

SPREEKBEENTJE - THE REVIVAL OF AN ANCIENT SPEECH DEVICE

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Purpose: Developing and enhancing a mouth-held device improving speech behaviour (both articulation and voice) in professional speaking, acting and singing. This tiny device should contribute in the fields of consciousness of speech motor, warming up and training of voice and speech.

Method: Research after methods of the use of small mouth-held objects. Developing “Spreekbeentje”, experimenting with different sizes of handcrafted devices of different size (height, diameter) and material and finally re-designing the cork and the English “bone-prop”, based on the experiences of acting students. Also developing of and providing Spreekbeentje with an instruction manual. And, since speakers, (classical) singers and actors in Holland from different nationalities (speaking, acting and singing in different languages) are using Spreekbeentje, adapting this manual to (the) different languages (German: Sprechbeinchen, French: Osselet de discours, Italian: Osso parlare, Polish: Kość do mówy, Finnish: Puhe luu)

Result: When we look into history we can find different mouth-held devices that are being used to enhance speech – some still exist, others disappeared. In distinguishing the contributing and disturbing elements of the different devices a more unobtrusive form could be developed. Keeping different goals in mind (enhancing, not disturbing speech motor, bringing consciousness and awareness around forming vowels and consonants, proprioception of vocal tract, articulators and mouth musculature without disturbing voice production and body posture, potential health risk, hygiene and safety) in mind spreekbeentje, together with its instruction manual, appears to be a supportive device that works great. However: further research on “how” and “why” spreekbeentje contributes to voice and speech training is desirable.

Keywords: Spreekbeentje, speech bone, speech device, Demosthenes, pebbles, cork, lax vox, stokje van bloed en tranen, bone prop, speech motor, speech training, voice training, warming up