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Subjective Testing of Car Audio Systems

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The sound quality of a car audio system is an important part for many consumers when making their buying decisions. Consequently, it is also of significant interest for car manufacturers. There are some studies addressing the testing paradigms that can be utilized for an efficient and realistic evaluation of the perceived sound quality. However, there are no investigations that focus on the differences between only listening and listening while performing a realistic parallel task, i.e. in this case, driving a car.

This contribution presents a comparison between listening tests that were conducted in two different simulated listening situations: listening only in a stationary, parked car and listening while driving a (simulated) car. In both tests, identical signals and identical playback configurations were used leaving the situation as the only variable in the test.

The comparative evaluation of the listening tests shows good agreement between the two listening situations for many stimuli. One clear trend can be observed, though: the lower end of the quality scale is not used as frequently when performing a parallel task. This indicates that a car driver may be a less critical listener than a passenger is.

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