

## Prosodic elements to improve pronunciation in English language learners: A short report

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### Abstract

The usefulness of teaching pronunciation in language instruction remains controversial. Though past research suggests that teachers can make little or no difference in improving their students' pronunciation, current findings suggest that second language pronunciation can improve to be near native-like with the implementation of certain criteria such as the utilization of prosodic elements. With the emphasis on meaningful communication and the understanding that speech production is affected by speech perception, there is a need to integrate prosodics with communicative activities providing situations to develop student pronunciation through listening and speaking. This short overview examines such elements.

**Keywords:** Teaching pronunciation, prosodics, suprasegmentals, fluency

### Introduction

The effectiveness of teaching pronunciation is a widely debated topic. Nevertheless, second language fluency is not only based on grammar, syntax, and discourse, but pronunciation as well, which plays a vital role in fluency. The prosodic aspects of speech are often the most difficult to teach, yet are a very important element for the language learner to master. Stress, rhythm and intonation differentiate the fluent from the mediocre second language speaker, and results in a native-like accent\* which is central to the successful use of a second language. This report examines the challenges facing the instruction of

pronunciation to second language (L2) learners and based on the examination of current scholarly work, sets out to answer the following question: What are the factors that promote native-like pronunciation in L2 learners? Additionally, this paper explores the role of pronunciation in current and past language programs, recent research on the elements of pronunciation of L2 learners, and current pedagogical beliefs about pronunciation teaching and learning.

While age is unmistakably a central aspect in determining the probability with which L2 learners will obtain a native-like accent, researchers have found that some nonnative speakers who began learning later in life are sometimes identified as native speakers. However, "this is a fairly exceptional phenomenon" (Bongaerts, 1999, p. 154). For the purpose of this essay, these exceptions will not be examined. Rather, the pronunciation of learners who begin to learn

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\* This paper focuses on pronunciation from a strict pedagogical point of view and does not have a sociolinguistic perspective. That is why the dichotomy 'native/non-native' has been used. For a sociolinguistic perspective in general and the commodification of accents in particular, see Blommaert (2010).

their second language after the age of twelve, the age where most find an accent unavoidable, and face the pronunciation challenges typical of second language learners (O'Brien, 2004, p. 5), will be considered.

### Introduction to the study

Prosodic features can be realized at the linguistic domain ranging from the shorter lexical (phonemic) level to the longer sentential level (Wu, Tu, & Wang, 2012). The terminology used in this examination is very field specific. An agreed interpretation of these terms is necessary to understand the positions presented. *A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics* (2003) discusses prosody. In phonetics, the smallest perceptible segment is a phone. Phonology, a subfield of segmental phonology, involves the analysis of speech into phonemes that corresponds to phonetic segments of analyzed speech. "A phoneme is an abstract unit of speech sound that can distinguish words is such that changing a phoneme in a word can produce another word" (64). Speakers of a particular language perceive a phoneme as a distinctive sound in that language. The prosodics of oral languages involves variation in syllable length, pitch, and loudness of speech sounds. Prosodic features are suprasegmental in that they are not confined to any one segment; rather, they occur in a hierarchy of other levels of an utterance. These prosodic units are the actual phonetic spurts or chunks of speech. They do not in general correspond to grammatical units such as phrases or clauses; hence they are more relevant to pronunciation rather than meaning. Typically, stress, length, intonation, syllabification and tone fall under the general heading of suprasegmentals, reflecting a conceptual division of speech into 'segmental' and 'suprasegmental' parts (Crystal, 2003). However, this division is

not absolute, with phonetic correlates of stress, intonation, etc. often manifesting in the consonants and vowels at the segmental level. Therefore, the term 'prosody' is often and accurately interchanged with 'suprasegmentals' as it will be in this examination.

Prosodic units are characterized by several phonetic cues, such as a coherent pitch, and the gradual decline in pitch and lengthening of vowels over the duration of the unit, until the pitch and speed are reset to begin the next unit. Furthermore, an allophone is one of several similar speech sounds (phones) that belong to the same phoneme. An allophone is not distinctive, but rather a variant of a phoneme. Changing the allophone will not change the meaning of a word, but the result may sound non-native, or be unintelligible (Crystal, 2003).

Furthermore, research has shown and current pedagogical thinking on pronunciation maintains that "intelligible pronunciation is seen as an essential component of communicative competence" (Morley, 1991, p. 513). "The role of pronunciation in the different schools of language teaching has varied widely from having virtually no role in the grammar-translation method to being the main focus in the audio-lingual method where emphasis is on the traditional notions of pronunciation, minimal pairs, drills and short conversations" (Otlowski, 1998, p. 2).

Though some instructors aim for a native-like pronunciation and have expectations of near perfection, typically, there is one main approach in pronunciation teaching: *understandable*. The *understandable* approach develops a pronunciation style that is clear and understandable to both native and non-native speakers, but not necessarily native-like. This approach does not aim for

perfection, considering it too ambitious and perhaps even an unattainable goal for most learners (Chung, 2005, p. 3). Despite advancements in teaching pronunciation, near native-like fluency remains elusive to most adult L2 learners. Though it may seem that researchers have examined every facet of language acquisition, pronunciation has fallen to the wayside and has suffered from serious neglect. "Neither the Europeans nor the North Americans have devoted much time to the study of acquisitions of sound systems" (Elliot, 1997, p. 95). Furthermore, Elliot maintains that "teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills and therefore sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend valuable time on other areas of language" (p. 531). Ironically, language learners themselves often feel the most important aspect of learning a language is pronunciation and sounding native-like, which reflects the position that intelligible pronunciation is a fundamental element of communicative proficiency. Consequently, to serve the contemporary L2 learner's needs, the ultimate goal is not merely 'understandable', rather native-like.

### **The role of pronunciation in current and past language programs**

Current and past language programs have varied widely as to their methods of teaching pronunciation, and debates continue as to the most effective method of teaching pronunciation. Modern pronunciation teaching methods sprung from the classic audio-lingual method (ALM) which was a direct result of the need for foreign language proficiency in listening and speaking skills during and after World War II. Based on the principle that language learning is habit formation, it makes drilling, repetition, and habit-formation central elements of instruction. However, ALM has a tendency to focus on manipulation of the

target language and to disregard content and meaning. Critics of the audio-lingual method assert that this emphasis on repetition and accuracy ultimately does not help students achieve communicative competence in the target language.

The antithesis and currently, "one of the more prevalent approaches to teaching pronunciation is communicative language teaching (CLT), which requires teaching methods and objectives that include whole-person learner involvement including three important dimensions: the learner's intellectual involvement, affective involvement, and physical involvement" (Morley, 1991, pp. 485-6). Teaching of pronunciation shifts from an aspect of phonological accuracy to a comprehensive conversational competence and is thought to be taught as an integral part of oral communication (Pennington & Richards, 1986). It is seen as a by-product of teaching speaking and listening (Murphy, 1991). The learner's involvement in the learning process as a partner with his instructor is acknowledged as an effective techniques for developing learner strategies. "With CLT began a movement away from traditional lesson formats where the focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorization of dialogs and drills, and toward the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work" (Richards, p. 4, 2006). It can be seen that the teacher's role is not only to teach but to facilitate learning by monitoring and modifying English at two levels, speech production and speech performance.

However, controversy persists regarding the much embraced CLT. Jenkins (2004) argues that the claim of CLT's integral instruction is an act of marginalizing pronunciation in the belief that it is peripheral to oral

communication. It superintends the critical role pronunciation plays in communication. In response, recent studies have shown some support for the superiority of suprasegmental instruction in ESL contexts (e.g., Derwing & Rossiter, 2003). Jenkins strongly suggests the need of a more systematic training of prosodic features and a return to the forgotten minimal pair drills. Wider availability of curriculum and software that make prosodic elements discourse more accessible to teachers and learners encourage work with suprasegmentals (Levis, p. 369, 2005).

Finally, teachers' understandings of CLT appear to vary and, thus, the manifestations of the approach in teaching pronunciation is not as effective as intended. Nazari (2007) differentiated two concepts of CLT as he investigated teachers' CLT beliefs and practices: the narrower (vocabulary, forms, and functions) and the broader (social-cultural aspects of language use). In his study of three Iranian English teachers he contends that the teachers' implementation of CLT practice appears to be based on a narrower concept because of the institutional constraints such as student contact time, class size and prescribed curriculum and because of the "teachers' lack of distinction between the two types of communicative competence (p. 210). In regards to pronunciation teaching, though certainly laden with advantages, CLT is not necessarily a clear choice for language teachers. Regardless, CLT with its heavy emphasis on input should indirectly improve pronunciation through target language exposure. However, that improvement aims for merely understandable pronunciation.

### **Challenges facing instruction of pronunciation**

Conservative and even antiquated beliefs of teaching pronunciation to second language

learners persist. "The goal of pronunciation should be changed from the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation, a very elusive term at the best of times, to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom (Otlowski, 1998, p. 2). However, these beliefs are antithetical to today's learners who yearn for near native-like fluency in their second language.

Research has uncovered numerous factors inhibiting native-like pronunciation of L2 learners. One of the most formidable challenges facing the L2 learner is his language instructor. Many language learners are hearing the target language modeled by their instructor who is not a native speaker and is not teaching the target language accent free. "The average speaker of English in Taiwan uses stereotyped and fossilized pronunciations based on what they hear from their teachers and peers" (Chung, 2005, p.2). The skills of listening comprehension and pronunciation are interdependent: "If they cannot hear English well, they are cut off from the language. If they cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers" (Otlowski, 1998, p. 2). The non-native instructors of pronunciation suffer from prosodic challenges themselves, thus they cannot model accurate phonemes. Also, speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer has become an important factor in communication discourse. This illustrates the need to integrate pronunciation with communicative activities; to give students situations to develop their pronunciation by listening and speaking. The current research reveals a reversal in the thinking about pronunciation and shows a developing consensus that a

learner's pronunciation in a foreign language needs to be taught in conjunction with communicative practices for the learner to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers (Otlowski, 1998, p. 2-3).

Furthermore, Otlowski (1998) notes the often cited view that little relationship exists between teaching pronunciation in the classroom and attained proficiency in pronunciation, which was supported by research done by Purcell and Suter (1980). They concluded that pronunciation practice in the classroom had little effect on the learner's pronunciation skills and moreover, "that the attainment of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of the educators" (Robertson, 2003, p.4). Findings were qualified by stating that "variables of formal training and the quality of the training in pronunciation could affect the results, as would the area of pronunciation that had been emphasized, that is segmentals (individual sounds of a language) or suprasegmentals" (Olowski, 1998, p. 2). This leaves educators with the conundrum of the influences of the instructors' own fluency with prosodies when imparting pronunciation strategies to their students often abandoning the fruitless effort of pronunciation teaching.

Additionally, phonological intelligibility is extremely difficult to isolate and pin down. Thus, identification of essential elements in teaching pronunciation can be a complex process (Jenkins, 2002, p. 2). Augmentation or modification of pedagogy is needed because scholarly work supports that repetition and drills are no longer a satisfactory tool for either the educator or the learner.

### **Recent research on pronunciation of L2 learners**

Current research on factors that influence native-like pronunciation aims for much more than an indirect improvement in pronunciation. "For several decades of the 20th century, the main interest of pronunciation teaching research was in applying contrastive analysis techniques to the sound segments of the [the first language] L1 and L2" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 109). Recently, researchers, including Jenkins (2004) have ceased treating pronunciation as an isolated, self-contained linguistic and pedagogic phenomenon, and are "embracing more sophisticated approaches to inter-language phonology by focusing increasingly on suprasegmental features" (p. 109). As a stress-timed language, English has a rhythm characterized by alternations in degree of stress, with stressed syllables significantly longer and most vowels in unstressed syllables reducing to a schwa, an unstressed vowel sound. Although the distinction between syllable- and stress-timed languages has been debated, it is still generally considered that most languages fall somewhere along the syllable- and stress-timed continuum (Trofimovich & Baker, 2007, p. 251). Prosodic elements, the stress and intonation patterns of an utterance, and suprasegmentals, pertaining to or noting features of speech, as stress, pitch, and length, that accompany individual consonants and vowels and may extend over more than one such segmental element, have been targeted for deeper examination in understanding factors that promote near native-like pronunciation of an L2 speaker.

In a study conducted by Trofimovich and Baker (2007), the relationship between suprasegmental accuracy and accentedness in an L2 was examined. "The study examined second language (L2) experience

effects on learners' acquisition of fluency- (speech rate, frequency, and duration of pausing) and prosody-based (stress timing, peak alignment) suprasegmentals. The analyses established that amount of L2 experience influences learners' acquisition of L2 suprasegmentals, those that characterize the prosody (stress timing, peak alignment) and fluency (frequency, duration of pausing) of L2 speech. What these analyses did not establish, however, is the importance of these suprasegmentals to the native English listeners' ratings of accentedness in L2 speech. Results also indicated that both fluency-based and prosody-based suprasegmentals appeared to determine the degree to which speech was perceived as being accented. Native English listeners appeared to consider a combination of suprasegmentals: those that characterize speech prosody (stress timing) and speech fluency (speech rate, frequency and duration of pausing)" (2006, p. 252).

The processing and learning of the suprasegmentals characterizing speech prosody, including stress timing and peak alignment, likely reflect linguistic knowledge that differs from language to language and must be processed and stored in a language-specific manner (Botinis, Granstrom, & M'obius, 2001). By contrast, "the suprasegmentals characterizing speech fluency reflect rapid and efficient functioning of several psycholinguistic mechanisms at multiple levels of processing, including those of lexical access and conversion of a speech plan into articulatory output, meaning understandable pronunciation" (Trofimovich & Baker, 2007, p. 252). Therefore, moving from understandable to native-like pronunciation requires an emphasis on prosodics and suprasegmentals in the language classroom.

Additionally, O'Brien's 2004 study of American students learning German, concluded that "pronunciation for subjects who received prosodic training improved whereas that of a similar group who received only segmental training did not" (p. 5). Furthermore, O'Brien determined that segmentals and prosodic aspects are not completely independent and that the improvement of foreign accent does not necessarily correlate with improvements in individual segments. Therefore, if the goal is to train L2 learners towards a native-like accent, suprasegmentals must be emphasized in the instruction (p. 6).

Furthermore, in her pronunciation research (2002), Jennifer Jenkins analyzed interactions between non-native speakers of English. The aim was to describe which features of English pronunciation are essential for intelligible pronunciation, and which are not. After examination, Jenkins concluded:

- All the consonants are important except for 'th' sounds as in 'thin' and 'this.'
- Consonant clusters are important at the beginning and in the middle of words. For example, the cluster in the word 'string' cannot be simplified to 'sting' or 'tring' and remain intelligible.
- The contrast between long and short vowels is important. For example, the difference between the vowel sounds in 'sit' and 'seat.'
- Nuclear (or tonic) stress is also essential. This is the stress on the most important word (or syllable) in a group of words. For example, there is a difference in meaning between 'My son uses a COMPUTER' which is a neutral statement of fact and 'My SON has a computer', where there is

an added meaning (such as that another person known to the speaker and listener does not use a computer) (Jenkins, 2002, p. 3).

Other items which are regularly taught in English pronunciation courses appear not to be essential for intelligibility in interactions, but could, if perfected, lead to native-like pronunciation. These are:

- The 'th' sounds (see above).
- Vowel quality, that is, the difference between vowel sounds where length is not involved, e.g. a German speaker may pronounce the 'e' in the word 'chess' more like an 'a' as in the word 'cat.'
- Weak forms such as the words 'to', 'of' and 'from' whose vowels are often pronounced as schwa instead of with their full quality (Jenkins, 2002, p. 4).

Moreover, stress, tone and pitch must be considered when examining pronunciation teaching. Hyman (2006) explains that every prosodic word contains one and only one primary stress. While tone is related to pitch features, stress relates to metrical prominence (p. 231). Hyman further argues that “pitch accent is not a coherent notion, rather a pick-and-choose among the properties in the prototypical tone vs. stress-accent systems” (p. 236). Other features of connected speech such as assimilation, where the final sound of a word alters to make it more like the first sound of the next word, so that, e.g. 'red paint' becomes 'reb paint' lead to improved pronunciation including the suprasegmentals of word stress, pitch movement, and stress timing. All these things are said to be important for a native speaker/listener either because they aid intelligibility or because they are thought

to make an accent more native like (Jenkins, 2002, p. 2-6).

Finally, research on pronunciation hovers between two goals: native fluency or relevant intelligibility. In today's global English world, some ELT researchers believe that native-like pronunciation isn't necessarily an advantage when communicating with World Englishes speakers. The implications of Jenkins' model for pronunciation teaching promote the idea that students should be given choice. “When students are learning English so that they can use it in international contexts with other non-native speakers from different first languages, they should be given the choice of acquiring a pronunciation that is more relevant to intelligibility than traditional pronunciation syllabuses offer” (Coskun, 2011, p. 53). Nevertheless, the nearer the traditional pronunciation of the language, the more readily understood a speaker is. Hence, the value of focusing on suprasegmentals when teaching pronunciation cannot be so easily side-stepped.

### Discussion

Drawing from the Hymes (1972) communicative competence and on contemporary research in discourse analysis, the aim of teaching pronunciation is to make the utterances intelligible. To become intelligible, learners tacitly approximate the target language norms as closely as possible. The ultimate goal is for the learner to develop spoken English that is easy to understand, serves the learner's individual needs, and allows a positive image of himself as a speaker of a foreign language. “The communicative approach to pronunciation teaching requires prosodic teaching methods and objectives that include whole-person learner involvement” (Chung, 2005, p.2). Through the instruction of

suprasegmentals, the learner develops awareness and monitoring skills above the segment level that will allow learning and self-correcting opportunities outside the classroom environment. Undoubtedly, the expanding global use of English has heightened the demand for English teaching and pronunciation. Research has shown that explicit instruction in pronunciation is essential in language teaching curriculum (Fraser, 1999; Jenkins, 2002; Levis, 2005). However, this idealized approach to teaching pronunciation does not mean that English language teachers need to abandon the communicative approach, which is so effective in teaching speaking and listening. It is through longer samples of real discourse, as found in the communicative language classroom, that the relationship between suprasegmentals and meaning becomes evident (Fraser, 1999, p. 169).

Elliott made a similar proposal with respect to teaching pronunciation in a communicatively oriented classroom. "Improvement in pronunciation for adult learners is possible by employing a multimodal methodology that accounts for individual learning style variation. The methodology aims to promote a metalinguistic awareness based on interlingual allophonic and phonemic similarities and differences as well as an awareness of the grapheme-phoneme relationship" (Elliott, 1997, p. 103). Furthermore, evidence revealed that by focusing on suprasegmentals that are most problematic for a particular native speaker within a communicative approach, yields enhancement toward a more native-like accent (p. 103). Moreover, instructors unintentionally use prosodics in conversational repair strategies, utilizing aspects such as stress and intonation in error correction which further effects accent (Seong, 2004, p. 156).

Learners with decent pronunciation are likely to be understood even if they make grammatical errors, whereas learners with poor pronunciation will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect (Gilakjani, 2012, p. 96). Furthermore, research suggests that speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer becomes an important factor in communication discourse. Thus, the skills of listening comprehension and pronunciation are interdependent. "If they cannot hear English well, they are cut off from the language...If they cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers" (Gilbert, 1984, p. 1). The teaching of pronunciation has to reach for intelligible pronunciation as an essential component of communicative competence, which can be achieved through pronunciation lessons centered around aspects such as sounds, syllables, stress and intonation (Gilakjani, 2012, p. 103), thus highlighting the prosodic elements of language.

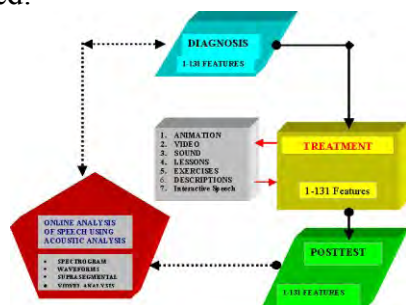
### **Recommended pedagogical strategies of pronunciation teaching**

The value of prosodic aspects of speech, stress, rhythm and intonation often enhances pronunciation and results in a native-like accent, which is central to the success of a language learner. As a result of the transition from the teacher-centered classroom to the student-centered classroom, there has been a need for the integration of pronunciation with oral communication. This has begun to be manifested with the change in emphasis from segmentals to suprasegmentals, more emphasis on individual learner needs, meaningful task-based practices, the development of new teacher strategies for the teaching, and the introduction of peer correction and group interaction. "These transitions result in a shift from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies as goals for



teachers and students” (Bruen, 2001, p. 161). Attention to larger, sentence level aspects of speech such as prosody and to various combinations of sounds such as linking, assimilation, and reduction will positively impact the pronunciation improvements of the second language learner (Mora, 2008, p. 433).

Additionally, with the advent of technology, the prevalence of online education cannot be ignored. Teaching pronunciation through a virtual classroom has reached the second language learner. “The pioneering use of CD-ROMs, eminently suitable for self-access, enables large amounts of contextualized native-speaker data to be provided for learners, along with the facility to listen to short extracts and repeat specific features over and over” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 112 ). Espousing the endless benefits to computer education, Bill Gates reflected, “Technology can humanize the education environment” (Donahue, 2007, p. 2). However necessary technology is, it is only just surfacing as a sufficient means of promoting near native-like pronunciation of L2 learners. A new model for teaching pronunciation online that links diagnostic tests, teacher treatments, posttests, and individual treatment via acoustic analysis has been proposed. Within this model, tedious, inaccurate teacher assessment is replaced by efficient, accurate computer diagnostics and prosodics again, are stressed:



**Figure 1: Model for online pronunciation instruction (Donahue, 2007, p. 3)**

- A. **Diagnosis-** technology reduces the laborious tasks of determining which accent modification features require remediation. Traditionally teachers utilize listening discrimination (such as minimal pairs) to determine level of proficiency. Computer assisted diagnostic programs cover features of intonation, stress, and rhythm. Though speech to text software is still being perfected, it can measure oral competence for producing English sounds.
- B. **Treatment-** With computer assisted instruction (CAI) students interact with software programs that emphasize interactive and collaborative activities stressing prosodic elements through animation, video, sound, etc.
- C. **Posttest-** A mastery test determines student progress.
- D. **Acoustic Analysis-** sophisticated acoustic analysis of speech signal online can be performed with currently available software. Though time-intensive for a teacher, technology leads to an accurate and quick analysis (Donahue, 2007, p. 1-7).

While on-line education in itself is insufficient in teaching pronunciation, with augmentation of a solid pedagogy, technology could be the future for the English language learner in gaining near native-like fluency.

### Future research

As the profession of Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) recognizes the importance of near native-like pronunciation for the L2 learner's success in fluency, flexible pedagogy, critical inquiry, and more scholarly research is necessary. “The development of L2

suprasegmentals needs to be examined in other, more naturalistic situations and tasks: those that allow researchers to estimate the effects of lexical access, syntactic encoding, and pragmatic decisions (among many other factors) on the production of L2 suprasegmentals” (Trofimovich & Baker, 2007, p. 255). Future research needs to clarify the precise contribution of prosody and fluency based suprasegmentals to foreign accent in L2 speech. Trofimovich and Baker (2007) have suggested that both fluency-based (speech rate, frequency, and duration of pausing) and prosody-based (stress timing) suprasegmentals determine the perception of foreign accent in a learners’ speech (p. 272). “Based on low-pass filtered speech, that is, speech that likely sounds unnatural to a casual listener, these ratings may not reflect perceptions of foreign accent in face-to-face interaction or in situations when clear speech is rated” (p. 252). This calls attention to the need for additional research in both second language phonological acquisition and classroom pedagogy. “What is needed is a shift of two types: a paradigm shift in research and teaching of pronunciation and an understanding of the sociolinguistic uses and users of English” (Jenkins, 2002, p. 196). Additionally, researchers must investigate more fully the effects of orthography in combination with suprasegmentals on students’ developing L2 phonological competence and identify those areas that may negatively influence L2 speech. This in turn will allow instructors to develop more effective classroom materials and provide students an opportunity to overcome the difficulties in foreign accent reduction.

### Conclusion

Clearly, one of the most influential factors that lead to more native-like pronunciation or L2 learners is a focus on prosody in pronunciation teaching. Whether in a

traditional classroom or online, research and the current trend reversal in viewing pronunciation shows there is a consensus that a learner's pronunciation in a second language needs to be taught in conjunction with prosody and communicative practices for the learner to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers (Otlowski, 1998, p. 2). With the emphasis on meaningful communication and the understanding that speech production is affected by speech perception, there is a need to integrate prosodics with communicative activities giving students situations to develop their pronunciation through listening and speaking. Although it is too early to make definitive claims, it is possible that more direct and learner-oriented technological approaches may “accelerate the process of tone acquisition both by providing a greater amount of exposure to tone in context with the opportunity to mimic repeatedly, and by the appeal to the subconscious as well as the cognitive level” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 112). The necessary importance of incorporating prosodic aspects for effective, native-like communication cannot be overlooked in the pedagogy of the second language instruction of pronunciation.

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