

## **EDITORIAL: DEBATE ON CHARISMATIC SPEECH LAUNCHED**

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In this new issue, the Journal of Speech Sciences (JoSS) publishes a letter that addresses the opening paper *Advancing research and practice in entrepreneurship through speech analysis - from descriptive rhetorical terms to phonetically informed acoustic charisma metrics* by Oliver Niebuhr, Silke Tegtmeier and Alexander Brem, which came out in the previous issue.

The letter by Åsa Abelin, from the University of Gothenburg, entitled *Charisma – who has charisma and can I get it?*, launches the debate by first discussing what would be the characteristics of uncharismatic and even anti-charismatic speech. In this context, she exemplifies cases of foreign accent for which a specific prosodic trait in the native language, perceived by native listeners as a mark of friendliness, could be perceived as impolite in L2. She gives other examples of changes in valence in speech general assessment across different pairs of languages and claims that foreign accent cannot be ignored when talking about charisma.

By adding that certain aspects of language such as the frequency code could be universal, she challenges the possibility that charisma could be learned and used in a natural way. By proposing an approximation of involuntary aspects of our expression such as emotion to charisma, she suggests that the latter could be related to seemingly universal acoustic manifestations of emotion itself and of sound symbolism.

Other important issues raised by Abelin are proposed in the form of provocative questions such as: "how charismatic speech functions in relation to different situations and speech acts?" and "does my charismatic speech have the same acoustic-perceptual characteristics if I try to sell you a product or if I want to ask you out for dinner?"

She also challenges the performance of a Charisma score calculator and proposes that social situations and speech act should be included as settings in the calculator.

Prof. Abelin raises important issues that deserve further discussion: that the debate continues.

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