

Western listeners' perception of music and speech is reflected in acoustic and semantic descriptors

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Background

Listeners show remarkable abilities when asked whether a sound should be classified as music or speech.

Our previous work (Durojaye et al., 2021):

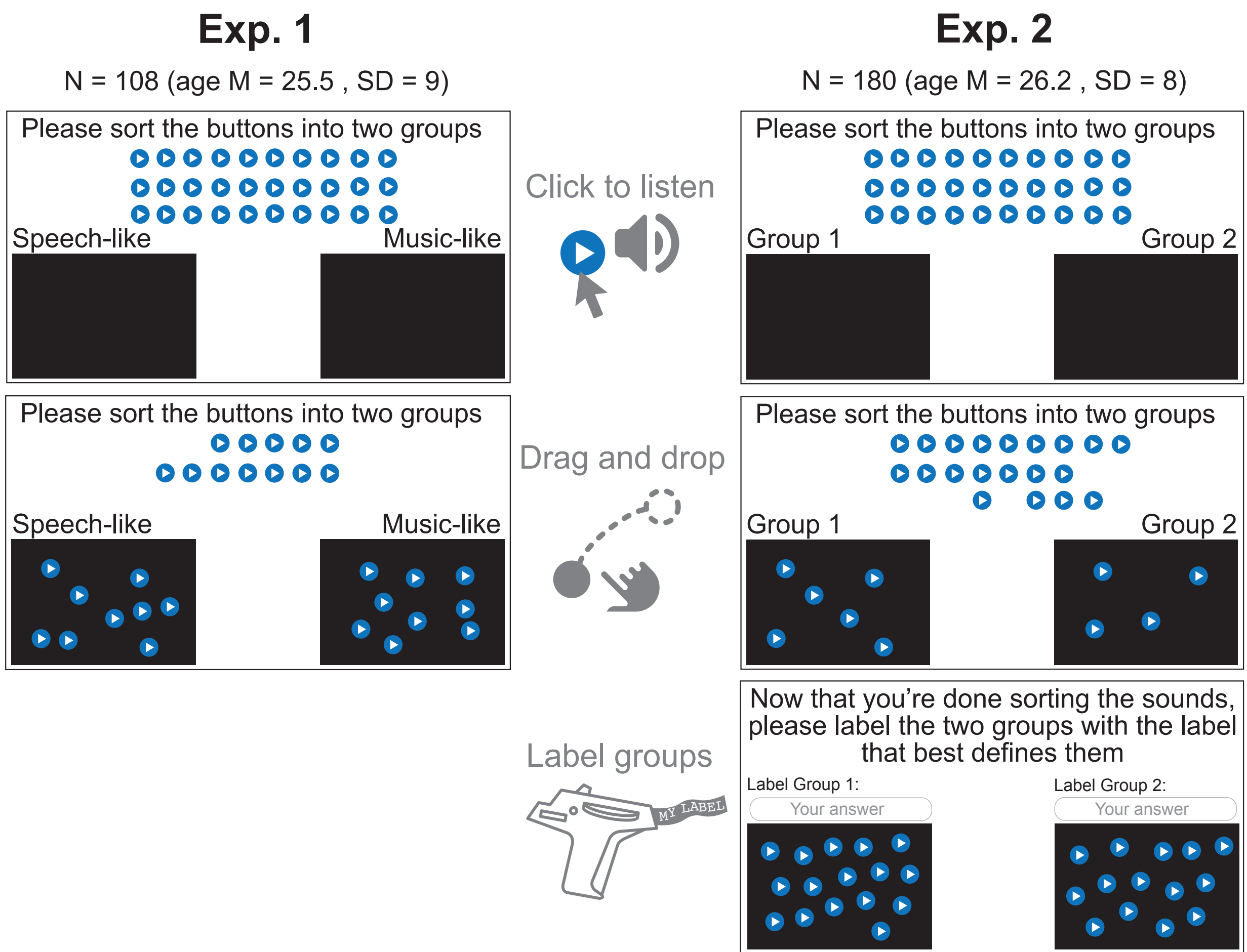
- used 6-10 sec recordings of Nigerian dundún talking drum performances that were intended to be speech or music.
- a categorization task: is the sequence music- or speech-like?

We found: familiarity and acoustic features shape listeners' categorizations. However, even unfamiliar participants could categorize above chance whether the drum was talking or playing music.

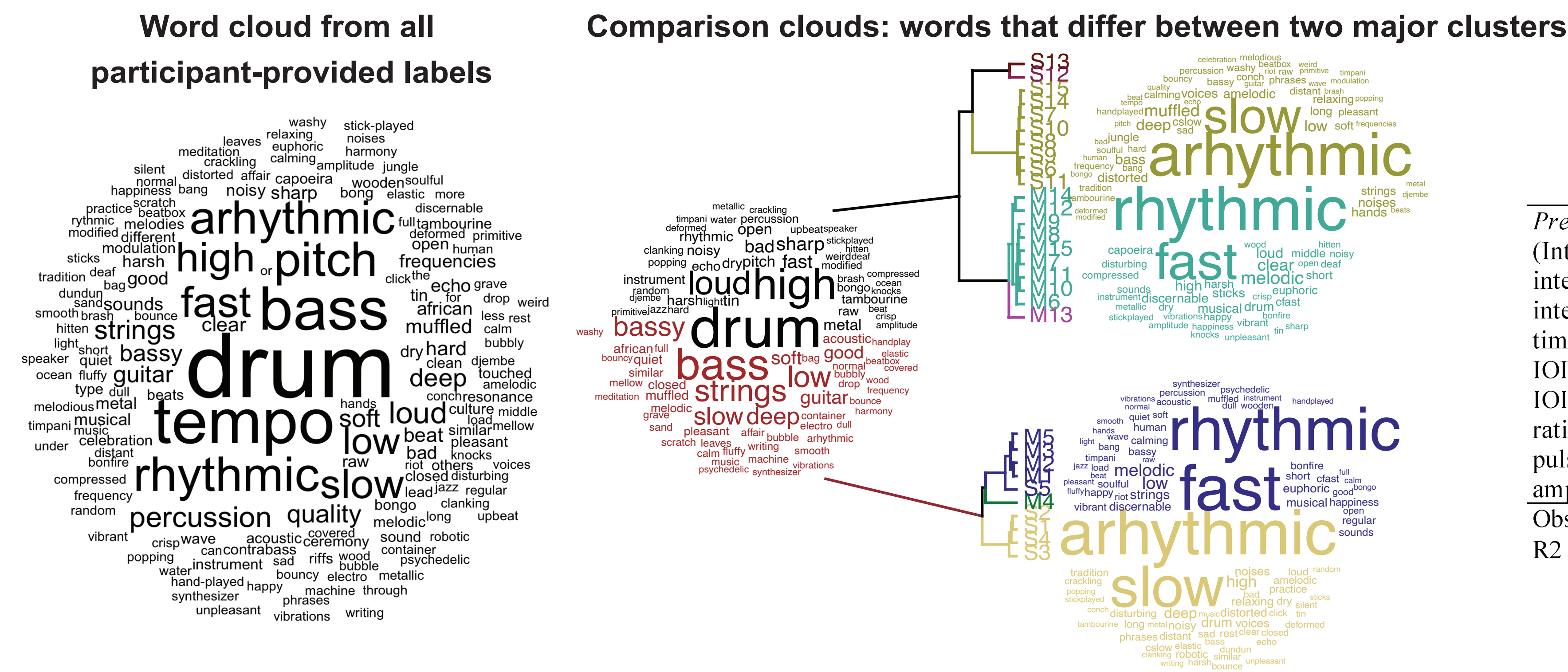
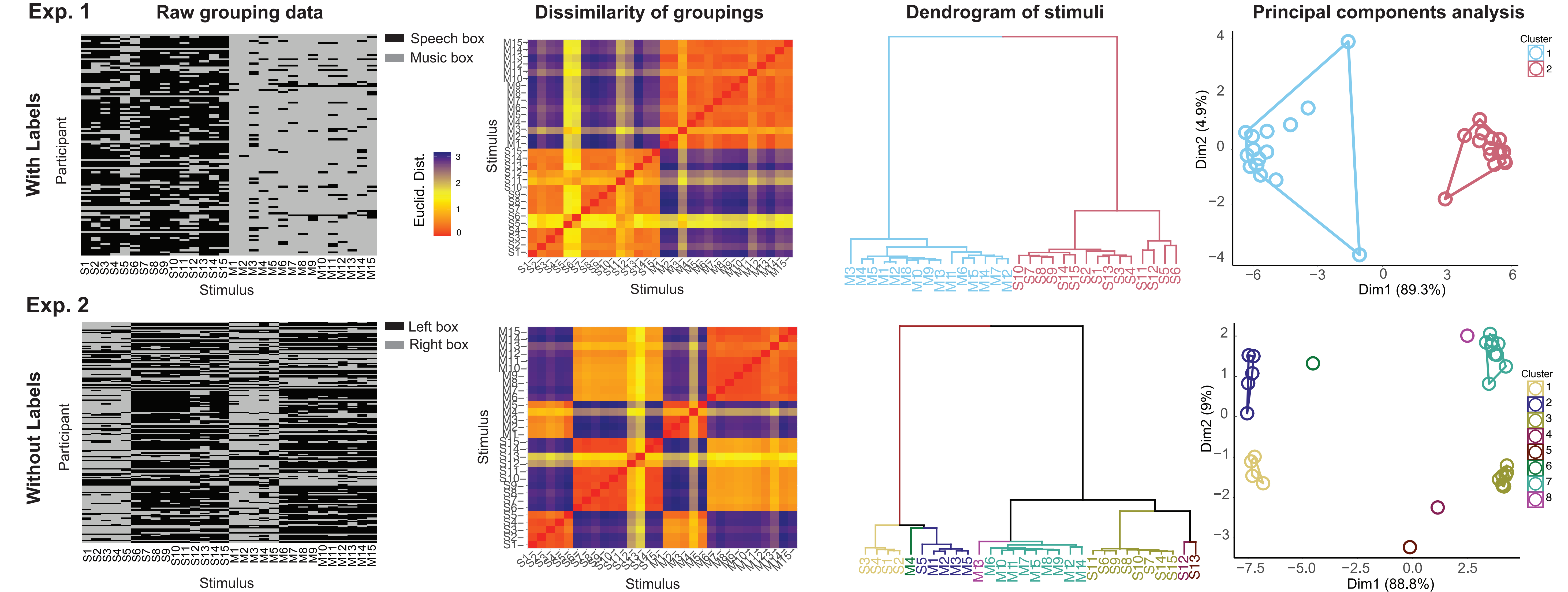
BUT the labels “speech” and “music” were given to participants, whereas categorization of our auditory environment is usually label-free.

HERE we explore the role of task demands and acoustic features in predicting participants' categorization.

Methods



Results



Acoustic predictors of stimulus position in PCA space							
	Exp. 2, Dim1 position			Dim2 position			
	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	
) (reference)	70.82	-105.35 – 247.00	0.413	19.36	-34.58 – 73.30	0.464	
	-10.18	-19.78 – -0.57	0.039	-2.71	-5.65 – 0.23	0.069	
	1,11	-6.84 – 9.05	0.775	1.93	-0.50 – 4.36	0.114	
	-75.53	-96.56 – -54.51	<0.001	-2.42	-8.85 – 4.02	0.443	
	0.03	0.01 – 0.06	0.016	-0.01	-0.01 – 0.00	0.148	
) (reference)	-0.03	-0.07 – 0.00	0.073	-0.01	-0.02 – -0.00	0.036	
	-65.01	-407.27 – 277.26	0.697	-31.34	-136.13 – 73.45	0.541	
) (reference)	-6.3	-22.44 – 9.85	0.426	0.5	-4.45 – 5.44	0.836	
	-0.11	-0.60 – 0.38	0.647	0.08	-0.07 – 0.22	0.301	
trum peak	30			30			
d	0.843 / 0.783			0.854 / 0.798			

Discussion

- Participants categorize well above chance which stimuli fall into speech or music categories (replication of Durojaye et al., 2021). BUT this speech/music distinction is not the most salient one.
- When no labels are presented, participants first tend to form mixed groups of speech-like and music-like stimuli, along timbral and intensity dimensions.
- The speech/music distinction emerges on a lower hierarchical level; it is associated with labels like “arhythmic” / “rhythmic” and is predicted by timing characteristics.
- Participant labels converge with acoustic predictors.



Poster PDF

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Reference Durojaye*, C., Fink*, L., Roeske, T., Wald-Fuhrmann, M., & Larrouy-Maestri, P. (2021). Perception of Nigerian dundún talking drum performances as speech-like vs. music-like: The role of familiarity and acoustic cues. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 1760.

