

## **Who's in Your Neighborhood? An Examination of Neighborhood Density in Adult Native Speakers of English**

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This research project was concerned with how native English speaking adults store words in their mental lexicon and whether or not they follow a one phoneme rule. These questions were answered with the participation of 107 adults. The participants were presented with 69 non-word stimuli and asked to produce the first real word that was sparked by each of the non-words. Each of the participants responses were coded to determine the words produced by two or more participants (i.e., the neighbors) and to verify whether those neighbors differed from the target nonword by one phoneme (i.e., fit the traditional definition of a neighbor). In addition, the number of people that generated the same response was divided by the total number of people to get the strength of each neighbor. The results show that neighbor strength was negatively correlated with the number of neighbors. That is, stronger neighbors were found in smaller neighborhoods and weaker neighbors were found in larger neighborhoods. The majority of the neighbors differed from the target nonword by one phoneme, indicating that the traditional one sound rule for determining neighbors was appropriate in capturing neighbors reported by these native speakers.