

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

The influence of media exposure on children's evaluations of non-local accents

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/88j6h0md>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 43(43)

Authors

St. Pierre, Thomas
Johnson, Elizabeth

Publication Date

2021

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

The influence of media exposure on children's evaluations of non-local accents

Thomas St. Pierre

University of Toronto Mississauga, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Elizabeth Johnson

University of Toronto, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

This study investigated whether positive or negative media exposure to non-local accents influences children's language attitudes of those accents. Following exposure to heroic or villainous cartoon characters with either a regional (British; Experiment 1, N=89) or non-native (Experiment 2, N=84) accents, children were tested on a friend preference task, during which they selected—given a choice between a locally-accented child and a British-accented (Experiment 1) or Korean-accented (Experiment 2) child—which one they wanted to be friends with. Consistent with previous literature, children selected native-accented speakers at above chance rates, both when paired with British- ($M=55\%$, $\beta=0.25$, $p=0.03$) and Korean-accented children ($M=86\%$, $\beta=2.63$, $p<.001$). There was no evidence that exposure to heroic vs. villainous characters influenced children's preferences for native-accented children in either experiment. Follow-up work is investigating whether protracted exposure to evil/heroic characters with non-local accents influences children's evaluations to non-local varieties across a wider range of tasks.