

PronSIG Online Conference

in association with
IATEFL TEAsig



**Exploring effective pronunciation
assessment practices
in the English language classroom**

Sat, 1 October 2022
09.30-17.00 UK time

<https://www.iatefl.org/events/370>



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Welcome to the 2022 PronSIG online conference!



How do you assess your students' pronunciation?

Whether formative or summative, assessment is a routine part of almost every English language teacher's repertoire. However, when it comes to assessing oral communication, and in particular, pronunciation, for many years there has been an absence of specialist publications, research, and training. This has meant that teachers have often gone without guidance on best practice in the fundamentals, i.e. how to evaluate pronunciation, what features to assess, and for what purpose. Thankfully, in the last decade the visibility of pronunciation assessment has started to improve as studies and publications focusing on it increase. But until these changes trickle down into the mainstream, there may be teachers who still feel unprepared to tackle pronunciation assessment.

This online conference aims to highlight the process of pronunciation assessment, the challenges it can bring, and offer practical suggestions to support its implementation.

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Letting go of baggage? Reconceptualising pronunciation and assessment for pedagogical practice Talía Isaacs



Plenary



Room
1

The fields of second language pronunciation and assessment have needed to reorient to position themselves for the 21st century. In the case of pronunciation, instructional and assessment targets have shifted from promoting accent reduction toward the more appropriate goal of intelligibility.

However, the notion of “intelligible to whom” remains unresolved. Narrower conceptualisations of testing (i.e., quantifying performances into scores) are making room for broader notions of assessment, or systematic information gathering about learning. But how can psychometric concepts such as validity be adapted for classroom practice? This presentation centres on trends and challenges in pedagogically-relevant pronunciation assessment research and practice.

Talía Isaacs is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESOL and Programme Leader for the MA TESOL In-Service at the UCL Centre for Applied Linguistics, University College London.

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Neuroscience contributions to assessing pronunciation

Susanne M.E. Sullivan

Session
1A



Room
1

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The brain processes language in surprising and wonderful ways. Recent neuroscience shows the brain cutting, sampling and even reversing bits of speech. How can we use this to throw light on assessment?

The Oxford listening shows the pros and cons of established testing. More comprehensive insight might result from Field's gating technique or two simple classroom approaches

Sue studies neuroscience around listening and pronunciation for adult L2 students, including developing a speechstream exercise to amplify abilities in fluency. Goals include harnessing the power of subconscious brain networks.

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ELSA's Speech Analyzer as an AI-based in-class exam predictor

Beata Walesiak, Jorge Proença

Session
1B

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Room
2

In the talk we would like to present the functionalities of ELSA's Speech Analyzer, which is an AI-powered English tool that listens to the learner's speech and provides immediate feedback.

We would also like to discuss the results from our research comparing Speech Analyzer's predicted IELTS test scores of Youtube mock IELTS speaking tests with the scores provided in these recordings.

Beata is a linguist at ELSA, teacher, teacher trainer and researcher specialising in pronunciation and technology-supported teaching. She has taught in academia in Poland and Scotland, and set up unpolish.pl.

Jorge has been a Speech Researcher at ELSA since 2018 and holds a PhD in the topic of automatic assessment of reading ability of children from University of Coimbra, Portugal.

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Effective Needs Assessment in a 1:1 Academic Setting

Session
2A



Room
1

Marieke van der Meer

This presentation will explore effective pronunciation needs assessment in a 1:1 academic setting, its importance for students and teachers and its design. Meaningful, context-informed tasks eliciting intelligibility issues will be suggested.

Next, addressing affective factors involved in improving pronunciation skills will be discussed. Finally, good ways of following up on the needs assessment will be shown.

In 2017, Marieke (MA in English & Applied Linguistics) joined PronSIG and trained with Adrian Underhill. She coaches Chinese PhDs at Dutch universities to be intelligible, confident speakers of English.



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Integrating student-centered pronunciation assessment practices

Gemma Archer

Session
2B

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Work
shop

Room
2



For most of us, a pronunciation-specific assessment is a rare occurrence in our classrooms. However, planning and integrating pronunciation assessment practices, beyond the traditional speaking test or presentation, can be a useful method of gauging our students' needs, allowing us to plan ways and means of supporting their continued development.

In this workshop, I will discuss a variety of practical methods for evaluating pronunciation, facilitating discussion of their merits and drawbacks.

Gemma is an EAP teacher and programme co-ordinator in the English language unit at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. She is also the editor of the IATEFL Pronunciation Special Interest Group's bi-annual journal 'Speak Out!' and joint coordinator of PronSIG.

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Poster

Using poetry in pronunciation self-assessment

Victor Carreño

Session
3.1



Room
1

Raising students' awareness on pronunciation features, such as individual sounds and word stress, are key-elements to ensure intelligible pronunciation.

When reading/writing short poems (e.g. Haikus and Tankas), students also get to focus on syllable counting and self-assess their work and pronunciation. Short poems are also easier to read/write and may engage learners at different levels and interests.

Victor Carreño has worked in ELT in Brazil in varied educational contexts. He is a PhD candidate in Linguistics and has also worked as a speaking examiner for international exams.

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Perspectives on pronunciation feedback:

EAP teachers versus subject specialists

Wayne Rimmer

Session
3.2



Room
1

Poster

This case study compares pronunciation feedback given by EAP teachers, offering language support, and Chemistry lecturers, subject specialists, on oral presentation assessment tasks from international postgraduate students in a UK university.

Using discourse analysis of the teachers' and lecturers' written comments on students' presentations, the poster compares the perceived salience of pronunciation and how feedback is articulated.

After a typically itinerant EFL career, **Wayne** currently teaches EAP at Manchester University. He is a former PronSIG Co-ordinator and has been a member longer since many of you were born.

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Are Suprasegmentals important in Assessing L2 Interactional Competence? **SungEun Choi**



Poster

Session
3.3



Room
1

This session reports the findings of a study on the relationship between interactional competence (IC) and suprasegmentals measured in paired speaking tests. The study found that the overall IC was significantly associated with pause and sentence stress.

Findings will lead to meaningful discussion for pronunciation assessment and discourse-level pedagogical treatment.

SungEun Choi is a Ph.D. student Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University. Her research interests include L2 speech, discourse prosody, and computer-aided pronunciation learning.

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Pronunciation Assessment Criteria and Intelligibility

Okim Kang, Kevin Hirschi

Session
4A



Work
shop

Room
1



The session will review rating descriptors, discuss the development of rating scales for pronunciation, explain importance of intelligibility in the pronunciation assessment, and introduce different ways to measure speaker intelligibility. By offering specific recommendations to inform rating criteria in L2 pronunciation assessment, it will help teachers' curriculum development and assessment practices in the context of Global Englishes.

Okim Kang is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director of the Applied Linguistics Speech Lab at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

Kevin Hirschi is a PhD Candidate at Northern Arizona University. His interests lie in second language pronunciation development and computer-assisted learning and analyses.

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Empirical approaches to measuring accent familiarity

Vito Miao, Okim Kang

Session
5A

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Room
1

Accent familiarity can influence teachers' evaluation of students' pronunciation. However, the field lacks empirical evidence to measure accent familiarity, meaning that teachers' self-assessment of their familiarity remains intuitive. This paper provides an evidence-informed approach to measuring accent familiarity and concludes with some useful measures of accent familiarity that teachers can easily use to self-evaluate their familiarity with different accent varieties.

Vito Miao is a PhD student in Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University. Inspired by his exposure to a variety of English accents, he studies L2 listening and speaking, with which he hopes to promote language learning, testing, and social justice in light of the global use of English.

Okim Kang is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona. Her research interests include speech production and perception, L2 pronunciation and intelligibility, L2 oral assessment and testing, automated scoring and speech recognition, World Englishes, and language attitude."

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Intelligibility-based

✓ **formative assessment**
on suprasegmentals:

✗ **Saliency, uptake,
and delivery**

**Kevin Hirschi,
Okim Kang, Stephen Looney**

Session
5B

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Room
2

This session informs teachers of effective ways to prepare intelligibility-based formative assessment on suprasegmental features of English. Using previous research and a series of studies conducted by the presenters, it outlines effective ways to design and conduct formative assessments that consider how to inform learners of their progress towards highly intelligible speech.

Kevin Hirschi is a PhD Candidate at Northern Arizona University. His interests lie in second language pronunciation development and computer-assisted learning and analyses.

Okim Kang is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona. Her research interests include speech production and perception, L2 pronunciation and intelligibility, L2 oral assessment and testing, automated scoring and speech recognition, World Englishes, and language attitude.

Stephen Looney biodata to follow.

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Pronunciation assessment for the foreign language classroom: some challenges and practical solutions

Tanja Angelovska



Plenary



Room
1

Given that the pronunciation community does not have a common standard for which type of pronunciation training is most suitable and what should be considered as an appropriate target, pronunciation evaluation in the foreign language classroom becomes equally challenging. I will talk about classroom-based pronunciation assessment as a process in which the teacher's role is to acquire diagnostic competence for individualized and continuous feedback. The aim is to inform the practice of pronunciation teaching by offering research-based solutions for some existing challenges (e.g., awareness about transferred pronunciation features of prior languages, (peer-)pronunciation evaluation using digital tools, assessment tasks etc.).

Tanja Angelovska is Associate Professor of English Linguistics & Language Education at the University of Salzburg and an associate Editor of *Ampersand: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Sciences and Bilingualism*. More info: www.tanjaangelovska.com

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