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The Likability of the Vocal Fry Amongst Women; Can Singing it make a difference?

SECTION 1

***Abstract:** The Vocal fry have often been debated whether or not such style of speaking is favorable in women speech even though the use of the vocal fry in male speech is not as often debated about. Vocal fry in singing however can be seen as enhancer of the female voice for the song and less debated about. Therefore this paper will look at if the vocal fry acts as a significant feature that determines the preference for a song. To do so songs of popular female artists will be looked at where one song will have a prominent vocal fry feature where as the other will not.*

Key words: Vocal fry, singers, female

Introduction:

Vocal fry is when the speaker's voice low and tense enough to hear the individual pulses of the vocal cord. This is also often referred to as the creak and is spotted amongst both genders, however very popular and noted amongst women(Quenqua, 2012). This style of speaking highly influenced by pop artists like Britney Spears, the Kardashians are debated to be unfavorable amongst women in employment settings even though deep voices are an indication of authority. However, such allegations are less specific to singers who use vocal fry. In fact, the vocal fry that may be depicted as a speech showing lack of interest, lower intelligence, less attractive is seen to be an adored feature in singing as it is seen as a tool to

enhance emotions (thetoptens.com) but there are no actual studies indicating the likability of the vocal fry amongst singers as they are for vocal fry used in regular speech. This paper will focus on understanding the preference for the vocal fry amongst female singers by analyzing the response they received for songs they have released.

In section 2 a review of the research done on the vocal fry preferences amongst both genders in terms of speech will be discussed. In section 3, you will be able to take a look at the study that was conducted to find the likability of a song in the presence and absence of the vocal fry in the song. In section 4 a summary of the results and discussion will be found.

SECTION 2

Literature review :

The use of vocal fry by women has been debated for some time especially on media and one of the most popularly discussed studies in this debate would include the study conducted by Anderson, Klofstad, Mayew, & Venkatachalam in 2014 where they state that vocal fry was looked negatively in the context of job hiring prospect. Even though earlier studies showed that the younger audience was immune to the negative outlook on the vocal fry found in women's speech, this particular study showed that generally the vocal fry in the female speech was viewed as a negative trait. In fact, women who used vocal fry were often viewed as less intelligent, less sure of themselves, less trustworthy, less competent, less educated, and less attractive (Anderson, Klofstad, Mayew, & Venkatachalam, 2014).

The Newyork Times article speaks about how women have begun this trend in incorporating vocal fry and uptalk when speaking. I t can often be portrayed as lazy talk or

disinterested speech amongst the older generation but the younger generation may disagree.
(Quenqua, 2012)

SECTION 3

Methodology:

In this study, we will be taking songs from Youtube of popular pop artists who have songs where they use a vocal fry and songs in which they don't. We are going to compare the likability of those songs to see if the vocal fry is actually a preferable trait amongst singers. So the selected artists were Britney Spears, Adele, Ariana Grande, and Kesha who are well-known artists for using the vocal fry technique in their songs. They were selected upon random selection as per search results and future studies the choice of artists can be broadened or specified. Two songs of each artist have analyzed of which one the vocal fry technique was prominent and the other being a song which lacked the vocal fry technique. Both songs released through the artist's youtube channel were looked at in terms of the number of likes and dislikes for the song and the percentage of likes were compared between both styles of songs. In section 4 you will be able to see the results of this analysis deeper.

SECTION 4

Discussion and analysis:

Artist	Song with VF - % of Likes	Song without VF - % of Likes
Kesha	Tik Tok - 96%	Praying - 96%
Britney Spears	Baby One More Time - 96%	Swimming In The Stars - 98%
Adele	We were young - 97%	Set Fire to the Rain - 97%

Ariana Grande	7 Rings - 96%	Side to Side - 95%
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As the above listed songs show there is not a significant difference in the preference for songs which artists use the vocal fry very prominently for and songs without the vocal fry prominence. It can be seen in the case of these songs vocal fry is not a variable that determines the preference for a song.

Conclusions:

With this study one can say that the findings lead one to believe vocal fry does not play a significant role in whether or not a female artists song is preferred over the other however, since this study was based off limited number of artists and songs a further study with a larger set of artists and songs is encouraged to get a more valid results. Also further studies can be conducted using live participansts and getting there opinions.

SECTION 5

References:

Anderson, R. C., Klofstad, C. A., Mayew, W. J., & Venkatachalam, M. (2014). Vocal Fry May Undermine the Success of Young Women in the Labor Market. *PLoS ONE*, 9(5). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0097506

Quenqua, D. (2012, February 27). They're, Like, Way Ahead of the Linguistic Currrrve. Retrieved December 08, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/science/young-women-often-trendsetters-in-vocal-patterns.html>

Top 10 Songs with. (n.d.). Retrieved December 08, 2020, from <https://www.thetoptens.com/songs-with-vocal-fry-technique/>

Songs analyzed :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxUFF6EY2tA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXiSVQZLje8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYh6mYIJG2Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ri7-vnrJD3k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDWKuo3gXMQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-u5WLJ9Yk4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP6XpLOM2Cs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-Dur3uXXCQ>