

ENGLISH PHONETICS COURSE: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PREFERENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

MARTA NOWACKA

University of Rzeszów, Poland
martha.nowacka@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the perspectives of Polish university students of English ($n=110$) on selected aspects after the pronunciation instruction they underwent during their phonetics course. It shows qualitative questionnaire results obtained by means of four open-ended statements. It sheds light on: English accent preference, reasons why they favoured and disfavoured the course and expectations from the course tutor. The students reported a positive impact of the training on their speaking and overall English/language skills, sounding native-like, good, and being understood. They admitted to disliking rules, theory of phonetics, unexpected pronunciation of words. In addition, the expected responsibilities of a pronunciation tutor comprised: correction of students' pronunciation and helping them improve this skill. It confirms that the nativeness principle to pronunciation learning still prevails as the students wish to sound natively and expect the teacher to give them corrective accuracy-based feedback.

Key words: English accent, accent preferences, pronunciation learning, expectations from a tutor, reasons for liking and disliking pronunciation learning

1. Introduction

In this paper, a brief overview of students' perceptions of their preferred target pronunciation model, whether native-like or aimed at intelligibility is delineated.

Levis (2020) in an updated version of his 2005 article, which introduced the dichotomy in pronunciation teaching of the Intelligibility and Nativeness Principles, advocates the superiority of the former over the latter and indicates that it effectively addresses teaching goals and that it recognizes the reality of social consequences of pronunciation differences. Intelligibility is perceived as the ultimate goal in oral communication. Pronunciation, which influences intelligibility, overlaps with grammar and lexicon as it is manifested, for example, in the use of the -s/es morpheme for third person Simple Present form, Saxon Genitive or regular plural. Other linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of language, such as gestures, visual cues or pragmatic appropriateness also affect intelligibility. Trofimovich and Isaac (2017) observe that for many language learners and teachers, native and accent-free pronunciation still remains an

important teaching and learning goal. Levis (2020:13) indicates that “the desire for nativeness in pronunciation often is based on beliefs that native-like speech ... will provide opportunities for professional advancement ... especially for language teachers”.

The Nativeness Principle, that is, a native English standard accent being favoured as a pronunciation model, has been referred to in survey work on in ESL and EFL teachers and students in inner circle countries, e.g. Canada (Derwing, 2003) or the USA (Zoss, 2015) as well as in expanding circle countries in Europe – EPTiES survey carried out in Finland, France, Germany, Macedonia, Poland, Spain and Switzerland (Henderson et al., 2012, 2015), in individual countries such as: Bulgaria (Dimitrova & Chernogorova, 2012; Dimitrova & Filipov, 2007), Croatia (Stanojević, Kabalin-Borenić, Josipović-Smojver, 2012; Vodopija-Krstanović and Brala-Vukanović, 2011; Drijača Margić and Širola, 2009; Stanojević and Josipović Smojver, 2011); Finland (Lintunen & Mäkilähde, 2018; Tergujeff, 2012; Tergujeff, 2013), Poland (Krzysik-Lewandowska, 2017, Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, Rojczyk & Porzuczek, 2015), Serbia (Paunović, 2009), Spain (Carrie, 2017; Mompeán, 2004), Sweden (Vidén, 2018) as well as in Asia: Iran (Galbat and Fahandezh Sa’adi, 2018).

In general, learners usually represent two different views on mastering English pronunciation, as they opt either for the nativeness or intelligibility principles. The nativeness approach is particularly common among university students of English, who are preparing to become either teachers or interpreters, whereas the intelligibility principle is favoured by students of other non-linguistic faculties, for whom English serves as a lingua franca (Gómez-Lacabex and Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2021; He and Zhang, 2010; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2008).

For example, Gómez-Lacabex and Gallardo-del-Puerto (2021) observed that Spanish university students receiving English medium-instruction in History and Economics degrees favoured intelligibility over native-like pronunciation, unlike students of English studies and Linguistics. Moreover, in search of a favoured type of English pronunciation, whether native or China English, He and Zhang (2010) examined approximately 1,000 college students and their teachers in four universities in China by means of a questionnaire, a matched-guise technique and a focused interview. They found that both a native model as well as China English were chosen as preferred by the respondents. More than half of the students set a standard English as a target for their pronunciation, as 58% voted for intelligible English and 42% for the native-speaker model. For the teachers, the reverse was true, 57% hoped their students could acquire native-like models and 43% accepted intelligible English. In addition, the study revealed differences between English and business majors, with the former conforming to native models and the latter satisfied with China English.

In a survey by Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2008) apart from English majors, students of an Economics and Sociology were also included to examine

whether they shared the views on the preferred target pronunciation model. Although these two cohorts of Polish learners expressed a strong preference for British rather than American English, possibly due to their earlier educational context, they differed in many other respects. Only a minority of the students of economics showed an interest in attaining native-like pronunciation (44%) or opted for one variety of English to be taught (47%), unlike students of English, for the majority of whom these goals were extremely important, 82% and 84% of positive responses respectively. The extent of direct contacts with native and non-native speakers of English was another dissimilarity, since the students of English claimed to have experience of contact and expected to communicate with native speakers, while the students of economics admitted to being more involved with non-natives. In general, the non-philology majors, for whom getting the meaning across was a target of communication per se, appear to set more realistic attainable goals in international communication. A similar result was attained by Stanojević and Josipović Smojver (2011) – Croatian business majors did not disfavour a foreign accent in communication and did not want to work on their pronunciation while the English majors preferred native-like models of English.

The majority of the questionnaire studies examined for the purpose of this article exhibit the respondents' strong preference for speaking with a native-like pronunciation, although as observed by Levis (2020), obtaining the goal is highly unlikely as success can be achieved only by some. Positive attitudes to acquiring a native-like pronunciation model in inner circle countries can be seen in Derwing (2003). All but five of one hundred respondents of sixteen different language backgrounds in Canada expressed their wish to sound native-like. In the USA, Zoss (2015) observed that 10 ESL learners from six countries: Columbia, India, Iran, Somalia, Spain and Thailand would like to pronounce English like a native speaker.

In Europe, Henderson et al. (2012) conducted a large-scale European survey of English pronunciation teaching practices ($n=635$). Teachers' perception of their students' aspiration to have native or near native pronunciation obtained a mean of 3.02 for seven countries (Finland, France, Germany, Macedonia, Poland, Spain and Switzerland) on a 5-point Likert scale, from the lowest mean of 2.6 for Spain to the highest one of 3.34 for Northern Macedonia. In the case of the teachers, RP was the dominant form for both reception (91.63%) and production (84.2%) work in English and was followed by GA (70.73% for receptive vs. 53.84% for productive practice). The teachers appeared to recognize that GA might be more popular than RP amongst their students, but the difference was less clear-cut. There was 8.11% preference for GA over RP in productive work and only 2.16% one in receptive work (receptive work RP: 64.53%, GA: 66.69%; productive work RP: 55.24%, GA: 63.35%).

In Bulgaria, Dimitrova and Chernogorova (2012) observed that 25% of Bulgarian students acknowledged that they experienced communication problems due to pronunciation and admitted to having been misunderstood while working or talking to native speakers abroad or because of mispronouncing a particular

word. 57.7% wanted to sound British, 15% opted for American, 4% for Australian, 23.5% were undecided. These findings are in line with: Dimitrova and Filipov (2007) in which 65% of the first-year and 60% of the second-year students wished to speak with a standard British accent.

In Croatia, Stanojević et al. (2012), in a nation-wide study with around 2500 participants, university, secondary school students and employees in an international company, noted that 67% of the surveyed agreed that perfecting English pronunciation to pass for a native speaker was worthwhile regardless of the time and effort involved. However, most participants would not mind having a strong or slight accent when talking to native speakers (76.1%) or non-native speakers (82.3%). The studies with English majors by Drljača Margić and Širola (2009) and Vodopija-Krstanović and Brala-Vukanović (2011) confirmed that these Croatian students were willing to conform to native rather than non-native models.

In Finland, Tergujeff (2012) and Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2018) also pointed to learners' preference for native models; however, Tergujeff (2013) showed teenage learners' preference for intelligibility and fluency. Tergujeff (2012) noted that according to teachers in Finland (n=76), Finnish EFL learners aimed at native-like English pronunciation with GA being more popular than RP or any other model. Most teachers also reported using native models – RP more frequently than GA, for both receptive and productive tasks. On the other hand, Tergujeff (2013) in an interview study with 10 learners, aged 10-18, observed that the students aimed at achieving intelligible and fluent speech rather than native-like pronunciation. Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2018) examined long and short-term effects of pronunciation teaching with 161 university students of English, divided into three groups before teaching, after teaching and after more than three 3 years of teaching. The results suggest that the participants wish to sound like native speakers of English. Semi-structured interviews, which complemented a questionnaire, showed that although students preferred native models their goals became more pragmatic after formal pronunciation instruction. They realised that sounding native-like was not easily achievable and that communication per se was more important. The experienced students tended to accept their non-native accent more often, evaluated their pronunciation skills more positively and became more tolerant of non-native accents, which agrees with Waniek-Klimczak et al. (2013, 2015).

A monolingual environment at different levels of education in Poland has been presented in detail in Nowacka (2012). Waniek-Klimczak et al. (2015) observed that BA students' approach to acquiring a standard accent changed over the course of three-year study and although they aimed at speaking with a standard accent, they became more pragmatic and more forgiving of non-standard forms. Krzysik and Lewandowska (2017) asked BA English graduates which accent should be taught to students of English as a foreign language. The standard accent based on a variety of materials created especially for pronunciation learning purposes was

selected by 27% of the respondents while the remaining 60.3% opted for a model based on some authentic materials. This finding could suggest that the students recognised a need for variation in English and called for a greater exposure to a great number of accents.

In Serbia, Paunović's (2009) 114 students training to be future EFL teachers were unable to recognize regional accents, preferred standard accents to regional accents, the latter of which they regarded as incorrect.

In Mompeán's (2004) study of 66 Spanish university students, 71% chose BrE as a reference model, 17% American English and 12% Irish English. Carrie (2017), who analysed language attitudes using the verbal guise technique, found that in a Spanish university students' evaluation of RP was associated with greater status and prestige than GA, and that such was the target of the learners, but GA speakers were rated higher on the solidarity dimension.

In Vidén (2018), Swedish university students reported using GA more than British English. In their assessment RP was referred to as more responsible, gentle and intelligent than GA but it was also perceived as more arrogant and boring, and it exerted more irritation on the Swedish listeners. Speakers of GA were found to be more trustworthy and likeable.

In Iran, Galbat and Fahandezh Sa'adi (2018) examined the attitudes of 50 teachers. 86% of them found it important to sound like a native English speaker. 76% of the respondents did not feel that speaking with a native-like accent would threaten their identity. 60% believed that communicating well is more important than using a native-like accent. 68% were of the opinion that people would respect them more if they spoke English with a nice accent. They were undecided if accent played a role in their communication problems. Among the strategies to improve English accent, they mentioned techniques like listening to authentic language, understanding pronunciation rules, comparing people's accent with their own accent, watching English movies, noticing stress and pronunciation patterns, imitating and speaking with native people.

2. Method

2.1. Aims and Respondents

The questionnaire study was conducted to examine students' perspectives on selected aspects of pronunciation learning such as: English accent preference, reasons for favouring and disfavouring the course and expectations from the course tutor.

The subjects were 110 first-year Polish students of the English language at the University of Rzeszow, 68% females and 32% males, 66% on a full-time and 34% on a part-time BA course in the English language. They were surveyed at university at the end of a two-semester phonetic course. Their ages ranged from 18 to 34 years, with the majority of the students (82%) aged: 20 (41%), 19 (24%)

and 21 (17%). All the students had been learning English between 8 and 25 years with the majority (91%) indicating a period between 10 and 16 years, i.e.: 13 (31%), 14 (16%), 15 (13%), 12 (11%), 10 (10%), 16 (6%) and 11 (4%). 94% confirmed that during that period they were taught mainly by non-native teachers of English, 2% pointed to native teachers and 5% to both.

26% of respondents reported having stayed in an English-speaking country from 1 to 78 months and a majority of them (28%) reported a period of a month, then 10% each indicated 2, 3, 6 and 36 months, 7% respectively chose 4 and 12 months while 3% each accounted for 8, 24 and 78 months. Among these reported countries there are: England (36%), USA (25%), UK (25%), Canada, Australia, Ireland and Great Britain (4% respectively). 65% confirmed that the stay affected their English pronunciation for a variety of reasons, such as learning a lot from native speakers and being able to use British pronunciation during study thanks to this experience, listening to (4)¹ and speaking with (3) natives on every day basis, being exposed to native pronunciation and intonation, learning to pronounce words correctly, receiving corrective feedback from native speakers in a home stay with a British family and gaining more confidence. Some of the informants who did not point to any change in pronunciation because of their stay in an English-speaking country justified their response in the following way: too low an age at the time of a stay and too low a level of proficiency in English (2); lack of interaction with native speakers; and a difference in pronunciation between a standard and a regional accent, i.e.: London versus Yorkshire.

2.2. Material

Originally, our study was designed as a mixed method questionnaire. It included: firstly, quantitative data in the form of 23 scalar judgments on a 5-point Likert scale and 4 closed questions; and secondly, qualitative data in 6 open-ended statements and 2 questions. This paper discusses the following four open-ended statements:

1. When I speak English, I would like to sound like ...
2. I like learning pronunciation because ...
3. I dislike learning pronunciation because ...
4. What I expect from my pronunciation teacher is that ... (Kang, 2014)

Statement 4 is a full adoption from Kang (2014). The quantitative results are discussed in a separate publication.

As regards the procedure, the data was collected in the written form at university. Each questionnaire was anonymous, coded with a number.

¹ In the whole paper the number included in the brackets corresponds to the number of responses.

3. Results and discussion

In this section the responses to the four open-ended statements are displayed and discussed separately under their respective headings.

3.1. English accent preference

105 informants provide 29 different answers to the question *When I speak English, I would like to sound like...*. The top nine most numerous categories are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: English accent preference.

No.	<i>I would like to sound like</i>	<i>n=105</i>
1.	a native speaker	30
2.	British	18
3.	American	17
4.	English (3), an Englishman from East Anglia (1), south London speakers (1)	5
5.	myself (2), myself but fluent (1)	3
6.	comprehensibility, intelligibility (3) + without a native accent (2)	3
7.	correct or with good pronunciation, with a foreign / non-native accent	2
8.	proficient (2) + non-native (1):	2
9.	a professional	2
10.	Others – single, one-reason arguments	23

The most frequent responses concerning the respondents' preferred sounding in English point to native accents (71): from a general statement 'like a native speaker' (30), through British (18) and American (17) to a non-specified English (5) including Englishman from East Anglia and south London speakers (1 each). Interestingly, 6 respondents, apart from indicating that being comprehensible and intelligible, correct with good pronunciation and proficient are their pronunciation aspirations, also expressed the wish not to sound native-like, e.g.:

- I want to be understood but I don't want to imitate native speakers.
- A speaker with good pronunciation but with a foreign accent.
- I'd like everyone to understand me. The accent doesn't really matter.
- I don't need to sound like a native. I would like to sound correctly.
- A speaker with good pronunciation but with a foreign accent.
- Someone who has a huge experience with the English language.
- Someone who knows the language, there is no need to sound like a native.

There are also other infrequent responses, such as ‘myself’ (3) including ‘myself but fluent’ (1), showing that the informants do not mind their own English pronunciation and other adjectival descriptors: comprehensible/ intelligible (3), correct/with good pronunciation (2), proficient (2) and a professional (2).

The remaining answers, given by one respondent in each case, include such descriptions as: fluent, ‘correct enough to communicate’, reliable, ‘not too Polish’ or ‘like a Pole who lives in Britain’. The following pairs of two accents were also listed by individual informants, e.g.: American and Canadian, American and British, British and Canadian, English and Canadian, American and neutral. The respondents also referred to the accent of a particular person such as: Queen Elizabeth II, Joey Essex, Sir Alex Ferguson, Hugh Jackman, Hugh Laurie, Alan Rickman, James Gandolfini or Michael Imperioli, Justin Bieber and the film character Bridget Jones. Reference to a native accent or a native speaker is made in 15 of the above-mentioned cases.

3.2. Reasons for liking pronunciation learning

97 respondents (88%) answered a question about their own reasons for liking to learn pronunciation shown in Table 2. Initially, there were 24 single argument responses, 22 more complex two-argument opinions and 4 voices including three arguments. All of these were then divided into one-argument reasons ($n=127$) for greater clarity. The top twelve responses are shown in the table below.

Table 2: The reasons for liking to learn pronunciation.

No.	I like learning pronunciation because...	$n=127$
1.	...it helps me improve my speaking	22
2.	improve (5)/ my language skills (6)/ English (10)	21
3.	...it helps me sound like a native (10)/ British (4)/ American (2)	16
4.	sound better (5), correct (3), good (2), perfect, the best I can, professional	15
5.	be understood (11) / by natives (2)	13
6.	pronounce words: correctly, better, properly	9
7.	...it is useful	7
8.	makes me more confident (3), in speaking (3)	6
9.	interesting	3
10.	it is fun	2
11.	improve my fluency	2
12.	in speaking and listening (with natives)	2
13.	Others – single, one-reason arguments	9

Among the most frequent reasons for favourite attitudes towards studying pronunciation students report that it helps them to improve their speaking skills (22) and English and language skills in general (21). References to sounding like a native speaker were also found among these responses (16), as the following citations exemplify:

- *It helps me to learn how to sound like a native speaker, which I really want to.*
- *I would like to speak like a native speaker because I believe that if I speak English I need to speak properly like some kind of respect to the language and its speakers.*
- *I like the practical aspect of it so I can sound like native.*

In addition, some informants claim that they want to sound: better, correct, good, perfect, the best they can, professional (15), e.g. I can feel like the Queen with my pronunciation. I sound good. They admit that it helps them to be understood (13), to pronounce words correctly, better, properly (9) and to feel more confident speaking (6). It is described as useful (7) and interesting (3). It is also visible that learning pronunciation is fun, has a positive influence on the learners' fluency of speech, both speaking and listening, as each of these judgements has been shared by two respondents.

9 respondents provided further one-argument answers. Pronunciation class, which they refer to as nice, enlarges their knowledge about British English. It improves their listening skills and makes them feel professional and they know what sounds to use. They also comment they like to imitate sounds, impress themselves and others, learn all new things and are perfectionists in pronunciation.

3.3. Reasons for disliking pronunciation learning

Out of 24 different reasons for disliking the process of learning pronunciation listed by 63 (57.2%) respondents, the most representative 11 arguments are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The reasons for disliking learning pronunciation.

No.	<i>I dislike learning pronunciation because (of)</i>	<i>n=63</i>
1.	rules	9
2.	theory of phonetics	8
3.	many words with difficult pronunciation	7
4.	it is hard, difficult, nonintuitive.	7
5.	a lot/ too much material to learn.	4
6.	it is boring, tedious work.	4
7.	phonemic transcription	3
8.	ambiguity, a lot of exceptions	2
9.	too many English accents, which is discouraging	2
10.	it is time-consuming.	2
11.	the stress placement	2
12.	Others – single, one reason arguments	13

The most often mentioned argument against learning pronunciation is memorization of rules, which the informants find both difficult and boring, e.g.

[s]ome rules are completely random, and a student has to learn them by heart. Personally, I prefer when there are patterns that I can memorize.

Phonetic knowledge and descriptions, which is regarded as boring and useless in practical life, unhelpful and hard to memorize or that there's too much of it (13%) is listed second. Then, 11% of the informants pointed to the fact that it is hard to remember how each word is pronounced, which stresses them, or which is an exhausting process; and the same percentage of respondents notes it is time-consuming, nonintuitive and difficult to learn pronunciation as such. Observations that there is too much material to learn at once or for a test, and that pronunciation is boring and tedious work, gather 7% respectively. 5% of the students dislike phonemic transcription. The following four opinions obtain 2 votes each (3%): lack of clarity and a great number of exceptions, too many accents (I don't dislike it, but the number of accents makes me daunted., or: There's a lot of accents and I want to know only American.), time-consuming process and irregular, not fixed lexical stress placement.

The remaining 13 voices express a variety of individual negative associations with the study of pronunciation, e.g.: a complex argument about the lack of one-to-one letter-to-sound correspondence: There isn't one simple rule for pronunciation of different sounds, spelling doesn't correspond to pronunciation, there are many exceptions to the rules., or standard pronunciation: It sometimes feels kind of artificial, compared to the actual daily pronunciation. The other subjects give the following arguments for their dislike of learning pronunciation: it is tiring, difficult, not really interesting and hard to understand and remember. They get discouraged by too much material, which they regard as unnecessary or by the fact that they cannot feel the difference between certain sounds or find some sounds difficult to pronounce. It is not easy for them to get rid of their accent. They have a feeling they are being corrected all the time. They believe it is better to learn something through practice. They get irritated because they do not have enough flexibility in their tongue or make unwise mistakes. They themselves are not satisfied with their own pronunciation, which they believe is far from the ideal.

3.4. The expectations of a pronunciation tutor

The students also expressed their expectations of their pronunciation tutor.

Thirty-four of the 96 respondents regard correcting students' pronunciation as the teacher's main responsibility – there was only one stand against being corrected. The informants also share the opinion that the teacher ought to help them master their pronunciation (13), which was phrased as: 'improve' (5), sound better (2) and pronounce well/correctly (6). The teacher should focus mostly on practice not theory (6), should speak proper English well/correctly/perfectly (5), and teach them how to pronounce words right (5).

Table 4: The expectations from their pronunciation teacher ($n=96$).

No.	<i>What I expect from my pronunciation teacher is that they:</i>	$n=96$
1.	correct my pronunciation mistakes	34
2.	help me master my pronunciation with their help	13
3.	should focus mostly on practice not theory	6
4.	speak well/correctly/perfectly (3); perfect/proper English (2)	5
5.	teach me how to pronounce words right	5
6.	pronounce words correctly	2
7.	teach me how I can improve my English skills/ language	2
8.	they encourage me to learn pronunciation and raise my interests in the language	2
9	<i>no expectations</i>	2
10.	others – single, one-reason arguments	25

Among the students who appreciate the teacher's corrective role in their phonetic education, 12 add that apart from being corrected they would like the teacher to: give them some guidance (2), explain the nature of their mistakes (2), help them find their pronunciation mistakes (1), share their knowledge with them (1), prepare more practical exercises such as role plays, etc. (1), use the mother tongue to explain pronunciation (1), give them a list of exceptions (1), help them speak properly (1), help them improve their skills (1); and the teacher should also not intimidate them, should not make them feel afraid to make mistakes (1). In addition, four informants specify types of pronunciation correction that they appreciate: it should be immediate, done every time a mistake occurs (2), only if something sounds bad (1) or in spontaneous speech not just during the repetition of single words (1).

The teacher should also: pronounce words correctly (2); teach students how they can improve their English skills and language; encourage them to learn pronunciation or raise students' interests in the language – each of these reasons was expressed twice. Two informants had no expectations in relation to the pronunciation teacher's responsibilities.

On the basis of the remaining single responses some characteristics of an ideal pronunciation teacher emerge. Some arguments concern students' long-term phonetic benefits. Thus, a good teacher is expected to prepare students to: understand native speakers, understand and discuss pronunciation at a high level; help learners to solve the most difficult pronunciation problems and enable them to speak fluently. Quite a few answers regard the teaching itself. A teacher ought to let the students talk more in class and make them listen to various accents. They should also expand the students' knowledge, teach them the rules of proper pronunciation effectively, include broadcast or do more word and sentence reading activities and give them feedback. Sometimes the students' ideas are contradictory because the ideal teacher should give them more tasks to train phonetics, especially transcription, while another student believes that less transcription, but more speaking would be better. What the teacher should not do is also ask the student to change their accent to British.

Yet another group of responses deals with teacher's competence and their personal qualities. The teacher should give students good explanations. Some think that they should provide them with a lot of examples concerning one accent only whereas others would not like them to focus only on one accent, e.g.: British. Some would like to be taught US and Canadian pronunciation and do not like the idea of learning UK accent without really wanting to make it your own, simply to please a teacher.

4. Conclusions

Levis (2020) advocates that it is pronunciation teachers' responsibility to make the students aware of the more realistic outcomes of pronunciation training, sufficient for successful communication, of which intelligibility is of central concern. The examined studies show that a lot has to be done in the field of pronunciation teaching to shift the focus from nativeness to the intelligibility paradigm as students in all parts of the world, including Polish minors of English, aspire to nativelike rather than intelligible and comprehensible speech, which would be a more pragmatic and attainable goal.

The results of this questionnaire confirm that native accents of English continue to dominate the informants' ultimate favoured choices that they themselves wish to attain. Only a small fraction of the respondents (6%) openly admit to not wishing to sound native-like. The students claim to like learning pronunciation because they believe it has a positive influence on their speaking, overall English, language skills, and that it helps them sound like a native speaker, sound good, correct and be understood. On the other hand, pronunciation instruction is mainly disliked for: the rules which need to be memorized; the theory of phonetics, which is regarded as useless, boring; the unexpected pronunciation of words; the fact that it is difficult to remember and time-consuming; a heavy load of material to learn and for tedious, dull practice. What the respondents expect from the ideal pronunciation teacher is: the correction of students' pronunciation, helping them improve this skill, putting emphasis on practice rather than theory, a good command of English and a focus on the pronunciation of words.

The study shows that these Polish university students of English, who are training to become teachers and interpreters, either strive to attain or wish to aim for native-like English pronunciation, as they overtly express the desire to sound nativelike. The theoretical and practical course of English pronunciation that they attend introduces the fundamentals of English phonetics, allows for contrastive analysis between Polish and English, discusses the concepts of nativeness and intelligibility, the importance of exposure to a variety of accents, prioritizes certain features for better communication (suprasegmentals or higher functional load of certain sounds) but at the same time makes reference to mostly British and American varieties for reference. The study reveals that the students want to be

corrected in order to speak good, even perfect, English. Therefore, participants should not be deprived of a corrective, accuracy-based feedback approach. At the same time, they should be reminded that successful communication does not require nativelike pronunciation and that mutual understanding is a goal in itself, even if some pronunciation features remain unmastered.

References

- Carrie, Erin. 2017. British Is Professional, American Is Urban: Attitudes Towards English Reference Accents in Spain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 272, 427-447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12139>
- Derwing, Tracey M. 2003. What do ESL students say about their accents? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 59, 547-567. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.59.4.547>
- Dimitrova, Snezhina, and Chernogorova, Tsvetanka. 2012. English pronunciation models and tertiary-level students: A Bulgarian perspective. In T. Paunović and B. Čubrović (eds.), *Exploring English*, 208-224. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Dimitrova, Snezhina, and Filipov, V. 2007. Accent variety in English and perception preferences by Bulgarian learners. In E. Grigorova (ed.), *Tertium Comparationis. Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag von Ruska Simeonova*, 79-89. Dresden: Thelem.
- Drljača Margić, B. and Širola, D. 2009. Teaching English as an International Language and Native Speaker Norms: Attitudes of Croatian MA and BA Students of English. *English as an International Language Journal*, 5, 129-136.
- Galbat, Hassan, and Fahandezh Sa'adi, Farhad. 2018. Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Learning Accent. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(3), 108-118. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.3p.108>
- Gómez-Lacabex, Esther, and Gallardo-del-Puerto, Francisco. 2021. Pronunciation in EMI: A Preliminary Study of Spanish University Students' Intelligibility and Comprehensibility. In D. Lasagabaster and A. Doiz (eds.), *Language Use in English-Medium Instruction at University*, 126-144. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003134534-7>
- Henderson, Alice, Frost, Dan, Tergujeff, Elina, Kautzsch, Alexander, Murphy, Deidre, and Kirkovana-Naskova, Anastazija, et al. 2012. The English pronunciation teaching in Europe survey: Selected results. *Research in Language*, 10, 5-27. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0047-4>
- He, D. and Zhang, Q. 2010. Native Speaker Norms and China English: From the Perspective of Learners and Teachers in China. *TESOL Quarterly*, 44(4), 769-789. <https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2010.235995>
- Kang, Okim. 2015. Learners' Perceptions Toward Pronunciation Instruction in Three Circles of World Englishes. *TESOL Journal* 61, 59-80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.146>
- Krzysik, Iga, and Lewandowska, Halina. 2017. English Pronunciation through the eyes of university graduates. *Research in Language*, 15(3), 299-312. <https://doi.org/10.1515/rela-2017-0017>
- Levis, John M. 2005. Changing Contexts and Shifting Paradigms in Pronunciation Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 369-377. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588485>
- Levis, John M. 2020. Revisiting the Intelligibility and Nateness Principles. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 6(3), 310-328. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.20050.lev>
- Lintunen, P. and Mäkilähde, A. 2018. Short- and long-term effects of pronunciation teaching: EFL learners' views. In J. Volín and R. Skarnitzl (eds.), *The Pronunciation of English by Speakers of Other Languages*, 46-72. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Mompeán, J., A. 2004. Options and Criteria for the Choice of an English Pronunciation Model in Spain. In José M. Oro et al. (eds.), *Linguistic Perspectives from the Classroom: Language*

- Teaching in a Multicultural Europe*. Santiago de Compostela: Servizo de Publicacións e Intercambio Científico – USC: 1043-1059.
- Nowacka, Marta. 2012. Questionnaire-based Pronunciation Studies: Italian, Spanish and Polish students' views on their English pronunciation. *Research in Language*, 10(1), 43-61. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0048-3>
- Paunović, Tatjana. 2009. Plus Ça Change ... Serbian EFL Students' Attitudes Towards Varieties of English. *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*, 45(4), 524-547. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10010-009-0027-1>
- Stanojević Mateusz-Milan and Josipović-Smojver, Višnja. 2011. Euro-English and Croatian national identity: Are Croatian university students ready for English as a lingua franca?. *Suvremena Lingvistika*, 37(71), 105-130. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0043-8>
- Stanojević Mateusz-Milan, Kabalin-Borenić, Višna, and Josipović-Smojver, Višnja. 2012. Combining Different Types Of Data In Studying Attitudes To English As A Lingua Franca. *Research In Language* 10(1), 29-41. <https://doi.org/10.2478/V10015-011-0043-8>
- Tergujeff, Elina. 2012. The English Pronunciation Teaching In Europe Survey: Finland Apples. *Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 6(1), 29-45.
- Tergujeff, Elina. 2013. Learner Perspective on English Pronunciation Teaching in an EFL Context. *Research in Language*, 11(1), 81-95. <https://doi.org/10.2478/V10015-012-0010-Z>
- Trofimovich, Pavel, and Isaacs, Talia. 2017. Second Language Pronunciation Assessment: A Look at the Present and the Future. In T. Isaacs and P. Trofimovich (eds.), *Second Language Pronunciation Assessment*, 259-271. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Vidén, Robert. 2018. Differences in attitude toward RP and GA: a study of Swedish university students with English as their L2, Stockholm university. Bachelor Degree Project.
- Vodopija-Krstanović, Irena, and Brala-Vukanović, Marija. 2011. Perception of English Accent by EFL Students and Teachers: Subjective Ideals and Objective Realities. In M. Brala-Vukanović and I. Vodopija-Krstanović (eds.), *The Global and Local Dimension of English. Exploring Issues of Language and Culture*, 17-32. Zuerich, Wien, Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Waniek-Klimczak, Ewa, and Klimczak, Karo;. 2008. Target in Speech Development: Learners' Views. In K. Dziubalska-Kończak and J. Przedlacka (eds.), *English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene*, 229-249. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Waniek-Klimczak, Ewa, Porzuczek, Andrzej, and Rojczyk, Arkadiusz. 2013. Affective dimensions in SL pronunciation: A large-scale attitude survey. In D. Gabryś-Barker and J. Bielska (eds.), *The affective dimension in second language acquisition*, 124-137. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Waniek-Klimczak, Ewa, Rojczyk, Arkadiusz, and Porzuczek, Andrzej. 2015. 'Polglish' In Polish Eyes: What English Studies Majors Think About Their Pronunciation in English. In E. Waniek-Klimczak and M. Pawlak (eds.), *Teaching and Researching the Pronunciation of English*, 23-34. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-11092-9_2
- Zoss, Jennifer Marie. 2015. Adult English Learners' Perceptions of their Pronunciation and Linguistic Self-confidence. *School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations*, 259. https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all/259