
This study examines children's metaphonological awareness for accent-related information in connected speech. In the first experiment, 5- to 6-year-old French-speaking children were asked to discriminate between Southern and Northern accented French in a sentence categorization task. It was found that these children were not able to reliably distinguish between these native variations of their own language, but were able to distinguish between their own accent and a strong foreign accent in Experiment 2. These findings were also replicated using a speaker discrimination task in Experiment 3, where children were asked to detect pairs of speakers sharing the same accent amongst speaker pairs with different accents. Whilst these experiments have shown that 5- to 6-year-old children do not use non-familiar regional accents as a discriminatory cue, they are able to perceive the differences between accents, as demonstrated in the AX task used in Experiment 4. The factors underlying the relative lack of awareness for a regional accent as opposed to a foreign accent in childhood are discussed, especially regarding the amount of exposure and the learnability of both types of accents.