

Career Plan

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My background:

I am an empirical neuroscientist with a specialization in perceptual psychology, and I am mostly interested in the human voice. In my future research, I strive to advance our understanding on voice perception via high-quality basic and applied research, with a multimodal and interdisciplinary perspective. During my PhD, my work was mostly focused on the perception and expression of emotions in voices. Currently, my primary research interest lies with the perception of naturalness in voices, and I plan to pursue my habilitation on this topic.

My mission:

In the digital era, synthesized and artificial voices have already become an integral part of our daily life, and with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) it is hard to keep up with the pace of new innovations. Yet, how reduced naturalness and human-likeness affects perception and interaction across different areas of application is insufficiently understood. In my view, it can be harmful if understanding lags behind application, because negative side effects or outcomes can be overlooked. This problem is currently debated in many contexts of AI. I want to address it specifically for the domain of voice perception. My approach is rooted in voice perception theory, while simultaneously bridging various disciplines where aspects of naturalness play a critical role, such as human, pathological, manipulated and synthesized voices. In that vein, I want to advance theory, back it up with robust empirical knowledge, and effectively communicate it to a widespread readership to leverage the use of this knowledge.

Besides my passion for research, I am a dedicated teacher. I have been teaching psychology classes across all levels for almost eight years, and I take my responsibility as a lecturer as important as my research. I find great joy in teaching future generations of psychologists and I actively engage in debates on how we can improve our curricula in German universities.

My long-term career goals:

I see my academic future in Germany, preferably in the Eastern part. Especially in structurally weaker parts of Germany, we are currently facing increased political tension and an atmosphere of hostility and mistrust towards science. Now more than ever, we need people in these regions who embody a clear commitment to education, science and the freedom of the mind. I want to be one of these voices. Coming from a small town in Eastern Germany myself, I want to be an example that being home-rooted does not exclude being open-minded, international, future-oriented, and interconnected. Therefore, upon completing my DAAD fellowship, I plan on returning to Eastern Germany and, in the long run, striving for a permanent research position.

Why the DAAD Kurzstipendium:

In the past years, the Friedrich Schiller University Jena has provided me with an extraordinary environment to develop my skills as a voice researcher. But now, it is time for new horizons. The DAAD offers me the unique opportunity to gain new perspectives from a different research environment, collaborate with and learn from world-leading voice researchers, obtain new research skills with regard to online testing of diverse participant groups, and interconnect with the large interdisciplinary network in London. Equipped with these valuable experiences, I will return to Jena where I will continue my work on voice naturalness on an international level within the VoCS (<https://www.vocs.eu.com/>) network and beyond.