**Voice Acting Unlocks Speech Production, Therapy Knowledge**

*Understanding vocal changes can help those with speech difficulties.*

\*\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL JUNE 8, 2021 AT 2:30 P.M. EASTERN U.S.\*\*\*

MELVILLE, N.Y., June 8, 2021 -- Many voice actors use a variety of speech vocalizations and patterns to create unique and memorable characters. How they create those amazing voices could help speech pathologists better understand the muscles involved for creating words and sounds.

During the 180th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, which will be held virtually June 8-10, Colette Feehan, from Indiana University, will talk about how voice actor performances can lead to better understanding about the speech muscles under our control. The session, "Articulatory and acoustic phonetics of voice actors," will take place Tuesday, June 8, at 2:40 p.m. Eastern U.S.

Just like any professional of any field that requires some sort of physical skill, voice actors certainly put in time and effort to develop those speech skills related to vocal performance. Feehan said studying those techniques could lead to therapeutic treatments.

"Voice actors are able to manipulate their vocal tracts to change the way they sound, but when they do this, they can speak intelligibly and maintain that altered sound safely," Feehan said. "By investigating these atypical articulations used by the voice actors, we might be able to learn more about what muscles in the vocal tract we have volitional control over.

"This knowledge could then possibly be used to think of alternative pronunciations of typical speech sounds that could be taught to individuals with pathological speech -- for example, someone who has had part of their tongue removed due to cancer or has lost muscle tone due to a stroke."

The specifics of how much control a person can take over their voice muscles is hard to quantify. Generally, sound profiles are largely determined by vocal tract anatomy, but Feehan said her research shows anatomy might not be as limiting a factor as previously assumed.

"Many voice actors play characters who do not match their sex, gender, or physical size," Feehan said. "By looking more closely at how they achieve this difference in sound profile, we can learn more about how the vocal tract works in general. This could have implications for trans individuals who seek out speech therapy to help their voice better reflect their identity."

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**----------------------- MORE MEETING INFORMATION -----------------------**

**USEFUL LINKS**

Main meeting website: <https://acousticalsociety.org/asa-meetings/>

Technical program: <https://acousticalsociety.org/technical-program-and-special-sessions/>

Press Room: <http://acoustics.org/world-wide-press-room/>

**WORLDWIDE PRESS ROOM**

In the coming weeks, ASA's Worldwide Press Room will be updated with additional tips on dozens of newsworthy stories and lay language papers, which are summaries of presentations written by scientists for a general audience and accompanied by photos, audio and video. You can visit the site during the meeting at <http://acoustics.org/world-wide-press-room/>.

**PRESS REGISTRATION FOR MEETING SESSIONS**

We will grant free registration for credentialed and professional freelance journalists who wish to attend the meeting sessions. If you are a reporter and would like to attend, contact the AIP Media Line at media@aip.org. We can also help with setting up interviews and obtaining images, sound clips or background information.

**VIRTUAL MEDIA BRIEFINGS**

Press briefings will be held virtually during the conference. Credentialed media can register in advance by emailing media@aip.org and including your full name and affiliation in the message. The official schedule will be announced as soon as it is available, and registered attendees will be provided login information via email.

**ABOUT THE ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

The Acoustical Society of America (ASA) is the premier international scientific society in acoustics devoted to the science and technology of sound. Its 7,000 members worldwide represent a broad spectrum of the study of acoustics. ASA publications include The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America (the world's leading journal on acoustics), Acoustics Today magazine, books, and standards on acoustics. The society also holds two major scientific meetings each year. For more information about ASA, visit our website at [http://www.acousticalsociety.org](http://www.acousticalsociety.org/).

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