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ABSTRACTS

edited by
Przemysław Ostalski

The conference is organized by **prof. Ewa Waniek-Klimczak**, the head of the Department of English Grammar and Phonetics (Chair of English Language and Applied Linguistics), University of Łódź with the department team: **Anna Cichosz**, **Adam Dudziński**, **Anna Gralińska-Brawata** and **Przemysław Ostalski**.

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A form-focused discovery approach and its effects on the acquisition of weak forms by Japanese learners of English

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The acquisition of weak forms or vowel reduction has been examined from several perspectives, yielding positive effects of instruction in the formal setting (Gomez Lacabex, García Lecumberri and Cooke, 2009; Gonet, Szpyra-Kozłowska and Swiecinski, 2010; Pozuczek, 2010; Shimizu, forthcoming); nevertheless, the question of instructional approach aiming at the effectiveness of instruction and the long-term gain in the classroom has not been thoroughly and empirically investigated thus far (except for Chan, 2006; Sicola, 2008; Wrembel, 2003, 2009).

To obtain significant data for this issue, the present study explored the effects of an instructional technique, a form-focused discovery approach (Fotos and Nassaji 2007; Tomlinson, 2007), in which a linguistic error is made explicit to activate learners' cognition encouraging learners to notice the gap in the target phonetic form and restructure their interlanguage phonology. A quasi-experimental study was conducted in a regular classroom setting, and the participants were high-school level enrolled in their intact EFL classes at a technical college. The target phonological form, vowel reduction, was chosen because this has been considered to be critical communicative competence, and Japanese EFL learners tend to have difficulty in learning weak forms. The following three major questions were investigated:

- (1) Does the experimental group, in which a teacher provides explicit instruction through discovery and communicative task, affect Japanese EFL learners' acquisition of weak forms?
- (2) Does the form-focused discovery approach have different effects on EFL learners' acquisition of the target phonological form?
- (3) Does the effect hold over the post-test period?

Learners' performance was assessed by three investigators (two native speakers of American English and the present author) and their acoustic properties (the duration and F2 of the target vowel(s) were also carefully examined. Results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the immediate and the delayed post-tests, which could suggest that the form-focused discovery approach was more beneficial for the L2 learning of vowel reduction than the control group. The study further examined whether the effect of instruction held over the post-test period, if the approach indeed had some effect on learners' restructuring of their interlanguage phonology. This finding leads us to assume that instruction that appropriately incorporates output & discovery-oriented treatments can have a lasting positive effect on the acquisition of L2 phonology.

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Perception of English Diphthongs by Syrian Arabic learners

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British English is rich in its diphthongal inventory. Nevertheless, most studies of vowel perception in L2 English have excluded diphthongs from the study and focused only on monophthongs (Cebrian 2010). The question is how do speakers of a language with a small diphthongal inventory perceive and produce English diphthongs?

For example, Classical Arabic (CA) has a small vowel inventory composed of just three phonemes: ‘open, close front, close back – with a superposed short/long distinction applicable to all three’ (Mitchell 1993: 138). Many spoken Arabic dialects such as Syrian Arabic (SA) have additional long mid-front /e:/ and mid-back /o:/ vowels, derived historically from diphthong-like sounds (/aj/ and /aw/, respectively), as can be seen in Table 1. The historical emergence of the mid vowels (/e:/ and /o:/) can be seen as a result of mutual interaction between two adjacent vowels or the two components of a diphthong i.e. vowel and glide (Odisho, 2005: 49). Thus, How do speakers of a language like Arabic perceive and produce English vowels (with its rich diphthongal inventory)?

In order to examine this question, 5 female and 10 male SA learners of English were asked in a perceptual assimilation task (Gilichinskaya and Strange 2010) to classify English diphthongs into a full list of SA vowels including the two mid vowels (/e:/ and /o:/) and diphthongs (/aj/ and /aw/). SA learners are predicted to use the above historical sound change in their L1, to perceive and produce English diphthongs. The results showed that SA listeners classified English diphthongs with a front starting quality into SA /aj/ diphthong and its evolved mid vowel /e:/. English diphthongs which included a back quality as one of its components were classified as SA /aw/ diphthong and its evolved vowel /o:/. SA learners, systematically, used the place of articulation of the diphthongs in their classifications, and they classified a greater number of English diphthongs to the outcome of the complete sound change i.e. SA long mid vowels (/e:/ and /o:/) rather than to SA diphthongs (/aj/ and /aw/). Thus, it is important to include diphthongs in L2 studies as they affect the perceptual patterns of L2 learners.

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A Welsh Accent as an EFL Pronunciation Model

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This paper aims to present a South Welsh accent of English and investigate its suitability as a pronunciation model for learners of English as a foreign language with particular reference to Polish learners and Received Pronunciation (RP), the present preferred British pronunciation model.

Abercrombie (1975, 1990) considers Standard Scottish English to be a phonetically simpler pronunciation model than RP, while lacking the tendency to arouse ‘hostility or dislike’ (1990) in some parts of the English speaking world. The same can be said of the accent of Pontypridd. The following features in which the Pontypridd accent differs from RP will be considered in terms of their learnability, especially for Polish speakers:

Systematic Differences

- no /h/ phoneme.
- no loss of /θ ð/ through TH fronting.
- the additional vowel /ɪʊ/.
- no /ɪə/ phoneme, the NEAR lexical set being represented by sequences of /i:/ plus /ə/.
- no /ʊə/ phoneme, the CURE lexical set being represented by sequences of /u:/ or /ɪʊ/ plus /ə/, or merger with /ɔ:/.
- no /ʌ/ phoneme, the STRUT lexical set being merged with schwa.
- a partial merger of /eə/ phoneme with the /eɪ/ phoneme in nonmorpheme- final position.
- a variable merger of /əʊ/ with /ɔ:/.
- no weak [ɪ] vowel, the happY lexical set indisputably being merged with the FLEECE lexical set.

Distributional Differences

- no loss of /l/ in syllable-final position due to l-vocalisation.
- no /ju:/ phoneme sequence, this group being represented by /ɪʊ/ or /u:/ alone.
- no short vowels besides schwa occur in word-final position due to the merger of the happY lexical set with FLEECE.
- no /ʊ/ in lexically stressed syllables, /ə/ being used instead.

Realizational Differences

- /i:/ and /u:/ are true monophthongs.
- /u:/ and /ʊ/ are true back vowels.
- /æ/ is fully open.
- /ɑ:/ varies between nearly fully back and nearly fully front.
- /ɔ:/ has a close-mid quality [o:].
- /ɜ:/ has a close-mid front quality with open lip rounding [ø:].

- /eə/ is a close-mid front unrounded monophthong [e:].
- All diphthongs have a strong, extensive off-glide almost reaching the fully close front or close back positions and there is none of the smoothing associated with RP.
- In morpheme-final position /eɪ/ is always the diphthong [eɪ]. In non-morpheme-final position, besides this diphthongal variety there is also a monophthongal variety [e:] which has the same realisation as the /eə/ phoneme.
- /əʊ/ has two main realisations depending on register, diphthongal [ɔʊ] and monophthongal [o:].
- /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ share an open-mid central starting point.
- /l/ is generally a clear variety thus there is no tendency to l-vocalisation.
- /θ ð/ are never realised as /f v/.
- /w/ is never labiodentalised, except as a rare idiosyncrasy.

Lexical Differences

Among the differences of lexical incidence which are most noticeable to the speaker and thus more likely to be consciously changed and therefore most variable between speakers are words such as ‘comb’ and ‘tooth’ with /ʊ/, ‘wasp’ with /æ/ and ‘hear’ with /ɜ:/ . There is, however, a small group of grammatical words which have a difference of lexical distribution from most other accents which is usually overlooked by the speaker despite their frequency. These words all contain /ʊ/ and are *won’t*, *don’t* and *going to*.

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Do vowels communicate? On foot-internal vowel relations

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The paper discusses intriguing differences between the acoustic characteristics of stressed vowels placed in different prosodic contexts. We have analysed the recordings of speakers of SBrE. Each speaker read 238 mono-, di and trisyllabic target items both in isolation and in carrier phrases. In the stressed syllables all English vowels and diphthongs were represented and each vowel was placed in 3 consonantal contexts: (a) followed by a voiced obstruent, (b) voiceless obstruent and (c) a sonorant. Monosyllables were read in isolation, phrase-finally, phrase medially (followed by 1 and 2 unstressed syllables). Disyllables were produced in isolation, phrase-finally and medially (followed by 1 unstressed syllable) and trisyllables –in isolation and phrase finally. Then, all vowels (both stressed and unstressed) were extracted from target items and measured with PRAAT. Twelve acoustic properties (n=42,912) were analysed within each vowel window: duration, pitch [mean; min/max; slope (Hz; Hz/ms)], intensity [mean; min/max; slope (dB; dB/ms)] and acoustic energy (dB*ms). The significance of various types of differences was tested with one-way ANOVA and correlation tests. The results suggest that there exist significant discrepancies between the properties of stressed vowels which depend on the distance between the stressed vowel and the end of an utterance or the following stressed syllable. These differences on the one hand follow from general laws of speech aerodynamics and on the other serve as important cues in word recognition process.

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Teachability and learnability of English pronunciation features for Vietnamese-speaking learners

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Anyone who has tried to learn a language with a very different sound system will have sympathy for speakers of a language as different as Vietnamese who are attempting to learn to speak English in a way that is intelligible to non-speakers of Vietnamese. Many learners have very limited opportunity to hear model pronunciations other than their teacher's, and no opportunity at all to speak in English outside the classroom. Vietnamese-accented English is characterised by a number of features which ride roughshod over English morphosyntax, resulting in speech that is extremely difficult to reconstruct for the non-Vietnamese-speaking listener.

Some of these features appear to be more difficult to learn to avoid than others. Phonotactic constraints in L1 appear to be persistent even in L2, and L1 phonological rules will, apparently, often apply in L2 unless they are blocked in some way. Perception of salient (to native listeners) target pronunciations is often lacking, and learners may not be aware that their pronunciation is not intelligible. Despite years of language study, many learners are unable to produce certain native speaker targets.

Vietnamese learners typically exhibit a set of characteristic pronunciation features in English, and the aim of this study is to see which of these are susceptible to explicit teaching and to what extent teaching results in improved pronunciation accuracy, i.e. learning. This explicit teaching is compared with a less direct, less interactive kind of teaching, involving drawing native and native-like pronunciation of problematic (for Vietnamese-speaking learners) features of English pronunciation to the learners' attention. The results of this study can then be interpreted in terms of teachability and learnability, which do not always go hand in hand.

If we understand what kinds of phonetic features are teachable and how learnability varies for different features, we can target those features where there is a good return for effort spent, resulting in an effectivisation of teaching.

Teacher-made EFL materials as a source of learner pronunciation errors

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Communicative Language Teaching promotes learner-centred language instruction and teaching pronunciation “as integrated into the general language lesson instead of being taught as a separate subject” (Carey 2009). Moreover, CLT “seeks to teach through discourse and not through explicit analysis”. Even though teachers have many ready-made didactic materials available, teacher-made audio-visual materials seem to be a good solution for the development of the language due to their interactive nature. However, they may also adversely affect the learners’ pronunciation.

A selection of MA students’ self-made PowerPoint books shows that Polish teachers of English as a Foreign Language are capable of creating interesting teaching materials and are willing to embrace modern technology to exploit its didactic potential. Yet, they seem unaware of the pronunciation pitfalls that the materials they create may lead the learner to.

The presentation discusses a considerate use of modern technology for creating teaching resources as add-ons to traditional didactic materials. Moreover, it highlights the need to raise teacher awareness of EFL pronunciation problems as well as of their own insufficiencies so that they can possibly avoid infecting students’ speech with their idiosyncratic errors without sacrificing their creative genius.

For some reasons practical language skills development (PNJA) that is typically a part of teacher training may be insufficient. Therefore, heightened phonological awareness raising needs to become an integral part of teacher training curriculum if Polish learners are to take full advantage of their teachers’ creative potential.

The focal areas of teacher training, as well as some recommended tools for materials preparation cover, e.g., PowerPoint for making simple talking books, free Text-to-Speech software for the audio, interactive PDI-generated lists of vocabulary that might cause problems for both the prospective teacher and the learner, and, finally, more practice reading aloud in the course of teacher preparation.

Once familiarized with the electronic medium, teachers may feel more comfortable with materials design and group project collaboration during integrated IT and English classes. This integration of technology components into the EFL curriculum is still insufficient. Partly so due to insufficient EFL teacher familiarisation with technology. Another reason may be too little mention of EFL e-didactics on university methodology courses.

Pronunciation, a “contributing factor to language acquisition” (Carey 2009), must become a more conscious aspect of language instruction for prospective language educators. And appropriate tools for materials preparation that are available to them ought to become mandatory in teacher training didactic curriculum.

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Selected phonetic characteristics of the Polamer forms used by first-generation Polish immigrants living on Long Island (NY, USA), and their influence on the methodology of sociophonetic research.

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Polish households constitute a significant group of the millions of U.S.-born and foreign-born immigrant families residing in the suburban part of Long Island. Although the term 'Polamer', as used in the paper, represents the Polish language used by both Poland-born Polish Americans and U.S.-born Americans of Polish ancestry, the analysis itself refers only to the speech of the former group, i.e. the language they were using when they departed from Poland lexically modified by borrowings from English (called 'Polamer words' or 'Polamer forms' here) (e.g. *bother* [baɖɛ'rɔvatɕ]/[ba'drɔvatɕ], *birthday* ['bɔrzɔɖɛj], *downpayment* [daw'pɛjmɛnt], *daughter* ['dɔra], *Fruit-tree* ['frutɕi]/['frutɕi], *humid* ['xjum'it]) and certain Polish words going out of use (e.g. *ubezpieczenie*, *klimatyzacja*, *wilgotność powietrza*, *budowlaniec*)

The first part of the paper contains an analysis of the segmental changes which can be inferred from an investigation of 163 Polamer forms, obtained from a sociophonetic study conducted in the July of 2010 in the towns of Copiague, Lindenhurst and Floral Park (NY, USA). The analysis focuses on the regular modifications that English consonantal and vocalic phonemes undergo as a result of the borrowing process into Polish. The second part examines the possible factors which determine the observed phonetic form of the Polamer items. The factors are as follows (the list is neither exhaustive nor importance-ranked) :

1. the pronunciation of a given word in the local accent of English
2. the phonology of Polish
3. the English spelling of the word
4. the tendency to approximate pronunciation to the closest Polish auditory equivalent
5. a person's knowledge of English

Part three discusses a number of sociophonetic observations and their consequences for the methodology of research for this kind of speech. The observations refer to:

1. the existence of many phonetic variants of a given Polamer word
2. lack of the written form
3. the contextual/situational usage
4. the social prestige
5. the influence of the age, immigration status and type of employment of the participant on the interview
6. the relation between the acoustic quality of the recording and the usefulness of the obtained information
7. the relationship between the type of the interviewing procedure and the amount of collected information

Sociophonetic transfer in Polish learners of English: the case of nasals

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Among a considerable number of pronunciation problems that Polish learners of English encounter in their learning process there are some that may be regarded as more or less relevant in terms of intelligibility or attaining native-like pronunciation. Transferring Polish nasal vowels in contexts where English has a combination of vowel + nasal consonant followed by a fricative can, presumably, be rated among less disturbing features of Polish, since it does not seem to interfere with communication and is not an element of primary concern in pronunciation training syllabuses of practical phonetics classes, and in fact, it often passes unnoticed. However, vowel and diphthong nasalisation accompanied by the deletion of the following nasal consonant remains one of the most persistent errors of Polish learners of English (Sobkowiak 2004: 204). The degree of its persistence may, to some extent, depend on the region one comes from as Polish nasal vowels have a specific regional distribution (Dejna 1993: 195).

The present study reports on the experiment conducted among 50 first year students of English Philology at University of Łódź. They were recorded reading a fable *The North Wind and the Sun* and a Polish text of equal length and similar rhythmic structure. Two words, “considered” and “mądrych” were extracted from the English and Polish recorded material and examined using both spectrographic picture and auditory analysis. All subjects filled in a questionnaire in which they were asked to state their place of birth and place of residence (with length in years). The results confirm that transferring a Polish nasal vowel /*õ*/ in contexts where English has /*ɒn*/ or /*ən*/ followed by a fricative is a frequent phenomenon among Polish learners of English. What prevails in the pronunciation of the word “mądrych” is /*ən*/ instead of /*õ*/, which validates the general tendency of Polish speakers to pronounce a nasal vowel before fricatives and a combination of vowel + nasal consonant before plosives and affricates. Statistical tests employed in the study revealed that there is a significant systematic difference between English and Polish in terms of nasal transfer.

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The English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey (EPTiES) and the collaborative generation of new knowledge

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EPTiES is an on-line survey which aims to collect information about English pronunciation teaching practices in European countries. It was jointly prepared by teachers in ten countries (Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) and went live in November 2010. The free, open-source application LimeSurvey was chosen for its user-friendly interface and basic statistics features.

The survey was created in reaction to a lack of knowledge about what goes on in classrooms across Europe, thus formalising common topics of conversation amongst teachers. There are two underlying assumptions:

- 1) an on-line survey lets people say what they do, and thus can provide useful information about what is actually going on in a given context;
- 2) teachers want to know– and benefit from knowing– more about what other teachers are doing.

Participants answer 84 questions, including certain questions which reflect the specificity of national contexts, e.g. “At what levels do you teach?” and “Qualifications”. The nine categories of questions are: Participant Information, Outside the Classroom, Pronunciation Teaching Methods, Teaching Materials, Evaluation of Pronunciation, Teacher Training, Views/Attitudes, Teaching Context, and Model/Norm. Teachers at all levels are invited to participate. The data will be written up as a book of country-specific chapters, thus providing a snapshot of English pronunciation teaching practices in Europe.

The time required to carry out such collaborative work should not be underestimated. After initial brainstorming at Accents 2008, the survey took nearly two years to develop. It could have taken much less time had it been a top priority for all developers; at times, it felt as if the project would never come to fruition. In the end, however, the long development span worked to our advantage. It allowed us to discuss what information would be truly useful, to propose and modify questions to elicit that information, and then to adjust questions in relation to another developer’s changes and, especially in the final stages, to catch previously unnoticed typing mistakes. We were also able to draw in more developers e.g. from Germany.

Collaborative work across borders does not necessarily require expensive travel or the most technologically advanced communication tools. In this project, one person is responsible for each country: for developing the questions and, in future, for analysing the data and writing up a book chapter. All discussions have taken place by e-mail, except for a brief meeting of five developers at a conference in June 2009. Video-conferencing or flash meetings were not used, as they can be technologically and pragmatically awkward to organise. Such synchronous discussion can be quite rapid and stimulating, whereas asynchronous interaction between ten people via e-mail can be long and at times frustratingly piecemeal. However, the latter has the advantage of

leaving time for quiet thought and analysis. This “slow time” feature of asynchronous communication could be key not just in developing tight on-line surveys, but also for any collaborative generation of robust new knowledge.

Quiet time to slow down and think has become a rare commodity in modern life. Simultaneously, researchers are under more and more pressure to publish quickly and frequently. Collaborative research can help to overcome this problem, as long as it is done in a spirit of openness, based on a genuine desire to share, debate and discuss. Arguably, these are essential skills for all researchers and yet collaborative research is less common in the humanities than in the so-called “hard” sciences. For the good of the entire field, pooling expertise and constructively criticising each other’s ideas can generate more reliable results and analyses, which in turn inevitably strengthen the research process. Therefore, the collaborative mode can actually help maintain quality alongside quantity.

Obviously, certain pitfalls await those who would embark on such an adventure. The issue of prioritising arises quite early in such a project: the PhD student needs the data two days ago, whereas the tenured professor is juggling administrative duties and cannot find time until next month. Personalities may clash or developers may have unrelated areas of interest. For example, a series of questions focussing on learners’ motivations was removed from EPTiES because only one developer was interested in this issue and it would have made the survey even longer. On a technological level, the host server might suddenly be unavailable at a key stage. At a later stage, we will not need to reach a consensus over the results in this type of survey based research. However, we will have to negotiate ownership of the results in the final book publication: the loose, spoken agreement at the moment is that each chapter will be written by one developer and the book will have the overall editor’s name on it. But if we publish a joint article, we will have to settle the issue of who has the prestige of being the first author. This may be quite important for an individual’s career advancement and is therefore a potentially contentious issue.

By presenting EPTiES at this conference, we hope to generate interest not only in this particular survey but also to inspire more focus on collaboration as an essential yet vastly underused research mode. Moreover, conferences are a common event in our professions and should be exploited more pro-actively and cooperatively in the creation of new knowledge. In between conferences, simple, cheap, widely available on-line tools (e-mail, surveys, forums, blogs, etc.) can easily prolong such sharing & creating.

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An aptitude for speech: the importance of mimicry ability in foreign language pronunciation.

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In recent studies into the factors affecting foreign or second language pronunciation, inborn capabilities, such as the musical ear and the ability to mimic, have received relatively little attention compared to that which has been focused on age, length of study or residence, first language and gender. This is unsurprising in the light of the relative decline of studies into language learning aptitude and fixed individual learner differences in general. Since Purcell and Suter (1980) included mimicry ability in their list of key factors affecting pronunciation, most research has been aimed at belittling its importance.

This paper has been written as part of a project to design a new style of aptitude test; one which would predict not only success in grammar tests, but also potential communicative proficiency. One step in this process is to attempt to establish a test for aptitude for pronunciation. To that end, the paper sets out to examine to what extent the ability to accurately mimic input after minimal exposure is decisive in determining the overall quality of pronunciation of foreign language learners, in part, because this ability is relatively easy to assess and therefore a good candidate for inclusion in a wider test of communicative aptitude.

The paper begins with a critical examination of the research which has been done into the factors affecting pronunciation (Piske, MacKay & Flege, 2001) and the role of mimicry and the so-called 'musical ear' (Slevc & Miyake, 2006) in the pronunciation of language learners. This review will highlight the lack of an authoritative answer on the question of mimicry and the need for further investigation.

There will follow a description of two experiments carried out by the author in which the ability of Polish college students of English to mimic was compared with the quality of their general English pronunciation and other factors of their speech relevant to communication, such as fluency. The paper will conclude with a discussion of these results and their relevance to the understanding of the development of foreign language speaking proficiency and also the degree to which an assessment of mimicry ability would be worth including in a test for communicative aptitude. Finally, suggestions will be made as to the use to which such an assessment could be put by the teacher, both of general English and of pronunciation.

The perception of word-final t-glottaling in Received Pronunciation by Polish learners of English

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Received Pronunciation seems to be changing due to the influence of one of the basilects of English in England, Cockney. Such features of Cockney as glottal replacement for /t/ are being adapted by an increasing group of young RP speakers. It is thus possible that these features could constitute the version of RP taught to EFL learners in the future.

The aim of this research was to further the understanding of how t-glottaling affects the perception of RP by Polish learners of English. The author's hypothesis was that it would be an impediment for intelligibility. The research focused on word-final /t/s, as those seem to cause the most problems, as RP speakers tend to glottalise them after both checked and free vowels. Whereas it would be easy to reconstruct the meaning of a word with a syllable including a checked vowel, i.e. one that has to be followed by a consonant, there are twice as many possibilities of interpreting words with free vowels followed by a glottal stop. As an example, some would interpret [bi:ʔ] as *beat* but others as *bee*.

The experiment designed to test the hypothesis relied on an online questionnaire. The subjects were 30 female BA students at AMU School of English: 15 1BA and 15 3BA students. Their task was to listen to sixteen short audio files containing words and phrases excised from interviews with a prototypical RP speaker relying heavily on t-glottaling (Prince Henry of Wales), and then take a single choice test, deciding what word or phrase they had heard. Apart from 3 distractions, the audio files comprised:

- 10 samples containing a glottalised /t/ word-finally after long or short vowels and providing as possible answers words both with and without /t/; for example for [greɪʔ] the respondents could choose between *great* and *grey*;
- 3 samples *not* containing a glottalised /t/ word-finally, and ending with a long vowel or diphthong, but providing as answers words both with and without /t/; for example for /deɪ/ the options included *Dave*, *date* and *day*.

The perception tests confirmed that t-glottaling has a marked negative influence on the students' perception of English. Surprisingly, the results showed that 1BA students were more successful in the perception of t-glottaling their 3BA colleagues, despite being supposedly less experienced. However, the discrepancy between the two groups was not clear-cut, as the 1BA students often heard glottalised /t/ even if it was not there. As a comparison, the 3BA students scored higher in all the tricky questions that did not contain /ʔ/.

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The role of intonation in the perception of Brummie

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The Birmingham accent, also known as Brummie, is, possibly, the most stigmatized accent in the British Isles. It scores worst of all the accents examined in various language attitude studies (Giles, 1970, Hiraga 2005 or Coupland and Bishop 2007) that considered criteria like status, friendliness and intelligence. There is no one simple answer to the question why certain varieties are perceived worse than others. Apart from obvious connotations with their users, accents are also evaluated on the basis of their vocal traits (Van Bezooijen and Gooskens 1999). Folk linguists believe that in the case of Brummie this trait is its intonation (How to speak Brummie 2001).

Brummie intonation differs from standard British intonation. In particular, Birmingham English often uses rising tones where RP uses falls, that is, in declarative sentences (Cruttenden 1994). In Cruttenden's terms these rises are „rise-plateaus” and „rise-plateau-slumps”. Ladd (1996), however, interprets Brummie's declaratives as stylised low rises and its questions as rise-falls. These, in turn, may convey negative attitudes (O'Connor and Arnold 1967), which would go in line with arguments declared by folk linguists.

Two experiments in the form of an Internet questionnaire have been carried out among university students at the School of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. The first experiment was to answer if Brummie is indeed disfavoured when compared to other dialects. The subjects listened to three Brummie speakers and three speakers of different accents of English English, and rated recordings' attractiveness, friendliness and intelligence on a 5-point Likert scale. The Birmingham accent, again, was deemed the least attractive and intelligent.

The second, core experiment investigated to what extent intonation is responsible for this bad perception of Birmingham speech. This time, the subjects were to listen to two versions of a speech sample of a given accent. The first version contained only intonation, the second one only segmentals. The modifications to the speech samples were made after Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (1999). To attain an intonational version of a speech sample a lowpass filter at 350 Hz was used. Thus, the speech was unintelligible, and only intonation was heard. In the segmental version, all the pitch points were removed but for one which was then placed at 109 Hz, i.e., an average pitch level for all speakers. Intonation was, therefore, not included in the signal. All modifications were performed in PRAAT. The results of the two versions of each recording were compared. It turned out that Brummie's intonation is not more conducive to bad judgements of Brummie than its segmentals, which goes against folk linguistic claims.

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The effect of selective listening on improving listening comprehension of Iranian intermediate language learners

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The present study was conducted to compare the effects of metacognitive strategies on listening comprehension of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. To fulfill the purpose of the study, 80 intermediate learners of Azad university Behshahr branch were chosen. These learners were tested for their homogeneity by a Nelson test. The subjects were divided into two groups by simple random sampling. After that two groups received questionnaire to elicit their attitude on particular topics. After data entry, their attitude on particular topics was elicited. Then, the researcher used specific lesson plan and strategy for teaching listening comprehension in each group. After 15 session treatment, the all groups were exposed to a post-test through the same listening test. The data analysis was done through the analysis of T-test. The result from T-test concluded the lesson plan and strategy used in experimental group could lead to higher listening comprehension in comparison to lesson plan and strategy control group.

Glottal stops in General American – a pilot study

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This paper aims at investigating the occurrence of glottal stops in General American accents in various phonetic environments (prevocalic, preconsonantal and prepausal). So far this particular aspect of American pronunciation has only received occasional mention in the literature, especially when compared to various descriptions and analyses of the use of glottal stops in Britain. The present study focuses primarily on the age factor and whether or not it has any significant bearing on the frequency of glottal stops.

In this comparative pilot study, three speakers were investigated using selected samples: Andy Rooney (age 91), Keith Malley (age 36) and Jesse Thorn (age 29). The speakers use moderately standard form of General American and what may be classified as a semi-casual style, being somewhat monitored and thus falling in between interview style (IS) and casual style (CS).

The study reveals interesting phonetic conditioning for glottal stops especially in the intervocalic position. Certain vowels preceding or following the consonant /t/ seem to trigger glottalization more readily than others.

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The effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on eliminating pronunciation errors

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Recent years have witnessed an abundance of research on the effectiveness of different forms of corrective feedback on the acquisition of a variety of grammar structures (e.g. Lyster 2004; Sheen 2006; Russell and Spada 2006; Ellis 2007; Pawlak 2008), which was mainly motivated by a revival of interest in form-focused instruction in which error correction is regarded as an important option. Such research demonstrated, somewhat contrary to the views expressed in a number of leading methodology textbooks for prospective and practicing teachers, that the treatment of errors in the course of communicative activities results in increased control over the targeted linguistic features, not only in terms of explicit but also implicit knowledge, with the caveat that the intervention should be focused, intensive and consistent (cf. Leeman 2007; Ellis 2009; Pawlak 2010). Unfortunately, there is very little research that would specifically address the impact of various techniques of providing corrective feedback on the acquisition of target language pronunciation.

The paper represents an attempt to remedy the situation by reporting the findings of a study which compared the effect of explicit and implicit error correction on eliminating persistent word-level pronunciation errors committed by advanced learners of English. The study involved 36 English philology students and took the form of a quasi-experiment with two experimental and one control groups. The students in the experimental groups took part in communicative activities in the course of which their mispronunciations of selected words were corrected explicitly (i.e. directly drawing their attention to the error) and implicitly (i.e. using recasts and clarification requests) while the control group focused on other tasks. The subjects' ability to pronounce the targeted words was measured on a pretest, immediate and delayed posttests, all of which included a reading text and a free production task. The results of the study serve as a basis for a handful of recommendations on how pronunciation errors should most beneficially be dealt with and some suggestions for further research in this area.

Segmental and prosodic reasons for non-native timing of *her* in Polish learner's English speech

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Foreign speech timing problems depend on both segmental and prosodic factors. Thus inadequate durations and duration proportions may result from segmental substitutions involving sounds of different intrinsic length, activation of L1 instead of FL sandhi processes and generally non-native temporal organisation of utterances caused by the use of L1 rhythmic patterns. In order to develop native-like speech rhythm, the learner first needs to get acquainted with the articulatory features of FL speech sounds and master the pronunciation of segments in their immediate phonetic contexts focusing on interaction between neighbouring sounds and the influence of prominence status on particular speech units. In comparison to Polish-accented pronunciation, varying prominence levels cause greater durational contrasts in native English, strongly related to considerable shortening of unstressed syllables and function words, which tend to appear in their reduced (weak) forms.

This paper, focusing on durational proportions between the unstressed pronoun *her* and its phonetic context, demonstrates insufficient function word reduction in Polish learner's pronunciation and other factors which contribute to non-native timing. The word was measured in Polish learners' read speech in three phrases:

1. ...but everyone called *her* Cinders.
2. When *her* sisters had gone, ...
3. It was *her* fairy godmother.

The respondents were college students of English at the beginning of their first year. The same recording procedure was repeated after 2 semesters of general English and practical phonetic training. The data were then compared to native Southern British English production recorded in the IViE database. Discrepancies in absolute and relative duration of the pronoun are referred to the substitution of /x/ for /h/, a consonant prone to elision in native English speech, insufficient vowel reduction, and rhoticity of the coda. The data show the scale of the problem and Polish learners' development in the course of practical phonetic training. The first recording reveals significantly longer durations in Polish learners' performance, magnified by fluency problems. The second recording, preceded by pronunciation training, indicates smaller length differences between Polish and English speakers. However, in many cases, the progress only involves a higher speech rate and better fluency, rather than actual rhythmic reorganisation of the learner's interlanguage. This observation calls for more attention paid to individual factors shaping the rhythm of FL speech.

Perception of vowel quality and duration as a cue to word stress in English by non-native listeners

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Vowel quality and duration have been found to be the most prominent acoustic correlates of word stress in English. Vowels in unstressed syllables are characterized by shorter durations and more centralized formant frequencies. These parameters have been shown to be consistently manipulated in production and attended to in perception in experiments with native speakers of English. Polish speakers, on the other hand, are reported to rely almost exclusively on F0 contours to produce and perceive stressed syllables. Although small but statistically significant results point to shorter durations and more centralized formant frequencies of Polish vowels in unstressed syllables, this variability is claimed to be only a concomitant of more pronounced rises and falls in fundamental frequency. The question therefore remains how Polish learners of English perceive English variability in vowel duration and quality if the F0 contour is kept constant in stressed and unstressed syllables.

We used an MBROLA diphone synthesizer to generate a sequence *record* with F0 kept constant at 98 Hz. Next, we manipulated initial vowel quality and durations of initial and final vowels to generate different tokens of noun form stressed on the initial syllable *'record* and verb form stressed on the final syllable *re'cord*. Polish advanced learners of English participated in a self-paced identification task in which they were required to recognize whether they heard a noun form with initial stress or a verb form with a final stress. The linear F0 contour forced the listeners to concentrate solely on only two tested parameters: vowel duration and quality. The results are expected to show to what extent non-native listeners are able to rely on acoustic correlates of stress which are only secondary in their native language.

A Slimming diet for the IPA

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The Pronunciation Unit at the BBC has several different tasks, including maintaining a large phonetic database of proper nouns and other problematic words useful for broadcasting. Because users of the database (and of the service in general) are not expected to have learned the International Phonetic Alphabet, a much smaller set of phonetic symbols has been devised which is tailored around the sounds of English and is thought to be relatively transparent to speakers of that language. In this paper, I will discuss some of the interesting issues which arise from trying to squeeze the sounds of all languages into the sounds of English: what do we do when the other language has sounds which do not occur in English? What limitations on representation are imposed by the set of symbols chosen for the reduced alphabet? What can be done about suprasegmental features? What sorts of mapping preferences are expressed by speakers of other languages?

Our database includes a field for a genuine IPA transcription, and that also throws up some intriguing questions, for example which accent is represented, how broad a transcription do we aim for, and how can we maintain a consistent standard for completely unfamiliar languages? This paper will pose many such questions and will lead to a confession that not all of them have been answered.

Stratification of ELF: identity constructions of learners and speakers

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Studies of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) suggest that some speakers of ELF are willing to mark their (national) identity in their ELF pronunciation, while others want to strive for native models (e.g. Jenkins 2009). A recent study (Stanojević and Josipović 2010) confirms this, suggesting that liberalism vs. non-liberalism towards ELF among Croatian university students is based on their major.

The aim of this paper is to prove that there may be a more pervasive process at play behind the liberal vs. non-liberal attitudes to ELF, namely identity construction. We will show that different attitudes to one's own accent, the accent of one's collocutors and teaching models primarily hinge on belonging to different groups of participants: learners vs. speakers of ELF. We conducted a 20-question anonymous questionnaire among Croatian high-school students (N=830), university students (N=1461) and employees of an international company (N=207). The data were analyzed using SPSS. The following statistical procedures were used: descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, analysis of variance and correlation

The results show that there are significant differences among the three groups of participants. For instance, high-school students are the most liberal with regard to their own accent, but are most willing to work to achieve a native-like pronunciation. The employees are traditionalist with regard to their own accent (not wanting a heavy Croatian accent), but are least willing to work on their pronunciation. Similar results obtain with regard to teaching models (students prefer non-native teachers, whereas employees prefer native teachers) and collocutors (employees believe that non-native speakers are easier to understand, whereas students do not). Differences in some of the attitudes may occur across other parameters (sex, self-assessed proficiency, regional status of their Croatian dialect), but these differences are not as pervasive as the learner-speaker distinctions. Our results suggest that liberality vs. non-liberality is a matter of social identity construction. The process is dynamic, in the sense that English learners and ELF speakers are pragmatic with regard to constructing their own role (realistic in setting their goals as learners or speakers, respectively), but extremist in constructing the other role (e.g. speakers not willing to learn and learners not caring about their collocutors). This warrants suggesting a stratified ELF model, which changes along with the needs and identity construction of its speakers.

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PDI in SLEFL pronunciation teaching and learning

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In 2008 in Łódź I talked about "SLEFL pronunciation, or: on teaching and learning EFL pronunciation in Second Life". In 2009 I presented "Phonetically Augmented Virtuality in Second Life". In 2010 I am going to continue to reveal some of the intricacies of SL pronunciation teaching by showing how I have been using the Phonetic Difficulty Index (PDI) to extract and prepare pronunciation materials for my SL students from the PDI-annotated Brown corpus as well as from the series of graded American English readers called Reading A-Z.

(more on PDI here: <http://ifia.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/abstract.htm#abs57>

and here: <http://ifia.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/abstract.htm#abs62>)

Unlike in my previous "Accents" presentations the specificity and uniqueness of SL environment will not be the focus of attention. Instead I will explain: (i) how PDI is instrumental in preparing resources customized for the needs and wants of the students, (ii) how it affords a high degree of control and precision in selecting materials from suitably processed and tagged text corpora and word-lists, (iii) how these materials are forged into interactive tasks, games and quizzes which I have used in the SL classroom. Examples will include: (a) sentences showing low and high PDI, and containing at least 8 words, (b) sentences and stories with the highest proportion of words containing velar nasals, word-final voiced consonants, aspirated stops, Am-Br pronouncing differences and other common pronouncing difficulties tagged in the text of Brown and Reading A-Z. These resources have been used in a variety of activity types, from self-access unsupervised exercises offered to any SL resident passing by, through simple in-class reading aloud with error feedback from the teacher, to paired information gap dialogues with students reconstructing their clozed notecards on the basis of other students' feedback, followed by teacher debriefing.

All information and advice contained in this presentation can be directly used in First Life EFL pronunciation teaching in a variety of settings. The character of this presentation is thus thoroughly practical. Standard theoretical assumptions about the best methodology of teaching and learning EFL pronunciation in an artificial setting are accepted without further question.

Phonological interference of L2 on L1 in VOT of initial pre-vocalic stops

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In spite of the prevailing interest in forward transfer in the past studies on phonological interference, the influence of L2 on L1 has gained attention (for example, Flege 1987, Khattab 2000, Ewert 2009). Most of the studies, however, concentrate on immigrant communities, comparing foreign accent in L1 as a function of age of arrival in the L2 country (for instance, Verhoeven 1994). This study seeks to observe longitudinal effects during intensive L2 instruction. First-year students of AMU School of English receive detailed pronunciation instruction. As far as learning English consonants is concerned, a great deal of attention is paid to the voiceless stops aspiration, which is known to correspond with long-lag VOT. Acoustic measurements of voice onset time (VOT) in Polish initial pre-vocalic stops followed by /a/ or /ɛ/ were made for two groups of Polish-English bilinguals differing according to a degree of weekly exposure to L2. Careful and spontaneous speech of the participants were examined twice, with a 6-month interval. It has been hypothesised that intensive exposure to English, (where intensive exposure is understood as repeated, active and passive, use of the language to a degree in which the daily use of L2 approximates or exceeds the use of L1), combined with detailed instruction, trigger changes in VOT of Polish initial pre-vocalic stops. VOT values of participants from the test group (T), whose exposure to English equalled 42 hours, were found to have changed significantly over the period of 6 months. Mean VOT scores increased by 5-6 ms for all the stop consonants, showing changes in the direction of patterns found in English. No such changes were found in the VOT scores of participants from the control group (C), whose weekly exposure to English equalled 2 hours. In order to assess the character of T group's changes, further tests were run. No statistically significant differences in VOT changes in careful versus spontaneous speech were found. Similarly, there was no difference between voiced and voiceless stops. Differences in VOT changes of stops followed by /a/ versus /ɛ/ were insignificant. In general, the results demonstrate that the phonetic inventory of adults is restructured as a result of intensive exposure to L2. As far as VOT is concerned, even a relatively short period of intensive exposure to L2 causes changes in L1.

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“Words, words, words...”

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The paper is a continuation of the author’s earlier studies in which she argues that it is the mispronunciation of whole words due to their incorrect storage in the learners’ phonetic memory that is more detrimental to successful communication via English than their inaccurate production of individual segments and suprasegmentals. Consequently, phonetically difficult words deserve to be thoroughly investigated and pedagogically prioritized.

The present study is a report on an experiment in which 20 English Department students, all advanced learners of English, were recorded having been asked to read a list of diagnostic sentences containing 80 words known to be problematic for Poles in terms of their pronunciation. This has been done in order to isolate and examine the major error types, to establish a hierarchy of difficulty among 8 sources of pronunciation errors, to compare the obtained results with the most common error types made by intermediate learners and to juxtapose the participants’ subjective evaluation of the phonetic difficulty of words with their actual phonetic performance. The final goal is to draw pedagogical implications for the phonetic training of advanced students of English.

MultiROMs and online applications used for teaching phonetics in a secondary school – a critical review.

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The aim of the article is to evaluate the quality of materials used to teach pronunciation in Polish secondary schools. Although the analysis covers all kinds of aids available for teachers, including a coursebook accompanied by a CD, the authors focus mainly on MultiROMs and online resources connected with a given book. The findings allow the authors to conclude which coursebook sets seem to be most effective in shaping students' pronunciation and which exercises are most helpful, taking into the consideration the level of students' English. Apart from the resources available online free of charge, a number of commercial multimedia programmes have also been reviewed. The coursebook sets chosen for the analysis are the ones most commonly used in Polish secondary schools, published both in Great Britain and Poland. The authors' idea was to check whether books written by Polish authors concentrate on the aspects of pronunciation which prove to be especially difficult for Polish students.

The analysis of online resources for teaching and learning pronunciation follows the research conducted by Krajka (2007), investigating both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation. The aim of the enquiry was to find out in what way the Internet resources can compensate for any shortcomings of traditional coursebooks. There are several reasons why the authors - both secondary school teachers / practitioners - turned to free Internet resources. One of the most important is the fact that nowadays secondary school students and teachers can seldom afford to buy any additional materials accompanying the foreign language coursebook; thus the search for the resources both available and reliable seems to be essential.

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An EMA study of articulatory settings in Polish speakers of English

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In the present study electromagnetic articulography (EMA) data are used to address the question whether, and to what degree, articulatory settings are related to foreign accentedness of speech in Polish speakers of English. The analysis concerns positions of articulators just prior to speech and during inter-speech pauses, and the examined tokens have been obtained from both read material as well as spontaneous speech. The objectives of the study are the following: (i) to obtain direct measurement data that could allow for a more detailed description of articulatory settings characteristic of Polish; (ii) to measure and describe articulatory settings in Poles while speaking English; (iii) to compare the differences between settings adopted while speaking Polish and English by speakers with near-native English pronunciation and by speakers whose English pronunciation is heavily accented.

Variation in the production of the TRAP vowel in advanced Polish learners of English

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Polish has only two vowels, usually symbolised /a/ and /ɛ/, in the area where English has three – TRAP, DRESS and STRUT (Jassem 2003; Wells 1982). As a result, virtually all theories of the acquisition of L2 pronunciation will predict some kind of problem for Polish learners of English, differing only in the details of their predictions. This paper will illustrate one area that has been largely neglected in L2 pronunciation literature – the scope and nature of variation in learner productions.

A previous study by the present author investigated a corpus of read English speech collected from advanced Polish learners enrolling in the English studies (Polish *filologia angielska*) programme at a Polish university. The results suggested that there is a considerable amount of inter- and intra-speaker variability in the production of the TRAP vowel despite the speakers being quite advanced in their English (sufficiently, in fact, to have received a score of 90 or more out of 100 during their final secondary school exam in English – an enrolment requirement). While aggregate results expectably showed a statistically significant difference between the average F1 and F2 values of TRAP and both DRESS and STRUT, and the distributions of DRESS and STRUT did not overlap, the distribution of TRAP was “superimposed” on those of the other two vowels. Also, inspection of individual speakers revealed that all logical “assimilation” possibilities were attested. Some speakers had been (more or less) successful in acquiring a separate TRAP category; some merged it with DRESS; others with STRUT; and, most importantly, there was also a group of speakers for whom TRAP showed a “bimodal” distribution, with some instances in the DRESS area, and some in the STRUT area.

The present paper will present an analysis of new data, addressing some shortcomings of the earlier project. Productions of TRAP from 50 female Polish students of English, newly enrolled in the same programme as mentioned above, will be analysed in terms of F1 and F2 values, and compared to those of DRESS and STRUT. In contrast to the earlier study, which used “opportunistic” data, this paper will present a more extensive set of read speech from four repetitions of a specially designed wordlist recorded under studio conditions, allowing to investigate not only group-wide and speaker effects but also lexical effects whose presence was hinted at in the previous experiment but could not be studied in more detail.

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Investigating foreign accent in third language acquisition

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The paper aims at investigating the nature of foreign accent in the acquisition of a third language. There is a growing recognition that due to the complexity of inquiry (cf. Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner 2001, Cenoz 2005). The phonological acquisition of a third language (L3) is a particularly young discipline and research in this area has been very limited in scope (cf. Hammarberg and Hammarberg 2005, Tremblay 2007, Gut 2010, Llama et al. 2010, Wrembel 2010).

In this contribution I intend to compare and critically analyse the findings of three foreign accent studies that I conducted on languages acquired as L3 in different language combinations; (1) L1 Polish, L2 German, and L3 English, (2) L1 Polish, L2 French, and L3 English, (3) L1 Polish, L2 English, and L3 French. The L3 speech samples were collected employing the 'read on your own' task, an oral narrative and verbalised reports based on the picture story technique. The experiments consisted in accent judgements of L3 speech samples performed online by expert judges, who were asked to:

- rate the L3 recordings for an overall degree of a foreign accent, intelligibility and irritability on a 6-point scale,
- identify the native tongue of the speakers,
- point to the phonetic/phonological features that contribute to the perceptual impression of the foreign accent in particular speakers.

The studies were expected to identify the sources of phonological cross-linguistic influence in the L3 phonological performance and to provide further evidence to confirm or disconfirm Hammarberg & Hammarberg's (2005) hypothesis that L2 phonological interference overrides L1 transfer at the initial stages of acquisition of a third language. Therefore, the main objective was to verify whether trilingual speakers have a tendency to be perceived as being L1- or L2-accented in their L3 performance and to analyse different factors that determine the observed variety in the findings, including such factors as typological relatedness in particular language combinations, proficiency level in L2 and L3, frequency of L2 use, and metalinguistic awareness.

Finally, the paper aims to provide specific pedagogical recommendations for the teaching of foreign language pronunciation in a third language context.

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Students' Session

The pronunciation of English adjectives with –able, -ate, -ative suffixes by Polish learners of English

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The main aim of the study was to check whether the pronunciation of selected adjectival English suffixes by advanced Polish learners is closer to metrically strong, or rather weak, reduced vowel sound. Moreover, I wanted to find out if the variability concerning the quality and length of the pronounced vowel sound in the stated suffixes depends on gender. Finally, I wanted to know whether the stress pattern has an influence on the quality and length of the vowel sound in the suffixes.

As the approach I chose the attention to speech, the effect of formal instruction, gender and stress pattern as the conditioning factors and the RP as the target variety. The study was composed of two different stages: qualitative study (auditory evaluation) and quantitative study (thorough analysis of the exact vowel length in the stated suffixes). While conducting both stages I worked with the same group of informants - fourteen Polish students of English (seven men and seven women) of the first year on the English Department at the University of Łódź. Their experience in English was more or less similar (10 - 12 years).

The study revealed that the quality of the vowel sound in the suffixes was closer to metrically strong and long vowel sound similar to the diphthong /eI/ rather than the reduced and weak vowel sound ("schwa"). The overall percentage of the mispronounced adjectives for men and for women was 68% and even after formal instruction there was no improvement. Furthermore, gender had an impact on the quality of the vowel sound in the investigated suffixes. In some cases, stress was put on the final syllable in the adjectives which had an influence on the length of the vowel sound in the suffixes –able, -ate, -ative.

“Five-o clock or Yankee? RP and General American recognition among students of English philology

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Received Pronunciation and General American, two major varieties of spoken English, differ considerably in many respects. Some features specific to each accent seem salient enough so as to give away the identity of a speaker as being a resident of either side of the Atlantic Ocean. Even if the task in question would be likely to pose some problems for a linguistics-uninitiated person, no such reservation should be expected to hold for an English philology student, who enters the course already equipped with some decent knowledge pertaining to regional varieties of English accent, and whose skills are further polished in the course of phonetics classes in the curriculum. The following study was conducted in order to confirm the English philology students' proficiency in accent recognition, and to demonstrate the anticipated visible year-to-year progress in distinguishing between RP and General American. Also, the study intended to demonstrate the most and least helpful characteristic features in accent recognition, as well as the most and least salient ones. The methods included:

- selecting some important differences between the two accents (lack/presence of rhoticity and tapping, the TRAP- BATH split, the FATHER-BOTHER merger, yod-dropping)
- devising sentences that included words evincing the aforesaid characteristics, to be read by native speakers of both varieties of English (2 RP and 2 Gen Am speakers) and recorded
- asking 1st, 2nd and MA students (each group of 14) at the Institute of English Studies of the University of Łódź to decide on each speaker's accent

The study, contrary to what had been expected, returned rather average accent recognition success rates in each year, and revealed that the 1st and 2nd year students were virtually on a par in this respect. Then, both groups were only slightly outscored by the post-graduates. Despite their having scored lowest, the 2nd year students were also least undecided, which means that on spotting the difference they would ascribe the characteristic feature to the wrong accent most often compared to the other groups. Also, it turned out that while five sets of characteristic features were almost equally helpful in recognizing the accent, the sixth (/o/ vs. /a:/) stood out dramatically from them and proved only half as effectual.

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Is English word stress beyond the scope of the Polish students of English? Different strategies of indicating the stress within multi-syllable words.

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The study of English pronunciation in EFL learners is obviously wide-ranging, but word-stress has been recognized as a particularly difficult area. According to Krzeszowski (1970: 68-69), Polish students of English are very likely to “encounter numerous difficulties learning the correct stress of polysyllabic words in English.” The author claims that it is not possible to “work out rules in this area since the Polish language does not provide any analogues”. As a result, “particular learners will place the stress on various syllables in a purely accidental manner” (ibid). Sobkowiak (2001: 241) is a strong supporter of a similar view. He points out that “word-stress cannot be assigned by rule, but rather is a property of each word itself”; he adds that there are “certain general preferences and tendencies, which regulate word-stress assignment in English” (ibid).

This paper reports on the results of an empirical case study into the ability to indicate the position of stress in multi-syllable words. The words to be investigated belong to different parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The research was conducted among three groups of students at the Department of English Studies, the University of Łódź: first and second year full-time students during their phonetics/phonology classes (BA studies) and fifth year full-time and part-time students (MA studies).

The general aim of the study was to find out how particular groups deal with the recognition of stress patterns in listening as well as with marking the stress within multi-syllable words. One of the main objectives was to measure the progress by comparing the results for the first year students at the beginning of their phonetics course with the second year and the fifth year students who completed the aforementioned course during their BA studies and do not participate in it any longer. The study was expected to reveal the degree of comprehension of word stress among these three groups and to show whether the phonetics/phonology course was effective enough to influence the results. Another important aspect of the study was an attempt to answer the question why such stress indicating mistakes occur and which of them can be associated with the stress pattern commonly found in students’ native language and the transfer of such pattern into their second language.

The analysis of the results of this study leads to the conclusion that Polish students of English use different methods and strategies in indicating English stress. Many of them tend to put stress in a way that can result from language transfer. Furthermore, the study proved that a majority of the 1st year students have a tendency to compute stress according to the category generalisation. The research also showed that the ability to indicate stress properly in multi-syllable words changes with the development of students’ level of proficiency in English.

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A bug in a bag – a cross-sectional analysis of the vocalic perception among BA students of English Philology at the University of Łódź

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The perception of vowel contrasts in a native speaker's speech is crucial for a foreign language learner in speech production and to communicate successfully. Auditory problems may lead to misapprehensions, which although sometimes amusing, may have more severe consequences. Much attention has been hitherto devoted to the consonantal perception (e.g. inter-dentals in various consonantal contexts - Ciszewski 2006) among Polish learners of English. In this cross-sectional study, however, we analyse the perception of TRAP, STRUT and DRESS vowels. Those phonemes were chosen by virtue of their common articulatory features: TRAP and DRESS being front vowels, TRAP and STRUT being open vowels. Our research is based upon a test administered to the groups of the first, second, and third year BA students of English Philology at the University of Łódź. The informants were asked to listen to a recording of two native speakers of English (American and British) pronouncing words that contained the aforementioned vowels, and decide which of these three sounds they hear in each word. Thus, we attempted to examine:

- whether the students can categorise the sounds properly (1st year) and if their ability to recognize them improved after the phonetic course (2nd and 3rd years).
- which contrast is the most problematic one to recognize.
- whether the accent of the speaker (Gen Am or RP) has an influence on the perception of the sounds.

The study showed no improvement in the perception of the abovementioned sounds over the period of one year, between the 2nd and 3rd year (this is when the phonetic training course is already completed), while the difference between the 1st and 2nd year was visible, although not significant. As regards the general categorisation of these sounds, the students continue to have difficulties in mastering their auditory conceptualization of them (especially TRAP and STRUT vowels; words: *tan* vs. *ten*, *man* vs. *men*). Additionally, the accent of a particular speaker proves to be absolutely crucial for the participants to recognize the sound and decide which word they hear (the results show some preference for General American, especially for in the TRAP vowel). We thereby make an attempt to determine the sources of the mistakes, considering the acoustic features and learning context.

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Aspiration in L2: the influence of language experience on the production of aspiration in Polish learners of English. Pilot study.

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The presentation presents a pilot study of aspiration in English spoken by native speakers of Polish. My personal experience as an English language learner and tutor led me to the assumption that students pay a lot of attention to vowels while speaking or listening to English. In other words, vowels operate as speech markers that allow for accent differentiation and their mispronunciation gives a foreign speaker away. However, absence and presence of aspiration works as speech marker as well, which suggests that learners of English should be sensitive to this aspect as well. The discussion of aspiration will concentrate on the production of voiceless stops /p/ /t/ /k/ in English in various phonological contexts, i.e. the VOT values will be compared in the following context of different vowels. The aim of the study is to explore the effect of language experience on the VOT and to investigate whether the proportion of target language variants produced by the speakers will increase with the degree of task formality.

The following research question is formulated: Is there any effect of language experience / phonetics training in the use of the VOT by two groups of students: Group A - students of English, and Group B - students of other faculties? 17 voice samples were collected by the researcher. All the subjects were native speakers of Polish. Group A (7 females, 3 males) consists of second-year students of English who have attended courses in phonetics and phonology of the English language. Group B (4 females, 3 males) consists of students of other faculties who did not receive pronunciation training, or it was of minimal amount. The participants were required to perform three tasks that have been put in order from the most to the least formal: reading list, quotation commentary, picture story telling. The results indicate that Group A behave more native-like. The differences in the VOT values are in most cases significant and they can be heard auditorily as aspiration or lack of it. The results are also consistent with the universal phonetic feature: VOT is shorter in bilabials, longer in velars and show that some linguistic environments are conducive to aspiration and some not regardless of speakers' language experience.

['berə] or ['betə]? - Do Polish learners of English accommodate their pronunciation? – a pilot study.

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One does not have to be a linguist to notice that a person's speech varies with relation to who one is talking to. In the same manner that people often find themselves speaking more slowly and clearly while addressing a foreigner or an elderly person, one will use different language when engaging in casual conversation with friends and when discussing account details with a bank official. To interpret and justify these shifts in communicative behaviour, Communication Accommodation Theory may be applied. Developed in the 1970s, it studies the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain or decrease social distance in an interaction, and pertains to linguistic as well as nonverbal features of communication. The two principal strategies described by CAT are convergence and divergence, the first of which is related to making one's speech more similar to the interlocutor's in order to communicate social integration or approval. Divergence, on the other hand, consists in emphasizing the speech differences so as to distance oneself from the interlocutor (Giles and Oga, 1997). Although CAT focuses primarily on interactions between native speakers of a given language, there have been several studies which suggest that the theory may also be applied to account for variation in non-native communicative behaviour (Zuengler, 1991). Hence, the aim of this pilot study was to investigate whether Polish learners of English accommodate to their interlocutors. More specifically, its purpose was to determine whether Polish English speakers converge their pronunciation while conversing with representatives of different English accents. To examine the applicability of CAT in such interactions, a pilot study on 4 first year English philology students was conducted, each of which was interviewed first by a British English and later Canadian English speaker. The two variables under investigation were T-voicing and rhoticity. The results indicate that some Polish English speakers may accommodate to different accents and that there might exist a relationship between this tendency and their level of proficiency in English. It also seems that rhoticity is the feature Polish English speakers adjust more readily. T-voicing is quite frequent among the informants, however, in most cases it appears to be a result of extensive exposure to American English (tv, cinema, music) rather than an indication of convergence towards any of the interlocutors. The pilot study also provided valuable insight into the ways of improving the methodology of such a research project.

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