



A Guide to Publishing in the Voice and Speech Review

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A Guide to Publishing in the *Voice and Speech Review*

Introduction

Authors in the *Voice and Speech Review (VSR)* emerge from a host of diverse fields and backgrounds. A yearly volume may include articles from accent coaches, performing arts instructors, speech-language pathologists, physicians, actors, singers, linguists, speech scientists, school teachers, and more. This multidisciplinary focus remains a hallmark and a strength of the journal, whose principle interest remains voice and voice pedagogy. In addition to furthering research in the field of voice, the *VSR* continues its longstanding mission not only to support experienced scholars, but also to support novice scholars and artist-scholars who are potentially unacquainted with the many formal research methodologies and practices outside of performance itself. The *VSR* came out of the need to give voice practitioners their own place to publish, and many of these practitioners are artists-turned-educators who find themselves compelled (either by spirit or by institutional mandate) to publish academically.

To assist in our mission of championing a wide range of scholars and in the spirit of being a rigorous yet welcoming academic journal, I have fashioned the “Editor Notes” in this issue as a guide to publishing in the journal. This information may be most beneficial to those new to academic publishing, but I hope senior researchers also find the straightforwardness in this essay refreshing and useful, as I seek to make the academic publishing process more accessible.

About the Voice and Speech Review

Aim and Scope

Voice and Speech Review (VSR) is a scholarly journal focused on voice and speech topics and training, particularly for the performing arts. The journal features writing about cutting-edge theory and practice in arts, communication, and interdisciplinary aspects of voice. The *VSR* is the only scholarly journal that publishes work about voice and speech training for stage, film, TV, and radio. The *VSR* publishes three issues per year online, two of which are general issues and one of which is typically a themed issue. The entire volume is printed yearly.

Mission and Goal

The mission and goals of the *VSR* are:

- to provide for the continuing professional development of scholars and practitioners in the field through the publication of pragmatic articles outlining useful methods and approaches to a variety of topics and problems in voice and speech training;
- to foster a scholarly and intellectually rigorous approach within the voice profession;
- to provide an outlet for the publication of scholarly research, and to stimulate new research;

- to provide an open forum for discussion of ideas and opinions related to the voice profession, the performing arts, and communication;
- to encourage good vocal hygiene and healthful vocal use through the dissemination of practical, up-to-date, and accurate information;
- to promote communication and collaboration with allied professions and disciplines;
- to promote discussion toward the refinement of professional standards and practices; and
- to promote international perspectives in the training of voice and speech.

Interdisciplinary Focus

Voice and speech training overlaps many other disciplines and practices, so the *VSR* encourages submissions that examine voice through other lenses. Such interdisciplinary topics may include but are not limited to:

- Linguistics, phonetics
- Performing arts pedagogy
- Voice science, speech and voice therapy
- Acting, performance
- Singing, opera, musical theatre
- Public speaking, corporate training
- Language acquisition, development
- Stage movement
- Heightened language, Shakespeare
- Theatre history and literature
- Ethics, diversity, social justice
- Private studio practice

Journal Sections

The *Voice and Speech Review* generally includes three kinds of articles in each issue:

Reviews

Reviews are short, analytical responses to a book, piece of software, or app. *VSR* reviews focus on the usefulness or relevance of the material to the voice and speech community as a whole. Reviews are not peer reviewed.

Forum Articles

Forum articles provide relevant commentary on current topics in voice. Forum pieces are often based on personal experience and use anecdotes and quotations as evidence to backup assertions. Writing for this section is often pragmatic, focused on solving problems, and is typically inspired by a coaching or teaching experience. Interviews are published in this section. Forum articles are not peer reviewed.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

These articles are often cross-disciplinary, using theories or research methodologies to explore an element of the voice field or voice pedagogy. All articles must cite primary academic sources to backup assertions. The *VSR* is one of the few academic journals that welcomes authors and

articles from the humanities, the performing arts, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The *VSR* uses a double-blind peer review. (See the explanation below.)

Audience

The *VSR*'s primary audience is the membership of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA), which sponsors the journal.¹ VASTA's membership continues to expand to various voice-related disciplines (such as executive coaching, speech language pathology, voice science, primary and secondary education), but the organization traditionally has a strong interest in voice for the performing arts. Through our publisher, Routledge (Taylor/Francis), the *VSR* is indexed and abstracted in English-speaking international databases, making the journal accessible to libraries throughout the world. Since the *VSR* is a multidisciplinary journal, authors are encouraged to use an academic yet accessible writing style that explains or avoids discipline-specific jargon. This journal permits authors to write in the first person if they wish, but asks them to avoid colloquialisms, contractions, and other writing elements that detract from the academic nature of the journal.

Guide to Publishing in the VSR

The following discusses the journal section by section and offers tips and considerations for academic publishing in the *VSR*.

Writing a Review

VSR reviews generally consist of books, media (film, video, audio, apps, etc.), and performances that pertain to training, history, theory, and practice for actors and voice and speech practitioners. The most common reviews are book reviews and then media reviews.² Many graduate students write book reviews as their first publishing credit, and, of course, many tenured faculty write reviews as well, adding to their publishing agenda. For those new to academic publishing, I encourage you to write a book review as your first venture.

The first step is to contact the Reviews Editor (vsr.reviews@vasta.org) for a list of current books or media waiting to be reviewed. Tell the Reviews Editor of your interest in writing a review, give a brief biography or resumé, and list your areas of expertise. If there is something to review in your area of expertise, the Reviews Editor will assign it to you and give you a deadline for a draft. Often, reviewers receive a complimentary copy of the book they review. Reviews are typically 1000–1500 words long.

All reviews follow a basic outline: Here, is the general outline for a book review:

- What is the purpose of the book?
- What is the book's audience?
- How does the book seek to fulfill its purpose?
- In what areas does the book succeed?
- In what areas does the book fall short of its objectives?

I recommend that you read several different *VSR* reviews before submitting your draft to get a sense of the style and tone. Be honest, professional, and respectful in your review.

Writing a Forum Article

Think of a forum article as an academic version of an op-ed (or “opinion editorial”) in a major national newspaper; however, the topics in the *VSR* forum section typically only interest those in the voice community. This section of the journal is historically the most pragmatic and tends to focus on problem solving. Forum articles are not peer reviewed. Authors of all experience levels publish in this section, but for novice authors, this section maybe a helpful entry into academic writing. Authors are welcome to submit forum articles directly to the Editor (vsr.editor@vasta.org) for consideration. Forum articles tend to be 2000–6000 words.

In 2017, the *VSR* developed several ongoing series for the forum section, intended as a helpful tool to encourage prospective authors. (Note that forum articles do *not* have to belong to one of the series). Most series are open to submissions, but a few are by invitation only. Many have specific templates that authors must follow for continuity.³ Below is a list of the series with a brief description and an example article.

A Case Study in Coaching Challenges

This series invites voice coaches to offer their research and field notes from previous productions, which may help other coaches solve challenges. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “A Case Study in Coaching Challenges: Vocal Fitness and Idiolect in *Switzerland*” (Agnew and Moor 2017).

Exercise Essay

The goal of this series is to offer academic yet highly practical essays aimed at giving teachers and coaches a place to share original exercises that solve challenges in the classroom. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “Exercise Essay: ‘Vowel Yoga’” (Sortore 2017).

Reflections on Voice

This forum series allows authors to explore the field of voice through personal reflection and story. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “Reflections on Voice: Healing Grief through Voice, Storytelling, and Song” (Benson 2017).

Profiles in Voice

This series chronicles historical figures in the world of voice, performance, and communication pedagogy. The individuals featured in this series should no longer be active instructors or artists. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “The Legacy of William Vennard and D. Ralph Appelman and Their Influence on Singing Voice Pedagogy” (Hoch 2017).

Interviews

This series allows authors to interview leading figures in the fields of voice, communication, pedagogy, and the performing arts. The interview questions and focus should relate to the scope of the *VSR*. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “Ray Virta Discusses Being Broadway’s Go-to Understudy, Accent Work, and Pre-show Volleyball” (Hetterly 2017).

Roundtables

This series provides experts with a forum for academic discussion where all of the participants agree on a specific topic to discuss and debate. The roundtable questions and focus should relate to the scope of the *VSR*. The series is open to submissions. For an example, see “We’ve Only Just Begun” (Klemp et al. 2015).

Vocal Traditions

This series highlights historically important voice teachers and schools of thought in the world of vocal pedagogy. The series is by Editorial Board invitation. Please contact the Editor to be considered for this series. For examples, see “Vocal Traditions: Lessac Kinesensics” (Munro et al. 2017) and “Vocal Traditions: Fitzmaurice Voicework” (Morrison, Kotzubei, and Seiple 2017).

My Journey to Now

This series consists of autobiographical reflections that honor and highlight distinguished practitioners from the world of performance, voice, and communication training and pedagogy. The series is by Editorial Board invitation. Please contact the Editor to nominate someone for this series. For an example, see “Carol Pendergrast: My Journey to Now” (Pendergrast 2017).

Writing a Peer-Reviewed Article

Peer-reviewed articles are the most formal articles in the journal, and they undergo a peer-review (or jurying) process. Authors are welcome to submit articles directly to the Editor (vsr.editor@vasta.org) for consideration. Peer-reviewed articles tend to be 3000–8000 words long. The maximum word count is 10,000 words, which includes references and any endnotes.

In the peer-review process, the VSR editorial team approves the article, then a small group of scholars and experts in the voice field (usually members of the VSR Editorial Advisory Board) serve as reviewers: they examine and approve the article for publication. These reviewers help to filter the articles that the journal presents; the reviewers ensure a high level of validity and quality in the articles, paying particular attention to the methodologies for research, the academic literature discussed, and the level of academic writing. (For the full process, see below.)

For VSR peer-reviewed articles, there are essentially three methodological options within academic research. The VSR is unique in that it is a multidisciplinary and one of the few journals that accepts all three. These methodologies are:

Humanities Research

Humanities research is traditionally the most common research form for VSR authors, particularly for acting, voice, and singing professors and active coaching professionals. An author explores a topic using a literature review and personal analysis; this form of research generally does not use research interviews or statistics as a part of the methodology. Research articles from fields such as literature, drama, and theatre history also fall into this category. Example articles are Lejeck (2017), which examines *Three Sisters* in light of feminist criticism and linguistic theory; and Schuster-Wachsberger (2017), which explores the history of Yiddish and its singing challenges.

Performing Arts Research

Performing arts research is becoming more common in the journal. This research generally involves an “event” of some kind such as a show or a workshop. The most prominent methodological example is Practice as Research (PaR). Oram (2015) gives a PaR overview and offers considerations for voice studies. Glasheen’s (2017) article on triple threat pedagogy is an example of PaR in this journal.

Social Science and Natural Science Research

This kind of research (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed method, action research) is also becoming more common in the VSR; this research is the most formal and traditional means of scientific research and involves conducting a formal study such as an experiment, a survey,

or formal interviews. Research articles from fields such as voice science, medicine, psychology, sociology, and education also fall in these categories. Butler's (2017) article offers an example of quantitative voice research, looking at teaching public speaking through digital media. Sansom's (2014) article is an example of qualitative voice research, exploring master class curriculum.

Answers to Common Questions, Considerations, and Publication Tips

In the following, I have amalgamated answers to common questions and common editorial notes that may assist *VSR* authors, particularly those publishing in academia for the first time.

Difference between a Forum and Peer-Reviewed Article

Ultimately, in order for an article to qualify for peer review, it must align with a specific methodology, usually from the list above (humanities, performing arts, social science, and natural science). Forum articles are not peer reviewed, and therefore do not need to follow a formal methodology; forum articles are written academic conversations, while peer-reviewed articles create new academic knowledge. If you are in a tenure track position, be mindful of this distinction since tenure committees may hold peer-reviewed articles in higher esteem.

Using Interviews in VSR Research

Authors should be mindful when using interviews in research because interview data often qualifies as conducting formal qualitative research. If an author wants to use interview data in their peer-reviewed article, then they must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval *before* conducting interviews. If the article is qualitative in nature, then the article must follow formal qualitative methodologies, rules, and practices in order to qualify as a peer-reviewed article in the *VSR*.⁴

On the other hand, forum articles use interviews in a journalistic way. Authors must obtain written approval from the interviewee, but IRB approval is typically not required in this case because the interviewee is named in the article and because the article is not formal social science research. The difference lies in how the quotations function in the article. If the quotations function anecdotally, then the article is probably journalistic and belongs in the forum section of the *VSR*. If the quotations function as data answering a research question, then the article is probably qualitative research and belongs in the peer-reviewed section of the *VSR*.

Nevertheless, if an author is unfamiliar with going about formal qualitative research, then a second author can be brought on to assist in the qualitative methodology. This practice is common in research from all fields. The same idea holds true for an author conducting quantitative research such as a survey, who will bring on a statistician as a second author to assist in the study's methodological design and in data analysis. Many artist-scholars find research colleagues in departments outside of the arts who can serve as an additional author to assist in these kinds of formal social science and natural science research.

VSR Peer-Review Process

The *VSR* prides itself on helping new scholars and artist-scholars. We like to think of ourselves as a "friendly" journal, so the *VSR* may offer more editing support than is typical in academia.

For many peer-reviewed articles, the *VSR* process is this:

- (1) You submit your article to the Editor.
- (2) The Editor and potentially members of the Editorial Board approve your article for the

editing process. Once approved, the Editor may offer some initial thoughts.

- (3) The Editor assigns you to an Associate Editor who works with you to address any issues.
- (4) The Editor then approves the reworked draft before peer review.
- (5) The article goes to two or three peer reviewers whose expertise best matches the content of your article. The peer-review process is “double-blind.” You will not know the reviewers, and they will not know you.
- (6) The reviewers (a) accept the article without changes, (b) ask for additional revisions, or (c) reject the article.
- (7) After any revisions from the peer reviewers, the Associate Editor or the Editor or both approve the new draft, and the *VSR* officially accepts the article for publication.
- (8) You work with the publisher (Routledge/Taylor & Francis) directly on the final typesetting and “proofing” process, which involves two sequential steps: (a) you digitally sign the publication agreement; and (b) you review and approve the article in its final form.

On a case-by-case basis, the Editor may “fast track” an article from submission to immediate peer review. Examples may include articles from veteran scholars and articles that have already gone through a period of gestation such as those based on a graduate dissertation or thesis.

Most likely, you will receive a number of suggested revisions and be given a few weeks to make the changes. Many articles go back and forth between the author and the Associate Editor a number of times during this process. As stated above, this is unusual for an academic journal, so if you are accustomed to minimal editing, you may be surprised by the amount of editing you are asked to do. Of course, even with extensive editing, not all articles are accepted for publication; nevertheless, a part of the *VSR*'s mission is to support new scholars and artist-scholars who wish to publish, and we endeavor to keep the publishing process positive and helpful.

Structuring an Article

The structure of an article varies depending on the methodology. Qualitative and quantitative research articles have specific article structures built into the methodology. Nevertheless, most articles (forum and peer-reviewed) follow a basic structure:

- What is the issue/topic/question?
- What is my central argument?
- Why is this topic important?
- What does the academic literature already say about this topic?
- What is my reflection on the issue/topic/question?
- How am I adding to the field, or how is my point of view new?
- What are the implications?
- What needs to change, or what is there still left to explore?

Within this basic frame, the editors will be looking for a viable thesis, logical development of ideas, clarity in writing, appropriate supporting references, a fully developed research methodology, a consistent writing style, apt grammar, and appropriate referencing and citations.

Miscellaneous Tips

- Feel free to reach out to the *VSR* with article ideas. The Editor can pair you with an Associate Editor who can offer early guidance and feedback. This kind of journal support is extraordinarily rare in academic publishing, so do take advantage of it.
- Find the *VSR* Author Guidelines.⁵ These will outline the formatting style, how to cite and reference, and other guidelines. I have observed that this element can be the most

intimidating for authors who are new to academia. Rest assured that the *VSR* Editors can assist in this area if needed.

- Explore the full *VSR* website (vasta.org/voiceandspeechreview) for a host of helpful resources including a submission template, award information, and help on other article needs like writing an abstract and keywords. The *VSR* website also has answers to commonly asked questions well beyond those in this article, including the details of the publishing agreement and ways to promote your published article.
- Obtain permissions for any photos or figures that you may use *before* submission. For photos of anyone but yourself, you must have written permission from each individual photographed, and you must have written permission from the photographer. (You do *not* need permission from your headshot photographer.) You *do* need written permission for any other photo or for any figure (such as a chart or a graph) that you did not personally create.⁶ If an article has an abundance of figures and tables, then many may appear in the supplemental section of the journal, which is visible only in the online version of the article.
- Find an article that has a similar structure to yours and use it as a structural template. Some forum series like the “Exercise Essay” already have a ready-made template. Obviously, do not copy or plagiarize another article. Many authors simply find that having a pre-made outline or having an example article makes the writing process easier.
- Have a colleague experienced in academic publishing critique your article before submission. Make sure the paragraph structure, sentence mechanics, spelling, and grammar are of academic publishing quality.
- Do not assume that the readership automatically understands the key terms and concepts in your article. In fact, many key terms and concepts in voice and speech are fervently debated. Ubiquitous voice terms like breath, support, and presence, for example, have a wide body of academic literature behind them with multiple points of view. You will need to be specific and academically rigorous when discussing such terms and ideas. For example, the phrase “breath is the center of the voice” has no inherent and objective meaning. Unless you unpack the meaning and the applications of these kinds of broad statements, they are not viable in academic research. What exactly do the terms (breath, center, and voice) mean; how do they relate to each other; how are they applicable to your article’s argument?
- Avoid blanket phrases involving large numbers of people or fields of study. Avoid phrases like “As all voice teachers know.” Also, avoid phrases like “As the field of psychology tells us.” These phrases are often unnecessary hyperbole, or they are not academically viable, or both.
- Know that publication can take time. The *VSR* editors are all volunteers, and we do our best to support authors in a timely manner. Please be patient with the publication process and reach out with any questions.
- Remember that “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” The phrase, often anecdotally attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, is a pertinent final tip for this guide. Outside of methodology issues, many authors new to academic publishing tend to have difficulty in one of two areas: (a) They submit drafts with overly dense or sporadic content; or (b) they do not submit in the first place, intimidated that their ideas are not sophisticated enough. I have found that the best articles tend to be simple and clear in both writing style and content.

Going Forward

Whatever your background, I hope you find this guide useful. There are those in voice and speech who come to academic publishing of their own volition and those who come out of necessity. Nevertheless, many practitioners, myself included, have found enormous joy, excitement, and fulfillment in research as our words and ideas travel far beyond our normal sphere of influence. I hope that this *VSR* publishing guide ignites your interest and passion in voice research and

makes the process more accessible and transparent. The *VSR* welcomes your contributions to the field. Reach out to us if we may offer assistance.

Notes

1. Founded in 1987, the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) is an international organization whose mission is to advance the art, research, and visibility of the voice and speech profession. VASTA serves the needs of voice and speech specialists, teachers, scholars, practitioners, coaches, and artists by supporting and empowering those who work and study in the voice field. A multidisciplinary organization, VASTA aims to broaden public understanding of the nature and importance of voice and speech use and training, and VASTA creates opportunities for ongoing education and exchange among the varying voice communities: performing arts, theatre, music, communication, business coaching, linguistics, health, speech science, and others. VASTA offers a variety of resources to those in the voice discipline including, but not limited to, a scholarly journal, a quarterly newsletter, an annual worldwide conference, organizational grants and scholarships, teaching and learning resources, advancement support, and networking and leadership opportunities. Active VASTA members receive free access to the full *VSR* content, which includes all articles dating back to the journal's inception in 2000, and they may elect to receive a printed yearly copy of the journal. For more information about VASTA and to join the association, visit www.vasta.org.
2. The *VSR* does welcome occasional performance reviews; nevertheless, the performance should have national or international significance, and the review should directly discuss voice-related themes. Like the book and media selection, the Reviews Editor must approve the performance selection before submission. The *VSR* cannot pay for the price of the reviewer's ticket.
3. Go to the *VSR* Resources for Authors page (<https://www.vasta.org/vsr-style-guide>) for more detail on the ongoing series for the forum section.
4. Most universities and research institutions have their own Institutional Review Boards. See your institution's guidelines for details. You may contact the *VSR* with questions, but the *VSR* cannot offer individual IRB oversight.
5. Go to the *VSR* Author Guidelines page (<https://www.vasta.org/submit-an-article>) for more detail.
6. Routledge has an extensive author services website that explains these kinds of issues in detail. Visit <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>.

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I would like to thank all the previous *VSR* Editors-in-Chief, who pioneered voice and speech research, and all those who have worked on the *VSR*. The journal stands on your legacy.

Notes on contributor



Rockford Sansom, PhD has performed Off-Broadway, regionally, and in international and national Broadway tours. He has taught at Shanghai Conservatory of China (Honorary Fellow), Seoul National, Marymount Manhattan College, HB Studios, Savannah State, AMDA, and others. He has served as a voice coach Off-Broadway and is a lead trainer for Communications and Media Training (London) coaching Fortune 500 executives, UN Delegates, and members of Congress (USA). He holds a PhD in education (Capella University) and an MFA in theatre (University of Central Florida), and he is a certified voice teacher with Fitzmaurice, Knight-Thompson, and Estill (Master Teacher). He is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Voice and Speech Review*. AEA. SAG. VASTA. NATS.

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