

## **The Influence of Language Experience on Perception: The Case of Spanish and English**

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Native speakers can distinguish sounds that serve a contrastive function in their language better than those that do not, but the role of allophony in speech perception is understudied. The present study tests the influence of the allophonic/phonemic distinction on ratings of perceptual similarity given by Spanish and English listeners to pairs of stimuli contrasting [d], [r] and [ð]. These sounds have different phonological relations in the two languages: [d] and [r] are allophonic in English and contrastive in Spanish, while [d] vs. [ð] are allophonic in Spanish but contrastive in English. The study also investigated to what extent, if any, degree of experience/proficiency with a non-native language influences perception. The results suggest that native language but not level of language proficiency in L2 affects rated similarity. In particular, whether or not sounds are in an allophonic or contrastive relationship in the native language shapes how these sounds are perceived. [Work supported by NIDCD grant R01 DC04421-4.]

### References

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