



## Yanping Li INTERSPEECH

I am a Ph.D. candidate from the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behavior and Development, Western Sydney University. My submission [\[pdf\]](#) entitled *L2-Mandarin regional accent variability during Mandarin tone-word training facilitates English listeners' subsequent tone categorizations* was accepted as a poster presentation by the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Speech Communication Association (INTERSPEECH 2023), which was held at Dublin, Ireland from 20<sup>th</sup> August to 24<sup>th</sup> August.

While parts of findings of my Ph.D. project have been published at INTERSPEECH [\[pdf\]](#) during the Covid, it was the first time for me to attend INTERSPEECH in person this August. Since my research background is about second language (L2) speech acquisition, I only labelled presentations in my filed in spite the fact that INTERSPEECH is a well-respected international conference for speech science and speech technology. Thanks to keynote discussions about *Bridging Speech Science and Technology – Now and into the Future* on the 21<sup>st</sup> August, we were encouraged to be open-minded by attending presentations in the fields

that we are not familiar with. I had lots of fun to discuss with researchers with a speech technology background, and these discussions have broadened my knowledge about applications of speech science, which instructed me to think about how to use what I have learned to solve problems in reality. It was convenient to label presentations and events that I was interested in using the INTERSPEECH 2023 app, and the Technical Program Committee deserves a thumb up for their excellent work. For networking, INTERSPEECH 2023 has presented a great opportunity, as researchers who have done excellent and interesting work have been attracted to attend it in person. They are from different parts of the world. It was enjoyable to discuss questions with them at INTERSPEECH, which led us to know each other, yielding network for possible collaborations. I also met researchers in Dublin that I had known them earlier, and I was happy to reconnect with them and to celebrate their new achievements together. Everything about Dublin INTERSPEECH was perfect except for coffee break. I expected to have local bakery during coffee break, but sweets were simple and it could easily run out of storage.

I left Dublin on 25<sup>th</sup> August and travelled back to Sydney on 27<sup>th</sup> August. Before leaving Dublin, I visited the Library of Trinity College Dublin. While I am not a Harry Potter fan, it was magic to be the library that I had watched only through movies when I was a child. This long trip was partially funded by the ASSTA Conference Travel Awards for students travelling from Australia or New Zealand to Europe for ICPHS 2023 and/or INTERSPEECH 2023. I appreciate supports from the ASSTA, particularly that ASSTA makes it a case this year to support students like me who may need to attend both ICPHS and INTERSPEECH in August. This support released me from financial pressures, which ensured me to enjoy my stay in Dublin. Last but not the least, I would love to thank my home institute MARCS for her fully support about the European travel in August. It is lucky to have such a supportive administrative team walking me through budget and visa application.

## **Yanping Li ICPhS**

I am a Ph.D. candidate from the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behavior and Development, Western Sydney University. My submission entitled “L2-Mandarin regional accent variability facilitates Mandarin-naïve English listeners’ learning of Mandarin tone-words” [[pdf](#)], was accepted as a poster presentation by the 20<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Phonetic Sciences (ICPhS 2023), which offers me a perfect opportunity to travel from Sydney, Australia to Prague, Czech Republic, the first international travel after global Covid lockdown.

ICPhS is a prestigious conference, which attracts researchers worldwide, and accordingly, I met researchers that I had not met before in spite the fact that I have been familiar with their work since my masters’ study, including Prof. Ocke-Schwen Bohn, Prof. Linda Polka, Prof. Paul Iverson, Prof. Ann R. Bradlow and Prof. Tessa Bent. As a second language (L2) speaker, I can distinguish their names, but it is difficult to connect each name to a specific person. As a result, I remembered their names according to their work by treating them as parts of literature. Seeing them in person is like seeing one character in novel to come to life, which is unbelievable but true! I also met other researchers during the congress, and discussed about studies on lexical tone learning, the topic of my PhD project, which extended my understanding about L2 learning. For example, I had a 15-min chat with A/Prof. Qin Zhen from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology about the effects of overnight consolidation on L2 tone learning. One of interesting part about our discussion was that improvements in delayed posttests could be explained by overnight consolidation. The 5-day congress covers a wide-range of topics on speech science, and it is easier to understand topics that I am not familiar with by attending presentations rather than reading papers. I tried to attend sessions that I am not familiar with such as infants’ speech perception and production, which inspired me to investigate further in these fields. I was also impressed by one of keynote talks presented by

Prof. Andrea Ravnani, whose research focuses on vocal training of seals. It requires hard-work to do research, and working with cute seals may be a gift from research.

It was the first time for me to visit Prague, and more broadly Europe. I stayed in a comfortable and beautiful student dormitory called S.R.A., which is 30-min away from the city center by train. “Are you sure you stay in Prague rather than Germany?” – My gut feeling told me it must be a joke given that 30-min is my commuting time in Sydney. After hearing it twice, I realised that it was actually possible to travel from Prague to Germany within 30 min: a cultural shock for sure. While it took time and energy to prepare for this trip, it is worthwhile to visit Prague and attend ICPHS 2023 in person. I gained full supports from my home institute, MARCS, for this trip, which was partially supported by the ASSTA Conference Travel Awards. Without these supports, I could not make the trip, let alone to have such a wonderful experience in Prague.