I Would Know that Voice Anywhere!
The Role of Phonetic Sensitivity in the Perceptual Identification of Individual Talkers

A listener’s ability to identify a familiar talker is often ascribed to sensory samples of the acoustic attributes of vocal quality. In idealizations of this aspect of speech perception, unique, long-term characteristics of the vocal source of acquaintances are represented in a gallery in long-term memory, and such characteristics function as standards for evaluating an unknown signal that challenges the auditory system. The ability to identify a linguistic message inheres in a different set of acoustic properties, those of finer grain that underlie the perception of consonant and vowel sequences used to identify spoken words. Neuropsychological findings of a dissociation between aphasia and phonagnosia suggest a system architecture in which the perception of a linguistic message is independent of the perception of the identity of the talker who produced it. The plausibility of this conceptualization can be assessed in light of our studies of individual identification without recourse to auditory impressions of familiar vocal quality. This evidence shows that phonetic attributes can contribute to the perception and identification of individual talkers.

RECOMMENDED READING:
