

Novel Word Recognition: The Role of Production

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Abstract: Children spontaneously produce speech as they learn a language, which raises the question of whether articulation of words is necessary for language acquisition. While one side argues that it is not essential (Gathercole et al., 1999), the other propounds for a perception-production link (Keren-Portnoy et al., 2010). This research explores the impact of production on the development of lexical representations. Adults were trained on non-words with visual referents, with half produced by the participants and half just heard. Using a visual world paradigm, participants then saw two trained images and were asked to look at a target. As hypothesized, results indicated faster processing speed and accuracy of the new words that were produced at training. Participants recognized produced words 200 ms faster than heard words, consistent with the hypothesis that production impacts newly formed lexical representations.