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Perception of English stress: English speakers vs. Japanese speakers

In this paper, we compare the perception of lexical stress in English two-syllable words (e.g., *TRANSplant* vs. *transPLANT*) by English native listeners and that by Japanese learners of English under the environment where F0 is not a reliable cue for stress. English listeners turned out to prefer initial stress even for final stress words such as *transPLANT*. On the other hand, Japanese listeners favored final stress even for initial stress words such as *TRANSplant*. The former outcome is in line with findings made by previous studies such as Leyden & van Heuven (1996) and Cooper et al. (2002) that English listeners are biased toward an initial stress pattern, which is statistically the most dominant pattern in the English vocabulary. The latter will be accounted for as the result of Japanese listeners applying their knowledge of Japanese syllable and accent patterns even when they detect the stress locations of English words.

References

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