

Summaries week 9

Phonetics and Phonology of Bilingualism

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Reading 1: Jacewicz, Fox and Salmons (2011)

Jacewicz et al. (2011) analyzed the ongoing change of /ɪ, ɛ, æ/ in apparent time across three American English varieties from North Carolina (South), Ohio (Midwest), and Wisconsin (North). To that end, they recorded 123 adult women from 3 different age groups (21-33, 37-49, 51-65) reading sentence pairs in which the stressed varied. The authors found variation in vowel duration and formant dynamics (acoustic space and spectral change) within and between dialects, across the different generations of speakers. This study shows that American English is not monolithic and that there is an ongoing cross-generational change in the production of the examined vowels.

Reference: Jacewicz, E., R. A. Fox, and J. Salmons (2011). “Vowel change across three age groups of speakers in three regional varieties of American English”. In: *Journal of Phonetics* 39.4, pp. 683–693.

Reading 2: Pallier, Bosch and Sebastián-Gallés (1997)

Pallier et al. (1997) examined the discrimination of the Catalan vowel contrast [e]-[ɛ] by Spanish-Catalan early bilinguals and compared it to that of Catalan-Spanish bilinguals. Forty participants completed three tasks in order to assess their perception of such contrast. Overall, L1 Catalan bilinguals could differentiate between [e]-[ɛ], whereas L1 Spanish bilinguals could not master such contrast. Interestingly, there was great variability in the last group. The authors interpret such findings as evidence that support the hypothesis of loss of plasticity with age, in which the sound system acquired by these speakers is biased by the early acquisition of Spanish, making it difficult for them to create two new phonetic categories for the Catalan [e] and [ɛ], even with early and extensive exposure to this language.

Reference: Pallier, C., L. Bosch, and N. Sebastián-Gallés (1997). “A limit on behavioral plasticity in speech perception”. In: *Cognition* 64.3, pp. B9–B17.

Reading 3: Shea (2019)

I am the discussion leader for this article.

Reference: Shea, C. (2019). “Dominance, Proficiency, and Spanish Heritage Speakers’ production of English and Spanish Vowels”. In: *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 41.1, pp. 123–149.