

July 5, 2022 – Pop Culture

Did you ever notice...Seinfeld was funnier the less Jerry talked?

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Unimportant questions about why Seinfeld wasn't funny the first few seasons.

Intro

Seinfeld, objectively the funniest show ever made, wasn't popular the first few seasons because, well, it wasn't very funny. As Jerry Seinfeld himself has observed, the show probably wouldn't have survived today because it wasn't an immediate hit. The show's quirky timing and distinctive voice didn't develop until the third or fourth season.

Questions

Analyzing dialogue from each episode's script, by character and by season, what can we learn about how the show evolved, from no buzz (circa seasons 1-3) to TV darling (seasons 5-9)?

1. How did each character's share of dialogue change as the show progressed from season to season? Did Jerry initially have an outsized share of the dialogue?
2. Did the writers reach some magic equilibrium/balance in terms of how they shared dialogue and/or distributed storylines between the four main characters?

The bottom line

1. **Seinfeld's popularity increased as Jerry's share of the show's dialogue declined**, from 54% the first season, to 22% the final season. [Insert series of area charts (small multiples) of the top four characters share of dialogue over each season to illustrate how Jerry's share of dialogue declined relative to the rest of the cast. Add line chart of Seinfeld's TV ratings to illustrate the inverse relationship.]
2. **Seinfeld's writers/producers discovered the sweet spot** (accidentally?) in how they distributed lines among the four main characters. In seasons 5-9, when Seinfeld was the top-rated prime time show, the consistency is remarkable: Jerry, George, Elaine, and Kramer shared 70% of the dialogue (70.8%, 71.8%, 67.6%, 70.7%, 71.5%); in contrast to the first three seasons, when it was 83% (85.7%, 84.3%, and 77.8%). [Insert stream chart of the share of dialogue among the leading four characters and rest of cast to illustrate the change/inflection point in season four vs the rest of the cast and consistency over the remaining five seasons.]