

Tomlinson, J. M., Liu, Q., & Fox Tree, J. E. (2014). The perceptual nature of stress shift. *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, 29(9), 1046-1058.

Abstract

According to the rhythm rule in metrical phonology, a word's stress alternates from the second syllable to the first when followed by a word with first syllable stress, a situation also known as a stress clash. For example, the second-syllable stressed word sixTEEN will be produced as SIXteen in the phrase SIXteen CANDles. Using pseudo-words in different rhythmic contexts, we demonstrate that stress clash resolution has a strong perceptual component and can be an auditory illusion. In Experiment 1, participants were more likely to misattribute stress in a clash condition (sixTEEN heard as SIXteen in sixTEEN CANDles) than in isolation (sixTEEN) or in a nonclash condition (sixTEEN caNALS). In Experiment 2, we failed to find support for the hypothesis that nuclear stress drove these ratings. We discuss these findings in light of various theories and mechanisms for parsing spontaneous speech.