CHILDREN’S PERCEPTION OF THE ALBANIAN DARK-CLEAR LATERAL CONTRAST

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• To what extent do adults use cue weighting in the lateral contrast?
• Does children’s cue weighting differ from that of adults’ and, if so, how?

PARTICIPANTS

• 20 3-year-old children (retained: 11)
• 22 5-year-old children (retained: 19)
• 18 adults (retained: 18)

All monolingual speakers of Albanian

TASK

• two-alternative forced-choice task (picture naming)
• control trials (see paper for details)
• presented on a touchscreen

STIMULI

• 2 continua
  • halla /ˈhaːlə/ ‘paternal aunt’ – hala /ˈhala/ ‘fishbone’
  • pulla /ˈpula/ ‘postal stamp’ – pula /ˈpula/ ‘chicken’

• Each continuum varied along two dimensions:
  • Cue1: values of F1, F2, F3
  • Cue2: transition duration from V1 into the lateral

RESULTS

Cue1: formant values of the lateral

Predicted changes in the odds of perceiving a dark vs. a clear lateral for changes in Cue1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formant Value</th>
<th>3-year-olds</th>
<th>5-year-olds</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/haːla/ - /hala/</td>
<td>-24%</td>
<td>-45%*</td>
<td>-88%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold face indicates p < 0.05; an asterisk indicates p < 0.0001.

Cue2: transition durations

Predicted changes in the odds of perceiving a dark vs. a clear lateral for changes in Cue2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Duration</th>
<th>3-year-olds</th>
<th>5-year-olds</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/hala/ - /hala/</td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold face indicates p < 0.05; an asterisk indicates p < 0.0001.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

• All three groups rely heavily on Cue1 (lateral formant values) in the distinction between /l/ and /l/.
• Only adults also use Cue2 (transition duration) in the halla-hala-continuum.
• Phoneme boundaries are far less sharp for children than for adults.

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