

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BELTING IN NOVICE ADULT FEMALE SINGERS OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC USING REFLEXIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

RESEARCH QUESTION:

**HOW DO ADULT FEMALE NOVICE SINGERS PERCEIVE THE EXPERIENCE OF
BELTING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY COMMERCIAL MUSIC?**

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- ▶ Justification and context
- ▶ Research aim and objectives
- ▶ Methodology and methods
- ▶ Key findings and discussion
- ▶ Insider Research and Ethics
- ▶ Conclusions/recommendations
- ▶ Reflection of personal/professional learning experience

JUSTIFICATION AND CONTEXT

- ▶ Study motivated by coaching adult female novice CCM singers new to belting
- ▶ Existing research focuses on belting's physiology and acoustics (Popeil, 2007; Edwin, 2007; Sundberg et al., 2012)
- ▶ Perceptual studies prioritise expert/external views, with limited insight into novice experiences (LeBorgne et al., 2010; Bourne & Kenny, 2016; Maxfield & Manternach, 2018; Roll, 2019)

JUSTIFICATION AND CONTEXT: KEY THEMES AND GAPS

- ▶ Bourne & Kenny (2016): lacks singer's input
- ▶ Popeil (2007): no novice perspective
- ▶ LeBorgne et al. (2010): minimal singer feedback
- ▶ Roll (2016, 2019): mostly trained professionals

RESEARCH AIM

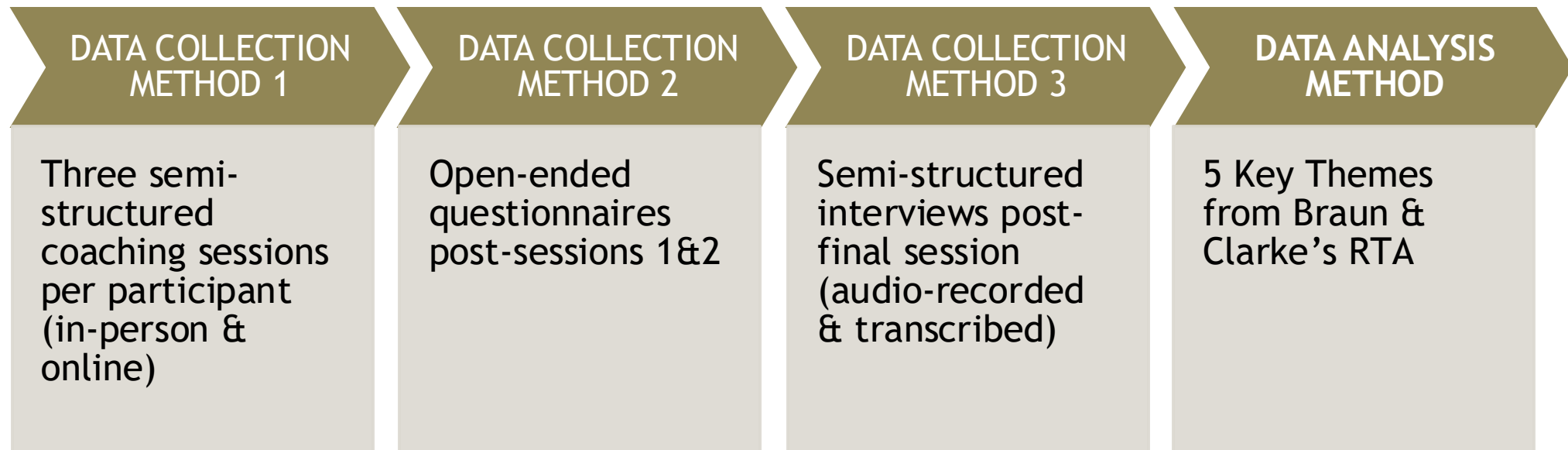
Explore how adult female novice singers perceive belting using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA).

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW AND PARTICIPANTS:

- ▶ Constructionist paradigm: reality as socially constructed through interaction (Scott, 2022)
- ▶ RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2021) values the researcher's active role in interpretation and is a flexible method.
- ▶ Two adult novice female singers (18-40) from researcher's studio
- ▶ Purposive and convenience sampling based on belting novice status and availability

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS



KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1:

Redefining Belting as a Release

- ▶ Shift from “forceful” to “freeing and expressive”
- ▶ Belting as both physical and psychological release
- ▶ Supports Roll (2016, 2019) and Popeil (2007)

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 2:

The Role of Speech and Guided Imagery in Making Belting Exercises More Accessible and Familiar for Novice Singers

- ▶ Speech-based exercises made belting more familiar
- ▶ Imagery helped refine belting production
- ▶ Aligns with Roll (2016, 2019), LoVetri et al. (2024), De Lillis (2021), DeSantis, Deck, and Hall (2021) and Brown (2023)

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 3:

Embodied awareness in Belting: Exploring vocal resonance, register, placement and support

- ▶ Increased awareness of resonance, register, and support
- ▶ Head voice & nasal sounds improved coordination
- ▶ Corroborates Roll (2019), Bourne & Kenny (2016), LoVetri et al. (2024)

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 4:

Developing Confidence in Belting Through a Gradual Process of Vocal Training and Vocal Coach Support

- ▶ Confidence developed gradually through guided training
- ▶ Vocal coach modelling and feedback built vocal trust
- ▶ Supports collaborative pedagogy (Roll, 2016, 2019; Edwin, 2007)

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 5:

Belting as an Instrument of Emotional Expression and Storytelling

- ▶ Belting used for emotional intensity and storytelling
- ▶ Connected to vocal identity and performance expression
- ▶ Resonates with Popeil (2007), Bourne & Kenny (2016), LeBorgne et al. (2010)

INSIDER RESEARCH AND ETHICS

- ▶ Insider researcher role provided credibility and understanding; risk of bias acknowledged (Mercer, 2007; Scott, 2022).
- ▶ Reflexive journal, open-ended questions, and supervision used to mitigate bias (Patton, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017).
- ▶ Ethical approval obtained; ensured informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation (Coghlan, 2007).
- ▶ Power dynamics, social desirability, wellbeing, and data security addressed with safeguards and reflexivity (BERA, 2024; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Limited research on novice female singers' belting perceptions
- ▶ Belting seen as embodied, emotional, and confidence-boosting
- ▶ Key supports: speech-like cues, guided imagery, acoustic modelling, encouragement
- ▶ Future research: broader novice samples, skill level comparisons, emotion/identity in belting

REFLECTION OF PERSONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Gained practical skills in reflexive thematic analysis and coding
- ▶ Developed qualitative research techniques (interviews and questionnaires)
- ▶ Applied ethical principles as an insider researcher
- ▶ Deepened understanding of belting's impact on novice singers
- ▶ Reflected on and adapted vocal teaching toward a more learner-centred, supportive approach
- ▶ Recognised the value of integrating pedagogy with scientific knowledge for sustainable vocal practice

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