

## ***Additional references***

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*From the article “Research in Teaching Pronunciation and Intonation”*

*by Jennifer Jenkins, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, (2004). 24, 109-125*

### **On Intelligibility in NNS–NNS communication: accommodation skills (p. 114)**

Jenkins (2000, 2002) builds on earlier research in which listeners rated the intelligibility of the pronunciation of speakers from different L1s, such as Smith and Rafiqzad (1979), Smith and Bisazza (1982), Smith and Nelson (1985), and Smith (1992). Her Lingua Franca Core targets those features found in her research to be crucial in promoting intelligible pronunciation for an interlocutor from a different L1: most consonant sounds, vowel quantity, initial and medial consonant clusters, and tonic stress (see Seidlhofer, this volume, for details). Drawing also on Speech/Communication Accommodation Theory (cf. Beebe & Giles, 1984; Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991), Jenkins’s research also demonstrates that intelligible pronunciation between speakers from different L1s is not a monolithic phenomenon, but one that requires negotiation and adjustment in accordance with the specific context of the discourse and, above all, in relation to addressor/addressee factors.

### **On Pronunciation Materials (pp. 115-116)**

Pronunciation materials tend to incorporate a greater degree of learner choice of target than hitherto, and to move away from native-like targets for learners whose goal is international intelligibility.

### **On Affect (p. 117)**

Smit (2002) finds that orientation to the target accent and L1 speaker group as well as self-efficacy and anxiety (that is, “how (in)adequate they feel in their pronunciation,” p. 95) play important roles in the acquisition (or not) of a near-native accent. She concludes that her study “supports the so often invoked character of pronunciation as being that aspect of a language which is closest to its speakers’ feelings of identity” (p. 102). Her findings resonate in some respects with Lippi-Green’s (1997) account of L2 accents in an inner circle context, the United States. Accent is seen both to arouse in L2 speakers feelings of linguistic insecurity, and to relate in critical ways to social identity and the construction of *self* and *other*. This takes us back to the problem highlighted by Dörnyei and Csizér: the difficulty of establishing the social identity of the L2 community in an international context and the implications for EIL pronunciation. While teachers and learners are becoming aware to some extent of the complex sociopsychological issues involved, there has as yet been no attempt to address them at the wider level through pronunciation teaching methodologies and materials, although more enlightened teacher education courses are beginning to grapple with them.

*From the article "Trends in Speech/Pronunciation Instructional Theory and Practice"  
by Joan Morley, TESOL Matters, August/September 1999.*

"ESL/EFL teachers looking for revised ways to teach speech/pronunciation need to know about the new and significantly different trends in instruction today."

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### **A Major Focus on Suprasegmental Features**

"Work in the sound system now emphasizes the critical importance of the suprasegmental features (i.e. stress, rhythm and intonation) and their use not just to complement meaning but to create meaning."

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"As awareness of the importance of intelligible speech/pronunciation increases and new directions in instructional planning develop, the time seems right for teachers to consider devoting more time and attention to an up-to-date speech/pronunciation component within the ESL/EFL curriculum."

*From the book "Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages"*

*by Marianne Celce-Muria, Donna M. Brinton, Janet M. Goodwin. Cambridge University Press, 1996.*

"With suprasegmentals and connected speech, however, the misunderstanding is apt to be of a more serious nature [than with segmentals]. Learners who use incorrect rhythm patterns or who do not connect words together are at best frustrating to the native-speaking listener; more seriously, if these learners use improper intonation contours, they can be perceived as abrupt, or even rude; and if the stress and rhythm patterns are too nonnative like, the speakers who produce them may not be understood at all." p. 131.

"**[stress, rhythm, and adjustments in connected speech]** allow the speaker to turn the basic building blocks of the sound systems (i.e., the vowel and consonant phonemes) into words, meaningful utterances, and extended discourse. Command of these features is therefore as critical as command of the segmental features ... in achieving successful communication for second language learners. Stress, rhythm, and adjustments in connected speech can be easily overlooked in the language classroom. Nonetheless, these invisible signals are among the main clues used by listeners to process incoming speech and are thus of primary importance in the speech communication process.", p. 172.

*From the book "Teaching Pronunciation"*

*by Rita Wong, Prentice Hall, 1987*

"Because, of their major roles in communication, **rhythm and intonation** merit greater priority in the teaching program than attention to individual sounds. In addition, since students usually have a limited time frame for formal language study, as a matter of expedience, they should work on the features of pronunciation that have the greatest bearing on communicative effectiveness. This is not to say that the pronunciation of individual sounds is irrelevant, but it is neither automatically the starting point nor the focus of learning to speak a language. For the general language learner, the payoffs are greater when sounds are treated within the framework of rhythm and intonation" p.p. 21-22.

*From the book "Teaching English Pronunciation"*

*by Joanne Kenworthy, (Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers), Longman Publishing, 1987.*

### **On Building Awareness and Concern for Pronunciation (p. 27)**

English pronunciation has various components such as sounds, stress, and variation in pitch, and the learner needs to understand the function of these as well as their form. Once learners are aware that English words have a stress pattern, that words can be pronounced in slightly different ways, that the pitch of the voice can be used to convey meaning, then they will know what to pay attention to and can build upon this basic awareness.

Learners also need to develop a concern for pronunciation. They must recognize that poor, unintelligible speech will make their attempts at conversing frustrating and unpleasant both for themselves and for their listeners.

### **On Stress (p. 18)**

In English there is a special relationship between the different parts of a word. ... in an English word of two or more syllables, one of these will have 'prominence' or 'stress'. That syllable is perceived more prominent because of a complex of features such as loudness, length of vowel, etc. If the learner doesn't stress one syllable more than another or stresses on the wrong syllable, it may be very difficult for the listener to identify the word. This is because the stress pattern of a word is an important part of its identity for the native speaker. There is a great deal of evidence that native speakers rely very much on the stress pattern of words when they are listening. In fact, experiments have demonstrated that often when a native speaker mishears a word; it is because the foreigner has put the stress in the wrong place, not because he or she mispronounced the sound of the word. Here are some examples:

the word 'written' was pronounced with the stress on the second syllable instead of on the first. The listener thought the speaker said 'retain' 'comfortable' was pronounced with stress on 'com-' and '-ta-'. The listener heard this as 'come to a table' 'productivity' which has the pattern pro duc tiv i ty, was pronounced with a stress on '-duc-' and one on '-ty' (pro duc tiv i ty). This was heard as 'productive tea' (and caused considerable confusion!)

In all the above cases, the sounds used by the speaker were for the most part accurate. But despite this the listeners were thrown by the incorrect stress pattern.

### **On Rhythm (p. 19)**

English has a characteristic rhythm and listeners expect to hear all speakers use this rhythm. It is therefore absolutely vital that learners will use the rhythm that is characteristic of English. There must be an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, with the stressed syllables occurring on a regular beat, and the unstressed syllables must have a less-than-full vowel.

If the speaker doesn't use the characteristic English rhythm, then the listener will be placed in the position of someone who walks out onto the dance floor with a partner, expecting to waltz, but finds that the partner starts some strange set of syncopated steps which are thoroughly unpredictable and impossible to follow, or marches up and down in a perfectly steady beat, which doesn't seem like a dancing at all to the waltz lover!

### **On Intonation (p. 19)**

Intonation is important for intelligibility, because it is used to express intentions. A speaker can show that he or she is asking for information, or asking for confirmation, seeking agreement, or simply making a remark that is indisputable or 'common knowledge', through the intonation of the voice. Even though pitch rarely causes problems with the identification of words, an inappropriate intonation pattern can lead to misunderstanding just as a mispronounced sound can. Only those who take an extremely narrow view of intelligibility can disregard the importance of intonation. Furthermore, the effect of intonation can be cumulative; the misunderstandings may be minor, but if they occur constantly then they may result in judgments about the attitudes, character, ways of behaving, etc. of a particular speaker. For example, if a foreign speaker always uses low pitch, without much variation in the melody of the voice, listeners may get the impression that they are 'bored' or 'uninterested' when this is really not the case.

## Assessment

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*From the article Teaching pronunciation.*

*by Goodwin, J. (2001). In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a second or foreign language (3rd ed.) Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle*

Goodwin presents three types of pronunciation assessment: DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION, ONGOING FEEDBACK, AND CLASSROOM ACHIEVEMENT TESTING.

*[ALSO LOOK FOR]*

Goodwin J. (2001). Meeting the needs of university ESL students. In J. Murphy & P. Byrd, (Eds.), *Understanding the courses we teach: Local perspectives on English language training*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Goodwin, J. (2005). The power of context in teaching pronunciation. In C. Holten & J. Frodesen (Eds.), *The power of context in language teaching & learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.]

*From the article “Towards Defining a Valid Assessment Criterion of Pronunciation Proficiency in NN English Speaking Graduate Students”*

*by Talia Isaacs, The Canadian Modern Language review, 64(4), 2008, 555-580.*

Using the **Test of Spoken English**, a standardized test often used to screen international teaching assistants (ITAs), Isaacs examines whether intelligibility is an appropriate criterion for assessing pronunciation proficiency in the academic domain. An example of one measure of intelligibility, specific to an ITA context, comes from **the ESL Placement Test** (Dr. Wayne Dickerson is the developer of the Oral Interview section of the EPT at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). This test includes a subjective, word-based definition of intelligibility to assess both NNS students and prospective ITAs.

What is novel about the EPT measure of intelligibility is its focus on the word level, a locus of pronunciation difficulties for many NNSs (Field, 2005), and the relative ease with which it can be administered (cf. Turner & Upshur, 2002). Taken together, these qualities make this

easy-to-administer, word-based measure of intelligibility an appealing assessment tool, applicable in a variety of ITA contexts.

In the first part of the oral interview, which adopts intelligibility as its central measure, the interviewer assesses three minutes of the candidate's unrehearsed speech on the basis of (a) being able to understand every word that the interviewee says, where 'understand' is taken to mean that each word is understood immediately without guessing or requiring additional context; and (b) determining if there is any evidence that the interviewee misunderstood anything that the interviewer said (e.g., as signaled by nonverbal cues). If no misunderstanding is detected, the interview is discontinued and the interviewee is exempted from pronunciation work. If the interviewer does detect a misunderstanding from one direction or another, then the second part of the interview, which adopts accuracy as its central measure, is administered to determine how well the interviewee controls the content of the ESL oral course that he or she will be required to take.

