

Don't miss the latest IATEFL PronSIG Webinar

When? 21 October 2017 at 1pm BST

Where? The PronSIG Adobe Connect Webinar Room



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Ewa Wanat is a PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow's English Language and Linguistics department. Her project investigates the role of various methods that use rhythm on the EFL learners' comprehension of connected speech.

Webinar:

Rhythmic training techniques for comprehending connected speech

Jane Bentley is a community musician, specialising in music in health, social and communicative wellbeing. Her PhD examined the enabling and outcomes of musical interaction among non-specialists.

Abstract

Comprehension of Glaswegian English is known to present difficulties for speakers of other varieties of English and even more so for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In connected speech, weak syllables become particularly reduced, which increases the chances of miscomprehension even further. This project investigates whether comprehension of Glaswegian connected speech can be improved if learners are trained using various rhythm-based tasks.

Three experiments were conducted. In one of these experiments participants were asked to tap to what they felt was the "beat" in the speech they were listening to. The main finding of this study was that tapping, or engaging in a synchronised motor task while listening to an external stimulus, improved speech comprehension in Chinese learners of English. As well as this, the participants' musical ability had a positive effect on listeners' comprehension of function words. In sum, the study revealed that training involving tapping is beneficial for EFL learners, and that there could be a relationship between speech comprehension and musical ability. We are currently looking into ways this finding can be incorporated in classroom as well as into an app for self-study.

How to take part:

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