PRONSIG CONFERENCE 2025

CONFERENCE CALL

Beyond Intelligibility: Expanding Our Approach to Pronunciation Instruction

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Welcome to the IATEFL PronSIG online Conference!

Pronunciation teaching often focuses on helping English language learners become intelligible i.e. ensuring they can be understood by listeners. While this remains a vital and necessary goal and should continue to be a priority in our everyday teaching, we cannot deny that sometimes real-life communication demands more from our students. In such circumstances, we have to go 'beyond intelligibility' in order to find the most suitable means to provide support.

But what do we mean by 'beyond intelligibility'? In this one-day online event, we hope to explore the additional factors which impact learners' pronunciation and broader communicative competence such as the role of fluency, prosody, pragmatics, and speaker confidence. This theme also provides an opportunity to investigate finer points and dynamics such as interactional nuance, listener engagement, and emotional expression in speech.

Join PronSIG for this whole day conference!

Amanda Baker

Teaching the impossible: Pragmatics and intonation!

Often considered impossible to teach, intonation remains a challenge for teachers and learners alike. Add pragmatics to the mix and the difficulties intensify. To empower English language learners to interact successfully with a diverse range of speakers, however, it is critical for learners to be able to understand nuances of meaning. These nuances are frequently tied into subtleties of intonation use and the context in which language is spoken. This plenary will unpack some of the major issues surrounding the practicalities of teaching intonation and pragmatics and offer a series of recommendations for teaching them in the English language classroom.

Amanda Baker is an Associate Professor in TESOL at the University of Wollongong in Australia. Amanda's research interests focus on the dynamic relationships that exist between L2 teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices, especially in the areas of L2 pronunciation, speaking and listening pedagogy.

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Nobuo Yuzawa

Expanding perception: Training EFL learners to understand global English accents

This presentation highlights the importance of listener training in pronunciation instruction. While learners may adopt one accent as a speaking model, they must develop the ability to understand a variety of intelligible English accents. Focusing on EFL contexts like Japan, the talk explores practical strategies—such as using online audio resources—to help learners expand their perception skills.

Nobuo Yuzawa has been teaching English at a university in Japan for over 30 years. His current interest is using AI to teach spoken English to EFL learners.

Susanne M E Sullivan

Intelligibility: Attending to microchunks to go beyond fluency

We need a clear division between what we want learners to be able to hear and what produce. Microchunks show that both articulation and comprehension have pressure points, sound clusters we need to take apart in class to increase fluency beyond the norm. As well, melodic recognition - cornerstone of child acquisition - yields extra functionality and confidence.

Susanne Sullivan, N.Z., has been studying pronunciation for many years and used a deep interest in neuroscience to approach listening and speaking from the viewpoint of the brain's processing of language.

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Mike Budden

Train pronunciation and prosodic features before they happen – in reading

Research in ELT and neurology shows that reading is embedded in phonology, yet it is often treated as a silent, non-phonological activity. This presentation introduces the research-based Reading Triangle, a simple neurological model of reading, and explores how training sub-vocalisation through Reading Aloud can and should help learners train pronunciation and prosodic features well before spontaneous speech

Mike Budden is from Australia and lives in Berlin where he teaches English and German. His lessons include a strong focus on listening, pronunciation and cognitive strategies for learning.

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Marisol Hernandez

Suprasegmentals for demanding contexts

In high-stakes contexts, pronunciation can make the difference between clarity and misunderstanding. This session explores how the intelligibility and nativeness principles can coexist in the pronunciation classroom, ensuring learners achieve clear, confident communication skills and, at the same time, have a good command of suprasegmental features essential for precision.

I am a higher education teacher of English specialising in English Phonetics and Phonology. I am the author of the book English Pronunciation through Acting Exercises and Techniques (2024).

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Jennie Reed & Ana Paula Biazon Rocha

Workshop

Session 3A

Room 1

Empowering learners through pronunciation: From clarity to confidence and connection

This workshop moves beyond intelligibility and comprehensibility in pronunciation teaching to boosting learners' confidence for real-life communication. Through reflection and practical tasks based on prosody (intonation, rhythm, and stress), participants will explore how to enhance learners' ability to understand and convey meaning beyond the words themselves. This will help them express emotional nuance, build connection, and communicate more effectively.

Jennie Reed is an English pronunciation coach at Excellence in English Education.
Ana Paula Biazon Rocha is an English Language Tutor at the English Language Teaching Centre, University of Sheffield.

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Thu Trang Truong

Workshop

Session 3B

Room 2

From wrong to right: Repairing pronunciation with the PIC Pronunciation Map

Many L2 learners mispronounce, misspell, or misuse word forms due to weak phonics foundations. This workshop introduces the PIC Pronunciation Map combining phonics, the interactive IPA chart, and the Color Vowel Chart to repair pronunciation gaps and boost spelling, stress, and vocabulary precision. Participants will explore classroom-ready activities that build confidence, integrate pronunciation into grammar, and enhance communicative fluency.

Thu Trang is a TESOL mentor, a teacher trainer, and co-founder of an active community supporting 37,000+ Vietnamese teachers through HEW London, Twinkl Vietnam, and VietTESOL, specialising in inclusive pedagogy.

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Mark Hancock

We need to talk about accent

Without accent-awareness, teachers depend too heavily on the guidance of models which may reinforce a standard language ideology and native-speakerism. This session aims to help teachers structure their own understanding of global accent variety. We will also consider to what extent this knowledge can usefully be shared with learners, the times they sometimes ned to go beyond intelligibility to explore issues of accent and identity, and how to achieve this in practice. We will divide this classroom application into productive and receptive pronunciation skills.

Mark Hancock is an ELT author and trainer. His books include Pronunciation Games, English Pronunciation in Use, and the PronPack series. He trains at the University of Chester and online.

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Stephanie Brennan

Pragmatics: Helping learners go from greetings to goodbyes in Irish English

Communication does not occur in a vacuum; social use of language requires more than intelligibility. Teachers can encourage learners to activate their L1 pragmatic language skills, to think about the fact that not only the speaker but "...the hearer also matters." (Roever, 2021). This talk highlights how awareness of cultural variations can make for more successful real-life communication.

Stephanie worked as a Speech & Language Therapist for over 25 years. She now uses her skillset to help people-facing professionals improve their pronunciation to provide a better service.

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Tetiana Lesyk

From accent perfection to clarity: Pronunciation in multilingual teams

In multilingual corporate teams, misunderstandings often arise from varied accents, unclear pronunciation, and weak listening skills - especially under time pressure. This session reframes the goal from native-like perfection to clarity, prosody, and adaptable listening. We will explore practical, business-relevant pronunciation and listener-training techniques to help L2 learners perform confidently and comprehensibly in high-stakes meetings, video calls and negotiations.

Tetiana Lesyk is a certified phonetician and business English trainer with 23 years' experience, helping professionals communicate with clarity, confidence, and intercultural agility in multilingual environments.

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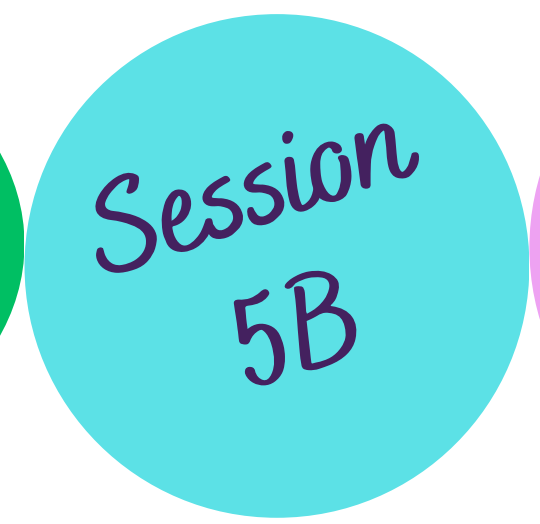**PRONSIG.IATEFL.ORG/CONFERENCE2025**

John Levis

Beyond intelligibility: Pronunciation integrated into communication

This presentation argues that moving beyond intelligibility involves moving beyond the view that intelligibility is only a function of pronunciation. Instead, we must recognize that all aspects of language involve features that impact intelligibility and those that do not. Moving beyond intelligibility means greater attention to listening and speaking skills, in which pronunciation is only one important aspect of instruction.

John Levis started the Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching conference and its electronic proceedings, and he the founding editor of the Journal of Second Language Pronunciation.

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Seiji Takahashi & Naoko Taguchi

Does ChatGPT go beyond intelligibility in conveying pragmatic prosody?

While ChatGPT's pronunciation is sufficiently intelligible, it remains unclear whether it can convey pragmatic intentions through prosody (e.g., saying "Great" in an ironic tone). This presentation reports on a study that examined ChatGPT's ability to produce pragma-prosodic variation. Based on the findings, we discuss the potential and limitations of using AI chatbots in pronunciation instruction that goes beyond intelligibility.

Seiji Takahashi is a Ph.D. student in the Applied Linguistics program at Northern Arizona University. His research interests include L2 pragmatics, L2 speech acquisition, and the pedagogical use of technologies.

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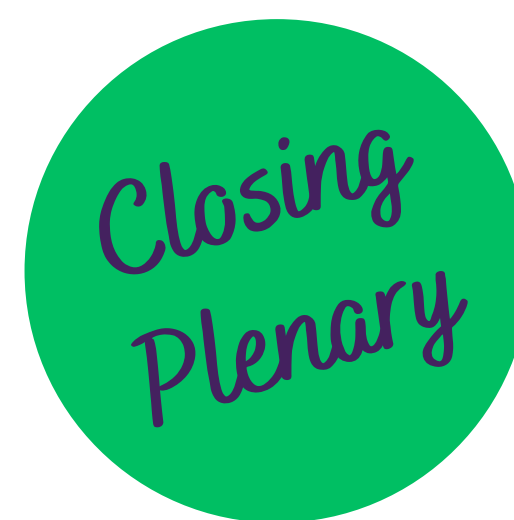
Marcela Danowski

From theory to sound: Pronunciation podcasts in the teaching training college

This presentation shares a project where first-year teacher trainees created a collaborative pronunciation podcast as a way to apply their Phonetics I knowledge. The project supported students' mastery of segmental features, revision for final exams, and built their speaking confidence. It also offered a real-life communicative context, helping future teachers experience pronunciation learning beyond the classroom.

Marcela Danowski is an ELT educator, speaker, and pronunciation enthusiast integrating neuroscience, technology, and positive education to design learner-centred experiences that go beyond intelligibility and foster real communication.

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Donna Brinton

Effective pronunciation instruction: Beyond controlled, guided, and free

Despite numerous and varied opinions on what constitutes effective pronunciation instruction, a clear consensus on the issue remains missing. This presentation incorporates insights from practitioners, methodologists, and applied research in the field (Baker & Murphy, 2011; Gordon, 2019) highlighting the need to attend to learner- or learning-specific variables when defining effective practice. It proposes the application of a pronunciation coaching model (Baker, 2021) that updates the Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) controlled, guided, free paradigm to include the additional situational, cultural, and linguistic variables believed to be critical to effective pedagogy. The model is illustrated via a brief sample lesson scenario.

Donna M. Brinton is an international teacher educator in the field of Applied Linguistics. She is the co-author and co-editor of numerous professional volumes, including Teaching Pronunciation (Cambridge University Press).

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