



FACULTY OF ARTS  
Charles University

Department of English and ELT Methodology

## A Review of a Final Thesis

submitted to the Department of English and ELT Methodology,  
Faculty of Arts, Charles University

### Name and titles of the reviewer:

Reviewed as:  a supervisor  an opponent

Author of the thesis: Ada Nanić

Title of the thesis: *Creaky voice in commercials: a study of functions of vocal fry in audio-visual presentation of a brand*

Year of submission: 2021

Submitted as:  a bachelor's thesis  a master's thesis

### Level of expertise:

excellent  very good  average  below average  inadequate

### Factual errors:

almost none  appropriate to the scope of the thesis  frequent less serious  serious

### Chosen methodology:

original and appropriate  appropriate  barely adequate  inadequate

### Results:

original  original and derivative  non-trivial compilation  cited from sources  copied

### Scope of the thesis:

too large  appropriate to the topic  adequate  inadequate

(The thesis definitely goes beyond the scope of an MA thesis, but this is handled very well considering all the elements the author included.)

### Bibliography (number and selection of titles):

above average (scope or rigor)  average  below average  inadequate

### Typographical and formal level:

excellent  very good  average  below average  inadequate

### Language:

excellent  very good  average  below average  inadequate

(Ideally, I would say "fairly good". But I'm not sure what the criteria for "very good" or "average" are exactly.)



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**Typos:**

almost none    appropriate to the scope of the thesis    numerous

I understand typos as genuine typos. There were almost no typos, but there were numerous language and/or formulation mishaps, which were rather distracting in places.



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**Brief description of the thesis** (by the supervisor, ca. 100-200 words):

The thesis focuses on whether there is a correlation between the use of creaky voice and communicative functions as proposed by Jakobson. In order to shed light on this question, the author uses data from the sphere of advertisement. Analysing 19 speakers of New Zealand English, she conducts acoustic analyses of creaky voice, using three potential correlates: f0, HNR, and H1\*-H2\*. The measures extracted are analysed through descriptive statistical analyses. This is done for the type of the communicative function (the main independent variable), but also for gender and age (two secondary independent variables). We return to the research question in Discussion, although we are reminded of it continuously throughout the thesis. In Discussion, the author reaches a conclusion and briefly proposes some interesting explanations for the results observed. The discussion focuses primarily on the methodological problems and to some extent also methodological recommendations. Finally, the thesis ends with a conclusion, which is primarily used as a summary of the work.

The author also provides an overview of approaches to creaky voice as part of the theoretical chapter.

**Review, comments and notes** (ca. 100-200 words)

**Strong points of the thesis:**

1. RQ clearly defined; predictions formulated; we are reminded of these throughout the thesis
2. The thesis is *heavily* interdisciplinary. I was very impressed with the breadth of the fields drawn on. This is not done just for the sake of being interdisciplinary: voice quality is notoriously well-known for being very challenging due to its multifaceted nature
3. Advanced acoustic analyses used; a range of software tools employed; this clearly goes beyond the level of an MA thesis
4. Ada is well aware of the complexities involved in the analyses
5. impressive reference list
6. ethically responsible behaviour
7. appendices provided

**Weak points of the thesis:**

1. Lack of clarity/structure in places – some examples:
  - a. In one place of the thesis we are told that auditory measures have been criticised, which is why Ada decided to use acoustic correlates of creaky voice. However, later on she recommends the auditory approach. And yet later still we find that it is the combination of audiovisual and automated acoustic analyses which is recommended. With this, and some other aspects, by the end of the thesis we do know what Ada's stance is, but the journey can be bumpy in places.
  - b. 1 out of 7 pages of Discussion is dedicated to the discussion of the RQ. Ada mentions some very good points, but these deserve much more space. What's mentioned in the remaining 6 pages is also very relevant, but it suffocates the take-home message (and may be a bit opaque even to some phoneticians).
2. language: consistent under- & overapplication of articles; word-order mishaps; plural suffixes

**Questions to answer during the Defence and suggested points of discussion:**



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1. Could you briefly clarify why creaky voice is expected to be more prevalent in (more) emotionally involved situations? This may have been mentioned in the thesis, but it would be good to remind us all during the presentation.
2. One of the areas the study lies in is that of advertisement (Even the title of the thesis mentions the world of advertising.). However, it is not clear what the implications of these results might be within that field. Could you briefly provide 1 or 2 suggestions?
3. You propose an expanded version of Jakobson's model of communicative functions. Would you say your results support the usefulness of this model *as a whole*? If not, what other model would you recommend?
4. If you could do a follow-up study, what would you do?

Minor questions:

1. In the résumé (p. 72), you explain that in order to calculate the average rankings out of the three acoustic correlates of creaky voice, you divided these by 2:  $(1+2+3)/2$ . Is this a typo? If not, why divide by 2 and not 3?
2. What are the units of measurement in Table 4 and the tables that follow?
3. We get a column with a % in the tables found in the later sections. Why not in the previous sections? What exactly is gained by this added column?

**Other comments:**

Although the two weaknesses I highlight above are not exactly minor, I think the merits of the work are fairly strong. In many aspects, the work is very clearly beyond what could be expected of an MA thesis. Ada demonstrates very good critical thinking throughout the work. The major problems are related to the presentation. Presentation is of course crucial as well, but it's a problem which is easier to work on. For these reasons, I have decided to propose "excellent" rather than "very good".

**Proposed grade:**

excellent    very good    good    fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Harlev, 19/01/2021, Míša Hejná