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## Probing the brain's capacity to learn a new language without trying

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If you've ever heard someone speak a foreign language you know that it can be very confusing. Even if there are pauses, or emphasised sounds, it can be hard to know where a word ends, and the next begins. We think Statistical learning, the process of picking up on patterns when receiving regular input, is involved in this. My research aims to see if passively listening to a foreign language can make the process of finding word boundaries easier. In my project we will ask native English speakers to listen to podcasts for an hour a day in a language they have no prior experience with – Italian. By comparing their brain's ability to process and discern speech before and after this period we can learn more about how language is acquired. This research could help find ways to facilitate adult language learning by exploring methods other than traditional classroom teaching.