

# Generational Differences in Speech Rate Among Canadian English Speakers

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## Introduction

- US cross-dialectal study found young adults have faster speech rate than older adults (Jacewics et al., 2009)
- Possibly due to older people's tendency to produce shorter phrases (Jacewics et al., 2009)
- Elderly speak slower than middle-aged (Hooper & Cralidis, 2009)
- Differences found in young adult, middle-aged, and older males in "oral reading, picture description, and conversational speech" (Duchin & Mysak, 1987)

## Rationale:

To determine if differences in speech rate exist among Canadian English speakers when comparing middle-aged and young adults

## Hypothesis:

Younger generations speak faster than older generations

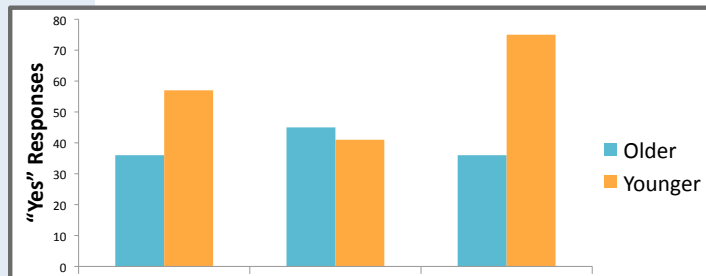
## Survey

- 15 closed-answer questions
- Administered online
- 63 participants
  - 52 younger: avg. age = 20.3 years
  - 11 older: avg. age = 50.5 years

## Oral Reading

- All read same, short passage; allowed practice, encouraged to speak naturally
- Recorded while reading passage
- 17 participants:
  - 8 younger: avg. age = 18.9 years
  - 9 older: avg. age = 51.2 years

## Results of Survey



7. Do you notice that people older than you speak more slowly than you do, or than you would like them to speak?
8. Do you notice that people younger than you speak more quickly than you speak or would like them to speak?
9. Have you ever been told to slow down while speaking?

## Survey Questions

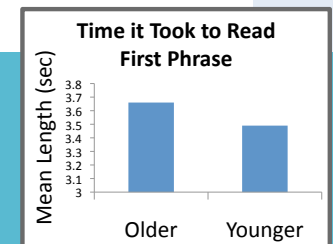
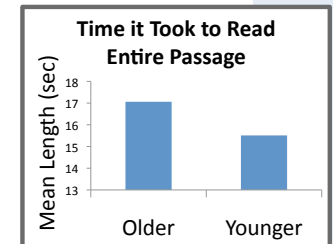
## Conclusions

- Speech rate differed between generations
- Older generation (~50 years old) spoke slower than younger generation (~20 years old)
- Survey indicates people's awareness of generational differences in speech rate

## Future Directions

- Examine differences in fluent speech
- Gender differences within and across generations
- Younger age group (i.e. ~13 years old) even faster?

## Results of Oral Reading



## References

- Duchin, S., & Mysak, E. (1987). Disfluency and rate characteristics of young adult, middle-aged, and older males. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 20(3), 245-257. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>
- Hooper, C. R., & Cralidis, A. (2009). Normal changes in the speech of older adults: You've still got what it takes; it just takes a little longer! *Perspectives on Gerontology*, 14(2), 47-56.
- Jacewics, E., Fox, R. A., O'Neill, C., & Salmons, J. (2009). Articulation rate across dialect, age, and gender. *Language Variation and Change*, 21, 233-256. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954394509990093>