

INFORMATION SHEET

***** PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN *****

The purpose of this experiment is to explore some of the factors that influence our ability to understand speech. You will hear a number of spoken sentences over headphones and be asked to transcribe them (explained below) as accurately as you can. The sentences have been synthesised by computer and may not be as intelligible as real speech, and so you will receive a short training session before beginning the main experiment. Even when you can identify the words in the main experiment, you will find the meanings of some of these sentences to be odd or obscure. An example of an odd sentence might be “Hungry policemen run on the desk”. Do not worry about this; it is irrelevant whether any particular sentence is commonplace or unusual.

Screening

Before beginning the experiment, we will need to perform a simple audiometric test on both of your ears. The results of this test may mean that we are unable to use you in this experiment, but if this happens you should not assume there is a significant impairment in your hearing. This test is **not** a clinical assessment, and **if you have any concerns about your hearing you should consult your GP.**

Transcription

During the training and main experiment you will be asked to transcribe sentences that you hear over headphones:

- You will be asked to type in *any* words you can hear in the order that you hear them.
- When you are not sure, please give your best guesses and type in as many of the words as you can – *even if it is only one or two of them and you are unsure even of those.*
- Should you be unable to identify any words in the target sentence, then enter only a single X in the response box, but *please do this only if you have absolutely no idea of the identity of any of the words.*
- For 30 of the training sentences (see below) you can choose to hear each sentence again, *up to a maximum of five times*, by pressing the **F1** key. At first you may need to use this feature often but as the training progresses you may not need to use it at all. Please note that during the final 10 training sentences and the experimental sentences you can choose to hear the sentence again *up to a maximum of two times.*
- Once you have entered your response, please check it for “typos” and for misspellings.
- Even if you are unsure how to spell a particular word, please enter your best guess of its spelling. Take as long as you need to type your transcription – the experiment measures accuracy rather than speed.
- Once you are happy with your transcription press **Enter** to accept it.

If you feel that you have made a mistake in your response on any given trial, then please use the notepad and pen provided to write down the trial number and what you believe the correct response should be.

If you wish to rest or to leave the test booth at any point during the experiment, then you are free to do so.

Training

The training session comprises 50 sentences. For the first 10 sentences you will hear both a synthesised sentence and the same sentence spoken normally in the following order: synthesised – normal – synthesised – normal – synthesised. You will not be required to transcribe any of the first

10 sentences but please listen carefully and try to recognise the words of the normal version of each sentence in the synthesised version. For the remaining 40 sentences you will first hear a synthesised sentence and be asked to transcribe it (see Transcription, above). After you have entered your transcription, you will then hear the same sentence spoken normally before hearing the synthesised sentence again. Please pay careful attention to them so that you are aware of how well you did. You may find this task quite hard at first, but it should get easier as you progress through the training.

Main Experiment

The main experiment comprises 48 synthesised sentences, all of which have been degraded in quality to varying degrees. You will be asked to transcribe each sentence (see Transcription, above). Each individual sentence will be heard only on one trial – i.e., it will not occur in any other trial in the training session or in the main experiment. Once the training session has been completed, you will not receive any feedback about whether or not your typed entries are correct.

***** IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE ASK THE EXPERIMENTER *****