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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)

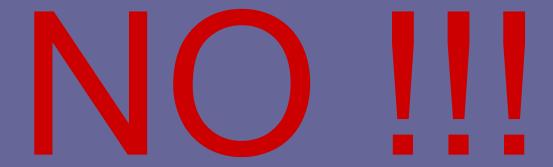
Figure 5. Phonetic variables in the technical assessment

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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 ['sɪηk]	5
Vowel/r/	bit pronounced as ['bit]	5
Long mixed vowel /s:/	work pronounced as ['wɔːk]	5
Inconsistency in v and w	<pre>very well pronounced as ['weri 'vel]</pre>	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...

