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THE OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE INSTRUCTORS REGARDING THE PROBLEMS FACED DURING UNDERGRADUATE INDIVIDUAL VOICE EDUCATION COURSES

Research Article

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Abstract

In Turkey, Music Education Sections (MES) under the Fine Arts Education Departments of the Universities are one of the leading institutions that provide higher professional music education. Individual Voice Education (IVE) course, which is included in the undergraduate curriculum of these institutions, has a very important place and function in music teacher education. The aim of this research is to discover and examine the problems faced by those IVE course instructors working at higher education institutions providing professional music education. The research group was formed from 10 instructors randomly selected from the full-time staff that teaches IVE courses at the MES of the Turkish Universities. A personal information questionnaire and an interview form prepared by the researcher was applied to the participants. In the interview form, 5 open-ended questions were asked to identify the opinions and suggestions of the instructors regarding the problems they face during the IVE courses. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive analysis and processed according to the predetermined thematic framework. Based on the findings, the problems that the individual voice instructors face during the courses were identified and suggestions regarding these problems were presented.

Keywords: music education, voice training, individual voice education, instructor.

1. Introduction

Music education is the process of creating certain musical behaviours for an individual, or creating certain musical changes in his/her musical behaviours, intentionally through his/her own life (Uçan, 1994, p. 31). Music education is divided into various sections and branches in terms of basic behaviour and content covered, tools and equipment used, methods and techniques adopted, environment and level of performance, and the stage and duration estimated. However, whatever the section/branch, level, duration, content, method and equipment is, the music education is organized and conducted for three main purposes as general, amateur and professional (Uçan, 1994, p. 25, 31). Professional music education aims to provide the musical behaviours and experience required by the music section, branch, work or profession towards people, who choose the field, branch or section of music as profession related to that section or branch or wants or shows tendency to choose it as a profession, a with a certain level of talent for music (Uçan, 1994, p. 27).

In Turkey, professional music education at the undergraduate level is given at faculties of education, departments of fine arts, the departments of music teaching, and at the conservatories of private, foundation and/or state universities. Among these institutions, the department of fine arts education (DFAE) affiliated to faculty of education and the department of music education (DME) stand out with their task of training and raising music teachers. In

music teacher training, what is essential is not only the satisfaction of an individual in line with his/her interest, desire, skills and talent but beyond that, the ability of that individual to get prepared, improve, specialize, develop and mature in the form, scope and level required by that profession. For this purpose, the Music Education Undergraduate Program (MEUP) is programmed in a way to cover the field information, general knowledge and professional knowledge together (Uçan, 1994, p. 28).

Çevik (2006, p. 642) describes the four main aspects of MEUP as follows:

“...*Field of Music Knowledge and Skills* that shapes the musical behaviours of an individual; *Field of Music Education* that provides the teacher candidate with the ability to use effective learning-teaching strategies to transfer his/her knowledge of music field to the students, to plan, process and conduct the education process within the classroom environment; *Field of Teaching* that develops the ability to recognize the school and classroom environment and to communicate with the school administrators, colleagues, students’ parents and the community as well as the awareness of responsibility with school supported experiences; and the *Field of General Knowledge and Culture* that improves the competences of teacher candidates in language and general culture...”

The field of voice education, which is under the Field of Music Knowledge and Skills, provides the individual with the ability to use his/her voice for speaking and singing purposes, ensures learning experiences related to singing (making music), and has a great importance and function in music teacher training (Çevik, 2006, p. 647). This is because the main instrument of a music trainee in music education is his/her voice that he/she is to use and benefit in both educational and artistic means at any class and level. Teachers, who are to give music education at schools, need to have accurate and sufficient knowledge and skills about voice education (Öztürk, 2003, p. 81).

Through voice education, which he/she receives throughout his/her education, a music teacher candidate shall teach his/her students how to sing accurately, healthily and effectively (Tonya, 2008, p. 25). Such that, as Torey (2002) also stated, since music teachers in Turkey are to work at pre-schools, secondary schools, high schools and vocational schools, they should have a good knowledge of vocal characteristics and voice development stages of each age group, should carry out voice education using appropriate and accurate methods and create accurate repertoire. The main purpose of voice education in music teacher training is both to provide the music teacher candidate with behaviours related to proper, good and effective use and protection of his/her voice, and to teach voice training methods for their future students. In this respect, the voice education received by music teachers within the scope of their undergraduate education is of great importance.

In the Department of Music Education of the Faculties of Education, voice education is conducted both individually and collectively. The aim of the classes is to provide the music teacher candidates with the skills related to most accurate, beautiful and effective ways of using their voice, which is the most basic and natural instrument of music teacher candidates, in both speaking and singing as well as teaching them how to protect their vocal health and to improve their voice in its natural state (Ekici, 2008, p. 67).

In the Music Education Undergraduate Program (MEUP) of the Faculty of Education prepared by the Council of Higher Education (YOK), the music classes to be given between the 1st and 8th semesters are as follows: Individual Instrument (I-II-III-IV- V-VI-VII) (throughout the 1st to 7th semesters), Individual Instrument and Instruction (in the 8th semester), Individual Voice Education (I-II-III-IV) (from 1st to 7th semesters), Choir (I-II-III-IV-V-VI)

(throughout the 2nd to 7th semester), Choir and Conducting (in the 8th semester) and Chamber Music (I-II-III) (from 5th to 7th semesters).

Individual Voice Education (IVE) forms the conceptual framework of this study. For this reason, definitions and descriptions included in the study are limited to voice education and IVE. Accordingly, no information about the voice, the physical characteristics of voice, the formation of human voice, the anatomical features and functions of the organs forming voice is included in the study.

According to Toreyin, who defines voice education as “a planned and programmed interaction process carried out in line with the planned targets through pre-determined principles and methods and which ensures behaviours necessary to enable the individuals to use their voice according to their anatomical and physiological structure while speaking and singing”, this education covers four sub-voice training steps including singing, advance voice training, choir and speech training according to their level (1998, p. 82, 83).

On the other hand, Çevik defines “voice education” as the process of providing the individuals with the necessary behaviours to enable them to use their voice in correct, beautiful and effective ways with a certain technical and musical sensitivity in accordance with the artistic and educational objectives in line with the characteristics of anatomical and physiological structure. Çevik, expressing that this process can be organized both individually and collectively, divides voice education into three main types as individual, ensembles (chamber music) and collective voice education (choir voice training) (Çevik, 2013, p. 53-60). In addition, it divides IVE into two groups as fundamental voice training and advanced voice training, and defines these subtypes as follows:

“*Fundamental voice education* is the process of providing basic behaviours for the correct use of speech and singing voice at all ages and qualities, primarily for educational purposes. Since it can be programmed individually, it can also be organized for communities. The planning and implementation process of the training includes the stages of listing and evaluating the behaviours intended to be developed in students in advance, regulating the learning experiences in accordance with their age and voice characteristics, and obtaining and assessing the necessary data to determine whether these regulations improve the intended behaviour in students or not.”

The individual voice education course that constitutes the subject of this research is a “fundamental voice education” as Çevik mentioned above that all the other students whose major instrument is different than singing should take for two years in the music teacher education institutions (Çevik, 2006, p. 656). However, with the decision of the Turkish Executive Council of Higher Education (YÖK), 25 graduate programs, including the MEUC, have been updated in 2018. In the updated program the duration of IVE courses which were programmed for four semesters/2 years before (at the time this research was done) were cut down covering only 2 semesters/one year. And this new scheme is implemented from this academic year (2018-2019).

1.1. Related Research

In the literature, there were no foreign publications similar to this research. In several studies conducted in the field of music educator training and higher music education research presented around the subjects such as general problems in training music teachers; undergraduate music curriculums (Hourigan, R. M., & Scheib, J. W., 2009; Schmidt, C. P., 1989; Güsewell et al., 2016); the problems encountered in the education of different instruments or the views of student-teachers and assessments of the current situation in

different countries (Ogawa, M., 2004; Thorgersen, Johansen & Juntunen, 2015). In a recent study by Thorgersen, Johansen and Juntunen (2015) the opinions of 12 music teacher educators who teach pedagogical courses called instrumental pedagogy and classroom music pedagogy in three music academies in Finland, Norway and Sweden were investigated by interviews. An opinion presented in the findings can be considered as a common recommendation with this study states that clear programme visions should be formulated in music teacher education institutions.

In the study presented by Toreyin (2001), she included the problems encountered during the voice training courses at DME and the effects of these problems on music teaching profession. In the study, the problems were grouped under three headings and interpreted. Accordingly, under the title of *the problems arising from the YOK curriculum*, it is stated that the total duration of the major field course in voice training within MEUP is not adequate and appropriate in terms of annual and weekly course hours; and that the fact that the definitions, objectives and contents related to the field course are not specified clearly causes different results to be obtained among the instructors and institutions applying the same curriculum.

In the research, under the title of *the problems arising from the quantity and quality of the instructors*, it is stated that the instructors do not have a common and definite opinion on the objectives, method and contents of the major field course in voice education applied to train music teachers, and that there are significant problems caused by instructor shortage. The vocal problems of the students due to misuse of their voice during the secondary school years are also expressed as *problems arising from the students' level of attendance*. As a consequence, the problems encountered during major field courses in voice education are stated to have negative effects on music teaching profession. For this reason, first of all, some of the uncertainties in the major field courses should be determined by voice education instructors, and a curriculum covering common course definitions, objectives, principles, teaching methods and assessment methods is suggested to be created.

Ekici (2008) conducted research on the development of the IVE course in the music teaching the undergraduate program. In the research, some 4th-grade students studying at the Departments of Music Education of four universities in Turkey, graduate and working music teachers and voice education instructors were interviewed. With the interview forms prepared for each group, the participants were asked questions in the categories defined as "the Duration of Course, Problems with the Use of Voice, Learning-Teaching Process, Evaluation, Common Curriculum, Situations and Problems Regarding the Professional Life, and Recommendations."

According to the findings obtained as a result of the interviews, all of the students and the instructors stated that they found the time allocated to the IVE course as insufficient and that it was necessary to conduct the course with the accompaniment of a piano. Instructors stated that they mostly experienced problems in teaching breathing with the support of diaphragm, and students had problems with voice techniques. In addition, the music teachers presented some opinions on placing more importance to theory and practice (especially exercises); providing information about vocal health and protection through voice education during childhood and adolescence; practicing school songs and anthems as well as classical voice education repertoire; and concentrating on Turkish music and practices for professional life. According to the findings regarding curriculum development, it was concluded that the objectives and target behaviours of the IVE course were not specific. Therefore, cognitive, affective and kinaesthetic field objectives were determined for the proposed curriculum and a Table of Specifications was prepared. Moreover, content was created and edited by specifying

the subjects of the IVE course in such a way to cover a four-semester education process, followed by a sample course model and an assessment form being presented.

In the research conducted by Kaya (2006) in order to evaluate the positive and negative views of the 1st grade students from Inonu University, Faculty of Education, Department of Music Teacher Program on the IVE course, it was determined that the students had some problems arising from the inability to use their voice correctly. The students participating in the research stated that it was necessary to be given more information on the use of voice in technical terms, to be corrected by their instructors if they were to make any mistakes throughout the course, to be motivated by their instructors more, to carry out a repertoire work in accordance with their own voice intervals and to perform their works accompanied with the piano. They also stated that it was necessary to have more resources, that one hour a week was not sufficient for this course and that the instructors should conduct one-to-one classes with each student.

Tonya (2008) conducted a study in order to determine the problems faced by the students studying and the IVE course instructors working at the DME in the Aegean and Marmara regions, and to examine the relationships between these problems and their personal characteristics. When the results obtained from the questionnaires applied to the students and teachers were examined, it was seen that the respondents reported some common problems in some course-related matters. Both students and instructors reported that they found the classrooms to be numerically and physically insufficient, that the duration of the course was not sufficient in terms of the number of semesters and weekly course hours, that the course grade distribution was not fair due to lack of common assessment criteria, that they found the number of accompanists insufficient, and thus the interest in the course was low because of that (singing without accompanist). In addition to this, the students stated that they had difficulty in singing early in the morning and in foreign languages, while the instructors stated that they had difficulties in working with students who had poor vocal health, had not completed their mutation period and had false pre-learning and prejudice.

Yiğit (2016) conducted research based on the views of instructors in order to identify the problems encountered during the implementation of the IVE course curriculum in the music departments of Fine Arts High Schools. According to the findings obtained, IVE instructors found the duration of the course insufficient in terms of practicing period and weekly hours; they had a great deal of challenges in providing skills specific to the field of IVE during the mutation period; 44.4% of schools had insufficient physical conditions to run IVE courses; and they stated that the course was mostly conducted with 3 or more students. In the research, it was found that the most problems were caused primarily by the duration of the course, followed by problems related to mutation, resources, physical conditions, textbooks and the way of running the course.

In the research carried out by Akgün (2005) in order to determine the problems arising from the undergraduate education of music teachers, 135 music teachers were asked an open-ended question of "what should be done to provide more efficiency for the major field courses in voice education at the schools where the music teachers work." According to the findings obtained, 36.30% of the respondents stated that the voice education courses should be increased to at least two hours a week, while 20.74% argued that the voice education courses should not be limited to one year and that they should cover a four-year period and be compulsory. 42.22% of the respondents argued that the repertoire used in voice education courses should be re-arranged to be used in the music teaching profession, while 28.89% of them stated that Turkish songs, especially school songs, folk songs and popular pieces should be included in the repertoire. 25.18% of the respondents stated that the choir courses should be given for the

period of four-year undergraduate education, and 46.67% of them found it necessary to focus on folk songs, school songs and popular choral works by reviewing the repertoire to be created for choirs.

Aytekin (2006), in his master's thesis titled "Monitoring of the Individual Voice Education Process through Acoustical Voice Parameters in Music Teaching Programs" compared the vocal performances of the 1st grade students of Gazi University Department of Music Teaching before the voice education process and after 7 months of voice education. As a result of the measurements made using an analysis program in computer environment at the related unit of Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, it was determined that IVE taken during a full academic year provided positive improvements in the voices of students.

Şakalar (2015) conducted a research with the purpose of identifying the difficulties faced by graduate students of advance voice training in the state conservatory in Turkey, and offering solutions in that matter. According to the results obtained from the research questions, to which most of the students gave positive answers, half of the students stated that they were hesitant about the adequacy of the Turkish songs, which were used as a repertoire in the advance voice training courses, but the majority (90.4%) stated that they were pleased to sing in foreign language. Most of the students noted that the time allocated to the advance voice training courses was not sufficient, that they were hesitant about having decent knowledge of voice anatomy, and that the use of accompaniment instruments in advance voice training courses had a positive impact on their interest in the course.

In a master thesis, where Özel (2012) investigated the importance of piano accompaniment in IVE, the number of instructors accompanying in the higher music education institutions and the amount of weekly course hours for the accompaniment courses were found to be insufficient in terms of efficiency. Özel (2012) also suggested that the accompaniment courses were not efficient enough due to lack of students' interest and insufficient number of practice rooms and pianos, and that the students experienced some problems in singing with an accompanist. As a result of these determinations, the pianists were suggested to develop and train themselves in accompanying with different musical instruments and/or singing in addition to the solo works throughout their music education process.

As is seen, in various researches conducted between 2001 and 2016 with the IVE instructors and students, similar problems encountered during the IVE courses and similar opinions and suggestions on that matter were revealed. In this study, it was considered to be appropriate to consult the instructors' opinions on the implementation, curriculum and requirements of the IVE course based on practice. To this end, issues related to many factors affecting the teaching/learning process (teacher/student qualification, curriculum, teaching period, learning and teaching strategies, methods and techniques, physical structure of learning environment, equipment, teaching materials, etc.) were tried to be presented in this research by referring to the opinions of field specialists.

This research is of importance in the sense that it determines the problems, which are or may be encountered by the instructors, and offers solution proposals to be used for these problems. The question of "What are the problems faced by the voice education instructors during the individual voice education courses?" is the main problem sentence to be answered in this research. Based on this main problem, answers were also sought for the following sub-problems and the solution proposals were offered by assessing the instructors' answers.

1. What are the problems caused by the competencies of instructors in IVE courses?
2. What are the problems caused by personal characteristics of the students in IVE courses?
3. What are the problems caused by the classrooms and equipments in IVE courses?
4. What are the problems caused by the curriculum in IVE courses?

2. Method

This research is qualitative research. *“Qualitative research is a research where qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used and which follows a qualitative process for presenting the perceptions and events within the natural environment in a realistic and holistic way.”* (Yıldırım and Şimsek, 2004, p. 35) In this study, data were collected by using an interview technique and were processed descriptively through content analysis. *“The main purpose of using interview technique is usually not to test a hypothesis, but on the contrary to understand the experiences of other people and how they make sense of these experiences.”* (Türnüklü, 2000, p. 544)

The population of the research consists of the voice instructors working full time at the DFAE and DME of the faculties of education in universities, during 2016-2017 academic year. In order to form the research group, 15 instructors were randomly selected among this population. However, since 5 instructors selected could not participate in the interviews, the study was conducted with ten instructors working in different regions of the country. Demographic data of the research group were collected solely for the purpose of providing personal information about the participants and were not taken into consideration. Accordingly, the data collected about the instructors, whose opinions are consulted in the research, are given in the table below.

Table 1. *Data Obtained from the Personal Information Questionnaire*

No	Gender	Age	Graduate Degree	Assignment	Title	Seniority	Main Branch	Voice education field courses given other than IVE
1	F	41	Phd.	Faculty Member	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	18	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing.
2	F	45	Master	Instructor	-	23	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing., Choir.
3	F	44	Phd.	Instructor	Dr.	8	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing., Choir.
4	F	60	Phd.	Faculty Member	Prof. Dr.	27	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing., Choir.
5	M	47	Phd.	Faculty Member	Assist. Prof. Dr.	24	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Choir.
6	F	45	Phd.	Instructor	Dr.	23	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing., Choir.
7	M	45	Phd.	Faculty Member	Assist. Prof. Dr.	20	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Group Singing., Choir.
8	F	38	Bachelor's	Instructor	-	17	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Choir.
9	F	42	Phd.	Instructor	Dr.	17	Vocal	Advanced Voice Edu., Choir.
10	F	45	Master	Instructor	-	17	Violin	Adven. Voice Edu., Choir Edu., Choir Conducting

With the purpose of establishing the theoretical dimension of the research and preparing the questions to be addressed to the participants, first of all, the Turkish and foreign (English) literature related to the subject were reviewed and the opinions of the field specialists were utilized to a great extent. The data were collected by applying an interview form structured with a *personal information questionnaire* prepared by the researcher. Since it was aimed to collect only demographic information about the participants using the personal information questionnaire, the data obtained from this questionnaire were not taken into consideration. The five open-ended questions included in the interview form were prepared to determine the problems faced by the instructors during the IVE courses and the solution proposals offered by them regarding these problems. Also, these questions were organized by consulting with the specialists' opinions. In addition, themes related to the questions were created and outlined, and the data were aimed to be collected regularly. The data collected through having a text chat with the participants are presented in the findings section, rankly and under the related headings. The opinions and suggestions of the participants are given without any changes, but their names are not disclosed. Instead, each instructor is assigned a number and it is considered appropriate to define the instructors as E (Educator).

3. Findings

Findings related to the sub-problems of the research are included in this section. The themes regarding each sub-problem are examined under the headings and examples from the views of the instructors on the themes are presented. The opinions are presented directly as stated by the instructor without disclosing their names. Instead of this, the instructors participating in the research are referred to as E1, E2, and E3 etc.

3.1. Opinions on the problems caused by the competencies of the instructors in the IVE courses and the solution of these problems

When the answers given by the instructors to the first question are examined, it is determined that the opinions include the following main themes:

1. Instructor shortage
2. General and specific field competencies of the instructor

1. Instructor Shortage

All of the instructors stated that the number of instructors in the field of IVE was insufficient and that their institutions should recruit more instructors specialized in this field. The instructors noted that due to instructor shortage, that course, which should be conducted with students individually, were conducted with at least two and sometimes three students, and that the course could not be run efficiently neither for students nor instructors.

While E6 and E9 mentioned that instructors, who specialized in different branches, were conducting IVE courses instead of field specialists due to instructor shortage; E2 stated that they experienced a decrease in performance due to the insufficient number of instructors.

E1: *"In order to reduce the fatigue and busyness of the instructors in terms of the efficiency of the courses, some instructors specialized in this field should be recruited."*

E3: *"The instructor shortage is an important problem. I think that especially opera artists, who have strong pedagogical formation, can contribute to the faculties of education."*

E5: *"Due to instructor shortage, I have to teach more than three students in one hour. The only solution to this is to increase the number of instructors."*

E8: *"In my opinion, the biggest problem is the insufficiency of the number of instructors who are to give this course. If the number of instructors increases, the course load will be reduced and more efficient courses will be taught. I believe that by increasing the number of instructors, the course load can be lightened and voice education can be provided at a higher quality. For instance, I have to have a class with at least 2, sometimes 3 students in just one hour, and this is a serious problem for me and my students. We have to race against time for a quality class."*

E9: *"Individual voice education course should be conducted with each student individually for 1 hour per week. However, although each class is carried out with 2 students, our course load is close to 30 hours a week."*

2. General and Specific Field Competencies of the Instructor

E3 assumes that all instructors have general or specific field competencies, but notes that the instructors do not improve themselves and that their expertise is limited to their own experiences, which they gained through master-apprentice relationship, and he/she continues as follows:

E3: *"If the instructor learned through a master-apprentice relationship in his/her own time, he/she is not creative and curious about researching and using new teaching methods, techniques, materials and methods."*

Although not stating it as a problem, E10 recommends instructors to constantly renew the repertoire of works and pieces they use. E5 also mentions that due to instructor shortage and the course load, instructors cannot find enough time to improve themselves, and then he/she makes the following suggestions:

E5: *"I believe that more time can be devoted to individual studies and field-specific works, if the instructor shortage is eliminated. Apart from this, the instructors should go abroad, as much as possible, with the ERASMUS program and closely follow the courses on site."*

As E1 thinks that the instructors have general and specific qualifications in the field, he/she also states that the problems encountered may be caused by the differences in method and application, and suggested as follows:

E1: *"...I can say that each of the instructors differs from each other in terms of teaching methods. Sometimes, this situation can create confusion on students, who have not yet established technical skills and level, and causes them to struggle. In this case, I think an advance voice education council should be established to set a path on what needs to be done."*

In addition to these, E6 and E9 specify that IVE courses should be given by field specialists and they express their opinions as follows:

E6: *"Most importantly, I think that people, who graduate from advance voice education main branch and have a master's and doctoral degree in this field, may have the qualification to conduct IVE courses. The fact that those, who are capable of lecturing in this field (those with qualifications), are not available in the educational institutions due to lack of staff is a very saddening result. I find it very inadequate of people, who specialized in other branches, giving this course."*

E9: *"I see that the IVE course given by the instructors who graduated playing different instruments. In my opinion, they should be definitely the graduates of the advance voice education major branch. When substitute instructors are hired due to the insufficient number of instructors, some problems arise in the learning process and the relations with the students."*

E9 also suggests that the instructors conducting the IVE course should have the ability to use the piano as an accompaniment instrument and states that it will be beneficial for the course, if the accompaniment of songs is also carried out by the instructors.

3.2. Problems caused by personal characteristics of the students in the IVE courses and the views on the solution of these problems

When the instructors' answers to the second question are examined, it is seen that they offer different opinions and suggestions as well as similar ones. The instructors stated that they encountered problems caused by factors such as the physical characteristics of the students' vocal organ, the physical and mental characteristics of the students, the use of language and speech, lifestyles, pre-learning about the use of voice and the singing features affected from the cultural environment. The most prominent theme headings are as follows:

1. Language and Speech Characteristics
2. Life style
3. Pre-learning
4. Pronunciation
5. Physical and Mental Characteristics

1. Language and Speech Characteristics

One of the instructors stated that the orthodontic braces used for dental treatment had a negative impact on teaching/learning:

E3: *“Orthodontic braces are the most disturbing situation for the students. Some difficulties can be observed in articulation and opening their mouths.”*

While all of the instructors stated that the speech characteristics of the students coming from different regions affected teaching/learning, E1 and E6 regarded that as a problem:

E1: *“Many problems, especially speech disorders (local dialects, etc.) can be considered.”*

E6: *“Accent differences of students coming from the east, in particular, can be challenging. This problem is also observed in students coming from the Thrace region and the Black Sea region.”*

1. Pre-learning

Most of the instructors noted that their students had inadequate or inaccurate knowledge on the anatomy of the vocal organ and vocal health, and some of them based this upon high school education of the students that they received before undergraduate studies.

E4: *“Our students mostly come with healthy and above-average voice materials. Although there are some of those with vocal health problems, they have little to none “singing” behaviour due to incorrect behaviours built. The number of students, who prefer to sing, is low and they usually prefer playing an instrument. In my opinion, the fact that they do not want or are unable to sing despite their vocal capacities, is a negative consequence of the misconceptions they have gained in using their voices.”*

E5: *“I sometimes face problems caused by smoking habit of some students and sometimes problems caused by their habits of straining their voice, which is a habit they gain especially in Fine Arts High Schools. In such cases, I primarily focus on vocal health. I tell them that they should use their voice without straining, and concentrate on the work they need to do regarding this matter.”*

E8: *“Since some Fine Arts High Schools do not have voice instructors, the students may be using their voice incorrectly with inaccurate voice techniques. Or sometimes we encounter serious vocal problems. I believe the voice education should be taken seriously especially in Fine Arts High Schools and voice instructors qualified in this field should be recruited.”*

1. Pronunciation Characteristics

Three instructors stated that their students faced problems caused by singing in different genres.

E3: *“Other problem is that THM [Turkish Folk Music] and TSM [Turkish Classical Music] courses cause students to use their voices through larynx. This way of singing, which is quite different from the advance singing technique, confuses the students.”*

E6: *“For students, who choose instruments such as baglama, oud, qanun etc. as their main branch, it is very difficult to move their voices from larynx and put in the proper position.”*

E8: *“In addition, since the majority of students make music outside the school, there are some vocal disorders caused by the long-term use of voice and the environment (caused by the use of cigarettes, alcohol, etc.).”*

IVE instructors, who participated in the research, made the following suggestions to solve the problems arising from the students' language and speaking characteristics, pre-learning and pronunciation characteristics:

E4: *“Students may gain the habit of singing the melodies, which can enable the students to identify natural voices by focusing on mid-tones without guiding them to sing from higher and lower tones in a way to excess their vocal capacities, in a natural position, maybe excessing over speech tone in some areas.”*

E5: *“In such cases, I primarily focus on vocal health. I tell them that they should use their voice without straining, and concentrate on the work they need to do regarding this matter. For a long time, I concentrate on the diaphragm control and carry out exercises on voice-producing through blowing. As they gain these abilities, I make them reinforce by practicing some pieces that will not challenge their vocal boundaries.”*

E6: *“We have to carry out special training with visually impaired students. However, sometimes these students can learn a lot easier.”*

E7: *“I try to overcome the problems I face according to the characteristics of the individuals. If there is a problem with the vocal organ, in addition to medical help, I try to overcome the problem using exercises.”*

In addition to these, E1 proposed the use of visual materials and different resources to thoroughly introduce anatomy in the IVE courses; while E10 stated that he/she emphasized on the importance of health and protection of vocal organs, improvement of healthy life and artist sensitivity; that he/she solved the speech-related problems caused by the previous use of voice, singing techniques and the local speech characteristics of students by supporting them with individual studies and exercises; and that he/she included musical analysis, while performing the exercises and musical pieces.

1. LifeStyle

E5 specified that some of the students face smoking-related problems. The same problem was mentioned by E8 stating that he/she encountered vocal disorders due to this habit.

E9 pointed out that some problems were had with students who did not attend the classes regularly.

1. Physical and Mental Characteristics

Some instructors expressed that the lack of prospective expectations of the students, the idea of failing due to lack of self-confidence and the state of being disabled-led students to be unwilling towards the class. Examples of opinions and suggestions on this theme are as follows:

E1: *“It is very important for a student to know what to expect from a course. This is because his/her love and interest towards the course increases at that proportion. The task of the teacher is to determine what the deficiencies are and to set a path in that direction. The teacher should follow the student, monitor the student's situation, develop a method accordingly and enable the student to adopt this method. The teacher should be patient, establish a good*

dialogue and explain the subjects well. The teacher should solve situations such as the inexperience of young people and them being their own master etc. wisely."

E3: "I think that instructors should have positive guidance and continuous support for the students with physical and mental distress to prevent them to feel like they are incapable of learning."

3.3. Problems caused by the classroom and equipment properties in the IVE courses and the views on the solution of these problems

While three out of ten instructors, who were consulted, stated that they did not encounter any problems in the IVE courses due to the classroom and the equipment properties, seven instructors indicated that they experienced some problems, which could be listed under two headings as "classroom properties" and "tool and equipment adequacy".

1. Classroom Properties

Four instructors stated that the classrooms were not suitable for IVE courses in terms of size and acoustics.

E6: "...The small size of the classrooms we are teaching (to an extent where we can hear the voices from the next rooms) creates problems. At the same time, the students do not feel confident due to acoustic issues."

E9: "Unfortunately, our classrooms are not suitable for advance voice trainings. They are small in size and inadequate in terms of sound insulation and acoustics. Making the physical conditions suitable for advance voice training lessons will bring positive results for both students and teachers."

Despite finding the physical conditions of classrooms suitable for IVE courses, E1 indicates that classrooms are inadequate in terms of acoustics and presents his/her opinions and suggestions as follows:

E1: "Although the most suitable environments for vocal health are acoustic areas, unfortunately finding acoustic conditions of opera stages is very difficult in Turkey. In terms of vocal health, it is important to sing in acoustic environments for long-term healthy use of voice without straining or forcing it. However, these conditions are not available. Special acoustical environments, where reverberation of the sound is not faded, should be created with special acoustical interventions."

1. Tool and Equipment Adequacy

In practicing the IVE course, instructors mainly use tools and equipment such as piano, mirror, computer as well as written and visual materials. Five of the participating instructors, who stated that they had problems related to the equipment adequacy, indicated that they had problems with the position and maintenance of the pianos. Three of these instructors (E2, E8 and E9) stated that they used digital piano in their classes, and that this instrument did not have an acoustic piano effect, despite not having any problems in terms of piano regulation. The two instructors stated that the position of the piano had a negative impact on the class because of the small size of the classrooms.

E3: "Although the instructors should position on the piano in a way to face the students, these rooms are not suitable for such practicing position."

E6: “...Because the rooms we teach in are very small, the faces of the students cannot be seen. This often causes problems with seeing their mouth movements. The fact that pianos are not regulated regularly is an important problem as well.”

Similarly, E10 also mentions the need for regular maintenance of the pianos used in the classes and offers a suggestion on this matter as follows:

E10: “In the institution, where I work, the lack of the piano regulating staff and insufficiency of piano maintenance and regulation creates negation in my classes. In the music education departments, there should be specialists in piano maintenance and repair.”

3.4. Problems caused by the curriculum in the IVE courses and the views on the solution of these problems

The problems faced by the instructors in relation with this question are basically gathered under three themes;

1. Time Allocated to IVE Courses
2. Accompaniment Problem
3. Teaching Material

1. Duration of Course

Apart from one instructor (E7), nine instructors participating in the study stated that the time allocated to IVE in the undergraduate program of music teaching (number of terms and weekly course hours) was insufficient for teaching that course. At the same time, instructors also stated that the course load increased, when inadequacy of the duration combined with the insufficiency of the number of instructors. The views on this matter are expressed as follows:

E1: “...This course, which is available for one hour a week for four semesters in the curriculum, passes by the students trying to understand what they are to do [purpose of the course] in the course because of the problems we have mentioned in the previous items. When the students start understanding some things, the course ends before the technique is comprehended and self-control is developed. So is to say, it does not reach its goal. The students cannot be provided with a technique where they can control their voice healthily and tirelessly. They cannot use their voices effectively in choir classes and other classes, which means that they cannot transfer their voices.”

E4: “IVE courses cannot be conducted “individually” by the instructors, because it is a mandatory course that all of the students are required to take for 4 semesters in the curriculum. The most important problem is the number of students and instructors as well as the disproportion of the duration of course. IVE can be considered as a separate specialty. In my opinion, the expectations from IVE courses are different from IIE [Individual Instrument Education] courses. Thus, I think it would be appropriate for some of the instructors in the field of voice to conduct only IVE courses.”

E6: “The polyphonic choral education classes were reduced to 2 hours whilst it was 4 hours per week. IVE classes were reduced to half an hour per student per week, whilst it was 1 hour.”

1. Accompaniment Problem

Nine out of ten instructors stated that they had problems regarding this theme. Some of the opinions and suggestions offered by the instructors are as follows:

E1: “The topic of studying with accompany is a serious problem as it is essential to integrate and feel the music. However, the music education department curriculums of the faculties of education do not include vocal or instrumental accompaniment [korrepetition] classes as they

used to in the past. Here, it may be possible to make the accompaniments same with the works in the repertoire of the individual voice training course by being in coordination with the piano instructors, but this is also very difficult due to challenges in ensuring the right time for both the student and the accompaniment. The curriculums can be reviewed and suggested to include accompaniment classes.”

E2: “Almost no healthy practice can be made in terms of studying and singing with accompaniment. The solution of the problem may be possible with the improvement of the curriculum in this respect.”

E3: “The faculties of education must definitely have lecturers, research assistants and instructors who are capable of conducting accompaniment classes and private advance voice training classes. The students should also practice with the accompanist after advance voice training classes. Exams must definitely be made with the real accompaniment of the voice training song. Otherwise, it is meaningless to measure the intonation in students by playing the tune on the right hand, and this leads them to become a free-rider without thinking.”

E5: “I try to accompany with the piano in the final exams as much as possible. In cases, where I cannot accompany enough due to lack of time, I use mp3 format accompaniment. Of course, the live piano accompaniment positively affects the students' performance. For this purpose, I recommend recruiting full-time accompanists in each department.”

E6: “Accompaniment may be as much as the instructor plays. In this sense, an accompanist is necessary.”

Despite reporting a problem regarding accompaniment, two instructors offered a proposal on the matter:

E6: “...Students take piano and harmony classes, so even if they cannot have the original accompaniment, they can accompany with the chords.

E9: “Accompanied studies are conducted by 4th grade piano students, close to their final exams. I did not have to deal with this issue as I do accompany myself in all of my classes.”

One instructor, on the other hand, stated that it may be difficult to create an opportunity for students to be accompanied, but expressed the following opinion in a way to support the views of the instructors above:

E4: “My practice in this regard is as follows. I give encouraging assignments to my IVE students in order to ensure that they definitely sing with accompaniment. In each class, my students make piano accompaniment for each other in each term.”

Another instructor, who noted that there was no specialist accompanist at the institution he/she worked in and that the classes related to the field of voice education (IVE, IIE and Choir) should be conducted with a specialist accompanist, made the following proposals:

E10: “Using the technological facilities, it is possible to prepare piano accompaniment of the studies and works on the notation software and to perform the works with accompaniment from the computer.”

1. Teaching Materials

Even though most of the instructors participating in the research did not report a problem arising from the teaching materials in the IVE course, the two instructors expressed their opinions regarding this theme.

E4, who thinks that no problem will be encountered related to teaching materials (method, album, note, etc.) in the IVE course thanks to current technological possibilities, expresses the following opinion:

E4: *"...I believe that the IVE courses are far from accomplishing their purposes in terms of content, method and repertoire etc. within the context of practices. In the IVE classes, it is useful for the music teacher candidates to work on the most appropriate repertoire for each student in order to enable them to learn how to sing easily, comfortably, lovingly and at a level that can meet the individual and professional expectations and needs."*

On the other hand, E3 offers the following views and suggestions:

E3: *"Old resources and editions should be revised, some notes should be rewritten and textbooks specific to faculties of education should be prepared."*

Apart from the duration of the course and the accompaniment problems, on which the majority of the instructors agree, the following problems arising from the curriculum are also expressed:

E9: *"For me, the biggest problem is the unwillingness of the students caused by the intensive curriculum. If the intensity of the courses within the curriculum is reviewed and reduced in number, the reluctance of students will be eliminated too."*

The feeling of "unwillingness" expressed by E9 was defined as "weariness" in the views of E1 who expressed the problems experienced by the student in the second question.

While E1 stated that the instructors did not use a common method and that it was necessary to establish a voice education council to determine what needed to be done, E4 stated that the curriculum could be improved by planning for the objectives and achievements of the course.

In addition to the findings presented within a thematic framework related to four sub-problems, E10 suggests that the students should get to the level of taking to the stage for performing a recital. However, another instructor (E6) stated that the students could not get on the stage, despite being trained, by using the following statement:

E6: *"Since the concert halls are fully booked because of some seminars or symposiums of other departments, there are difficulties in giving concerts."*

Finally, it is useful to include another problem and solution proposal for the IVE course, which is expressed by E2:

E2: *"Due to low intensity of advance voice training exams in the entrance exams, we cannot find a sufficient number of students with the qualification of developing singing skills. Increasing or balancing the singing score in the entrance exams can be a solution."*

1. Result, Discussion and Recommendations

In this research, the opinions of the instructors conducting the IVE courses at the DFAE and DME of Faculties of Education in the universities on the problems encountered in the IVE course and their solution proposals for these problems were evaluated. The answers given by the participants to the questions addressed to them in order to find solution for four sub-problems of the research were analysed by using content analysis method, and the data obtained were presented under headings by creating a thematic framework. Consequently, the problems encountered by the instructors in the IVE courses were determined and their opinions were shared. These opinions and recommendations are briefly mentioned in the following items:

1. The number of instructors specialized in the field to conduct IVE courses in DME is not sufficient. Since the number of field specialists is insufficient, IVE courses are given by the instructors who do not have main branch/instrument or advance voice training. IVE courses must be conducted by the instructors specialized in that field, and a sufficient number of voice instructors should be recruited.
2. The time allocated to the IVE courses in the Music Teaching undergraduate programs is insufficient (semester and weekly course hours).
3. Due to instructor shortage and the insufficiency of course duration, the course load of the instructor increases, the IVE course, which should be conducted individually with each student, is conducted with 2-3 students, and thus the objectives of the course cannot be achieved. As this may lead the instructor to experience a decrease in performance and cause him/her to fail in finding enough time to improve himself/herself academically, it also prevents the students from receiving an efficient course.
4. Most of the students have inadequate knowledge on the anatomy and protection of the vocal organ and vocal health. In addition, incorrect or incomplete behaviours acquired before the undergraduate education also affect the vocal health and misuse of voice by the students.
5. As well as the students' personal characteristics (physical and mental) and lifestyles affect the IVE course negatively, the intensity of the curriculum and the objectives of the course, which cannot be understood by the students, also create the feeling of unwillingness towards the course.
6. The classrooms, in which the IVE courses are conducted, have insufficiencies in terms of size and acoustics. The position of the piano in the small size rooms does not allow the student to face the instructor during the class.
7. In some departments, there is no acoustic piano available in IVE classrooms. This situation negatively affects teaching. Instructors working on acoustic piano also deal with the issues related to lack of regular maintenance and repairs of the pianos. Definitely, some experts in the field of piano repair and maintenance must be present in the DME.
8. IVE courses must be conducted with piano accompaniment, but IVE courses and exams are conducted with piano accompaniment within the capabilities of the instructors. For this reason, there should be accompanists present in the DME of the faculties of education.
9. The teaching materials (oral and instrumental works) to be used in the IVE courses must be determined in accordance with the objectives of the course, and at the type and level to meet the students' professional expectations and needs.
10. The objectives and behaviours of the IVE course should be re-determined according to the expected achievements of the course and a common curriculum including the methods, techniques and materials to be used should be developed.

The above-mentioned opinions and suggestions reflect a significant part of the problems faced by instructors during IVE courses. Based on the opinions and suggestions of the instructors, it is thought that first of all, a curriculum should be developed in order to meet the applicable professional expectations by determining objectives, methods and techniques for the content and conduction of the IVE course, and then an appropriate duration should be established in accordance with the importance and objectives of the course.

Efforts should be made to increase the number of instructors with qualifications required to conduct IVE courses in DME of the faculties of education; to establish appropriate physical conditions for conducting IVE courses and to eliminate the deficiencies such as classrooms, teaching tools and equipment, teaching materials and technical infrastructure. For example, it can be suggested to create instructional materials and archives for visually impaired students with the Braille notation system. At the same

time, it is also important to find the experts, who will be regularly engaged in the maintenance and repair works of the pianos in DME, and to eliminate the need for advance vocal accompanists for voice education courses. In addition to all these, it can be suggested to carry out more comprehensive researches, in which the IVE practices and students' views will be evaluated, by extending the sample of this research.

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