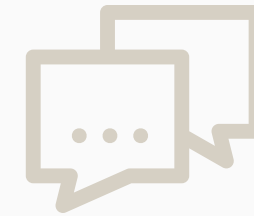




A Qualitative Research Study on the Professional and Personal Experiences of Women Over Forty Experiencing Changes in Their Speaking and/or Singing Voices and How These Changes Relate to Perimenopause and Menopause Stages.

Key Research Question



What are the experiences of female singers over 45 concerning hormonal voice changes, in their own words?





Table of Contents

01	Context	10	Theme 1 Analysis
02	Aims	11	Theme 2
03	Research Paradigm	12	Theme 2 Analysis
04	Methodology-Participants	13	Theme 3
05	Ethical Considerations	14	Analysis Theme 3
06	Methodology-Data Collection	15	Limitations
07	Methodology-Data Analysis	16	Conclusions
08	Results-Themes	17	Reflections
09	Theme 1	18	References



Context

Literature shows:

- Decreased fundamental frequency
- Increased vocal instability
- Reduced voice quality (Bhatia et al., 2025).

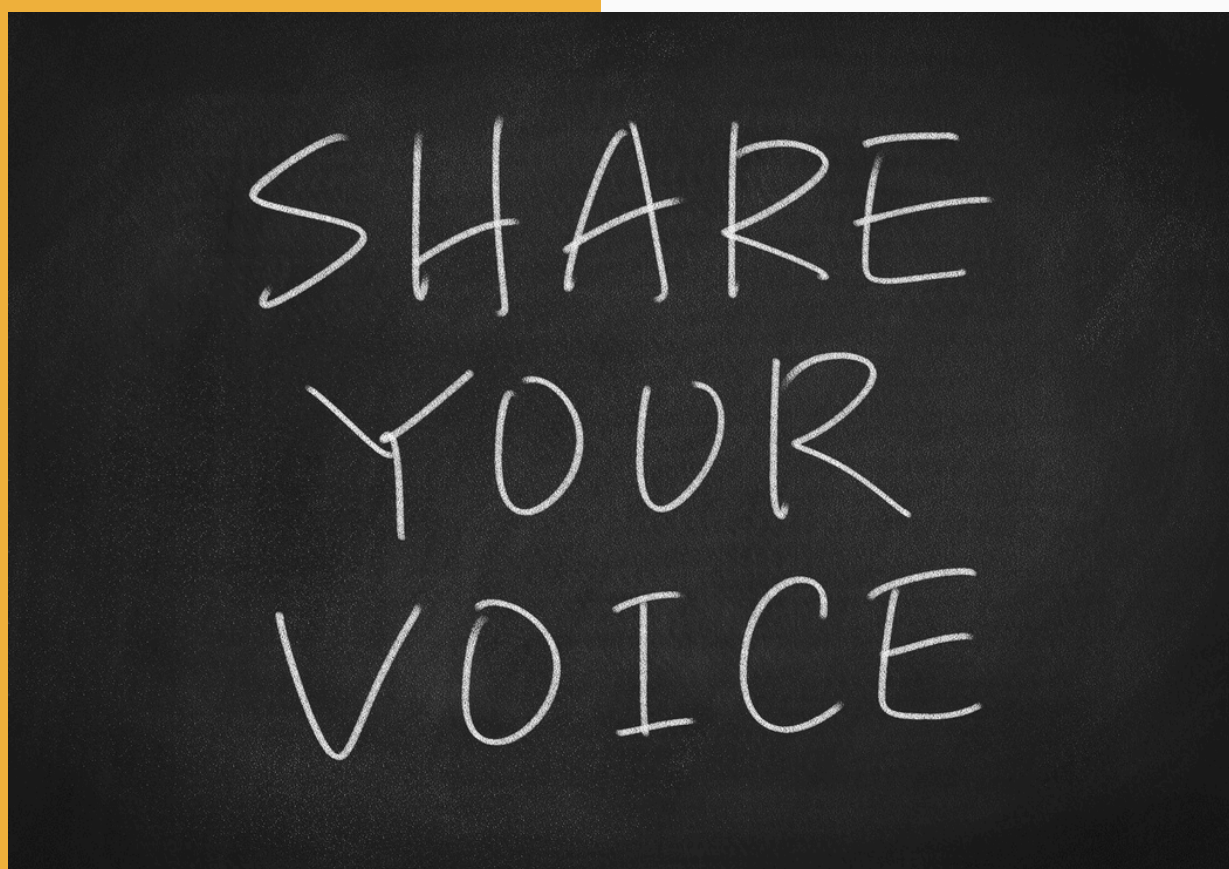
Little research has been devoted to documenting women's experiences in their own words.





Aims

- Filling in a gap of information.
- Raising public awareness (Spain).
- Fostering debate.



Research Paradigm

- Research conducted under the **Feminist Paradigm**.
- **Feminist Paradigm**: Women have been silenced by power structures (Atkinson,2017).
- **Necessity of addressing the gender gap in the medical literature** (Merone et al.,2022).
- **Co-creation of knowledge** (Flock and Aldridge-Waddon, 2024).



Methodology-Participants

TAXONOMY OF PARTICIPANTS				
PARTICIPANT	AGE	COUNTRY of ORIGIN and LANGUAGES of SINGING	OCCUPATION	VOICE TYPE and SINGING STYLE
1. Interviewed	58	Catalunya, Spain. Spanish, English, and Catalan.	Social Services Assistant	Soprano. Jazz, soul, and Gospel Choir.
2. Interviewed	65	Catalunya, Spain, of Andalusian origin. Spanish, English, French.	Former dancer and owner of an au pair company	Soprano. Jazz and musical theatre.
3. Interviewed	45	Mexico. Spanish, Italian, German, French, English	Professional lyrical mezzosoprano, singing teacher and voice coach.	Mezzosoprano. Opera and Musical Theatre.
4. Interviewed	52	Spanish. Spanish, Catalan.	Make- up artist and massage therapist	Soprano. Spanish pop.
5. Focus Group	59	Catalunya, Spain, of Andalusian origin. Spanish.	Commercial and TV shows actor and producer assistant	Soprano. Spanish traditional music (copla), bolero, and Spanish pop.
6. Focus Group	55	Argentina. Spanish.	Actor, playwright, director.	Mezzosoprano. Pop-rock in Spanish.

Table 1. Taxonomy of Participants, inspired by Bunch and Chapman (2000).

Ethical Considerations



- Detailed explanation of the project
- Data anonymity
- Risk of data leakage controlled

REFLEXIVITY as a means of limiting the researcher's **BIAS**
(Lim, 2025).

Methodology–Data Collection Methods

METHODOLOGICAL TRIANGULATION (Noble and Heale, 2019).

1. Semi-structured interviews:

- Participants' self-expression (Fontana and Frey, 2005).
- Delve deeper into responses (Lim, 2025).
- Pursue emerging themes (Lim, 2025).

2. Focus Group:

- Gathering experiences and perspectives through facilitated discussions (Lim, 2025).

3. Literature Review

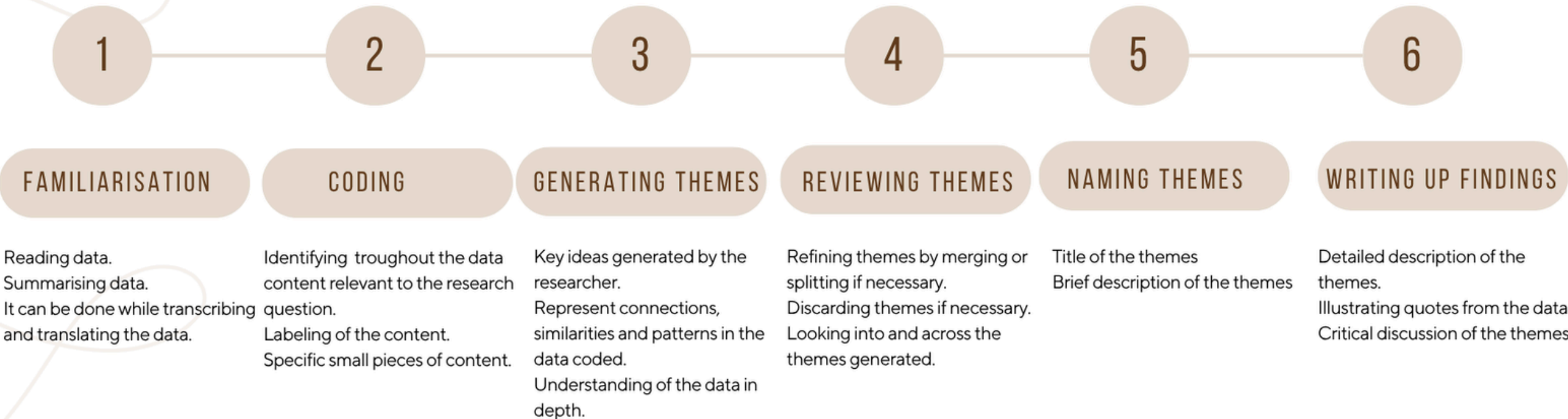
Methodology-Data Analysis

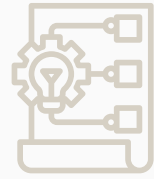
Thematic Framework: Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)

Six Steps of Reflexive Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) with a brief description of the six phases (Yardley, 2024).

SIX STEPS OF REFLEXIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

(Braun and Clarke, 2006)





Results-Themes



Theme 1

*Participants Rate Their Current
Voices Better Than 10-20 Years
Ago*

"POWERFUL"

"SWEETER"

"MORE OPEN"

"ENJOYABLE"

"MORE MIXED"

**"BETTER AT
HIGHER NOTES"**

Theme 1–Analysis



- Participants know their instrument better (self-awareness).
- Cultivated, safe environment of mutual support free from shaming (Hess and Bradley, 2020).
- Contrast with the literature (Elliot 2007; Lã and Ardura, 2022; Bhatia et al., 2025).

Theme 2

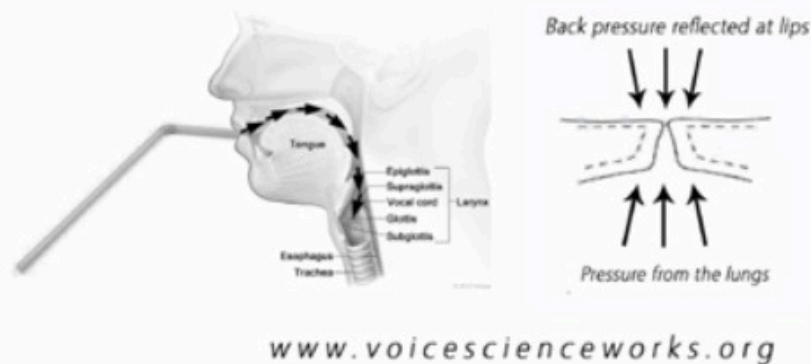
SOVT's exercises, as well as mixed voice and twang exercises, are key elements of a personalised voice intervention, especially for singers over 40.

When the mouth is open, air pressure comes up from the lungs, impacts the bottom of the folds and is expelled through the mouth.

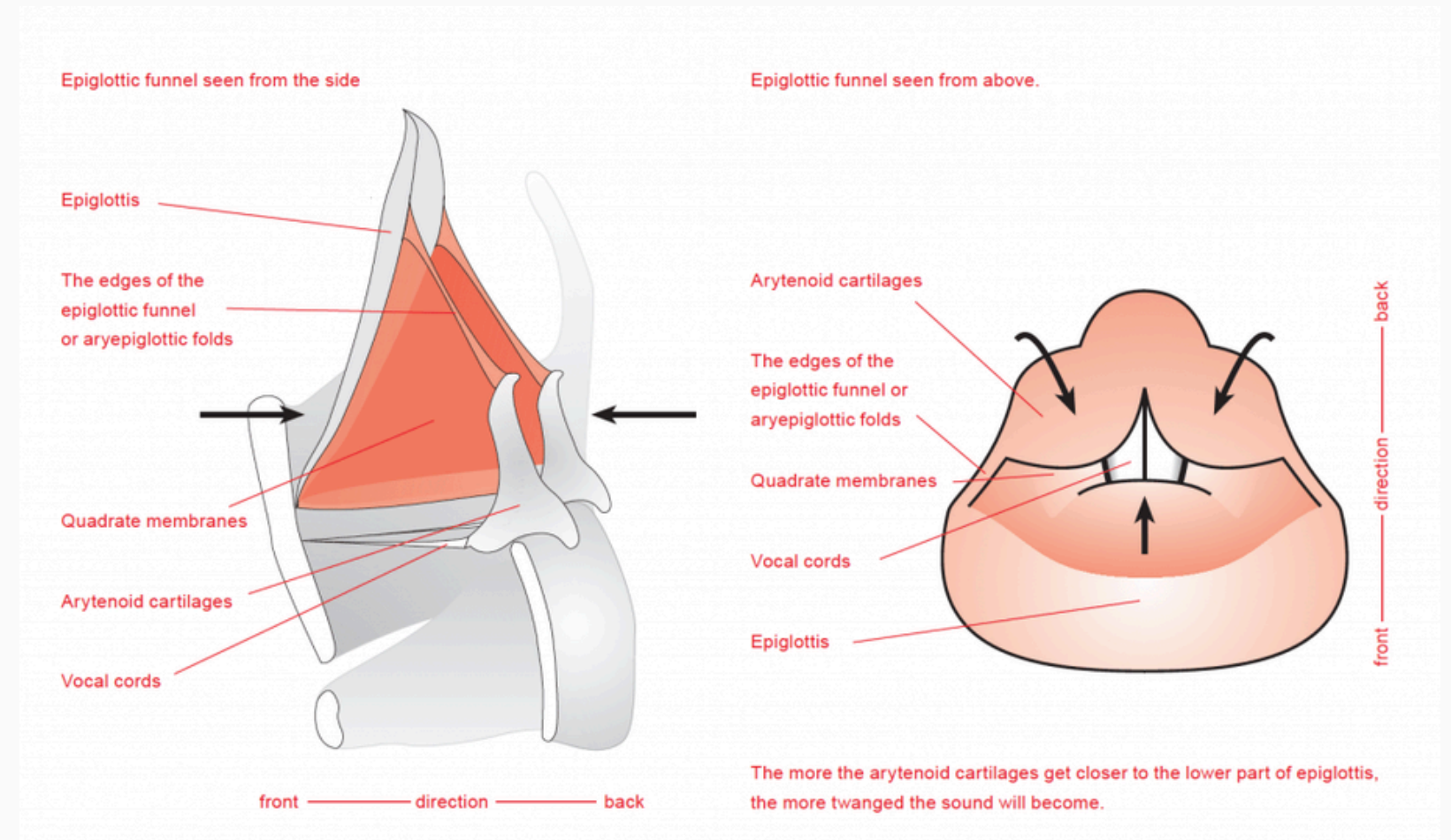


While some pressure always returns, when the mouth is more closed (semi-occluded) more pressure is reflected at the lips and returns to the folds.
This back pressure helps align the folds up in a more balanced, squared up position

*****Great for transitions in the voice and finding a mixed register*****



SOVTEs, as explained by VoiceScienceWorks website (2020).



Epiglottic narrowing (funnel) seen from the side and from above, as explained by the Complete Vocal Institute (2023).

Theme 2-Analysis

SOVTEs:

- Reduce muscle tension.
- Improve self-perceived vocal resonance.

(Guzmán et al., 2018).

MIXED VOICE:

“I believe that women need to be aware that when they reach a certain age, they cannot neglect vocal muscle toning” (Participant 3, voice coach and experienced singer).

Blocked her creativity.
“A boss blocked my creativity...and I hid from any public judgement”, Participant 4.

“She said, I don’t know why you’re still here; you’re not improving as other students do”, Participant 1.

Theme 3

Participants have often undergone patriarchal authority and bullying episodes.

2025



Trauma-informed care 6 Core Principles (Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, 2025).

Theme 3- Analysis



HOLISTIC VOICE COACHING

- Technical Needs
- Psychological Needs
- Emotional Needs

Limitations

- Limited depth.
 - 5/6 participants are avocational singers.
 - Time.
-



Conclusions

- Specific Holistic Training is key.
 - Self-care.
 - Self-awareness.
 - An evolution in pedagogical approaches is needed.
-



Reflections

- Learning outcomes fulfilled.
 - Importance of co-creation of knowledge.
 - Limitations as a researcher and voice teacher.
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