

## Practical Research of “Inter Subjectivity” Theory in Vocal Music Teaching in Universities

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**Abstract.** Vocal music is one of the two categories of music art which corresponding to instrumental music. Vocal music teaching is one course with strong practicality. During the teaching, different students appear different phenomena as well constantly emerge new situations and new problems, such as aspects of psychological, physiological, character, comprehending ability, cultural quality, studying attitude and relationship between teacher and student, etc. For all these, teachers must continuously explore, study out new method to adapt new situation and solve new problems. The author introduces educational theory of “Inter subjectivity” into the vocal music teaching in colleges and universities which let teachers and students can carry on teaching and study activities with admission and respect to each other between subject and subject, thereby obtain good teaching effect.

“Education is spiritual fit between men as well as culture transferred activities. The relation between men is the dialogue between you and me... Education, namely, is spiritual and physical communication between men subjective.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Vocal music is one of the two divisions of musical art, which correspondents with instrumental music. Vocal music is one kind art expression way by noise organ, which is a complex physical activity as well as a senior neuron activity for creation in high mood. Using voice to express music freely requires long-term systematical singing training and physical exercise in excited conditions.

Vocal music teaching is a course characterized by strong practice. In teaching process, various students represent various phenomenon, which lifts new situation and problems on psychology, mentally, personality, perceivable capacity, culture values, study attitude, teacher-student relations, etc. Teachers shall explore constantly for new ways to address the new problems.<sup>[2]</sup>

The author introduces Inter Subjectivity into vocal music teaching in universities, which makes teachers and students subjectively recognize and respect to conduct teaching and learning, thus achieving sound teaching effect.

### I. Essential Characteristics of Vocal Music Art

Mr. Zhou Yinchang says in Vocal Music Teaching Theory written by Yu Zizheng: Vocal music includes double interpretations: (1). Vocal music is the general name for one major type of musical performance from the point of musicology, which corresponds with instrumental music. All the music with human voice (solo, duet, antiphon, chorus, round, etc.) is called vocal music. (2). The singing within certain range and specific standards can be called vocal music from the point of musical performance.<sup>[3]</sup> In the essay, the author shall discuss vocal music theory in narrow sense, namely, the significance of the 2nd vocal music said by Zhou. Vocal music, one kind of performance music, is language music sung by human beings, and singing type often refers to solo.

#### 1. Direct Expression of Emotion

Singing comes from direct expression of human’s spiritual nature, based on some certain organs, can reflect the close relationship between singing and human beings, dating back to the origins of

human art. In art practices in early stages of human beings, the activities are deep and direct in expressing emotion regardless of its adherence to practical function. The Music of Getianshi and story-based, music-poem combined major folk vocal works both the direct expression of human emotion.

In ancient China, we had the saying that the silk is inferior to bamboo while bamboo is inferior to meet. The sound characteristics of vocal art is not only the cry for human spirits, but also the need for spiritual monologue, comfort, compassion and echo.

## 2. Combination of Literature and Music

Vocal art combines two different art types—music and literature (poem and lyrics) by its distinguished structure and ways of expression. As two independent art divisions, the thinking of music and literature, creation, expression and ways of feelings are drastically different. “Sometimes, it weakens the characteristics of both for achieving balance; Sometimes, it disobeys some certain rules itself for getting closed to the other side; But general trend and penetration into each other strengthens musical and art expression, enriches their contents, and promotes the prosperity and development of the two arts. Their independent characteristics are not lost but become brighter, richer and more stereoscopic.”<sup>[4]</sup> The infectivity of both combines to rock strongly the viewers’ spiritual.

## 3. Recreation of Performers’ Soul

The double creation of vocal works is the belt and bridge for communicating works and viewers. As vocal music is the art of human voice, performers’ subjective creative ability is the key factor for revitalizing art works in performances. The performers firstly shall get good command of ideas and concepts of works in correct ways. Secondly, different performers shall bring different effect regardless of objective and unchangeable contents. Then, performers’ vocal skills shall express the contents of works based on emotion, achieving perfect accordance between skills and art expression in content and types. Finally, recreation of vocal music shall express performer’s personality to interpret works.

# II. Special Rules for Vocal Music Teaching

Vocal music is an art, while vocal music teaching is an art as well. Art itself has its rules, principles and scientific bases. But it is not pure science totally. Vocal music teaching is one kind special teaching, which requires individual teaching with different teaching targets. This requires teachers command rules of individual teaching and teaching based on students’ aptitude. Meanwhile, this shall conform to rules of universalism and consistence.

The instrument used in vocal teaching is vocal cords that can not be seen in common conditions. This makes teaching of both sides in harder situation. During teaching process, teachers shall use visualized language to teach and students shall get close to teachers’ thoughts, understand the intention to reach the requirement. Teachers shall find problems in students’ voice and find ways out to adjust teaching method. In the process where teachers lead students to achieve subjectivity of both sides, students will make progress constantly, and master all the skills and vocal works, achieving teaching purpose.

As target of vocal music teaching is different subjective, different treatment based on their aptitude are critical in teaching process. Singing is an art, which requires long-term training to master singing rules and apply all voice skills. Without step-by-step accumulation and constant systematically practices, one can not make achievements. It is not one day work without any shot-cut.

Vocal music teachers shall be optimistic and passionate to each of his/her students, explore their merits, cultivate their potentiality, assess, inspect and accept them from several points of views. The teachers shall focus on students’ present abilities and consider the past foundations as well. More importantly, they shall focus on future development to make accurate assessment. Meanwhile, teachers shall pay attention to individual difference and general assessment, helping all students leash their potentiality, cultivating their confidence and making greater progress.

### III. Essence of Inter Subjectivity Theory

Educational activities are practical activities to develop human beings, which should highlight its association. Concerning subjectivity to develop human beings, target-oriented activities focus on development of possessive individual subjectivity, while association focuses on commonness and uniformity between subjective, which develops inter subjectivity. Inter subjectivity can be achieved by association between subjective, replacing subject-subject relationship by subject-object relationship. This relationship considers self and others both as subject. In association, self affirmation and respect for others' value can be realized, which considers not only myself but also others as subject. The association between subject is connected by mediators, reaching common understanding. Therefore, the relationship between subject is subject-mediator-subject or subject-object-subject, which is inner uniformity of subject-subject and subject-object relations. In educational practices, the relationship between educators and students is association relationship in comprehensive sense. This kind of association and dialogue between human spirits are significant for guiding student-teacher relations.

### IV. Practical Research of Inter Subjectivity Theory in Vocal Music Teaching in Universities

In vocal music teaching in universities, voice concepts, singing methods, ways to handle works are problems that shall be addressed. Besides, student-teacher mental state should also be taken into consideration. This is because in teaching process, normal teaching and learning will be influenced if both sides are in bad mood, fearful and inattentive. Therefore, inter subjectivity shall be focused in teaching process and make full use of association-dialogue methods to make teaching move smoothly.

Vocal music teaching is an active bilateral activity, in which practices of voice skills play an important role. Only by intelligent teaching and smart learning will students make full use of subjectivity, exploring students' potentiality to the largest extent and bearing fruit in teaching.

"Practices shall start from the basics. Don't get down to the work with full ambition."<sup>[5]</sup> In the beginning, correct voice concepts are important to the beginners. "Vocal music teachers aim to finally change the voice concepts for students. The whole process for teaching is to change their concepts."<sup>[6]</sup> In the beginning stage, the teachers and students should cultivate mutual trust. Based on common trust, students shall believe teachers' concepts and follow them without hesitation. The author ran into the situation before: A male student gave no trust to his teacher in college, and his teacher judged he is a tenor based on his tone, field and change point, etc. But he admires tone of baritone, and he thought he was a baritone with many practices. He fought mentally with his teacher in classes and his concepts about voices are stubborn. He was obsessed with singing with CDs outside classes, and his voice was in the wrong direction after four years. It has been one year since his graduation, and his voice in low and middle bass sounds like terrible without clearly hearing his lines. High bass was almost lost and voice field became narrow. This is a thought-provoking example. It is uncommon in real vocal music teaching and this case seems more serious. What we can learn from the case is that vocal music teaching and performance are different. Performance art can get art effect by self singing. However, vocal music teaching requires association, dialogue and cooperation between students and teachers. Namely, teachers and students, both as subject, involve in activities with their subjectivity respectively. The teacher in the case mentioned above is subject himself but considers his student no subject, which is only target-oriented activity and lacks full assessment and equal dialogue. For student himself, he is much too subjective and dubious about his teacher, lacks efficient communication and dialogue, thus bearing terrible effect.

Every student who learns vocal music is willing to master the gist of vocal music by guidance from teachers. Therefore, students must listen to every critical point attentively. But vocal music is abstract art, vocal cords are grown in bodies and we can not see and touch it, which requires teachers' guidance. So teachers are able to describe it in specific and accurate language. During voice training, teachers shall take different measures for different students.

Inter Subjectivity Theory requires teachers respect fully students' subjectivity, consider them same as their own, communicate more times, pick suitable works based on students' aspects for their reference. College students have their own beauty value and taste of works. Teachers should assign more works, in which students can choose to promote their interest and diligence. Besides, students can find some works to sing, and these works may come from others mouth to their taste. And also it is likely that these works may complement the works assigned because they don't like them. In such cases, teachers shall give their right to choose and give some guidance on works they choose. Concerning limited learning experience and poor accumulation of knowledge of students, they have no idea whether the works they choose are suitable or not. So teachers should help students make correct choice in correct direction.

In works teaching, teachers must require students explore deep into works, strengthen emotional experience for lines and master emotion base correctly, thus revealing correctly the theme of works and making performance vivid and moving. Here interpretation from teachers contribute to their understanding for works.

Inter subjectivity is harmonious education, eliminating subject-object relation of subjectivity, transforming educational process into association practices, realizing comprehensive understanding for educational process. Teachers and students should form an equal relationship, reflecting mutual respect, understanding and combination between subjects.

The introduction of inter subjectivity in college vocal music teaching helps teachers and students set new teaching concepts, choosing scientific teaching methods, applying human-oriented teaching process, realizing learning and studying activities in various teaching modes. Vocal music teaching is a process requiring constant improvement, adjustment and development. We are looking forward to gaining huge progress in vocal music teaching.

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