

Interactions between temporal acoustics and indexical information in speech rate perception

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This study examines the interplay between a number of factors that affect speech rate perception. Three factors were investigated: pause type/length (short, long, and non-silent), actual speech rate (accelerated vs. decelerated), and utterance type (native Arabic, accented Arabic, and unfamiliar language). A group of Arabic speakers judged whether the sentences they heard were slow or fast, and rated their speed on a 1–7 scale (1=extremely slow, 7=extremely fast). The findings show that all three factors influence speed judgments and ratings and that they interact with one another on different levels. Our results testify that perceived speech rate is the outcome of an interaction between the actual linguistic and acoustic properties of an utterance along with a listener’s indexical knowledge about the speaker.

Keywords: temporal acoustics, speech rate, perception, indexical information, pauses

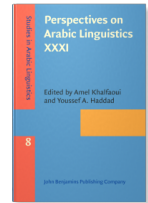
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