Emerging research findings and innovative practices in pronunciation pedagogy, including:
- means of increasing learner motivation and autonomy
- multi-modal approaches to pronunciation teaching
- the increasing role of technology in today’s pronunciation practice
- pronunciation priorities for English as a lingua franca (ELF) communication
- the impact of rhythm, stress, intonation, and thought groups on learners’ overall intelligibility
- enhancements to previous pedagogical practices

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

I am writing on behalf of [editors] to invite you to compose a book chapter for [name of volume] slated to be published in 2017…. The topic of the chapter we are inviting you to compose is “New Ways of Teaching Pronunciation”…. What we would like you to include is an overview survey discussion of contemporary and emerging directions in pronunciation teaching…. We are asking you to describe current and emerging themes, to provide illustrations and examples, and to offer future directions and recommendations…
MY QUANDARY

TOPICS COVERED IN THE 1ST EDITION

1ST EDITION, CONTINUED
Aside from advances in instructional technology, what true innovations exist in the field of teaching pronunciation?

RESOLVING THE CONUNDRUM

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Increasing learner motivation and autonomy

Innovation #1
There is a significant correlation between learners’ beliefs and attitudes toward L2 pronunciation and their ultimate attainment.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

- Learners are aware of the role that motivation plays in their acquisition of L2 pronunciation.
- Anxiety and low self-confidence negatively affect learners’ willingness to communicate.
- Identifying strongly with the L2, wanting to sound like an NES, having a socially outgoing orientation, and using the language in a variety of domains figures strongly in success.
- However, despite the overriding importance of social factors in L2 pronunciation acquisition, many learners remain unaware of the relation between identity and accent.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM**

**Motivation**

- Adopt Dörnyei’s (2014) notion of the possible self
- Provide safe environments in the classroom for learners to practice as this can help them build confidence and be more willing to speak in the L2 (Zielinski, 2012)

**Learner autonomy**

- Create archives of out-of-class learning opportunities housed on CMS (e.g., TED talks, elevator pitches, and Three-Minute Theses)
- Combine student self-regulated practice with scaffolded in-class instruction (Sardegna & McGregor, 2013)
- Implement strategy instruction with (Rokoszewska, 2012; Sardegna, 2012; Smemoe & Haslam, 2013)
Multi-modal approaches to pronunciation teaching

Innovation #2

Since pronunciation teaching involves auditory, visual, and kinesthetic modalities, best practice mandates that it be taught through a multi-modal approach.

TAKEAWAY

Brinton (2014)

Multi-modal approaches can help to break down ego boundaries, thereby increasing learners’ receptivity toward acquiring L2 sound features.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin (2010); Acton (2012); Acton, Baker, Burt, & Teaman (2013)
**SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM**

- Chan’s (n.d.) “Pronunciation Doctor” pronunciation workouts - exercises to heighten learners’ awareness of their vocal apparatus, increase the strength and flexibility of their articulatory muscles, and enhance the automaticity of L2 sound production
- Acton et al’s (2013) haptic pronunciation - a teaching system grounded in the coordinated use of movement, touch, and gesture to anchor new sound features
  - punching in time to primary stressed syllables of multi-syllabic words (“fight club”)
  - stepping or dancing in time to key words in a stretch of discourse
  - holding an object and shaking it to the rhythm of a poem

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**The increasing role of technology**

Innovation #3

Technology’s influence on pronunciation teaching includes the entire spectrum—from the simplest audio solutions such as digital recording software to threaded voice boards to more advanced technologies such as web-based applications and automatic speech recognition.
Learners exposed to digital sound files improved not only their perception of unfamiliar English vowels but also, to a limited degree, the intelligibility of their production.

There are currently 6.8 billion mobile phone subscribers worldwide (rapidly approaching the world’s population of 7.1 billion.) As a result, mobile technologies hold great promise for empowering literally billions of learners in their acquisition of English pronunciation skills.

Mobile technologies not only empower learners and encourage learner autonomy but also enable learning to extend beyond the classroom.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

- Thomson (2011; 2012); Jarvis (2015); Huffman (2011)

**SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM**

- Links to digital resources on the course website
- Audio file attachments for teacher and peer feedback
- Streaming video samples of authentic native speaker discourse
- Synchronous video conversations where tutors can view images of the learners’ faces in real time, providing them with simultaneous visual and audio feedback
- Mobile technologies including synchronous voice chat apps (e.g., Skype), interactive feedback apps (e.g., MobiLearn), videoconferencing software (e.g., NetMeeting) that allows both parties to hear and speak to one another while attending real-time virtual classrooms

**Pronunciation priorities for lingua franca communication**

Innovation #4
The NES is no longer the sole target interlocutor. Our job as pronunciation teachers is to prepare English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) users of English to communicate their ideas and needs intelligibly to other ELF speakers, prioritizing those pronunciation features that will best prepare them for this goal.

**TAKEAWAY**

A "common core" pronunciation curriculum would consist of the minimal inventory of pronunciation features needed for successful interaction among ELF speakers. This curriculum would omit those features that are deemed peripheral to intelligible NNES-NNES communication. The end goal of a common core approach to pronunciation syllabus design is a significantly reduced (and thus a more attainable) set of ELF pronunciation goals.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

Identify those features that are deemed essential to intelligible NNES-NNES communication from the pronunciation syllabus, with the end goal of a significantly reduced (and thus more attainable) set of ELF pronunciation goals.

- Include: aspiration following /p, t, k/, word initial and word medial consonant clusters, long/short vowel contrasts, and nuclear or tonic stress
- Omit: vowel reduction, schwa, and weak or reduced forms (such as /kən/ for can); features of connected speech such as linking and palatalization; stress timing; pitch movement; and certain consonant phonemes such as /N/, /Ø/, and dark /l/ along with the General American flap /ɹ/
Impact of suprasegmentals on learners' overall intelligibility

**Innovation #5**

Notwithstanding disagreements between pronunciation experts, most agree that the impact of the message, and to a great degree its meaning, reside in its suprasegmental features.

**TAKEAWAY**

Within a thought group, the placement of prominence on the focus word contributes to the overall intelligibility of the utterance.

On the word level, correctly placed lexical stress also contributes to intelligibility.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

Saito (2014)
Intelligibility and comprehensibility are of critical importance; therefore teachers should focus classroom time on issues of stress at both the word and phrase level (Derwing & Munro, 2014).

According to Murphy (2013), thought grouping…

- is essential to most other aspects of English pronunciation (e.g., prominence, intonation, linking, assimilation, and deletion)
- consequently, it should be prioritized over other aspects of pronunciation teaching
- This is especially true when classroom time devoted to pronunciation is limited

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Enhancements to previous pedagogical practices

CAVEAT

One of the more curious phenomena in teaching is the extent to which previously popular and well-received classroom practices or methods resurface in a later time period and are pedagogically re-envisioned (or in some cases simply “repackaged”) under new labels or with new enhancements to better appeal to contemporary learners and teachers… A number of popular approaches to pronunciation teaching appear to fit under this category… Strictly speaking, none of these practices can be considered novel or innovative since they have been widely discussed in the literature and are by no means new practices in the field.

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The Silent Way
- Young and Messum’s (2013) use of SW sound/color chart, fidels, and Cuisenaire rods which the authors have substantially revised to better reflect the sound system of English

The Color Vowel Chart
- Taylor and Thompson’s (2012) CVC which builds on Finger’s (1989) “vowel colour chart” and which builds on Gattegno’s original sound/color chart

REINVISIONED OR REPACKAGED?

Young and Messum (2013)  Gattegno (1972)

YOU BE THE JUDGE...

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I have come to believe that true innovation connects directly to research findings. As Murphy and Baker (2015) observe, the fourth wave of pronunciation teaching is still in progress. This wave is dedicated to emerging ways of teaching pronunciation as informed by contemporary empirical research; it is defined by researchers in the field who have posed foundational questions that bear a direct relation to classroom pronunciation teaching. In the fourth wave, empirical research is beginning to have more of an impact on the teaching of pronunciation while methodological ‘bandwagons’ of past decades are receiving diminished attention from teachers, materials developers, and curriculum designers.

Brinton (in press)

REFERENCE


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REFERENCES, CONTINUED


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ABSTRACT

With the transition in the late 1970s from Direct Method and Audiolingual approaches to communicative language teaching, second language pronunciation teaching entered an era of challenge. Practitioners and materials developers made concerted efforts to align their classroom practice with emerging communicative approaches, where learner needs formed the center of the curriculum, attention to fluency was balanced with attention to accuracy, the authenticity of teaching materials was stressed, and classroom tasks were aimed at engaging learners in interactive, meaningful exchanges of information.

Today, almost four decades later, pronunciation teaching has emerged from its past history of rote drill and repetition. Influenced by works on contemporary pedagogical practices and recent research into factors that directly impact learner intelligibility, pronunciation teaching has embraced numerous innovations in classroom practice.

ABSTRACT, CONTINUED

This presentation will highlight the juncture of research and emerging innovative practices in pronunciation pedagogy. These practices include but are not limited to means of increasing learner motivation and autonomy, multi-modal approaches to pronunciation teaching, the increasing role of technology in today’s pronunciation practice, pronunciation priorities for lingua franca communication, and insights into the impact of rhythm, stress, intonation, and thought groups on learners’ overall intelligibility.