

## Clear speech strategies across the lifespan

Dr. Valerie Hazan

### **Abstract:**

In a series of three major studies over the last ten years, we have investigated how talkers adapt their speech to be more easily understood when communicating in challenging conditions. In our work, such clear speech adaptations are naturally elicited in the context of a 'spot the difference' problem-solving picture task (diapix). This task is carried out with a conversational partner while channels of communication between the two talkers are manipulated to make it either easy or difficult for them to hear each other. We analyse acoustic-phonetic characteristics of the spontaneous speech produced in different communicative conditions, and other aspects such as dysfluency rates and communication efficiency, to evaluate how clear speech adaptations are affected by speaker-related factors such as the age and hearing status of talkers, and by the type of challenging condition. The first study was carried out with young adults (N=40), the second with children aged 9 to 14 years (N=96) and the most recent study with older adults with or without mild hearing loss (N=57) and young adult controls (N=26). In this talk, I will review the main findings of these three studies. I will first discuss how spontaneous speech produced in good listening conditions ('casual' speaking style) changes across the lifespan. I will then focus on the effects of age and hearing status on clear speech adaptations and discuss the 'clear speech benefit' that is found in speech perception for different talker/listener populations. [This work was carried in collaboration with Dr Outi Tuomainen].