Cantonese tone word learning by tone and non-tone language speakers

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2. Methods

2.1. Participants

Eighteen native Thai and sixteen native Canadian English adults participated in this study. All participants had no prior knowledge of Cantonese or any other lexical tone language (other than their L1). They also had less than 4 years of musical

significantly increased their lexical tone identification accuracy after training (41% to 54%). However, no significant group difference was found in tone identification accuracy across tests [$F(1,32)=2.505$, $p=.123$], as English (51%) and Thai listeners (45%) performed comparably. The interaction of Test x Group was also not significant [$F(2,32)=.965$, $p=.392$].

Figure 1: *Mean identification accuracy by tone across pre- and post-tests by English and Thai listeners. Tones: 1=high level, 2=high-rising, 3=low-falling, 4=low-rising, 5=low-level.*

The ANOVA yielded a significant main effect of Tone [$F(4,32)=18.239$, $p<.0001$] and Tone x Group interaction [$F(4,32)=11.829$, $p<.0001$]. Additional 1-way ANOVAs for each group with Tone as the independent variable revealed significant differences in tone identification accuracy patterns

information. On the other hand, pitch in Cantonese and Thai has high functional load, as it is used phonemically on all words. Given the present findings, it is perhaps more challenging for listeners to acquire words where there is an L1