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### Perceptions

of Non-Native Pronunciation of English

### by Native Speakers

# EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION

- Teaching English since 1986
- Specializing in Phonetics since 1991
- Running the TomCat Playgroup since 1993
- Adrian Underhill: Sound Foundations (1996)
- J.C.Wells: Summer Course of English Phonetics at UCL(1996)

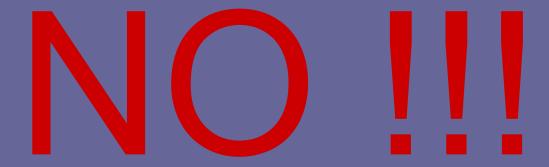
#### Figure 5. Phonetic variables in the technical assessment

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Consistent error	Example	Points subtracted
Inaccurate, weak, missing stress and rhythm	event pronounced as ['iːvnt]; It was a surprise as ['ɪt 'wɒsə 'sʌpraɪs]	40
Final consonant devoicing and faulty liaison	big love pronounced as ['bik'lxf]	20
Voiced dental fricative /ð/	this pronounced as ['dɪs]	5
-ing endings	Ending pronounced as ['endɪηk]	5
Voiceless alveolar plosive /t/	dental instead of alveolar	5
Voiceless dental fricative /θ/	think pronounced as [ˈsɪηk]	5
Vowel/I/	bit pronounced as ['bit]	5
Long mixed vowel /s:/	work pronounced as ['wɔːk]	5
Inconsistency in v and w	very well pronounced as ['weri 'vel]	5
Words mispronounced	determine pronounced as ['detemain]	5

#### What next???

- Rhetorics?
- Elocution?



### Instead, by studying the PERCEPTIONS

of non-native pronunciation of English, to find out which aspects of pronunciation are vital for positive/negative personality perception.

#### THE CORPUS

- 15 non-native speakers of English
- Texts for them to read; a question to answer
- Recordings
- 5+1 assessors, native speakers of English
- Questionnaires

#### EVALUATION

- Phonetic assessment
- based on the system devised in 1996.

Sociolinguistic assessment based on

Questionnaires; criteria: intelligibility, confidence speaking English, elligibility for a childminding job, appropriateness of speech behaviour. Other criteria (secondary) not fully used.

Correlations between them

#### CORRELATIONS

 The group of 4 best speakers by phonetic criteria remained unchanged.

Two shifts occurred between the 5
 average speakers and 6 inferior speakers.
 Speakers 11 and 3 obtained much better
 results by perception than by phonetic
 criteria.

#### COMMON FEATURES

- Their speech is appropriately loud.
- Their speech is appropriately slow.

- In other words, their loudness is sufficient for being comfortably heard,
- and their tempo is sufficiently moderate for their pronunciation mistakes to be decoded.

# CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In teaching, appropriate LOUDNESS and TEMPO must be emphasized.

**ECHOING** is to be avoided.

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS on the author's pronunciation

- A) Nemluvíš jako Angličanka. Mluvíš
- jiným tónem.

[You don't speak as if you were English. You use a different tone.]

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS on the author's pronunciation

- B) I didn't know you were foreign.
- C) I knew at once you were foreign.

D) How many O-levels have you got?

• E) You speak like an upper-middle class person.

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS on the author's pronunciation

- F) Mrs. Tomkova's accent is better than mine.
- G) You speak a bit American.
- H) You sound very British, we'll work on that.
- I) I don't usually understand a word of what the British say but you're very intelligible.

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS on other foreign pronunciation

• J) I'll turn the volume up for you.

- K) Someone speaks with an Irish accent here. Keep it!
- L) Your accent is charming.

 M) You sound like a Russian spy in a James Bond movie.

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS on other foreign pronunciation

• N) ..... – Pardon me?

• O) My name's Tom. – Dominic?

• P) Camden Town, please. – Kensington?

Q) The one with the Czech accent?

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS made among native speakers

• R) When did you first become aware of the special rhythmicality of English? - Not until I started Spanish.

• S) Never mind Phil's accent, he's O.K.

• T) Oh? You're Canadian, aren't you?

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS made by Czech speakers

U) My name's David Konečný.

- V) Těm Angličanům se vůbec nedá rozumět.
   Víc toho neřeknou než řeknou.
- [It's ever so hard to understand the English. They swallow more than they say.

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS made by Czech speakers

- W) Já jsem té Angličance říkal všechno tak zřetelně a ona dělala, že mi nerozumí.
- [I was so distinct speaking to the English person and she pretended not to understand me.]
- X) Té angličtiny jsem nechala. Připadalo mi, že ze sebe dělám šaška.
- [I quit English classes. I felt I was making a fool of myself.]

# AUTHENTIC COMMENTS made by Czech speakers

- Y) Otevři hubu, vole.
- [Open your yapper, man.]

- Z) Čeština mě namáhá víc.
- [Czech requires more of my effort.]

#### CONCLUSIONS

#### QUESTIONS

# INVITATION TO DISCUSSION SESSION ON EURO-ENGLISH THIS AFTERNOON

### Thank you for your attention and have a



### Meowy Christmas!

#### Brno again...

