

Supervisor's contact details

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Title of the project

Fluency and Disfluency in L2 speech: assessment and multimodal interaction

MSCA-PF Research Panel

- Chemistry (CHE)
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)
- Economic Sciences (ECO)
- Information Science and Engineering (ENG)
- Environment and Geosciences (ENV)
- Life Sciences (LIF)
- Mathematics (MAT)
- Physics (PHY)

Description of the project

Fluency and Disfluency in L2 speech (FDF2) is a four-year project by the FlowLang team (<https://sites.utu.fi/flowlang/>), funded jointly by the Academy of Finland and the University of Turku for 2020–2024. We are part of the Centre for Language Learning Research (<https://sites.utu.fi/kielen-oppimisen-tutkimuskeskus/en/>). The project is based at the Department of English in the School of Languages and Translation Studies. Our approach combines methods from the fields of SLA research and psycholinguistics and employs a varied data set to scrutinize L2 fluency and factors affecting it. The emphasis is on examining the effect of task types (monologue, dialogue) and individual speaker characteristics (cognitive processes, anxiety, and first language fluency) on L2 fluency and disfluency.

We are looking for an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellow in English studies or applied linguistics (with a specialization in SLA, spoken language assessment or multimodal analysis of interaction) to join the FlowLang team for two years to investigate L2 fluency. The research to be undertaken by the MSCA Fellow may address any of the main research objectives of FDF2 or combine them in a meaningful way. We particularly encourage postdoctoral projects that address L2 assessment or multimodal analysis of interaction to complement our approaches. The dataset collected by the FDF2 project will be made available to the MSCA Fellow for the duration of the fellowship, and the researcher may collect additional

data. The applicant's precise research topic will be formulated in collaboration with the project supervisor Prof. Pekka Lintunen (director of FlowLang and FDF2).

Promoting a two-way transfer of knowledge, we expect the MSCA Fellow to gain (1) new insights into combining research methods in SLA and speech fluency studies; (2) new knowledge of how L2 speech fluency is linked with fluency assessment and/or multimodal features; (3) new experience in working in an international research in the humanities.

Research objectives or research questions of the project

Speech fluency is one of the key indicators of L2 proficiency, but what actually makes speech fluent is still debated in research. Traditionally, fluency and disfluency have been understood as polar opposites. Yet disfluency features have important functions in L2 communication.

Our project combines psycholinguistic and SLA methods, focuses on both individual and group level variation, includes data from first language and L2 speech from the same participants, includes the analysis of fluency in the rarely studied dialogue data, and challenges traditional fluency conceptualizations by suggesting that disfluency-related features are indicators of proficient L2 speech.

FDF2 has three main research objectives: 1) to examine how two moderating effects, L1 fluency profile and task type (monologue, dialogue), influence the connections between L1 and L2 fluency; 2) to examine the influence of cognitive and affective factors on L2 fluency; 3) to formulate a new framework of L2 fluency and disfluency, which different research perspectives.