

Discourse level phonology in the language curriculum: a review of current thinking in teaching pronunciation in EFL courses

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ABSTRACT: This paper offers an outline of current ideas in the area of teaching pronunciation and discusses the implications of the changes of emphasis which the author sees as being fundamental to a new paradigm for the teaching and acquisition of phonological skills. Main topics include the move from segmental phonology to suprasegmental and discourse studies in pronunciation and the implications for pedagogical practice, evaluation and teacher and learner training. Other questions include that of the learning setting and curriculum development.

RESUMO: Este artigo oferece um esboço das idéias atuais na área de ensino de pronúncia e analisa as implicações das mudanças de ênfase que o autor considera fundamentais para um novo paradigma no ensino e aquisição de habilidades fonológicas. Os tópicos principais incluem a mudança de foco da fonologia segmental para os estudos suprasegmentais e discursivos na área de pronúncia e suas implicações para a prática pedagógica, bem como para a avaliação e o treinamento de professores e aprendizes. Incluem-se ainda outras questões, tais como o ambiente do aprendizado e o desenvolvimento dos cursos.

KEYWORDS: phonology, FLT, discourse.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: fonologia, ensino de línguas estrangeiras, discurso.

SOUNDS TO SENTENCES

Pronunciation teaching is no longer simply a question of teaching the sound system of the target language (TL) in its segmental aspects. Isolated sounds and their function as distinctive features in the TL are an inescapable phenomenon in language acquisition, naturally, but we can no longer be satisfied that the study of segmental features leads to an adequate degree of phonological control in the new language. In terms of classroom practice, work on single sounds and their allophonic variants has a purpose in remedial teaching and in an understanding of phono-morphological processes at word and utterance boundaries, for example, in the process of assimilation at work in phrases such as *did you* and *could you*, where the proximity of a voiced alveolar plosive /d/ to a velar semi-vowel /j/ tends, in informal rapid speech, to be palatalised to /dʒ/ (/'kudʒju:/). In the speech of the foreign language learner this process of assimilation needs to become part of the speaker's perceptual and productive skills, since native speaker talk will evidence the variation and the learner attempting to realise the /d/ and the /j/ as separate phonemes runs the risk of inserting an epenthetic vowel between the two words, giving rise to ?/'kud^əju:/, a realisation that is potentially ambiguous or distracting for the (native or expert) listener. Clearly, consciousness-raising and training in this area are valid classroom activities; but note that we have already moved away from the isolated phoneme and are dealing with allophonic variation which is partly determined by the phonological environment. The other determining factor in this case, of course, is choice of register, since in formal careful speech the /d/ and the /j/ phonemes will probably be distinguished in native speaker production. The nature of the communicative intention is thereby subtly changed.

Thus, choice of register is a non-linguistic factor in performance that is reflected in phonological realisations at the micro-level. It is not enough to draw attention to these morphological features. One of the first questions that is raised is that of perceptual versus productive skills. A commonly accepted position¹ is that *vowel reduction* is predominantly a matter of discrimination, where the learner has to become

¹ See Gilbert, J. *Speaking Clearly* (1983), unit 7, for example.

accustomed to hearing - in rapid colloquial speech - phenomena such as *dunno* for *I don't know*, *gonna* for *going to*, *wanna* for *want to*, and so on,² and on hearing, being able to interpret or decode the sounds into their underlying lexico-grammatical components. On the other hand, *contractions* seem to be something that the learner must be able to *do* as well as to *perceive*. There is a semantic difference between the following:

- (1) a. I've been to Rio
 b. I have been to Rio

where (1a) may be interpreted as an affirmative declarative utterance, while (1b) - where the stress may be attracted to the full realisation of the auxiliary verb (which is normally contracted in unmarked contexts) - might be heard as containing a disconfirming or contradictory emphasis. Further discussion of this point appears below.

The focus on isolated segmental features in teaching pronunciation is the result of the fact that phonetics as a science is more 'exact' than phonology and therefore an analysis of the phonemes of English, along with numerous other languages, has long been available. The phonetic nature of English is extensively understood and the physiological manipulation of separate sounds is relatively straightforward in terms of explanation and practice, as well as in terms of perception and discrimination.

In a tendency that is paralleled in the field of syntax, where the focus has moved from sentence level analysis to analysis at the level of discourse, pronunciation teaching has begun to look at phonological features beyond the phoneme to word-level processes such as assimilation, elision, linking and juncture to sentence level questions concerning rhythm and stress and thence to discourse level phenomena manifested in intonation patterns. The 'communicative approach' to FLT, whether deliberately or not, encouraged a tendency to leave pronunciation matters to one side³, in contrast to the error-free mimicry advocated by audio-lingual dogmatism. The swing back to pronunciation

² See Celce-Murcia *et al.* (1996), p. 234 for a comprehensive, if not exhaustive, list.

³ In the same way that the communicative approach unwittingly provided a motive for leaving grammar teaching to the background of classroom practice, although none of the *loci classici* of the approach ever claimed this as being part of the methodology.

teaching is apparent, but the point of return is a different place from the point of departure:

... while the pendulum has begun to swing back in the direction of more emphasis on pronunciation, it is swinging back in a different arc, and we are now at a very different place than we were during the audio-lingual period. — Anderson-Hsieh, *JALT Journal*, 1989, 16 [2], 73. In Morley (1998)

The reasons for this are manifold but Morley (1998) identifies “clientele pressure” as an influence, in a practical sense, and it is also possible to see that theoretical advances in the area, principally of inter-language phonology studies have also been an impulse in a new and differently-focused interest in teaching and learning pronunciation. Moreover, it is difficult not to see the changing emphasis moving back on to pronunciation as evidence of a certain kind of modism that afflicts language teaching at all times. Morley’s (1998) article makes the claim that “intelligible pronunciation is essential to communicative competence” as if this were some kind of revelation, whereas such a statement is so obvious that one wonders why it needs repeating, much less why it should be offered as a justification for new efforts in the area of pronunciation teaching. The key issue is that we know more about phonology at more complex levels of interaction, including non-linguistic choices involved in the paradigmatic sequence in discourse (Brazil 1997), and that, while the demands of the clientele may have become more vociferous, the fact is that phonological skills have always been fundamental to communicative success and that we now seem to have better pedagogical skills, theoretical knowledge and teaching techniques with which to address the needs of learners.

IMPLICATIONS

Integration

The move from segmentally focused pronunciation teaching to suprasegmental and discourse level phonology has a number of impli-

cations for language teaching in general. One is that the isolating nature of training segmental production skills is no longer necessary: closed tasks involving the production of single sounds and phoneme discrimination exercises, while still appropriate at specific moments in the teaching project, do not dominate the landscape as they once did. The fact that the emphasis has moved to higher levels of analysis, both perceptual and productive, means that the ideal situation is one in which pronunciation teaching is integrated into ‘general’ language classes, on the simple principle that every time one listens to or speaks the TL she is practising pronunciation. As any respectable training course for teachers will demonstrate, the course-book, for example, can be shown to offer potential pronunciation work at almost every stage: as soon as the learners are exposed to the written word, the question of grapheme-phoneme correspondence is raised, that is, the relation between spelling and pronunciation; any reading task can be exploited to draw attention — at the very least — to suprasegmental features such as rhythm and stress, vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, morphological features at word boundaries, breath groups and tonic units, and intonation in general. This is just to mention the written portions of the text. Dialogues, listening exercises and discussion tasks, it should go without saying, are rich sources for pronunciation work, even if the organisers of the course book do not suggest such an activity or focus (the text is only one tool in the teacher’s repertoire and one she is free to utilise in any way that she thinks is pedagogically justifiable). Once pronunciation teaching moves beyond the focus on single sounds it can be embedded, or integrated (Kenworthy 1985), into the language class.

Integration in this sense presupposes a disposition on the part of the teacher to ‘teach’ or work on pronunciation at almost any moment during lesson time and this in turn presupposes sufficient and appropriate training. This is a topic that will be touched on again.

Micro- vs. macro-level skills

The current mode is an attempt to improve on teaching strategies that focused on the production and discrimination of single sounds and left the rest to take care of itself. With the move towards a focus on communication and the belated recognition that intelligible pronuncia-

tion is integral to communicative competence, segmental phonology has been subsumed into suprasegmental priorities. Discrete-point pronunciation features that previously centred on elements such as vowels and consonants now claim basic features such as stress, rhythm and intonation as part of their domain. That is, just as working on the intelligible, or acceptable (see Gimson, 1962/1994:283ff), production of single sounds was part of the narrow-focused pronunciation teaching of the past, so now isolating higher level features for awareness-raising constitutes 'segmental' phonemics. Morley (1994) includes these features at the 'micro-level' of her curriculum design model for pronunciation teaching, so that speech rate and volume, 'pitch change points' and intonation patterns are dealt with out of context, at some point. If all these features can come under the heading of 'micro-level' teaching, what is left at the 'macro-level'? The distinction that Morley makes is between *speech production* and *speech performance*, the domain of the latter being contextualised language use. This means that single sounds can be worked on at both levels: at the micro-level, the concern is with clear articulation of isolated phonemes; at the macro-level, how those sounds are realised in contextualised speech. This recognises the fact that, as we saw, the non-reduction of normally reduced vowels can have semantic implications and that change the message being conveyed:

(2)a. He doesn't need to go

/hi:'dʌzəntni:dtə'gəʊ/

b. He does not need to go

/hi:dəz'nɒtni:dtə'gəʊ/

Utterance (2a) is a simple affirmative whereas (2b), where the vowel in the negative marker <not> is not reduced, is a contradicting affirmative: the phonological distinction lies in the selection [-reduced, +reduced] realisation of the vowel phoneme. Micro-level work on vowel reduction, in this case centring reductions to [ə], leads to macro-level concerns with effectiveness in the 'communicative use of vocal features' (Morley, 1994:75). The ability to produce [ə] in unstressed positions - a micro-level skill - is operationalised at the macro-level

through vowel reduction that is appropriate to the communicative intent of a particular utterance.⁴

Teachability

Morley's 1994 model for curriculum design⁵ also demonstrates a further complicating difficulty with higher-level forms of phonological perception and production. For Morley, intonation patterns form part of discrete-point speech production skills (see Morley 1994, table 2); the elements included in her global patterns of speech production do not include specific reference to intonational phonology. The discourse and pragmatic functions of intonation are not included here, unless it comes under the heading of what she calls the 'overall effective use of appropriate and expressive non-verbal features of oral communication', but this seems to us to imply all paralinguistic features and in any case intonation patterns can not be described as 'non-verbal'. As Underhill (1994)⁶ and Clennel (1997), amongst others, point out, intonation features - as suprasegmental, discourse-level phenomena - are fundamental to comprehension (perception) and intelligibility (production). 'Failure to make use of the appropriate pragmatic discourse features of English intonation may result in serious communication breakdown between native and non-native speakers'. (Clennel, 1994:117). Clearly some place has to be found in the curriculum for the teaching of prosody and intonational phonology.

⁴ The requirement that learners develop this as a productive skill is based on pragmatics: 'Learners who do not assimilate at all may sound finicky, over-precise, too careful and where their mother tongue assimilation patterns intrude they may be difficult for English listeners to follow. Lack of appropriate assimilation in the stream of speech can inhibit the use of English rhythm and intonation patterns, leading to a loss of both fluency and clarity of meaning.' Underhill, 1994:61.

⁵ The design model is clearly paralleled in Celce-Murcia et al's (1996) suggestions for a pronunciation teaching programme (see chapter 11).

⁶ 'My observation is that while within certain limits of intelligibility mistakes or inappropriacies of pronunciation, grammar and even vocabulary can be accommodated by the native listener, inappropriate intonation can at times give rise not just to obscuration of the message, but to reception of a quite different message. Once again it is almost as if intonation is received by a different part of the listener's brain, which is less able to make allowances for inappropriate use.' Underhill, 1994:75.

Roach (1983) claims that intonation is a complex and language-specific area of phonology and that this complexity and specificity means that it is essentially unteachable⁷. When examining the way prosody and intonation function in English we can see why this claim might be made. According to Clennel's 1997 outline, the different roles of prosody in oral communication include functions 'such as

- information marker (prominent stress)
- discourse marker (given/new)
- conversational manager (turn-taking/collaborating)
- attitudinal or affect marker (mood/feeling)
- a grammatical/syntactic marker (clause boundaries/ word classes)
- pragmatic marker (illocutionary force/intention of speaker)';

and of oral communication, its systemacity or grammaticality, Clennel notes that

- 'tone group divisions are acoustically recognisable
- tonic syllables normally occur on one item in a tone group
- tonic syllables are perceptually salient through pitch change
- unmarked tonic syllables are located at the ends of tone groups
- marked tonic syllables may occur on any item for contrastive reasons
- pitch change marks inherent complete/incomplete dichotomy of speaker
- relative pitch choice is always significant and part of discourse competence.'(Clennel, 1997:123.)

These features and the attendant complexity of the question of their 'teachability' become more pressing as we move towards a focus on macro-level phonology skills: how *teachable* are they? Teachability echoes the notion of learnability, of course (see Ellis, 1985), but may

⁷ 'It should not be concluded that intonation is not important for conveying attitudes. What is being claimed here is that, though it *is* of great importance, the complexity of the total set of sequential and prosodic components of intonation and of paralinguistic features makes it an impossible thing to teach.' (Roach, 1983:141)

not susceptible to the same kind of objective analysis. The intuitive and emotional aspects of the acquisition of phonological skills probably means that developmental stages are not easily discernible so that it is not a simple task to define when a learner is ready, or not, to be presented with 'new' language information. Pronunciation permeates all of language and the development of speaking skills is not a hierarchically determined process. Moreover, the objective status of developmental stages is overthrown by learner perceptions: the belief that improvement in pronunciation skills can only be achieved with difficulty after a certain age is a widespread myth entertained by many adult learners, it is a myth that has been shown to be no more than a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Gilbert, 1984:45). Nevertheless, even - or especially - as myth, the conviction has consequences in the augmenting of the affective filter and subsequent lowering of learner expectations.

We can see therefore that one of the consequences of this move towards discourse level work in pronunciation teaching is that it has complicated the life of the teacher and the learner. There are more, and more complex, aspects of pronunciation to be taught and hence studied and both participants become unavoidably involved in non-linguistic questions. Intonation, as we have seen, involves problems of sociolinguistics and socio-cultural differences that, depending on the identity of those involved, are more or less transigent and susceptible of change through pedagogical input.

Communication

Practitioners of 'communicative' approaches to language teaching unrepentantly maintain the fiction that the function of language is communication, despite Malinowski's (1935) demonstration to the contrary.⁸ The fiction is a convenient one when planning a language curriculum; and having shifted the focus in pronunciation teaching to suprasegmental and discourse levels, we inevitably become involved in the need to propose and encourage 'communicative activities' for the

⁸ Malinowski's definition of 'phatic communion', or 'talking for the sake of talking' was a direct rejection of what he called 'the false conception of language as a means of transfusing ideas from the head of the speaker to that of the listener.' (Malinowski, 1935, in Aitchison, 1996).

language classroom. Morley's 1994 curriculum proposal contains four elements related to communicative competence and learner goals, namely 'functional intelligibility, ... functional communicability, ... increased self-confidence, ... [and] speech-monitoring abilities and speech-modification strategies for use beyond the classroom' (Morley 1994:78). Also incorporated are Canale and Swain's (1980) four notions of communicative competence as well as Wenden's (1985) and Oxford's (1990) categories of language learning strategies. Celce-Murcia *et al's* (1996) outline for curriculum planning with reference to pronunciation teaching requires that the following variables be accommodated: learner variables; setting variables (the overall educational context), institutional variables (the specific educational context), linguistic variables and methodological variables. As Celce-Murcia *et al* (1996) note, given that 'the phonemic-based view of pronunciation has largely given way to a broader, discourse-based view, which includes the interaction between segmental features, voice quality settings and prosodic features. With this discourse-based view, the argument that communicative practice should assume its place in the teaching of pronunciation is strongly underscored.' (Celce-Murcia *et al.* 1996:338)

This brings us back to the notion that *any* language use in the classroom involves matters of phonology. Discourse-level activities that are suggested as a means of practising aspects of pronunciation during classroom time are not easily distinguishable from communicative activities in general, that is, those that are designed to encourage the use of particular grammatical elements in the 'less controlled' interactional phase of the traditional 'communicative' classroom. The same problems arise: the activity may be cunningly designed to lead the learners to exploit the new grammatical form during the activity, but the lowering of teacher control over the language content during the process means that learners will establish their own aims and their own means of achieving task completion, which in turn means that they will use their normal tactics of avoidance and paraphrase when confronted with the unknown, or the uncontrolled/uncontrollable, or what they perceive of as 'difficult' in the exigencies of the assigned task. If trying to 'control' the language content during 'less controlled practice' is inherently problematic, how much more so when the teaching aim is the production of specific intonation patterns and the achievement of what Morley (1994) describes as 'general communicative command

and control of grammar' and 'general communicative control of vocabulary and phrasal units.' (Morley 1994:75) Celce-Murcia *et al.*'s aims seem to be no less ambitious and hence also problematic: 'what is common to the ideal pronunciation syllabus ... is that there should be a focus on both discrimination and production of selected features; furthermore, once instructed, learners should be able to reproduce these features intelligibly'.⁹

Teaching and learning pronunciation skills at discourse level, then, involves decisions regarding authenticity, dealing with complexity, priorities (Celce-Murcia *et al.* (1996:323), learner differences, attainment criteria and appropriate models and questions of cognitive choice.¹⁰

The teaching environment

As noted, one of the variables specified by Celce-Murcia *et al.* (1996) for curriculum planning is 'setting', used to 'refer to the general context (educational, corporate, etc.) rather than the specific institution in which a teacher works'. (Celce-Murcia *et al.* 1996:321) Setting can be seen to involve variables such as *second vs. foreign* language learning, or the national policy regarding language education, amongst others. Clearly, it also involves long-discussed questions such as the paucity of intonation patterns that are typically exploited in the language classroom¹¹. And regarding the question of input, the learning setting

⁹ It may be of interest to note that in his suggestions for remedial work in dealing with fossilised pronunciation habits, Acton (1984) includes activities that 'eventually [force] learners to focus on intonation contours, stress and rhythm independent, to some degree, of the lexical content'. (Acton 1984:77) This approach would seem to be retrogressive, moving against the tide of increasingly 'authentic' modes of language practice.

¹⁰ '[In the classroom] ... preoccupation with the calculation of rules and formulation of sentences, rather than with a genuinely experienced need to communicate, means that lack of intonation is a natural and in fact quite authentic choice. While you choose *words* 'as if' you are communicating, it may not be as easy to choose *intonation* 'as if' you are communicating, because intonation may not be an essentially cognitive choice.' Underhill, 1994:93.

¹¹ 'There is a tendency for classwork to involve recitation, citation, exemplification of language which has little discursual value, despite its supposed communicative con-

which is generally described as ‘foreign language learning’, that is, where the TL is not part of the linguistic culture outside the classroom, is itself deprived of potentially helpful input from non-pedagogic (and therefore more natural?) sources. Roach (1983) suggests that one of the ways of solving the ‘unteachability’ of pronunciation features — since ‘relying on a textbook could lead to hilarious consequences’ — is exposure: ‘[t]he attitudinal use of intonation is something that is best acquired through talking with and listening to English speakers.’ (Roach, 1983:142) Such a proposal, obviously, is inappropriate for the majority of learners and is a reflection of the narrow limits of some thinking about ELT and the cultural European/Western hegemony that it promulgates (Pennycook, 1998).

One of the apparent difficulties that arise with the question of teaching context is this of exposure to the TL. It seems intuitively clear that learning in a TL environment will lead to more rapid learning with a more solid foundation. However, this argument for exposure to TL pronunciation features in a TL context runs up against the same problems as language acquisition in general in a TL context does: the paucity (or ‘degenerate’ nature) of the input and the inadequacy of the feedback. It is assumed that phonological skills will develop better in the TL environment, that the target language phonology will somehow spontaneously enter the learners’ subconscious if they are placed in a context where that is what they hear. There are many issues here, including that of age at time of initial language exposure. However, it is our experience that the phonology of a new language, for a learner over the age of around 12-15 years, is something that needs to be consciously analysed and practised. The teaching techniques of Underhill’s *Sound Foundations* (1994), for example, focus in detail on the physical nature of the necessary articulatory movements for adequate production of target language phonemes. This approach does not require the learner to attempt to imitate native speaker production, but rather to develop an inner, physical awareness of the way sounds are produced that is specific to each individual, conscious of the place and manner of articulation of the separate sounds and the way they are modified at suprasegmental levels. The aim is not mimicry but an at-

tent. ... Teachers’ own hierarchical relationship with learners may lead them to a limited and unnatural use of intonation.’ Underhill, 1994:195.

tempt to produce close approximations to the target language sounds in a natural, personalised, way. We believe that this approach is easily as efficient as long-term exposure in the TL environment where there is no analytical guidance.

A further assumption from the myriad that are implicit in the privileging of the TL environment has to do with error commitment and remediation. In a natural environment, error correction that is well judged, i.e., appropriate, comprehensible and contextualised, cannot take place. Learners are left to their own devices and the commonest evidence they have that an error has occurred is the belated realisation that communication has broken down. Help is not always available in these situations and if it is, it is not likely to be professional. Amongst other issues, this raises the affective question. Stress in language learning leads to a diminution in motivation and as motivation is the only proven common factor in successful language learners however these are defined, then the affective aspect is obviously a crucial one. A well-ordered classroom, where relations between teacher and learners and between learners and learners are those of trust and mutual help, is a very safe place to make mistakes. The emotional stress is reduced, if not eliminated, and the breakdown in communication can be repaired using a number of strategies previously negotiated by all sides.

A further dimension to current trends in pronunciation teaching is the relationship of material/curriculum and the learner. Whereas pronunciation course content was previously dictated by the perceived exigencies of the phonemic inventory of the TL, which meant that narrowly-specified sounds had to be taught and re-produced within narrowly-defined parameters, the recognition of the non-linguistic aspects of phonology, for example, has meant that teaching priorities can begin to concentrate, as one commentator has said, on 'incorporat[ing] a focus on meaning, context and authentic language' (Grant, 1998) and thus approximate to notions of a 'communicative approach' to language teaching. Embedded in this consideration is that of the needs and capabilities of the learner. Underhill's (1994) holistic approach situates the source for judgement as to the quality of speech production within the learner, so that s/he is aiming to produce a 'version' of the target phonology that is close enough to the native standard as to be intelligible and yet remains an integral part of the personality of the learner who is doing the producing. This approach acknowledges the well-recognised

problem of ‘ego-boundaries’ in language acquisition in general and in the acquisition of phonology skills in particular. Guiora’s (1972) work has shown that inhibition is a factor in language learning and that this involves questions of personal identity, never more so than when the learner comes to express herself in the new language. By encouraging learners to shape an intelligible version of TL phonemes for themselves and to possess these as part of their personal identity, these difficulties are reduced if not avoided altogether, at least as far as informal exchanges are concerned. (Stølen, 1987)¹²

Integrating discourse level phonology into general language classes

In Morley’s (1994) proposed curriculum model and in Celce-Murcia et al’s (1996) outline for a course in pronunciation, we can identify a parallel tendency. As the elements of the course are extended into ‘higher’ levels of discourse, the focus is increasingly on oral skills in general, what Morley describes at the ‘macro-level’ as ‘general communicative command and control of grammar’ in speech production seen globally. Thus, pronunciation is subsumed into general oral skills. A reflection of this is the fact that almost any classroom activity can be made to include a pronunciation element: a listening exercise, where attention may be drawn to phonological features in any spoken passages; a discussion task, where prominence used for purposes of highlighting or emphasis can be taught; or reading/writing activities where questions of the spelling-pronunciation relationship in English can be dealt with. Integrated pronunciation teaching means that the segmental details can be treated alongside the suprasegmental and both are contextualised in the discourse of the classroom and the language aims of the specific lesson.

In order to achieve this kind of integration the teacher needs to be flexible in her use of the didactic materials at hand and alert to the possibilities for pronunciation teaching that almost any circumstance in the classroom will provide. This is particularly the case when the teaching staff is comprised of ‘non-native’ speakers of the TL and all that that

¹² It is clear that stress increases in formal settings, with a corresponding fall in achievement levels (Stølen, 1987).

implies in terms of teacher confidence and motivation (Medgyes 1994, Dixo Lieff 1996-7). Teacher training and development has to confront these demands.

A further implication for practice in this area is evaluation. Once pronunciation teaching engages suprasegmental features and begins to encourage holistic, personalised objectives for learners, evaluation procedures must be adjusted to accommodate the new paradigm. Longitudinal assessment, for example, would seem to be fundamental to a new configuration of pronunciation teaching and evaluation, and this would imply recording and transcription techniques as means to determine specific problems and overall improvement; and self-assessment by the learner is a prerequisite also, especially since that learner is, ideally, identifying his/her own learning needs during the process of acquiring phonological skills in the TL.

CONCLUSIONS

Pronunciation teaching has become more interested in and interesting to the learner. Contemporary pedagogy in this area is dealing with questions of greater complexity as a result of the increase in knowledge about phonology that is currently available. It is becoming apparent that intonation phenomena may not inhabit the same cognitive domains as other linguistic features of language. The advances in knowledge and the pressure for pedagogical development imply fundamentally different and continuing training and development for teachers and learners. There is a subsequent demand for better teaching materials that are improved both in their awareness of the discipline and in their adaptability to specific teaching settings and variable individual learner requirements. This in turn presupposes new modes of evaluation, involving new technology and tailored to the needs of particular learners in particular contexts with particular necessities. The ideology of attainment criteria is being questioned and the native speaker/non-native speaker distinction is becoming outmoded. Research possibilities are numerous, for example in the area of interlanguage phonology, where issues of developmental hierarchies transfer versus interference and fossilisation can be addressed. Phonology and pronunciation teach-

ing are coming to occupy a central position in the teaching and acquisition of other languages as oral skills are increasingly seen as a high priority. Speakers of English as a language of international communication — soon to be the majority user — are delineating their own needs and setting their own criteria for communicative competence. It remains for the teaching profession to accompany this development and meet and satisfy its demands.

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