

Abstract

The most common form of interpersonal communication is using human voice. Interest in the development of vocal skills can be found in ancient texts, but the approach to voice development throughout history is often not supported by systematic research. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine literature used in university courses focused on vocal skills development in three fields – public speaking, stage speech and singing – as to their phonetic grounding.

Based on a search of university curricula, twenty publications were selected for analysis. Based on recurring themes across the publications, a set of thematic categories was identified for each of the fields examined, into which the publications' contents were sorted. Relevant thematic categories were then assessed in terms of awareness of five acoustic-phonetic operational domains – fundamental frequency, sound spectrum, amplitude, temporal characteristics and articulation.

In stage speech publications, there was a noticeable overlap with one domain in each category. In public speaking manuals, the domain representation was similar, but for the category of resonance overlapped equally with the amplitude and spectral domain. In singing publications, multiple domains were represented in each category and the spectral domain was represented across all categories, indicating the complexity of the singing voice.

The thematic categories into which the content of the manuals were sorted, along with the results of the analyses of their overlaps with the acoustic-phonetic domains, are presented in a series of annotated tables which include sub-tables focusing on selected aspects of the analysis, as well as summary tables collating all results. This study thus lays out a descriptive framework that could be used in the future as a basis for formulating hypotheses in follow-up research on vocal skills development.

Keywords: vocal skills, verbal performance, singing voice, stage speech, domains of development