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As infants begin to learn words with earnest in their second year of life, they must not only learn which distinct combination of sounds maps onto the label of an object but also be flexible in this knowledge to account for variability in the signal (e.g. speakers, accents, etc.). Over a decade of research has investigated the phonological detail with which infants encode familiar words by examining their recognition of correctly pronounced (*dog*) and mispronounced (*tog*) words. Using a meta-analytic approach, we capture how sensitivity to mispronunciations changes as infants mature.

(130 character title)

Infants start learning words, the building blocks of language, at least by 6 months. To do so, they must be able to extract the phonological form of words from running speech. A rich literature has investigated this process, termed word segmentation. We addressed the fundamental question of how infants of different ages segment words from their native language using a meta-analytic approach. Based on previous popular theoretical and experimental work, we expected infants to display familiarity preferences early on, with a switch to novelty preferences as infants become more proficient at processing and segmenting native speech. We also considered the possibility that this switch may occur at different points in time as a function of infants’ native language and took into account the impact of various task- and stimulus-related factors that might affect difficulty. The combined results from 168 experiments reporting on data gathered from 3774 infants revealed a persistent familiarity preference across all ages. There was no significant effect of additional factors, including native language and experiment design. Further analyses revealed no sign of selective data collection or reporting. We conclude that models of infant information processing that are frequently cited in this domain may not, in fact, apply in the case of segmenting words from native speech.