

Title: Contextual Interference and the Role of Phonetic Similarity

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This study evaluated the influence of similar sounds on different stages of skill acquisition. Specifically, phoneme similarity was examined as a variable that facilitates contextual interference, a motor learning phenomenon where poor performance during training results in increased performance in transfer conditions (Shea & Morgan, 1979). Twenty-two participants repeated nonwords that varied by phoneme similarity during training. Following training, retention and generalization tasks were administered with untrained stimuli that also varied by phoneme similarity. A percent consonants correct (PCC; Dollaghan, 1998) measure was used to examine nonword production accuracy during retention and generalization tasks. The result of this study will provide an insight into how stimuli similarity influences motor learning outcomes. Historically, only practice schedules have been used to induce contextual interference; however, the results of this study provide insight into additional variables that may also enhance speech motor learning.