

Deep male voice helps women remember

September 12 2011

Men take note: If you want women to remember, speak to them in a low pitch voice. Then, depending on what they remember about you, they may or may not rate you as a potential mate. That's according to a new study by David Smith and colleagues from the University of Aberdeen in the UK. Their work shows for the first time that a low masculine voice is important for both mate choice and the accuracy of women's memory. The research is published online in Springer's journal, *Memory & Cognition*.

In a series of two experiments, Smith and colleagues show that [memory](#) in [women](#) is sensitive to male voice pitch, a cue important for mate choice because it can indicate genetic quality as well as signal behavioral traits undesirable in a long-term partner. These could include antisocial traits and lack of emotional warmth for example. In order to evaluate potential partners, women appear to rely on their memories to rapidly provide information about the attributes and past behavior of potential partners.

In the first experiment, 45 women were initially shown an image of a single object while listening to the name of the object spoken either by a high or low pitch male or female manipulated voice. They were then shown two similar but not identical versions of the object and asked to identify the one they had seen earlier. The women were also asked which voice they preferred.

In the second experiment, as well as manipulated voices, the researchers used real male and female voices to test how 46 new women rated the

voices and how they scored on object memory.

In both cases, the authors found that women had a strong preference for the low pitch male voice and remembered objects more accurately when they have been introduced by the deep male voice.

Smith concludes: "Our findings demonstrate that women's memory is enhanced with lower pitch male voices, compared with the less attractive raised pitch male voices. Our two experiments indicate for the first time that signals from the opposite-sex that are important for mate choice also affect the accuracy of women's memory."

Dr. Kevin Allan, who supervised the research, said, "We think this is evidence that evolution has shaped women's ability to remember information associated with desirable men. Good memory for specific encounters with desirable men allows women to compare and evaluate men according to how they might behave in different relationship contexts, for example a long-term committed relationship versus a short-term uncommitted relationship. This would help women to pick a suitable partner, and that's a particularly important ability to have because the costs of poor [mate-choice](#) decisions can be severe."

More information: Smith D et al (2011). A modulatory effect of male voice pitch on long-term memory in women: evidence of adaptation for mate choice? *Memory & Cognition*. [DOI 10.1007/s13421-011-0136-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13421-011-0136-6)

Provided by Springer

Citation: Deep male voice helps women remember (2011, September 12) retrieved 7 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-09-deep-male-voice-women.html>

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