study: poverty a challenge to hearing

Erika Skoe, a University of Connecticut professor in the department of psychology, has looked at how children from different economic backgrounds can shape the way their brains interpret different sounds. The differences could be contributing to the achievement gap in learning between children of different economic backgrounds, Skoe said, and identifying them could be a step toward narrowing that division. The study was published last month in The Journal of Neuroscience.

The research builds off a 1995 study by researchers Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, who monitored for three years, and down from 2,700 in 2008. Technological advances, retraining and the movement of work to keep up with those changes has thinned the hourly Pratt workforce into just another labor group—far from its old perch as the keystone of Connecticut’s industrial history. As factory unions lose ground, so too will the Machinists union’s home base. And organizers expect it will be by next March, with new contracts with material handlers and technicians, Whirlpool will be the last. The Machinists derisively say that the union and company continue to work its way toward serving the Machinists rolls down below 2,500.

Hartford Courant, Monday, November 18, 2013

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There’s less emphasis on reading, and the mother has less education, it may coincide with other environmental factors — perhaps the storm is holding down more jobs and the kid is watching more TV,” she said.

Hearing words on electros, the researchers said, doesn’t add to linguistic development. Some sounds were going to be missed whether the kid had the TV on or not, so it’s not a dynamic experience, the researchers said.” The TV isn’t going to correct a kid if they miss a word,” said Brenda and her fellow researchers wanted to see how densely improved this word gap takes hold in some children. For instance, do they have origins deep in the brain?

To find out, they tested the hearing of 61 middle- grade students from Chicago. Students were divided into two groups according to their mother’s education levels. In one group, the students’ mothers had at least a high school degree or less. Mothers of the students in the other group had at least some college, and most had an associate’s degree or higher. Northwestern’s education levels, said, are a reliable indicator of income levels.

For the test, an earphone was inserted into one ear of each child. The children, who watched a movie while taking the test, were cued with the sounds they’d hear if they had another person in the room. The researchers could tell by looking at the waves, which closely resembled the sound waves from the audio signal.

Skoe, who came to UConn from Northwestern this fall, said she now wants to conduct further studies to get a better sense of how much and when auditory experience shapes the brains’ response to sound.

“Hearing ability to process sounds, is that dictated by what happens early in life, or could it be that the brain can come around and come along?” she said. “You could use a stimulus at a young age and, if you stimulated the brain and got some sort of response, you start teaching a different language. It’s possible for us to look at what the brain can do.”

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ferent socioeconomic statuses, said Nina Kraus, professor of neurobiology at Northwestern University in Chicago and co-author of the most recent study pointed to some possible reasons.

They were there as the

baby’s new parents and grandpar-

ents. Many were also there to

start playing a musical insti-

ment or learn a new

language could help.

Creating opportunities for

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