

## **Perceiving familiar voice identities**

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Identity perception from voices can be error-prone, and is generally thought to be inferior to face identity processing. While performance can improve with greater exposure to vocal identities, the continued popularity of "mystery voice" contests in radio broadcasts keenly demonstrates the fragility of our mental representations of even very well-known voices. In this talk, I will present some of our behavioural work investigating how different types of familiarity affect the accuracy of voice identity perception, particularly in the presence of perceptual challenges such as natural within-person variation, reduced verbal cues, and artificial modulations of vocal acoustics. Our findings indicate that familiarity is not a binary state but more likely reflects a continual process of developing a perceptual representation via greater experience with a voice. At its best - for example when hearing the voice of a close relative or partner - the identification of a person from the voice can in fact be highly accurate and robust. However, familiarity benefits do not generalise to all tasks – in a speech-in-noise recognition task, we found equivalent performance for personally familiar and unfamiliar targets.