

## Abstract

The current study investigated the interaction between vowel characteristics and second language (English as L2) proficiency affecting the objective measure (the intelligibility task) and the subjective measure (accentedness rating) of accent perception in the L2. ~~As predicted by the Late Native Advantage Hypothesis, it was hypothesized~~ that vowel with greater acoustic distance between accented speech and native speech, ~~would demonstrate a greater~~ *the Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit (ISIB)* ~~was expected~~ for participants with lower L2 proficiency, providing advantage in transcribing accented speech than native speech. ~~On the other hand, the~~ detection of accent in accented vowel with greater perceptual confusion due to the greater overlapping with other vowel space was ~~also~~ hypothesized to be more salient as compared with ~~those~~ vowels with less perceptual confusion. ~~39~~ *Thirty-nine* Cantonese speakers (age range: 18-23) were recruited in the study. They ~~transcribed and rated the accentedness of~~ ~~were listened to~~ the native American speech and Cantonese accented speech ~~while transcribing the speech as accurate as possible and rate the accentedness of the speech~~. The results showed that there was a significant ISIB in participants with lower L2 proficiency ~~in~~ *for* the vowel with largest acoustic distance, while this effect was not demonstrated in either participants with higher proficiency or vowels with less acoustic distance. For the accentedness rating, accented vowel with greatest overlapping with other vowel space was rated as more accented than the native vowels; ~~however,~~ ~~while~~ this effect was not shown in vowels less overlapping. In summary, the current study demonstrated ~~the interaction between vowels characteristics of specific vowels effect and~~ *of* foreign listeners' L2 proficiency ~~in~~ *on* the intelligibility ~~task~~ and ~~the~~ accentedness rating.