Acoustic characteristics of VCV utterances in the speech of children K. Bunton, B. Story

It is known that young children do not produce speech as adults do, yet many questions remain concerning how children eventually attain mature patterns of gestural organization. One observation about speech produced by young children is that they tend to show constraints on individual places of constriction for both vocalic and consonantal gestures that depend on the surrounding environment. Greater variability in repeated productions of the same target utterance has also been reported for children as compared to adults. Reports of significant age-related changes before the age of 7 year can be found in the literature; however, the data also suggests that children are still refining their organization of articulatory gestures past the age of 7 years. The purpose of the present study was to examine the acoustic characteristics of consonantal constriction variability in V_1CV_2 sequences produced by children between the ages of 3;0 and 18;1 years. Comparisons of the formant contours, duration, and perceptual identification for each consonant will be used to evaluate the variability in production of target consonants.