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Voice modulation: from origin and mechanism to social impact

A theme issue compiled and edited by Juan David Leongómez, Katarzyna Pisanski, David Reby, Disa Sauter, Nadine Lavan, Marcus Perlman and Jaroslava Varella Valentova

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About this issue

The voice is a powerful social tool. In many species, individual differences in nonverbal vocal parameters like pitch and timbre communicate speaker traits, from age and sex to social status. We know much less about the role of dynamic voice changes in nonverbal communication. When, how and why did vocal control evolve? What neural, anatomical, and sociocultural factors shape its development and use in humans and other animals? How does voice modulation influence listeners' perceptions, or predict social and mating success? With these questions in mind, this two-part issue showcases the diverse functions of voice modulation in human and nonhuman nonverbal communication, from signalling motivation and emotion, exaggerating biological traits like body size and masculinity, to enabling song and musicality across cultures.

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