ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF ARGENTINE SPANISH VOICELESS FRICATIVES

Ana M.B. de Manrique and Maria I. Massone, Laboratorio de Investigaciones Sensoriales, Buenos Aires, Argentina

The present work attempts to examine the perceptual load carried by the frequency position of the most prominent energy-density maximum in the identification of Argentine-Spanish voiceless fricatives. The results are compared with those obtained by Fry (1973) from a group of English-speaking listeners.

Procedure

The test tape consisted of 13 synthetic syllables formed by a fricative voiceless consonant plus a vowel (transitionless), repeated eight times and randomized.¹

The vowel values were fixed and the fricative portion was obtained by filtering a wide-band noise in order to obtain a set of 13 frequency variable bands ranging from 1.250 to 7.500 Hz.

Two groups of Argentine Spanish-speaking listeners and one of English-speaking listeners were tested under two experimental conditions: free-choice and forced-choice. The latter method was employed in order to allow the comparison between our results and those obtained by Fry.

Results and Discussion

Spanish-speaking listeners identified high and low frequency bands as /f/ and middle ones as /s/. Two noise-bands in between /s/ and low /f/ were sometimes identified as /ʃ/.

These results are not in agreement with those obtained from English-speaking listeners who divided the voiceless continuum in two sections: /s/ for high and /ʃ/ for low frequency values.

Both English and Spanish-speaking listeners' responses were only slightly influenced by the forced-choice condition. Thus, the difference between the two sets of data cannot be accounted for by the method employed and may probably be attributed to a different use of the acoustic properties due to the peculiarities of each linguistic system.

Reference


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