

Barcelona L2 Speech Research Group Meeting.

Thursday 21st September 2023.

Sala de Professors, Josep Carner building 5th floor. Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació, UB (Carrer Aribau, 2, 08007-Barcelona).

09:15-09:30	Welcome
09:30-10:30	Invited Talk
	<p>Małgorzata Baran-Łucarz (Uniwersytet Wrocławski) <i>Success in FL pronunciation learning and teaching: The role of selected individual differences.</i></p> <p>According to Dörnyei (2005), “individual differences (IDs) have been found to be the most consistent predictors of L2 learning success (...), and no other phenomena investigated within SLA have come even close to this level of impact” (p. 2). Thus, a better understanding of the role of IDs in pronunciation learning and teaching is essential. Consequently, in this talk I will present studies showing how selected learner factors determine the level of accentedness and/or comprehensibility, focusing on cognitive style, personality, pronunciation (learning) anxiety, attitudes and motivation related to L2 learning, and ethnocentrism. Then, pronunciation learning preferences of students with various profiles will be discussed. This will lead us to the concept of pronunciation student-tailored instruction, based on the idea that learners vary in 1/ their need for explicit pronunciation instruction, for different types and amount of feedback and teacher scaffolding, and for guidance towards self-regulated learning, 2/ their attitudes towards and effectiveness of using various materials, resources, and tasks, and 3/ how important classroom dynamics and rapport with the teacher is for them. Finally, directions for future research on effective pronunciation teaching and learning will be suggested, opening the floor for further discussion on this matter.</p>
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
Presentations	
11:00-11:30	<p>María de los Ángeles Gómez González (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela) <i>e-SoundWay the Route: A digital tool to gamify EFL/L2 English pronunciation instruction.</i></p> <p>Despite the importance attributed to EFL phonetics by both teachers and students in Spain (e.g., Calvo Benzies, 2016; Cenoz & García-Lecumberri, 1999; Díaz Lage et al., 2023; Walker, 1999), Spanish EFL/L2 learners of English seem to have language skill gaps, particularly regarding phonological awareness and pronunciation according to previous empirical studies (e.g., Martínez Flor et al., 2006; Alonso, 2014; Szprya, 2015) and international reports (e.g., PISA, EF EPI, ESLC, and PIRLS). In this talk I will present e-SoundWay the Route, a gamified e-learning platform and the corresponding learning analytics backend, which have been specially developed to help higher education Spanish and Galician learners of English to improve their phonological competence and pronunciation in English through "serious games" while walking St James Way. Players will have to face a series of challenges along the Way conceived as minigames targeting three phonetic skills: (i) perception, (ii) production, and (iii) transcription of English sounds. The underlying rationale is that e-SoundWay the Route will contribute to improving the digital competencies, as well as the perception and production of (supra)segmental English phonetic skills of Spanish-speaking university learners while favoring their involvement and motivation in the learning process, as shown in prior empirical work on serious games (e.g., Filella et al., 2017; Fraga -Varela et al., 2021) and Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (e.g., Levy, 2007; Setter, 2008; Kim, 2012; Luo, 2016; Mompean & Fouz-González, 2016; Gómez González & Lago Ferreiro, in press).</p>

11:30-12:00	<p>Sinéad Marie Rankin (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) <i>The Contribution of the Visual Modality to Speech Intelligibility in Native and Non-Native Speakers of English</i></p> <p>This study investigates the role of visual cues on speech intelligibility by analysing stimuli from a native and two L1 French English speakers. Using video recordings, the study assessed intelligibility of vowels in CVC monosyllabic words presented in cafeteria noise set at -15dB SNR. Native British participants (N = 24) were asked to identify the words they perceived from the audio and audio-visual stimuli. The findings indicated that visual cues improved speech intelligibility, but that the degree of visual modality effectiveness varied across different vowel features and between speaker groups, in particular for vowels involving lip rounding in French. This highlights the influence of language-specific gestures on L2, and the role of the visual cue for speech intelligibility.</p>
12:00-12:15	<p>Break</p>
12:15-12:45	<p>Katherine Fraser (Universitat de Barcelona) <i>Speech rhythm in spontaneous and controlled L2 speaking modes: exploring differences, distance measures and measurement challenges.</i></p> <p>Studies of speech rhythm have often used read speech rather than spontaneous speech in their comparisons. However, read speech has been shown to be perceptually different from spontaneous speech, which may be due to rhythmic differences between the two modes. In this talk I will discuss the results of an experiment examining the effect of speaking mode (spontaneous or controlled) on the speech rhythm of a group of 82 Spanish-Catalan learners of English relative to a control group of 8 native English speakers. The study used both traditional rhythm metrics and a novel Mahalanobis distance approach to see where learners differed more in comparison to the native control group. I will also outline future work on native and non-native listeners' perception of rhythmic structure as an approach to overcoming some of the methodological challenges associated with measuring speech rhythm.</p>
12:45-13:15	<p>Anabela Rato (University of Toronto) <i>Effect of stimulus repetition on non-native speech perception.</i></p> <p>Discrimination of non-native speech sounds can be enhanced not only with phonetic training, but also more implicitly with multiple stimulus presentations (Holt, 2011; Holt & Carney, 2005) since the robustness of the internal representation of a speech sound increases with multiple opportunities to perceive the stimulus. In this presentation, I will discuss the effect of natural stimulus repetition on non-native speech discrimination by overviewing two studies that examined the impact of perceptual training without feedback in the discrimination of consonant and vowel contrasts in two listener groups: experienced and inexperienced L2 learners (Black, Rato, Rafat, submitted; Correia et al., July 2023).</p> <p>Black, M., Rato, A., Rafat, Y. (submitted). Effect of perceptual training without feedback on bilingual speech perception: Evidence from approximant-stop discrimination in L1 Spanish and L1 English late bilinguals. <i>Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech</i>. Equinox.</p> <p>Correia, S., Ge, Y., Fernandes, J., Rato, A. Rebuschat, P. (July 13-14, 2023). Effects of perceptual training and cognitive aptitudes in the development of non-native speech perception abilities: Evidence from L2 Portuguese. <i>International Conference L2 Portuguese @ Lancaster</i>, University of Lancaster, UK.</p> <p>Holt, R. F., & Carney, A. E. (2005). Multiple looks in speech sound discrimination in adults. <i>Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research</i>, 48, 922–943.</p> <p>Holt, R.F. (2011). Enhancing Speech Discrimination Through Stimulus Repetition. <i>Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research</i>, 54(5), 1431–1447.</p>
13:30-16:00	<p>LUNCH</p>