

# PRONSIG ONLINE CONFERENCE

**Mind, Brain and Pronunciation:**  
**How thoughts, emotions, and experiences**  
**affect L2 English pronunciation**



# Sensations

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**How can English language teachers make use of the potential of the brain/mind to support their students' receptive and productive pronunciation skills?**

From the moment we are born our brains are constantly at work, categorising the sounds of our mother tongues and enabling us to remember and produce language utterances. When it comes to the use and pronunciation of an additional language, the brain's capacity to store, retrieve, and use new sounds is fascinating and complex. However, this is not always taken into consideration in the practice of everyday teaching of English. What role do variables such as experience, emotion, confidence, mindfulness, cognition, processing, or memory have on pronunciation?

PronSIG's 2021 online conference hopes to explore these questions, providing participants with a deeper understanding of how the brain/mind can influence and improve English pronunciation teaching and learning.

The event will feature presentations and workshops on the following topics:

- anxiety and fear of speaking/ producing an L2,
- neuroscience and pronunciation,
- memory and pronunciation,
- teaching practices and techniques to support anxious students,
- creating mindful pronunciation classroom activities,
- the effects of attitude and motivation on pronunciation.



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English to  
the next level

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At Sensations English, we recognise learners as multi-competent speakers and multicultural citizens.

Our five-level, global news videos and articles embed language, lexis and pronunciation features in meaningful, motivating contexts, providing learners at all levels with engaging, real-world resources which stimulate intake and productive use of new language.

Including diverse content and global voices is key to our approach. The resources enable learners to reflect on and connect the news with their personal stories, creating person-centred contexts for language development, and interactive games target intake and sub-skills at all levels.

With five levels, each report provides in-built differentiation to scaffold learner understanding and independence, build confidence, lower affect and encourage reflection. Classes can retain a shared experience while studying different levels of the same report. Learners can explore new language at higher levels and change level to match their listening or reading skills or use specific study activities.

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**IATEFL PronSIG's October 2021 conference has received the first ever GOLD award by EVE for representation among our line-up of speakers!**

Equal Voices in ELT (EVE) is an international organisation promoting balanced gender and L1/L2 speaker representation at ELT conferences and events worldwide.

After receiving a platinum EVE for gender and L1/2 parity in our 2020 conference, PronSIG are delighted to achieve the GOLD EVE voices award in 2021. This brand new award recognises that our speaker line up represents our audience and our industry; more female than male, and more L2 than L1. Equitable representation of voices lies at the heart of PronSIG's ethos, and we value this recognition.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to all of our speakers for contributing to our event and to EVE for their recognition through this gold award!

[www.evecalendar.wordpress.com](http://www.evecalendar.wordpress.com)



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## The role of memory on the individual differences in acquiring L2 pronunciation skills

**Akiko Kondo**

Room  
1

ES/FL instructors have witnessed that some L2 learners have better L2 pronunciation skills than others regardless of age of onset and the amount of exposure and effort, which indicates that the aptitude for pronunciation is underlying. This session will commence with a brief discussion of the aptitude-related factors. Then, insights gained from researching the role of memory capacity in L2 pronunciation learning—which the speaker has exclusively researched—will be shared, and pedagogical implications for teaching L2 pronunciation in terms of focus on instruction, teachers' native language, using computer software and authentic media, and teaching framework, will be discussed.



Plenary

Akiko Kondo has taught at the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels for 28 years in Japan. Currently, she teaches graduate courses and is a researcher and teacher-trainer. Her research interests include individual differences in second language acquisition, teaching pronunciation, and film (movie)-based instruction; further, she has presented role of memory in L2 skills at national and international conferences.



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## The effects of individual learner variables on English pronunciation learning efforts: What teachers need to know

Veronica Sardegna

Room  
1

Improving L2 speech intelligibility takes time and largely depends on students' practice choices and efforts, which are ultimately linked to their self-efficacy beliefs, motivations, and attitudes towards pronunciation practice. In this plenary talk, I first describe a structural equation model that identifies the relationships among these individual learner variables, and offer pedagogical recommendations based on the identified paths. Next, I share my research findings on an approach that empowers learners with pronunciation learning strategies. I argue that the effectiveness of this approach is mostly due to its positive impact on learners' self-efficacy beliefs, practice choices, and attitudes towards pronunciation learning.



Plenary

Veronica Sardegna, PhD., teaches courses on second language learning and teaching at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, USA. She is the current Chair of International TESOL's Nominating Committee and conducts applied linguistics research with a focus on English pronunciation and intercultural learning. In particular, she investigates the effectiveness of strategy-based classroom interventions and the role of individual learner differences on learning.



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## The impact of linguistic profiling on decision-making

**Katrin Lichterfeld**

Room  
1

Brains need to categorize an enormous amount of data according to environmental influences and preferences developed over time. Due to deeply ingrained processes, the possible negative impact of unconscious biases or filters is hardly noticed. What is more, the omnipresence of digital devices has helped spread linguistic bias and stereotyping, impacting listeners from childhood and influencing their willingness to take over responsibility for successful (international) communication.

The purpose of this talk is therefore to raise awareness of the relationship between these unconscious biases and linguistic profiling, which is relevant for both teachers and their learners in their specific contexts.



Session  
1A

As an in-company trainer in Germany, Katrin Lichterfeld focuses on getting learners prepared for the challenges of their workplaces as confident users of global English communicating in multi-faceted intercultural settings.



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## L2 anxiety during oral presentation by Japanese university students

Hiroko Nakamura

Room  
2

This presentation will report on the high communication apprehension and L2 anxiety of Japanese university students. It will also share the results for an acoustic study of communication apprehension that compared F0 values between rehearsal and the actual performance settings. The findings suggest the importance of teaching prosody and that the enjoyment of performing a drama can reduce L2 speaking anxiety.



Session  
1B

Hiroko Nakamura is an associate professor at Tottori University of Environmental Studies. She has an MA in Communication Science from the University of Connecticut and an MA in Linguistics from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies.



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## Nurturing understanding, identities, and choices through near-peer, inquiry-based pronunciation learning

**Adam Scott**

Room  
1

Contextualised, inquiry-based pronunciation learning centred on L2 speakers leaves behind "native" models and teacher-led activities, recognises learners' complex, evolving L2 identities and explores achievable pronunciation goals. Learners connect near-peer models in both classes and resources with achievable self-voices, while discovery approaches provide tools for independence. These elements help learners construct personalised understandings of pronunciation, recognising individual needs and developmental pathways.



Session  
2A

Adam Scott, joint coordinator of PronSIG, has wide-ranging interests include teacher development, language development, identity and inclusion, and a career-long focus on advancing phonology practice. He's passionate about developing inclusive, high-quality, evidence-based approaches and learning materials.



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## 'Crocodile or Kroko'dil: effects of stress differences on second-language processing

Sandra Kotzor & Isabella Fritz

Room  
2

Session  
2B

This talk presents the results of psycholinguistic experiments designed to determine whether differences in stress patterns of words which exist in both the first and second language cause processing difficulties for German and Dutch learners of English. We will discuss the data and assess the contribution of these results to classroom practice and material design.



Sandra Kotzor is a psycholinguist and English language teacher.



Isabella Fritz is a researcher in psycholinguistics. Both work on second-language processing at the University of Oxford.



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## Neuropsychology of pronunciation and its implications for teaching

André Hedlund

Room  
1

What happens inside people's brains from the moment they think of a word until that same word is uttered? What are the mechanisms at play when someone pronounces something? In this session, we will look at which aspects of a speaker's nature and nurture influence their accent, how that relates to pronunciation and what teachers must consider when teaching it.



Session  
3A

Work  
shop

André Hedlund is a Chevening Alumnus (MSc in Psychology of Education – University of Bristol), bilingual education mentor, and postgraduate course lecturer at PUC-PR. He blogs at [edcrocks.com](http://edcrocks.com)



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## Real pronunciation improvement: It's in the palm of your hand!

Karen Taylor & Liz Bigler

Room  
2

Far more than rubber bands or feathers, our own hands are built-in pronunciation learning tools that enjoy a direct connection to the brain. In this (truly!) hands-on workshop, you will discover and practice three simple but powerful pronunciation improvement strategies that improve the learners' performance of stress, vowel reduction, and vowel quality.



Karen Taylor is co-creator of the Color Vowel Approach and Blue Canoe, combining powerful visuals, ed tech, and brain-based strategies to transform English pronunciation teaching and learning.



Liz Bigler is the owner of Bigler English Coaching, which specializes in helping Japanese speakers of English be understood the first time. She is based in Atlanta USA and teaches worldwide via Zoom.

Session  
3B

Work  
shop



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## Multi-dimensional touch in pronunciation teaching

Michael Burri & William Acton

Room  
1

Session  
4A

This session briefly reviews neuroscience-based research and principles related to touch in pronunciation teaching, both physical/tactile touch and touch as metaphor (emotion and affect). Following this overview, we demonstrate an example of the application of those principles through the use of haptic vowel teaching in pronunciation instruction by attending to the peak vowels in prominent words such as during storytelling.



Michael Burri is a Senior Lecturer in TESOL at the University of Wollongong, Australia. His research interests include pronunciation teaching, teacher education, Mind Brain Education, context-sensitive/innovative pedagogy, and NNEST issues.



Bill Acton is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Trinity Western University. His current research centers around the role of the body in pronunciation teaching, and meta-pragmatics in classroom speaking instruction.



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## Pronunciation-teaching environments that can nourish mind, heart and soul

**Stella Palavecino**

Room  
2

Some teaching environments may help release the “wrong” chemicals, with a resulting negative effect on our students’ achievement. Clearly, there are settings that can trigger or suppress learning in strange ways. In this presentation, pronunciation environments and tasks will be compared and contrasted to show how to turn learning into a lasting positive experience that can nourish mind, heart and soul.



Session  
4B

Master in TEFL, Stella Palavecino is a graduate EFL teacher, specialised in Higher Education and ICT, English Phonetics and Phonology, and Didactics. She lectures in Phonetics at Teacher Training colleges and Translation Programmes in B.A. Argentina



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## Using mindful pronunciation activities with VYL & YL in the ELT classroom

**Sinziana Socol**

Room  
1

During this workshop participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own teaching of pronunciation before delving into the benefits and ways of using mindfulness when teaching pronunciation in the pre-primary and primary ELT classroom. Finally, they will have the opportunity to explore several activities through which they could mindfully raise their very young and young learners' phonological awareness.



Session  
5A

Work  
shop

Sînziana is a freelance English language teacher, teacher trainer and children's mindfulness teacher. She has previously worked at the British Council Romania and is currently studying for her Trinity Diploma.



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## Foreign language anxiety: Effective ways to lower the temperature

Polina Gordyshevskaya

Room  
2

For many L2 learners, speaking English is not just a difficult activity but also a scary one. Mispronouncing or forgetting a word and using wrong grammar – these are their most common fears. Come to this workshop and learn how you can help your students feel more confident and less anxious. All techniques have been tried and tested.



Session  
5B

Work  
shop

Polina Gordyshevskaya is a freelance English teacher, pronunciation coach, and blogger ([eltbylinablog.wordpress.com](http://eltbylinablog.wordpress.com)). Her qualifications include an MA, Delta Modules 1 and 3, and a certificate in teaching pronunciation.



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