NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ACCENTS OF ENGLISH: DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE IN A PHONETIC PERSPECTIVE.
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Abstract
The text reviews selected current issues related to native and non-native accents of English, including the status of English as a global language, the value of varieties of English and the question of a possible supremacy of one accent over other varieties. The text links theoretical and applied issues addressing the question of which variety should be used in EFL education. Focusing on the phonetic dimension it weights the conflicting reasons given in classic works, such as Kachru's and McArthur's to eventually point to novel research programmes as exemplified in other texts included in the special issues of *Research in Language*, i.e. vol. 20, issues 1 and 2, most of which were inspired by Accents 2021, an annual conference organised by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics, Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz, Poland.

1. Introduction

Globalisation, mass media, commerce, social media and worldwide tourism have greatly contributed to the development of English as a lingua franca (ELF), or a global language, which serves the broadly-understood communicative purposes. The attempts to create an artificial language (Esperanto) failed and it did not take root in the international tradition. The rapid changes in the 19th and 20th centuries (British industrialism, American economic development) contributed to the natural choice of English as the language to fulfil the role and to become the international medium for communication not only among native speakers but first and foremost between speakers of other languages. Even though the number of Mandarin Chinese native speakers exceeds that of English (Vistawide.com), still according to the Eurobarometer Survey, it is English that has become the most

commonly used language in the world. Furthermore, English is widely recognised as the first language in the European Union even despite the fact that the European Commission promotes and advocates multilingualism as the core concept behind international communication.

The need to communicate for reasons such as travel, trade or entertainment has never been stronger in the history of civilisation than it is nowadays. This growing need unquestionably affects the educational dimension in most countries in the world. As was observed by Graddol (2006), English has undergone a transition from merely being taught as a foreign language to becoming a basic and fundamental skill. It has discredited other foreign languages in many European countries (Crystal, 2003; Vuković-Vojnović and Nićin, 2012). From a Polish perspective, it would be difficult to find a school (primary or secondary), in which English is not taught as the first, the most predominant, popular and desired foreign language. The global and ubiquitous need for English as well as the fact that more and more non-native speakers assert that they can speak the language must all have an impact on both learning and teaching English as a foreign language and thus they should be integrated within the language teaching syllabi and curricula. Thus, there is a constantly growing field of both practical and theoretical actions and investigations into English in its variety.

Learner needs' analysis emerges as the most relevant component of foreign language syllabus planning as it is crucial in developing tasks and exercises that will be tailored to the learner needs and will cater for their expectations, especially in the private tuition sector, where, more than in any other state educational context, the students/learners obtain the possibility and the right to decide, at least partially, on the content of the classes. Tourism is a large economic sector, which itself may comprise a number of reasons why learners wish to acquire English. They might be travellers who enjoy globetrotting and visiting different places, they might travel for business, or they may be employed in the branch of economy dealing with tourist services and tourist assistance. All these different linguistic contexts require varied degrees of their command of English, and all might assume communication with both native and non-native speakers of English. Discussing the English education for tourist purposes, one should make a distinction between different groups of learners and their goals. In the tourism industry itself there are employees who need basic and rudimentary knowledge of the language to discuss housekeeping, and room attendance; whereas managerial positions will require negotiation skills, presentation skills, language for business meetings with partners and also clients or hotel guests (Vuković-Vojnović and Nićin, 2012). Tourists, on the other hand, may also display a number of reasons for learning English. Some might only want to communicate in the hotel, while others may desire more proficiency in order to absorb the culture, visit museums and galleries or participate in cultural events and mingle with the locals.

2. English and Englishes in the modern world

With the growing demand for English and the rapidly increasing number of users of English worldwide, the phenomenon of the so-called World Englishes (Jenkins, 2003) has become an interesting starting point for the discussion on language ownership and linguistic-cultural interdependence. The very name of World Englishes may raise controversy due to the uncommon and awkward use of the plural form with reference to the English language. Evidently, the term is supposed to cover many varieties of English all over the world, and explicitly emphasise the variety as a significant and natural phenomenon. It legitimises their existence and emphasises their equality without outlining the dominance of any particular model of English over others or indicating one as more legitimate, more "proper". In a much-quoted model, Kachru (1986) distinguishes between three circles of the varieties of English: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. He suggests that the Inner Circle comprises English varieties as used in countries where English is the first and native language, i.e. countries such as the USA, Canada and Great Britain. The Outer Circle refers mainly to former British colonies, where English became the official language and thus it includes such countries as for example India or Nigeria. The first two circles, therefore, are considered to house historically legitimate varieties of English. The Expanding Circle, on the other hand, points to places with varieties such as Japanese English, Chinese English, Polish English, etc., which developed as a result of the learning process, and therefore they are norm-dependent and commonly labelled as 'learner varieties'.

The perception on the mutual relationship between the World Englishes and Standard English has been the subject of a heated on-going debate over the years. A rather conflicting view of the status, and possibly the power held by varieties of English can be found in McArthur's model (1987), in which British English (or rather "British and Irish Standard English") is placed along Canadian Standard English, Caribbean Standard English, and a few other varieties, while the central position is granted to World Standard English (WSE). On the fringes, or rather rays, of the sun-shaped model there are more specific, more "local" types, e.g. British English, BBC English, English English, Scottish English, etc. for the British standard. In McArthur's visualisation, all Englishes are specific varieties, all of them have a "descriptive" label, but the existence of some generalised standard (WSE) is asserted. It is not, however, clear how to understand and describe in detail the WSE variety, and how to use it as a model in, e.g., an educational context.

Significantly, Kachru (1986) claims that norms referring to registers or speech acts were relatively insignificant in the context of the sociolinguistic reality of the Outer Circle, whose members use English 'naturally'. Selinker's interlanguage theory (1972, 1992), on the other hand, assumes that learners' competence stems from the interlanguage continuum between their L1 (their native language) and

the L2 (i.e. English as their second language). Any produced output that differs from the standard variety (whether related to British English [BE] or American English [AE]) is treated as an error resulting from L1 interference, whereas repetition of the error is regarded as a sign of fossilisation. Quirk (1990) emphasises the necessity of preserving a standard variation in all the circles in order to regulate the use of English and to avoid dividing English into unintelligible varieties that could seriously impede or hinder international communication. However, Jenkins (2009) does not draw a clear distinction between the three circles and puts all the "Englishes" on a par regarding them as genuine and equally important varieties, in which she comes closer to McArthur's model. What seems important is that Jenkins (2003) places pronunciation learning and teaching in the context of World Englishes (as in, e.g., Kachru, 1992) and supports the idea that English belongs to those who speak it, promoting the view that in the modern world it is no longer exclusively the property of its native speakers. Much in the same vein, Kachru (1985) challenges the Inner-Circle users' right to standardise and provide models in Outer-Circle educational contexts by saying:

> …the global diffusion of English has taken an interesting turn: the native speakers of this language seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization; in fact, if current statistics are any indication, they have become a minority. This sociolinguistics fact must be accepted and its implication recognized. What we need now are new paradigms and perspectives for linguistics and pedagogical research and for understanding the linguistic creativity in multilingual situations across cultures. (Kachru 1985: 30)

Widdowson (1994) supports this point of view and asserts that native speakers are not entitled to claim their ownership of the English language since English, becoming an international language, belongs now to all people who use it.

> How English develops in the world is no business whatsoever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgment. They are irrelevant. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status. It is a matter of considerable pride and satisfaction for native speakers of English that their language is an international means of communication. But the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their language. It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it. (Widdowson 1994: 85)

The assumption of an equal treatment of all varieties, no matter which circle they come from, is frequently subject to criticism because it is very hard to accept that the Expanding Circle Englishes, which have stemmed from different linguistic (L1) backgrounds and have been formed on the grounds of language errors and their users' incompetence and many a time their inability to acquire certain phonetic features of native speakers' English (be it received pronunciation

[RP], AE, or some other), are supposed to be treated and analysed in the same way as the legitimate varieties of the Inner or Outer circles, which, on the contrary, have evolved and originated from thousands of years of history and culture. In terms of sociolinguistics, a language belongs to a community of people, not just individuals who speak it, but a nation, a group, for whom the language constitutes part of their culture, including elements such as history, geography, art, and, primarily, national, ethnic or group identity. The concept of comparing the numbers of native speakers and non-native speakers of English and drawing conclusions as to who the language belongs to and who, as a result, is entitled to modify it and set the standard to be respected has, undoubtedly, its flaws and remains a contentious issue.

3. ELF and its criticism

It has always been controversial which accent model should become the subject matter of language education. In the past decades the best model varieties appears to be either British Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (AE) accents, ideally, meant and expected to be taught by native teachers. Nowadays still, most teachers choose these two reference accents since they are the most available ones in out-of-class contexts and unquestionably the most popular. It is easy to find them in the media. However, a language or an accent are subject to constant change, which is their inherent characteristic and property and this kind of change is responsible for numerous teaching and learning problems. Synchronic variation as well as dilemmas of what should be taught and whether or not to update the given variety might turn both the learners' and teachers' task into a "minefield", as Przedlacka (2005) puts it. The instability of native models and the search for a learner-friendly target accent model gave rise to a very controversial solution of accepting English as a lingua franca (ELF), being understood as a variety itself, which sparked a heated debate among researchers and linguists.

The concept of ELF needs to be explained and contrasted with other commonly used acronyms related to foreign language learning. EFL (English as a foreign language) is associated with the typical European context, in which English is taught and learnt as a foreign language, usually to enable communication. A relevant question, therefore, that should be posed with regard to the learner needs is who learners are going to communicate with using English. Are their interlocutors going to be native speakers or perhaps, more likely, other non-native users of English whose main goal is to employ the language as a medium of communication. Another context related broadly to the USA and Canada is ESL, i.e. English as the second language, which involves immigrants learning the language in the native environment and thus being exposed to a more extensive input outside the classroom with the aim of learning to communicate with native

speakers of the language and to function in the L2 environment. Other frequently used acronyms are ENL, EIL and ELF[1]. ENL stands for English as the native language, i.e. used by its native speakers. EIL (English as an international language) could be easily identified with EFL, when learners intend to acquire it for future envisaged communication with non-native users. Seidlhofer (2005), in turn, uses the term EIL to refer to ELF (English as a lingua franca, as proposed by Jenkins, 2005), as it is used worldwide and therefore necessary in international communication.

The idea of ELF is closely related to a specific communication context and communication needs. ELF is the language chosen by its speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to communicate. Native speakers are not excluded, but they are not in the majority. ELF is a compromise that all its speakers agree on, and therefore none of the variety that they come with (regardless of whether it is from the Inner, Outer or Expanding Circle) takes precedence or becomes a norm or a model. All the speakers have to adjust their local varieties for the sake of their interlocutors if they want to participate in the lingua franca communication (Jenkins, 2009).

Comparing ELF to ENL, it is worth noticing that they both have their cores, which overlap to some degree, and they both possess their local variants. Intelligibility is the key concept in ELF since the "language" is used for communication, and being understood and producing comprehensible speech, therefore, become the main goal[2]. In ELF, all the speakers, including the native ones, need to make adjustments so as to make themselves intelligible. Native speakers are deprived of the role of norm-providers, they are treated as equal to other ELF users. In order to ensure it, data bases restrict the participation of native speakers in communication, as it is the case in, for example, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE, Seidlhofer, 2002), in which only 10% of the data comes from native speakers from the Inner Circle. The main assumption behind this decision is that native speakers should not intimidate other users of English or put pressure on them to sound native-like. Nativeness, therefore, is the key concept in ENL and EFL[3]. It is questionable whether the assumption that native speakers should be restricted or banned from international communication (even in the context of norm-setting) has convincing or plausible grounds. It does render the whole project rather artificial if it does not account for the interaction with native speakers and relegates such contexts to a lesser role.

ELF relies on a set of pronunciation features termed as the lingua franca core (LFC), which was supposed to serve as a teaching tool, as proposed by Jenkins (2005) and Seidlhofer (2005), and was based on research conducted among non-

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[1] Differences in using English in ENL, ESL, EFL, and ELF contexts are presented by Walker and Zoghbor, 2015: 435, and also by Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015.

[2] The concept of intelligibility and comprehensibility was discussed in Derwing and Munro, 2015.

[3] Levis (2005) comments on the correlation and discrepancy between comfortable intelligibility and nativeness as the main principles in language learning/teaching.

native speakers and investigating their communication in English. The LFC, thus, is a pronunciation syllabus proposal designed for ELF/EIL learners of English who wish to be able to communicate with other non-native users of the language. As was suggested by Jenkins (2005), LFC reduces the number of pronunciation features that are expected to be learnt within the EFL syllabus. Thus, the learning task becomes smaller in size, but not necessarily easier at the same time. The reduction in size is meant to increase teachability. The LFC categories, however, may not be equally easy for all learners with their different L1 backgrounds. The concept of "teachability" lies at the core of Jenkins' proposal and she questions the ability of her opponents to understand it fully and to grasp its true meaning (Jenkins, 2005). The proposal has been subjected to much fierce criticism over the years; it was indeed bitterly criticised in Poland. For instance, Szpyra-Kozłowska (2005) concludes that by no means is LFC an easier or simpler task to accomplish for a Polish learner. Moreover, it is suggested that "teachability" cannot function as the most essential factor guiding teachers in what to teach in a language or in any other branch of science. In a much wider perspective, just because logarithms cause problems to students of mathematics, or the use of articulated prepositions in Italian is extremely complicated, they should not be omitted in the teaching syllabi. Counting is possible without the knowledge of logarithms, and so is communication even with native Italian speakers without articulated prepositions. However, neglecting them in the educational process puts the students at a disadvantage and deprives them of the opportunity to express in a detailed manner what they mean. It puts a limit on their education and creates artificial thresholds. If they meet others who, similarly to them, have no idea of what logarithms or Italian articulated prepositions are, they will not feel underprivileged or worse. However, if they happen to encounter someone who is better educated at maths or Italian, or in the case of the language – an Italian native speaker, the students will feel less confident and it is hard to expect the better-educated interlocutors, who aspired to higher standards and for whom the "teachability" threshold was set higher in the course of their education, to adapt their speech to the less demanding environment and to develop specific "accommodation skills" (Jenkins, 2000) in order to facilitate a special kind of communication.

As regards the assumptions of LFC in the field of segmentals, Jenkins suggests dropping some English sounds that are likely to cause problems such as the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ or dark 'l' [ɫ] as well as an arbitrary approach to vowel quality, but at the same time insists on preserving phonetic features which pose problems for many nationalities, since they are quite rare in terms of phonetic universals, for example aspirated plosives, the glottal fricative or different vowel length. With respect to suprasegmentals, some inconsistencies might also be observed. Jenkins claims that the knowledge and use of rhythm, intonation and weak forms have no impact on international interaction. However, she advocates firmly that nuclear stress, articulatory settings and division of speech into word chunks should be preserved and respected. LFC's attitude to weak forms, which are a relevant aspect

of English suprasegmental phonetics, is very controversial and has provoked much criticism. According to Jenkins (2000), weak forms are expected to be excluded from the LFC due to the fact that they are hard to master and likely to actually handicap or disrupt EIL intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000). As an alternative solution Jenkins proposes they might be used with the same vowel quality as in the strong forms but of reduced length and not substituted by schwa. Nevertheless, they are supposed to be taught receptively for the sake of possible communication with English native speakers who use them and a student's lack of passive recognition might obstruct successful communication. Thus, in spite of the claims that ELF is meant for non-native communication, Jenkins herself accepts the fact that the interaction with native speakers must be accounted for and cannot be totally eliminated. Such approach results in difficulties for teachers, who, on the one hand, have to teach weak forms (concentrating exclusively on their passive recognition), but on the other, they are expected to discourage their learners from using weak forms in their speech on the grounds that they hinder and harm intelligibility (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2005). The role of the teacher cannot be overestimated in the educational process even though without learners' willingness or consent to learn it cannot be successful. Clearly, teachers need to have transparent guidelines as to what to teach and also how to do it. From this standpoint, LFC does not appear to be a very useful tool, and still a lot of questions would need to be clarified and verified. However, it is hard to conclude whether any relevant pedagogical implications could result from it. As Sobkowiak (2005) concluded, LFC, after all, is an 'artifice', i.e. an artificial creation and it is hard to resist the impression of perceiving it in this way.

As regards EFL taught in Europe, unquestionably, RP can be defined as its standard variety that serves as a model even though it has been recently subject to discussion. Many researchers (ELF advocates included) have ventured to question its function and its existence in general on the grounds that it is stiff, resistant to change, and used by a considerably limited number of speakers. How it evolves is in detail discussed by Przedlacka (2005) who also opens a debate on which variety to teach and whether there is a convincing alternative model to RP. Sobkowiak (2005) argues that all the criticism of RP as a standard model for pronunciation teaching can be as well applied to ELF. RP was criticised by Jenkins, who claimed that it is not feasible or realistic to impose a particular accent with the aid of a top-down method (1998). Since language develops, it ought to be taught in the most natural bottom-up manner. However, LFC is nothing else but a set of rules and principles that are expected to be followed so that non-native communication can take place and intelligibility can be achieved; and they are (irrespective of its creators' intentions) forced from the top. One could wonder to what extent following the rules is reasonable since ELF, similarly to any other artificial language (such as Esperanto for example), does not have its own native-speakers. This might account for the fact that Esperanto has not managed to defend its place in the international communication traditions remaining only of interest

to a tiny group of its faithful supporters. As Macauley (1988) observes, the major problem (also in the case of RP as the model variety) refers to the fact that most teachers of English (EFL) are non-native RP speakers themselves. Therefore, they either strive to modify their pronunciation and accent in order to approximate RP or they apply the teaching rule which says 'Do not speak English as I do, but as I tell you to speak'. Both of these situations, according to Macauley (1988) are far from optimal learning conditions. LFC is going to be taught in exactly the same way by non-native teachers who will be forced to face the same problem. However, should it be required, it is not a problem to find a native RP teacher; whereas a native LFC speaker will not be found.

As Sobkowiak (2005) observes, teacher training and preparation are not specified or clearly defined in ELF. There is a question regarding the pronunciation teaching standards for the LFC teacher. Teachers prepare their students for communication in commerce, tourism, business, etc. Although the communication usually takes place with non-native speakers, it is interesting to indicate how much teachers themselves should know. They are most commonly expected to act as language models for their learners, and as a result they are supposed to display near-native-like pronunciation and linguistic competence of the language in general. Anything that falls from the native-like model might be discouraging and demotivating for the students, who need models. In this light, it is hard to agree with Jenkins (2002) who claims that the ideal and optimal ELF teacher should be bilingual and ought to share their learners' L1 background. Thus, they will, on the one hand, be familiar with the core ELF aspects and features of pronunciation, but on the other, they will exhibit clear evidence of their own L1 accent. According to Jenkins (2002), only then do they provide a realistic and sensible model for students, both from the pedagogical and sociolinguistic perspectives. However, the clear evidence of L1 accent is just what educators of English would like to make inaudible to the students. Otherwise, they are regarded as incompetent teachers and incapable users of the language. This point of view has been corroborated by a number of research studies conducted in Poland at English studies and English philology departments among majors (Janicka, Kul, Weckwerth, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak, 2013; Waniek-Klimczak, Porzuczek, Rojczyk, 2013). Some of the students may have already started their teaching career or may soon start teaching. As Waniek-Klimczak (2013) observes, for Polish majors in English, the native-like accent (still mostly RP) is an indicator of self-recognition as an English expert, and it still constitutes the main objective for some, even though there may be a number of majors who prefer to work on their fluency rather than on approximating their accent to the native speaker accent (Waniek-Klimczak, 2002).

Interestingly, Polish students majoring in English accept the native-speaker model, mostly Received Pronunciation, although they also set fluency rather than native-like accent as their main objective (Waniek-Klimczak, 2002); overall the ambition to be as close to the native

speaker accent as possible remains an important element of recognising oneself as an expert
in English (Janicka, Kul, Weckwerth, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak, Porzuczek, Rojczyk, 2013).

(Waniek-Klimczak, 2013: 230)

A crucial difference that can be observed between ELF and ENL standards refers
to the judgment and attitude to errors. In ELF not everything that deviates from
the norm is regarded as an error. It is likely to be considered a legitimate variant.
Empirical research that would shed some light on the topic is still too scarce and
even Jenkins (2002) admits it has not been clearly specified yet which forms
constitute variants and which should be treated as errors. Such a liberal approach
may be conducive to communication breakdowns and chaos caused by all
participants in communication who speak without respecting rules, prescriptions
or control. Attempts to introduce some order equal trying to find some common
features, which, in turn, involves forcing all the interlocutors of international
communication to resign from their cultural and linguistic background for the sake
of all other languages brought into the communication. It means heading for a
utopian goal and taking into consideration all other languages instead of just one,
English, as in EFL. If a Greek and a Japanese speaker wish to communicate and
apply EFL as a medium for communication, they will both head in the direction
of the English standard hoping to meet in the middle of the road. However, if they
choose to use ELF, they will have to account for all other languages that affected
ELF, making thus some of the phonetic aspects easier but some others more
difficult, since they will stem from a number of varied cultural and linguistic
backgrounds.

Jenkins (2002) clearly distinguishes between ELF and EFL claiming that those
who decide to learn EFL fall beyond the scope of interest of ELF research on
condition that their choice is grounded and they display a genuine wish or
ambition to sound native-like. The major interest for ELF researchers consists of
non-native communication as well as the application of ELF as a means to make
it possible.

4. Alternative suggestions

One of interesting solutions with regard to the ELF versus EFL controversy is
suggested by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2015), who proposes a compromise concept of
Native English as a Lingua Franca (NELF). "It is intended for foreign learners
who wish to learn English in order to communicate in it with other speakers of
this language, both native and non-native, without excluding any of these two
groups of potential interlocutors" (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015, p. 23). The idea of
NELF results from the wish to cater for the needs of learners who are unable to
clearly specify a particular group of interlocutors who they intend to talk to.
Suffice it to say, it is hardly possible to denote accurately the context variety, in

which communication will be established. Instead of relying on artificially created pronunciation syllabus, like in the case of LFC, NELF should use "native English accents, such as RP or AE, but in a modified fashion" (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015: 24)[4].

Most recently, Jennifer Jenkins (2018) has noticed that the spread and use of ELF is particularly visible in higher education (HE). Starting from the point she has developed the concept of EMI (English Medium Instruction or English as Medium of Instruction in HE). She, consequently, observes the internalisation of universities, which happens simultaneously to their "Englishisation". She concludes that

> It is time for the consequences of this ELF reality to be recognised, and for the unquestioned assumption by all except ELF scholars, that 'good English' equals that of the 'educated native speaker' to be abandoned in HE. Innumerable native speakers have been recruited to help non-native scientists and scholars in their struggle with native English. (…) And yet it is many (if not all) NESs (native English speakers) who are most in need of help in global HE: help to develop their intercultural communication and accommodation skills, help to escape their monolingualism, and help to understand that they do not own English, whether in HE or any other international domain. (Jenkins, 2018: 14).

In an attempt to classify language models for learners, Dziubalska-Kołaczyk (2013) suggests the distinction between three models: (a) prototypical monolingual native models, i.e. standard accent varieties such as RP or AE; (b) non-prototypical multilingual native models, such as South African or Indian Englishes; and eventually (c) ELF/LFC and local ELFs. From the pedagogical perspective, the first group models are better anchored and grounded in literature, they are used in the mass media as well as in numerous didactic materials and they are constantly updated, analysed and verified. The knowledge of multilingual native Englishes or ELFs unquestionably leads to better and more effective communication. However, as Dziubalska-Kołaczyk (2013) points out, ELF/LFC cannot be expected to constitute a target model for proficient learners of English who set the competence threshold much higher.

It seems evident that "[w]ithout a stable model, learners will have nothing to base their attempts at pronunciation" (Walker, 2011: 53) and such a situation is unacceptable in the learning/teaching context. Aiming at native-like pronunciation (albeit in most cases unattainable) guarantees acquiring acceptable pronunciation even if students do not achieve the ideal (in fact, most of them will not). Thus, the nativeness goal leads to acquiring a 'decent' accent, whereas expecting less results in very low standards and may contribute to communication breakdowns due to inability to achieve even the basic comfortable intelligibility. The best summary of the issue of which model to teach was provided by Trudgill (2001) who interestingly and perversely concluded that RP should be taught since something

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[4] More details related to NELF can be found in *Pronunciation in ELF Instruction*. A Research-Based Approach by Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015.

has to be taught after all. As Trudgill puts it: "My own response to the old issue of 'why teach RP' is 'why not?'. We have, after all, to teach something" (Trudgill, 2001: 4).

5. Selected recent studies and investigations regarding phonetics, phonology and pronunciation learning and teaching in a Polish and in an international perspective

The two special issues of Research in Language, Volume 20: 1-2, entitled: Native and Non-Native Accents 2022(1) Special Issue and Native and Non-Native Accents 2022(2) Special Issue – Studies in phonetics and pronunciation from a Polish perspective and Accents 2021(2) Special Issue, co-edited by Anna Jarosz and Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka present selected recent studies in the field of English phonetics and sociolinguistics. The papers offer numerous guidelines, suggestions, good practices in the context of teaching and learning English, and provide implications for further research. Many of the selected texts refer to Poland's educational reality and to phonetics-oriented problems related to Polish users of English, integrating Polish data with international research programmes.

In the first article entitled "L2 accentedness and language self-esteem in foreign language learning", Magdalena Szyszka explores the interplay between accentedness and self-esteem in a foreign language learning context (EFL) in Poland. Derwing and Munro (2005) define accentedness, frequently also referred to as a foreign accent, as a gradable phenomenon, which denotes the extent to which non-native speech differs from the particular native variety. Furthermore, as Derwing and Munro (1997) observed, accentedness and intelligibility constitute semi-independent constructs. Therefore, heavily accented speech might still be intelligible and understood by the interlocutor and thus it does not necessarily impact the successful delivery and reception of the intended message. Nevertheless, it is commonly known that a considerable degree of L1 accentedness may potentially affect the listeners' overall impression and cause negative bias towards the L2 speaker. Language (L2) self-esteem, on the other hand, pertains to the learners general feelings on their linguistic competence, performance and self-value. It is therefore a construct which describes a number of subjective affective measures and evaluations (Williams, Mercer, and Ryan, 2015). With 59 students of English and two non-native raters who had substantial knowledge of the Polish and English sound systems, Magdalena Szyszka finds that L2 self-esteem correlates negatively with accentedness. Moreover, less accented participants display significantly higher L2 self-esteem levels than those whose speech is heavily accented. Magdalena Szyszka also sets directions for further investigations suggesting that psychological and socio-cultural learner dimensions need to be explored in order to create a better understanding of the intricate and multidimensional accentedness-related processes.

In the next article entitled "Developing unbiased teacher identity in pluri-accent reality: research-based classroom activities," Kristýna Červinková Poesová and Klára Lancová report on a pilot study aimed at raising pre-service teachers' accent sensitivity and awareness, as well as building their confidence in addressing accent-related issues in their future classrooms. In their intervention, they proposed four activities, which displayed the potential of guiding future teachers in developing sensitivity to their own accent biases, in reinforcing their ability to handle accent variety-related queries as well as involving them actively in accent studies, thus lowering their affective filter (Krashen, 1986).

In the article "Speech rhythm in English and Italian: an experimental study on early sequential bilingualism", Vincenzo Verbeni explores the dynamics of speech rhythm patterns observed in early sequential bilingual children by analysing the Italian and English semi-spontaneous narrative productions of nine young students.

In the article entitled "English phonetics course: university students' preferences and expectations", Marta Nowacka undertakes to survey students of English with regard to their English accent preference, their favourite and least favourite aspects in the phonetic training they received, as well as their expectations related to the course instructor. The qualitative data give insight into the students' views, perceptions and evaluations of the course. They indicate the usefulness of the course for improving the speaking skill and intelligibility. The questionnaire also reveals that students can be reluctant to learn rules and the theory of phonetics. Interestingly, the Polish students tend to choose the nativeness as their ultimate pronunciation learning goal over the intelligibility principle. The dichotomy of the two pronunciation learning and teaching goals is readdressed and revisited in Levis (2020), which provides valuable background for the research programme.

In the next article entitled "Arab EFL learners' stress of compound words", Safi Eldeen Alzi'abi investigates stress placement in compound English words by Arab EFL learners, the strategies they applied, and the difficulties they encountered. Compound word stress variations have been proven to confuse not only EFL learners but also native speakers (e.g., Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). The author investigates the impact of five factors on the behaviours and levels of success of the learners: word class, orthography, knowledge of phonetics and phonology, age and grade point average. The results indicate that age has no correlation with the stress placement and stress production.

The second volume (RiL 20:2) continues the discussion of accents, i.e. phonetics, phonology and pronunciation in a teaching and learning perspective. The first article by Veronica G. Sardegna, entitled "Student-teacher conferences in an English pronunciation course: goals, characteristics, and views", explores English as a second language (ESL) context for pronunciation instruction in highly individualised settings, i.e. student-teacher conferences outside of the classroom, which are considered a very useful pedagogical tool (Sardegna, 2012,

2022). Veronica G. Sardegna sets out to examine both the ESL students' and ESL tutors' views and therefore, the efficacy of student-teacher conferences for pronunciation instruction. The results suggesting a high level of satisfaction and usefulness corroborate and further support the findings presented by Sardegna (2022) with reference to the efficacy of Enhanced Covert Rehearsal Model for pronunciation learning.

The next article in the volume dedicated to the selected aspects of English phonetics in the Polish EFL context "More harm than good – why dictionaries using ordinary spelling instead of the IPA should be handled with care)", written by Agnieszka Bryła-Cruz investigates three English-Polish dictionaries employing orthographic transcription instead of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). With numerous examples, the author illustrates the inadequacy of the orthographic transcription and the confusion it might cause. She enumerates the following weaknesses of the orthographic transcription: the fossilization of certain mispronunciations resulting from negative L1 phonetic transfer as well as blurring the phonetic patterns and rules, which makes it impossible for the learner to recognise aspects such as vowel reductions, silent letters or non-rhoticity.

The article written by Łukasz Stolarski and entitled "Correlations between positive or negative utterances and basic acoustic features of voice: A preliminary analysis", aims to define possible correlations between continuous sentiment scores and four basic acoustic features of voice. The findings indicating statistically relevant correlations between sentiment scores and three acoustic voice characteristics: the mean F0, the standard deviation of F0 and the mean intensity may prove extremely useful in multimodal sentiment analysis and in research on linguistic phenomena such as irony.

Kizzi Edensor Costille contributed an article entitled "Englishville: a multi-sensorial tool for prosody", in which she investigats the usefulness of the Englishville website as a tool for prosody learning. As was found in many previous studies, prosody is commonly considered difficult to teach (Setter et al., 2010). Englishville, which offers the learners multisensory input through real-time 3D spectrograms, was found useful, interesting and fun by the students participating in the experiment.

Following the focus on technology, Marek Molenda and Izabela Grabarczyk in their paper entitled "Microsoft Reading Progress as a CAPT tool", set out to examine the accuracy of feedback provided by a pronunciation module included in Reading Progress, a free tool built into Microsoft Teams and designed to support and track reading fluency in the virtual classroom. In the study they compared pronunciation assessment produced by the online tool with judgements of two university pronunciation teachers. Although the results indicate that it is still too early to consider the Reading Progress tool as a reliable Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) tool, the texts offers a relatively novel perspective. The authors recommend caution for EFL teachers and researchers in approaching the current available version of Reading Progress especially in terms

of using it for automated independent feedback. It might, nevertheless, with some future improvements from the Microsoft team, potentially develop into a functional CAPT tool for EFL pronunciation pedagogy as well as into a research instrument.

The last article in Vol. 20:2, entitled "Use of L2 pronunciation techniques in and outside classes: Students' preferences", written by Ewa Kusz and Judyta Pawliszko, presents an analysis of the students' views on the effectiveness of two groups of pronunciation learning and teaching techniques: traditional ones (e.g. transcription practice, explicit articulatory explanations, drills, reading aloud; Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu 2010) and computer-assisted L2 ones (self-imitation, recordings, visual aids, and automatic speech recognition tools). The authors investigate the learners' perceptions, views and attitudes to different tasks and their perceived impact on L2 pronunciation improvement. Data analysis leads the authors to distinguish five categories of pronunciation techniques aligned with the respondents' replies. Additionally, the authors propose their own ideas, guidelines and suggestions for the creation of effective educational materials.

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