijski modus* (in English – *Phrygian mode*). For the ‘Phrygian mode’ Slovene has four different terms. Some talk about *frigijski modus*, the others would say *frigijski način* or *frigijski tonski način* (*tonski način* could be translated as a *key*), while the others simply say *frigijska lestvica* (*lestvica* could be translated as *scale*) (Ib.: 2018–220). Although a lot of authors use these words as synonyms, what is the result of this and are we really talking about the same concepts when we use these terms? In the next chapter, some other examples of synonymy will be presented in more detail.

4. Problematic aspects of synonymy in Slovene textbooks

To begin with, two examples from two different textbooks are presented in the following picture. One was written by Anton Foerster in 1874, the other by Pavel Mihelčič in 2006 and they both tackle the same terminological problem. When these two authors talk about types of clefs, they talk about *F-clef* or the *bass clef* and *G-clef* or *treble clef*. In Slovene, the terms would be *G ključ* or *violinski ključ* and *F ključ* or *basovski ključ*. With the definition that *treble clef* is also called *G-clef*, a pupil will learn that these two are totally equal concepts. This is, of course, not entirely accurate, because there are other types of G-clefs, and treble clef is just one of them. The same goes for the *bass clef* and *F-clef*. The pupil will equate these two concepts and he/she will not be able to form a hierarchy between them.



Notni ključ

Za zapisovanje not uporabimo petštrni notni sistem. Za naravno doblitev notne višine (absolutne višine tona) moramo na začetku vsake vrste zapisati notni ključ, dočič ključ vedno po kateri se ravnavo vse preostale note v okviru uporabe (s tremi in več pomožnimi őrtrami zgoraj, s tremi in več pomožnimi őrtrami spodaj) obsega.

Violinski ključ imenujemo tudi **Gključ**, ker z zavojem obkrožča drugo őrto, na kateri je v tem ključu nota g'.

27



Obseg, ki ga ima violinski ključ, zadostuje za otroške in vse ženske glasove (sopran, mezzosopran, alt) in mnoge instrumente (violina, flavta, oboa, klarinet, trombeta, kitara, mandolina, itd.). Violinski ključ uporabljamo tudi za zapis visokih moških glasov (tenor) in nekaterih instrumentov v najvišji legi (viola, violončelo, rog). Ta ključ uporabljamo za zapis zvojnje lege tonov pri vseh instrumentih s tipkami (čembalo, klavir, orgle, cesalca) in pri harfi.

Basovski ključ imenujemo tudi **Fključ**. Dvojnič je ob značilnem zavoju, ki le obrne na zrcalna in na obeh koncih odrezana slika violinskega ključa, obdaja őrtrto őrto, s tremi pomožnimi őrtrami zgoraj in tremi pomožnimi őrtrami spodaj.

Figure 2. On the left: a passage from Foerster's textbook regarding types of clefs (Foerster 1874: 6). On the right: a passage from Mihelčič's textbook regarding the types of clefs (Mihelčič 2006: 27)

Another interesting case is linked to a case when authors equate subordinate or superordinate concepts. A good example of this is the practice of equating the terms *trozvok* ‘triad’ and *kvintakord* ‘root position triad’. *Trozvok* is a term made out of two words, one is *tri* ‘three’ and the other is *zvok* ‘sound’. This term can refer to any kind of chord that has three pitches (or sounds). On the other hand, the term *kvintakord* is a term made out of the words *kvinta* ‘fifth’ and *akord* ‘chord’. It is a type of chord which is made out of the root, the third and the fifth. The conclusion is quite clear: the term *kvintakord* should be used to name one specific type of *trozvok*, but in Slovene textbooks one can come across a common practice among authors in using both terms as synonyms. Here are some examples from the textbooks:

“Temeljni ton, terca in kvinta skupaj tvorijo trizvok.” (The root, the third and the fifth form together the triad.) (Negro-Hrast 1924: 161).

“Trizvok je akord, sestavljen iz dveh terc, oklepa ga kvinta.” (A triad is a chord composed out of two thirds, spanning the range of a fifth.) (Gregorc and Jurca 1958: 13).

“Izraz ‘trozvok’ v resnici označuje število tonov, ne pa njihove intervalne razvrstitve, vendar ga je raba tako udomačila, da pomeni tudi v tej knjigi vedno osnovno lego, t. j. kvintakord.” (The term ‘triad’ in fact refers to the number of tones and not to their interval classification, but in practice it has come to be used, as in this book, in its the root position triad) (Škerjanc 1962: 9).

In the last quotation it is interesting to note that even the author realizes that maybe he is making a terminological mistake here, but nevertheless, he lets practice win in the end.

As was mentioned before, there can be a lot of confusion in understanding the concept if the domestic term and the international one are used by the same author or/and in the same textbook for the same concept. In Slovene, there is a good example of this with the concept of the patterns of accents or beats, which in English is called *metre*. In Slovene textbooks there can be found two different terms of foreign origin (*meter* and *metrum*)³ and one domestic (*mera*). Here are three examples by the same author in which he uses these terms with the same meaning:

³ *Metrum* comes from German term *Metrum*, which has an origin in Latin *metrum* and Greek *métron*. The term *meter* came to the Slovene language from the German word *Meter*, which comes from french *mètre* (<https://fran.si/193/marko-snoj-slovenski-etimoloski-slovar>).

“Prvotno je bila pasakalja španski, dokaj svečani ples v trodelni meri.” (Originally the passacaglia was a Spanish, relatively formal dance in triple metre.) (Škerjanc 1966: 36).

“Preprost račun nam pove, da je v štiridelnem metru prvi in tretji mah enako težka.” (A simple equation tells us that in the quadruple meter the first and the third beats are equally stressed.) (Škerjanc 1956: 71).

“Za analizo zadošča ugotovitev, da je metrum te skladbe dvodelen.” (For the analysis it is sufficient to realize that the metrum of this piece is duple.) (Škerjanc 1966: 16).

When reading this, it would only be understandable that the pupil would ask himself “if the author is talking about the same concept, shouldn’t he be using the same term to express it?” Interestingly enough, this is not where the confusion stops.

Things became even more complicated when other authors started to use another domestic term *taktovski način* ‘time signature’ also as a possible synonym. Since this term was longer than the original domestic term *mera*, they started to shorten it, so it became simply *takt* ‘bar’. In the end, another logical question naturally arose: is *mera* or *taktovski način* or *takt* a time signature, or the way in which the beats are organized? Here are the examples from the textbooks:

“Taktovski način ali metrum je organizacija utripov v značilne enote; te enote pa tvorijo časovne oznake.” (Time signature or metre is the organization of beats into characteristic units; these units form time signatures.) (Amalietti 2011: 105).

“Dvobodni in tridobni takt imata le eno samo poudarjeno dobo, preostali taktovski načini pa jih imajo po dve ali celo več.” (The double and triple bar have only one stressed beat, while the remaining time signatures have two or even more.) (Ibid.: 124).

“Več o 6/4 taktu pri pregledu taktovskih načinov str. 25, kjer se bomo natančneje bavili tudi z ostalimi takti, ki se redkejšje rabijo.” (More about 6/4 bar can be found in the overview of time signatures, page 25, where we will also look at other bars that are not so often used.) (Gröbming 1924: 13).

“Posamezne mahe vežemo v skupine, ki jih imenujemo takte (mere).” (Individual beats are joined into groups, which we call bars [metre]). (Bajuk 1922: 22).

“Zamenjava mere (metruma, takta) mora biti v notni sliki pravočasno označena.” (The change of metre (metrum, bar) must be announced at the right time in the score.) (Mihelčič 2006: 50).

The research showed that as many as eleven authors out of the sixteen who have tackled this topic in their textbooks in the last 150 years use two or more terms that were mentioned before as synonyms. In the end, there are six different terms (*metrum*, *metrika*, *meter*, *mera*, *takt* and *taktovski način*) to be found in the history of textbooks, and there is still no agreement on the exact meaning and their usage (Grazio 2017: 202–203).

The overall conclusion is quite obvious. The lack of definitions and a general clear separation between terms and concepts is misleading for the readers and counterproductive in understanding the material for the pupils in the early phases of the acquisition of basic musical terminology and its correct usage.

5. Conclusion

The given examples point to the conclusion that for the good of the reader the terminology in textbooks should be consistent, at least to the point that the concepts are named consistently with the same term within one textbook. The authors should be held responsible for the use of terminology, and in choosing the right terminology they should be able to consult other experts in the field, but also linguists capable of helping them to choose the best terms for their books. Ideally, there should exist a book which would prescribe the correct terms and their usage, but unfortunately, in Slovenia, this is not the case. There is only one modern dictionary of Slovene musical terminology; published in 2014; it deals with percussions (*Dictionary of Percussion Terminology* by Marjeta Humar and Franci Krevh). Making this kind of dictionary takes a lot of time, and it calls for cooperation between the experts in the specific field and a language expert. Quite often one can expect that certain problems will arise from this type of cooperation because linguistic or terminological criteria and those of experts in the field are likely not to be the same. But the most important thing is discussion. If we think more about how we express our thoughts and talk to others about certain problematic terms, then maybe we could in the long run come to an agreement. At this point, we can try to raise the awareness of terminological use,

be consistent in our everyday use of the terms and, when writing about a given topic, always think about how the readers will understand our words, especially young readers such as those who use textbooks.

References:

- AMALIETTI, PETER. 2011. *Sodobna glasbena teorija*. Amalietti & Amalietti. Ljubljana.
- BAJUK, MARKO. 1922. *Pevska šola*. Jugoslovanska knjigarna v Ljubljani. Ljubljana.
- BRENES, PATRICIA. 2018. *In my own terms*. <http://inmyownterms.com/mysmartterms/mysmartterms-3-preferred-admitted-and-deprecated-terms-%EF%BB%BFiso-0241-1/>. Accessed 13 November 2018.
- CABRÉ, MARIA TERESA. 1999. *Terminology: theory, methods, and applications*. J. Benjamins Pub. Co. Amsterdam.
- GRAZIO, JELENA. 2017. *Terminologija v slovenskih glasbenih učbenikih od leta 1867 do danes*. Doctoral dissertation. Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani. Ljubljana.
- GREGORC, JURIJ; JURCA, MAKS. 1958. *Osnove teorije glasbe in enoglasni solfeggio*. Državna založba Slovenija. Ljubljana.
- HUMAR, MARJETA; KREVIH, FRANCI. 2014. *Tolkalni terminološki slovar*. Društvo slovenskih skladateljev, Inštitut za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša ZRC SAZU, Društvo Slovenski tolkalni project. Ljubljana.
- MIHELČIČ, PAVEL. 2006. *Osnove teorije glasbe*. Državna založba Slovenije. Ljubljana.
- SNOJ, MARKO. Slovenski etimološki slovar. <https://fran.si/193/marko-snoj-slovenski-etimoloski-slovar>.
- ŠKERJANC, LUCIJAN MARIJA. 1966. *Oblikoslovje*. Državna založba Slovenije. Ljubljana.
- ŠKERJANC, LUCIJAN MARIJA. 1962. *Harmonija*. Državna založba Slovenije. Ljubljana.
- ŠKERJANC, LUCIJAN MARIJA. 1956. *Kontrapunkt in fuga: 2. del*. Državna založba Slovenije. Ljubljana.

Slovenska glazbena terminologija u udžbenicima između prošlosti i sadašnjosti

Sažetak

Članak se bavi nekim problematičnim primjerima unutar teorijsko-glazbene terminologije u slovenskim udžbenicima. Nakon predstavljanja karakteristika i opće terminološke problematike u slovenskoj glazbenoj terminologiji autorica ističe problem

sinonimije kao osnovnoga problema u razumijevanju tekstova, kako u starijim, tako i suvremenim glazbenim udžbenicima. Na nekoliko primjera pokazuje se da izostanak jasnoga odvajanja između naziva i pojma može biti zavaravajuć i kontraproduktivan za razumijevanje teksta, a posljedično i za razumijevanje samoga gradiva za učenike.

Keywords: musical terminology, music theory, textbooks, Slovene language

Ključne riječi: glazbena terminologija, glazbena teorija, udžbenici, slovenski jezik