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# THE ISSUE OF VOICE ADJUSTING IN UZBEK TRADITIONAL SINGING, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON REPERTOIRE

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## Abstract

The article examines issues related to vocal skills in Uzbek traditional singing, talks about the enunciation of letters and the possibility of performance. The term “Namud” is defined. As an example, voice adjusting exercises are given. An analysis of a ghazal is presented. To a certain extent, the issue of repertoire is considered and the role of the teacher in the development of the student is analyzed. The names of some terms were written in Uzbek spelling.

**Keywords:** Avj, culmination, enunciation, maqom, ensemble, tenor, namud, voice adjusting exercises, staccato, the text of the piece, ghazal, listener, manzuma, repertoire.

## Introduction

Traditional singing teachers have different opinions about voice adjusting. According to the data collected during the study, it turned out that in the past, singers did not use special, complex, systematic vocal exercises before performing a piece. That is, the opinions of experts working in this field emphasize the following: “The masters also performed the piece to adjust the voice before the piece.” – such ideas were received. That is, when a singer went to a service (wedding or similar event), depending on the occasion, at first he would sing light songs (for example, pieces such as “*Shitob aylab*” and



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“Fig‘onkim”). With warming up the voice, singers could prepare themselves for complex songs.

Traditional singing pieces are also complex with their high notes. These notes are called **avj**. Therefore, the performer must proceed to the performance of songs after a certain level of preparation. First of all, it is necessary to provide information on the avj. Folk songs are strongly connected to the form of poetry. In Uzbek classical poetry, the murabba’ form is a very melodious form. The first, second, and fourth lines rhyme with each other, while the third line does not rhyme (a a b a). The avj of the piece usually corresponds to this non-rhyming third line (b), this condition is more likely associated with the culmination of the song [1, p. XII]. At this point, it was deemed necessary to define the word **culmination**. **CULMINATION**(Lat. culmen – summit) – the highest point, avj in a musical piece or a specific part of it [7, p. 170]. Achieving vocal fluency at the avj is considered a singer’s achievement. The avj in Uzbek folk songs is one of their characteristic features. The avj is of particular importance, especially in the maqoms. Avjs are usually built on continuous singing. Therefore, melodic formulas built on the basis of avj have separate names. “Turk”, “Zebo pari”, “Muxayyar” are some of the most common avjs [2, p. IX].

The gradual rise to the avj and finishing with the lower notes in Uzbek singing folk music is reminiscent of the gradual vocal exercises used to adjust the voice: It is known that it is characteristic of Uzbek folk songs to begin in the lower register (daromad), then rise higher and gradually descend to lower sounds [4, p. IX].

The next issue is related to the **enunciation** of letters. Vowels are of great importance in singing: “I”, “E”, “A”, “O”, “O’”, “U”. This sequence of vowels reflects increasing levels of complexity in singing. During the process of adjusting the voice, it is advisable to perform exercises for each of the vowels in exactly this sequence. In addition to singing, the student needs to work on the pronunciation of consonants, the accuracy of words depends on them. It should be noted that vocalization is the elementary, “grammar” or more precisely, the “lexicon” of singing... The closest “friends” of singing are the sonorous sounds: “M”, “N”, “R”, “L” when pronouncing them, the vocal cords vibrate just like when pronouncing vowels. The smooth, beautiful sound of the voice in a rhythm



is considered the artistic foundation of singing [13, p. 26-27]. Therefore, regularly performing various vocal exercises made up of vowels and consonants is one of the most effective ways to develop a singer's performance.

Performing **maqoms** is a more complex process and requires greater skill from the singer. Maqom masters have performed Shashmaqom pieces in two different ways - as a complete cycle from beginning to end, or as single melodies and songs, performed by certain ensembles. As Fitrat wrote in his book "O'zbek klassik muzikasi va uning tarixi" (Toshkent-Samarqand, 1927), the performance of maqoms was characterized by an ensemble consisting of two tanburs, one dutor, one qobuz or sato, one doyra, and two or three accompanying singers. The singers took turns performing this complex cycle of musical pieces, which lasted two to three hours. Maqom pieces were performed in the form of single melodies and ashulas by solo musicians - singers or accompanying artists. The existence of methods of performing in cycles and as a single piece has led to various changes in the keys and scales in the sho'bas of Shashmaqom [6, p. 185]. There is another aspect that we need to consider. This aspect is precisely related to maqoms: ...singers sometimes changed the keys and scales, singing from high or low notes, depending on the capabilities of their voices. By transposing the key and scale to one of the specific base notes, it is possible to perform the maqom cycle without damaging its legitimate progress. For example, if Savti Navo started with the note "fa" and the singer had difficulty in singing the avj, the singer sang it 4 frets lower - starting with "do", and so on.

Especially when maqoms are performed individually, rather than in a cycle, there is ample opportunity for such changes to occur [6, p. 186]. Singers' performance capabilities vary. The ashulas are performed by singers who have mastered the complex musical material. Folk singers who cannot sing the full maqoms participate in performing some simple taronas. At this point, it is clear that the tarona is close to folk melodies [3, p. XXVII].

When maqoms are sung in traditional singing **ensembles**, singers with a **tenor** voice type can sing the avjs and **namuds** corresponding to the high notes. Definition of the term "Namud": Namud means "appearance", "arrival" in Tajik, and is the appearance or use of a specific fragment of a particular melody or song taken from the maqom sho'bas in other melodies or songs. Namuds are often



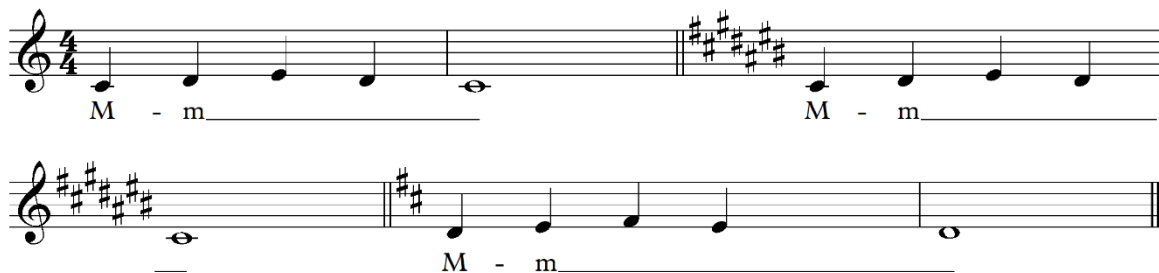
taken from the melodic phrases at the beginning of some sho‘‘bas of the maqom and used as avjs in the upper registers of other sho‘‘bas.

The names of the namuds are derived from the sho‘‘bas of the maqoms (for example, Namudi Uzzol, Namudi Navo, etc.). It is characteristic that the melodic structures used as a namud are in the variant which are adapted to other different sho‘‘bas in terms of melodic character and rhythms of doyra [5, p. 8].

### **Voice adjusting exercises**

In traditional singing, it is necessary to assist the student with the use of a specific musical instrument to adjust the voice. It is advisable to use musical instrument rubab in this process (depending on the circumstances, other stringed instruments may also be used). Voice adjusting exercises always begin with singing with closed lips, holding space inside the oral cavity (as if there was an egg inside the oral cavity). It is necessary to make a sound ‘‘m-m-m’’ in this part of exercises. The first exercise:

1.



In this way, it is necessary to move up a semitone. When the octave higher tone is reached from the first note, the downward movement begins and ends when the first starting notes are reached. If singers who are practicing their voice feel the urge again (the teacher can discern this), they can go down another tone or one and a half tone without stopping the practice. This also applies to the next exercises.



2. This exercise aims to work on a wide breath using one of the most effective vowels. This is the vowel “o”:



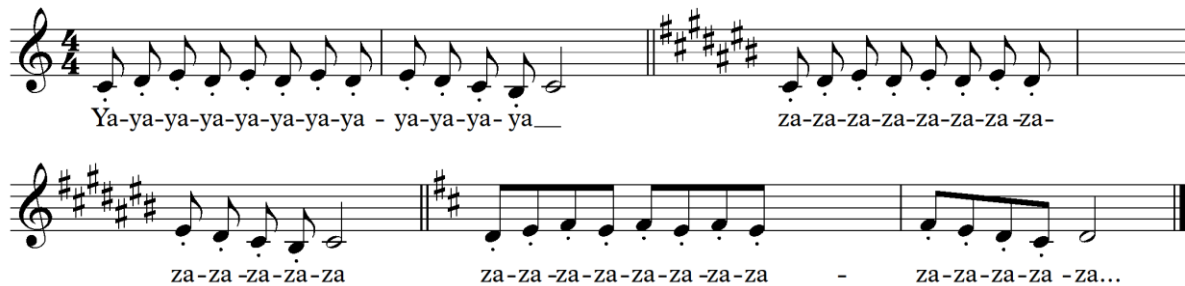
3. In this way, consonants should also be gradually added to the exercises:



4. This exercise is given to ensure a wide and light voice resonance in the upper notes:



5. This exercise is for light **staccato**. Staccato exercises are exercises that make the voice more invigorating:



Vocal exercises are also performed to increase the number of easily singable pitches in a singer's vocal range, and this is one of the main goals of these exercises. Vocal range is one of the most important aspects that determines a singer's performance potential. It would not be right to let a young performer sing at high levels so much in order to expand it. When a problem occurs with the vocal cords, finding a solution is also difficult. For this reason, the teacher must carefully monitor the singer [<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14468188> p. 3].

The singer's voice is always ready to perform a piece as a result of regular practice. After all, performers always must be in a ready-made position for a demand of listeners and this condition betokens a professional ability of them. Today, there is also a need to complete effective voice exercises in a short period of time because before concerts based on live performance, various situations can arise. For example, we can cite situations such as a singer arriving late to the performance area for various reasons, changing a light piece that was supposed to be performed to a relatively complex one [https://uzresearchers.com/index.php/ijrs/issue/view/76 p. 291-292].

It is not possible to achieve goal with only physically preparing the vocal apparatus. It is also important for a singer to mentally prepare before performing a piece. **The text of the piece**(lyrics or poesy) has a great influence on the performer's mental state. This condition, in turn, also applies to voice. A singer who sings knowing the true meaning and essence of the text will achieve success, and this singer's voice can "fly". When combined with singing skills and brilliant music, the impact of poetry as spiritual nourishment for the human soul is further enhanced. That is the achievement of an artist who can find a melody worthy of





the words. Only in order to achieve the intended goal, that is, to fully explain the piece, the listener must be ready for it. This idea is also confirmed in the sixth volume of the six-volume “Shashmaqom” – “Iroq”, written by academic Yunus Rajabiy: Regardless of the style and locality of the performance, at the same time maqoms and similar large-scale complex musical works also require a certain musical aesthetic preparation from the listener. Just as the singers must have a wide vocal range and high performing skills to perform maqom pieces, the listener must also have a high artistic taste [6, p. 187]. Especially when it comes to examples of our classical literature, a certain level of knowledge is required from the listener.

In our classical literature, lyrical works on philosophical, didactic, and love for the Motherland themes have a positive impact on the spiritual world of people. The condition which can reduce the positive impact is not fully understanding the meaning of the words. Exactly it is difficult for the listener to understand the essence of the work when they encounter words that are rarely or not used at all in these days. For example, the piece “Saraxbori Rost” from “Shashmaqom” with the **ghazal** of Munis:

*Qildi ko ‘zum qaro meni g‘am tiyra hol etib,  
Xursheddek yorut ani arzi jamol etib.*

*Mardumlarim yuzig ‘a yopushtimu yo magar,  
Mashshota zeb berdi munga ani xol etib.*

*Ishqimni ayla tark deding, maqsading nedur?  
Mundog ‘ meni mukallafi amri mahol etib.*

*Jismim ga ‘ming toshi bila ko ‘yingda bo ‘ldi gard  
Qil sarfarozi gohi ani poymol etib.*

*Nayrangi dardi ishqni ko ‘rgilki, paykarim  
Zulfiging ‘a tushti za ‘f ila tor xayol etib.*

*Ber fayz shomi iyd qoshing aksidin manga,*



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*Yoqut rang may shafaqida hilol etib.*

*Topdim muhabbat ahli aro surx ro'ylig',  
Qonlig' sirishk chehrai zardimni ol etib.*

*Har necha topsa kimsa quyoshdek kamol, charx  
Xok ichra solur oxir asiri zavol etib.*

*Munisg'a har necha g'ami hajring hujum etar,  
Daf' aylar ani yodi nishoti visol etib.*

This ghazal with the radif "Etib" has been quoted in full [8, p. 75]. The vazn of the ghazal was created in the Muzore' bahr, one of the most complex vazns in Eastern poetry. [9]

Qil-di ko'- zum qa-ro me- ni g'am tiy-ra hol e-tib  
- - V / - V - V / V - - V / - V -  
Xur-shid(di)- dek yo-rut a- ni ar-zi ja- mol e-tib  
- - V / - V - V / V - - V / - V -

Name: Muzorei musammani axrabi makfufi mahzuf.

Rukns: maf'ulu foilotu mafoiylu foilun

Taqte': - - V / - V - V / V - - V / - V -

The first rukn is the tarmoq axrab of mafoiylun-maf'ulu. The second rukn is the tarmoq makfuf of foilotun-foilotu. The third rukn is the tarmoq makfuf of mafoiylun-mafoiylu. The fourth rukn is the tarmoq mahzuf of foilotun-foilun. The meaning of the words in the piece: My eyes darkened with grief. Show your face and shine it like the sun. Did the pupils of my eyes fall on the face of that? Or maybe mashshota(woman make-up artist) made it look good. You suggested to me, "Leave love behind", what is your intention with that? It is impossible for me to accept your this suggestion. In your presence, my body has turned from a stone of sorrow to dust. Now walk with your head held high. See the trick of love's pain, my sick body thought your hair(locks) was tight and clung to it and dreamed this. Give me the blessing of Eid evening from your eyebrow's reflection. It seemed to be a crescent moon in the afterglow of ruby-colored wine. My face turned red among people of love. My bloody tears turned my yellow face





red. No matter how much a person attains perfection like the sun, the charx(world) eventually brings that person back to earth by making prisoner of ruin. No matter how much the sadness of separation attacks Munis, he repels this attack by remembering the joy of visol(meeting after long period of separation). The audience fully enjoy the piece, understanding the meanings in the poetry and feeling the brilliance of classical literature. When it comes to the musical performance of classical literature – poetry, it is inevitable that knowledge will be required from the listener as well. It is advisable for the performer to convey the content of the work he is performing to the listener before the performance. Or the performer can replace the text of the work with another text (in maqomot) and perform it, making its meaning more understandable to the listener. It is also very important that **listener** acts as a critic towards the performer. If there is stronger demand, the performers works more on themselves and music critic must be an educator, or rather a re-educator. In the words of musician G. Eisler: “A listener who is not educated in music is, first of all, an unintelligent listener, because he is defenseless against the buffoonery of street products”.

Next, it is time to talk about the concept of **manzuma**. If we examine the traditions of maqom passed down from generation to generation, we can see that poetry and music have become harmonious in form and content, becoming a single work of art. At the same time, there is also a tradition of reciting a certain maqom with different words, replacing one text with another. The current situation is called as “контаминация” in some Russian-language studies. In our opinion, the traditional concept of *manzuma* (nazmlash, i.e. to set words to a melody) seems more appropriate here than “контаминация” (means “to mix” in Latin) [11, p. 12]. Through manzuma, a rare musical work can be brought to a more impressive level. Another issue is that it is possible to find solutions to problems with words and syllables. These two aspects lead to ease in pronunciation when singing. At the same time, there will be a comfortable condition for understandable performance of the work. Next, the issue of **repertoire** will be considered in a certain extent.

““**Yovvoyi tanavor**” is a work that is performed in a unique way in the Farg‘ona valley. Masters mostly remember this ashula as being performed in a style of yalla by the famous hofiz Jo‘raxon Sultonov. Because of the piece’s being performed



in a wild style, it was called “Yovvoyi tanavor”, namely the wild way of tanavor. In the modern process, it has become standard to perform this work in a slow ryhthm” [10, p. 8]. The piece is recommended for singers.

**“Ul maxliqo kelsun”.** When performing this work, which is sung with the ghazal of Muqimiy, and is characteristic and appropriate in the styles of katta ashula, it is definitely recommended to approach the style of performing katta ashulas in the traditions of the Fergana valley. The bastakor (there are differences between composer and bastakor) of the piece is Jurakhon Sultanov. When performing this ashula, singers must have a wide vocal range, like katta ashula performers. The ryhthm of the piece is also complex. The piece can serve to expand a singer’s ability to sing in a higher register.

**“Cho‘li Iroq”** was created in the style of folk music. The bastakor of the piece is Imamjon Ikramov. In this piece the ghazal of Alisher Navoi is sung. The tune of the piece is the melody “Cho‘li Iroq”, popularly known with that name. The work is created similarly to the melody. The work has been sung by a number of famous singers. The piece helps the singer develop a sense of melody and practice soft singing.

The role of a master is very important in teaching young people. One famous vocal pedagogue expresses similar to these thoughts about a vocal teacher: Teaching students (communication) is not limited to just adjusting a voice. The performer must have an understanding of the form of the work. The performer must improve the expressive performance of each musical phrase, know the content of the poetic text, and finally, live in the work - be in the image, that is, all of these are aspects that must be mastered by the teacher, represented by the word “school”. The teacher should be more attentive when working with the voice of young people. Scientific studies indicate that the human voice reaches its full range (1.5 octave) at the beginning of the ages 12-13. From this period, the voice of the future soloist is trained and developed on a professional basis. In this regard, teachers, specialists, and accompanists of children’s music and art schools in our republic are required to take a scientific and professional approach to the voice adjusting of future singers. The works of composers were also created based on the singers’ abilities. An example is the great composer Fakhriddin Sodikov. It is said that the result achieved is considered acceptable if the singer



can achieve at least approximately forty percent of the level the composer intended. These are mainly comments about the singer's ability to use voice, ability to master delicate ornaments, and the quality of conveying the meaning of the melody to the listener through words [12, p. 101].

Physical education is also of great importance in the singer's performance development. "It is also required to be physically prepared for students so that their voices conform to the performance of the pieces. Sometimes, just working hard on a piece may not be enough. Additionally, in this condition it is recommended for the student to train in sports. A sport that is practiced according to one's opportunity is more beneficial if it relies more on the active participation of the human lungs" [Vol. 4 No. 07 (2024): Vol.04, Issue 07, 2024 p. 49-50].

In conclusion, it can be said that as a result of adjusting the voice, the singer's performance becomes perfect. When choosing pieces, it is of great importance to consider the voice possibilities. Meanwhile, singing with a constant understanding the meaning of the pieces further increases the singer's confidence in performing. The role of the teacher is important in the student's achievement of perfection.

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