Participants: Monolingual Canadian English-learning 22-month-old children (n=60)
  • Mono-accented (n=34)
    < 6 hours/week exposure to accents other than Canadian English
  • Multi-accented:
    Native accent (n=12)
    Non-native accent (n=14)

Stimuli: 16 words produced by 4 speakers differing in accent
  • 1 Canadian-accented speaker (same recordings as those used in Buckler et al., 2017)
  • 3 foreign accented speakers (German, Polish, Japanese)

Trials:
  • Each child completed 32 trials; which word was spoken by which talker was counter-balanced across participants

Results

To make the task particularly challenging, attention getters and target labels were produced by different talkers. Note that talkers also differed in age and gender (e.g., the Japanese speaker was a young male while the Polish speaker was an older female).

Comparative word recognition performance for mono-accented and multi-accented toddlers for Canadian and foreign-accented speakers

Discussion

• Preliminary results suggest that when 22-month-olds are presented with a difficult word recognition task, presenting target words by various talkers in various accents, the mono-accented advantage observed by Buckler et al. disappears.

• These results are compatible with the hypothesis that multi-accented children have a different default lexical processing strategy than mono-accented children.

• An interesting question for future research is whether there are test conditions where multi-accented children would actually outperform mono-accented children.