

Do we use L1 probabilistic phonotactics in L2 listening?

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Abstract: The present study examined whether Cantonese-English bilingual listeners made use of their L1 probabilistic phonotactics in the segmentation process of English continuous speech (L2). Previous research in different languages demonstrated that probabilistic phonotactics could serve as a useful cue to locate the possible word boundary in continuous speech. The use of these kinds of information in L1 can also be easily transferred to deal with L2 listening for bilingual listeners. In the present study, a word-spotting experiment was conducted to examine this issue and the results revealed that the Cantonese-English bilingual listeners might not make use of all their L1 probabilistic phonotactics in segmenting the L2 speech.