

Attention and salience in lexically-guided perceptual learning

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PhD Defense

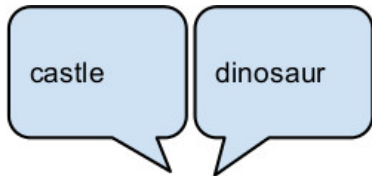
Perceptual constancy

Despite variation, listeners can interpret variable productions as a single word type

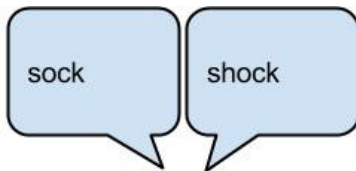


Shankweiler et al. (1977); Kuhl (1979); Sumner and Kataoka (2013)

Perceptual learning

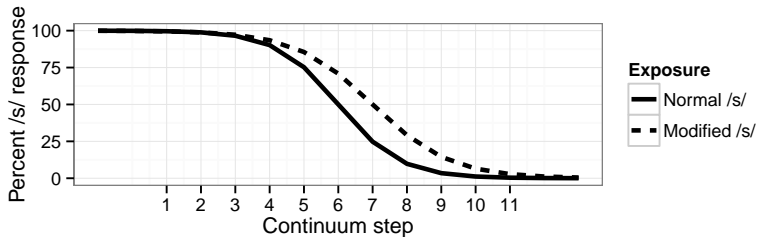
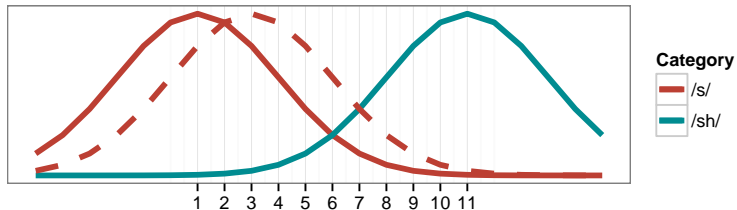


Exposure



Categorization

Categorization



Sources of variation

Example: /s/

SPEAKER

- Indexical
 - Accent
 - Gender

LISTENER

- Indexical
 - Accent
 - Perceived accent
 - Perceived gender

Strand and Johnson (1996); Li et al. (2011); Kraljic and Samuel (2005)

Sources of variation

Example: /s/

SPEAKER

- Contextual
 - Speaking rate
 - Coarticulation (/stu/)
 - Position in word
 - Predictability

LISTENER

- Contextual
 - Speaking rate
 - Coarticulation (/stu/)
 - Position in word
 - Predictability

Lieberman (1963); Kraljic et al. (2008); Clopper and Pierrehumbert (2008); Pitt and Szostak (2012)

Sources of variation

Example: /s/

SPEAKER

● Attention

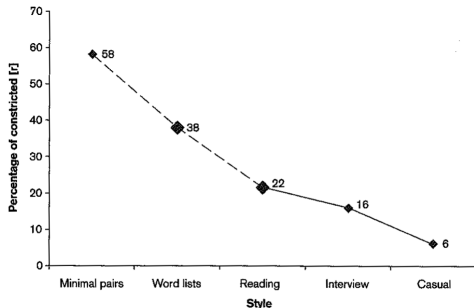


Figure 3.2 Occurrence of constricted [r] in New York City English in five speech styles. (Dashed line indicates the qualitatively different activities involving the use of unconnected speech.) (Source, Labov 1966: 221.)

LISTENER

● Attention

- Comprehension
- Perception

Examples

- Students taught by a professor with non-native accent
 - How can they maximize their comprehension?

Research question

How do changes to a listener's attention in exposure affect perceptual learning in future categorization?

Interaction of variation

Example: /s/

Speaker

- Contextual
 - Speaking rate
 - Coarticulation (/stɪ/)
 - **Position in word**
 - **Predictability**
- Attention

Listener

- Contextual
 - Speaking rate
 - Coarticulation (/stɪ/)
 - Position in word
 - Predictability
- **Attention**
 - Comprehension
 - Perception

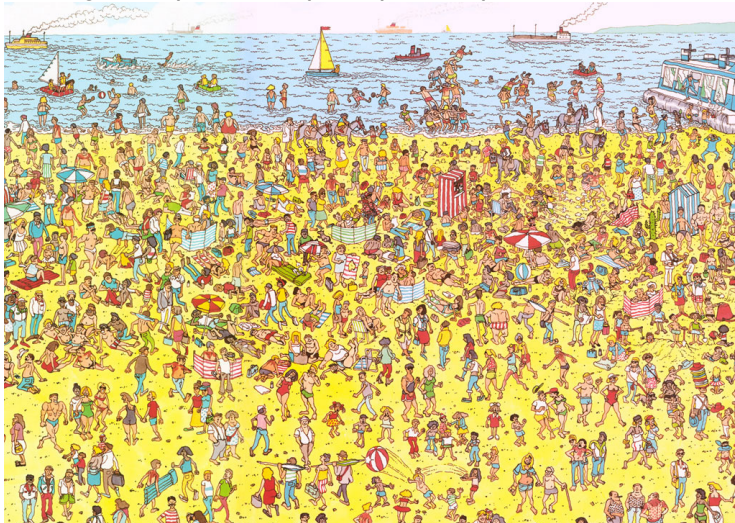


Outline

- 1 Background
 - Perceptual learning
 - Sources of variation
 - Attentional sets
- 2 Experiments 1 and 2
 - Set up
 - Results
 - Summary
- 3 Experiment 3
 - Set up
 - Results
 - Summary
- 4 Discussion

Attentional sets

Strategies to parse our perceptual experience



Attentional sets

Comprehension-oriented

- Focus on comprehending meaning
- Real world example:
 - Students in lecture
 - Primary focus is comprehending the professor (we hope)

Pitt and Szostak (2012)

Attentional sets

Perception-oriented

- Focus on perceiving a specific pronunciation
- Real world example:
 - Students in lecture
 - Professor with an accent or affectation
 - Primary focus might shift from comprehension

Pitt and Szostak (2012)

Attentional sets in perceptual learning

- Comprehension-oriented tasks
 - Lexical decision
 - Sentence transcription
- Perception-oriented tasks
 - Audio-visual lipreading (nonwords)
 - Psychophysics perceptual learning

Ahissar and Hochstein (1993); Norris et al. (2003); Vroomen et al. (2007); Bradlow and Bent (2008); Reinisch et al. (2014)

Generalization in perceptual learning

Comprehension-oriented tasks generalize

- New words or nonwords
- (Sometimes) new voices

Perception-oriented tasks do not generalize as readily

- Exposure specificity

Ahissar and Hochstein (1993); Norris et al. (2003); Kraljic and Samuel (2005); Bradlow and Bent (2008); Pitt and Szostak (2012); Reinisch et al. (2013)

Hypothesis

Comprehension-oriented attentional sets allow for greater generalization than perception-oriented attentional sets.

Experimental paradigm

Comprehension-oriented tasks

- Lexical decision
- Word identification in sentences

Manipulations to promote perception-oriented attentional sets

- Instructions
- Salience
 - Unpredictability or low expectations
 - Increase the likelihood of listener noticing modification
 - Assumption: similar to increasing the number of /s/ trials relative to filler trials

Explicit instructions

- “This speaker’s ‘s’ sounds are ambiguous”
- Promote perception-oriented attentional set

Pitt and Szostak (2012)

Salience - Word position

- Listeners are more tolerant of variation later in the word
- Word-initial modified /s/ should be more salient
- Examples
 - Word-initial: *submarine*
 - Word-medial: *whistle*

Pitt and Szostak (2012)

Salience - Category typicality

- Productions farther from the mean of a category are more salient

DOFIGUREOFDISTPREDBUTDIFFERENTLABELS

Experiments 1 and 2

Experiment 1

- Lexical decision exposure task
- 94 native English participants (77 non-native participants)
- Across subject factors
 - Instructions
 - Position of modified /s/ in words (Word-initial vs word-media)
- 50% word response rate in a pre-test (n = 20)

Experiment 2

- Same design and materials as Experiment 1
- 96 native English participants (31 non-native participants)
- 30% word response rate in the pre-test (more atypical /s/)

Sample trials

Exposure

- Hear: whistle (Experiment 1 audio) (Experiment 2 audio)
- Hear: submarine (Experiment 1 audio)
(Experiment 2 audio)
- Word or nonword?

Categorization

- Hear: sock-shock (), sin-shin (), sack-shack (), sigh-shy ()
- Sock or shock? Sin or shin? etc.

Experiment 1 and 2 predictions

Only categorization data presented here

Possible outcomes:

- Perceptual learning should be less where perception-oriented attentional sets are promoted
- Equal perceptual learning effects across all conditions
- Perceptual learning effects stronger in Word-initial exposure
 - More similar to categorization items

Experiment 1 - Word-initial exposure

Exposed to ambiguous /s/

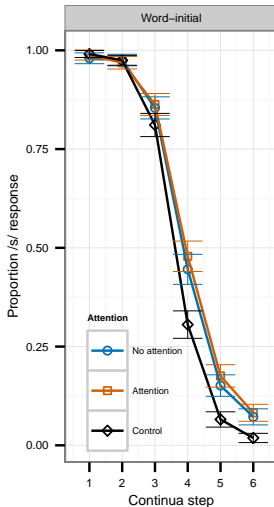
- 50% between /s/ and /ʃ/

Attention

- No /s/-oriented instructions
- Told /s/ would be ambiguous

Position of /s/

- *Word initial*
- Word medial



Experiment 1 - Word-medial exposure

Exposed to ambiguous /s/

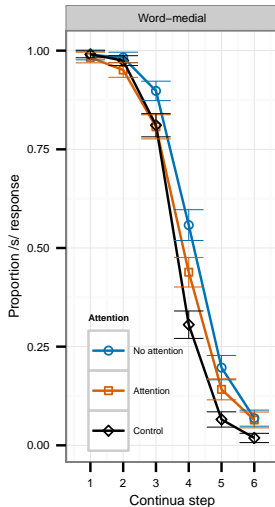
- 50% between /s/ and /ʃ/

Attention

- No /s/-oriented instructions
- Told /s/ would be ambiguous

Position of /s/

- Word initial
- *Word medial*



Experiment 2 - Word-initial exposure

Exposed to ambiguous /s/

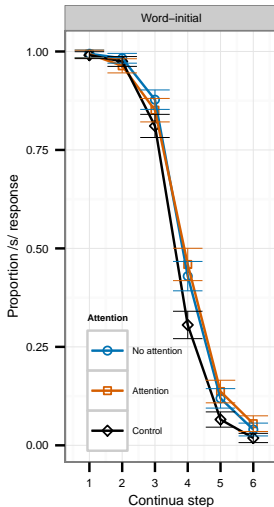
- More like /ʃ/ than /s/

Attention

- No /s/-oriented instructions
- Told /s/ would be ambiguous

Position of /s/

- *Word initial*
- *Word medial*



Experiment 2 - Word-medial exposure

Exposed to ambiguous /s/

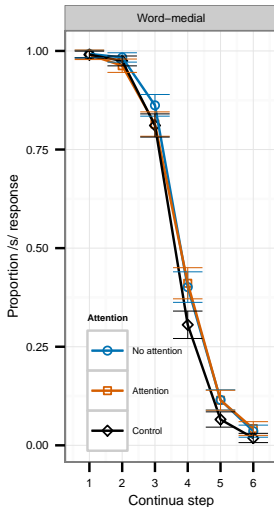
- More like /ʃ/ than /s/

Attention

- No /s/-oriented instructions
- Told /s/ would be ambiguous

Position of /s/

- Word initial
- *Word medial*



Summary

- Results align with attentional sets
- Conditions promoting a perception-oriented attentional set
 - Had smaller perceptual learning effects
 - Still showed perceptual learning
 - Did not differ from one another
- Fine-grained similarity did not appear to play a role
 - Word-medial exposure had the largest effect

Further promoting comprehension

- Lexical decision is comprehension-oriented
 - Word recognition
- Experiment 3 uses words in sentences
 - Attempt to further promote comprehension

Salience - Semantic predictability

- Listeners are more tolerant of acoustic reduction or noise in predictable sentences
- Modified /s/ should be more salient in unpredictable words
- Examples
 - Predictable: The cow gave birth to the calf.
 - Unpredictable: She is glad Jane called about the calf.

Lieberman (1963); Kalikow et al. (1977); Scarborough (2010)

Exposure task

- Predictable: The traffic cop alerted the driver by blowing her whistle (Audio)
- Unpredictable: The boy ran away when he heard the whistle(Audio)



Experiment 3

- 98 native English participants
 - Auditory sentences
 - Identification of picture corresponding to final word in sentence
 - Same word-medial modified /s/ stimuli
 - Final targets were predictable or unpredictable
- Across subjects
 - Instructions (identical to Experiments 1 and 2)
 - Modified /s/ only in predictable or unpredictable words
- Same categorization as Experiment 1 and 2

Experiment 3 predictions

Categorization results only again

Possible outcomes:

- Perceptual learning effects equal to Experiment 1's Word-medial conditions

Experiment 3 predictions

Categorization results only again

Possible outcomes:

- Perceptual learning effect smaller than Experiment 1's Word-medial conditions

Experiment 3 predictions

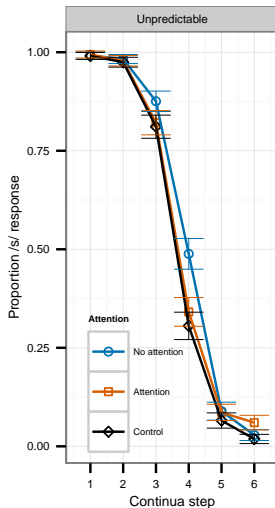
Categorization results only again

Possible outcomes:

- No perceptual learning effect in predictable condition

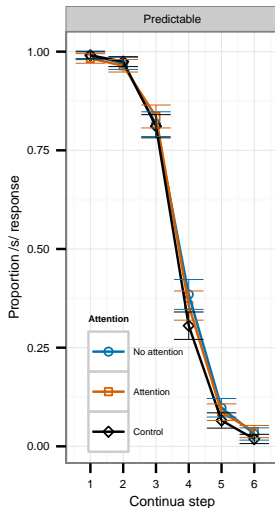
Experiment 3 - Unpredictable exposure

- **Exposed to ambiguous /s/**
 - Halfway between /s/ and /ʃ/
 - In sentences
- **Attention**
 - No /s/-oriented instructions
 - Told /s/ would be ambiguous
- **Predictability of final /s/ words**
 - *Unpredictable*
 - Predictable

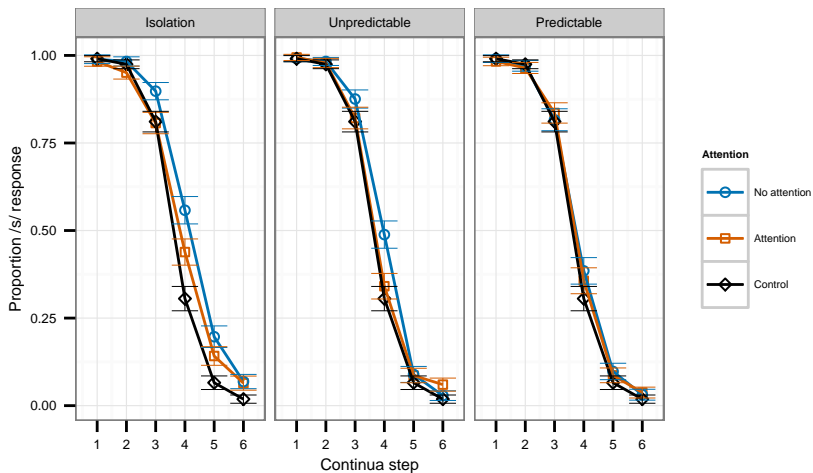


Experiment 3 - Predictable exposure

- **Exposed to ambiguous /s/**
 - Halfway between /s/ and /ʃ/
 - In sentences
- **Attention**
 - No /s/-oriented instructions
 - Told /s/ would be ambiguous
- **Predictability of final /s/ words**
 - Unpredictable
 - *Predictable*



Isolation vs Sentences



Summary

- Unpredictable exposure showed a similar pattern to words in isolation
- Predictable exposure showed no perceptual learning effect
 - Similar to studies using a coarticulation context (/stu/)
 - Predictable words are typically shorter and less clear
 - Listeners compensate for this predictability
 - Mean durations: Predictable words (0.53 s, SD = 0.06 s), Unpredictable words (0.53 s, SD = 0.07 s)

Clopper and Pierrehumbert (2008); Scarborough (2010); Kraljic et al. (2008)

Discussion

- Attentional sets affected perceptual learning
 - Conditions that did not promote perception-oriented attentional sets showed larger effects
- Predictability was not an effective attentional set manipulation
 - Instead, allowed for attribution of the modified category to predictability

Implications for theoretical models

- Supports hierarchical representations
- Attention to episodic representations or specific pronunciations inhibits learning in abstract categories
- Attention as a gain mechanism is not supported
 - Perception-oriented attentional sets would have larger effects
 - Valency of attention may play a role

Implications - Dialects

- Perceptual learning of salient dialectal features may be inhibited
 - New Zealand/Australian English: *fish and chips*
 - New Zealand/North American English: *Bret* vs *Brit*

Implications - Non-native accents

- Non-native accent perceptual learning may be inhibited when attention is directed to pronunciation

Real world example:

- Students attending to the professor's message rather than pronunciation should perceptually adapt more
 - Timecourse of perceptual learning?
 - Size of perceptual learning?

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