

The Perception-Production Relationship in the Acquisition of Second Language Vowel Contrasts

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Abstract

This experimental work examines the acquisition of segmental contrasts in second language (L2) phonology. Perception as well as production data are considered to gain more insight into the nature of the relation between the two processes and, in turn, into the nature of segmental representations. The study focuses on the perception and production of selected German vowels by adult native speakers of American English. The vowels are investigated in their natural phonological consonantal environments in existing German words. The experimental results show the relationship between the perceptual pattern of vowel identification and acoustic spacing in production. The major finding is that beginning learners are able to cope with contextual variability when the vowel contrast exists in their native language but are unable to do so in the case of a novel vowel distinction. The Lexical Contrast Hypothesis is postulated which states that in the acquisition of L2 segmental phonology, the learners focus on lexical system of contrasts and relations among the segments within larger organizational units such as syllables or words.

Editors' Note:

Due to the nature of this article, and especially the use of phonetic script, it has been decided to present the article as a pdf file.

To read the article, [click here](#).

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