

ACOUSTICS2008/512
Differences in the time-course of accent adaptation: a comparison
of adaptation to foreign-accented and unfamiliar
regionally-accented speech

Bronwen Evans^a and Patti Adank^b

^aDepartment of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College London, 4 Stephenson Way, NW12HE
London, UK

^bF.C. Donders Centre for Cognitive Neuroimaging, Kapittelweg 29, 6525EN Nijmegen, Netherlands

Recent work in speech perception has demonstrated that listeners are able to rapidly adapt to foreign-accented speech (Clarke and Garrett, 2004). However, it is not clear whether adaptation to an unfamiliar regional accent operates in the same way. Although some studies have shown that listeners are able to adapt to different accents within the same language after only a short amount of exposure (e.g., Maye et al., in press), others have shown that listeners do not always alter their perceptual representations when listening to a non-native regional accent even if they are highly familiar with that accent (Evans and Iverson, 2004, 2007). In this study, we further explored perceptual adaptation to different accents by comparing the time course of adaptation to an unfamiliar regional accent with adaptation to foreign-accented speech. Listeners identified sentences in noise produced in either an unfamiliar regional accent (Glaswegian) or foreign-accented speech (Spanish-accented English). Preliminary results suggest a different pattern of adaptation for each accent: although listeners show greater adaptation to foreign-accented speech, they perform more poorly with foreign-accented speech overall and the rate of adaptation is slower.