

EMOTION AND PERFORMANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S SINGING

Grit Sommer

Werner Deutsch

Christliebe El Mogharbel

Technical University of Braunschweig, Institute of Psychology, Germany

Ingo Laufs

Hanover University of Music and Drama, Germany

Background

In the course of a child's singing development, singing in community becomes the usual form of singing, whereas singing alone becomes more of an exception. Singing alone is often connected with self-rating emotions.

Aim

It is our aim to find out the relations between the behaviour of a child that is asked to sing alone and the quality of the ensuing song reproduction. We investigated which different forms of inhibition influence the child's readiness to sing. A second issue is how the motivational attitude toward the singing task is related to the quality of the singing.

Method

A cross-sectional study with longitudinal additions was carried out with 46 children aged 3 to 6 years. The experimental task of reproducing children's songs was embedded in a board game.

The song reproductions were categorized as to whether a song was sung immediately on request, after prompting or not at all. The musical quality of the song reproductions was assessed in terms of completeness, intonation and adherence to musical structures.

Results

Only four children always refused to sing. The remaining 42 children varied in motivation according to situation. There is a relationship between the type of inhibition – disinclination vs. lack of confidence – and the possibility of overcoming the initial blockade. Singing immediately upon request does not necessarily produce better singing results than reluctant singing.

Conclusions

Singing alone in the presence of others is a problem for many children. Situations that encourage joint singing or that enhance the child's self-confidence help reduce overdrawn expectations on their performance to a healthy minimum.