

Julia Trzeciakowska

Centre for Language Evolution Studies, Faculty of Humanities,
Nicolaus Copernicus University
juliatrz@doktorant.umk.pl
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7277-4713>

Non-Native English Speakers' Attitudes Towards Polish-Accented English

Abstract. Worldwide, most research on attitudes towards foreign-accented English has focused on the judgements of native speakers or differences between the groups of native speakers and non-native speakers – and not on the evaluations of international speakers. The present paper goes against this trend and points to the infancy of attitudinal research in a more international context. The paper identifies the necessity for research in two major areas: 1) attitudes of non-native English speakers towards non-native English accents, 2) differences in normative versus intuitive approaches to teaching English pronunciation. Such empirically-oriented research is crucial to enhance the understanding of non-native speakers attitudes to foreign accent and pronunciation teaching relations. To support these claims, the paper first provides an overview of the literature on attitudinal research, an emphasis is put on attitudes of Polish language users. It further discusses the attitudes towards accented speech in the globalised world, in which English has a status of *lingua franca*; thus, being an accented speaker among other accented speakers is prevalent in various contexts. The tailored-English teaching models are considered here a possible factor influencing the mutual attitudes of non-native speakers. The article advocates taking steps towards a closer fit between pronunciation teaching policies and standards as well as evaluation criteria actually applicable in the context of real multinational use of English.

Keywords: attitudes; foreign accent; accented speech; non-native speakers; Polish students; international students.

Introduction¹

Worldwide, most research exploring attitudes towards foreign-accented speech has focused on the judgements of native speakers or differences between the groups of native speakers (henceforth NS) and non-native speakers (henceforth NNS) (see e.g., Gonet & Pietroń, 2004; Nowacka, 2010; Scheuer, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2005; Kirkowa-Naskova, 2010; van den Doel, 2009; Maharjan, 2009; Lippi-Green, 1997, 2001; Munro et al., 2006; Lindemann, 2002) rather than on evaluations of international speakers. Foreign-accented models of pronunciation are, more often than not, downplayed and disregarded in favour of the preferred native ones (e.g., Nowacka, 2012; Scheuer, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak et al., 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015). Likewise, English language training at the university level in Poland, within the paradigm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), is mainly focused on normative/prescriptive instruction, improving the rendition of certain segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features, with the explicit main goal of helping learners achieve a more native-like accent. However, this approach may be outdated, as it fails to consider very recent changes in the international ‘consumership’ of English, which is no longer owned by its NS, and it is increasingly spoken between its NNS in various international and professional contexts, such as: “science, education, media, business, tourism, and finance” (see e.g., Roessel et al., 2020; Crystal, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011; Pennycook, 2011; Menon & Patel, 2012; Graddol, 2000; Warschauer, 2000).

The use of English as a lingua franca is not only an interesting topic but also a key issue in today’s world, as it may influence the way English is perceived, taught and learned. Here, I present a brief theoretical overview of the literature pertaining to the attitudes of NS and NNS towards foreign-accented speech. The article sheds light on the scarcity of empirical evidence in attitudinal studies pertaining to NNS. Empirically oriented research programs are crucial to enhance the understanding of NNS accents and pronunciation teaching relations. The paper takes a closer look at teaching policies in which a target pronunciation model should both be tailored to learners’ needs and, simultaneously, recognise the newly emerging demands and trends in the global ‘consumership’ of English.

¹ The parts of the text of this article have been adapted from my unpublished MA dissertation (Trzeciakowska 2016).

Attitudinal Studies Towards Foreign Accented Speech

Several attitudinal studies considering views of English NS towards foreign accented speech were conducted in the English-speaking countries, which were, among other things, motivated by a language diversity introduced by numerous immigrants (e.g. cf. Lippi-Green 1997, 2001; Munro et al. 2006; Lindemann 2002; van den Doel 2009). Yet, as it has already been mentioned, there is little empirical data on attitudes pertaining to NNS English speakers towards NNS accents.

Attitudes can be researched from different perspectives at various levels.² Giles and Coupland claim that “[m]ost language behaviours are [...] socially diagnostic” (1991, p. 32 in Jenkins 2013, p. 78). Here, the authors refer to accent features exclusively and observe that if there are two speakers who utter the same words, which vary only in one phonological feature, i.e. the realisation of a word ending -ing as [in] instead of [ɪŋ], the speaker who pronounces it differently may be treated negatively. A pejorative outcome is usually ascribed to “the images evoked in response to the accent” different from the standard one (1991, p. 32 in Jenkins 2013, p. 78) (in this case non-RP accent).

Even though a foreign accent is invariably perceived as “a salient marker of non-standardness” (Radomski and Szpyra-Kozłowska 2014, p. 68) it is as well a “common, normal aspect of the speech of those who acquire their L2 after early childhood” (Munro et al. 2006, p. 67 in Radomski and Szpyra-Kozłowska 2014). Therefore, non-native foreign accent ought to be treated on equal footing with the native pronunciation of English. Yet, in many situations, foreign accent is just seen as flawed (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2015, p. 46). The negative judgements of accented speech have been popularised by several sources which include language professionals (Munro et al. 2006, p. 70). Sobkowiak uses the term “Polglish” with reference to Polish-accented English (2008, p. 23). Serious mispronunciations are understood as “phonologically deviant representations of words stored in learners’ memory” (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2011, p. 286 in Porzuczek 2015, p. 170). They are presupposed to strengthen the noticeability of the accentedness in the speech of a foreign language speaker.

Radomski & Szpyra-Kozłowska (2014) in their article *Pilot study on Poles’ Attitudes to Foreign-Accented Polish and Its Users*, set a goal to

² Some of the attitudinal studies characterised in this article were chosen specifically because of their topic-related investigations in the EFL context and pedagogical implications which contribute to the topic of the article.

analyse the recordings of foreign-accented Polish, taking into account accent features, and personal characteristics of the speakers. The findings showed that the speakers' nationality does not influence the assessment of foreign speakers' accent with reference to 'comprehensibility', 'foreign-accent' and 'acceptability'. But it may affect the perception of personal characteristics of a foreign speaker, which can be due to their nationality and some cultural prejudices of the listener (Radomski & Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2014).

Interestingly, some of the Polish research studies analysed differences between judgements of native and non-native speakers of English, focusing on the perceptions of error salience and gravity, which were subsumed under the term of foreign accent/ accented speech (Gonet & Pietroń, 2004; Scheuer, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2005). In this respect, different pronunciation features, which deviate from the "model" native-like pronunciation or a teacher's pronunciation, were explored. In all of the studies in question, an approach which was undertaken to evaluate foreign accentedness strictly complied with normative language system and was dependent upon standards established by native speakers. Differently put, foreign accent was treated as being erroneous and faulty as a default.

Scheuer (2002) analysed judgements of linguistically trained and 'pristine' native speakers of English (linguistically naïve). Their judgements were contrasted with those of Polish academic teachers at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. (2000, p. 306–314). The participants evaluated speech samples from Polish students on a scale from 1 – "very strong accent" to 5 – "no-foreign accent at all, native" (Scheuer, 2002). In spite of the fact that native speakers identify foreign accent better, they appeared to be relatively more lenient in their evaluations of accented speech than Polish non-native speakers. Likewise, Gonet and Pietroń, analysed numerous aspects of phonetic deviations drawing upon several elements, i.e. "(a) objective judgements by English and Polish judges; (b) [a] discussion with English listeners and (c) studying the correlations of objective error counts with experimental native speakers' opinions" (2004, p. 15). These researchers aimed at investigating what strikes native and non-native listeners in terms of incorrect foreign-sounding that could assist in prioritising particular pronunciation errors and supplementing the field data by recognising the factors which as Szpyra-Kozłowska phrases it are "responsible for intelligibility and the Polish-accented English speech" (2005, p. 60) with implications for new curricula.

A similar study conducted by Maharjan (2009) examined learners' errors and their evaluation by the Nepali-, non-Nepali and NS English teachers. Yet, in contrast to the aforementioned error-related investigations, this study indirectly aimed at lessening the normative approach and persuading English

teachers to undertake a more positive attitude and tolerable approach to foreign accentedness represented by learner's errors (2009).

Normative criteria versus intuitive evaluation

Roessel et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive overview of attitudes towards NNS researched within different paradigms. The authors illustrate that there has emerged a very recent line of research on foreign-accented English which indicates that foreign accent does not, in fact, have to evoke negative responses. The type of attitude is mostly interrelated with the method of its evaluation. The attitudes are said to be more positive if the participants do not have to respond spontaneously (in various contexts), but in a more behaviour controlled-environment. This allows for eliminating prejudice which, then, could be outstripped by sensitivity towards accent biases and normative need to avoid prevalent discrimination (Roessel et al. 2020).

It should be noted that the notion of normativity may be understood and investigated in the present article in two different ways: 1) either a judge wants to undertake a normative, prescriptive approach to assessing foreign accent in terms of its deviation from a model native-like norm (and obtain an original, model pronunciation) which entails direct implications for teaching and learning "original English" or 2) to adopt a more "intuitive" attitude to foreign-sounding, in the sense of acceptance of linguistic behaviour that differentiates from an imposed standard and is motivated by other social norms, common in the interactions of the globalised world.

The second understanding of normativity refers then to the norm of not downgrading or discriminating others (cf. Roessel et al. 2020; also, Pantos & Perkins, 2013). What is more, Roessel et al. (2020) point to the research studies on discrimination against NNS (cf. Giles & Watson, 2013; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010 in Roessel et al. 2020) which advocate that "whereas strong norms exist nowadays against discrimination and prejudice, in general, the normative climate is rather lenient regarding the expression of negative attitudes toward accents" (2020, p. 89).

Here, I claim that NNS are part of international communications. Hence, one of the factors shaping the mutual (positive) attitude of NNS towards foreign-accented English may be the choice of the teaching method. Consequently, an important question to ask is of how closely the attitudes towards standard normative pronunciation model are consistent with the intuitive evaluations of international speakers. English teachers may either focus on the English language errors/deviations (adopt the normative/

prescriptive criteria), that is, what is considered a norm trying to teach the ‘original, unflawed accent’ or prepare the learners for living in an international community and help them to familiarize themselves with NS accents.³

The latter method could emphasise fluency instead of incorporating some already known accent-reductions or modifications (cf. Hansen et al. 2014). Also, Roessel et al. (2017) argue that people can adapt to NS speech easily; thus, “preconceptions and prejudices should not hinder communication across linguistic borders, but openness should overcome these borders for the benefits of interlinguistic exchange” (2017).

The further section presents the current status of English NNS and the English language itself in today’s world which mirrors the need for reconsidering the normative approach to foreign accent evaluation and seek for NNS standards.

The Global Status of the English Language

The English language is spoken by about 1.75 billion people and this number was supposed to reach 2 billion by 2020 (British Council report, 2013); thus, English has become part and parcel of global interactions (Graddol, 2000; Crystal, 2012; Stepkowska, 2013; Majer & Majer, 2008). However, a considerable body of literature corroborates the fact that NS still function as a reference point for establishing the standards of language use (e.g., see Seidlhofer, 2011; Nowacka, 2012; Scheuer, 2008; Vandergriff, 2016). Seidlhofer (2011) notes that NS’ conventions are invariably relevant for “both popular and scholarly opinion across the whole spectrum of linguistic laypersons, linguists, activists, and governmental institutions” (p. 41). NS are predominantly labelled as authors or owners of English and privileged to authoritatively determine the standards of correctness (Seidlhofer, 2011; Graddol, 2000; Stepkowska, 2013; Vandergriff, 2016) since they are in possession of the “true repository” of the English language (Trudgill, 2002 in Seidlhofer, 2011).

In her comprehensive review of this topic, Seidlhofer (2011) opines that the superiority of NS over NNS acts only as “a deep-seated assumption” (p. 41). Scheuer (2008), on the other hand, argues that NS have to play an integral part in the decision-making pertaining to the future of English due to “their phonetic behaviour that is likely to set standards, if not of authenticity,

³ I will discuss this issue with more detail in a further section on implications for teaching models.

then at least of acceptability of the foreigner's speech" (p. 113). In light of the above, NNS are often perceived negatively as inferior in terms of their linguistic performance. This often leads to the formation of pejorative attitudes and cases of discrimination, in which NNS are characterised as insufficiently competent for certain roles because their language performance deviates from the norms dictated by NS. In particular, foreign-accented speech is frequently taken to signify generally substandard language competence (cf. Derwing & Munro, 2015; Munro et al., 2006, p. 67). According to Fledge (1984), human beings are endowed with "an extraordinary filter" which enables them to distinguish accented speech, even if the stimuli lasts 30 seconds". Naturally, native speakers are differently attuned to accent differences (Scheuer 2000). Still, the degree of foreign accent is thought to determine the strength of negative reactions (Radomski and Szpyra-Kozłowska 2014, p. 69); when its intensity dwindles, more favourable attitudes concerning other aspects of accented speech may be expressed (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2015, p. 47). Interestingly, Roessel et al. (2020) outline the studies which indicate that differing attractiveness of particular foreign accents and certain stereotypes which are ascribed to some social groups "may moderate the extent (rather than the direction or occurrence) of negative biases toward nonnative speech" (2020, p. 89).

Unfavourable attitudes pertaining to prestige and social attractiveness may also stem from an increase in the processing time (in Moyer 2014, p. 20). The processing difficulty, caused by accented speech, triggers negative judgements of credibility (Lev-Ari & Keysar 2010). The lack of credibility classifies employees-to-be as incompetent to perform certain jobs. Hosoday & Stone-Romero (2010) claim that statistical evidence confirms discrimination of foreign-accented speakers in their workplaces. Thus, their employment prospects are, in many cases, damaged.

Hansen et al. (2014) show that, in view of so many cases of discrimination, some other measures should be undertaken, i.e. "mechanisms of mediation and intervention" should be developed. The authors analysed that Turkish-accented job candidates were assessed better if their judges were earlier treated as NNS for a while before they proceeded to evaluation, and they themselves had to experience what is called as "a process related to self-other overlap" (p., 73). Moreover, in certain situations, if some social groups' stereotypes are absent, the foreign accents may not be enough for triggering discrimination (cf. de Souza, Pereira, Camino, Souza de Lima, & Torres, 2016 in Roessel et al. 2020, 90).

Following this line of reasoning, it's worth mentioning the earlier study by Derwing & Rossiter (2002) in which social work students developed an

increased empathy towards accented speech of Vietnamese immigrants after cross-cultural awareness trainings and comprehension of foreign-accented speech.

Nonetheless, some of adverse judgements and attitudes may as well arise from anxiety that certain framework standards might be lost. For Mollin, such a course of events could purportedly entail the break of “worldwide communication if everybody will be able to use their own form” (2006, p. 29). However, such a scenario can be considered fallacious.

The legitimacy of non-native varieties of English and the assumed superiority of the native ones have long been a topic of a very lively never-ending debate (for extensive discussion, (cf. Jenkins, 2007, 2015; Kachru, 1992; Kachru & Bolton, 2006; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008; Stępkowska, 2013). Usually, the reference is made to the Kachruvian model comprised of the three concentric circles (the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle) which delineate the spread and expansion of English (Kachru, 1985). The general conclusion seems to be that NS keep losing their privileged status. Crystal (2012) aptly states that “nobody owns [English] any more. Or rather, everyone who has learned it now owns it.” Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) also emphasise that English “no longer has one single base of authority, prestige and normativity” (p. 3). Hence, NNS should be equal to NS due to the significance of effective communication between interlocutors rather than the attainment of native-like competence (Molin, 2006, p. 8).

The Facts of Language Use

The increasing focus on NNS gains support from quantitative data on language use. This points to the fact that non-native speakers vastly outnumber native speakers (e.g., see van den Doel, 2010; Stępkowska, 2013). Note, that already in 2000 there were about 1100 million NNS (375 million (ESL) and 750 million (EFL) speakers), in comparison to only about 375 million NS of English (Graddol, 2000). According to the 22nd edition of *Ethnologue*, in the year 2018, there were about 379 million of NS (EFL) and 753 million of NNS (ESL) (Eberhard et al., 2018) – a disproportion that continues to grow.

Peterson (2020) acknowledges that English, indeed, has become “a modern-day necessity”. European Union citizens should be trained in order to be able to speak English at a higher level. Nowadays, English is present in NNS’ everyday lives by means of ‘computer-mediated communication’, that is, social media, YouTube, games, etc., but also by means of some more traditional forms of media, like films, TV shows or music (Peterson, 2020).

Here, I approach this issue from a socio-economic perspective to highlight that English has the dominant role of the world's default language; most importantly, an appropriate command of the English language is a critical criterion for the development of a professional career (Menon & Patel, 2012). In the year 1996, the number of organisations using English as a working language was estimated at 85% for international (Yearbook of International Associations) and 99% for European organisations (see Crystal, 2012). A more recent survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit showed that 70% respondents would have to learn English in order to “to realise corporate expansion plans”, whereas a quarter of them estimated that about 50% of workers would be required to speak English (British Council report, 2013).

Graddol (2000) observes that “English is now the international currency of science and technology” (p. 9), and complements these with a long list of domains in which English has an important international status:

international organizations and conferences, scientific publications, international banking, economic affairs and trade, advertising for global brands, audio-visual cultural products such as film, TV, popular music, international tourism, tertiary (university) education, international safety (airline and maritime travels), international law, a ‘relay language’ in interpretation and translation, technology transfer, internet communication. (p. 8)

As is known, the activity in multiple fields of the international employment market is primarily stimulated by its NNS where they are required to communicate in English on a daily basis (Crystal, 2012; Graddol, 2000; Warschauer, 2002; Menon et al., 2012) for instance, in such companies as Nokia, Heineken, Samsung or Renault (British Council report, 2013). In short, native speakers of English have been losing their privileged status because, increasingly, the vast majority of interactions in English in Europe occur with other non-native speakers rather than native speakers of English; or, in the words of Graddol (2000) “native speakers may feel the language ‘belongs’ to them, but it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future” (p. 5).

Implications for Teaching Models

An online survey conducted in seven European countries by Henderson et al. (2012) revealed that English teachers predominantly opt for the Received Pronunciation model. Similarly, most learners and students of English strive to speak with a native-like manner (see e.g., Janicka et al., 2008; Jenkins, 2009; Nowacka, 2012; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015). In their article, *Ideologised values for British accents*, Coupland & Hywel reported survey research which analysed participants' reactions to 34 different English accents. The findings showed, among other things, that the ideologised values for British accents exist. Moreover, a general belief remains that "speech style should come under a prescriptive lens" (2007, p. 85), so that we could speak properly. Similar results were obtained by Nowacka (2012) who analysed the beliefs of Italian, Spanish, and Polish Erasmus students about their own English pronunciation.

However, so far, a clear consensus has not been reached on which model should be prioritised in pronunciation teaching. The bulk of the debate is organised around the trade-off between prestige (implied by the native accents) and intelligibility (e.g., see van den Doel, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2005, 2015). It is difficult to disagree with Timmis (2002) that "[w]hile it is clearly inappropriate to foist native-speaker norms on students who neither want nor need them, it is scarcely more appropriate to offer students a target which manifestly does not meet their aspirations" (p. 249).

In view of the above, teachers should reach mutual understanding on such fundamental issues as the actual usefulness and relevance of what is presented to language learners within the pronunciation models. Research indicates that the main context, in which the learner predicts to apply their knowledge of English, can have an immense impact on the choice of a model by university students. For example, in a study of Polish students of English, economics and sociology, Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2015) show that the future use of the English language influences choices of particular pronunciation models. Students of English favoured native-like models, in contrast to the students of economics and sociology. The latter group recognised English as an effective instrument for successful communication at their future workplaces. These findings yet again imply that the majority of interactions in future professional careers of the graduates will be with other NNS rather than NS. Thus, a target pronunciation model should both be tailored to learners' needs and simultaneously recognise the newly emerging demands and trends in the global 'consumership' of English.

Although the demand for non-native English speakers in international contexts is high and constantly growing, current syllabi and curricula generally stress the apparent value of native teaching models. At the same time, foreign-accented models have not been given the attention they merit. Consequently, this suggests that the allocation of teaching time and effort may be non-optimal from the point of view of some NNS with particular future language use plans (e.g., Waniek-Klimczak & Klimczak, 2015).

Common European Framework of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)

While touching upon the topic of pronunciation teaching, it is vital to mention the use of the Common European Framework of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) which is used internationally to assess the linguistic performance of English language learners.

A closer look at the framework and its criteria are of importance for this paper, as it also used in Poland. What is more, this “tool of reference” is widely applied not only in Europe but also in some other continents. And it is currently available in 40 languages. But what is exactly meant by CEFR? It was established after 20 years of a thorough analysis of what is exactly required to meet both the learners’ and teachers’ expectations. The main goal was to prepare coherent, concise, and well-organised guidelines for teachers and, simultaneously, standardise materials worldwide in accordance with a shared proficiency level system. Thanks to that, teaching and testing could finally be properly structured by the development of comprehensive teaching materials and rules for curriculums and syllabi (Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int>).

CEFR is now seen as a common international reference instrument which, despite some critique, as, for instance, Strugielska and Piątkowska claim that its description of competence is “defined and structured in an unbalanced and inconsistent way” (2018, p.21), it is still said to allow for a proper evaluation of the level of foreign language proficiency. A six-point scale is used, starting from the basic beginner levels A1 and A2, through more independent ones B1 and B2, up to the levels which define a person as a proficient language user C1 and C2 (Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int>).

Since the introduction of the framework, it has undergone some adjustments and improvements. Most importantly, it has updated the perspective of assessing pronunciation skills. We may, therefore, state that

the idea behind the European framework should change the attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. The description provided in CEFR does itself emphasise that some drastic adjustments to the previous (2001) version have been introduced. The framework does not praise highly normative native-like speech as a “norm” for correctness. Non-native features of speech are not entirely diminished and are ultimately seen as acceptable (to some extent). The transition is made into the direction of intelligibility as being a factor of greater significance for effortless communication in a foreign language.

If we take a closer look at what is actually presented in the new companion volume of CEFR, it says that “[i]n language teaching, the phonological control of an idealised native speaker has traditionally been seen as the target, with accent being seen as a marker of poor phonological control” (CEFR 2018, p. 135). The “phonological control” is understood here as an umbrella term for three other aspects. The first one is called the “overall phonological control” – it verifies the degree of effort which is needed to decipher the content of a message and the speaker’s intention. Here, the included criteria are intelligibility, interference from other languages, as well as the control of sounds and prosodic features. The second feature is “sound articulation”; it is evaluated on the basis of the range of sounds used and confidence in their accurate rendition, which allows for their clear interpretation. Whereas the last aspect which evaluates “prosodic features” focuses on a correct application of intonation and rhythm patterns for conveying certain contextual information.

As we read further in the CEFR, the aforementioned intelligibility feature is now more important than accent correction. Therefore, the experts decided to redevelop the scale used in CEFR and diminish the significance of “idealised [native] models that ignore the retention of accent” as they “lack consideration for context, sociolinguistic aspects and learners’ needs” (Council of Europe, CEFR 2018, p. 135). Major changes of the framework should satisfy the requirements of NNS learners, whose command of English is at a very high level. Thus, they are capable of communicating in English freely, though with some foreign-sounding elements, whereas, in the previous evaluation criteria, their accented speech could have resulted in a much poorer assessment.

It is vital to mention the improved areas enumerated in CEFR concerning pronunciation assessment, i.e. “1) *articulation* including pronunciation of sounds/phonemes, 2) *prosody* including intonation, rhythm and stress – both word stress and sentence stress –and speech rate/chunking, 3) *accentedness* accent and deviation from a ‘norm’, 4) *intelligibility*: accessibility of meaning for listeners, covering also the listeners’ perceived difficulty in understanding

(normally referred to as *comprehensibility*)” (Council of Europe, CEFR 2018, p. 135).

Still, the existence of foreign accent which is assessed in terms of the above-mentioned phonological control does exist and does influence the evaluation of a foreign language speaker. The framework allows for “some features of accent retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility” (Council of Europe, CEFR 2018, p. 136).

CEFR is not perfect, nonetheless, it provides teachers and examiners with an idea of English being not only a language that should be reproduced with an idealised and authentic rendition of its sounds but as well a tool for international communication. In today’s globalized world, it is more important to convey a comprehensive message and not to cause any conversation breaks. The appropriate implementation of CEFR is in the hands of teachers who, together with the use of some other guidelines from state curricula and country’s own curricula, may or may not comply with the given rules.

Pronunciation Teaching in Poland

Polish EFL learners encounter various problems in mastering pronunciation of the English phonetic system. Significantly, erroneous rendition of speech sounds often depend upon a linguistic background represented by learners; thus determine the type and the impression of the degree of foreign-accentedness (cf. Scheuer 200).

The main objective of English practical pronunciation courses at the academic level in Poland is to acquaint students with an accurate segmental and suprasegmental rendition of English sounds. For instance, at the end of a course students at the Department of English at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Poland are required to speak “at B2 level without pronunciation errors caused by interference from mother tongue – K_U17” and “can pronounce correctly particular words in the selected variety of English – K_U04” (“Phonetics” [USOS, Nicolaus Copernicus University], n.d.). In other words, foreign-accented speech is still deemed erroneous and the focal point of normative instruction constitutes detection of particular local or global errors and their subsequent elimination. Students can choose which variety of English they would like to use (usually the distinction is made between British and American English). Interestingly, the pronunciation of some sounds which is considered, in general, erroneous and difficult (in a particular variety), for instance, the pronunciation of “THs” as voiceless /θ/ or voiced /ð/ is accepted as “F” or “d” in some other English variations.

In short, practical English pronunciation training at universities in Poland conducted within the EFL framework fails to reflect recent changes in the use of the English language worldwide. Also, the CEFR guidelines are not directly applied in this academic context. As it has already been stated, several findings demonstrate that generally students prefer to be exposed to native-like models and eliminate foreign-accentedness (e.g., Nowacka, 2012; Jenkins, 2009; Henderson et al., 2012; Waniek-Klimczak, 2005).

This holds especially for the specific group of students studying English (Waniek-Klimczak & Klimczak, 2005, 2015). However, students at other faculties and international Erasmus students pursuing different goals, consistent with what they would use their language skills for in the global world of English, do not have to comply with the same pedagogical priorities, which simply may occur to be irrelevant.

Conclusions

In this paper, a brief overview of the literature on attitudes towards foreign-accented speech was delineated. The research pertaining to 1) the attitudes of non-native English speakers towards non-native English accent and 2) differences in normative versus intuitive approach to teaching English pronunciation is still underrepresented. This clearly points to the necessity of experimental testing. More empirically proven experimental research pertaining to NNS views could have crucial implications for, among other things, the functionality of language use.

The present theoretical paper should be considered as yet another step in establishing what exactly should be taken into consideration in modifying and updating priorities in pronunciation teaching within EFL in order to recognise the needs of international language speakers. Despite the fact that some adjustments to the curriculums have already been introduced, as in CEFR, they are not always diligently employed in the actual teaching practice at different levels of education. A closer fit should be achieved between pronunciation teaching policies and standards as well as evaluation criteria actually applicable in the context of real multinational use of English.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to gratefully thank Michael Pleyer and the reviewers for their opinions and suggestions. The author also expresses gratitude to Artur Sulecki for the proofreading of the paper.

References

- British Council [annual report]. (2013). The English effect [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/english-effect-report-v2.pdf>
- Council of Europe. (2018). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Companion Volume with New Descriptors. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int>
- Coupland, N., & Bishop, H. (2007). Ideologised values for British accents. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(1), 74–103.
- Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a global language second edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. (2002). Teaching Native Speakers to Listen to Foreign-accented speech. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. (Vol. 23(4)), 245–259.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). (2018). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-second edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- Fledge, J.E. (1984). The detection of French accent by American listeners, *J. Acoust. Soc. Am.*, 76(3), 692-707.
- Giles, H., & Watson, B. M. (Eds.). (2013). *The social meanings of language, dialect, and accent: International perspectives on speech style*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Giles, H., Coupland, N., & Coupland, J. (1991). *Accommodation theory: Communication, context, and consequence*. In H. Giles, J. Coupland, & N. Coupland (Eds.), *Studies in emotion and social interaction. Contexts of accommodation: Developments in applied sociolinguistics* (p. 1–68). Cambridge University Press
- Gonet, W., & Pietroń, G. (2004). The Polish tongue in the English ear. In W. Sobkowiak & E. Waniek-Klimczak (Eds.), *Dydaktyka fonetyki języka obcego w Polsce* (pp. 56–65). Konin: Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa.
- Graddol, D. (2000). *The future of English? A guide to forecasting the popularity of the English language in the 21st century*. London: British Council.

- Henderson, A., Frost, D., Tergujeff, E., Kautzsch, A., Murphy, D.J., Kirkova-Naskova, A., ...Curnick, L. (2012). The English pronunciation teaching in Europe survey: Selected results. *Research in Language*, 10 (1), 6–27.
- Hosoday, Megumi & Eugene Stone-Romero. (2010). The effects of foreign accents on employment-related decisions. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 25(2). 113-132.
- Janicka, K., Kul, M., & Weckwerth, J. (2008). Polish students' attitudes to native English accents as models for EFL pronunciation. In K. Dziubalska-Kolaczyk & J. Przedlacka (Eds.), *English pronunciation models: A changing scene* (pp. 251–292). Bern: Peter Lang.
- Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, J. (2009). (Un)pleasant? (In)correct? (Un)intelligible? ELF speakers' perceptions of their accents. In A. Mauranen & E. Ranta (Eds.), *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings* (pp. 10–36). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Jenkins, J. (2015). *Global Englishes: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, J., Baker, W., & Dewey, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca*. Routledge.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985) Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (Eds), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. (1992). *The other tongue*. Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois.
- Kachru, B., & Bolton, K. (Eds.). (2006). *World Englishes: Critical concepts in linguistics* (Vol. 4). London: Routledge.
- Kirkowa-Naskova, A. (2010). Native speaker perceptions of accented speech: The English pronunciation of Macedonian EFL learners. *Research in Language*, (Vol. 8), 41–61.
- Lev-Ari, S., & Keysar, B. (2010). Why don't we believe non-native speakers? The influence of accent on credibility. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 46(6), 1093–1096.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2001). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. USA and Canada: Routledge.
- Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. London: Routledge.
- Lindemann, S. (2002). Listening with an attitude: A model of native-speaker comprehension of non-native speakers in the United States. *Language in Society*, 31, 419–441.
- Majer, J., & Majer, H. (2008). English on target: A second, third, foreign or international language? In E. Welnic & J. Fisiak (Eds.), *Friendly metaphors. Essays on linguistics literature and culture in honour of Aleksander Szwedek* (pp. 73–86). Peter Lang: Germany.

- Menon, S., & Nimesh, P. (2012). Importance of English language in corporate world. *International Journal for Research in Management and Pharmacy*, 1(1), 44–52.
- Mesthrie, R., & Bhatt, R. M. (2008). *World Englishes: The study of new linguistic varieties*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mollin, S. (2006). *Euro-English: Assessing variety status*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.
- Munro, J. M., Derwing, T. M., & Sato, K. (2006). Salient accents, covert attitudes: Consciousness-raising for pre-service second language teachers. *Prospect*, 21(1), 67–79.
- Nowacka, M. (2010). Native and non-native perception of foreign-accented speech: Do Polish and English raters have the same ear for nativelikeness? In E. Waniek-Klimczak (Ed.), *Issues in accents of English 2: Variability and norm* (pp. 61–96). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Nowacka, M. (2012). Questionnaire-based pronunciation studies: Italian, Spanish and Polish students' views on their English pronunciation. *Research in Language*, 10(1), 43–61.
- Pantos, A. J., & Perkins, A. W. (2013). Measuring implicit and explicit attitudes toward foreign accented speech. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 32, 3–20.
- Pennycook, A. (2011). Global Englishes. In R. Wodak, B. Johnstone, & P. Kerswill (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 513–525). Bodmin: MPG Books Group.
- Peterson, Elizabeth. (2020). Making sense of “bad English”: An introduction to language attitudes and ideologies. London & New York: Routledge.
- Phonetics [USOS, Nicolaus Copernicus University]. (n.d.). Retrieved October 17, 2020, https://usosweb.umk.pl/kontroler.php?_action=katalog2/przedmiot/pokazPrzedmiot&prz_kod=0704-f1ENG1S-PH
- Prčić, Tvrtko. 2012. “The role of modernized prescriptivism in teaching pronunciation to English EFL students,” in Biljana, Čubrović and Paunović Tatjana (eds.) *Exploring English phonetics*, 113–124.
- Radomski, M. & Szpyra-Kozłowska, J. (2014). “A Pilot Study on Poles' Attitudes to Foreign-Accented Polish and Its Users,” *Studies in Polish linguistics* 9.2, 67–87.
- Roessel, J., Schoel Ch., & D. Stahlberg (2020). Modern notions of accent-ism: Findings, Conceptualizations, and implications for interventions and research on nonnative accents. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, (Vol. 39(1)), 81–111.
- Roessel, J., Schoel, Ch., Zimmermann, R. & D. Stahlberg (2017). Shedding New Light on the Evaluation of Accented Speakers: Basic Mechanisms Behind Non-native Listeners' Evaluations of Nonnative Accented Job Candidates. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, (Vol. 38(1)), 3–32.
- Scheuer, S. (2002). What makes foreign accent sound foreign? In A. James & J. Leather (Eds.), *New Sounds 2000* (pp. 306–314). Klagenfurt: University of Klagenfurt.

- Scheuer, S. (2008). Why native speakers are (still) relevant. In K. Dziubalska-Kořaczyk & J. Przedlacka (Eds.), *English pronunciation models: A changing scene* (pp. 111–130). Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2005). Key concepts in ELT – English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal*, 59(4), 339–341.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stępkowska, A. (2013). *Multilingualism and English: The canton of Zurich as a linguistic paradigm*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Strugielska, A. & Piątkowska, K. (2018). Challenges with defining competence for foreign language learning and teaching on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference. *Theoria et Historia Scientiarum*, 15, 21–34.
- Szpyra-Koźłowska, J. (2005). Intelligibility versus Polish accent in English. *Studia Phonetica Posnaniensia. An International Journal for Linguistic Phonetics*, 7, 59–73.
- Szpyra-Koźłowska, J. (2015). *Pronunciation in EFL instruction: A research-based approach*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Timmis, I. (2002). Native-speaker norms and international English: A classroom view. *ELT Journal*, 56, 240–249.
- Trzeciakowska, J. (2016). *A sociolinguistic perspective on the perceptual judgements of pronunciation errors: A case study of Polish students* [Unpublished MA dissertation]. Nicolaus Copernicus University.
- Trudgill, P. (2002). *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- van den Doel, R. (2009). Native vs. non-native attitudes to non-native Englishes: Implications for English as an international form of communication. In J. Radwańska-Williams (Ed.), *Discourse and Intercultural Communication* (Vol. 2) (pp. 22–33). Louisville: Institute for Intercultural Communication of the University of Louisville.
- Vandergriff, I. (2016). *Second-language discourse in the digital world: Linguistic and social practices in and beyond the networked classroom*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Waniek-Klimczak, E., & Klimczak, K. (2005). Target in speech development: Learners' views. In K. Dziubalska-Kořaczyk & J. Przedlacka (Eds.), *English pronunciation models: A changing scene*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Waniek-Klimczak, E., Rojczyk, A., & Porzuczek, A. (2015). 'Polglish' in Polish eyes: What English studies majors think about their pronunciation in English. In E. Waniek-Klimczak & M. Pawlak (Eds.), *Teaching and researching the pronunciation of English. Studies in honour of Włodzimierz Sobkowiak* (pp. 23–34). Cham: Springer.
- Warschauer, M. (2000). The changing global economy and the future of English teaching. Retrieved January 10, 2017, from http://www.education.uci.edu/person/warschauer_m/global.html