



An interview with

## Valdís Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir

PhD, Speech pathologist  
Iceland

Right from the end of my M.Phil. degree (distance learning from Strathclyde University, Glasgow) in 1997, I have been working on research on teachers' voices and trying to advocate for voice ergonomics here in Iceland, both in speech and in writing. Unfortunately, I am the only speech pathologist with special training in voice in this country. I completed my PhD at Tampere University in 2003, and I had excellent supervisors there, Professor **Anne-Maria Laukkanen** and Professor **Erkki Vilkman**. They inspired me to contribute as much as possible to the fight for voice ergonomics.

I maintain a website, <https://www.rodd.is/um-rodd/valdis-ingibjorg-jonsdottir/>, where I provide education about voice, including a self-help video. Additionally, everything that has come from me in the media, TV, and daily newspapers can be found there, along with all my publications to date. All the books I have published have been funded by research grants. The book *Talandinn* (The Speaker) is about voice ergonomics, including voice, pronunciation, and diction. I have also published three books for language and grammar teaching and one book for beginning reading. Besides, I have written booklets on voice ergonomics, commissioned by The Icelandic OHS at Work and The Icelandic Teachers Union.

I had the honor of working on a research project with **Anita McAllister**, PhD, and **Leena Rantala**, PhD, on preschool children's perception of noise in preschools. Our research resulted in the article "The Others Are Too Loud! Children's Experiences and Thoughts Related to Voice, Noise, and Communication in Nordic Preschools," published in *Front Psychol.* 2019 Aug 21;10:1954, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01954>. Additionally, our research led to the creation of the book *The Corks*, which teaches children about voice and voice ergonomics. It has been translated into Finnish and is freely available to members of The Finnish Society for Voice Ergonomics. My latest publication is a picture lotto designed to teach language, *Thinking Outside the Box*. This will probably be my last publication.

In 2017, teaching on voice and voice ergonomics started at the University of Akureyri. This teaching has been a compulsory subject since then, ending in an exam that counts for credits. Unfortunately, this is the only university in Iceland that makes voice a compulsory subject.

I was involved in founding The Nordic Voice Ergonomics Group, which I sincerely hope will survive and grow. However, if this group is not active today, I would like to direct it to my Finnish colleagues to revive it and use it to promote knowledge and fight for voice ergonomics. I have also started a group called The Voice Ergonomics Girls, which includes speech pathologists interested in voice.

Currently, Icelandic teachers are in a wage dispute, and I have published an article in a newspaper pointing out how both teachers and students are affected by allowing 80 dB noise in schools, where noise levels of 50 dB are required in “offices and other places where conceptual work and dialogue shall take place unimpeded.” I highlight the type of work that is supposed to take place in schools.

Today, I am 81 years old but operated a speech pathology clinic until 2003. Although I am officially retired, I still have six people with voice problems. As long as I have the strength, I will continue to fight for voice ergonomics.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the honor of being chosen as an honorary member of your excellent association. I appreciate it a lot.