

Dear Editorial Board,

We hereby submit a paper entitled “Infants’ preference for speech is stable across the first year of life: Meta-analytic evidence” to *Infancy* for consideration as a **research article**.

One of the key milestones in language acquisition is the preference for speech over other types of sounds. The finding that even newborns exhibit this bias is a cornerstone of multiple theoretical discussions, including some on the extent to which such biases are innate and domain-specific (e.g., Vouloumanos et al., 2010). Moreover, a preference for speech over foils has been argued to be a relevant development marker and a potential diagnostic (e.g., Sorcinelli et al., 2019). Our study gathered all the available literature on this topic, which allowed us unprecedented power to statistically test previous claims based on non-statistical comparisons, often done by interpreting p-values across papers. This practice is now openly considered as incorrect (as expressed in Gelman & Stern, 2012: “the difference between ‘significant’ and ‘non-significant’ is not itself statistically significant”). We demonstrate results are extremely stable across the first year of life; and do not statistically differ depending on whether native or foreign speech is used, or whether the competitor sound is artificial or natural, vocal or non-vocal. Based on the methodological and theoretical importance of our findings, we make targeted recommendations for future data collection and reporting endeavors.

We believe this manuscript is a perfect fit for *Infancy*, not only because of the topic, but also because of the approach and methods. *Infancy* is a leading journal for papers on speech processing and early cognitive development, and the implications of our findings above for both theoretical and applied research will attract the attention of your wide readership. Regarding the approach and methods, we read with enthusiasm the publication on your pages of two other open science meta-analyses (Carbajal et al., 2021; Cox et al., 2022). We are excited at the possibility of continuing this streak of cumulative, open, and reflective research being published in *Infancy*.

The manuscript complies with all requirements in your *Instructions for authors*. Regarding ethical guidelines, ours is a meta-analytic study and therefore does not rely on newly collected data, nor does it contain personal identifying information. We make our meta-analytic data and reproducible analysis scripts publicly accessible online, archived on the Open Science Framework. Links are provided in the manuscript. To preserve anonymity, these are “anonymized view only”, and therefore do not have a DOI, but upon acceptance they’ll be rendered public and DOIs will be added to the manuscript. This work has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. There are no conflicts of interest and all funding sources are acknowledged in the Acknowledgments section.

Aware of the difficulty of identifying and securing relevant reviewers, and the volume of work that is certainly in your hands, we take the liberty of suggesting the following potential reviewers, who are knowledgeable on the topic, and who can provide an unbiased review (to the best of our knowledge):

- Christopher Cox (chris.mm.cox@gmail.com) and Riccardo Fusaroli (fusaroli@cc.au.dk) recently coauthored a meta-analysis published in *Infancy* on speech processing, as well as several other meta-analyses
- Osnat Segal (osegaliii@gmail.com) published two papers that are included in the meta-analysis and can provide a perspective from a researcher working in the field
- Megha Sundara (megha.sundara@humnet.ucla.edu) does not work on preference for speech but does work on infant speech perception, and has recently first-authored a meta-analysis

We would also like to oppose Dr. Athena Vouloumanos, whose theoretical and empirical claims may make some of our results uncomfortable.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Cécile Issard