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ABSTRACTS

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Przemysław Ostalski

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

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PROBLEMS FACED BY BENGALI LEARNERS IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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When learning English as a foreign language, Bengali learners face various kinds of problem in pronunciation. Most of the problems arise from the dissimilarity in the inventory of phonemes the two languages possess. The paper will examine how the knowledge of Bangla gets in the way of mastering the sound systems of English. The problem areas are broadly divided into vowels and consonants. Vowels are again divided into monophthongs and diphthongs, and consonants into phonemic classes based on manner and place of articulation. Manner of articulation will classify consonants as plosive, fricative, affricate, lateral and nasal while place of articulation as bilabial, labiodental, alveolar, post-alveolar, palatal, velar and so on. Problems of pronunciation in every area have been identified and discussed separately, bringing into focus the cause of such problems. Phonetic description of each phoneme is of special concern here. Some English sounds may be pronounced from the same place of vocal tract as in Bangla but they subtly differ in the manner of pronunciation. Dental phonemes, for example, are fricatives in English but plosives in Bangla. The most difficult problem for the Bengali learners in the area of monophthongal vowels is the pronunciation of schwa. This vowel is not present in Bangla so the users of this language cannot utter the weak syllables properly. English also differs from Bangla in terms of supra-segmental features as stress and

intonation. The former is a stress-timed language while the latter is a syllable-timed one. So the Bengali speakers cannot follow the special rhythmic qualities of English. The phonemes of Bangla are patterned differently from English. So the Bengali speakers may find it difficult to pronounce some consonant clusters of English.

The study has great pedagogical implications. It will provide the learners with a contrastive analysis of the phonemic systems of the two languages and help them avoid the problems they might face during pronunciation. It will make them aware of the mother tongue interference and overcome it with conscious efforts which may be achieved from specialised training of pronunciation.

Historically, English and Bangla are not unrelated; both of them belong to the 'Indo-European Family of Languages', the former being placed in the West and the latter in the East. English is an offspring of Germanic branch and Bangla of Indo-Iranian branch. It is really curious to see how the two distant relatives have diverged over time in their way of pronunciations.

THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION AND DIALECT CONTACT ON THE ABERDEEN ENGLISH VOWEL SYSTEM

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Aberdeen is a city of about 200,000 inhabitants in North-East Scotland. The discovery of oil in the North Sea in the late 1960s had major effects on the city and surrounding Grampian Region which until then was fairly isolated and showed all signs of out-migration fairly typical for remote areas. In the following decade the net in-migration was close to 30,000 people – most of who came to work in the new industry (e.g. Mackay & Moir 1980: 79). The social backgrounds of the migrants were very different. Those working in the managerial positions were mainly Americans staying only for a short period of time and people from England. Most labourers on the other hand came from other parts of Scotland, in particular Glasgow and Strathclyde.

While the linguistic effects of the in-migration have been described in detail for the more rural Doric dialect of Scots (e.g. McClure 2002; Marshall 2004; Löw-Wiebach 2005) or on a lexical level (McGarrity 1998), only little attention has been paid to phonology. While first results for the consonant system have been published (Brato 2007, forthcoming) there is still a considerable lack of more comprehensive data on the vowel system (with the exception of Watt & Yurkova 2007 who discuss the Scottish Vowel Length Rule in the Aberdeen context and brief comments in Hughes et al. 2005 and Millar 2007).

The data for the present paper is based on 12 male and 12 female speakers of a socially stratified sample of 44 Aberdonians from three age groups (8-10 years old, 13-15 years old and adults) for which word list, read speech and interview data has been analysed acoustically. I can confirm previous findings on the high variability in the BOOT set of vowels (Hughes et al. 2005: 107; Millar 2007: 118) which seems to be a direct outcome of the dialect contact situation. There is also a highly significant difference in the realisation of the BET vowel, with younger speakers of all social backgrounds preferring a much more centralised variant. The status of the other vowels is less clear. There are indications of socially determined variation patterns in the CAT set as well as hints of diphthongisation of MATE in younger middle-class speakers with regular contact to speakers of English English.

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IS METRICAL FOOT A PHONETIC OBJECT?

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The concept of ‘metrical foot’ has been given a lot of attention in the phonological literature. Ever since Liberman and Prince (1977), various structural definitions and modes of parsing have been proposed. However, relatively little attention was paid to the acoustic characteristics of the foot. This paper is an attempt to report on the research in progress, whose objective is to confront a number of purely theoretical assumptions concerning the foot structure and foot typologies with a preliminary analysis of selected acoustic and perceptual features of possible metrical feet in English.

Inspired by Gordon’s experimental research on a phonetically driven syllable weight (Gordon 1999, 2001, 2005), we shall try to verify the following hypotheses concerning the English foot structure:

- Feet are portions of acoustic energy represented as the total acoustic energies of its component rhymes; given the possible differences in phonological weight of syllable rhymes (V, V:, VC), the total acoustic energy may be the property which underlies the phonetically based foot typology.
- Since one of the main linguistic functions of stress is demarcation of word edges, the acoustic characteristics of foot head rhymes (or stressed syllables, to use more traditional terminology) in words having penultimate and antepenultimate stress should differ.

The results indicate that the most promising theoretical model for the description of foot structure and foot-related segmental phenomena is that of standard Government Phonology (cf. e.g. Harris 1994). Standard GP, however, has never made an explicit attempt to apply the relations of government to the analysis of prosodic phenomena. There may have been good reasons to avoid such an extension of the theory since its fundamental interdependent principles of locality and binarity would need to be reconsidered. While a higher prosodic organisation is generally recognised (Harris 1997, Cyran 2003: 214-215, Gussmann 2002: 205-222) and the foot is assumed to be a legitimate phonological constituent, the most interesting questions concerning its internal structure, however, have not been openly voiced within the framework.

Thus, we will propose a revised version of GP, tentatively referred to as Metrical Government, which is phonetically grounded on the one hand, and sufficiently well-constrained on the other.

While we are fully aware that a much more comprehensive database analysis is required to arrive at an appropriate level of generalisation, for this preliminary verification of our hypotheses we used standardised single pronunciations of target items provided by EPD.

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THE INFLUENCE OF NATIVE DIALECT ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH VOWELS BY CHINESE LEARNERS

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This research did an acoustic and statistical analysis of English vowel production from forty-five first year Chinese male undergraduates in Beijing. They are from nine dialectal groups, with five speakers in each. The discriminant tests show that the phonetic features of formant 1 of [ʊ], formant 1 of [i], and formant 2 of [e] can classify the speaker origins on the super-group Chinese dialect level. Meanwhile three memory conditions (i.e., spontaneous reading, immediate repetition, and delayed repetition) are also tested as a function for dialect group performance. Their Standard Mandarin number counting, counted as their native language intrusion, in the stage of delayed repetition does not significantly interfere their reproduction of the English vowels. Moreover, the vowels [ʊ] and [ɔ] are proven to be more subjective to learning than the other six monophthongs analyzed in this experiment.

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION TEACHING USING NEW GENERATION OF LEARNING TOOLS

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Pronunciation may not appear to be an obvious candidate for teaching online, but modern net-based communication has many advantages over the classroom situation for learners who want to focus on pronunciation. This paper aims to show how the problems experienced by learners and teachers in the traditional physical classroom environment can be avoided or solved in the virtual classroom and how the disadvantages of the virtual environment can be minimized or even turned into advantages.

The New Generation of Learning involves not only technological advances, but also new pedagogical thinking. Many learners are using electronic communication tools in other aspects of their lives, and the move to these media is not dramatic for many learners, especially those who have grown up with ICT. The challenge for educators is to embrace the pedagogical possibilities offered by technology and to use NGL tools to create an enhanced learning experience.

The wholesale move to computer-based learning platforms for both online and campus tertiary education empowers learners and teachers, facilitating an interactive communication and exchange that we need to harness in an informed and efficient way. The persistence of computer-mediated communication in contrast to the transience of the classroom situation is another huge advantage for learners and teachers.

The chance to listen again to any kind of material is great advantage.

This paper describes some ways of teaching pronunciation and sets them into a theoretical framework related to the targets of students and teachers. The challenge of teaching English as a language of international communication in parts of the world where little native-speaker English is heard is revolutionized by access to the web. Learners are no longer reliant upon the materials supplied with their text books. It is now possible to hear thousands of English-language radio stations and copious amounts of podcasted material at any time. Learners also have access to English produced by speakers of other languages. This is important since these are the future interlocutors of most learners of English in the world. Learners can be exposed to material for extensive listening, and also to material for intensive listening, adequate perception being a prerequisite for adequate pronunciation.

ENGLISH ACCENTS IN IRAN; CHOICES AND DIFFICULTIES

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This paper is an attempt to clarify the choice Iranian English learners make among English accents and to investigate the reasons for their choice in Qaemshahr, Sari and Babol, three major cities of Iranian northern province of Mazandaran. To carry out the investigation, a questionnaire is developed and distributed among English learners at different English language institutes in these three cities. Then answers are studied and calculated. The paper also looks at phonetic and phonological differences among English and Persian that produce most difficulties for Iranian English learners and suggests possible ways to lessen them.

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THE USEFULNESS OF MOBILE PHONE TRANSMISSION IN FORENSIC SPEAKER IDENTIFICATION

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The spread of voice transmission through mobile phones has caused its increasingly frequent application to obtain forensic evidence either through the popular use of inbuilt recorders, or by means of phone tapping employed by law enforcing institutions. In comparison to landline telephony, the spectra of cell phone calls are subject to more extensive filtering. In order to assess the distortion level of the speech signal transmitted through mobile telephony in comparison to landline transmission, and the reliability of both for forensic speaker identification, an experiment was carried out in which speech samples were recorded simultaneously via three distinct acoustic channels: a regular microphone, landline telephony and a mobile phone. The recorded material contained strings of maximally contrasting sounds i.e. vowels between voiceless fricatives, which enabled a study of most typical vocalic and consonantal acoustic events. The test procedures included F1-F2 and F2-F3 plots and long-term average formant histograms for vowels, and noise spectral peak locations for fricatives. The results have shown that despite more extensive distortion of mobile transmission as compared to landline telephony, GSM can constitute a reliable source of forensic information.

A CORPUS-BASED, PILOT STUDY OF PHONOLOGICAL FREE VARIATION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

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Phonological free variation describes the phenomenon of there being more than one pronunciation for a word without any change in meaning (e.g. *because*, *schedule*, *vehicle*). The term also applies to words that exhibit different stress patterns (e.g. *academic*, *resources*, *comparable*) with no change in meaning or grammatical category.

A corpus-based analysis of free variation is a useful tool for testing the validity of surveys of speakers' pronunciation preferences for certain variants. Such surveys include Wells' surveys of British English (1999, 2008) and Shitara's 1993 survey of American English. The current paper presents the results of a pilot study of American English, in an attempt to replicate Mompéan's 2009 corpus-based study of British English.

A spoken corpus is useful because it reveals rates of usage for free variants of lexical items. In the current paper, the corpus was constituted using talks from the website <http://www.ted.com>. The talks cover the period February 2002 to June 2009. The corpus includes approximately 11.5 hours of transcribed speech (110,000 words) produced by 41 speakers (21 women) with an American accent. As we are interested in what happens over a variety of American speakers the corpus was not limited to speakers of a Network Standard

or other “standardized” form. However, given the formal, public context all speakers are assumed to be intelligible speakers of educated American English, though perhaps exhibiting certain regionalisms.

To guarantee a minimum of representativeness for this pilot study, the items analyzed were produced by at least three speakers and found at least three times in the corpus. These items involve variation in their phonemic structure (*either, economic, financial, sure, idea*, etc.) and/or variation in stress placement pattern (*controversy, research, complex, academic*, etc.). The items were chosen from the list of 261 words from the 2008 LPD for which survey data was provided, lists found in two textbooks about American pronunciation (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008; Celce-Murcia, 1997/2007), as well as from anecdotal knowledge of frequent variants.

In conclusion, factors that may explain variation are briefly discussed. However, the main focus of the paper is to provide some initial results from the pilot study and some general “how to” guidelines on carrying out such corpus-based studies of spoken English.

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CLOSE-MID VOWELS IN CARLISLE ENGLISH

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Recently, there has been an increasing interest in varieties of English in urban centres in the north of England and in Scotland. Several studies on these ‘northern Englishes’ have been conducted during the last few years, e.g. Geordie (Watt and Milroy 1999), Glaswegian (Stuart-Smith 1999), English in Berwick (Watt and Ingham 2000; Pichler 2006), Aberdeen (Brato 2007) and Middlesbrough (Llamas 1998, 2006).

However, although a lot of attention has been paid to the north-east of England and the metropolitan areas of Manchester and Liverpool, the far north-west, Cumbria, has hardly been recognized by sociolinguists as a linguistic area in its own right. Especially Carlisle as an urban centre is an important site in Cumbria. It is a city of about 100,000 people in the northern part of the county.

In this presentation we will have a look at the lexical sets FACE and GOAT. The monophthongization of these lexical sets, which share similarities in their realizations, is a typical feature in the north of England. According to Beal (2004) /e:/ and /o:/ are the pronunciation of these two variables. Watt and Milroy (1999) report the centring diphthongs /ɪə/ and /uə/ as traditional markers in Newcastle speech but this realization is restricted to older, working-class males while Watt and Tillotson (2001) and Finnegan (2009) report the fronting of GOAT as an innovation in Bradford and Sheffield English. The goal of this presentation is twofold. On the one hand the general account of

the FACE and GOAT vowel in Carlisle will be given. On the other hand however, we will have a look at the variation within these two variables and its distribution across different age, gender and social groups in interview style.

The data presented here is part of a large-scale research project on variation and change in Carlisle English conducted in the city in February/March 2007 and March 2008. Acoustic phonetics is used as analyzing tool which “enables us to capture relatively finegrained differences in vowel quality across different speakers and contexts.” (Hay and Drager 2007: 92).

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GERMAN AND ENGLISH VOWEL SPACES IN GERMAN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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Building upon results from Kautzsch (2008), the present paper offers a first comparison of the native German and non-native English monophthongs of German learners of English. On the basis of detailed acoustic analyses using PRAAT, it addresses the question of to what extent German learners retain or change their German monophthongs when talking English.

The study analyses English and German diagnostic word lists as used in Wells (1982) or Ladefoged (2001) read by 30 students of English. In order to correlate the findings with relevant extralinguistic factors, and in order to show that the notion of a monolithic learner German is somewhat dated and might be replaced by learner varieties, rather, students are taken from two different regional backgrounds in Germany as well as from two different proficiency levels. This might ultimately give insight into if and how different regional varieties of German are visible in the English of German learners and to what extent a higher proficiency level leads to a more near-native pronunciation of English monophthongs.

In addition, the information gathered by means of a questionnaire will be presented that might contribute to an explanation of various degrees of near-nativeness from the point of view of personal and social factors like age, period of learning English, musicality, living in an English-speaking country, estimated amount of exposure to English per week, etc.,.

Irrespective of the fact that using the terms "native", "non-native", and "near-native" is partly becoming unfashionable these days in research on English as Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, or English as a Lingua Franca (cf. Jenkins 2007), this study still uses these concepts. This is because the present author is of the opinion that especially in pronunciation teaching learners require a target accent which should serve them as a model for sounding near-native and not non-native from the start (cf. van den Doel 2008). From a psychological point of view it seems that at a certain proficiency level learners take great pride in not being identified as non-native speakers as soon as they start communicating in the foreign language, and also use this experience as motivation for further improvement.

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L2 PHONOLOGICAL ACQUISITION: WHAT SOUNDS NON-NATIVE IN MACEDONIAN-ENGLISH ACCENTED SPEECH?

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L2 pronunciation (or the developing L2 phonological competence) demonstrates greatest variability among second language learners. Both research and teaching practice agree that the characteristics of the L1 sound system largely determine learner's L2 speech production; in an attempt to master new or similar sounds, learners adapt their pronunciation under the influence of their native language. The result of the overlap between L1 and L2 is the foreign-accented speech phenomenon. This is strikingly evident in spoken interaction where phonological similarities and differences between the two languages appear to be a reliable clue for the listener as to the speaker's background. A straightforward comparison between the sound systems of L1 and L2 does not reveal the subtle nuances that may facilitate or impede learner's L2 pronunciation. It also seems that the phonological phenomena that are obviously different are not perceived by native speakers altogether as erroneous; some are accepted with greater tolerance whereas others are treated as deviant (mispronounced/non-native) leading to unintelligibility and miscommunication.

This presentation reports on the results of a recent study that aimed to detect and describe the most frequent vocalic and

consonantal markers of Macedonian-English accented speech as perceived by native speakers of English and to find out whether native speakers who speak different standard variants of English perceive the same segments as non-native. First, a brief overview of the methodology design will be presented with emphasis on the web application which was developed as a necessity due to lack of phonetically trained experts in Macedonia but also having in mind the benefits of the approach such as wider audience and fast results. Two types of data were collected: a) quantitative (frequency of phonetic segment variables and global foreign accent ratings on a 5-point scale), and b) qualitative (open-ended questions). The result analysis sheds light on the predicted phenomena and points out three variables as the most frequent markers of Macedonian-English accented speech: final obstruent devoicing, vowel shortening and substitution of English dental fricatives with Macedonian dental plosives. It also reflects additional phonetic aspects poorly explained in the available reference literature such as allophonic distributional differences between the two languages and intonational mismatch (sporadic use of weak forms and frequent inappropriate use of rising tones). Based on the listeners' responses, a detailed profile of the English speech produced by a Macedonian learner of English (the typical representative of our sample) is constructed and practical pedagogical implications are proposed.

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LEARNER IDENTITY AS A FACTOR IN ACCENT VARIABILITY: A PEDAGOGICAL STUDY

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This paper attempts to account for accent variability by locating it within a framework of linguistic identity, and outlines the implementation of an L2 pronunciation pedagogy based on this theory. The pedagogy stemmed from the broadly-assumed intuitive association between pronunciation and identity, which assumes that a speaker's pronunciation reflects his identification with a given social or cultural group (e.g. Block, 2007; Smit & Dalton, 2000). In recent years, social identity has come to be viewed more commonly as a complex, multi-levelled phenomenon, constructed as a social process rather than produced as a result of predetermined biological or racial attributes, as was previously assumed (Omoniyi, 2006). This multi-faceted view of social identity suggests that an individual's perception of the self may change over time or with the surrounding environment. If the supposed correlation between accent and identity exists, then it is reasonable to assume that as a speaker's identity changes, so too may his manner of pronunciation.

Such a proposition has significant implications for the teaching of pronunciation, as it suggests that there may be a role to be played by learners' social, cultural or linguistic identities in the pronunciation classroom. According to this theory, teachers may achieve greater improvement in their learners' pronunciation by helping students to approximate a particular

manner of pronunciation by associating it with an alternative identity, such as that of 'a confident speaker'. This approach draws on Dörnyei's (2005) theory of possible selves and its application to L2 motivation.

In this paper I describe a pedagogical study carried out to test this proposal with a group of adult EAP learners. Students attended a short course of pronunciation instruction, which aimed to improve learners' English pronunciation by encouraging them to reflect on their extant and desired linguistic identities, associate specific features of speech with those identities, and focus on the elements required to approximate the desired identity. As part of the study, recordings of the learners' speech were taken before and after the course of pronunciation instruction, along with interviews conducted at the end of the course to evaluate learners' opinions of the pedagogy. It is hoped that the results of the pedagogical study, which is currently undergoing analysis, will 1) indicate whether reflection on learner identity has a place a successful L2 pronunciation pedagogy, and 2) help to determine the extent to which accent and pronunciation may be said to be a product of individual identity.

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THE PERCEPTION OF L2 ENGLISH WORD STRESS: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC STUDY

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This study investigates word stress perception by EFL learners with different first language backgrounds. Native speakers of tone languages tend to interpret English word stress as pitch differences in the code-switching context. For instance, Cheng (1968) reports that the English unstressed syllable is interpreted as a tone carrying the [-high] feature and further triggers the 3rd tone sandhi in the Chinese-English code-switching context (e.g., *hao3 professor* → *hao2 professor* ‘good professor’). Ou (2009) further reports that in L2 acquisition when the cue of high pitch in an English stressed syllable is manipulated to be low, Taiwanese EFL learners exhibit great difficulty in using other phonetic cues of stress such as duration to identify stress. Two questions about Ou’s findings then arise: (a) Is the reliance on pitch in identifying stress an effect of the tonal system of Chinese? Can it not be a general feature of L2 stress perception? (b) Will native speakers of a pitch-accent system (e.g., Japanese) which also uses pitch as a primary cue to contrast lexical meanings also show similar tendency in L2 English stress perception?

To answer these two questions, this study duplicated Ou’s (2009) experiment using another two EFL groups: L1 stress language speakers (i.e., Spanish) and L1 pitch-accent language speakers (i.e., Japanese). The task was for subjects to perceive

English non-word pairs with a stress contrast (e.g., *fércept* vs. *fercépt*), of which stressed syllables have high F0 or low F0. If both groups relied on the cue of high pitch in perceiving stressed syllables, this may suggest L2 learners' reliance on high pitch to identify stress be a general tendency of L2 word stress perception. If only the Japanese group showed difficulty in perceiving English word stress in the rising intonation, this would suggest the Taiwanese pattern come from the effect of L1 tonal system. Twenty Spanish and twenty Japanese college students were recruited to participate in two forced choice perceptual experiments, in which they were asked to identify disyllabic non-words with a stress contrast (e.g., *fércept* vs. *fercépt*) when the stressed syllable had high or low F0. The results show that while both Japanese and Spanish groups had little difficulty in identifying word stress in the falling intonation, Japanese participants had greater difficulty in doing so in the rising intonation than Spanish speakers. The result suggests that the reliance on pitch in identifying stress be an effect of the language-specific phonological use of pitch at the lexical level.

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DESIGNING AND PILOTING A TOOL FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Despite the fact that the last few years have witnessed a growth of interest in pronunciation learning strategies (e.g. Petersen 2000; Pawlak 2008; Wrembel 2008), this field of inquiry still remains neglected and is in urgent need of further empirical investigation. This is because the available research findings are primarily confined to the identification and description of the strategic devices that learners draw upon in their attempts to learn the various segmental and suprasegmental features, with only a handful of studies addressing such issues as the factors influencing pronunciation learning strategy choice and use, the impact of proficiency levels or the value of strategies-based instruction in this area. Another problem is related to the use of diverse research methodologies and data collection tools, which renders it impossible to make comparisons between studies, view their results in a cumulative way and arrive at conclusions concerning the effectiveness of specific strategies used by learners.

What appears to be indispensable to drive the field forward and ensure that research findings will be comparable across studies and provide a sound basis for feasible pedagogic proposals is to draw up a classification of pronunciation learning strategies and design on that basis a valid and reliable data-

collection tool which could be employed to measure the application of these strategies in different groups of learners, correlate it with a variety of individual and contextual variables, and appraise the effects of training programs. In accordance with this rationale, the present paper represents an attempt to propose a tentative categorization of pronunciation learning strategies, adopting as a point of reference the existing taxonomies of strategic devices (e.g. O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990) as well as the instructional options teachers have at their disposal when dealing with elements of this language subsystem (e.g. Goodwin 2001). It also introduces a research instrument designed on the basis of the classification that shares many characteristics with Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning but, in contrast to it, includes both Likert-scale and open-ended items. The findings of a pilot study which involved 80 English Department students demonstrate that although the tool requires considerable refinement, it provides a useful point of departure for future research into pronunciation learning strategies. The paper closes with comments on the possible directions of such studies and the methodological considerations involved.

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AGE AND ACCENT – CHANGES IN A SOUTHERN WELSH ENGLISH ACCENT

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Neath English is an accent with features typical for Southern Welsh English. It is the accent of an urban area which is home to 50,000 people. Neath English belongs to the lives of those people, is part of their identity, and tells others where they come from. The informants whose accent is investigated for this paper generally consider Neath English as part of themselves, are proud of their own accent, and do not want to change it.

Languages change throughout time and develop. There are several non-linguistic factors at play which might influence the accent of an area, such as age, gender, and education. This paper describes the accent of Neath (South Wales) from a socio-dialectological perspective and deals with changes in the accent which are due to the non-linguistic factor age. With regards to Neath English, the question arises if and to what extent the factor age affects the accent in Neath.

In a direct interview with indirect questioning, 27 informants from Neath were recorded to collect data for a phonetic and phonological investigation of the English spoken in Neath. The material gathered is described phonetically and phonologically by using Wells's lexical sets. Based on the life-stage approach, the 27 informants are divided into three age-groups, firstly 16 to 20 year-olds, 25 to 40 year-olds, and finally 45 to 60 year-olds, representing adolescents, younger adults, and older adults

respectively. The data is analysed statistically to show correlations between age and linguistic variants.

Age clearly has an influence on Neath English. The percentage with which some variants are realised in the key-words varies by up to 60 per cent. The realisations of STRUT, BATH and START, FACE/STAY, GOAT/SNOW, NEAR, CURE, PLAYER, EMPLOYER, FIRE, POWER, and the consonants /r/, /l/, and word final <ing> in participles and gerunds have changed throughout age. Some variants are becoming more popular, others are being used less.

Age, though not the only non-linguistic factor affecting language use, has a strong influence on Neath English and is likely to continue having an impact on people's accents in Neath.

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THE EFFECT OF IP CONSTITUENT COMPLEXITY ON UNSTRESSED VOWEL DURATION IN POLISH LEARNER'S ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Unstressed vowel reduction regularly occurs in the English language, traditionally regarded as stressed-timed. Polish, on the other hand, is a syllable-timed language, which does not reduce its vowels. Although recent research has not confirmed categorical statements such as the above, Polish learners of English tend to vary the length of vocalic segments less than native speakers, which also includes insufficient qualitative and quantitative vowel reduction in unstressed positions.

The purpose of the study presented in the paper is to observe the duration of unstressed vowels and/or syllables in various positions of the traditional British School rhythm unit, i.e. prehead, unaccented parts of the head and the tail in the pronunciation of native speakers and Polish learners of English. The analysis focuses on strings of one to four consecutive unstressed syllables in a read text.

The Polish subjects were students at a teacher training college and they were asked to read a passage in English. Their performance was recorded and then analysed at two points of time, i.e. at the beginning (October) and at the end (May) of the first year of practical phonetics training. The results were

compared to the IViE corpus samples of native British English speech (Cambridge inhabitants).

The following research questions refer to differences in quantitative vowel reduction in the English pronunciation of native speakers and Polish learners in terms of absolute and relative duration:

1. What is the general difference in quantitative unstressed vowel reduction between the two groups?
2. Is there a difference in the degree of reduction of the prehead and the other positions?
3. Does the degree of reduction vary depending on the number of consecutive unstressed syllables?
4. How much individual variation occurs in native and non-native reduced vowel/syllable duration?
5. Are there any visible tendencies in the development of Polish learner's interlanguage?

The conclusions aim to contribute to the discussion concerned with rhythm patterns of native and non-native spoken English as well as serve the purposes of practical phonetics pedagogy.

THE ANALYSIS OF FORMANT FREQUENCIES OF ENGLISH VOWELS /e/ AND /ɪ/ PRODUCED BY POLISH LEARNERS

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Learning sound categories in a new language requires re-partitioning of an acoustic space previously adopted for native sounds. As predicted by the Speech Learning Model, L1 and L2 vowels exist in the same phonological space and learning a new vowel is harder when it is close to an existing category. L2 vowels that are similar to already existing L1 vowels have their acoustic attributes accommodated within a native category, which results in non-native productions. This situation is predicted to happen for Polish learners of English. English vowels /e/ and /ɪ/ are expected to be accommodated by two Polish vowels that are close in the acoustic space.

In order to compare productions of the two L2 English vowels to their L1 Polish counterparts, we recruited a group of Polish advanced learners of English from the English Department at the University of Silesia. Participants read carrier sentences with an embedded bVt word non-utterance finally in both English and Polish. Formant frequencies were taken from a vowel midpoint in the region of steady-state formants. Formants were estimated with an LPC algorithm with a prediction order of 10 and 12 coefficients for male and female subjects respectively. The analysis window was 25 milliseconds long.

Repeated-measures ANOVA was run to seek significance in the difference between Polish and English vowels for both F1 and F2. Next, individual productions were normalised using the Lobanov method to factor out physiologically-caused differences and were plotted on a vowel chart.

MAKING ENGLISH A NEW LATIN

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The so-called ‘English-Latin analogy’ has been a recurring motif in recent applied linguistics literature, with various scholars focusing on the parallels between the two languages as world lingua francas, or envisaging that English may eventually share the fate of Latin as a dead language. In this context the notion of death should be understood as eventual disintegration into mutually unintelligible accents and dialects. The anxieties over the multiplicity of native/nativised varieties of English are best summed up by the following statement: “just as Latin, which once held sway over a great linguistic empire, split into French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian /.../ so may the future of English be not as a single language but as the parent of a family of languages” (Bragg 2004).

The paper will look briefly at the above aspects of the analogy, but will then focus on how the increasingly popular, ‘democratic’ approaches to teaching English pronunciation – which downplay the role of native speakers as norm providers – may make the fate of English similar to the fortunes of Latin in yet another way: by paving the way for a conceptual separation, and possibly a future split, between international and native English(es). The author would like to demonstrate that we may be witnessing harbingers of major changes in the status of foreigners’ English, not entirely unlike the fortunes of Latin, whose international version parted company with its native varieties in the early Middle Ages. Paradoxically, it was precisely

the former – i.e. the learned, and to a large extent artificial, entity – that preserved the original name of the ancient Romans' mother tongue, thereby earning Latin its established reputation as a dead language, in spite of its Modern Romance continuations being very much alive and well (e.g. Wright 2004). While the mechanisms underlying the operation of the two world languages are crucially different, native and non-native Englishes might also, in the future, take divergent routes of development. This may happen if the norms and reference accents presented to foreign learners deliberately ignore L1 usage, particularly if English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) becomes codified along non-native lines. Indeed, the need for making ELF a viable pedagogic alternative has been much emphasised in recent years, and intensive work on a fully-fledged ELF model, based solely on patterns of interaction among non-native speakers, is well under way (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2006).

Even if ELF ultimately fails to acquire an identity of its own, non-native speakers (due to the sheer numerical domination) may become a force to be reckoned with, to the point of shaping the future character of native English accents and dialects (e.g. Crystal 2008, cf. Trudgill 2002) – an idea which, until recently, was generally dismissed as fanciful.

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EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF CONSONANT VARIATION IN SCOTTISH ENGLISH

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Rhoticity, i.e. the general realisation of non-prevocalic /r/ in words like *car* and *sport*, is one of the consonantal hallmarks of Scottish English accents. However, it has been shown that both workingclass speakers (e.g. for Glasgow: Stuart-Smith 2003; for Edinburgh: Romaine 1978) and, to a much lesser extent, middle-class speakers (Stuart-Smith 2003) are variably rhotic today. In the study by Romaine, working-class males lead in /r/-vocalisation, the data presented by Stuart-Smith suggest that working-class females do. Stuart-Smith also finds that while working-class males realise a higher proportion of non-prevocalic /r/ than females, the pattern is inverse (if remarkably less pronounced) among middle-class speakers. On a surface level this suggests that the prestige of rhoticity differs according to social class. Apart from these sociolinguistic patterns phonetic environment has also been shown to have an effect on the occurrence or non-occurrence as well as on the phonetic realisation of non-prevocalic /r/ (e.g. Romaine 1978; Stuart-Smith 2003).

While non-prevocalic /r/ features in a number of studies of Scottish English, the word-initial phoneme /ʍ/ corresponding to the spelling <wh-> in words such as *whale* and *which* has not received a similar degree of attention. This “voiceless labio-velar

fricative” (McCully 2009), also described as “[w] preceded by some aspiration or breathing” (Jones 2002) is still reported as being in contrastive distribution with /w/ (Jones 1997; Jones 2002), although Macafee (1983) finds that younger speakers in Glasgow occasionally merge the two.

This paper is based on data elicited from 27 middle-class speakers interviewed in Edinburgh early in 2008. It aims (1) to test previous findings regarding the variation of non-prevocalic /r/, using a number of internal and external predictors such as age, gender, language contact, speech style, stress, and phonetic environment, (2) to explore the alternation of /ʌ/ and /w/, employing similar predictors, and (3) to compare the behaviours of the two variables, especially addressing the question whether accent levelling affects both features in a similar way.

It will be shown that the two variables appear to be largely unrelated: While younger speakers tend to merge /ʌ/ and /w/ and seem to lead in a change in progress, the variation in non-prevocalic /r/ does not suggest that Scottish English is becoming non-rhotic. Furthermore, phonetic environment plays a major role in the variation especially of non-prevocalic /r/, and for both variables Anglo- English contact and the regional background of speakers’ families emerge as important factors.

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RHYTHM AND VOWEL QUALITY IN ACCENTS OF ENGLISH

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Although the phonetic bases of the opposition between 'stress-timed' and 'syllable-timed' languages have yet to be firmly established (e.g. Ramus et al 1999), a number of phonological phenomena appear to be dependent on these categories (Bertinetto 1989), including vowel inventories and the presence of diphthongs in a language. Donegan and Stampe (1983) suggest a phonetic correlation in vowel quality – in stress languages, even the monophthongs may be quite diphthongal in nature, while the vowels of syllable languages are generally quite pure in quality. This notion has been found to play a significant role for vowel perception in English, a stress-timed language, whose listeners make use dynamic spectral properties for vowel identification (Strange 1989). In syllable-timed languages, we might expect listeners to rely more heavily on static spectral targets for vowel identification, as suggested by preliminary findings in Schwartz (2007).

Various accents of English show phonetic differences in vowel quality. For example, in Scotland the /i/ vowel is quite pure in quality, while in the South of England, the Southern U.S. and Australia it may perhaps be best described as a diphthong. Thus, we are faced with the question of whether these accent-specific properties in the phonetic realization of vowels may be reflected in the rhythmic properties of a given accent.

This paper will investigate this question by means of an acoustic study of samples of a number of native and non-native accents of English. The goal is to investigate the possibility of a correlation between rhythmic properties and the 'phonetic' realization of vowel quality. Spectral measurements of monophthongs of stressed vowels are presented along data evaluating the degree of vowel reduction, a trademark sign of stress timing. Those accents with purer vowels are hypothesized to show a lesser degree of vowel reduction. Such a finding would provide additional support for the rhythmic typology outlined in Donegan and Stampe (1983), and raise the possibility that vowel quality may be used to describe rhythmic characteristics. Preliminary results of the acoustic study appear to support the hypothesis.

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VOWEL REDUCTION PATTERNS IN ENGLISH

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Most of the recent discussion of phonological vowel reduction (VR) boils down to the fact that the name no longer refers to a uniform phonological concept and should rather be applied as a cover term to a set of phonological processes with varying phonetic outcomes. Two relatively distinct patterns of VR have been identified by the theorists of the subject. The first type, moderate VR, has been found to involve neutralization of individual formant values, mainly vowel height contrasts, leading to the emergence of a sub-inventory of reduced vowels in a language. The other type, extreme VR, is characterised by a more extensive neutralization of most vowel contrasts resulting in centralization and manifested in speech as the targetless schwa. While this most frequently occurring reduced vowel has been evading precise instrumental description, there is an agreement that its phonetic values are language and speaker-specific.

English has been traditionally associated with the second type of VR. For practical reasons, EFL contexts often promote a conveniently simplified version of VR, which suggests replacing most vowels with the schwa in prosodically weak positions. Moreover, the tendency to categorize English as a stress-timed language with prominence-reducing VR still prevails in academic accounts of the phenomenon.

The present paper reviews VR patterns found in English with a focus on their non-homogenous nature. It is argued, based on

the developments in the field, that both moderate and extreme types of phonological VR are to be found in the language, with their relative salience determined by distributional characteristics. In fact, English might be more accurately described as having a complex VR pattern present in a number of other languages, e.g. Russian or Bulgarian.

The paper also revises the phonetics of English reduced vowels, from the variable values of the schwa to a set of reduced coloured vowels whose specific realizations are context-dependent. Last but not least, the paper recaptures a number of factors, such as casualness, frequency and lexical properties of individual words, which affect the degree of VR in English.

While vowel reduction has been a well-established feature in the phonological portrait of English, its description has relatively recently evolved to embrace the variety of phonological contexts and phonetic realizations, which allows a conclusion about the complexity of its patterns in the language.

EXPRESSING CROATIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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This paper presents the results of a research on the attitude of Croats towards expressing their national identity in English pronunciation. The research has been inspired by the sociolinguistic debate known as the controversy between the proponents of 'liberational' vs. 'deficit' linguistics. However, the present research deals with English as a foreign, rather than a second language. It is carried out on the sample of some 1000 university students whose mother tongue is Croatian and who speak English as a foreign language. The parameters involved are: sex; degree of education; proficiency in English; the sociolinguistic status of the subject's regional dialect of Croatian; attitude to displaying one's own regional provenance; and one's own judgement of the degree of being perfectionist. The research is carried out in the form of a questionnaire including 20 questions. It is anonymous, takes 10 minutes to complete and is done on a voluntary basis during regular university classes. The subjects' responses are analysed by means of the SPSS software.

The results of a preliminary research suggest that attitude towards one's own foreign accent does not necessarily depend on whether the collocutor is a native speaker of English or not. Interestingly, the majority of subjects give extreme responses in either direction in connection with their readiness to display

their regional accent of Croatian. Consequently, one of the aims of the research is to establish the correlation between the tendency to display one's regional identity in the mother tongue and the inclination to preserve one's national identity in the pronunciation of the foreign language.

There is a surprisingly strong tendency among subjects to consider the work on the improvement of one's English pronunciation as a waste of time. It is also interesting to observe that the subjects tend to prefer non-native teachers of English pronunciation, which can be accounted for by the deeply rooted contrastive approach of Croatian teachers of English. The current results are related to recent motivational and socio-phonetic research in connection with the pronunciation of the native and foreign language. They present a challenge to the current way of teaching English in Croatia, where the two metropolitan varieties of English pronunciation (mainly RP and occasionally General American) have been the exclusive models of English pronunciation. These conclusions have implications for the future of teaching English in the contemporary globalisational context: some formerly stigmatised regional and national features of English pronunciation may become fully acceptable.

PHONETICALLY AUGMENTED VIRTUALITY IN SECOND LIFE

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In my Accents 2008 presentation I talked about and demonstrated some phonetic affordances of the virtual world of Second Life for EFL pronunciation teaching and learning; I also discussed some environment-inherent problems in this respect (<http://ifia.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/abstract.htm#abs55>). In my 2009 presentation I plan to go further along this path and show how SL objects can be augmented with pronunciation-relevant qualities, such as built-in audio, phonetic transcription, pronunciation exercises and drills, expository information on selected phonetic topics, etc. Together they make up what I call an integrated PAV system of Phonetically Augmented Virtuality, on a par with similar systems of Augmented Reality (AR) currently developing in Real Life. I will also report on the last academic year's pronunciation teaching/consulting work which I did under the label of "Pronunciation with Wlodek Barbosa" consultation meetings held every Wednesday on the island of Virlantis in SL. Most of my PAVed objects were used during those sessions. Such PAVed objects and activities naturally appeal most to kinesthetically-minded EFL learners, but are fun to use for all! They include, but are not limited to:

1. PHONETIC DOMINOES: Audio-enhanced 'magnetized' cubes can be dragged and linked to each other domino-style one by one to match the offset-onset sounds, e.g.: alcohol-lemonade-duck-cabbage-gin.

2. WORD STRESS BLOCK GAME: There are 19 cubes of two sizes: big and small. Each cube represents a syllable of one the seven words, which can be listened to when the cube is touched. Big cubes are stressed syllables, while small cubes are unstressed syllables. The learner drags the cubes to snap them together in such a way that they make up the entire word, with cube size matching the stress pattern of the word.
3. PHONETIC WALK-THROUGH GRID GAME: This is a variant of phonetic domino: the same stones are used with recordings of words/phrases. But this time, rather than dragging magnetized cubes to string them into a domino with phonetically matching edges, the learner walks through the grid so that sounds at the edges match. When s/he steps on a stone, it will speak its name.

References

- A short presentation of the PAV idea and implementation is available <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDIWtCtQB8I> and here: <http://blip.tv/file/2315534/>.
- A longer one, held in SL is available from my website as audio recording: <http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek>.
- More ideas on EFL pronunciation in SL coming from Wlodek Barbosa: <http://slactivities.ning.com/profile/WlodzimierzSobkowiak>.
- My "Mówienie w języku obcym" Konin conference PowerPoint presentation on "Phonetic affordances of Second Life" is available here: <http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/Afford.pps>.
- More links on SL in EFL pronunciation teaching are available from my dedicated website: http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/~swlodek/Second_Life.html.

ON THE IRRELEVANCE OF SOUNDS AND PROSODY IN FOREIGN-ACCENTED ENGLISH

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The author argues that current research on phonetic priorities in ELT, with its focus on segments and prosody, is misguided and that emphasis should be shifted towards learners' training in the production of words whose erroneous rendition does not result from their inability to articulate foreign sounds correctly, but which is caused by interference either from sounds or spelling in their native language and English (e.g. *Disney* pronounced by many Polish learners as [d'isnej]). It is argued that the use of such severely distorted items has grave consequences for linguistic communication, more serious than segmental and suprasegmental errors and, as such, should be pedagogically prioritized.

In order to verify this claim, two experiments have been carried out in which 40 native-speakers of English (20 in Dublin and 20 in London) were asked to assess two phonetic versions of the same passage: one produced by a Polish learner of English with poor (heavily accented) segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation, but no major distortions of words and another recording made by a speaker with the correct rendition of segments and suprasegments, but with several seriously mispronounced words, common in Polish English. The assessment concerned the samples' degree of comprehensibility, foreign-accentedness and annoyance caused in the listeners. The experimental data show that on all three

counts the subjects' judgements were more severe in the case of the version with grossly distorted words. The same results were obtained in the second experiment in which the samples' intelligibility was examined in a dictation test.

FROM FOCUS ON SOUNDS TO FOCUS ON WORDS IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION

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The paper addresses a very important aspect of Polish-accented English, namely the issue of frequent phonetic errors made by Polish learners which do not result from their inability to produce foreign sounds correctly, but which stem from various interference factors (e.g. *foreign* pronounced as [fo'rejn]). Following Szpyra-Kozłowska's claims (see the paper "*On the irrelevance of sounds and prosody in foreign-accented English*", this conference) that such errors hinder successful communication far more than other segmental and suprasegmental inaccuracies and should thus be treated as a top pedagogical priority, what is suggested is a shift in phonetic instruction from the focus on the production of sounds and prosodies to the focus on the pronunciation of problematic words. Our major goal is to demonstrate how this proposal can be implemented in the language classroom.

The authors present a report on the experiment in which a group of 60 Polish secondary school pupils has undergone a special training in the pronunciation of 50 commonly mispronounced words with the use of special, teacher-designed materials. The effectiveness of the employed procedure as well as the pupils' reactions to it are examined and pedagogical conclusions are drawn.

ACCENT ADDITION IN FINNISH EFL TEXTBOOKS

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This study is an investigation of model accents in Finnish EFL textbooks. For this rough analysis, four EFL textbooks by Finnish publishers were selected: two for beginners and two for advanced learners. I focus on the key texts, which are meant to be studied by the whole teaching group. The accents are identified by listening to the CDs attached to the textbooks. The study is linked to a wider EFL textbook analysis conducted as part of my ongoing doctoral studies.

The great variation in the English language is a challenge to EFL teaching, especially to pronunciation teaching. It is common, that a single (traditional) variety is chosen as model for pronunciation. In recent years, however, this has been questioned (see e.g. Jenkins 2000). In Finland the model accent has generally been, and still is, the British Received Pronunciation (RP). Wells (2005) points out the importance of aim in the matter: the aims of learning English pronunciation, and the purpose to which the learnt skills are to be used, should be considered when the model for pronunciation is chosen. Finnish learners for example are more likely to communicate in English with other EFL learners than with speakers of RP. In recent years, it has become more acceptable to speak English with a foreign accent. Instead of getting rid of one's foreign accent, Jenkins (2000, 209 - 210) suggests a five-step programme of 'accent addition' for learners of English. In my presentation, I

will approach Finnish EFL textbooks from the point of view of this suggestion, exploring the possibilities for accent addition offered by the analysed teaching materials.

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IMPLICATIONS OF SOUND SYMBOLISM FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRONUNCIATION PEDAGOGY

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The paper aims at investigating the idea of a symbolic nature of sounds in the acquisition of a foreign language phonology and its implications for the teaching and learning of L2 pronunciation. Firstly, I will present an overview of universal trends in phonetic symbolism, i.e. non-arbitrary representations of a phoneme by specific semantic criteria. Sound symbolism is usually demonstrated in the matching of a phone to polar adjective pairs like small/big, bright/dark, etc. For instance, /i:/ and /I/ represent high-frequency sounds and are typically associated with small size, sharpness, rapid movement and physically high objects. On the other hand, /u/ and /a/ represent low frequency sounds and tend to symbolise large size, softness and slow movement, physically low objects (cf. Hinton et al. 1994).

Secondly, research results of different manifestations of phonetic symbolism shall be discussed including an overview of experiments on sound-colour coding (Wrembel 2007, Wrembel & Rataj 2008). The major focus, however, will fall on a pilot study on emotionally-loaded representations of phonemes as well as other phonaesthetic associations, i.e. visualising a sound or a phonological process in terms of aesthetic values.

It will be claimed that through assigning vivid symbolic

characteristics to the target language sounds, long-term auditory memory is enhanced, L2 phonemic representations are reinforced, and additional affective learning pathways are activated, thus, the process of phonological acquisition of a foreign language may be facilitated. Finally, practical pedagogical implications of sound symbolism will be explored and a number of innovative classroom activities involving phonaesthetic associations will be proposed.

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SUBSTANTIVE COMPLEXITY AND THE LICENSING OF VOCALIC LENGTH IN STANDARD SCOTTISH ENGLISH

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Although various opposing theoretical analyses of the vocalic length in English have been on the market since, at least, the 1960s (see SPE, Durand 2005), the observation that the words *pool*, *naught*, and *lead* possess long vowels as opposed to *pull*, *not*, or *lid*, the vowels of which are short, has been recognised as the established textbook assumption. All but one accents of English possess this kind of phonemic quantity distinction in their systems. The notable exception to this pattern is Standard Scottish English (SSE). In SSE certain vowels are invariably long, some are long only in relevant contexts, while others remain short irrespective of the environment they are located in. The label used in the literature to describe the distribution of long vowels in SSE is the Scottish Vowel Length Rule (SVLR) also known as Aitken's Law.

Synchronic SVLR was under particularly thorough investigation in the 1980s and the early 1990s when the issues of the input to the rule (McMahon 1991, Carr 1992, Kamińska 1995), the environment in which the rule operates (Lass 1984, McMahon 1991, Anderson 1993, Kamińska 1995), as well as the interaction of SVLR with other rules of grammar (McMahon 1991; 2000, Carr 1992, Anderson 1993) were investigated. Unfortunately, especially in the light of new electronic

measurements of SSE vowels (Scobbie et al. 1999a/b, Scobbie and Stuart-Smith 2006, Pukli 2006), none of the abovementioned works can be said to have provided a satisfactory phonological interpretation of SVLR.

The aim of this paper is, first of all, to present to the audience the main points of the interpretations of SVLR available since the 1980s within the framework of Lexical Phonology (LP) (Rubach and Booij 1987, McMahon 2000) and to point to the main drawbacks of those approaches as far as the analyses of the input to and the environment of SVLR are considered. My aim is also to propose an alternative interpretation of the quantitative phenomena in SSE. This will be based on the assumption of the existence of variable licensing potential of different vocalic objects that constitute phonological representations of words (Cyran 2003, Scheer 2004) as well as on the notion of elemental complexity of consonantal objects (Cyran 2003). It will be argued that the distribution of vocalic length peculiar to SSE is the effect of the interaction of those two factors.

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