

Voice analysis and improvement

1. The importance of voice improvement

Broadcasters are a unique creation of our times - an "essential product of the electronic age". The problem is that their audience is scattered; but they are related to the preliterate story tellers in that they speak directly to their audiences. This makes VOICE QUALITY an important aspect of performance. It is the broadcaster's voice personality, invisible to the listener, but essential to the communication process. The most important part of your delivery has to be your voice. You are not an actor in a silent film, a mime in a skit, nor a person giving lessons on lip reading. You are a presenter giving a speech. If they can't hear you and they can't understand your words, then you have failed. Like any other skill, strengthening your voice takes practice, but it is time well spent. This chapter gives you reasons for why you should develop your voice and includes activities and videos to help you improve your voice.

The moment we open our mouths to speak we are judged.

As words are spoken assumptions are made about who we are — presumptions about our intelligence, desires, determination, confidence and influence are all inferred from how we use our voices.

For instance:

Our tone, pitch, quality of articulation and inflection deliver subtle messages about the kind of person we are. They convey our mood and our feelings at a particular time.

Having the capacity to project appropriate sounds can make a critical difference in the way we are perceived and treated. When used effectively, our voice can work in our favor and enhance our personal and professional relationships.

It can be said that our voice is the primary link between our mind and body. Therefore, with the appropriate mindset and awareness of how to use our voice properly, we can exercise control over how we speak, improve effectiveness and do so with confidence.

It's evident those with communication impairments are at a serious disadvantage. Fortunately, the future of voice synthesis is bright.

2. Speech

Speech, or oral communication, is a process of sending and receiving spoken messages between people. Speech conveys and sways through the presentation of ideas, opinions, information, directions and commands, usually with responsive communication from the listener. Effective speech is tailored by our needs and those of the receiver. Once we start to consider the ongoing interactive nature of speech, many of the differences between speech and writing become explicable.

3. Personality Development

Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability.

In today's era of cut-throat competition and endless opportunities, you can't rely solely on good grades to excel and achieve success on the professional front. People who bank upon their higher educational degrees overlooking the significance of soft skills miss various lucrative growth opportunities and eventually lose their edge. To hit the jackpot, you need to have a perfect balance of soft skills and academic excellence.

It is important to understand that personality is not just about fluently speaking in English and donning good clothes; it's more than that. Personality development implies value addition in personal and professional spheres of life. If you really want to make a difference and stand apart from the rest, go the extra mile and groom your personality.

Let's discuss in detail how public speaking can help shape personality.

1. Communication Skills

Public speaking provides you an opportunity to evaluate your speaking habits, pay heed to your vocal quality, and assess your language/accent. All these

efforts enhance your ability and proficiency to communicate verbally and make an impact on people. Moreover, you learn to make a careful selection of words, pronounce words correctly, and put forward your message with clarity in a persuasive manner without verbal crutches (like “umm,” “ah,” etc.).

2. Body Language

Non-verbal cues, such as hand gestures, head movements, and facial expressions, speak the facts that are not audible and say a lot about your speaking style. Moreover, this non-verbal communication has a huge impact on audience engagement. So, when you practice public speaking, learn how to make right eye contact with the viewers and what your body posture should be on the stage. By aptly combining the spoken words with physical gestures, you can create your own unique identity.

3. Confidence

Public speaking empowers you to overcome your insecurities and fear, making you comfortable around people. Speaking engagements teach you to channelize your nervousness into enthusiasm and deliver your talk with passion and grace. Continuous practice of speaking at office meetings and in small groups equips you with the confidence to express your thoughts and opinions to a larger audience without any hesitation.

4. Critical Thinking

As a public speaker, you need to tailor your message to fit the requirements of your audience. For this, you do careful reasoning and apply meticulous standards of evidence and logical principles while evaluating, conceptualizing, and/or synthesizing the information accumulated through observation or experience. You start thinking critically to improve your speaking style and make your talk relevant and meaningful to your listeners.

5. Presentation Skills

Public speaking involves positive visualization of your ideas and perceptions to win the trust of the audience. So, you learn to customize the predesigned, high-definition presentation templates to align them with your speaking objectives. You also gain the basic knowledge of all major presentation platforms (such as PowerPoint, Google Slides, Apple Keynote, etc.) and utilize the advanced features offered by them to make your slides more captivating and visually appealing.

4. Analyzing the speech

Speech is defined as the expression of thoughts and feelings by articulating sounds. Speech is the most natural, intuitive and preferred means of communication by human beings. The perceptual variability of speech exists in the form of various languages, dialects, accents, while the vocabulary of speech is growing day by day. More intricate variability at the speech signal level exists in the form of varying amplitude, duration, pitch, timbre and speaker variability.

Voice analysis is the study of speech sounds for purposes other than linguistic content, such as in speech recognition. Such studies include mostly medical analysis of the voice (phoniatics), but also speaker identification.

5. Pitch

The musical term for frequency is pitch. The higher the frequency, the higher the pitch. The lower the frequency, the lower the pitch.

Intonation and pitch are two of the most important elements in effective speaking. Spoken English too, like any other language, depends vastly on them. Having a good knowledge of that and an intuitional usage of these in communication would ensure the utmost fluency in the language and in turn, the listeners would understand you more easily.

Pitch is one of the very crucial elements of speech in any language. Without the right pitch and intonation, it becomes almost impossible to convey the intended messages on-point. In the English language precisely, if the right intonation and pitch range are not ensured, the meaning and manner of speech can not be pinpointed most of the time. That causes unnecessary misunderstandings and uncalled-for situations. Lack of the right pitch would always confuse both the speaker and the listener equally.

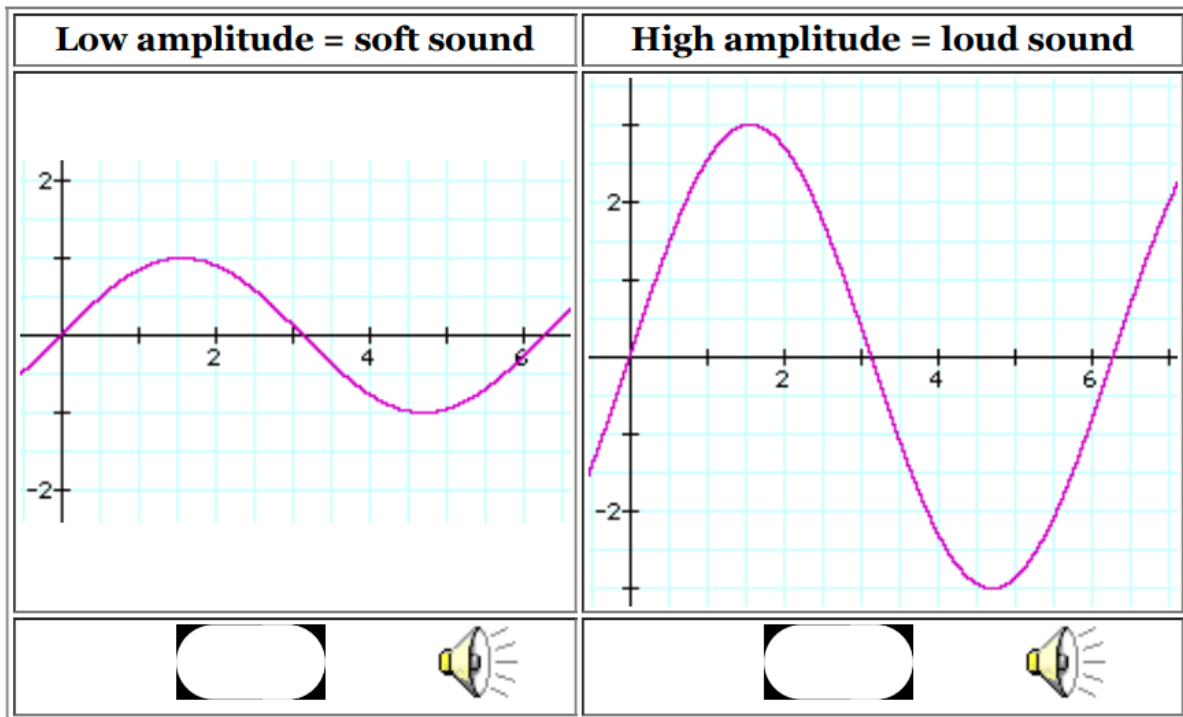
Pitch is the vocal element that determines the accentuation and prominence of speech. It is similarly significant in the individual word or full sentence level. The normal pitch of any voice depends on the vocal cord at play and in what frequency it vibrates. The frequency of the vocal cord's vibration is solely dependent on the length, thickness and tension.

The vibration of the vocal cords is the basis of the change in pitch. The increase in the vibration of the vocal folds means that the pitch climbs with it. Normally, the pitch range of an average person remains inside the 70 Hz to 200 Hz mark.

In the case of everyday speech, the pitch range of the utterance denotes the attitude of the speaker towards the information or the listener in front. The neutral, unmarked, mid-pitch is the speaker's modal pitch and it conveys the simple-neutral manner that the statement is delivered in.

6. Amplitude

The amplitude of a sound wave determines its relative loudness. Looking at a graph of a sound wave, the amplitude is the height of the wave. In the following two graphs the two sound waves have the same frequency but differ in amplitude. The one with the higher amplitude has the louder sound. Studies in hearing show that we perceive sounds at very low and very high frequencies as being softer than sounds in the middle frequencies, even though they have the same amplitude.



7. Volume

Volume, sometimes referred to as "amplitude," is a sound system's dB output. Essentially, it is the level of the music coming out of your speakers.

After a signal has been processed and it makes its way out of a sound system, the volume is how loud it is. In essence, volume is how loud we perceive something to be .

In the world of mixing, the volume of a signal is the audible level of the source you are sending out of your speakers.

8. Tempo

Speech tempo is a measure of the number of speech units of a given type produced within a given amount of time. Speech tempo is believed to vary within the speech of one person according to contextual and emotional factors, between speakers and also between different languages and dialects.

Measurements of speech tempo can be strongly affected by pauses and hesitations. For this reason, it is usual to distinguish between speech tempo including pauses and hesitations and speech tempo excluding them. The former is called speaking rate and the latter articulation rate.

Tempo refers to absolute time and is referenced to an external time source that marks off equal units of time. For example, your heartbeat, the sound of your footsteps on a steady walk, a clock ticking, or a metronome all provide a series of steady beats. The speed of these beats is called tempo. These steady beats (ticks, pulses, clicks) serve as the underlying foundation upon which musical rhythm and performance is built.

9. Vitality

If you say that someone or something has vitality, you mean that they have great energy and liveliness.

10. Voice Quality

Voice quality has been defined as the characteristic auditory colouring of an individual's voice, derived from a variety of laryngeal and supralaryngeal features and running continuously through the individual's speech. The distinctive tone of speech sounds produced by a particular person yields a particular voice.

voice quality is that component of speech which gives the primary distinction to a given speaker's voice when pitch and loudness are excluded. It involves both phonatory and resonatory characteristics. Some of the descriptions of voice quality are harshness, breathiness and nasality.