How Does Having a Good Ear Promote Successful L2 Speech Acquisition?

Abstract:

Even if two L2 learners with the same level of motivation spend the same amount of time on the same kind of practice activities, they will most likely end up with different levels of oral proficiency in the target language. This is arguably because certain learners are more cognitively and perceptually adept at learning L2 speech. In this talk, I will provide a state-of-the-art review on how scholars have conceptualised, tested, and elaborated a set of frameworks of such aptitude relevant to successful L2 speech learning via both behavioural (language, music and psychoacoustic tests) and neurophysiological (e.g., EEG) measures. Specifically, I will introduce an emerging line of research programme examining domain-general auditory processing (i.e., precisely representing characteristics of sounds) as a bottleneck of L1 speech acquisition and the generalizability of the ability to L2 speech acquisition (e.g., Saito, Sun, & Tierney, 2019). Finally, I will provide some suggestions regarding how we can use these frameworks to help L2 learners with different cognitive orientations achieve successful L2 speech learning in *classroom* settings via developing an optimal, profile-matched training method.

Bio:

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