

Sentential Context is Insufficient for Perceptual Learning of Speech

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Abstract

Listeners use sentential context to improve spoken word recognition. What is less clear is whether sentential context can aid in perceptual learning of speech. We employ a perceptual recalibration paradigm to investigate whether sentential context occurring before or after an acoustically manipulated target word can aid in learning a new talker's accent. We found that while sentential context improved spoken word recognition, it did not induce perceptual recalibration effects (regardless of its location in the sentence). This suggests that sentential context alone may not be a sufficient stimulus for perceptual learning. We consider two potential explanations for these results: first, information may need to be more closely tied to the target of learning to facilitate recalibration; second, sentential context may draw listeners' attention away from the target of learning.