

The Attractivity of Average Speech Rhythm in Mandarin Chinese

Gyongmin Oh

University of Cologne

The current study explores the perceptual preferences of listeners concerning speech rhythm and investigates the so-called "averaging effect" of speech. The central hypothesis is that listeners will prefer speech characterized by an average temporal pattern across different speakers. This research is built upon prior studies that have examined the aesthetic nature of the averaging effect in diverse domains, such as faces, music, and voice, revealing a general tendency among observers to favor averages in the performance or appearance of various human and non-human phenomena. Additionally, this study extends a study conducted with Dutch speakers that yielded very promising results. The current study investigates whether the "averaging affect" is indeed prevalent in a domain that is yet to be investigated, which is Mandarin Chinese.