

When we hear a voice, we form instant impressions about it. One of these impressions is perceived “naturalness”. The cover illustration depicts multiple ways in which voices may differ in naturalness: due to voice pathologies, distinct idiosyncrasies, digital distortions, or artificial voice creation. Currently, voice synthesis technology is quickly invading everyday life and is increasingly incorporated in everyday devices. This calls for scientific efforts to understand how (un)naturalness affects communicative quality with both humans and machines. In their review, Christine Nussbaum, Sascha Frühholz and Stefan R. Schweinberger reflect on insights from a wide interdisciplinary network of literature (sketched in the cover background). They propose a conceptual framework which offers a concise definition for voice naturalness, is rooted in voice perception theory, and provides informed recommendations for future research. Cover illustration by Linda Ficco and Christine Nussbaum.