

Laura Newton-Harris

Student Number: 2319676

Module: BMPF7326D - **PROPOSAL**

Word Count: 618

Towards Sustainable Vocal Practices: Exploring Vocal Fatigue, Dysphonia, Pain, and Recovery in the Voice Acting Industry

Context

This study will explore the challenges faced by voice actors in maintaining long-term vocal health, particularly in video games and audiobooks, where extended recording sessions require vocal endurance and strain management. The research will investigate how vocal fatigue, pain, and dysphonia develop over time and what strategies voice actors use to prevent long-term damage.

Findings will aim to highlight gaps in knowledge, training, and industry support while proposing recommendations for sustainable vocal practices.

Justification

Although research on vocal strain in teaching and singing professions exists, the voice-acting industry remains underexplored. The demand for high-intensity performances in video games, audiobooks, and animation means that voice actors experience repetitive strain, extreme vocal exertion, and prolonged sessions that are not well-documented in existing studies.

This research will address this gap by investigating the physical and psychological challenges faced by voice actors.

Intended Impact

- Provide insights into vocal health challenges unique to voice actors.
- Identify current management strategies and highlight where further industry support is needed.
- Inform voice training and education.
- Promote long-term career sustainability by advocating for improved health outcomes for voice actors.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach will be employed to capture both the measurable aspects of vocal strain and the subjective experiences of voice actors.

Quantitative Methods

1. Surveys and Questionnaires:

- Distributed to a sample of voice actors to assess vocal health, strain frequency, and recovery experiences.
- Responses will be analysed for patterns and correlations.

Qualitative Methods

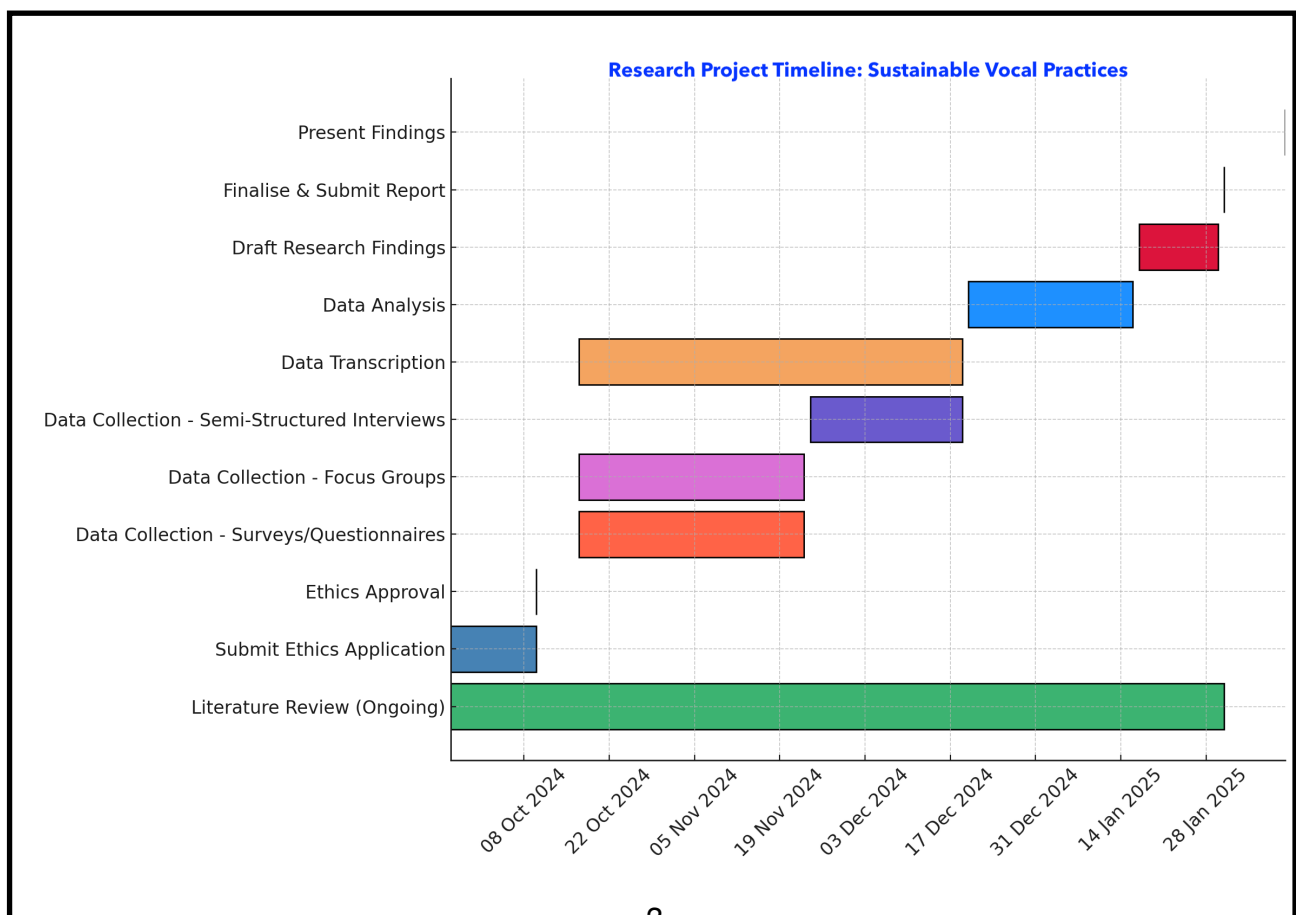
1. Focus Groups:

- Facilitate small group discussions to explore shared experiences and vocal strain management strategies.
- Thematic analysis will identify key industry challenges and recurring themes.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews:

- A subset of participants will take part in one-on-one interviews to provide detailed insights into their personal experiences.

Timeline



Ethical Considerations

- Participants will provide informed consent before taking part in the study.
- All data will be anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

Insider/Outsider Research

As the researcher, I believe I bring a unique perspective to this study, blending aspects of both insider and outsider positions. My interest in the voice-acting field stems from my limited experience as an audiobook narrator, as a writer whose work has been recorded by professional voice artists, and as a stage performer in traditional venues and open-air spaces. These experiences have provided me with some understanding of vocal strain and its impact.

However, I am not a regular professional voice actor, nor have I worked in video game voice acting. As such, I position myself primarily as an outsider to the profession, albeit with some insider knowledge and experience. Reflexivity will play a critical role in this research to ensure that my dual perspective is managed effectively, minimising potential biases and maximising the depth and authenticity of the data collected. By acknowledging and reflecting on my positionality, I aim to balance the benefits of my limited insider insights with the objectivity afforded by an outsider stance.

Conclusion

This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of vocal fatigue and its management in the voice-acting industry.

The research will investigate existing vocal protection and recovery strategies and the extent to which voice actors feel equipped with the knowledge and support needed to maintain their vocal health. By identifying gaps in knowledge, resources, or industry support, this study seeks to uncover what voice professionals need to enhance their well-being and ensure sustainable vocal practices.

Individual Learning Outcomes

This research will enable me to:

1. Develop advanced research skills, including designing and executing a mixed-methods study.
2. Enhance my ability to critically analyse and synthesise data related to vocal health in a professional context.
3. Deepen my understanding of the unique challenges faced by voice actors, particularly regarding vocal fatigue and its management.
4. Expand my expertise in thematic analysis and statistical methods for interpreting qualitative and quantitative data.

Laura Newton-Harris

Student Number: 2319676

Module: BMPF7326D

Word Count: 5184

Towards Sustainable Vocal Practices: Exploring Experiences of Vocal Fatigue, Dysphonia, Pain, and Recovery in the Voice Acting Industry.

The voice acting industry has grown rapidly, fueled by the demand for immersive audiobooks, video games, podcasts, and audio dramas (Reid et al., 2023; Aiken, Rumbach & Madil, 2022). These formats require skilled performers capable of meeting intense physical and emotional demands, yet the profession presents significant challenges to vocal health. Extended recording sessions, vocally extreme performances, and repetitive strain often lead to vocal fatigue, dysphonia, and pain (Hunter et al., 2020; Cazden, 2017). Additionally, the mental strain of tight deadlines and high expectations adds further pressure to sustain performance quality.

Despite these challenges, voice acting lacks the systemic resources and standardised training found in professions like teaching or singing (Williams, 2003; Lerner et al., 2013). Without structured frameworks for vocal health and recovery, performers must navigate these risks independently. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of voice actors, focusing on the prevalence of vocal strain, strategies for recovery, and areas for systemic improvement. By adopting a person-centred, qualitative approach, it aims to provide actionable insights to support sustainable career paths and bridge critical gaps in knowledge.

The research had three aims: (1) to assess the prevalence of vocal fatigue, dysphonia, and pain; (2) to explore recovery and prevention strategies; and (3) to identify gaps in industry support and training. The ultimate goal is to empower performers with practical tools and advocate for systemic changes that prioritise vocal health, fostering sustainability in a rapidly evolving industry. Additionally, this project provided an opportunity for personal and professional growth, enhancing my ability to apply interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and communicate nuanced findings effectively. These outcomes will support future contributions to the field of vocal health and performance sustainability.

Literature Review

The voice acting industry has experienced significant growth due to increased demand for immersive audiobooks, video games, podcasts, and audio dramas. This expansion has led to greater attention to the challenges faced by voice actors, particularly the impact of vocal health on their professional and personal lives. A literature review was undertaken to critically examine existing research on vocal health and to highlight its relevance to the

unique demands of voice acting. The review explores the prevalence of vocal fatigue, dysphonia, and pain, strategies for recovery and prevention, and gaps in systemic support and training. The review also situates this study within broader discussions about sustainability in performance-related professions, including comparisons with singers, teachers, and other occupational voice users.

Contextual Research: Growth and Challenges in the Voice Acting Industry

The voice acting industry has expanded rapidly, with video gaming alone surpassing the revenue of the film and music industries combined (Cazden, 2017; Reid et al., 2023). This growth has increased the demand for voice actors to perform highly demanding vocalisations, often involving emotionally and physically taxing roles (Aiken, Rumbach & Madil, 2022). Studies suggest that voice acting poses unique challenges, such as repetitive phonotrauma and prolonged vocal load, challenges that current training models fail to adequately address (Cazden, 2017; Reid et al., 2022; Hunter et al., 2020).

Voice actors face challenges that closely align with those experienced by other occupational voice users, such as teachers and singers. However, while formally trained singers benefit from structured education in vocal technique, health maintenance, and performance sustainability, voice actors receive little to no comparable training. Singing programmes often incorporate warm-ups, targeted recovery strategies, and performance ergonomics, all designed to safeguard against vocal injury. In contrast, actor training does not prioritise vocal health to the same degree, and there are currently no dedicated degree or postgraduate programmes solely focused on voice acting. This lack of formalised instruction leaves voice actors without the necessary frameworks to protect and sustain their voices, despite the fact that their work—particularly character vocalisations and extended recording sessions—demands comparable levels of vocal stamina, physical resilience, and emotional endurance. Implementing structured vocal health training within actor education and developing specialised voice-acting courses could help bridge this gap, ensuring that voice actors receive the same level of preventative care and technique refinement as other professional voice users.

In contrast to professional singers, teachers, while also high-risk occupational voice users due to prolonged speaking in acoustically challenging environments, typically receive little to no training in vocal health (Murry & Rosen, 2000; Sampaio et al., 2012). This can lead

to physical, functional and emotional/psychosocial symptoms in teachers, including hoarseness and changes in vocal quality, pain or tightness in the neck and throat area, vocal fatigue, difficulty in projecting, inability to sustain vocal tasks, anxiety regarding voice reliability and reduced confidence (Sampaio et al., 2012).

Lin et al. (2023) highlight that teachers are at significant risk of vocal fatigue and phonotrauma due to high vocal loads, exacerbated by a lack of knowledge about vocal care. Interventions like vocal hygiene programs and structured voice training have shown promise in reducing strain and improving voice quality, though they remain underutilised due to insufficient systemic promotion.

In addition to the demands highlighted above for singers and teachers, voice actors are often expected to frequently switch between extreme vocal ranges and emotions and perform extreme vocal efforts (including screaming, shouting, coughing and death efforts), further heightening risks to vocal health (Lerner et al., 2013). However, the voice acting profession stands to benefit from integrating preventative measures explored in teacher-focused research, such as those proposed by Lin et al. (2023), alongside the structured practices of singer training programs. By addressing gaps in vocal health knowledge and rehabilitation strategies, particularly for Video Game Voice Actors (VGVAs) and Audiobook Narrators (ABNs), these adaptations could promote sustainability and well-being within the industry.

Defining Vocal Health and Its Implications

Key terms like vocal fatigue, dysphonia, and vocal load/demand are frequently discussed in the literature but often lack consistent definitions. Hunter et al. (2020) propose a consensus framework to differentiate between vocal effort, vocal fatigue, and vocal load/demand (shown in Appendix 2), which are critical for assessing vocal health. The definitions for *vocal effort*, *vocal fatigue*, *vocal demand*, and *vocal demand response*, as proposed by Hunter et al. (2020), have been used throughout this research project.

Vocal fatigue, characterised by a decrease in vocal efficiency and endurance, is commonly reported among voice actors due to the high-intensity demands of their work (Reid et al., 2022). Dysphonia, involving hoarseness or changes in vocal quality, is particularly prevalent in performers engaging in vocally extreme roles, such as combat voices in video

games (Cazden, 2017). These definitions provide the foundation for understanding the vocal health challenges explored in this study.

Prevalence and Causes of Vocal Strain

Existing studies highlight the widespread prevalence of vocal strain in voice acting. Aiken et al. (2022) report that 74% of voice actors frequently engage in vocally extreme work, with 38% experiencing vocal fatigue during sessions. Prolonged recording sessions, coupled with inadequate recovery time, are primary contributors to these issues (Williams, 2003). Reid et al. (2022) further emphasise the cumulative impact of phonotrauma caused by repetitive screaming, shouting, or performing 'death grunts' (Cazden, 2017), which can lead to both acute and long-term vocal damage.

Compared to voice actors, singers and teachers often benefit from structured training and workplace policies that support vocal health. Singers, for example, are routinely trained in diaphragmatic breathing, pre-performance warm-ups, and post-performance cool-down routines, which help mitigate vocal strain (Murry & Rosen, 2000). Teachers, while at higher risk due to prolonged speaking in acoustically challenging environments, have benefitted from research that has led to guidance on vocal hygiene and workplace recommendations (Lin et al., 2023; Sampaio et al., 2012). Although this research was not conducted specifically for VGVAs or ABNs, its findings provide valuable insights into managing vocal strain in high-risk professions. Strategies such as implementing vocal hygiene programs and advocating for improved workplace conditions could serve as a foundation for developing tailored interventions to address the unique needs of voice actors as a Professional Voice User (PVU) community.

Strategies for Recovery and Prevention

The literature highlights several effective strategies to mitigate vocal strain, including hydration, vocal warm-ups, and specialised training techniques. Reid et al. (2023) emphasise the effectiveness of the Vocal Combat Technique (VCT) as an advanced intervention, demonstrating that it not only reduces vocal fatigue but also preserves artistic integrity. This provides a sustainable solution for voice actors engaged in vocally extreme performances. Similarly, Murry and Rosen (2000) advocate for the integration of breath

control and phonation techniques into professional training programs to enhance vocal endurance and resilience.

Despite these promising methods, the gap between evidence-based recommendations and their real-world application remains significant in the voice acting industry. Reid et al. (2023) underscore this issue, confirming the cumulative impact of extreme vocal demands on voice actors. Their randomised controlled trial demonstrated that targeted techniques like VCT can significantly reduce vocal fatigue while maintaining the realism required for high-intensity performances. These findings highlight the urgent need to develop industry-wide resources and training programs tailored to the specific challenges faced by voice actors.

To ensure long-term sustainability, these initiatives must be underpinned by systemic change. Collaboration between industry stakeholders, educators, and healthcare professionals is essential to create a cohesive framework for vocal health. Embedding vocal health education into professional training and establishing standardised guidelines for vocal care would foster a more sustainable and supportive environment for voice actors. By addressing both individual and systemic needs, the industry can better support performers and safeguard their vocal health over the course of their careers.

Systemic Gaps and Opportunities

Although vocal health challenges are increasingly recognised, systemic support for voice actors remains fragmented and inadequate. Aiken et al. (2022) highlight that the absence of standardised industry guidelines leads to inconsistent practices and increases the risk of long-term vocal damage. Comparative research on singers and teachers demonstrates that tailored interventions, such as vocal health workshops and workplace policies, could provide significant benefits to voice actors (Williams, 2003; Sampaio et al., 2012). Building on these findings, Reid et al. (2023) advocate for the widespread adoption of techniques like VCT as part of industry best practices, emphasising the importance of proactive training to mitigate long-term risks.

To foster better practices and improve vocal health, it is essential to make such training and techniques more widely understood, accessible, and integrated into voice actors' routines. By raising awareness about the dangers of improper vocal practices and

providing accessible tools to minimise risks, the industry can prioritise the health and sustainability of its performers, ensuring they are equipped to meet the demands of their work while safeguarding their vocal mechanisms.

Conflicts in Literature and Research Gaps

While the literature provides valuable insights, conflicts remain regarding the effectiveness of certain recovery techniques and the extent of vocal health challenges in voice acting. For instance, Hunter et al. (2020) note the lack of consensus on measuring vocal fatigue, complicating efforts to standardise interventions. Additionally, there is a notable scarcity of qualitative research on the lived experiences of voice actors, creating a gap in the data and limiting our understanding of their personal coping mechanisms and perceptions of industry support (Aiken et al., 2022; Reid et al., 2023). This study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the intersection of vocal health, sustainability, and professional demands in voice acting. Through qualitative research, including in-depth interviews and case studies with voice actors, this research aims to provide nuanced insights into their experiences and inform the development of more tailored and effective support systems.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of voice actors regarding vocal fatigue, dysphonia, pain, and recovery. Grounded in the constructivist paradigm, the research emphasises the subjective realities of participants, seeking to understand their perspectives and meaning-making processes within the context of their professional lives. The person-centred methodology aligns with the study's aim to investigate complex, multifaceted phenomena that are deeply personal yet shaped by broader systemic factors.

Phenomenology, as articulated by van Manen (1997), prioritises the exploration of human experience as it is lived, aiming to uncover the depth and complexity of participants' realities. IPA, rooted in the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, offers a structured yet flexible framework for achieving this. Husserl's emphasis on *returning to the things themselves* — *zu den Sachen selbst* — (Husserl, 1931) aligns with IPA's idiographic focus, which begins with a detailed examination of individual experiences

before seeking patterns across cases (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2021). This process ensures that the personal and subjective dimensions of each participant's narrative remain central.

IPA's use of the hermeneutic circle, as described by Heidegger (1962), further strengthens its suitability for this study. This approach involves an iterative process where parts of the narrative illuminate the whole and vice versa, enabling the researcher to interpret participants' experiences in their broader contexts. For voice actors, whose vocal challenges are influenced by both personal and systemic factors, this interpretative depth is invaluable. Moreover, IPA's commitment to understanding lived experiences within their relational and embodied contexts, as presented by Merleau-Ponty (1962), allows for a nuanced exploration of how physical sensations, such as vocal fatigue, intersect with emotional and professional pressures.

The ideographic and interpretative strengths of IPA make it particularly well-suited for investigating the dynamic and multifaceted nature of vocal health among voice actors. By allowing for a deep dive into individual cases while identifying shared patterns, this methodology not only aligns with the aims of this study but also bridges the gap between individual lived realities and broader industry challenges (Spiers & Smith, 2019).

Methods

Participants

The study included four participants selected through purposive sampling, a method chosen for its ability to ensure a targeted and meaningful exploration of the research question. This sampling approach was used to capture a diverse range of experiences and perspectives within the voice acting industry. Inclusion criteria required participants to have professional experience in voice-over work across various media formats, such as audiobooks, video games, and audio dramas. These formats, while all demanding high vocal performance standards, differ significantly in the types of vocal strain they may cause. For example, video game voiceovers often involve high-intensity vocalisations, such as shouting or combat sounds (known as 'efforts'), which are understood to contribute to phonotrauma (Reid et al., 2023). In contrast, audiobook narration typically demands sustained vocal endurance over extended periods, requiring precise modulation

to maintain listener engagement. Audio dramas may blend these challenges, combining the emotional intensity of acting with prolonged speaking demands. By capturing the perspectives of voice actors working across these diverse formats, the study aimed to uncover how varied performance contexts influence experiences of vocal strain, aligning closely with the research objectives.

Efforts were made to recruit individuals from varied demographic, geographical, and professional backgrounds to reflect the broad spectrum of challenges and strategies present within the industry. Participants ranged in age, gender and experience level, from newer professionals to those with a more established career trajectory, enhancing the richness of the data by capturing insights across different stages of professional development.

Recruitment was facilitated through industry networks and social media platforms, leveraging professional communities to identify potential participants who met the inclusion criteria. Candidates were invited to participate via email, with detailed information provided about the study's aims and the commitment involved. This approach ensured transparency and allowed participants to make an informed decision about their involvement.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method for data collection to provide both flexibility and depth. This approach allowed participants to share their unique experiences while enabling the researcher to explore specific topics in greater detail. For instance, BM's recounting of her childhood vocal trauma—losing her voice after prolonged shouting in a school performance—illustrates the enduring legacy of vocal injuries sustained at a young age. This prompted a deeper exploration of how early experiences shaped her cautious approach to vocal strain and recovery as a professional voice actor. Similarly, participants specialising in different media formats, such as video games or audiobooks, were able to discuss the distinct challenges they faced, from managing the physical demands of combat voiceovers to sustaining vocal consistency during extended recording sessions. This adaptability ensured the interview process captured the diverse and nuanced impacts of vocal strain across varied professional contexts, aligning with the study's objectives of exploring lived experiences in detail.

This approach enabled the exploration of core topics, such as vocal health challenges, recovery strategies, and systemic support, while allowing participants to elaborate on their unique experiences and introduce additional topics of relevance. The interview guide was designed based on a thorough review of existing literature and was piloted with a peer voice actor to refine the clarity and relevance of the questions. This iterative process ensured that the questions were engaging, contextually appropriate, and aligned with the study's objectives.

To accommodate participants' varying schedules and geographical locations, interviews were conducted online using secure video conferencing platforms. This method provided a practical solution to logistical constraints and allowed participants to engage in the research process from the comfort of their preferred environment. Each session lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, a duration sufficient to explore topics in depth while respecting participants' time. With their informed consent, the interviews were video-recorded to capture both verbal and non-verbal cues, and the recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim. The transcription process ensured the accuracy and reliability of data representation and created a robust foundation for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative to ensure that the research adhered to the highest ethical standards. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, methodology, and potential outcomes through an information sheet distributed prior to their participation. Informed consent was obtained in writing, with participants given the opportunity to ask questions and withdraw at any stage without explanation or consequence.

To protect participants' confidentiality, their identities were anonymised using initials, and any potentially identifying details were excluded from the transcripts. All data were stored securely in compliance with GDPR guidelines, with access restricted to the primary researcher. These measures ensured that participants' privacy and rights were upheld throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the IPA framework, which was chosen for its ability to

capture the depth and complexity of participants' lived experiences. The six-step IPA process, as outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2021, 2nd edition), was employed to ensure a systematic and rigorous analysis. This included:

1. **Immersion in the Data**
2. **Initial Coding**
3. **Developing Emergent Themes**
4. **Connections Across Themes**
5. **Cross-case Analysis**
6. **Finalising Themes**

Integration of Case Studies in Analysis

As part of the qualitative framework, this study incorporates individual case studies to deepen the exploration of emergent themes. Case studies are widely recognised in qualitative research as a method for providing rich, contextualised accounts of participants' lived experiences, which enhance understanding of broader patterns and complexities (Yin, 2018).

In this research, the narratives of individual participants, such as BM, are presented as illustrative case studies. These accounts offer detailed insights into specific experiences, such as vocal trauma and recovery, that resonate with or expand upon existing literature. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of themes like vocal health, systemic gaps in training, and coping strategies while maintaining the focus on participants' subjective realities.

The use of case studies aligns with the IPA approach, situating personal narratives within broader industry challenges and scholarly discourse. This method bridges individual experiences with collective findings, contributing valuable insights to discussions on sustainable vocal practices.

Rationale for Methodological Choices

A qualitative approach using IPA was chosen to explore voice actors' lived experiences, providing deep insights into individual coping strategies and industry challenges. This

aligns with research by Reid et al. (2023) and Aiken et al. (2022), which emphasise the value of personal perspectives in vocal health studies.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for adaptability, enabling participants to share personal experiences of pain, recovery, and vocal strain while ensuring a supportive and respectful environment. Conducting interviews online improved accessibility and inclusivity, reaching participants across diverse locations.

Limitations

While the small sample size aligns with IPA's emphasis on depth over breadth, it limits the generalisability of findings. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of recall bias, as participants may have unintentionally omitted or misrepresented certain details. Additionally, the online nature of the interviews, while convenient, may have influenced participants' comfort levels or responses. However, these limitations are mitigated by the richness of the qualitative data, which prioritises depth and understanding over generalisation.

Conclusion

This study's IPA framework and semi-structured interviews provide a robust foundation for examining the lived experiences of voice actors, capturing both individual narratives and broader industry trends. This approach aligns with the study's objectives and contributes to ongoing discussions on vocal health and sustainability in performance professions.

During cross-case analysis, themes were compared across participants to identify shared experiences and key variations. While all participants prioritised vocal health and reported challenges from prolonged recording sessions, individual differences provided further insights. For example, BM's experience with early vocal trauma highlighted the need for foundational vocal education, while SO's emphasis on advanced equipment underscored the impact of technical factors on vocal health.

These findings suggest that industry-wide recommendations should balance universal and individual needs. Standardised guidelines—covering hydration, warm-ups, and recovery—could be complemented by role-specific interventions for combat voiceovers or audiobook

narration. This dual approach ensures more targeted, adaptable strategies, promoting sustainable vocal practices across different areas of voice acting.

Findings and Results

Introduction to Findings

This study's findings are presented through thematic analysis and case studies, offering insights into vocal trauma, recovery strategies, and systemic gaps in the voice acting industry. The IPA approach situates individual narratives within broader industry trends, contextualising voice actors' lived experiences within the growing demands of the profession.

As the industry expands, opportunities increase, but so do challenges to vocal health and career sustainability. Analysis of four participants identified key themes, highlighting work-life balance, professional growth, and systemic obstacles. These themes shed light on individual vocal health strategies while exposing industry-wide gaps that hinder sustainability and equity.

The following sections explore these themes, incorporating participant reflections and literature insights. Case studies highlight critical issues such as vocal trauma and recovery, bridging personal experiences with broader industry trends to inform sustainable vocal practices.

Emergent Themes and Cross-Case Analysis

1.1 Balancing Work-Life Flexibility with Voice Acting

Voice acting offers flexibility, allowing performers to align work with personal commitments. However, this blurs boundaries, leading to overwork and reduced recovery time.

AM: *"I can structure my workday around family commitments, which is a huge relief compared to theatre."*

SO: *"Working from home means I can pick up my kids, but it also makes it harder to set boundaries."*

While flexibility fosters accessibility, it also increases self-regulation challenges. Aiken et al. (2022) note that flexible work arrangements, common in creative fields, can undermine health and productivity without clear boundaries.

MR described the pressures of auditioning, stating: *“I’ve had days where I submit three character auditions in a few hours—it’s exhausting.”* Similarly, BM recounted overcommitting early in her career: *“I said yes to everything and didn’t realise the strain until it was too late.”*

Industry-wide support, such as standardised workload guidelines, could help voice actors navigate flexibility while maintaining vocal health. Strategies like setting defined work hours and creating dedicated recording spaces may also mitigate burnout.

1.2 Skill Refinement and Professional Growth During Downtime

Participants viewed downtime as an opportunity for growth, refining vocal techniques and technical skills.

MR: *“Quiet months let me refine my craft and build confidence.”*

BM: *“Downtime pushes me creatively—I experiment with new voices and perfect tricky techniques.”*

This aligns with Reid et al. (2023), who emphasise that skill development during quieter periods is key to long-term sustainability. Participants used industry lulls productively, enhancing resilience and adaptability.

1.3 Meritocracy in Voice Acting Opportunities

The industry was perceived as **meritocratic**, prioritising performance over appearance.

SO: *“It’s refreshing to feel that talent matters more than connections.”*

MR: *“There’s less judgment about looks—the focus is on what you bring to the mic.”*

However, systemic barriers persist. Lerner et al. (2013) suggest that, despite removing visual biases, inequities remain due to varying access to training and industry networks.

1.4 Vocal Health and Sustainability

Vocal health was a universal priority, with participants adopting hydration, warm-ups, and equipment adjustments to protect their voices.

AM: *“Hydration and warm-ups are non-negotiable before every session.”*

SO: *“Using a humidifier in my booth has helped immensely.”*

BM’s case study underscores the consequences of neglecting vocal care, reinforcing Reid et al. (2023), who advocate for tailored recovery techniques in vocally extreme roles. Cazden (2017) highlights the risks of phonotrauma in intense performances, emphasising proactive prevention strategies. Aiken et al. (2022) stress that systemic gaps leave performers responsible for their own recovery plans, highlighting the need for greater industry support.

1.5 Industry Challenges in Voice Acting

Participants cited unrealistic deadlines, minimal vocal health support, and fast-paced industry pressures as significant concerns.

AM: *“Last-minute auditions with extreme vocal demands are a constant challenge.”*

BM: *“New performers aren’t educated on how to protect their voices—the industry could do more.”*

These challenges are intensified by freelance job insecurity, compelling actors to accept vocally taxing roles. Reid et al. (2023) and Aiken et al. (2022) advocate for structured training programs and greater collaboration between performers and producers to prioritise vocal well-being.

1.6 Pursuit of Training for Vocal Control

Ongoing training was seen as essential but often inaccessible due to cost and availability.

SO: *“Breath control training has been a game-changer for me.”*

MR: *“Training is crucial—tech trends like AI mean we have to keep evolving.”*

Murry & Rosen (2000) recommend professional training in breath control and phonation, yet voice actors struggle to find targeted programs. Expanding affordable, industry-specific training would better equip actors to manage vocal demands sustainably.

1.7 Coping Strategies and Recovery

Participants relied on hydration, rest, and steaming as key recovery methods.

AM: *“If I push my voice too far, I ensure I rest the next day.”*

BM: *“I steam and do gentle humming exercises after intense sessions.”*

These align with Reid et al. (2022), who recommend steaming and phonation exercises for recovery. However, participants highlighted a lack of structured recovery plans, particularly for newer performers, suggesting a need for industry-supported guidance on vocal rehabilitation.

Reflections on the Research Process

This study had limitations, including a small sample size, which, while appropriate for IPA, reduces generalisability. Self-reported data introduces potential recall bias, yet detailed narratives provide valuable insights into systemic challenges and personal strategies. Future research should expand participant diversity to validate and extend these findings.

Integration with Literature

Findings align with key vocal health research, such as Reid et al. (2022, 2023) on preventative strategies and Aiken et al. (2022) on industry gaps. This study uniquely explores the interplay between individual practices, career aspirations, and systemic challenges, contributing to discussions on vocal sustainability. Future research should focus on affordable training programs and industry-wide vocal health guidelines to enhance voice actor well-being.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study set out to explore the lived experiences of voice actors concerning vocal fatigue, dysphonia, pain, and recovery, with the aim of understanding how these issues manifest in practice, whether gaps exist in knowledge and training, and what can be done

to promote sustainable vocal practices in the industry. By addressing a critical gap in the literature, this research has provided insights into the interplay between individual strategies and systemic challenges, highlighting the need for greater industry-wide awareness and support.

Reflections on the Research Approach

Originally designed as a mixed-methods study incorporating both focus groups and individual interviews, logistical constraints necessitated a shift to a purely qualitative, IPA approach. This adjustment proved beneficial, as one-to-one interviews fostered deeper, more candid discussions, capturing nuanced insights that might have been diluted in a group setting.

The inclusion of individual case studies strengthened the research, allowing participants to explore personal narratives in depth. For instance, BM's disclosure of vocal trauma provided a rare, detailed account of long-term vocal strain and recovery—insights that may not have surfaced in a focus group. This methodological flexibility underscores the importance of adaptability in qualitative research, revealing valuable, unanticipated opportunities for learning.

Key Findings: Common Themes and Industry Gaps

The study identified several recurrent themes across participants' experiences, illuminating both individual and systemic challenges within the voice-acting profession:

- Frequent vocal fatigue and strain, particularly from shouting, character voices, and prolonged high-energy performances.
- Absence of formal vocal health training, with most actors self-teaching or seeking costly coaching.
- Industry pressures, including tight turnaround times for auditions and little regard for vocal safety in scheduling.
- Financial barriers restricting access to high-quality training and vocal care resources.
- Lack of standardised industry policies to protect voice actors from overexertion.

These findings reveal a worrying reliance on individual responsibility to maintain vocal health, with no structured framework to ensure long-term sustainability. While some actors invest in vocal coaching and structured training routines, these resources are neither universally accessible nor widely encouraged within the industry's systemic structures.

Gaps in Understanding and Practical Knowledge

A key gap identified in this study is the lack of formal education and structured guidelines on vocal sustainability tailored to voice actors. While actors in traditional drama training receive some instruction on vocal preservation, these lessons often focus on theatrical and on-camera performance, rather than the unique demands of video game, animation, and audiobook voice acting. As a result, many voice actors enter the industry without sufficient knowledge of safe vocal practices, increasing their risk of long-term damage.

Additionally, the industry itself does not always prioritise vocal safety. Many participants reported working through strain, skipping recovery periods, or feeling pressured to accept vocally demanding roles due to financial necessity. Casting directors and production teams often lack awareness of the risks posed by extreme vocal exertion, leading to poor scheduling practices and unrealistic expectations.

Towards Sustainable Vocal Practices

This study highlights the need for systemic changes to protect voice actors and promote sustainable vocal health practices. Several key solutions have emerged:

- Industry-wide training and education – Developing accessible, standardised training on vocal safety, endurance techniques, and recovery methods could reduce injury risks and improve career longevity.
- Stronger workplace protections – Studios and game developers should implement mandatory breaks, structured warm-ups, and improved scheduling to ensure voice actors are not subjected to damaging conditions.
- A centralised resource hub – A dedicated platform offering training, peer support, and industry guidance would help actors access affordable, evidence-based resources.

Without greater awareness, structured training, and industry-wide policy changes, vocal health will remain an under-prioritised issue, leading to preventable strain and long-term career limitations for voice actors.

This study reinforces the importance of sustainable vocal practices in the voice-acting industry. While many voice actors proactively attempt to protect their voices, the industry remains inconsistent in its approach to vocal safety. Addressing these challenges will not only ensure the longevity of performers' careers but also enhance the quality and sustainability of voice performances.

Future research could explore how unions, professional organisations, and voice actors themselves can collaborate to implement systemic changes that support vocal health, career sustainability, and industry-wide best practices. By prioritising vocal health and investing in systemic improvements, the voice-acting profession has the potential to create a more inclusive, sustainable, and artistically enriching environment for current and future voice performers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aiken, P., Rumbach, A., and Madil, C (2022). 'Listening to Video Game Voices: A Call for Action for Research into the Vocal Health of Video Game Voice Actors', *Journal of Voice*, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.09.009>

Amir, O., Primov-Fever, A., Kushnir, T., Kandelshine-Waldman, O., and Wolf, M (2013). 'Evaluating Voice Characteristics of First-Year Acting Students in Israel: Factor Analysis', *Journal of Voice*, Volume 27, Issue 1, Pages 68-77 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2012.09.003>

Cazden, J. (2017). 'Screaming for Attention: The Vocal Demands of Actors in Violent Interactive Games', *Journal of Voice*, Volume 31, Issue 1, 2017, pp. 1-2, [10.1016/j.jvoice.2016.02.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2016.02.001)

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* [Trans. by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson]. New York: Harper & Row.

Hunter, E. et al (2020) 'Toward a consensus description of vocal effort, vocal load, vocal loading, and vocal fatigue' *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, Volume 62. Issue 2, pages 509-532 https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_JSLHR-19-00057

Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: general introduction to pure phenomenology*. [Trans. by W. R. B. Gibson]. Macmillan.

Lerner, Michael Z., Paskhover, B., Acton, L., and Young, N (2013). 'Voice Disorders in Actors', *Journal of Voice*, Volume 27, Issue 6, pages 705-708, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2013.05.006>

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception* [Trans. by C. Smith]. London: Routledge.

Murry, T and Rosen, C. A. (2000) 'Vocal Education for the Professional Voice User and Singer', *Otolaryngologic Clinics of North America: Voice Disorders and Phonosurgery II*, Volume 33, Number 5 https://www.academia.edu/26523388/Vocal_Education_for_the_Professional_Voice_User_and_Singer

Reid, K., McKenna, V.S., Smith, D.A. (2022) 'Mitigating dysphonia, pain, and vocal handicap after violent video game voice overs: a pilot investigation into vocal combat technique training.' *Journal of Voice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.06.015>

Reid, K. et al. (2023) 'Reducing Vocal Fatigue while Preserving Realism during Video Game Voice Overs using the Vocal Combat Technique: A Randomized Controlled Trial', *Journal of Voice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2023.07.006>.

Sampaio, M. C.; Farias Borges dos Reis, E. J.; Carvalho, F. M.; Porto, L. A.; and Araújo, T. A (2012) 'Vocal Effort and Voice Handicap Among Teachers', *Journal of Voice*, Volume 26, Issue 6, Pages 820.e15-820.e18, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2012.06.003>

Shewell, Christina. (2009). Voice work art and science in changing voices. Wiley-Blackwell.

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2021). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.

Spiers, J., & Smith, J. A. (2019). 'Analysing one dataset with two Qualitative methods: The distress of general practitioners, a thematic and interpretative phenomenological analysis', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 16(2), 246–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1544677>

van Manen, M. (1997). Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315421056>

Williams, N.R. (2003) 'Occupational groups at risk of voice disorders: a review of the literature', *Occupational Medicine*, Volume 53, Issue 7, 1 October 2003, Pages 456–460, <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqg113>

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods (6th edition). SAGE Publications.

APPENDIX 1

Case Study: BM

Vocal Trauma and Its Long-Term Impact

Vocal Trauma and Recovery

BM's account vividly illustrates the long-lasting consequences of vocal trauma, particularly in contexts where performers lack foundational training in safe vocal techniques. Her experience of vocal injury at the age of ten, due to prolonged shouting during a school performance, highlights the risks of untrained use of the voice. She recounted:

"Nobody taught me how to do it properly... My voice just went. It just disappeared. I couldn't do anything more than whisper for three months. It took about two years to repair to a normal level, but even now, I'm cautious about strain."

Her narrative underscores the importance of early education in vocal anatomy and safe vocal practices, aligning with calls in the literature for systemic changes to performance training (Cazden, 2017; Reid et al., 2023). Cazden (2017) emphasises that performers without adequate vocal training are more susceptible to phonotrauma, which can have enduring effects on vocal quality and resilience.

Physical and Emotional Consequences of Vocal Injury

The physical strain BM described—ranging from neck pain to a scratchy throat and overall discomfort—mirrors symptoms of phonotrauma identified by Hunter et al. (2020). She stated:

"It feels like you've overexercised and pulled a muscle... The inside of my throat feels scratchy, almost like when you first get a cold."

Emotionally, BM noted frustration and a sense of limitation during periods of recovery, reflecting findings from Reid et al. (2022), who documented how vocal injuries can impact performers' confidence and sense of identity. This dual impact—physical and emotional—

highlights the multifaceted challenges of vocal recovery, which are often underestimated in the industry.

Adaptation and Coping Strategies

BM's experience of gradually learning to manage her voice post-injury demonstrates resilience and adaptability. She has developed an acute awareness of early warning signs of strain, such as a sudden drop in pitch, enabling her to intervene early:

"As soon as it drops, I know I need to start being careful."

Her approach aligns with Reid et al. (2023), who advocate for proactive vocal health monitoring. BM's use of personalised recovery techniques, such as warm-ups targeted at specific vocal registers and hydration strategies, mirrors best practices discussed in the literature. However, her comments about the lack of structured guidance for such techniques reveal a critical gap in the resources available to performers.

The Role of Training and Education

A recurring theme in BM's narrative is the inadequacy of formal training in addressing vocal extremes, despite her attending a prestigious and renowned drama school on a post-graduate course designed to prepare students for all aspects of the industry:

"We were never taught how to voice extremes or maintain a voice that wasn't ours."

This critique echoes Williams (2003), who identified gaps in traditional acting curricula in preparing performers for vocally demanding roles. The literature consistently calls for more comprehensive and accessible training programs that integrate safe vocal practices, particularly for voice actors working in high-intensity genres like video games (Reid et al., 2023).

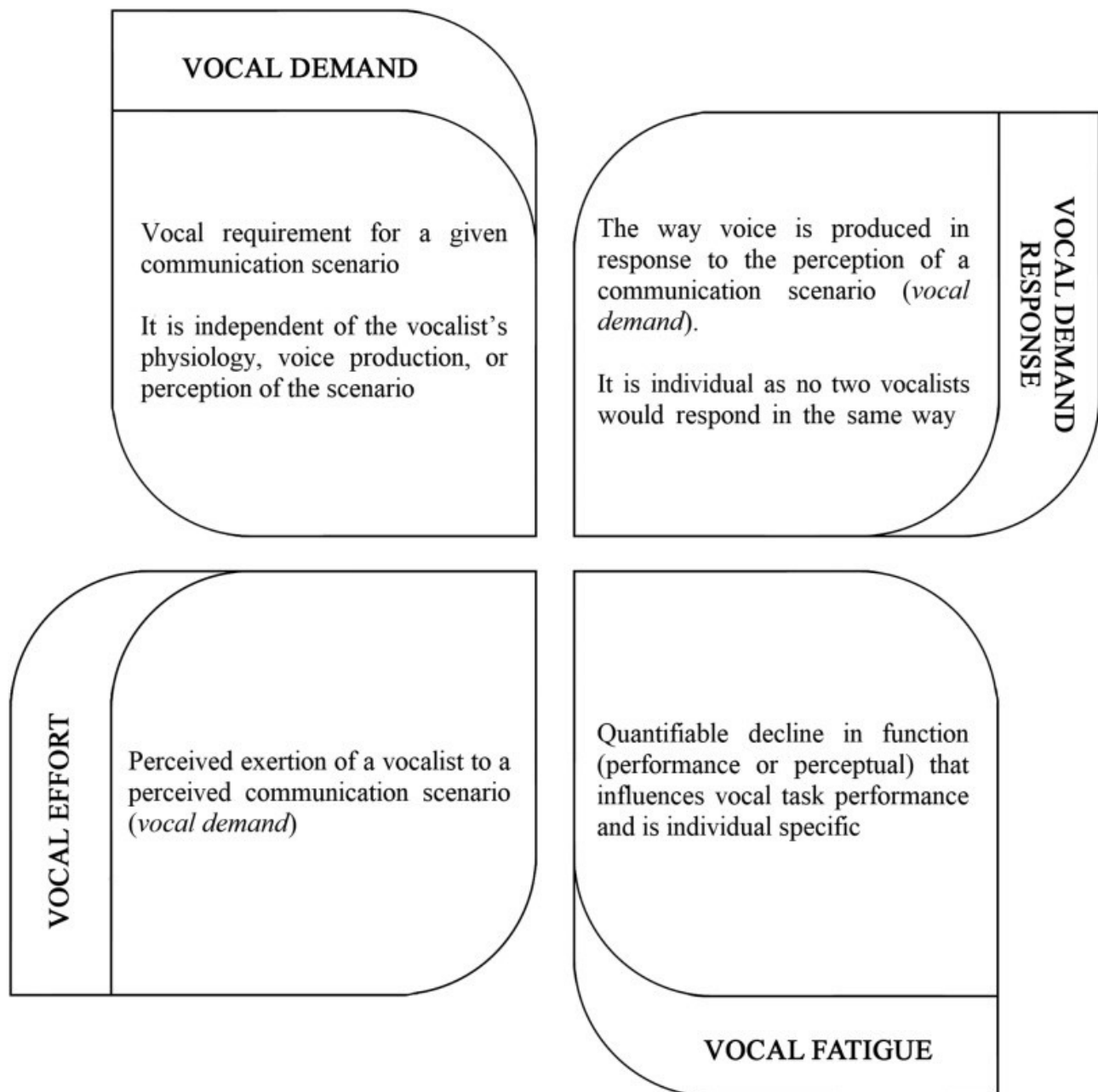
Reflection

While providing a deeply personal and illustrative account of vocal trauma, BM's experiences not only validate existing research but also highlight specific areas where systemic improvements could be made, such as early education, accessible training, and

centralised resources tailored to voice actors, strengthening the argument for industry-wide changes to prioritise vocal health.

APPENDIX 2

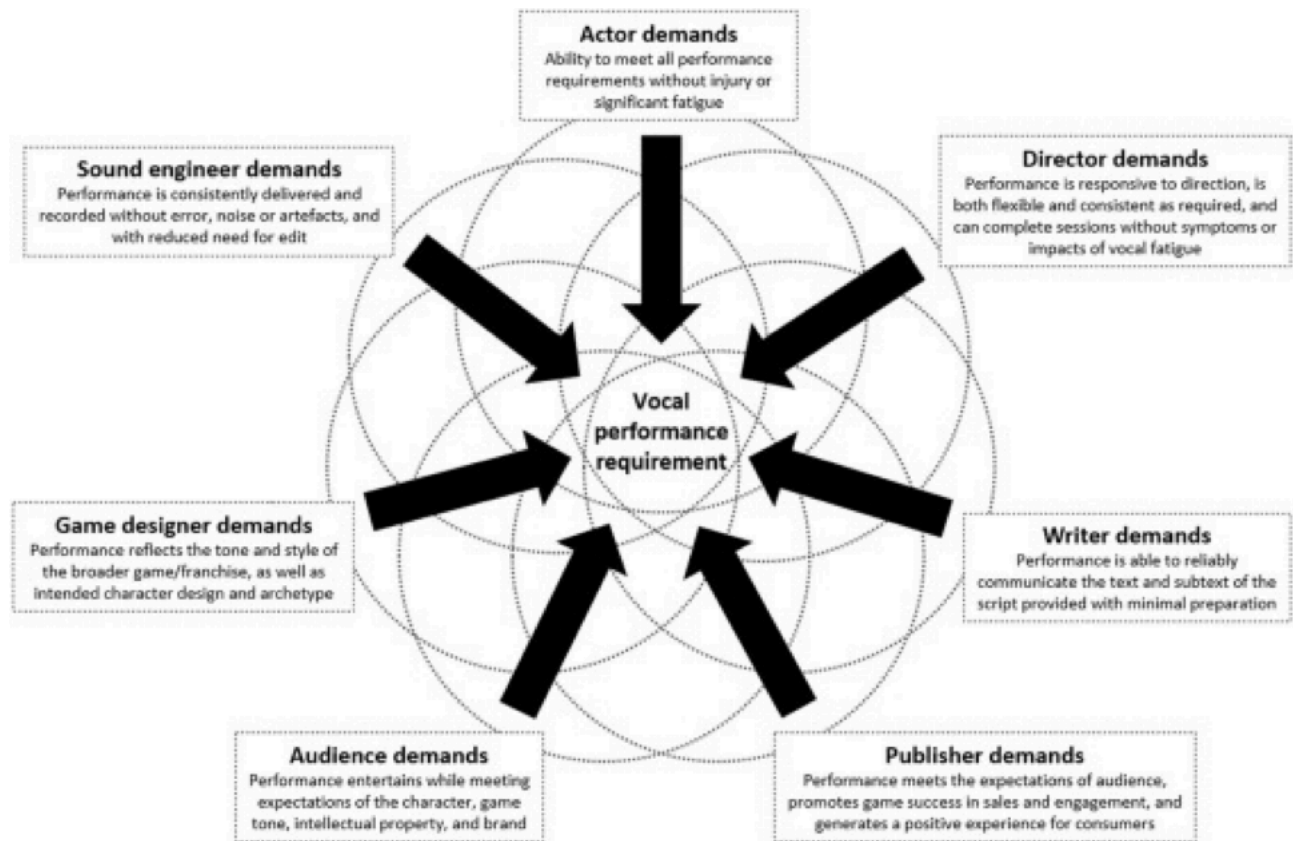
Summary of the definitions.



From research undertaken by Hunter et al. (2020)

APPENDIX 3

Figure 1. Stakeholder Demands on VGVA Vocal Performance



From research undertaken by Aiken et al. (2022)

APPENDIX 4

Phenomenological Analysis of Transcript - BM

Significant Statement	Meaning Unit	Open Code
enjoyed it. And it was about a year, I think, after I'd left. No, I tell a lie. I'd	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
animation course, which, again, I quite enjoyed, but didn't think anything	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
more of it. I was like, I might get a voice reel together at some point. Sure,	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
Scouse. That'll do. So sort of got that and then realised how much I loved it	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
It was just pure chance. And I remember like I remember going to the	Opportunities shaped by chance or luck.	Industry challenges in voice acting.
good. I think, yes. What's really nice there is the enjoyability factor that really	Opportunities shaped by chance or luck.	Industry challenges in voice acting.
voice reel done. I went to a wonderful company in Manchester called VAudio	Efforts to grow professionally and improve skills.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
convinced I was going to go into radio. I was like, I'll get a voice reel and	Efforts to grow professionally and improve skills.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
mic stand. And because it was USB, I didn't need any of the other setup. I	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
The sort of general idea of the setup is still quite the same	Efforts to grow professionally and improve skills.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
vocal strain I was getting when I was sat on the	Prioritising techniques to protect vocal health.	Focus on Vocal Health
So it puts quite a lot of strain on it. So I will try and warm that part...	Prioritising techniques to protect vocal health.	Focus on Vocal Health
... in the same register where I'd damaged. Yeah. So it puts a lot of strain...	Prioritising techniques to protect vocal health.	Focus on Vocal Health
lot of the vocal strain and tension comes from is because you don't often	Prioritising techniques to protect vocal health.	Focus on Vocal Health
I have always been an actor. Like, don't get me wrong, I like doing this. I love this...	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
. I love doing the commercial and everything.	Experiencing joy and love for the craft.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
...there's scripts on another site, you've got voice reels on another site. Everything's all over the place...	Efforts to grow professionally and improve skills.	Industry challenges in voice acting.
companies are charging no change of 300, 400 quid for voice reels. And it's	Efforts to grow professionally and improve skills.	Industry challenges in voice acting.

APPENDIX 5

Phenomenological Analysis of Transcript - AM

Theme	Significant Statement	Meaning Unit	Open Code
Balancing Work-Life Flexibility with Voice Acting	"Working from home gives me flexibility, but it also means managing my time carefully."	Maintaining long-term sustainability while balancing professional and personal demands.	Work-life balance strategies
	"I record in shorter bursts—maybe two hours at a time with breaks in between."	Structured scheduling to prevent burnout and manage flexibility.	Work-life balance strategies
Skill Refinement and Professional Growth During Downtime	"During quieter periods, I spend time mapping out scripts and practicing articulation exercises."	Utilizing downtime for professional improvement and readiness.	Active skill-building
	"I'm intrigued by AI voice technology and how it might complement human performances."	Staying future-ready by exploring new opportunities and technologies.	Exploring future opportunities
Meritocracy in Voice Acting Opportunities	"Some studios respect limits, but others push actors too hard. There's a need for fair opportunities."	Emphasis on merit-based opportunities and ethical work conditions.	Fairness in opportunity
	"What gets you continued work is having the ability to control and adapt your voice."	Skill and adaptability drive career opportunities and client trust.	Performance-based merit
Focus on Vocal Health and Sustainability	"Hydration and a humidifier in my recording space are non-negotiables."	Prioritizing preventative vocal health measures for longevity.	Proactive vocal care
	"If something feels unsustainable, I'm upfront about it and ask for adjustments."	Advocating for sustainable practices during recording sessions.	Vocal health advocacy
Industry Challenges in Voice Acting	"There's also the issue of rapid turnaround for auditions—sometimes just 24 hours for multiple characters."	Acknowledging systemic pressures in audition preparation timelines.	Audition process challenges
	"Organizations like SAG-AFTRA and Equity are pushing for better working conditions, which is great."	The need for structural reform in industry standards and practices.	Advocacy for industry reform
Pursuit of Training to Improve Voice Control	"Drama school taught me how to use my voice as an instrument, which shaped everything I do now."	Foundational training drives long-term skills and control.	Foundational training value
	"I prioritize ongoing training to refine character work, vocal health techniques, and industry trends."	Continuous learning and skill refinement for professional longevity.	Ongoing training

APPENDIX 6

Phenomenological Analysis of Transcript - MR

Significant Statement	Meaning Unit	Open Code
I realised I could do work that I felt was giving value and earn a reasonable amount while being available for my kids.	Shifted focus to voice acting to balance financial stability and family life.	Balancing work-life flexibility with voice acting.
The pandemic forced me to focus and experiment, which was a real positive for my career.	Used pandemic downtime to refine skills, build a professional setup, and self-direct.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
Voice acting felt more meritocratic compared to traditional acting, where judgment and gatekeeping were barriers.	Voice acting offers opportunities based on skill, not traditional credentials.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
I became more aware of the importance of voice as an instrument and maintaining vocal health.	Awareness of vocal health as essential for sustaining a freelance career.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Game localisation and casting processes often disregard the time and effort required for vocal preparation.	Criticism of industry practices that fail to respect performers' time and vocal health.	Industry challenges in voice acting.
I could do a job that was an hour's work that would potentially pay me more than a whole week of performing.	Voice acting offers better pay and flexibility compared to traditional acting.	Balancing work-life flexibility with voice acting.
I could be available to pick up my kids from school and be around weekends.	Voice acting allowed more time for family compared to theater schedules.	Balancing work-life flexibility with voice acting.
I spent time in my studio trying out all kinds of crazy stuff on the microphone.	Experimentation during the pandemic helped improve performance skills.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
I used the self-employed grant during the pandemic to work on my studio skills.	Pandemic grants enabled focused development of technical and creative abilities.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
You don't get the same level of judgment in voice acting compared to traditional acting.	Voice acting felt more inclusive and skill-based than traditional acting.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
Voice acting doesn't require the same kind of traditional credentials like a drama school stamp.	Opportunities in voice acting are based on skills rather than traditional markers of success.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
I've become really aware of how to avoid bad habits and protect my voice.	Developed strategies to maintain vocal health and prevent strain.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
I'm exploring how to approach auditions from a singer's perspective to avoid damage.	Applying techniques from singing to protect vocal health in demanding roles.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Casting processes often don't respect the time performers need to prepare.	Criticized last-minute casting processes that overlook performers' needs.	Industry challenges in voice acting.

APPENDIX 7

Phenomenological Analysis of Transcript - SO

Theme	Significant Statement	Meaning Unit	Open Code
Journey into Voice Acting	"I've always loved storytelling, whether through theatre, film, or even gaming."	Passion for storytelling drives the decision to pursue voice acting.	Meritocracy in voice acting opportunities.
Journey into Voice Acting	"I didn't have formal voice training, but I practiced what I could with the resources I found, like vocal warm-ups and reading scripts aloud."	Exploring informal training methods and self-learning.	Skill refinement and professional growth during downtime.
Challenges and Demands	"One of the hardest parts is consistency—keeping my voice strong over long sessions, especially when I'm still building stamina."	Maintaining stamina is a challenge during long or intense sessions.	Industry challenges in voice acting.
Challenges and Demands	"I've noticed how easy it is to overdo it when I'm excited about a project or nervous about an audition."	Overexertion due to emotional investment in the work.	Balancing work-life flexibility with voice acting.
Preparing for Recording Sessions	"I do some light stretches, breathing exercises, and tongue twisters to loosen up."	Basic warm-ups are a key part of preparing for recording sessions.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Preparing for Recording Sessions	"My routines are evolving as I learn more—like realising how hydration the day before a session matters just as much as during the session itself."	Adapting vocal preparation to include proactive measures like prior hydration.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Experiences with Vocal Fatigue and Dysphonia	"I've definitely felt vocal fatigue, especially after long audition marathons or trying to do high-energy character voices."	Vocal fatigue impacts performance and creates concerns about long-term damage.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Experiences with Vocal Fatigue and Dysphonia	"It's frustrating because I can't hit the tones I want, and I have to stop before finishing what I planned."	Vocal fatigue disrupts performance and causes emotional frustration.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Pain and Discomfort	"Throat pain happens when I push too hard, especially on loud or gruff voices."	Physical discomfort is linked to improper technique or overuse.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Pain and Discomfort	"I've also had jaw tension after doing exaggerated articulations for certain projects."	Physical tension caused by character-specific demands.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Coping Strategies and Recovery	"Rest is number one for me. I make sure to stay quiet for a while after recording."	Recovery strategies focus on rest, hydration, and gentle vocal exercises.	Focus on vocal health and sustainability.
Coping Strategies and Recovery	"I think what I need most is a more structured recovery plan tailored to voice acting."	Identifying gaps in recovery strategies and seeking tailored solutions.	Industry challenges in voice acting.

APPENDIX 8

Participant Consent Form (BLANK) submitted separately.

AM Transcript

Interviewer: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. To start, could you introduce yourself and share a bit about your journey into voice acting?

Voice Performer: Absolutely, thank you for having me! My name is [REDACTED], and I'm a professional voice actor specializing in video games and audiobooks. My journey into voice acting began after I graduated from drama school. I trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, focusing primarily on theatre, but I always had a fascination with voice work. I did a little radio drama during my studies, which planted the seed. It wasn't until a few years into my acting career that I decided to build a voice reel and explore this world seriously.

Interviewer: That's wonderful. You mentioned drama school—how did your training there influence your approach to voice acting?

Voice Performer: Drama school was foundational. It taught me how to use my voice as an instrument. We had rigorous vocal training—everything from breathing techniques to Shakespearean text work. What stuck with me most was learning how to support my voice physically. The emphasis on posture, breath, and clarity shaped how I approach everything, from narrating long audiobooks to creating high-energy voices for video games.

Interviewer: Speaking of video games, they often

involve quite demanding sessions. Can you talk about how you prepare for those kinds of roles?

Voice Performer: Oh, absolutely. Video game sessions can be intense. For roles that involve shouting or creating creature sounds, I warm up very deliberately. I start with straw phonation and lip trills to gently activate my vocal cords. I also make sure to hydrate well the day before a session—that's critical. During the session, I pace myself, taking short breaks if I feel any strain. I've learned that communication with the director is key. If something feels unsustainable, I'm upfront about it and ask for adjustments.

Interviewer: That sounds like a very disciplined approach. What about when you're working on audiobooks? How does your preparation differ?

Voice Performer: Audiobooks are all about endurance and consistency. I usually spend time mapping out the script beforehand, marking character changes and emotional beats. I do a lighter warm-up for narration, focusing more on articulation exercises. My main focus is staying grounded in the story and keeping my voice fresh, so I record in shorter bursts—maybe two hours at a time with breaks in between. Hydration and a humidifier in my recording space are non-negotiables.

Interviewer: You clearly prioritize vocal health. Have you ever experienced vocal strain or challenges, and how did you address them?

Voice Performer: Unfortunately, yes. Early in my career, I pushed through a particularly grueling video game session without proper pacing. I ended up with

significant vocal fatigue and had to rest my voice for almost a week. That experience was a wake-up call. Since then, I've worked with a vocal coach and even took singing lessons to strengthen my vocal cords. I also incorporate yoga and diaphragmatic breathing into my daily routine to support my voice.

Interviewer: It sounds like you've developed a holistic approach. What motivates you to invest so much time and effort into your vocal health?

Voice Performer: It's simple—longevity. This career is a marathon, not a sprint. I love what I do, and I want to be doing it for decades. Taking care of my voice ensures that I can continue delivering my best work. Plus, I see it as a form of self-respect. My voice is my instrument, and it deserves to be treated with care.

Interviewer: That's a powerful perspective. What's your take on industry challenges, particularly in voice acting for video games?

Voice Performer: One of the biggest challenges is the lack of standardization for vocal safety. Some studios are excellent about allowing breaks and respecting our limits, but others can push actors too hard. There's also the issue of rapid turnaround for auditions—sometimes we're given just 24 hours to prepare multiple characters with intense vocal demands. That's where union guidelines and advocacy come in. We need more awareness about the physical toll of voice work.

Interviewer: Have you seen improvements in the industry, or do you think there's more work to be done?

Voice Performer: There's definitely been progress. Organizations like SAG-AFTRA and Equity are pushing for better working conditions, which is great. But we still have a long way to go in educating clients and developers about what's sustainable for performers. It's not just about protecting us—it's about ensuring the final product benefits from our best work.

Interviewer: On a more positive note, what are some of the most fulfilling parts of your work?

Voice Performer: Oh, there's so much! I love the storytelling aspect, whether it's bringing a character to life in a game or narrating an entire world for audiobook listeners. There's a special magic in knowing your voice is helping someone escape, feel inspired, or even just get through their day. And honestly, I love the variety. One day I'm voicing a gritty warrior, and the next, I'm narrating a heartfelt memoir.

Interviewer: What about your aspirations? Where do you see yourself in the next five to ten years?

Voice Performer: I'd love to keep expanding my portfolio. I'm particularly interested in working on AAA video games and narrating more diverse, inclusive stories in audiobooks. On the technical side, I'm intrigued by AI voice technology and how it might complement human performances. My goal is to adapt and stay relevant while maintaining a strong foundation in vocal health.

Interviewer: That's a fantastic vision. As we wrap up, do you have any advice for aspiring voice actors who

want to prioritize vocal health?

Voice Performer: Absolutely. First, invest in training—find a good vocal coach and keep learning. Second, treat your voice with the respect it deserves. That means warming up, cooling down, and listening to your body. Finally, be patient with yourself. This is a challenging but rewarding career, and taking care of your voice is the best way to ensure you can enjoy it for years to come.

Interviewer: Thank you so much,  This has been incredibly insightful.

Voice Performer: My pleasure! Thanks for giving me the chance to share my journey.

BM TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer:

What made you kind of want to get into voice acting? Was there anything that inspired you in particular? Did you fall into it?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I kind of fell into it, I guess. I'd done a little bit of it at uni in my second year. We'd done radios and because I'd previously done quite a lot of singing, I was used to being in front of a microphone. So I was like, oh, this is this is comfortable. And then didn't think anything more of it, just quite enjoyed it. And it was about a year, I think, after I'd left. No, I tell a lie. I'd done a couple of little animations and video games at uni with their animation course, which, again, I quite enjoyed, but didn't think anything more of it. I was like, I might get a voice reel together at some point. Sure, it'll be fine. And it was only about, I think it was about a year or two after I'd left. And I was with my first agent and their office was next door to a recording studio. And they'd sent an email across to the agent saying, we're currently working on a video game with this company. They want Northwest accents because it's set in the Northwest. That sound between the ages of 18 and 25. Have you got anybody? And then underneath it said, we've got lots of Scouse voices, please. No Scouse. And they were like, BM's not Scouse. That'll do. So I sort of got that and then realised how much I loved it while I was doing it, really.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Brill. Oh, gosh, how lucky was that as well?

Voice Performer:

It was just pure chance. And I remember like I remember going to the audition and it was quite warm. It was in Liverpool somewhere. We were just

sat on some benches outside just with a script reading it. And as we walked away, they went, yeah, we've sorted it. We've cast it.

Interviewer:

Oh, brilliant. Oh, that's good. So I suppose after you'd done that, what happened after that?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I think it was quite a long process, as it often is with video games. So it was like over a couple of years anyway. So it was sort of scratching that itch, I guess, because it was every sort of three months or so we'd go in and we'd do some more recordings. And then when that finished, I was like, oh, I can't do this all the time now. This is terrible. So that was when I sort of went, I want to get a voice reel done. Went to a wonderful company in Manchester called VAudio and said, I want to be a voice actor. And they were like, great. I was like, I need a voice reel. And they were like, what kind of voice reel? And I was like, there's more than one. What is this? And they sort of talked me through like, well, yeah, OK, there's the acting side of it. Or you can also do like the corporate or the commercial and all that sort of stuff. And sort of opened me up to it a bit more in that regard in terms of the voice acting side of it. I was convinced I was going to go into radio. I was like, I'll get a voice reel and then I'll go into radio. It'll be fine. I'll be on BBC4. Still never happened. And then I sort of, in terms of voice acting, it was kind of podcasts that I fell into. Again, I kind of fell into it because it was a case of I was on Twitter looking for voice actor roles. And a post popped up saying we're looking for a northern female voice that sounds like a teenager. And I was like, hello. And then I've sort of fallen headlong into that world now.

Interviewer:

Oh wow, that's great. So when about was this?

Voice Performer:

So the video game, I think that was end of 2017 through to 2019. And then I did, I think I did one little indie game that was during lockdown. So I was doing that from under my duvet. And then it was, I think I got cast in the first podcast. I was living in London, so it would be 2021. No, 2022. And then, yeah, basically after 2022, everything sort of snowballed really.

Interviewer:

So, I will scribble some notes as we're speaking, if that's OK. But, can you, because you kind of just alluded to it then, tell us, what was your initial setup like compared to what you have now?

Voice Performer:

It went through many iterations. Originally, I had... when I first went, 'I'm going to be a voice actor', I bought the cheapest mic I could find, which was a tiny little Sennheiser podcast mic, which was God awful. I'd have never... like, it used to fit on top of my computer screen. That's how small it was. It was terrible. It couldn't do anything. So I quickly realised that that was bad. And I bought a Audio Technica 2020 USB and I bought like a surround for it and a pop shield and a mic stand. And because it was USB, I didn't need any of the other setup. I could just plug it straight into my laptop. And then I literally. It's ridiculous. I would sit on the floor in my mum's office room under the desk with with an ironing board behind me and duvet over the top, like a little kid's den and like pillows round the back of it. And I'd have to like crawl under the ironing board to get in. It was it was ridiculous. So, yeah, that was sort of how it started out.

Interviewer:

I love that. The adventure to get to just being able to record.

Voice Performer:

Yeah, that was entertaining. What was more entertaining was when I then would spend like three hours sat cross legged on the floor recording. And I was like, 'I can't move my legs'. Yeah. 'How do I get out now?' Literally, I was just stuck. It was terrible.

Interviewer:

So what's the home studio set up like now?

Voice Performer:

The laptop's still the same, but hopefully not for long. The sort of general idea of the setup is still quite the same, because building a professional soundproof booth is ridiculously expensive. So I've currently got a metal frame with many, many duvets on the top and around. And I also bought quite a lot of acoustic foam. So that's sort of on the inside as well to try and make it a bit more not soundproof, but dampened, which seems to be OK as long as the plane doesn't go over. That seems to be the only thing it can't, can't deal with. I've got a new mic. I've got an XLR now. What have I got now? Rode NT1. So handily, I can have that as a USB or XLR. So if I go away, I can take it as a transport mic. I've got my little audio interface, which is a Focusrite Scarlett, I think. And I've also put my laptop out of the room because I was realising that a lot of the fan noise was getting through. So I've got a lot of cables and I've got a monitor in there so that I can actually read stuff. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So have things changed? And how does your home set up differ to performing in a studio?

Voice Performer:

In terms of from my old booth to my new booth, I say 'old booth' very loosely. I, for a start, I'm able to stand up, I'm able to move, which makes a massive

difference, especially with voiceover, because I feel like sometimes you need that physicality for it to be able to come through, which I didn't have the option of when I was sat on the floor. I think the difference between sort of being in a studio and being at home, (A) you're not having to worry constantly about background noise. That's not your job. You don't have to worry about it. There's somebody else sorting that out. And also I did a workshop a while ago, which was down in London at OMUK, and they've got a technology where the microphone is on your forehead. So you can do as much movement as you want and you're not going to be off mic. Which was really helpful, I found, because I am not good at standing still, even when I'm having to stay on mic. So that was brilliant. And also you've got more room to play, because, you know, whereas my booth is probably like a metre by two and a half, a voice booth, you're looking at the size of a small bedroom. So you can, you feel like you've got a lot more movement. Also, the biggest one is recording in the summer. You've got aircon. You're not overheating, which is nice.

Interviewer:

Yes. Yeah.

Voice Performer:

When I was in London, it was during the heatwave, and I'd gorilla glued all my foam on originally. And I had to ring a studio at the last minute and be like, I have got a voiceover in two hours and my studio is literally melting. Like the foam was falling off and I was just sticking it back up because it was so hot. It just wasn't doing anything. Again, you don't need to worry about that if you're going to a professional studio.

Interviewer:

Yeah, no. So it was really interesting when you were saying about physicality. How do you feel about that? Does that does that play into anything for you?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, definitely. The amount of vocal strain I was getting when I was sat on the floor because the microphone because I was sat cross-legged. The microphone was like here. So I was having to lean forward, which was then pulling on the back of my neck. So physically, after doing half an hour of whatever it was, it really hurt.

Interviewer:

Yes. Yeah. And when you say it really hurt, was it...?

Voice Performer:

A bit of everything. It was sort of all the way down my back, my neck, depending on what I was doing. So if it was like efforts and noises and shouting and screaming, it was really pulling because my neck was already extended. So, yeah, there were a couple of times where it was quite painful, whereas I don't have that issue anymore, which is quite nice.

Interviewer:

Yeah. No, that's really, really good. And, as well as the physical, there's also the psychological and emotional considerations. Are you aware of any instances where you've felt like you've been affected?

Voice Performer:

In terms of the little old booth, it was quite emotionally constrictive as well, because there was no... I couldn't express what I wanted to express. There was no sort of room for movement in that. So that did make it quite difficult. Luckily, I'm quite an imaginative performer, I guess. I use my imagination quite a lot. So that wasn't affected as much as it could have been, I suppose. But yeah, emotionally, it was quite frustrating that I couldn't sort of expand it as much as I wanted to.

Interviewer:

Have there ever been any times where, if you've been either in a vocal booth performing with cast — whether that's online or in a room, recording, — where you felt pressured to perform in a way that is less comfortable?

Voice Performer:

Not so much. I've been quite lucky with directors. So I've not had, 'oh, we'll just do one more. Oh, we'll just do one more. Guess what? We'll just do one more'. And anything that's been particularly strenuous, either, like, physically or emotionally has generally been put at the end of the day. Yeah. So I'm not ragging my voice early on. I remember having to do a character I was playing was pregnant and she had morning sickness. And I had to do a solid, like, three minutes of fake vomiting. And the same character also, if you did it wrong, if you played the game wrong, died in a fire. So there was a lot of me coughing. And they immediately went, we're not doing that until the end of the day. And we know you're not recording for another few weeks. So you've got that sort of recovery time.

Interviewer:

That's really good.

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I have felt very, very lucky with that. Any sort of shouting or screaming has all been taken into account, which has been quite nice.

Interviewer:

So you feel like that's been sort of understood and supported?

Voice Performer:

Yeah. I mean, obviously, there are kind of limits, like there are days where they will go, OK, most of what we're doing today is quite emotional or quite a

lot. And those days you come home and you're shattered. Yeah. But again, it's always been like, OK, we're going to do frequent breaks. We're going to do this. Like, I remember when I was doing the coughing. As stupid as it sounds, it's an airtight booth. So if you're using up that oxygen quicker, you get very, very lightheaded. And they were like, OK, we're going to sit you down for 20 minutes. Have a cup of tea. Chill out. We'll go through the script. And it sort of gave me that little break-up of the difficult scenes.

Interviewer:

Oh gosh. And in terms of efforts and things like that, what's the most difficult or the most labour-intensive kind of thing that you've had to do?

Voice Performer:

It's normally screaming like death stuff, like when you've got to die is quite painful at times. I did a demo a while ago for a game. No, I like the joys of video games. You have no idea what you're auditioning for. You probably don't find out until you do it. I think it was some kind of zombie game because it was asking for like zombie noises and like ghouls and stuff like that. That was a tough demo to do because it uses a very different part of your voice that you don't normally use. And my voice was like, what the hell are you doing to me? I'd warmed up a lot, but even then it was like, no, we're not doing this. It's like, oh, OK, I don't have a future in creature voicing then.

Interviewer:

If you're booked for the day, what does that kind of look like for you in terms of performing breaks and things like that?

Voice Performer:

It varies company to company and it kind of varies like genre to genre. Like when I've done full time podcasts, it's been a full-day recording. So it's been like nine till six or ten till six or whatever, unless it's like a bit part, in which

case they'll jump online with you for like an hour and get that done. In terms of video games, I don't think I've ever had a session that was longer than four hours. I don't know how different that is with like motion capture, because I've never sort of gone into that area of video games. But yeah, when we were doing when I've done video games, we've never done longer than four. And it's normally two, maybe three, four if they're like running behind.

Interviewer:

Fair enough.

Voice Performer:

And so even on the days that you're running sort of ten till six, if it's a whole day.

Interviewer:

And what amount of breaks or anything do you get if you get any throughout the day?

Voice Performer:

I mean, you get you obviously get lunch, which is always an hour in the middle of the day, which is quite nice. Again, I've got quite limited experience of doing long runs. I've only done a few. But again, the people I've worked with have always been like, we'll do a scene and they're like, everybody good. Are we OK? Do you want to go on to the next one? Do you want to take a break? Do you want five minutes? Like, especially if it's a big emotional or big shouty one. It's a case of, OK, let's take five minutes, you know, get yourself a drink. It's all settled. There's normally a little bit of explanation between scenes anyway, because the director/writer on one of the podcasts she likes explaining where you are at that point and what you know, this has just happened. We're coming in at this point. Any questions? No. OK, so there's always a little bit of a break anyway, but they are very good. And I've always

felt comfortable to be able to go do you mind if I have five minutes, I just need a quick break. I've always I've always felt comfortable being able to do that with the people I've worked with, which is pretty good. Yeah, they'd normally... when I've been in the studio, they've done it scene by scene. So the one that I've been in studio with, they'd already done the motion capture. So we were matching our voice to the motion capture. So we'd go, OK, we'd go into sort of the side room with the sound desk and stuff, talk through it, like any problems, all that sort of stuff. And then go into the booth, maybe record it two or three times, the full scene. And then it'd be like, right, got it. Good. Come back through. And then we'd go back in and be like, have a break. Have a chat about the next one. So it was small breaks in between each scene, really.

Interviewer:

Do you have a specific sort of routine or anything like warm-ups that you tend to do sort of religiously before a recording session?

Voice Performer:

Always do at least a basic vocal warm-up. So I'll do like humming, different pitches, lip trills, a couple of tongue twisters. It also depends on if I'm doing an accent. Yes. Because sometimes I'll need to warm up. I'll still do tongue twisters, but I'll probably do them in the accent rather than in just normal. If I'm doing a slightly weird voice, I'll sort of focus the warm-up a little bit more on that pitch. Yeah, it's kind of I'll always do sort of a very similar warm-up, but I'll put more emphasis on where the voice is going, I guess, for it. Yeah. I very rarely physically warm up, which is probably to my detriment. That's probably stupid, but especially because I'm normally on the move or I'm just coming in from doing other work. I don't really have too much time to warm up. So I'll try and get as much in as in a short period of time.

Interviewer:

And so I suppose in terms of creating a creature voice or something like that, and you're either maybe going into your lower register or going into higher or something a bit more nasally and stuff like that. Do you do you have anything, any sort of warm-ups or exercises that you do particularly for those things?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I mean, I kind of... like I said, it's very similar warm-ups, but I'll kind of focus, I guess, on the resonators I'm going to be using. Like if it's a really nasally character, then I'm probably going to spend more time sort of aiming it. I'll still do scales, like not scales, but like sirens and stuff. But I'll try and aim it as much through the nose as I can. Yes. I generally will always warm my throat up purely because I have past history of injury with it. So I'm always aware of I don't want to break this more than it already broke. And I'm always very careful when I'm doing lower register because I generally not at the moment because I'm full of a cold, but I generally have quite a squeaky voice. So lowering my register is quite difficult for me. So it puts quite a lot of strain on it. So I will try and warm that up with again with humming, but more aimed at my chest register.

Interviewer:

I don't know if you have done something like this in the past, particularly. But have you ever been asked to voice a character and perform a sort of death rattle or metal scream? Is there anything, have you done anything like that?

Voice Performer:

Oh, have I? I'm going back through my head now.

Interviewer:

And it's all right if you haven't. I just wondered.

Voice Performer:

I feel like I have, but I can't remember what it was. Yeah, I have. I can't remember why I've done it, but I have. And I remember that I really struggled with it. Because I think it was around the same register where I'd damaged. Yeah. So it puts a lot of strain where normally I try and avoid it. Yes. So yeah, I do remember struggling quite a bit with it. And I think I did try and just do, like I said, my normal warm ups. Because it's something we don't generally do very much. It's hard to know what it affects until you've done it. Yes. And I mean, even now, if somebody said, oh, yeah, OK, I need a death rattle. Well, I need like a heart wrenching, piercing scream. I don't really know what I'd be able to warm up to be able to do it. And I would be vaguely concerned about damaging it. Yes.

Interviewer:

And if you're happy to, are you able to talk a little bit about how you injured your voice previously? And anything that you have to share that you know about it?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I was quite young to be fair. I was I was about 10 or 11. I was still at school, like primary school. And we were doing a show. I can't remember what the show was now, but the character I was playing had to shout and scream through an entire song. So it was a solid like three minutes of me just screaming. And nobody taught me how to do it properly. And I think we did. We only did like three, three shows of it. But obviously we've had like two weeks of rehearsal. And my voice just went. It just disappeared. And my parents were a bit like, oh, this is great. She's quiet. We've never had this before. So like the first couple of days and then they were like, oh, it's not coming back. So after I think they left it for like a week, 10 days to see if it was just, you know, would repair itself. So I know they took me to doctors. I don't really remember the details because I was still quite, I wasn't really paying attention to be quite honest. I damaged, I think I damaged my larynx

quite badly. So it took about two years to repair to a normal level. And I say that very, very vaguely. I couldn't do anything more than whisper for three months. I remember that. And then it did come back. But my voice was very low and very gravelly for a 10 year old. And that stuck around till I was about 13, 12 or 13. And then I went the opposite way and it sort of repaired to what it should have been at the age of 10. So I was quite squeaky. So my, I remember talking to a singing teacher when I was about 16. And I was like, I'm really struggling with being able to belt. Like I could, I could sing all the notes and everything. I just couldn't belt properly. And she was like, I mean, at this point it should have, like your voice should be mature enough that it's able to do that. Not for long periods of time, but it should be able to do it. And then she looked at me and she went, have you ever had a voice injury? And I was like, yeah, I have actually. And what she said was what's happened is your voice has repaired itself. But because it took so long, it repaired itself and gone, not quite gone back to what it would have been when I was 10. But it sort of regressed slightly. So then my voice was a couple of years behind realistically what it should have been and was more vulnerable to damage again. I've never had a scan or anything. So I don't know if it's scar tissue or what, because they were like, she's 10, it'll repair, she'll be fine. So I don't know if there is any sort of lasting damage, but I am very aware that it can, it doesn't take much for it to get sore. So, yeah, that was a fun few years.

Interviewer:

Yeah, so you're obviously aware then of how much or how little it takes pushing yourself vocally. And what sort of happens then? Does it just go completely again or is it painful? What happens?

Voice Performer:

It varies. I normally notice that my voice drops. If I've overdone it, it immediately drops. And I'm like, oh, I'm not as squeaky as I normally am. So that's sort of like an early warning sign of, OK, I might be pushing it too far

now. And if I really push it, it just goes. It just does not exist. And that can take a couple of days then to come back. And it gets quite scratchy as well. Yeah, that's sort of the main, as soon as it drops, I know that, you know, I need to start being quite careful.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So you said about it being quite scratchy. And then does it feel quite dry? Or do you get like sort of like aching and what have you? That whole voice box kind of larynx area and up into your jaw and things like that. Or is it contained mostly sort of where your vocal folds would be?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I definitely feel strange sort of around the front of my neck. Yeah, specifically sort of where the larynx is. It feels like a bit like you've overexercised and you pull the muscle. Yeah. And then like, yeah, the inside of my throat feels scratchy. Almost like when you first get a cold. Yes. That kind of quite dry, quite scratchy feeling. But yeah, it definitely feels like it's pulling sort of around the front. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Thank you. You mentioned singing earlier, how did you manage singing? Do you find that singing-style vocal warm-ups, like scales, help ease you into other warm-ups? Or do you feel they place a different kind of strain on the voice?

Voice Performer:

I think it varies actually. I mean, like if it's because I've voiced characters that are quite, I'm trying to think of a way of putting this, quite vocally rounded. Like not operatic, but that kind of boominess to it. And I think if I, if I'm playing a character like that, then doing a singing warm up does open it up more. But again, like, I wouldn't do specifically scales, I guess. It would be more like the

siren stuff and sort of going up and down, but almost with like an operatic feel to it.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So again, I suppose it's a bit like when you were saying before about where you would focus on the nasality of something. So you kind of place the voice in a different part, whether it's more chesty, etc?

Voice Performer:

Exactly. If a character sings, then I'm going to do a proper singing warm-up. They've been very few and far between.

Interviewer:

Has there ever been any time that you've been recording a session at a studio or with people you know, where you've got that external demand on you, but you've been aware, 'actually, my voice is getting tired'. How has it affected your ability to complete that session, if at all? And how comfortable have you been to be able to say, 'actually, I really need to take a break' or anything like that?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I think I've been lucky in the fact that it hasn't really. Don't get me wrong, I've been getting like vocally tired towards the end of the day. But it's not been enough where I've gone, guys, I need to, I need to pack it in. And I think especially with sort of, like I said, when I've had sort of the four hour limits, that's definitely helped. I think if it had been pushed to five hours or six hours, it would have been a big problem. But generally speaking, I've been okay with it. And then when I've had the longer sessions, they're not, the longer sessions I've had have generally been like podcasts, like audio drama podcasts. So there's been some emotional bits, but a lot of it is just like normal talking. And I think that's the very helpful bit with voiceover is the fact

that because the mic is here, you don't have to project like you do on stage. So there's that sort of protection for the voice. There's obviously other factors that come into it that can, you know, strain the voice and stuff with all the, like I said, the efforts and the big, you know, dramatic bit. But generally speaking, it is just talking. So it's not as emotionally taxing as if you were on stage for two, like three hours.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah. So What do you do in between jobs and what have you to try and recoup and rest your voice? Is there anything that you try and do?

Voice Performer:

Yeah. My go -to is always hot water, honey, lemon, and then a little bit cayenne pepper and a little bit of ginger. I don't know why it works. It just seems to soothe a lot. There's little sort of things that I've picked up over the years, like pineapple juice, which sounds ridiculous, but it's got an anti-inflammatory in it. That helps. I've got glycerin throat pastels that don't have any menthol in, which poke the throat. And I'll have them all the way through recording as well, just to try and negate any damage. If I've had a particularly heavy session that day, I'll try and make sure I'm not working the next day. I'll try and have - voice rest is an interesting term for me because I can't stop talking! - but I'll try and limit my talking. However, I did watch a video a while ago that was talking about vocal recovery. I can't remember who it was. And they said that going straight voice rest, not talking, is actually more damaging than it is helpful. So I do try and do, on those days, sort of every in the morning, I'll do a tiny little voice warm up, but I won't push anything. And then a few hours later, I'll do it again. And just to sort of make sure it's not constricting too much. Because the last thing I want is it completely shutting down for a week.

Interviewer:

Yes. Yeah. And especially, you know, after you've had an injury and an experience of that happening. And in fact, just very sort of quickly, when you were speaking about when you had the voice injury and then initially you could only whisper, was that a case of that you could only whisper, or was there advice to only not push it past the whisper?

Voice Performer:

Whispering was the only thing that was comfortable. Yeah. If I tried to push it, it sounded a bit like when you have laryngitis. Yeah, yeah. And it would hurt a lot. Like, I could feel it like clenching. Again, I guess, like, if you have a muscle injury, it's very, very similar. Like it was, it would hurt to do that. Whereas whispering was the only thing that I could do that didn't physically hurt. Yeah, it was, it was rough. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Can you clarify what you mean by 'whispering'? I wanted to check that I understood.

Voice Performer:

Yeah, it was closer to a 'I can't say this' [voice very quietly] than a stage whisper. Yes. It was very, very quiet.

Interviewer: Yeah. And that was for, sorry, you did say, how long was that for about six weeks? Did you say something like that?

Voice Performer:

No, it was about three months, I think.

Interviewer:

Was it? Gosh.

Voice Performer:

Yeah. I think by the end of three months, it was starting, it was a bit louder. But yeah, it was, it was quite a significant period of time.

Interviewer:

Gosh, yeah. And thank you, because I've written that down before. And then you kept saying really interesting things. I was like, no, I need to ask this and come back to this. Excellent. And so yeah, we've talked about some of the different types of pain and discomfort and things you've felt. And do you ever get like any kind of jaw tension or anything like that as well? Or do you usually sort of manage to negate that and avoid it?

Voice Performer:

Yeah, I seem to be okay with jaw tension. I guess people put tension in different places. And as a general rule, I've managed to avoid that. It is more sort of related with me, I think.

Interviewer:

Do you feel, as an actor, you were adequately brought into an understanding of vocal mechanics and what your voice is capable of? When about on your journey, were you introduced to the voice?

Voice Performer:

It's a difficult one because we did do voice at uni, but, and like there was warm up, like we did different warm ups and all that sort of stuff. I don't remember during my degree going over the actual anatomy of it. And why, what works, how. We didn't really do that in my undergrad degree. We did to a certain amount in my master's. I remember us having a session where we like drew out like the tongue and the larynx and blah, blah, blah. So there was a bit more of an understanding there, I guess. I don't feel like either taught me how to maintain a voice that wasn't mine and how to do that safely. I

remember my third year show when I was at uni, my character was a lot lower than me. She was very deadpan. She was very low in the register. And by the last night, my voice had gone. And it was only due to one of our voice teachers who didn't take us for voice very often. She sat down with me for like 40 minutes and did, she was like, okay, I think the problem is this, we're going to do this. And sort of went through that. I think we were **never taught how to voice extremes**, really. Again, we vaguely, vaguely touched on it, but it wasn't in a context of a character. It was what, what noise can your voice make? It wasn't how, again, it wasn't how to maintain it and how to build that into a character where you didn't feel like you were going to break the voice. The stuff I've sort of picked up has been through working with other voice actors. Yeah. And there's an excellent book. I don't know if I've got it in here. I do. On the Mic by Nick Redman. Oh, yeah. And it's genuinely one of the most helpful books I've ever bought. Very good.

Interviewer:

Yes. And so would you say that you've kind of learnt on the job?

Voice Performer:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely. It's definitely been a lot of trial and error. And I think a lot of that has been because we didn't really do voiceover. And, you know, there is such a big difference between voicing for stage and voicing for TV. But there's also a big difference between voicing for voiceover. And that's not really taught. Like I said, we did. We did like one lesson a week for half a term on radio in my second year. And that was it. We didn't touch it. I did absolutely nothing in my masters on voiceover. So anything in terms of that and sort of looking after a voice after a voiceover job has all been learnt on the job and going, oh, I've screwed that up. I should probably work out how to not do that again. And sort of diagnosing it as we go, really. Oh, yeah. So, yes, kind of going, oh, this has happened now. Let me look into it. It's kind of

like then doing a bit of yoga and a stretch afterwards to kind of find out what hurts and what doesn't and why.

Interviewer:

And so, yeah, no, let me just have a look here. I think, I think we've kind of talked about everything. But yeah, the kind of the things that I wanted to get into is like the prevalence and severity of vocal fatigue and dysphonia and things like that. And pain amongst voice actors, how these can kind of challenge and impact you. Both sort of like your professional performance and then your well-being as well. So that's why I'm asking a little bit about the kind of the psychological kind of things as well. Because, you know, as a performer, how much prep work do you do in advance for like any kind of performance, I suppose, but certainly for vocal performance? And how do you approach a script? How long does that prep work take before you get into the actual recording of it?

Voice Performer:

It kind of varies, but generally the rule with voiceover, which is kind of where a lot of the problems come from, is you get the script on the day. If you're lucky, you've seen an earlier version of it. If you're not, if as a general rule, especially with video game, if you're very, very lucky, you'll get an image of the character and maybe a description. So a lot of it is on the fly. A lot of it, you're working out what that voice is like. You kind of got to go with a couple of voices and then go, one of these. And they go, yeah, that one. And then if they pick the one that's really, really difficult, then you're kind of in trouble because you've not got the time to prep it properly. Especially the first session. If you're doing more than one session, then you're like, oh, OK, I know what I'm doing now. But you kind of get dumped in the deep end. Video games also have a habit of giving you extra characters on the day because they're short of a guard or a person in the street. So, oh, like, oh, really weird, like a mushroom. That was a weird one that I got given on the day. And I was

like, cool, I now need to voice a mushroom. So with that, you don't get any prep time. Again, it's just a case of throw stuff at the wall and see what sticks. I found podcast. I do get the script before. It's more like a radio drama situation. I do get the script or a version of the script to the very least. It will change. But I at least know who the character is, what I'm saying. They'll quite often come and say they want a certain accent. So that helps because I know in advance that I need to work on my accent or that I can, if it's an accent that I'm already comfortable with, I know that I need to be able to turn it on and off as and when. But yeah, I do think that's where a lot of the vocal strain and tension comes from is because you don't often know what you're walking in to and what is going to be needed of you. So you can only do a basic warm up, but you might be, you know, being an evil hag and do cackles all day.

Interviewer:

Yeah, no. Yeah, that's really interesting, actually, because that's going to, I would imagine, like you saying, that then it is going to create like a full body tension. If you were going in to perform on stage and you didn't get the script until an hour before or something like that, and knowing that you're going to go do it live.

Voice Performer:

Obviously, you can record a couple of times, but yeah, everything then impacts and the longer it takes to get it, the more frustrated you could be or, you know, whatever might happen. And yes, I think that's really the thing about the psychological and the full physical whole kind of holistic kind of thing that then lends itself to either the voice cramping up and things like that.

Interviewer:

So out of everything that you've done, when do you tend to get the script through?

Voice Performer:

Commercial. If you look at the day before, if not, it's the day of. I've had a phone call before at 10am. Can you do voiceover? Yeah. What time do you want me? 11am. Great. I'll send you the script. And like you've got half an hour. Corporate. Corporate, generally speaking, is a bit longer, so they don't normally come online to record with you. So they'll go, I need it by such and such date. So you might have a few days to get it done, in which case you can actually go through it and mark it off and mark where you're going to breathe and all that sort of stuff. Because the videos for them are normally between two and three minutes. The longest one I've had was 15 minutes, which took a very long time. But again, I didn't have to go online to do it. I was doing it like myself with like directing. And then any pickups then they came back with and I just re-recorded that. If it's a shorter one, if it's like an internal, we really care about who you are as a person, that again, you might get a day's notice. I recently did one where, when did I record? I got the script on Tuesday and recorded on Wednesday. So again, not a huge amount of time. But they become quite, you kind of get the hang of it because there's a certain tone to it. Yes. So you can kind of already go in. Yeah, you've kind of got muscle memory for it, I guess. That's not quite as bad. Yes.

Interviewer:

So out of everything, what would be your, I suppose, your medium of choice that you like recording for most?

Voice Performer:

Oh God, video game or podcast. Every time. I have always been an actor. Like, don't get me wrong, I like doing this. I love doing the corporate stuff. I love doing the commercial and everything. Because it's a very different kind of medium. And it's unfortunately where the money is. Yeah. But I'm never happier than when I'm, like, in a booth playing a character. It's just the most fun. And like, yeah, it can be stressful. And, you know, everything that's said

about, you know, the voice strain and all that, it's horrendous. But I'd rather be doing that than anything else. Definitely. Yeah.

I:

Just very quickly, to kind of wind it up, if you could design, like, a programme or, like, a set of resources or to help actors maintain their vocal health, what would that look like? What would it be for you? Would it be a book, a video, something, some kind of app that you could utilise, something you could listen to or follow along with? What might work for you?

Voice Performer:

Oh, an app, probably. An app would be great. I think a lot of the issues, personally, that I have as a voice actor is the fact that I, a lot of my work is at home. So I'm solo, on my own. There's only so much that somebody on the other end of the line can do. So I think having an app where you can go on and, don't get me wrong, there's a brilliant, wonderful indie voiceover community online. They're great. And, you know, some of the information and advice that comes through is brilliant. But I think, especially if you're a new voice actor coming through and you're specifically, you've not had any experience in the studio, you are specifically working online, there is not really much of a support network. There's nothing you can specifically go to and be like, I want to know how this works or my voice has done this. Why has it done that? There's plenty of websites that are happy to take your money and do courses and all that sort of stuff. But there's no quick sort of go to without paying quite an extortionate amount of money. But like I said, the best thing I've got is that 'on the mic' book. But again, with a book, it's not, you've not really got that sense of community, whereas if you're all on an app and there's like a forum and all that sort of stuff. Discord's been quite good for voice actors. There's a lot of voice actors on Discord. But yeah, I think if it was all in one place in like an app or something like that, that would be really handy, especially for newcomers.

Interviewer:

And so if that was like, if there was an app or something, what would be really helpful in there for you? Like you said resources to look at things and obviously like forum to connect and ask questions. Is there anything else that would be really helpful on there for you too?

Voice Performer:

I don't know? I think if it was like warm up videos, but warm up videos for different reasons rather than different ranges. I think a lot of people assume that voice over, like voice warm ups are singing warm ups. So when you go online and you put in, I want a voice warm up, you get la la la la la la la, which is fine, but it's not going to help you if you're, you know, like I said, playing a hag that's got the cackle. It's not really going to help you with that. So I think if you had specific resonator warm ups or specific, like you had a creature warm up or you had, even if it's like archetypes, like princess, hero, that sort of thing, warm up. I think that would be incredibly helpful. There's something else that came to mind as well then, and I can't for the life of me remember what that was. It's really going to annoy me. Oh, that was it. Yeah. Some websites do have — which is quite handy, but scripts — that you can just give stuff a go. Like I know Volquent have just got a new website, like a sister website, which has got like scripts and stuff for voice reels. I think we basically kind of need almost like a spotlight for voice actors, because everything's kind of scattered with voice, whereas Spotlight's got the advice, they've got the sub in for different jobs, they've got your profile, they've got agents, they've got contact books. The voiceover world, everything's sort of scattered. You either rely on your agent, if you can get one, which is like gold dust in the first place. You've got training courses on one site, you've got scripts on another site, you've got voice reels on another site. Everything's kind of bookshotted. So I think if it was all in one place, a bit like Spotlight, it would just make life so much easier. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Have you, because you mentioned courses, have you looked at any courses and then you thought, 'I would really find that really helpful, but it's too expensive' or anything like that?

Voice Performer:

Oh, God, yeah. Yeah, definitely. I've done quite a few courses. There's a website called 'Gravy for the Brain', which is really good if you're a new starter. If you don't know anything about voiceover, it's great. It's like, it's a subscription service. Last time I was on there, it was like 30 quid a month, which, especially if you're new starting is quite a lot. So, yeah, there's very little that you can get for free in voiceover. That's a huge problem. There's a lot of people that take a lot of liberties. Now, don't get me wrong, 'Gravy for the Brain' is brilliant. And like, it goes through quite a lot, but it is very expensive. I did a course down in London, one of the video game studios, which was expensive, but there are more expensive. If you want to branch out into things like motion capture in video game, you're looking at no change of £250 for a day. I was recently looking at weekend courses, and that was, I think the cheapest one was 600 quid for weekends. And it's very similar with voiceover, with voice reels. Now, obviously, you need a voice reel, like you need a show reel. The well-known companies are charging no change of 300, 400 quid for voice reels. And it's just not feasible for a lot of actors. It's just not possible to do that, unless you've got funding or something like that. And the only way you can get work is by submitting work. So, it's kind of a rough circle. I'm lucky enough that I've got a background in audio production, so I can make my own voice reels and it not be an issue. But if you're coming into this with no background, you don't know anybody in the industry, it's very, very expensive. Equipment's fine. Equipment's not too bad to buy. But the actual sort of full package is ridiculously expensive.

Interviewer:

Thank you. And I think that's everything that I wanted to ask now. So, I am going to see about pressing stop on this recording. And I'm just looking at my notes in case there is anything additionally. Yeah, that all seems good. Thank you, again.

[REDACTED] inspired you to go into this field or, you know, if you fell into it, how you came to be

[REDACTED] Yeah, sure. So yeah, so my name is [REDACTED]. I'm a, I'm a voice artist and an actor and I've been doing voiceover work since

[REDACTED]: and to start off with, would you be able to and Just sort of tell me a little bit about yourself and how you kind of came to be a voice actor. What

[REDACTED]: Since about 2018 and kind of full time since probably 2020, I trained as an actor. I've been an actor since 2009 and what's it would still consider myself as as an actor. But, but I worked in mostly in theater, with bits of bits of TV in film for about about a decade, and until I realize, you know, it's sort of I'd always people always make comments about like, Oh, maybe have you thought about trying voice over? It's, you know, you might have a voice that suited to it and I, you know, I was never really sure how to how to do it. And so it took me quite a while to kind of do a couple of courses and then and then even after doing that to set up my own and to get a get a mic and and you know, set up a recording space and I did that for So that was in about 2018 by the time I finally actually, you know, thought, Okay, I'm gonna try and make some money out of this thinking of it as being something I would do on the side alongside regular acting. And and I did a few job sort of here and there until about until 2020, when covid hit. And, you know, all of a sudden it was like, well it there's no no work anywhere else. So, if, if I'm gonna make a living, I need to, I need to focus on this a bit more and not just treat it as as a, as something that I do on the side, if, if a job comes along. But actually actually touch on turn it into a business and, and be and establish myself in that field. And I, I quickly realized,

and, as I was, you know, doing it and put in the time into this that actually compared to, you know, the average acting job that I was going up for it was that was able to me and My, you know, my The, my life is a voice. Actor was with two young children, who then were nursery age. But now sort of school age was a, you know, a way more flexible and be with, with the right job, which tended to be kind of most of them considerably better paid and I could, and I could, you know, could do a job that was an hour's work that would potentially pay me more than say, a whole week of performing, and in, you know, in Northwestern theater in London, for example, which work, which is where I live, and that was a bit of a, I don't like,



Okay. Revelation.

Sort of a bit of a revelation for me because a a just sort of gave me an insight into just how I mean I already knew it. But, like, just how sort of under A underfunded and BJ. But just how how underpaid performers are working in like, any area of live performance. I mean, not just, not just theater, but, you know, for the time and effort and the, the mental strain that it puts on you and physical and, and emotional. Yeah, it's it's, you know, not paid very well and it's and it can be really, really hard. Which not say the voice acting isn't either, but you know, I suddenly realize that I could I could do work that I felt was that I found value in and I felt was kind of was giving value and I could I could if I put my mind to it, I could I could earn a reasonable amount and I could be available to pick up my kids from school and be around weekends as opposed to, you know, if in work, it means that I'm out six days a week including a weekend matinee and you know, I don't see my kids and it was and as soon as I You know, I woke to that idea. I just I kind of thought well, Yeah, from that

point onwards, I'm not I'm not gonna chase this. This kind of Real seemingly like unattainable and quite an often quite thankless dream of of doing anything and everything just to be in a show that you can invite people to and hope that somebody comes in and, you know, you're slugging away sending emails. But I'm, you know, I'm gonna follow where, where people seem to be giving me work and if something comes along that's that's the is an acting job. But that's right, you know, that that doesn't doesn't mean that I have to like, hire child care. To do a job and end up out of pocket for it. You know that if it's the right job, I'll do it, but otherwise I'll just keep on doing what you know, people are what people are asking me to do, which I would have been, what I wanted. My whole career is, is for people to say, I'll be like the work that you're doing, you know, come back and do more. And, you know, the more I did I kind of I found that I was, I was getting it getting asked back to do stuff. And and I started off initially in kind of more corporate work. And then the more I did that I was able to to get considered for commercials and then I After I'd kind of built up my confidence in the studio. I asked, You know, I asked my acting agent at the time to start putting me up a video games and just see where that went and I got I got a couple of parts and I've just kind of gone from there really. I should also say that I used one of the other things I did as a part of my business building in in during the pandemic was to on the one side, it was it was presenting a business front. So it was it was getting. It was getting getting my studio in a bit more, you know, professional shape rather than

: Yes.

: just a cupboard space and prevented, you know, setting up a website and and presenting my work so professionally so that was one

side of it and the other side was of it was just Spending, you know, having the luxury of being able to use the the self employed grant that was available to to self-employ people at the time to to use that time just in my studio just like trying out all kinds of crazy stuff on the microphone all kinds of crazy voices and working out. What worked with my microphone. What didn't what, what sounded good how I could get certain sounds where I needed to stand what? I know what, what traps I fell into. What? What My performance kind of bad habits were I mean, like genuine generally is as a performer. I feel like I'm a far better actor in general now, just by doing voice work and listening to myself over and over again and, and kind of self-directing. Then I, then I was before. And so so yeah. So that that was a sort of two wrong approach, I did. I just worked on my my studio skills in a way that I never would have had time that I never would have had had I had you know, in a different situation. So in in many ways kind of well see the many, you know, many terrible aspects, to the pandemic, kind of it. It forced me to focus and that was a real positive that came out of it for for me. So so yeah, so once and then, so, I guess exit covid things. I can't things kind of return to normal. And by that point, I done, I done a TV commercial campaign. I done, I'd recorded Two or three video games. One of them. I was kind of lucky. I did it through voices, which is why. So I started off initially, just on paper plate, sites like Voices, and Mandy, and Voice, One, Two, Three, and Stuff like that. To kind of Just get a portfolio. And and one of those happened to be, It was an untitled game and untitled role. And when it came out it was it was nominated for

: a game award.

[REDACTED] And I was that, you know, I'd gone in for a supporting role, which I'd recorded. And then they'd come back to me a month or so later. And said actually could you record one of the one of the lead characters? And you know that I think and together with with a commercial campaign kind of made me and that the fact that he got nominated for an award, maybe maybe realize that You know, that I like other people think that work I'm doing, is, is good. And I'm involved in projects that that are having the desired impact, I guess, like, you know, it's reaching an audience. And so I just so I've been up, I've just been doing that ever since and trying to trying to broaden that the scope of the work that I do as much as possible. I'm working in new areas wherever I can. So I've you know, I do, I'm I since we've done animations. documentaries audiobooks, you know, just kind of podcasts audio drama serials and so I kind of you know, I make it my mission I guess to To a, You know, every year to try and work, okay, what have I not worked in yet? Or what am I not working in enough? Like How can I work more in that in that field in particular, sort of things that really inspire me kind of And be. How can I get my skills better? You know what? What it's this is a constantly changing landscape. Like, What can I especially with with AI? Like, I've got a, How can I give people a reason to to choose my voice over the, You know, many other very, very talented voices out there, you know? It's so,

[REDACTED] Yeah.

[REDACTED] Yeah, okay. So that's quite

[REDACTED] : Yeah.

[REDACTED] long-winded.

[REDACTED] No, no, that's amazing. And and yeah, I've absolutely was just happy to listen and because, yeah, that that journey that you've described

and kind of going on and the not falling into it. But having that that time to really experiment and advance yourself during the pandemic and and that that I suppose, journey of yourself discovery and having having the option to play around in your home studio and have you as well. Yeah. And so important and I think a lot of people who I know have expressed the same sort of thing, it's like and that same sort of, okay, well, I've got nothing. Else to do nothing. Pressing kind of thing that I'm gonna take advantage of this opportunity to, you know, see what I can do with my voice, see what I can do with my studio and and it obviously, you know, sounds like it really, and was a you know, beneficial and potentially like a really big step for you as well that you know you can reflect back afterwards potentially that you didn't know at the time kind of thing of how much of an impact

 Yeah.

: an impact it's essentially gonna have. And in terms of those you said, you've been performing and and sort of mainstream acting previously and training wise You was there any sort of specific voice training? You did either it from school or anything like that or any other time.

: And so yes and no. So, so I did, I did quite a sort of odd route of of, kind of getting into performance, which, which like in hindsight is not not necessarily one that I would I would That I would recommend if for, in terms of kind of like getting where you want to be. But basically, I did and I, you know, I I knew from a very young age that I wanted to, I wanted to be a performer of, of some kind and and, you know, um, like mostly like most likely acting. And so I did, you know, as soon as I had any opportunities at school or kind of like theater clubs are like, I from about the age of

about 10. I just, I just, you know, got involved in anything. I could, you know, school plays or did the National Youth Theater. And, you know, and I I, when I was left school, I was like, I wanted to just go straight to drama school and get straight into get straight into performing. But I was, I was so strongly pushed by by parents and teach the time to like to go to university and then go to drama school afterwards. If I If I still wanted to and I am so I so I did, I went and did I did a languages degree and

 I sort of I did my and so on the one hand I kind of immersed myself in the university theater scene and You know, there would be workshops have kind of people visiting visiting teachers from drama schools and things like that. Coming to do, you know, but vocal warm up workshops, you know, some physical warm-up sessions Shakespeare. So, so, and through that in the National Youth Theater, I'd I and, and just by by taking part in your school productions, like, I'd Done and I'm fully engaged in. Like, what I felt was a huge amount of of vocal training, and I sort of, I realized as well, that my that I kind of naturally had a voice which, which sort of lent, it lent itself to, to theater. It, wasn't that some people, we sort of seem to be working really hard to be able to project and reach the back of the theater. And I was realizing that I could actually stand in a theater. And I didn't have to do that much and people could still hear me. And so I kind of, you know, I I almost felt like it it was it and You know, I wasn't too worried about that, that side of things and so. So I did a language degree in part of the languages part of the languages degrees. It's a four-year course and you have to go and spend your third year abroad, and and often. It's it's kind of going to do an Erasmus or British Council

exchange or that kind of thing. And I thought like, okay, well I can maybe make use of this and I went to study I would study physical theater in, in Paris, at Jack Lecock, which I don't know if, I don't know if, you know, it's kind of like very Well, um, they would give Simon McBurney from complicity when went there, and that's where complicity

[REDACTED] were formed. And, and it's very, very huge folks on on device, theater movement based improvisation mime, no, scripts whatsoever. So, I'd like, I'd come from a very kind of analytical perspective of like a literature student. That was that any, any roller to come was very much, kind of in the head. And this is very much in the body and so, completely different. So, I got this. So I went there and got this kind of physical training and which I felt was, was the thing that was that was missing for me and kind of went back to my final year university and then kind of with the with the like the arrogance of you, I kind of thought to myself. Well, I've done everything, I've done these school place for years. I've done. I know how to, like, I've watched a million films I've been to the theater, like, I know, To what I want to do and I want to just I died. I don't want to go to drama school. I just wanted I just want to kind of get out there and and just being impatient basically and so I went and I I so I then went straight into working on the fringe theater to try and get an agent. And then you know in this process was much Realized quickly that this was a, this was going to be a long, a long

[REDACTED] process and you know, kind of eventually. I did work managed to get myself, managed myself to get myself, an acting agent, sort of found people that I enjoyed working with and we worked

together in theater and set up a company together. And but, you know, always it was always felt like a bit of a you know, I one thing we always feel like a bit of a grift and a bit of a kind of real struggle to convince people to, to sort of, you know, take a chance on you and especially if you

[REDACTED] don't have that drama school stamp of a rod or a lambda, or a guilt or something like that and which is it, which is another reason why but voice acting was suddenly, so appealing because you just don't get any of that, there's none of that, that sort of, you know, kind of

[REDACTED]. And level of judgment that goes on before. You're before, you're allowed access to any kind of, you know, to any kind of project and but what happened, as a result of that, was that, I'd no. So, I didn't really get that sorry. And I didn't really get that sort of formal vocal training. and it's something that I've noticed, particularly since starting to do video game work where I'm having to go, Even just in the audition stage, if that more. So in the audition stage, you know, when you get sent a book of, I don't know. I mean I've just been sent one for tomorrow of an amazing project that like I'm really excited to be to be auditioning for But it's like 13 characters, two days notice where they probably want, two takes each, like wildly difference to show your different sides. And, you know, I know that I'm gonna unless I plan it really carefully and like plan, which characters, and which take of, which character I'm gonna do in which order then, I'm gonna run the risk of a like, whatever I do at the end is gonna be Rubbish compared to what I do at the beginning. And you know, it's gonna probably reflect badly on my whole Set of

auditions of my capacity to, to sort of sustain a voice for a whole session and b is gonna, you know, mess up.

Luckily, it's a Friday. But if but if I have a, you

[REDACTED] a job for after that day because my voice will not be in a state because you just have to go all over the place.

[REDACTED] So so yeah, so it's, it's something that I've become really aware of really conscious of like, and And I'm so wary now of of, like, trying something that goes a little too far, that's just gonna kind of do the wrong thing. And I actually for this purpose, with this in mind, I took a five day singing course in November last year. precisely to get that, you know, sense of training of the voices as an instrument and to get that, you know, for me, I feel that, you know, that the sound may be different, but the the technique should, you know, and the preparation that you put into it to whether it's singing or singing or character voices, you know, it's the same instrument and so I'm kind of exploring now how I can approach this Like my auditions, or the roles. As from a singer's perspective to make sure that I'm not. Causing any damage.

[REDACTED]: Brilliant. Oh, no, that's lovely. And when you sort of said, then you touched on having to rest the following day and Can you? And Sort of, Do you have a specific routine that you kind of go through, sort of warming up and cooling down and something that you had before or something that you've learned. And with regards to sing in or, and yeah, is that you can take us here. We saw.

[REDACTED]: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, it's so essentially my my vocal routine if I've if I've got a job in the morning or my vocal routine would be the same or

whatever time of the day, or even just for auditions my warm-up routine would be the same as if I was warming up to go on stage. Like when I was, when I was doing a lot of theater work, you know, I don't sort of, It's not. Yeah, I don't, I don't sort of differentiate between the style of performances because it's for me it's the same things. I need to focus, I need to, I need the body to be to be loose and relaxed and and free for, you know, we which enables the the diaphragm, the vocal chords to be loose and relaxed and free. And then I need the diaphragm to be elastic so that I can go so that I can hit. I notes If I need to, if I, you know, I can adapt. I can do, I can do a younger character or I can go really low and do and do a, you know, much much gruffer deeper voice or something that's quite, you know, raspy and old. And but also I need to be able to if I'm doing a if I'm doing a, you know, and explainer or of e-learning thing, I need to be able to speak clearly. So I've got to do the same that tongue twisters or that I would always do. So anytime I think about I've got, do I have time to do this? I'll take one out and I always get there and I'm well, you know, you take it out then then it might not, they won't sound as good. So I generally just do The same thing.

[REDACTED].
[REDACTED]: although, again sort of since doing the singing course, I'm kind of exploring now how I can how I can sort of refine it a little bit so that I'm Saving the best for the performance and not kind of over, you know, overshooting it. I guess in the warm

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]: warm-up. But but yeah, so I mean it's it's absolutely kind of been indispensable for me to warm up before any any kind of session. However, however low-key it is, it's, you know, even if it's a whispered one, I would still, I would still perform do the

same thing.

[REDACTED]: Brilliant. And so, and Yeah, so that sort of includes physically warming up and Doing that your vocal warm set as you would normally sort of like and then you're articulators and warming or all the way through there and then and I mean, I've noticed you drinking as well, it's really good and which is so hydration obviously being Key factor and things like that as well. And do you have anything in terms of it sort of like hydration or anything that you use and there's some people use like storification kind of things and stuff I'd like to sort of and massage their your vocal folds and

[REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

[REDACTED]: things like that and is there anything that you I suppose? If you Were to wake up. And you you've got a bit of a You know, you kind of like all this this, you know, just quite feel. I feel like I'd have to work a little bit harder today to actually get myself to the point and I'd be comfortable that recording whether for an audition or or whatever. And is there anything that you sort of go to as a little bit about and a bridge helping hand kind of things with it? In terms of assisting you out with those warm ups or anything.

[REDACTED]: Uh yeah, I guess I guess. I mean, I would do I do some would do kind of lip trills. I did I sort of I do sometimes do that depending on how extreme the voice is. I might I might do use the use the straw but I find that if I'm if I'm kind of if I'm struggling weirdly for me. Actually what tends to get me more than then like, then a sore throat because after often I mean, if it's if it's if it's a character well I would probably just try and postpone it because if I if You know, it's if it needs to be to have like a certain range, that I'm not gonna get however, much I however, much herbal tea. I have or whatever. I would probably just be on honest, with, with

the client and, and try and, you know, give them the option and just say, like, Look at this is, this is, this is the

[REDACTED]: And but so, you know, if you want to go ahead we can but but I would recommend that we that in order to to sort of hit the, the marks that I know, I can do there will be better for your performance. I would, I would recommend if we can, you know, pushing it back and most of the time.

[REDACTED]: Mmm.

[REDACTED]: Yeah, most of the time people, people are pretty amenable about that and I think I think I think there should be more Honesty. In that. And I I learned this from. I did a job where I, I pushed through when I had I had like the worst flu I've had in my life like way worse than any covid that I had and but I

[REDACTED]: Oh gosh.

[REDACTED]: would it was a new client. And I, I had to do, like, a couple of rounds of auditions to get the job and I really wanted it. And it was, and it was my third of four voiceover job and I thought if I cancel, they'll, they'll, you know that I'll never work again in this industry. And I went ahead and did the job. And I knew as I was doing, it was, it was just awful. I don't think the video was released. I never heard from the client again, and ever since then I just thought, you know what, just be honest because it's because it's not.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

[REDACTED]: your people get colds. People get he does it doesn't mean that you're bad. Actor. It just means that you've got

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]: a cold and you sometimes you need to have the the confidence and yeah and the professionalism to just to just you know, trust that they'll

understand and say you know what, I I know my I know my instrument and I I don't feel that it's wise to do this today, and yeah, much that much like a builder won't, you know, they're not gonna go and, and lay a brick wall in the rain.

[REDACTED]: Yes.

[REDACTED]: And so yes. So if I, if I know that no amount of herbal tea is going to, it's gonna help me. I will I will try and postpone the session if I can if that's not an option or if it's something that's a bit more. Here. So I mean sometimes personally, sometimes I'm hired for having a very deep voice. So there are certain situations in which in which a sore throat is not necessarily going to ruin things. It might even the client might even like it more. So again, I'll be cut, I'll be upfront. But in that case, I would just try and I would just try. And yeah, go herbal tea vitamin. That's of ginger lemon. Turmeric tea. I'd like, you know, there's much kind of natural restoratives as you can. And but the main thing that I find, it is a problem in that situation is not having is like having blocked up nasal passages. So like a steam, you know, steam bath for the feel airways is really important because even if the voice is okay, you're kind of getting sniffles on the mic and which I find is is more damaging in that situation.

[REDACTED]: Yes. Yeah, yeah. And Because again, it's it's another one of those aspects that just really and Affects the vocal quality weirdly enough isn't it? That people kind of

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

[REDACTED]: don't think about what it is it's that that final sound that's that's coming across. Yeah and Oh no that's brilliant. Thank you have you and Have you ever had any experiences of? Or be aware of experience, sorts of, are there any vocal fatigue or any

strains and injuries? And Additive, you know, to your voice to your and Any aspect of your instrument, I suppose really.

[REDACTED]: I don't, I don't think that I've ever I've ever been aware of, like of having actually, cause You know, I i you know along injury like so so that for me for the last year I've been dealing with with sciatica with a with a kind of flare-up of a back entry that I had a few years ago and like I'm very I'm very aware of that like all day every day and I've had days where Yeah, I know that I'm my photos a bit more dried out than the normal. He? but, If but I've never had Touchwood. I've I've never woken up.

[REDACTED].
[REDACTED] and got into the studio and thought, like, Oh God, I can't, I can't do this today. I can't, I can't pull it off and I think, Yeah. And I'm sure that sort of regular warm-ups and plays a part in that, but again, I'm I'm yeah, I'm so much more wary of that happening these days anyway because it's you know if I if I do Is a freelance person. Like, you know, if you if you do, if you are out of action for for a while, know, you, you know, you don't work, don't get paid, you know, it's and

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] it's and so it's I'm, I'm I've since working more in video games and I always the thing is, you always get to the end of the session and there and there. And it's, you know, however, however, kind of relaxed and laid back and naturalistic it starts out. It always ends up with with like 10 minutes of like, of death efforts and and it's

[REDACTED] Yes.

[REDACTED] Yeah, and I'm all kind of creature sounds and I get sent more and more kind of creature things and and you know you want to open expand the

opportunities to you. So I've taken classes in extreme creature vocal sounds. And you know, for that very purpose and I'm I'm you know I would say it's more of a just, an awareness from my kind of business perspective that, you know, if I that I need to To keep on. That, you know, work, it warming up with a view to maintaining that my voice instead of making it kind of invincible. Even if the recipe is, is under the weather, the voices is okay, you know, because it's, it's, it's really, you know, it's it's my business. So, It's kind of like the golden product.

: Yes.

as a freelancer, you you really feel that interests as well, don't you? And so you mentioned then about

extreme vocals.

: Yeah.

: I've done.

so I've done kind of creature character classes or kite for animation, so, you know, but it sort of how to kind of push the more physical

element of it and you, Yeah, which uses a lot of the kind of techniques that I learned in, studying physical theater and then I've done an ex I've done extreme character, voice sounds with you probably come across the Sebastian Cotto, who is a Canadian specialist who who is, you know, doesn't believe in in computer generated libraries of animal sounds and he and he's like incredible. He's a death metal vocalist originally. Who's who's

[REDACTED] Who's who's applied those techniques to to creating character sounds and he studied the impact he has regularly with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] yeah, that

[REDACTED]: So, he studies that the movements of

[REDACTED] the folds of the of the your vocal cords as he's making these these sounds so that he can help, you know, do it and it make these extreme sounds in a safe way as possible.

[REDACTED] Yeah.

[REDACTED]: That was quite eye-opening because it gave a Framework. He he gives us a framework for the, the consonants that you would use, for example, for certain efforts that you might make in games. So whether you're, you know, you're jumping, your dodging, your thrusting, your climbing, your your falling, he's work gone through work through the whole alphabet and gone like okay, which which Consonant works best for this, you know? Where does it, where, you know, where would you use a? Yeah, where would it be a valve more vowel? Led like, oh, and A is looking at two things. A like that the, which gives the best performance, the most convincing, truthful

performance. But also, which is, which is safest for the performer and to give you this kind of roadmap and that was, you know, that I found that like fascinating because I'd come at it from a very physical aspect and kind of whatever the sound is that you make when you're doing, when you're doing this but then sometimes, that could be, I always felt that I was, I was shooting in the dark when I'd get to a session and they'd say, Okay and it wasn't even in the script that you would get sent before you know, you're presented with this on the moment. And they're like, Okay now imagine that you're you're being flattened by by a huge boulder like Indiana Jones. Like you know, now you're being you sucked through. text like all the like these these things that you just, it's not something that you can just That you can easily at the end of a long session. Anyway, where you're mentally exhausted? It's not something you can easily just like pick out of the bag. Much much less.

[REDACTED]: Yes.

[REDACTED]: no. Okay. How do I do it safely? So that was like, really it was really helpful in Just having a kind of a kind of map to go to of, okay, that's this like this effort. It's like that. Here's the, here's the vowel, he works at a selection and then you give four or

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: five options and and it's it's, you know, that that's gonna have the, the effect that is that is needed. So that's yeah. So that that's that's sort of the most training I've done in extreme voicing I don't personally. So he's he's a specialist in in creating those extreme characters and character, you know, alien races that you know, creating the sounds and and the sort of the, the noises and the languages of alien cultures. I, I also realize doing that, that's not Not my area of expertise and not the sort of performer that I'm I likely

to be I'm much more of a ever kind of I guess Script-based character type performer and the. So I so while it's useful to have these, if the camera character has elements of it, I'm never gonna specialize in that.

[REDACTED]

: I guess. But it's all. It's all

[REDACTED]

: useful. I mean, it's, you know, I mean his, his main reason for running this workshops, it's the same. It's same as you're saying that that there's just nothing out there, you know, there's there's there's so much

[REDACTED]

much expected, but there's nothing out there to guarantee safety, and like, it always makes me so angry. When I get when I get casting calls from, from usually the biggest audio producers for games in the UK. I'm not gonna name names, but it's always

[REDACTED]

: Mmm.

: the big ones that say, his six characters creature characters. You know, this one is like, this one's voice is like, hell, distilled gravely like raspy like, you know, listening to it is like, like being scraped with a, with a rusty knife. Like we want something really gutter all

[REDACTED]

: Mmm.

: And then they want something else. That's a high-pitched shriek the requires a completely different vocal skill, that needs a lot of prep and then they want something that's really booming, and resonant, but then is able to just like, you know, destroy people with a with a blast of air. That's so loud and violent again something different technique same amount of prep and they're like we want it tomorrow you

know it's 4.

[REDACTED]: o'clock now. Can I have it by 10 o'clock tomorrow morning and you just think you know, if you like like how how

[REDACTED]: dare you how dare you treat your performers in this way? Because you know, but at the end of the day they're You know, their product will suffer. But what I think happens I don't know, but speculation is, is that

[REDACTED]: largely they go for the same people over and over again to do this and so regard, whether you hand in the audition or not good, it is like chances, are you, you've They have go to people for it. Um,

[REDACTED]: and it's frustrating being sent those things where, you know, from an agent's perspective, you need to do it because I've got, you got to keep the agents happy, but you've got a really they're not giving you a time scale. That's respecting the the fragility of

[REDACTED]: A human voice and that the, you know, the anatomy that supports it. um, And they're not allowing you the time to a like provide your optimal performance and be keep yourself safe.

[REDACTED]: Yes. Yes. Because even then sort of those voices that he describes that and In some ways it's like, actually, you should maybe be going to different people for those qualities or be putting them out in different auditions. Lots of something like

[REDACTED]: Yeah. Yeah.

[REDACTED]: that and and Yeah, I think he's from the operating nicely saying that, you know, that sort of it, it doesn't allow and It doesn't take into account that sort of, like, respectful for what you need to do to deliver those sounds. And do you think that's then, potentially, like a lack of understanding on the parts of people, kind of, you know, that the companies when they're handing it out or, and just maybe not, understanding how much goes into it, you know, almost like Well it's just voice work like,

[REDACTED]: I think I think it's a combination, I think. I think that it's there is definitely an element of that. and I think, I think that Yeah, I think there's definitely a commonish people. People don't don't quite realize that I think, but I also think that there's an element of it which is that it's not particularly in recent years and that the the casting process is being, you know, he's being just like squash and squeezed. And it's, you know, it's one area where people where the

[REDACTED]: Hmm.

[REDACTED]: people try to save money and can do it relatively easily compared to on the actual production side of the or the effects side, you know, once it's happening. You know, that's where they want to issue. Nobody, nobody watched nobody watches. I don't know or nobody, nobody plays like the Indiana Jones game and watch it. That's just come out and looks at it and thinks like gosh, I mean, like you could really see like that the amount of time they allowed their audition ease to prepare for for those things like

[REDACTED]: Okay. Yeah.

[REDACTED]: they they look at that. What's up there on the screen and the

[REDACTED]: Mmm.

[REDACTED]: performances and, and the and

the and the effects and the animation But so I think that it's I'm sure that when it gets to the actual productions, that step there is sometimes a bit more of that. But I also as but I think that in in the casting process I think that they squeeze it down and I think that they

[REDACTED]: it comes so last minute and it, you know, you'll get you'll get a brief for something that needs to be in tomorrow to record next Tuesday and

[REDACTED]: Hmm.

[REDACTED]: I think that that's, I think that it should be up to the The audio producers, you know, the people at your your and your top localization studios to say to the, the game devs. Well, like You know, okay, well actually we we can't we can't do that. You know, the equity for actors have recently. You know, they're all these safeguards have been put in place recently. If you can't set an audition for 9 am the next day, it's not it's it's not good practice and it shouldn't be legal, you know? It's not because you can't expect people to suddenly upturn their life, their plans. You know, people have families, people have commitments, you can't expect

[REDACTED]: you can't expect that. For the for the next day, you've got to give them reasonable time and it's not fair that somebody who has the the luxury of being able to to, you know, change their plans, at the flick of a, the click of a finger. It's not fair that they that somebody who doesn't have that, but is it equally equally talented performer?

[REDACTED].
Yeah, that it's not fair. That somebody who doesn't have that doesn't? Is he reflects poorly on them as a result?

And so, and I think, I think that the game localization should do more to educate the game developers in that in that side like like let the casting process, give it more time, give people more time, like respect that the respect the instrument of the voice and and the time in the effort that people want to put in to give a good a good performance and your product will will benefit as a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: result. So yeah. and I, yeah, I think that I just I also think that they're so squeezed for time and money in some places that it's just it's just not on say an audio engineer or an audio producers radar if that's not. If performance is not there, Especially if it's not something that they've come up learning. You know, they they like primary skill that got them into this job as technical and you know, it takes a while a little bit of just You know. Gentle education to sort of help people realize that actually in order for everyone to do their job better. you know, I think, I think many frustrated studio sessions could be avoided by A little bit of of education on behalf of you know and audio studio engineers and things of that.

[REDACTED]: Yeah. yeah, no absolutely and especially as well would you saying and you know when you're freelancing and you're trying to submit a good audition as well and what you're trying to sort of Give a good range of and different options on different character. Sounds and maybe you've got six or seven to record for, and That then, if you Are putting too extreme, you know, different extremes of your voice that actually then. Whether that has the impact of their new needing to rest the following day and that's just for an audition, you know, without any guarantee.

[REDACTED]: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I know, for example, you know

[REDACTED]: the one, the one that I've got to do for Friday, there are certain characters that I can't do on the same day and I and I won't do if I want to do them, if I want to do them to the best of my ability. I have to, I have to separate them because because they I, you can look at them straight away and see the vocal qualities. And I I can't I can't do those together. Because, you know, I also have other work commitments that I that I can't, you know, that I can't jeopardize by you. For the sake of an audition that I may not get you know, the sort of

[REDACTED]: it's that difficult thing of like you want to do your best shot but also I've got a if I've made a commitment to it to a client. Well I've it's my my so top priority is to make sure that the person that has actually hired me is getting, is getting their money's worth.

[REDACTED]: Yeah, I know that's brilliant. Thank you. And I think with mostly covered everything there because you, yeah, you thank you for being so open and just be, you know, leading into just

47:41 Maxim Reston: No, not all. No, it's it. It's [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Yeah. I think it's a really Yeah, I mean, I think it's a really valuable thing to be doing and I think I'm really grateful that you

[REDACTED] but you know, sort of putting this, you know, trying to expand the field of knowledge that we have that we have about it because it's it's a as a say kind of source of no not all the time, but but often a source of like frustration in terms of that you come up against where that, you know, feel it does it shouldn't take much actually to to it sort of make that change but

it does. It does need to be. It does need to be made like more and more people that work in voice acting as well. Because essentially, you know, if that's your livelihood and if you do do something, if you do, do something that you that you're due to something unsafely and it causes a permanent injury, permanent injury then you know that's that's a potential career change. It's it's

[REDACTED] Yeah.

[REDACTED]: and it's it's yeah I I think it's I think it's really important and

[REDACTED] So yeah, thank you. And so I suppose just my final thing just before we finish up his and if you as of reflecting on the future, if there and was any kind of piece of advice that you could give somebody just starting out and knowing that they wanted to go into voice acting and About either sort of protecting their voice or maintaining vocal health and what might that be?

[REDACTED] I would say with hindsight so I I the Main things, I would say. Before. I wish I'd known. I wish it's somebody had told me. Is. Yeah, I we I would say, do you know, do a full singing course something like that. Do do something. Where you can learn and understand. Right from the off. How real professionals who take their voice to extraordinary places, you know, extreme highs extreme lows, with all the emotion in it. Learn how they control it. Because at the end of the day, what what gets you work on? What gets you continued? Work is having the ability to control and it's all very well being able to make funny sounds funny accents. but you need to be able to switch things on and off at the flick of a switch and you need to be able to Take it to extreme levels and then bring it back. And if you don't have that control that technique, it's going to show very quickly when you're in a session and you won't be, you

might get one or two jobs but you won't be the person that that people go back to. And I think so, I think that is what I would say is is just have that. Platform that foundation before you even think about going and recording anything.

Brilliant. Oh thank you very much

I think that's been amazing. Thank

you.

SO Transcript

Interviewer: Thank you for joining us today. To start, can you tell us a little about how you became a voice actor? What inspired you to get into this field, and what kind of training or preparation did you undertake?

Voice Actor: Thanks for having me! I've always loved storytelling, whether through theatre, film, or even gaming. In university, I got involved in student radio and community theatre, which gave me my first taste of performing for an audience. I'd hear compliments about my voice—things like, "You should try voice acting"—but I didn't know how to get started. After graduation, I explored workshops and online videos about voiceover work. I didn't have formal voice training, but I practiced what I could with the resources I found, like vocal warm-ups and reading scripts aloud. I also bought a beginner microphone and started experimenting with recording at home.

Interviewer: That's a fantastic start. What would you say are the biggest challenges or demands you face as a voice actor, particularly when it comes to maintaining your vocal health?

Voice Actor: One of the hardest parts is consistency—keeping my voice strong over long sessions, especially when I'm still building stamina. I've noticed how easy it is to overdo it when I'm excited about a project or nervous about an audition. The physical demands sneak up on you. Also, understanding the technical side, like mic placement and acoustics, has been a learning curve. I've had to learn by trial and error, and I'm constantly worried I might strain my voice without

realizing it.

Interviewer: That makes sense. Do you have any specific routines or techniques you use to prepare your voice before a recording session? How have these routines evolved over time?

Voice Actor: Right now, my warm-up routine is pretty basic. I do some light stretches, breathing exercises, and tongue twisters to loosen up. I've also started using straw phonation because I read that it's good for reducing tension. My routines are evolving as I learn more—like realizing how hydration the day before a session matters just as much as during the session itself. I'd love to get more professional guidance to refine my preparation.

Interviewer: Have you experienced vocal fatigue or dysphonia in your work? If so, what does it feel like, and how does it affect your ability to perform or complete sessions?

Voice Actor: Yes, I've definitely felt vocal fatigue, especially after long audition marathons or trying to do high-energy character voices. My throat feels tight, and my voice becomes raspy or strained. It's frustrating because I can't hit the tones I want, and I have to stop before finishing what I planned. It makes me worry about whether I'm damaging my voice long-term.

Interviewer: That sounds challenging. Have you ever experienced pain or physical discomfort related to your voice work, like throat pain or jaw tension? How do you manage or recover from it?

Voice Actor: I have! Throat pain happens when I push too hard, especially on loud or gruff voices. I've also had jaw tension after doing exaggerated articulations for certain projects. Recovery for me usually means taking breaks, drinking warm tea, and trying to relax my neck and shoulders. I'll sometimes use a steam inhaler, which helps, but I know I need to get better at preventing the pain in the first place.

Interviewer: What strategies or techniques have you found most effective for managing vocal fatigue or recovering after a demanding session?

Voice Actor: Rest is number one for me. I make sure to stay quiet for a while after recording. Hydration helps a lot, too—I'll drink water throughout the day and avoid caffeine before sessions. Recently, I've been trying gentle humming to relax my vocal cords and help them recover. I think what I need most is a more structured recovery plan tailored to voice acting.

Interviewer: Do you feel the voice-acting industry provides enough support or resources to help actors maintain their vocal health? If not, what do you think could be improved?

Voice Actor: Honestly, no. It feels like you're left to figure out a lot on your own. There are resources out there, but they're scattered, and some are too expensive for someone just starting out. I'd love to see more beginner-friendly workshops focused on vocal health or even a central resource hub where we could access affordable tools and tips. Better awareness of vocal health across the industry would make a big

difference.

Interviewer: Reflecting on the future, what advice would you give to someone just starting out as a voice actor about protecting their voice and maintaining vocal health?

Voice Actor: I'd say don't underestimate the importance of warming up and staying hydrated—it's your foundation. Invest in learning proper technique early on, even if it's just through free resources or local workshops. And listen to your body! If something feels off, don't push through it. Your voice is your instrument, and you've got to treat it with care. Finally, connect with other voice actors—there's so much you can learn from each other.

Interviewer: That's great advice. Thanks so much for sharing your experiences. It's been a pleasure talking with you.

Voice Actor: Thank you! I've enjoyed it—it's always great to reflect on this journey and talk about what we can do to improve.