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## **PRONUNCIATION RESEARCH IN ACTION**

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**THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

*edited by*  
*Przemysław Ostalski*



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## PLENARY SPEAKERS

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### FOUR WAYS IN WHICH PRONUNCIATION RESEARCH RELATES TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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Pronunciation was once a mainstay of language teaching when it was generally accepted that fully learning a foreign language also included learning native-like pronunciation. But during the 1960s, research demonstrated native-like attainment was unlikely due to biologically determined limits on acquisition (Lenneberg, 1967) because of a critical period that seemed especially strong with pronunciation learning (Scovel, 1969), resulting in frequent interlanguage fossilization (Selinker, 1972). For pronunciation teaching, the result was widespread neglect and many years in the language teaching wilderness. Research on L2 pronunciation continued in the 1970s and 1980s, though at a slow pace, and while pronunciation continued to be taught in many contexts, it was no longer a mainstay in TESL programs (Murphy, 1997) nor indeed in many other programs training teachers of foreign languages.

Pronunciation, however, never went away. Driven by pedagogical innovations (Gilbert, 1986; Kenworthy, 1987; Wong, 1987) and a change from a sounds/words focus to an emphasis on suprasegmentals and discourse (Avery and Ehrlich, 1987; Pennington and Richards, 1986), the role of pronunciation was re-invented, making the ground fertile for the growth of research into pronunciation improvement and devising a central role for intelligibility. But one result of teaching leading the way back to a central role for pronunciation is that there is often a disconnect between teaching and research.

This talk examines how research and practice interact in pronunciation teaching today, looking at four possible interfaces: Research that is not yet sufficiently represented in practice (e.g., variability in input), research that is adequately (though not perfectly) represented in teaching (e.g., information structure in discourse), practice which goes beyond what is justified by research (e.g., connected speech modifications), and practices, however desirable, that have no real research base (e.g., integrating pronunciation with other skills). Examples from published pronunciation teaching materials and research studies will be discussed for each category along with suggestions for how future materials can better reflect connections between innovative pedagogical intuitions and empirical evidence.

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## PHONOLAPSOLOGY OF GRADED READERS IN EFL: PDI PROFILE OF A CORPUS OF PEDAGOGICAL TEXT

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Włodzimierz Sobkowiak and Liliana Piasecka's book *Phonolapsology of graded readers in EFL: theory, analysis, application* is an attempt to apply the Phonetic Difficulty Index (PDI) to a corpus of graded e-reader texts written by *Reading A-Z* (RA-Z; <http://www.readinga-z.com/>) authors for native American children developing their reading skills. In the *analysis* part of this monograph an in-depth view is taken of the corpus phonolapsological profile: the frequency distributions of PDI values (0-11), codes (61 tags) and code complexes ('codegrams') over the entire run of 18 reading proficiency levels, 317 texts, 29966 sentences, and 331905 words.

In this presentation a subset of the data is approached from one, quantitative, perspective only: that of the global PDI value profile of the entire corpus. It will be shown: (a) how the PDI values grow with reading proficiency levels, (b) how they compare against two other corpora of text: *MEDAL* and Brown, (c) how these data can be used for pedagogical selection and profiling of texts for the EFL classroom.

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## SOME TECHNIQUES OF INTERACTIVE PHONOLAPSOLOGICAL SCAFFOLDING IN GRADED E-READERS FOR EFL LEARNERS

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Włodzimierz Sobkowiak and Liliana Piasecka's book *Phonolapsology of graded readers in EFL: theory, analysis, application* is an attempt to apply the Phonetic Difficulty Index (PDI) to a corpus of graded e-reader texts written by *Reading A-Z* (RA-Z; <http://www.readinga-z.com/>) authors for native American children developing their reading skills. The results of this PDI phonolapsological analysis are used in the last part of the book to sketch some methods and techniques of adapting and interactively scaffolding such resources for the needs of (Polish) EFL learners of English pronunciation. In this presentation some examples of this kind of enhancement are provided and discussed.

"Applied to RA-Z texts, PDI can: (a) point to local maxima of expected pronouncing difficulty of any range (word, sentence, text, grade level), (b) guide the process of global phonetic difficulty grading of texts for the sake of facilitating reading, (c) inform the remedial treatment generator with data on the specific problem, its incidence in similar contexts in other texts, common Polish mispronunciations, possible drills and exercises" (Sobkowiak and Ferlacka 2011b:103). The last category of scaffolding is the focus of this presentation, with examples of interactive phonolapsological: (i) highlighting, (ii) concordancing, (iii) games, (iv) word-clouds, and the like.

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(abstract: <http://wa.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/abstract.htm#abs68>)

## PARALLEL SESSIONS

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### L1 INITIAL VOWELS IN THE SPEECH OF PROFICIENT POLISH USERS OF ENGLISH

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Fllege's (1995) Speech Learning Model predicts the occurrence of bi-directional phonetic influence in the speech of bilinguals based on observations of intermediate phonetic forms that lie between monolingual norms. However, many of the experiments that produced these findings did not control for language mode (Grosjean 1998). Thus, it is possible that such L2>L1 effects stem not from pure 'interference' so much as L2 activation in the L1 experimental task. In this regard, Antoniou et al. (2011) found no evidence of L2>L1 interference in the speech of Greek-English bilinguals in Australia. At the same time, a study by Schwartz et al (2012) found evidence of both L2 influence and language mode effects, suggesting that L2 interference and language mode induced 'phonetic code-switching' are indeed separate phenomena.

The aforementioned studies dealt with VOT in initial voice contrasts. In current work, we take up the question of word-boundary effects, in which Polish and English show systematic differences. One such difference is associated with the realization of vowel-initial words. L1 English is characterized by a number of sandhi linking processes by which word-initial vowels are joined with the preceding word. Sandhi linking is observable in both V#V and C#V sequences (see e.g. Cruttenden 2001). By contrast, sandhi linking is largely absent from Polish. Polish word boundaries are frequently reinforced by glottalization of initial vowels (Schwartz 2013), while in English glottalization is less common, typically acting as a marker of phrase boundaries (Dilley et al. 1996).

In this paper, we present L1 Polish data from proficient users of L2 English, staff members at the Faculty of English at UAM in Poznań. Speech data is collected in two modes, a monolingual Polish mode in which the recording session is carried out entirely in the L1, and a task designed to elicit phonetic code-switching by requiring subjects to produce fragments of English speech before the L1 target items. Rates of vowel glottalization are compared in the two tasks, and an additional comparison is carried out with a control group of 'quasi-monolinguals'. A lower glottalization rate in

the code-switching task provides evidence for the differing phonological status of linking in the two languages. A higher glottalization rate in the monolingual group suggests that L2>L1 effects in bilingual speech go beyond language mode effects and can be classified as L2 interference.

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## CLICKERS IN THE L2 PHONETICS CLASSROOM: THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Learner Response Systems (or *clickers*) have existed for over four decades (Judson and Sawada, 2002); however, only recently have they received careful consideration as tools to promote learning, particularly in large classrooms (Caldwell, 2007). Surprisingly, clickers are rarely used in the L2 classroom and, more surprisingly, the topic has not received careful attention from the L2 research community (Cardoso, 2011; 2013).

An experimental study following a pretest-posttest design was carried out among fifty-six English majors studying at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Its aims were to examine (1) the effectiveness of teaching L2 English phonetics with clickers, and (2) the perceptions of Polish students towards the use of clickers in phonetics teaching. The issues chosen to be taught in the experiment were the following: (a) the rules governing English lexical stress, and (b) the differences between RP and GA. In this presentation we will report the results of a subset of this study, which investigated the

students' perceptions of the use of the technology in learning about English phonetics. The qualitative data obtained via written open questions, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and class observations revealed that learners perceive the technology as beneficial, as it provides an anxiety-free, interesting, and exciting learning experience. Despite the observed weaknesses (e.g., lack of personalized feedback), most participants stated that they would like clickers to be used systematically in their phonetics and other classes.

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## **TEACHING THE TEACHERS: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN P AND P CLASSES FOR GERMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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Does theoretical knowledge about typical L2 English characteristics (Gut 2009) help students to avoid them in practice? This paper explores the first steps of 50 future German primary school teachers without any prior knowledge of English linguistics towards developing an awareness for the phonetics and phonology of English. During the course of their "Phonetics and Phonology" classes in summer 2014 at the University of Rostock, these students learned about some of the major pronunciation problems of German L2 learners of English, mainly on the basis of their textbook (Collins and Mees 2013). Their results in the final exam document both their new theoretical knowledge about selected L2 problems and their ability to put their insights into practice in their transcriptions. The relationship between what the students knew and how successfully they managed to actively apply it helps to identify and discuss priorities for future courses and yields potential issues for future research.

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**AUTOMATICALLY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES  
OF NON-NATIVE ENGLISH ACCENTS**

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Dialectologists have taken advantage of computational techniques to study regional language variation, and developed specific measures for quantifying this variation. Accent studies can also benefit from these developments. We have applied statistical measures from such dialectometry studies to transcriptions of accented English speech from the Speech Accent Archive (Weinberger and Kunath, 2011), to quantify the most distinctive deviations from standard English pronunciation. This archive contains transcribed English speech samples of the same 69-word text from people with different language backgrounds.

It has been shown on spoken dialect data that a combination of representativeness (the difference between pronunciations within the language variety is small) and distinctiveness (the difference between pronunciations inside and outside the variety is large) is a good way to identify characteristic features of a language variety (Wieling and Nerbonne, 2011), and even a single highly characteristic word can approximate a dialect area (Prokić, Çöltekin, and Nerbonne, 2012). In calculating these two measures, Levenshtein distances are used to represent differences between speakers, a dialectometry method that has already been successfully applied to measure accent strength (Wieling, Bloem, Mignella, Timmermeister, and Nerbonne, forthcoming). Applying this measure to transcriptions of the words from the Speech Accent Archive, while treating speakers of different native languages as ‘varieties’, yields lists of words that are pronounced characteristically differently in comparison to native accents of English. This method is implemented in the publicly available Gabmap web application for dialectology (Nerbonne, Colen, Gooskens, Kleiweg, and Leinonen, 2011).

We discuss typical English accent characteristics for various languages, and compare them to the phonologies of those languages to identify the source of the difference. For example, according to our measure, the pronunciation of the word ‘into’ is characteristic for French speakers. Examining the different pronunciations reveals why: the form *ĩntu* is used by 21 out of 34 French speakers, while only 25 out of 181 English speakers use it. English speakers employ the phonological process of vowel

reduction, resulting in the form  $\tilde{ɪ}ntə$  used 56 times, as well as other forms ending in  $ə$ , which only one of the French speakers used. The French language does not have vowel reduction to  $ə$  in word-final position, so it makes sense that French speakers would deviate from standard English here. Knowing about these characteristic features of accents has useful applications in teaching L2 learners of English, since potentially difficult sounds or sound combinations can be identified and addressed based on the learner's native language.

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## ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE POSTVOCALIC LATERAL LIQUID IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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The linguistic situation in Nigeria is typical of a postcolonial country. A blend of indigenous and non-indigenous languages is to be found in this West-African setting as well. English is spoken throughout the country as it fulfills the expected functions of a second language variety: it is the common *lingua franca* in areas such as business, mass media and commerce, or it is used as a medium of instruction in education and the communication vehicle in social interaction among the educated elite. An estimate of about 500 indigenous languages is given by Grimes and Grimes (2000), among which Igbo and Yoruba spoken in the Southern part of the country, and Hausa spoken in the Northern part of Nigeria, are the major indigenous languages with about 18 million speakers each. What this paper aims to investigate is the behavior of postvocalic /l/ in the speech of three adult users of the variety, each having as a native language one of the three major languages of the county (namely Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa). The results of the acoustic measurements, using Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2014), will show that the data presented in Simo Bobda (1995, 2001, 2007) are only partly confirmed and that a more in-depth look reveals a similar pattern to other non-native varieties around the globe (e.g. Singapore English). Moreover, the separation between a Northern subvariety and Southern one, operated by Gut (2008), seems to become legitimate even in as much as this single phenomenon is concerned.

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## THE INTELLIGIBILITY AND COMPREHENSIBILITY OF POLISH-ACCENTED ENGLISH TO NATIVE SPEAKERS – EMPIRICAL DATA

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The paper presents the results of the empirical study regarding the perception of Polish-accented English by native speakers and constitutes an answer to the *call for more research to enhance our knowledge of the nature of foreign accents and their effect on communication* (Derwing and Munro, 2005:379). The study employs 26 Englishmen and its aim is to select phonetic features of Polish English most detrimental to intelligibility and comprehensibility as well as investigate the relationship between the two parameters. The distinction between objective and subjective intelligibility has been based on the findings of previous studies (Derwing and Munro, 1997; Munro and Derwing, 1995; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2013) so that *intelligibility* refers to the recognition of a given word / utterance and *comprehensibility* is perceived ease of understanding. Previous studies have demonstrated that there tends to be a discrepancy between intelligibility and comprehensibility and that the perceived ease of understanding does not appear to be a good indicator of actual intelligibility, i.e. the number of words or phrases identified accurately (Derwing and Munro, 1997; Munro and Derwing, 1995, 1999; Matsuura, Chiba and Fujieda 1999). The researchers claim that a foreign-accented message can be perfectly intelligible (correctly transcribed) even though phonetic inaccuracies may place some perceptual load on the listener.

The study encompasses two types of data, vis. quantitative and qualitative. The participants fill in surveys, complete transcription tasks and make judgments and comments regarding the speaker in open-ended questions. The extent to which Polish-accented English is intelligible is measured by comparing listeners' transcriptions and the target texts produced by stimulus providers. We identify intelligibility lapses and attempt to account for them.

## AN INVESTIGATION INTO FUTURE TEACHERS' COMPETENCE

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Although foreign language pronunciation has recently become a well-developed area, the research in this field usually concerns only L2, not L3. An observable interest in Third Language Acquisition began not until 1980s, and developed from Second Language Acquisition studies (Chłopek 2011). Thus L3 pronunciation studies constitute a relatively new domain. The research in this area is now developing rapidly. Heretofore investigations assessed the L3 learners' production and perception (e.g. Tremblay 2008; Wrembel 2010; Wrembel 2011; Lipińska in press) and examined the L2's influence on L3 acquisition (e.g. Tremblay 2006; Treichler et al. 2009). Nevertheless, unlike an abundance of studies on Polish learners' L2 phonological development and L2 phonodidactics in Poland (e.g. Sobkowiak 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al. 2002; Waniek-Klimczak 2002; Wrembel 2002; Nowacka 2003), L3 research has yet to provide clear implications for pronunciation instruction.

In response to market demands and in order to provide their graduates with various opportunities, many upper education institutions offer courses preparing their students to become instructors of more than one language. This situation calls for the reanalysis of what we know about pronunciation teaching, and poses new questions: what happens when language instructors are to teach both, their L2 and L3? Are the L2 and L3 pronunciation teaching skills correlated? Do future teachers feel equally competent to aid their learners' L2 and L3 phonological development?

The aim of the presentation is to report results of a study, which sought answers to the aforementioned questions. The research was conducted with six groups of subjects recruited amongst the students of the University of Wrocław, the University of Silesia and the Silesian School of Economics and Languages. The participants were second-year students of different philology programmes for future teachers, with various L2s and L3s, including English, German, Swedish and Spanish. The data was gathered by means of an anonymous questionnaire designed by the researchers. The results obtained allow for the analysis and comparison of the aspects of knowledge and skills related to L2 and L3 pronunciation teaching that are most problematic for future language instructors, and expose deficiencies in teacher training programmes.

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## PAUSE PLACEMENT IN THE SPOKEN DISCOURSE OF POLISH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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Researching non-native spoken discourse concerns various aspects of communicative competence, including those inextricably related to what is perceived as **fluency** in speech production. Studies investigating oral proficiency in non-native English, as well as other languages, adopt numerous measures to assess levels of fluency. Some of the most commonly used measures revolve around the concept of a *pause*. Pause-related phenomena that are of relevance in such studies include the type of pause – filled or unfilled, the length of pause, and the distribution, or placement, of pauses in the samples of analyzed discourse.

Much effort has been taken in order to identify factors underlying pausing phenomena in spontaneous speech production. Pawley and Syder (2000) have proposed two hypotheses to explain the patterns of pausing observable in native English speech. The first hypothesis, referred to as ‘the one-clause-at-a-time constraint’ states that speakers can only encode one independent clause in a single act of cognitive planning. The second hypothesis, known as ‘the the one-clause-at-a-time capacity’, says that competent speakers of a language can encode the content of several independent

clauses in a single planning act due to their knowledge of conventional, or formulaic chunks operating in the given language.

Pawley and Syder (2000) support their hypotheses with a large body of data containing naturally produced native English spoken discourse. The purpose of the present paper is to show to what extent the above-mentioned hypotheses apply to the data obtained from non-native, namely, Polish speakers of English. The author will demonstrate the oral data gathered in her own study of oral proficiency among the students of an English department in a tertiary education institution in Poland. Out of the many measures used in the study, only those relating to the patterns and length of pausing will be discussed. The findings will be then compared to the data produced by native speakers of English under the same, semi-experimental conditions.

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## INCORPORATING SPEECH RECOGNITION IN AUTOMATED ACCENT IDENTIFICATION

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Within the speech of non-native (L2) speakers of a language there are phonological rules that differentiate them from native speakers. These phonological rules characterize or distinguish accents in an L2. The Shibboleth program (Frost, 2013) is an automated method which uses these rules to create combinatorial rule-sets to describe the phonological pattern of accents and then classify L2 speakers by their native language (L1) using a support vector machine. Currently, transcription is done by trained linguists. We propose to incorporate a component which uses phonetic recognition software to automatically provide phonetic transcriptions with which we will run our analyses. In this paper, we will discuss the methods by which Shibboleth

analyzes L2 speakers to determine their L1, followed by an outline of the incorporation of speech recognition technology.

In an experiment using Shibboleth, the program correctly identified the L1 of a speaker of unknown origin 50% of the time when there were seven possible L1s, American English, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Russian, and Farsi. This rate is significantly better than the 14% chance classification rate.  $\chi^2(1, N=28) = 29.167$ ,  $p < .0001$ . This classification was possible with training groups as small as ten speakers, or training data comprised of five minutes of spoken data. While comparable or better than other accent recognition programs (Angkitrakul and Hansen, 2006; Choueiter, Zweig, and Nguyen, 2008), this level of accuracy does not yet provide a usable tool in the field. Since some of the biggest hurdles for Shibboleth are inaccuracy, unreliability, and irregularity in the transcriptions due to limitations on human perception, a speech recognition component will create automatic transcriptions for training and classification by Shibboleth. In addition to minimizing irregularity in the transcription procedure, the faster process of automated transcription will present a larger subject pool for immediate training. This larger pool of data will be crucial in narrowing down definite rules from the possibilities presented, a necessity for classification.

Since such an automated transcription system is not presently available to us, we are employing the Nexidia phonetic speech recognition system (Gavalda and Schlueter, 2010) as an intermediate step. Given a phonetic transcription, Nexidia returns the timepoint in an audio file where the system matches a transcription, along with a confidence value. We will review experiments where Nexidia identifies an L2-accented transcription with higher confidence among L2 English speakers, and complementary experiments where Nexidia identifies a native English transcription with lower confidence among L2 English speakers.

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH AND POLISH RHYTHM MEASURES IN POLISH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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The aim of the paper is to verify the existence of a relationship between L2 English and L1 Polish rhythm measure scores in individual Polish learners of English. The study is based on the conviction that there is certain dependency and dynamics present in the rhythmic level of performance in English and Polish spoken by Polish speakers, despite the fact that the two languages represent different rhythmic classes - English is traditionally a stress-timed language (Pike 1945, Abercrombie 1967) and Polish is a mixed-type language (Dauer 1987, Nespor 1990, Ramus et al. 1999). Recent research into L2 rhythm classifies English spoken by Polish learners as mix-type (White and Mattys 2007) and the present study aims at investigating its mixed-type nature and finding intricacies governing the rhythmic behaviour of Polish speakers of English. The data used for the analysis come from 30 Polish first-year students of the University of Łódź recorded reading of two texts with comparable stress-patterns in the two languages (*The North Wind and the Sun* in English and its Polish version). The

following rhythm measures have been employed: %V,  $\Delta V$ ,  $\Delta C$  (Ramus et al. 1999), VarcoV, VarcoC (Dellwo and Wagner 2003, White and Mattys 2007) and nPVI (Grabe and Low 2002). The results reveal a considerable variability in the data; however, as some traits of consistent behaviour have been found in a few subjects, the paper explores possible relationship between rhythm metric scores calculated for these speakers' performance. The results indicate that not only does the relationship between Polish and English rhythm score depend on individual speaker, but it seems strongly related to the choice of a particular measure.

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## ESTABLISHING LEARNER FLUENCY PROFILES IN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEECH

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Speech fluency has been a commonly addressed issue in second language research over the past years (Lennon 2000; Skehan 2003, 2009; Segalowitz 2010; Wood 2010; Housen, Kuiken and Vedder 2012; Gilquin and DeCock 2013; Götz 2013; Leclercq, Edmonds and Hilton 2014). The majority of recent accounts have focused primarily on establishing a range of temporal variables of speech as the primary diagnostic tool for the assessment of learner oral performance and have led to the recognition of speech fluency as one of the major performance descriptors and an indicator of progress of foreign/second language learners (Chambers, 1997). Other studies have explored the issue from a wider perspective by looking at a range of fluency devices utilized by L1/L2 users such as the reliance on formulaic language to alleviate processing demands (Pawley and Syder 1983; Towell, Hawkins and Bazergui, 1996; Wray and Perkins 2000) and the use of a variety of naturalness-enhancing performance strategies including repeats, self-repairs, hesitation phenomena and discourse markers (Brandt and Götz, 2011: 257). Drawing on research findings from both of these strands, this paper attempts to establish individual learner fluency profiles in L1 and L2 speech on the basis of a 22,000 word dataset consisting of L1 and L2 monologic

speeches elicited from advanced Polish speakers of L2 English (N=50). The data include both the recordings and their pause-annotated transcriptions. We first establish a range of temporal fluency measures to determine the precise nature of the ‘fluency gap’ (Segalowitz, 2010: 2) between L1 and L2 speech samples. This is followed by identifying the repertoires of fluency-enhancing devices as well as dominant disfluency patterns found in L1/L2 output of individual learners. Basing on the assumption that a learner’s productive fluency is the function of his/her idiosyncratic way of speaking as well as the degree of automatization of speech production (see De Jong et al 2011), we hope to arrive at a distinction between the features of fluency which are characteristic of a speaker’s performance in general and those which are L2-specific.

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## **“IT SOUNDS MORE LIQUID”: LEARNERS’ DESCRIPTIONS OF ACCENTS AS WINDOWS ONTO CONCEPT FORMATION**

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This paper explores the teaching implications of descriptions which one set of EFL learners provided, when identifying accents for a listening exercise. Their answers inspired a rethink of their pronunciation classes, to include explicit work on concept

formation. The present paper presents quantitative and qualitative analysis of their written comments, as revealing the process of concept formation; a further study will include pre- and post-instruction measures of L2 pronunciation competence.

First year English majors at a French university were asked to listen to two, unlabeled extracts: one of a presenter from the BBC programme FastTrack and another of the American comedian Jerry Seinfeld. They had to determine whether the speaker's accent was more British or American, and then to explain which features helped them to decide this. They carried out the task at the start of the semester and later in an on-line exam. Their answers were analysed to see both how they used specialised terminology and whether they noticed more types of features. The results confirmed the hypotheses that, after explicit theoretical instruction, they would notice a greater variety of features and that their comments would become more precise.

More importantly, this paper focuses on certain answers, for example *consonants are more breathy*, *it's fast and he hatches his words*, and *it sounds more liquid*, which raise the issue of learners' concept formation. I argue that this key aspect of L2 learning should be included in L2 pronunciation instruction, mainly because exploring such comments with learners could improve their meta-phonological awareness (MPA). MPA is defined by Wrembel (2011, 106), as "explicit knowledge of selected aspects of L2 phonetics and phonology, analytic awareness of the formal properties of the target language as contrasted with the learner's L1 as well as considerable level of processing control." Wrembel claims in general that metacognitive reinforcement plays an essential role in developing L2 pronunciation competence (2005), which concurs with Couper's findings (2011). Couper tested the effect of socially constructed metalanguage (SCM) and showed significant positive effects on L2 speech production: "the right kind of metalanguage (SCM) helps learners to form new concepts (2011, 174). If "the key to changing pronunciation is changing the concepts that drive it" (Fraser, 2006, 69), then it should be possible to usefully exploit in the classroom what learners write about their perceptions of accents, in order to influence their pronunciation.

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## CHANGES IN RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION: DIACHRONIC CASE STUDIES

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This paper sets out to investigate changes and individual irregularities in the Received Pronunciation of a number of individuals over time and to compare them with the changes noted in contemporary RP in the literature. The aim of the study is to ascertain whether accent change affects individuals during their lifetimes or is only brought about by new generations of speakers accepting different pronunciations as the norm and effectively speaking with a different accent to older generations within their social circle. The study focusses exclusively on RP for two reasons: it has been well-studied and described over a period of years, and public broadcasts, which are the medium for assessment, were formerly made largely in that accent.

The variations/changes looked for were: CLOTH transfer, CURE lowering, GOAT allophony, R-sandhi, T-voicing, and Yod coalescence. All of these have been discussed by numerous linguists and variously considered acceptable within RP or not and rely on the vocabulary sets developed by Wells (Wells 1982, 1997; Cruttenden 2001; Upton 2004); all are also considered to be increasingly common. The procedure of the study was to identify the presence or absence of these features in the speech of certain individuals in recordings made at some time in the past, and to compare the results with contemporary recordings. Each subject is also assessed for other typical features of RP speech in order to qualify as a recognised RP speaker. For some individuals, such as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Sir David Attenborough, it was possible to make repeated assessments of public speeches and television appearances over a period of 60 years; the speech of other subjects is considered over a more limited time-frame.

The results of these comparisons suggest that individual speakers are not greatly affected by changes in pronunciation taking place around them and generally stay with the preferred pronunciation of their youth. The paper concludes with a discussion of what this finding means for the concept of 'an accent' and whether or not it makes sense to talk of accents associated with a particular region or social group without referring also to the date of birth of the speaker.

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## EFFECT OF ACCENT ON THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF COMPLEX TEXTS IN AN ELF SETTING

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This study attempts to investigate whether the extra processing cost that has been demonstrated for unfamiliar accents by Munro and Derwing (1995) can lead to comprehension difficulties with complex texts, such as university lectures, in an ELF setting. Specifically, we test the hypothesis that comprehension of complex texts can be compromised by an unfamiliar accent even when a simple true/false sentence test does not suggest problems with word level intelligibility.

To test this hypothesis, we have recorded 10 speakers of English – two NSs, 8 NNSs with German, Danish, Swedish and Spanish and Japanese L1 – reading 40 short true/false statements as well as transcripts of two unrelated “university lectures”, drawn from a repository of old TOEFL academic listening tests. This material will be used for two experiments: In Experiment 1 reaction-time measures will be collected from 20 Danish L1 listeners responding to the 40 true/false statements. Informants will also give comprehensibility and accent ratings for each speaker. One purpose of Experiment 1 is to find two speakers for Experiment 2; the speakers should be similar with regard to intelligibility (per cent correct true/false responses) but different with regard to reaction time (processing cost); responses to the more familiar accent of the two will be faster. Measures on (perceived) comprehensibility and accent are also collected. In Experiment 2, two groups of 20 listeners will hear the recorded lectures by the two selected speakers in a crossed design and answer a number of comprehension questions (from the original TOEFL exam).

Data collection for Experiment 1 is ongoing and will be completed in September 2014; Experiment 2 will be conducted shortly thereafter provided the outcome of Experiment 1 is satisfactory. The presentation will discuss the results and some central methodological considerations as well as the implications which the results may have for our understanding of lecture comprehension in the context of English-medium higher education.

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ON THE ACQUISITION OF MEDIAL CODA AND FINAL STOPS  
BY BRAZILIAN-PORTUGUESE EFL LEARNERS

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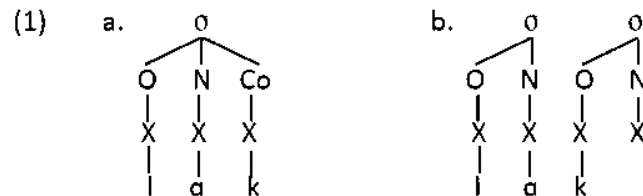
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This study investigates the acquisition of medial coda and word-final stops (e.g., [k] in *doctor* [dɒk.tər] and *lock* [lɒk] respectively) by Brazilian-Portuguese (BP) EFL learners. BP permits only a limited set of medial coda/final consonants (namely [r l N s]), so the realization of English stops [p t k b d g] in these locations represents a considerable challenge. The interlanguage strategy for handling such stops involves [i]-epenthesis: *doctor* is realized as [dɒ.ki.tər] and *lock* as [lɒ.ki]. Under [i]-epenthesis, the [k] in both *doctor* and *lock* is syllabified as an onset. Since the same process applies to loanwords to BP (e.g., *chic* → [ʃi.ki]), [i]-epenthesis is best viewed as an L1 transfer process.

With increased proficiency, BP learners can reach a stage where they suppress the transfer process and acquire targetlike pronunciation. Uncontroversially, this implies that they learn to syllabify the [k] in *doctor* as a coda. Our question concerns the syllabification of [k] in *lock*, since two competing analyses have been proposed for final consonants: [k] (or any other final consonant) is either i) a coda, as illustrated in (1a) (Selkirk, 1982); or ii) an onset of an empty nucleus (Kaye, 1990) – see (1b).



Under the analysis in (1a), we would expect BP learners to acquire medial coda and final stops together, since these share a prosodic representation (i.e., both are codas). Under the analysis in (1b), however, we would predict differential acquisition of medial coda and final stops, since these are different prosodic structures: unlike medial codas ([k] in *doctor*), final stops are onsets. In the latter case, what learners are really acquiring is the representation of final stops as onsets of empty nuclei.

What our research seeks to establish is whether BP EFL learners acquire medial coda and final stops together (supporting the analysis that the two share a prosodic representation) or whether these stops are acquired separately at different rates (supporting the analysis that the two have different prosodic representations). We test the hypotheses on data collected from BP EFL learners using standard sociolinguistic protocols (e.g., Labov, 2001), and analyze the results using Goldvarb X (Sankoff et al., 2005). The discussion of our findings will highlight how knowledge of prosodic

constituency and its acquisition patterns can enhance the teaching of word-final consonants, with implications for L2 acquisition and phonological theory in general.

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## MEASURING THE EFFECT OF METACOMPETENCE IN EFL PRONUNCIATION LEARNING

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Reportedly, metacompetence (i.e. phonetic and phonological awareness) provides the learner with reflective feedback that boosts L2 pronunciation learning (Dziubalska-Kołaczyk 2002, Schwartz 2005, Wrembel 2005, Wrembel 2011). However, there is still little quantitative data to confirm this hypothesis. More importantly, there are no studies that would measure how the specific elements of *theoretical* metacompetence training impact the learner's success in *practical* pronunciation training.

The primary aim of this pilot study is to test the hypothesis that the knowledge of English phonetics and phonology helps Polish undergraduate EFL learners of English in mastering English pronunciation. The study will be conducted on 1BA English philology students who take a *theoretical* course in English phonetics and phonology and a *practical* course in English pronunciation. To verify the hypothesis, we will:

1. measure the intended learning outcomes for learners in the *theoretical* course in phonetics and phonology,
2. measure the performance of those learners in the *practical* pronunciation course,
3. investigate the correlation between the performance in the *theoretical* course and the *practical* course.

Previous studies relied on class observation or qualitative data (e.g. questionnaires, as in Lechowska 2005). While such data can be a part of a broader analysis, relying solely on

learners' impressions may not be sufficient. This is why our study will rely predominantly on quantitative data that most objectively reflects learner behaviour. To collect this data, the theoretical phonetics and phonology course will heavily rely on online components: interactive quizzes, transcription exercises and video lectures (as in previous pilots by Łodzikowski 2014, and Łodzikowski and Aperliński 2013). Following Raadt (2014), the data will be collected on Moodle 2.7 with Google Analytics plug-in to measure learner online behaviour (frequency, times and duration of visits on Moodle; number of attempts at tasks and time spent on them, etc.). The table below summarises the two sets of measures.

	Practical English pronunciation skills	Theoretical knowledge of English phonetics
<b>Direct measures</b> of success in mastering English pronunciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student performance in the <i>practical</i> pronunciation course (tutorials, exam)</li> <li>• impressionistic and instrumental analysis of students' recorded performance (recordings every 2 months)</li> </ul>	student performance in the <i>theoretical</i> phonetics course (tutorials, exam)
<b>Indirect measures</b> of success in mastering English pronunciation	surveys of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-reported gains</li> <li>• satisfaction</li> </ul>	

Although the data for this pilot study will be collected throughout the entire academic year (between October 2014 and June 2014), this paper will only report on the first two months of the pilot.

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## COMPUTATIONAL APPROACHES TO EXPLORING PERSIAN-ACCENTED ENGLISH

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This paper will explore the use of two computational approaches to identify Persian-accented English. We will first describe salient features of Persian-accented English, with an emphasis on segmental features. We will then discuss how each computational system identifies Persian-accented English. Finally, we will discuss how the two systems might be combined to create a hybrid.

Persian-speakers of English might use [t] for English /θ/ and [d] for English /ð/. The first computational system we apply to the identification of Persian-accented English is the Nexidia phonetic speech recognizer (Gavalda and Shlueter, 2010). This system has a multilingual language package which allows searching audio files using IPA. The system returns timepoints in audio files matching the IPA search term, along with a confidence value.

We created a test set consisting of native American English and native Persian speakers from the Speech Accent Archive (SAA, Weinberger, 2014). The SAA consists of audio files and IPA phonetic transcriptions of both native and non-native English speakers reading a phonetically diverse English paragraph. Table 1 shows the results of an experiment searching the test corpus for the string /dis tɪŋks/, a phonemic transcription representing an expected Persian form of the phrase “these things”. As can be seen, the Persian renditions (speaker farsi1) are found by Nexidia at higher confidence than the native English renditions (speakers ‘english147West’ and ‘english160North’).

Speaker	Transcription (from Speech Accent Archive)	Confidence
farsi1	dis θɪŋks	95
farsi1	dis tɪŋks	85
english147West	ni:z θɪŋs	41
english147West	ðiz θɪŋz	45
english160North	ni:z θɪŋz	not recognized
english160North	ðiz sɪŋz	not recognized

**Table 1:** /dis tɪŋks/ experiment

The second computational system we explored was the Shibboleth Foreign Accent Identification System (Frost, 2013). Shibboleth aligns native and nonnative IPA transcriptions from the SAA and derives rule sets characterizing the differences between them, which are then classified using support vector machines. Shibboleth was able to discriminate Persian accents from six other nonnative accents at 100% recall but only 55% precision. The rule sets can then be examined to identify rules

analogous to the ones we employed to search using Nexidia, as well as more generalized possibilities for the rules. For example, there were approximately 3348 initial rule possibilities created from the change  $\theta \rightarrow t$  and 7254 created from  $\delta \rightarrow d$ . The strengths and weaknesses of each system will be discussed and possibilities for creating a hybrid system emphasizing each system's strengths will be outlined.

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## ENGLISH PHONETIC AND PRONUNCIATION RESOURCES FOR POLISH LEARNERS IN THE PAST AND AT PRESENT

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This paper is an attempt to present the contribution of Polish practitioners and theoreticians to teaching English phonetics and pronunciation to Polish learners of English. In this analysis, which is far from being a critical review, we plan to examine books with a contrastive Polish-English phonetic component and/or aimed at a Polish reader. We take into consideration resources written over a period of nearly 90 years, from Benni (1924) to Porzuczek et al. (2013). *(Although a considerable effort has been made to include as many representative phonetic publications as possible, we realize that the list of the books under discussion, comprehensive as it is hoped, is not a complete one. It is based on the resources that were available to the author. Should the reader be aware of any other material that could be included in this examination, please do not hesitate to contact the author).* Our analysis encompasses the most-favoured standards of English by Poles, i.e. Received Pronunciation and General American.

Although all the examined resources share a unifying theme of English phonetics they differ in many respects, such as: the scope of discussion (a rudimentary introduction to, or a comprehensive course in, English pronunciation), the choice of model variety (Received Pronunciation, presented in most of the selected literature, or General American), objectives (a textbook, a practice book or both), the targeted audience, (an average English learner / intermediate reader or a university student in an English Department), the language of instruction (English or Polish) as well as the accompanying materials (recordings on tapes, CDs or DVDs).

Most of the above-mentioned textbooks include a selection of useful additional phonetic materials, e.g. Sobkowiak's (1995) well-known list of words commonly mispronounced, Porzuczek et al.'s (2013) list of English vowels and diphthongs in different contexts; Sawala et al.'s (2009) list of loanwords etc.

We also take a closer, contrastive look at one selected feature, which is the TRAP vowel in a sample of six textbooks to examine how this issue has been tackled at different times, by different authors over the period of nine decades, and also to see whether the treatment of it was affected by any trend in EFL methodology.

It is hoped that this analysis apart from reviewing the phonetic literature will also encourage some readers to familiarize themselves with pioneering or recent teaching resources that have been published in Poland.

## ON HOW HAPPY POLISH ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS ARE WITH HAPPY-TENSING

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The latter part of the 20th century witnessed several regional features becoming part of the mainstream RP. One of them is happY-tensing, a term coined by Wells (1982), which reflects tensing of the word-final unstressed vowel orthographically represented as -y, -ie, and -i (more rarely, -ee, -ey, and -ea) (Fabricius 2002). HappY-tensing is traditionally observed in the pronunciations of speakers from the south-east of England. However, it is now reported to be spreading northwards (Trudgill 1999). This vowel quality shift posits no danger to English phonology, as the KIT–FLEECE distinction is neutralised in this position.

Sociolinguistic descriptions have been followed by instrumental studies, which, by and large, substantiate impressionistic observations by proving the quality of happY to be intermediate between KIT and FLEECE, at times closer resembling the latter (Fabricius 2002, Harrington 2006). Though tense, happY is generally short, yet prosodic conditioning surely exerts its influence here (significant length is expected phrase-finally). As of Wells (1990), this intermediate vowel quality has been conventionally transcribed as /i/ (but, e.g. /ɪ:/ in Harrington 2006). Contributions on L2 acquisition and the teaching of happY are only few, and these have been concerned with teaching and transcription suggestions (Ćubrović 2007, Herment 2010, Wells 2012). To the best of our knowledge, however, phonetic data on non-native (or, at least Polish) happY productions are lacking. The aim of the present study is therefore to fill this gap by systematically investigating the quality and quantity of happY produced by Polish advanced learners of British English. Following Fabricius (2002), three phonetic contexts will be examined, viz. prevocalic, preconsonantal, and prepausal. HappY will then be compared with the participants' productions of KIT and FLEECE and plotted on the vowel space. It will also be interesting to see if the Polish participants are able to produce a tensor vowel without recourse to greater duration, given the observed tendency for Poles (at least those not proficient in English) to associate greater vowel length with spectral characteristics of FLEECE (Bogacka 2004).

This talk will conclude with a warning against leaving happY unaddressed in EFL classroom. Suggestions will also be made concerning possible ways to teach Polish learners how to deal with pronunciation of this vowel.

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## SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE INTONATION PATTERNS OF WELSH-ENGLISH BILINGUALS FROM ARFON AND ANGLESEY

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This piece of research was conducted to fill a research gap within the field of Welsh sociophonetic bilingualism, more specifically, with regards to the sociolinguistics behind intonation pattern choice in Welsh-English simultaneous bilinguals.

Previous research focuses on intonation patterns in the South of Wales (Pilch, 1975; Connolly, 1981; Tench, 1990) with no published research on the North, for either Welsh or Welsh English. In this, the use of fall-rises is considered as common for Welsh speakers, along with a wave pattern, termed "saw-toothed head" by Thomas (1967), both found in the data given in this thesis.

A questionnaire was given to five Welsh-English bilinguals which gleaned information on their use of Welsh and English in different environments such as education and the home. It also asked about attitudes to Welsh and the participants' self-professed abilities in communicative Welsh (speaking, reading and writing). Alongside this, the participants were recorded reading a children's story book, firstly with the words and pictures and then with just the pictures. This was done to increase the spontaneity of the speech, especially in the second, recalled condition. The stressed syllables were annotated using the Intonational Variation in English (IViE) method of analysis. In total, 208 intonational phrases were analysed with 507 stressed syllables annotated.

Overall, the use of L\*H was the highest across all of the participants in both conditions with H\*L being the second most common. The most interesting finding was that of the inverted downstep !L\*H which is something that has not previously been recorded. However this feature was rare in the speech of the participants. The usage of typically Welsh intonation patterns seemed to be linked to dominance factors, more specifically the medium of education although there were also some links to language attitude and the language used with peers. This research goes some way to filling the large void in North Wales English phonology.

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## INVESTIGATING THE USE OF PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES IN FORM-FOCUSED AND MEANING-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

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In spite of some advances that have been made in recent years, the use of pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) still remains an area in urgent need of empirical investigation. In addition, most of the available studies have relied on questionnaires filled out by respondents with respect to their general strategic actions and thoughts rather than the use of such strategies in the performance of specific learning tasks. The present paper contributes to the scant body of empirical evidence in this area by reporting the results of a study which explored the use of pronunciation strategies by 30 English majors enrolled in a BA program. The participants were requested to perform two activities focusing on pronunciation features, one of which was explicitly focused on form and the other on meaning. The data were collected by means of questionnaires distributed immediately after the two tasks in two different classes. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that, despite their level and experience, the students used a rather limited repertoire of PLS, some of which were not very effective, which points to the need for training in this area.

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## REPAIR STRATEGIES IN ONLINE ADAPTATION OF POLISH CCC CONSONANT CLUSTERS BY NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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The repair strategies applied in loanword adaptation at the phonotactic level include vowel insertion, consonant deletion and cluster modification. The selection of a repair may be co-determined by a number of factors, such as the position of an illicit phonotactic structure in a word, the segmental makeup of a consonant cluster etc. In Radomski (2014) we report on an online loanword adaptation experiment in which 30 native speakers of British English reproduced Polish words with CC consonant clusters which do not occur in English. The article in question examines the role of



several factors in online adaptation of Polish obstruent-obstruent sequences. It is demonstrated that the position of a cluster in a word influences the choice of a repair strategy, with word-initial clusters being adapted via epenthesis, word-final ones via cluster modification and deletion being very infrequent in both cases. Furthermore, the segmental structure of a CC sequence is shown to play some role in that epenthesis applies most frequently to clusters of voiced obstruents, deletion is dispreferred, except for sequences of voiceless non-strident fricatives, and cluster modification is most common in the adaptation of voiceless CC structures with an affricate. All these results seem to support the perceptual similarity view on loanword adaptation, according to which agents of adaptation maximize the perceptual similarity between source items and the output of adaptation by applying strategies which result in the least perceptible deviations from the source as possible.

In this paper, which is a follow-up to Radomski (in press), we report on another online loanword adaptation experiment in which 15 native speakers of the southern variety of British English were asked to repeat a set of Polish words containing CCC consonant clusters which do not occur in English. More specifically, we aim to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Does the position of a cluster in a word (word-initial vs. word-final) influence the selection of a repair strategy?
- Does the selection of a repair strategy depend on the segmental structure of a cluster?
- Which approach to loanword adaptation best accounts for the patterns found in the data?

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## PRIMING DIFFERENCES IN ACCENT RATING AS A FUNCTION OF INDUCED BELIEFS ABOUT SPEAKERS' PROFICIENCY

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The studies on foreign accent rating have demonstrated that the actual scores registered for selected samples of foreign-accented speech may be influenced by a number of factors. Those factors concentrating on the raters themselves usually indicate the recruitment of native or non-native judges, raters' familiarity with foreign accents or dialects, experience with evaluating accentedness, and training received prior to the rating session. In the current study we explore the possibility that scoring may also depend on the judges' beliefs about the proficiency of rated speakers. In other

words, we assume that if beliefs about proficiency of speakers contribute the judges' ratings, then the same speakers will receive different ratings when presented as high vs. low proficiency learners.

The recordings of four Polish learners of English with perceivable traces of Polish accent were presented to two groups other Polish learners serving as judges. Each group consisting of 17 listeners listened to the four speakers reading a text passage. The critical manipulation was that the first group was primed to believe that the speakers were pre- to intermediate learners while the second group was primed to believe that the speakers were university students at the English Department. The speakers were rated on a 1-7 scale for accentedness and communicativeness. The results revealed significant differences in ratings for accentedness but not communicativeness between the two groups. This points to the fact that judges' beliefs about rated speakers are another variable that must be consistently controlled in studies on foreign accent rating.

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### **DO SINGERS SOUND BETTER? ACCENT RATING OF SUNG VERSUS READ SPEECH**

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Singing has an observable influence on perceived accent. Singers such as Mick Jagger, Elton John, Rod Stewart, Phil Collins and George Michael give interviews with recognizable British accent, but when they sing they produce many elements characteristic for American accent. Adele speaks with a very heavy cockney accent, but when she sings all those features are lost. Using an example of non-native speakers, the Swedish band ABBA could sing with a decent and pleasant accent despite the fact it in interviews their Swedish accent was discernible. While the reasons for accent change in singing have been debated by both linguists and popular press, in the current study we investigate if this singing-induced accent change is reflected in accent ratings. In other words, we seek to find if a non-native speaker will be rated as more native while singing compared to speaking using exactly the same text.

A Polish qualified musician read two text passages in English that revealed a number of detectable Polish features in his English pronunciation. Next, he was asked to prepare two sung versions of the same text, one accompanied by the keyboard and the other by the guitar. Two groups of Polish advanced learners of English judged accent and comprehensibility of presented recordings. The groups were counterbalanced, in that one judge never heard both the read and sung version of the same text. The results were expected to show if accent ratings would be significantly different for the read and sung version of the same text and thus reveal the extent to which singing influences the perception of accentedness in a foreign language.

## THE PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH *SANDHI* LINKING BY L1 POLISH LEARNERS

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Our recent research has investigated the production of *sandhi* linking processes involving vowel-initial words in the speech of Polish learners of English (e.g. Schwartz et al. 2013). *Sandhi* linking is widespread in English, observable in both V#V and C#V sequences (see e.g. Cruttenden 2001). By contrast, *sandhi* linking is largely absent from Polish. Polish word boundaries are frequently reinforced by glottalization of initial vowels (Schwartz 2013a), while in English glottalization is less prevalent, typically used for emphasis or as a marker of phrase boundaries (Dilley et al. 1996).

In this paper we address the question of Polish learners' perception of linking in L2 English. Two groups of participants, first year and advanced students, are exposed to pairs of linked and glottalized C#V and V#V sequences in a word monitoring task. A target word is presented and learners are instructed to respond when they hear the target word in a recorded sentence. Reaction times are measured. Our research hypotheses were as follows.

- Advanced learners are expected to be faster in monitoring vowel-initial words
- Proficiency-based differences in reaction time are expected to be diminished in the case of glottalized tokens

Preliminary results provide limited support for these hypotheses. Implications of our study for L2 phonological acquisition and phonological theory will also be discussed. With regard to the former, our study will shed light on the sometimes problematic notion of phonological similarity that is crucial for models of L2 speech (e.g. Flege 1995); it is not entirely clear where vowel glottalization might fall on scales of cross-language phonetic distance. With regard to the latter, we shall argue that phonology should have ways of accounting for different boundary formation mechanisms across languages. In the Onset Prominence framework (Schwartz 2013b), the absence of *sandhi* linking in Polish and its presence in English are associated with independently motivated representational parameters.

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## **THE EFFECTS OF PRONUNCIATION TRAINING. ENGLISH CONSONANTS AND VOWELS BY DUTCH LEARNERS BEFORE AND AFTER A PRONUNCIATION COURSE**

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Amongst all second-language skills, pronunciation seems to be in a league of its own. It is difficult to teach and acquire as it is a highly intuitive and physiological skill. This study focuses on the field of second language pronunciation and its interaction with formal instruction. It examines the effects of pronunciation training on native Dutch learners' production of certain problematic vowels and consonants of British English. Recordings of the phonemes before and after the course were the source of information.

Specific consonants were transcribed and differences were found, some of which constituted improvement, while others did not. In almost half the cases where progress was needed, it occurred. For certain consonants, however, pronunciation training did not seem necessary. Our results show that this is true for /θ/. Its voiced counterpart, /ð/, on the other hand, along with syllable-final /d/ and /v/, proved to be more challenging. There were no patterns when it comes to type of consonant and degree of success, in the sense that certain pronunciation qualities (for instance place or manner of articulation) were easier than others. For the vowels, acoustic measurements were done. The F1 and F2 values – showing degree of vowel openness and front/back-ness, respectively – before and after training showed that an individual learner's progress in the production of one vowel does not necessarily imply equal success in another. The results suggest that Dutch learners should focus more on vowel openness than on front/back-ness.

Types of learners could be distinguished; while most learners improved, others stagnated or regressed. In future courses, learner types could be established on the basis of starting level: expert judgements at the onset of the course may be used to split learners up into different groups. The more successful students at the start of the course benefit less from such a course and could do with more practice material, more

detailed explanation, and higher pronunciation aims, including prosodic ones. Weaker students could be taught fewer sounds with more emphasis on intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation. Such a selection of students is not common practice but might be beneficial for all involved.

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## PODCASTS AS A TOOL FOR FACILITATING INCIDENTAL ACQUISITION OF PRONUNCIATION

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In recent years, podcasts have been used to promote the development of the listening and speaking skills of EFL students. Research studies into the use of podcasts as a teaching and learning tool demonstrate that they are viewed positively by the students (O'Bryan and Hegelheimer 2006, Lee and Chan 2007), yet empirical research on podcasting projects specific to pronunciation is relatively scarce (see, for example, Tavales and Skevoulis 2006, Lord 2008, Ducate and Lomicka 2009).

The following study reports on the facilitative role of podcasts in the acquisition of pronunciation features of English as a foreign language at the English Philology undergraduate level.

The study aims to investigate whether extensive exposure to English podcasts has any bearing on the development of learners' pronunciation. In particular, we are interested in the following areas of English pronunciation: a) vowel quality, b) strong and weak forms, c) accentedness, d) some aspects of connected speech.

Recordings of individual words, short stretches of connected speech and open ended speaking tasks were made at the beginning of the experiment and again after the three-month treatment. The study was two-fold as it comprised both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Acoustic analysis of vowels was conducted before and after the treatment in order to gauge whether there exist significant differences in formant frequencies as well as whether the participant accommodate to the model found in the podcast. Then seven native speaker judges assessed the performance of the speakers to determine whether the treatment had any impact on participants' production of strong and weak forms, connected speech and accentedness.

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## THE WORD-FINAL *FORTIS*-*LENIS* DISTINCTION IN NATIVE AND CZECH-ACCENTED ENGLISH

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Foreign-accented English is hardly a matter of a single acoustic quality, with multiple dimensions presumed to contribute, in various degrees, to the perception of foreign accent. However, it is possible to pinpoint some salient features that are typical of a given L2 accent: for instance, Czech speakers tend to produce the /æ/ vowels more close than native speakers [1] or they incorrectly assimilate voicing of word-final obstruents [2]. Moreover, there are also prosodic divergences from L1 English concerning, for example, local prominence contrasts between stressed and unstressed syllables [3].

In this study, we focus on the production of words with a fortis *vs.* lenis obstruent in the syllable coda. Unlike in Czech, which has a considerable agreement between phonological and phonetic voicing, English lenis obstruents like /b z dʒ/ are partially or even completely devoiced in many contexts [4: 99ff.], [5: 26ff.]. However, the contrast between fortis and lenis sounds is maintained in the preceding vowel: vocalic nuclei before fortis obstruents are substantially shorter than before lenis obstruents [6], [7]. We can thus still differentiate between the words *lap* and *lab*, even though the final obstruent may in both cases be produced without any phonetic voicing.

The aim of the current study is to investigate the production of the fortis-lenis contrast in native and Czech-accented English. We examined two Czech and two Standard British speakers of English (one male and one female for each language), since it essentially constitutes a preparatory stage for the perceptual testing of specific features of Czech English. They read a set of carefully controlled paired sentences in which the target word with either a fortis or a lenis final obstruent appeared (16 pairs in total for each speaker); these sentences will subsequently be subjected to acoustic manipulations to assess the perceptual impact of vowel duration on the identity of the

final obstruent. That is why we focused on both quantitative and qualitative analyses of our data.

The results show that the Czech-accented and native speakers differ both in temporal characteristics of the syllable rhyme (the Czech speakers do not sufficiently exploit duration to cue the identity of the word-final obstruent, cf. [8]) and in the degree of voicing of the coda obstruents (they tend to produce the phonologically voiceless and voiced sounds without any voicing). The presentation will include a detailed discussion of the qualitative aspects of the data.

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## PRIMING AS A MECHANISM BEHIND THE TEMPORARY ADOPTION OF FOREIGN PHONETIC FEATURES INTO ONE'S FIRST LANGUAGE: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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The aim of the present experiment was to investigate the possible role of priming, “a non-conscious form of memory that involves a change in a person’s ability to identify, produce or classify an item as a result of a previous encounter with that item or a related item” (Schacter, Dobbins, and Schnyer, 2004, p. 853), as an underlying mechanism of what is known as phonetic convergence. More specifically, this paper taps into the question of whether it is possible to adopt even features of a foreign accent into one’s first language (L1) upon an exposure to foreign accented L1 speech.

Research in the field of first language attrition has shown that it indeed is possible to incorporate phonetic features of a foreign accent into one’s L1 or cease to be perceived as a native speaker altogether (e.g. Major, 1992; Latomaa, 1998; Sučková, 2012) but what exactly the mechanism behind this phenomenon is and how fast the changes happen is far from clear. Auditory priming research has shown that various phonetic and phonological features may be primed in both monolinguals and bilinguals (e.g.

Shockley, Sabadini, and Fowler, 2004; Theodore and Miller, 2010; Nielsen, 2011). The present experiment investigates whether listening to an L1 text with L2 long-lag voice onset times in phoneme /p/ induces the subsequent L1 production with the said L2 phoneme variant.

30 Czech female students of English participated in the experiment. The first task consisted of re-telling a simple story in order to establish the participants' VOT baseline. In the second task, the participants were again asked to retell a story, but this time they heard it through headphones. In the control condition, the recording contained Czech short-lag initial prevocalic /p/ VOTs; the treatment condition recording featured long-lag (L2) /p/ VOTs which were hypothesized to get subsequently adopted by the participants. However, 2x2 ANOVA revealed that interaction effect between treatment and time (pre-test, post-test) was not statistically significant.

The results of this experiment seem to suggest that priming does not play as significant a role in adoption of a foreign accent into one's L1 (possibly a more intense exposure is required and it is long-term memory that is involved). Perhaps more importantly, however, this experiment, designed with increased ecological validity in mind, failed to replicate conventional auditory priming experiments, in which the participants were typically asked to shadow individual words or even sounds out of any communicative context, casting a slight doubt over the validity of tightly-controlled laboratory designs involving word lists.

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## ON THE MISPERCEPTION OF DIASPORIC SPEECH GROUPS: INSIGHTS FROM PROSODIC CUES

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Variationist studies in sociolinguistic and sociophonetic fields have brought insights into how some speech styles (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Hinrichs, 2011; Todd, 2014) and even lexical items (Heller, 1995; Baxter and Peters, 2012) can be adapted to fall more in line with local norms. Still, it has been implied that 'perfect' second/subsequent



language acquisition is likely to be an ongoing (if not unachievable) task, in phonetic terms (Riney and Flege, 1998; Ingels, 2010). This work moves on to progressively consider another important issue which appears to be under-researched in the literature — thus, speaker identity and the incidence of listener misperception is investigated.

The study reveals that inter-ethnic differences can give rise to inferences quite removed from any the respective speaker intended. It evidences how unfavourable (social) outcomes are likely to be produced if certain types of speakers use the ‘right words’ but inadvertently use the ‘wrong way’ to say those same words. The English speech being considered for this study is non-stereotypical, in ethnic terms. Furthermore, the non-native/diasporic speakers are highly-proficient users of the target language. Consequently, the work provides us with a wider appreciation of foreign speech prosody; some cognitive processes behind language maintenance/attrition; and others’ conceptions of certain speech communities.

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## ON THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE APTITUDE, PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND PRONUNCIATION PERFORMANCE

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In pronunciation language learning research, Language Learning Strategies (LLSs henceforth), pronunciation teaching/learning, and language aptitude are areas which have received a good deal of attention over the last three decades, although not in equal measure (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003; Grenfell and Macaro, 2007; Norton and Toohey, 2001; Ranta, 2008; Safar and Kormos, 2008). These three variables seemed to have followed rather parallel pathways with scant connecting reference to one another. Put differently, a good deal

of research into LLSs is available, yet very little is known about what the actual Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLSs) are, their use, their relationship with language aptitude, and their influence on L2 pronunciation development. Thus, the main objective of this presentation is to establish whether or not there is a relationship between (foreign) language aptitude, Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLSs), and pronunciation performance. Also, embedded in the major objective is the aim of uncovering which PLSs are most frequently used and which PLSs have been used for the longest period of time.

The study was conducted at a teacher education university in Chile, with a sample of 43 students, 24 of whom were Year 2 students and 19 were Year 3 students at the time of data collection. All participants were asked to take three tests, wherein each of them was intended to gather data for each of the three major variables under consideration. An adapted version of the *Strategic Pronunciation Learning Survey* (SPLS), aimed to gather data concerning both frequency and duration of use of a set of 36 strategies was first administered; later, the participants were to take the first two sections of the *Modern Language Aptitude Test* (MLAT); finally, a Pronunciation Test (PT), developed by the researcher, was administered to the sample. The results suggest the most frequently used PLSs are largely of a cognitive nature and directly relate to the language (pronunciation) learning process, which correspond to the *direct* learning strategies, following Oxford (1990). Additionally, it was found that the strategies that the participants have used for the longest period of time seem to be roughly the same as the ones they employ more regularly. Finally, no major correlations between language aptitude and pronunciation performance was found; the same applies to the relationship between PLS use and pronunciation performance.

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## **SPEECH MELODY PROPERTIES IN ENGLISH, CZECH AND CZECH ENGLISH**

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Speech melody fulfils a number of important functions in the sound structure of languages (Ladd, 1996; Cruttenden, 1997; Gussenhoven, 2004). Naturally, foreign-accented speech displays excursions from the native patterns in this area, too (Hirst, 2013). F0 tracks extracted from the speech signal can be used for forensic purposes (Hollien, 2002) in applications for automatic detection of foreign-accented speech. However, to an intonologist, this acoustic approach does not provide much information about the melodic shapes. Despite the advancements in the research on the relationship between acoustic cues and perceptual effects (Hermes, 2006) many scholars believe that F0 equals intonation. The goal of this study is to show that perceptual impressions regarding melodies in foreign-accented speech can be explained through a detailed look at the actual contour shapes and their alignment with the segmental chains.

A popular consensus of both native and proficient non-native listeners concerning the melody of Czech English is that it sounds flat and monotonous, as if signalling boredom or lack of involvement. We wanted to provide some rigorous descriptors of the underlying F0 tracks and see if they support this view. Moreover, we sought a confirmation of the ‘interference hypothesis’ through comparison of native Czech and native English data with the data extracted from Czech English speech production.

Our original material (Czech and English non-professional speakers, Volín and Weingartová, 2014) was expanded by 12 news bulletins in Czech read by Czech professional news readers and 12 news bulletins in English read by English professionals to obtain benchmark measures. F0 tracks were extracted by autocorrelation method, manually corrected and processed to obtain twelve F0 descriptors. Czech speakers differed from the English ones in a number of them. For instance, the Czech professionals produced F0 range of less than 10 semitones, the English speakers produced variation range more than two semitones wider. Surprisingly, speakers of Czech English did not always fall in between the two figures, but sometimes even exceeded the native English values. Therefore, our material was expanded by recording and analysing a set of over a hundred of English sentences read by both target groups.

Our results show that ‘the devil is in detail’. While the overall F0 descriptors revealed some but concealed other differences, the detailed measures provided more

direct evidence about the intonation structure of Czech, English and Czech English, and suggested explanation of the perceptual impact of Czech English intonation.

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## WORD-FREQUENCY AS A PREDICTOR OF DIFFICULTY: THE CASE OF WORD-STRESS PATTERN RECOGNITION BY ADVANCED LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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The study reported here investigates correct vs. incorrect stress-pattern recognition by advanced Polish learners of English with basic vs. extended phonetic training. The level of difficulty has been assumed to correspond to the frequency of test words as provided by the list of words commonly mispronounced (Sobkowiak 1996). In the study, 10 most frequent words creating conditions for difficulty due to L1 transfer and overgeneralization have been selected from the list and recorded in a random order with correct and incorrect stress pattern, as provided in phonetic transcription by the list; 100 students divided into two groups depending on their explicit phonetic training experience were asked to decide on the correctness of the stress pattern in the words they heard. With word frequency expected to function as a major variable, other factors, such as the level of extended phonetic training, the source of difficulty (L1 transfer vs. overgeneralization) and the effect of the length of the words (two vs. three syllables) have been explored. The results support an overall effect of word frequency on the difficulty of stress-pattern recognition; however, several cases call for individual treatment, such as the case of ‘anatomy’, an infrequent word that proved relatively easy in perception, possibly due to its frequency in learners’ language experience (the title of a popular series *Grey’s Anatomy*). Moreover, the relationship between incorrect stress-pattern recognition and language advancement suggests a possible diagnostic role of an erroneous production recognition. Thus, the study makes a case for yet another reason to study phonolapsology in second language phonetics.

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**BETWEEN 'POLGLISH' AND NATIVE PRONUNCIATION:  
WHAT ENGLISH STUDIES MAJORS THINK OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ACCENTS**

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This paper is a continuation of a series of reports on the results of a large-scale questionnaire study which shows the attitudes of advanced Polish learners of English to various aspects of L1 and L2 pronunciation variety and norms in correspondence to the level of studies (BA vs. MA) and gender. Our research to date indicates the learners' desire to pursue a native pronunciation model and eliminate any L1 accent features. This approach appears less radical in MA compared to BA students and in male subjects, who also assess their own English pronunciation less critically with respect to the level of Polish-accentedness. In this report we also provide evidence for education level and gender-related differences in the students' tolerance of pronunciation variety (or deviation). Generally, the respondents did not express a firm conviction that all native accents of Polish and English are/are not equally correct. Furthermore, there was an observable tendency to accept phonetic diversity in native English more often than in native Polish speech.

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**EMOTIONAL APPROACH IN BRITISH VOWEL ACQUISITION**

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The aim of the article is to demonstrate that the process of teaching English pronunciation is not just a mental process, but also physical and emotional. Taking advantage of the achievements derived from disciplines such as psychophysiology and psychology of emotions, it is shown that working on a body and engaging specific emotions can serve the purpose of useful tools for classroom work. The paper tries to explore and put into practice the notion of sensory feedback, emotions perceived as stimuli for cognitive processes and memory, and facial expressions as an aid for the acquisition of British vowels. An attempt is made to examine how conscious manipulation of facial expressions allows for a faster and more accurate acquisition of British vowels by learners regardless of their native language and the culture they have been raised in. The research and its results are presented in detail in the paper.

## ACCOMMODATION OF L2 VOT VALUES TO NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE INTERLOCUTORS

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Accommodation can be described as the phenomenon of adjusting one's speech towards the speech of another individual in the process of social interaction (e.g. Giles et al., 1991 ). Previous studies on phonetic accommodation in non-native speech have examined the phenomenon by focusing on interactions between speakers communicating in the same L2 (e.g. Trofimovich and Kennedy, 2014; Trofimovich et al., 2014) or interactions between L2 learners and native speakers (e.g. Beebe, 1981; Zuengler, 1982; Lewandowski, 2012). An interesting aspect of phonetic accommodation that remains yet to be explored is the comparison of convergence strategies in the two types of interaction. The aim of the current study was to address this issue by investigating whether the magnitude of phonetic accommodation in L2 speech varies as a function of the interlocutor being a native or a non-native speaker. Additionally, the study tested a new experimental method, where a controlled, laboratory-based design was modified to contain elements of social interaction (the presence of an interlocutor). The participants were 25 Polish learners of English recruited from the University of Łódź. The phonetic variables under investigation were voicing lag values in English /p t k/ and voicing lead values in English /b d g/. The participants were instructed to listen to stop-initial tokens provided by two model talkers (a native speaker of English and a native Polish user of English) and then asked to read the tokens for the two model talkers to listen to at a later time (thus making the model talkers act as interlocutors). The results of the study suggest that the magnitude of accommodation was conditioned by the native/non-native status of the interlocutor and was interrelated with the subjects' attitude towards L2 pronunciation. It was also found that convergence patterns differed according to phonetic feature, indicating that accommodation was linguistically-selective.

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## COMPILING A CORPUS-BASED LIST OF WORDS COMMONLY MISPRONOUNCED

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The inspiration for the paper was the list of Words Commonly Mispronounced (Sobkowiak, 2001), a collection of over six hundred pronunciation errors that are habitually made by Polish learners of English. The paper explores the ways in which lists such as Words Commonly Mispronounced could be “upgraded” using corpus linguistic tools. The paper describes the results obtained in a previous study (Zajac and Pezik, 2012), whose aim was to compile a corpus-based index of frequent mispronunciations in the speech of Polish learners of English and which used data from the spoken component of the Polish Learner English Corpus PLEC (<http://pelcra.pl/plec/>). The paper discusses the list obtained by Zajac and Pezik (2012), describes and evaluates the process of creating the list, and compares the corpus-based index with Words Commonly Mispronounced. The difficulties related to the compilation of lists of common mispronunciations (both corpus-based and “traditional”) are also examined. The general conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis is that employing corpus linguistic tools to examine L2 pronunciation errors may enable one to create a thorough and reliable collection of commonly mispronounced words, which can constitute an effective and powerful tool in pronunciation teaching and learning. At the same time, careful examination of the corpus-based list and the process of its creation reveal that, just as in the case of compiling a list of common mispronunciations using “traditional” methods, creating a corpus-based index of pronunciation errors entails certain problems that need to be addressed when attempting to produce such a list.

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Pronunciation research and pedagogy are receiving a great deal of attention in many languages lately (for example PTLT, EPIP, New Sounds, PSLT, Accents, ACTA, and the IATEFL and TESOL Special Interest Section conferences and events). This renewed interest in pronunciation instruction has strong references to instructional technology and computer-assisted pronunciation instruction (for a discussion see Tanner and Landon 2009, AbuSeileek 2007, Levis 2007, Neri et al. 2008). This presentation will discuss what learners can do to improve their English language proficiency with an emphasis on pronunciation, termed as the “Cinderella” of ELT (Kelly 1969, Dalton 1997, Underhill 2013). Although pronunciation has been neglected in the past in terms of foreign language instruction (McDonald 2002), there is a renewed interest in promoting and improving pronunciation, moving from segmental phonology teaching to integrating pronunciation in the curriculum (Keys 2012, Gilbert 2008). This presentation will give an overview of recent trends and directions in practicing pronunciation in terms of instructional technology and web-based resources: Online dictionaries, social networking services, file sharing resources and finally mobile and tablet applications.

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## WRITTEN REPRESENTATION OF DIALECTS IN MIDDLE ENGLISH: THE CASE OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN VERSIONS OF *MANDEVILLE'S TRAVELS*

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The main reason for dialectal diversity in the Middle English period was lack of a "standard" variety (Crystal 2004). As scribes were trying to illustrate the way people spoke, it can be assumed that orthographic variation in Middle English texts was a reflection of people's pronunciation (McIntyre 2009). The most noticeable contrast was observed between northern and southern regions – not only distinct from each other in space, but also subjected to diverse linguistic influences (Milroy 1992).

This study aims to investigate the spelling of two geographically different versions of the Late Middle English text *Mandeville's Travels* (northern – *Egerton MS.*, and East Midland – *Cotton Titus MS.*; both copies dated c. 1420), and to check to what extent they are consistent as far as the use of typical northern/southern forms is concerned. For the purpose of the study a small parallel corpus comprising c. 7200 words was created, thanks to which it was possible to observe variation between the two texts. The criteria concerning phonology/spelling were based on Freeborn (1992) and Milroy (1992), and included the following features: 1) the use of <a,aa>/<o,oo>, 2) the use of <k>/<ch>, 3) the use of <qu->/<wh->, 4) the use of <s,sse>/<ssche>, and 5) the use of <p>/<th>.

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## POLISH MISPRONUNCIATIONS

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English and Polish accentual patterns differ significantly: in English stress is a distinctive feature, whereas in Polish there is a general tendency to stress the penultimate syllable. The stress patterns of some English words cannot be predicted on the basis of their lexical and morphological features. Even though some rules exist, there are numerous exceptions. Furthermore, English is a stress-timed language, whose syllables differ significantly in length, whereas in Polish syllables are the basic metric units, the difference in duration is less significant than the change of pitch and volume (Waniek-Klimczak 2002, p. 221). Therefore, in the beginning, Polish learners tend to be quite insensitive to quantity – the fact that heavy syllables are more likely stressed. In addition, a large number of errors result from the fact that learners frequently guess the pronunciation of a word on the basis of its spelling. For instance, they may not know which syllable is reduced, whether “i” should be long, short, or pronounced as the diphthong /ai/. In some cases they can even be misled about the number of syllables a particular word has.

The research is based on a recording of selected words from the list of commonly mispronounced words created by Sobkowiak (2001, p. 350). Most of the chosen words are quite rare, assigning stress correctly is supposed to be challenging for advanced learners of English.

The aim is to analyze why certain words tend to be mispronounced and what strategies Polish learners use to assign stress to particular syllables: how quickly they memorize the stress patterns of new vocabulary items, and to what extent they are likely to compute stress on the basis of lexical category of the word, its morphological structure, and the length of its syllables.

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