

Abstract

Absolute pitch (AP) refers to the ability to identify and name the pitch of a tone in the absence of an external reference pitch. It is widely believed to be a rare ability possessed only by the selected few with both genetic predisposition and early musical training experience within the critical period. Such hypothesis suggests that absolute pitch learning in adulthood is impossible as both prerequisites are invariable, for there is no way to change genetic makeup and/or to reverse and make an earlier onset of musical experience through any kind of training. However, a few previous empirical studies have suggested that AP learning showed classic characteristics of perceptual learning and have demonstrated that AP is indeed difficult yet learnable by adults. This research paper discusses four factors: personalization, association, relative pitch strategy and motivation, and their possible optimization in AP training paradigm to increase success rate of AP training among adults. As an attempt to further illustrate the role of learning in the acquisition of AP, this paper proposes that an individual may acquire, or at least improve, AP depending on the amount and type of perceptual experience. Thus, review on current theories of AP acquisition is needed.