

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Children's accent-based preferences and stereotypes in media contexts

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8zk5m7fv>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 44(44)

Authors

Harper, Kathryn

Ma, Lili

Publication Date

2022

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

Children's accent-based preferences and stereotypes in media contexts

Kathryn Harper

Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Lili Ma

Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Children are avid consumers of screen media, including television and mobile apps. Non-native and non-standard accents are underrepresented in media, and representations are often stereotypical. The present research investigated children's accent-based preferences and stereotypes in media contexts. Children aged 5-6 and 9-10 selected characters, from a variety of characters with different accents, to play different archetypes in a television program (Experiment 1) or to serve as teachers in an educational app (Experiment 2). Results revealed that, in Experiment 1, children generally preferred for television characters to speak with a Canadian accent (versus British, Chinese, and Indian accents), regardless of character valence. In Experiment 2, in educational apps, children aged 9-10 preferred Canadian- or British-accented teachers for culturally-neutral subjects (e.g., oceans), and Chinese- and Indian-accented teachers for culturally-relevant subjects (e.g., Chinese pottery). This research contributes to our knowledge about children's accent-based biases, and may guide development of more inclusive media offerings.