

## The Acquisition of L2 Phonology

## **SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

**Series Editor:** Professor David Singleton, *Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland*

This series brings together titles dealing with a variety of aspects of language acquisition and processing in situations where a language or languages other than the native language is involved. Second language is thus interpreted in its broadest possible sense. The volumes included in the series all offer in their different ways, on the one hand, exposition and discussion of empirical findings and, on the other, some degree of theoretical reflection. In this latter connection, no particular theoretical stance is privileged in the series; nor is any relevant perspective – sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, neurolinguistic, etc. – deemed out of place. The intended readership of the series includes final-year undergraduates working on second language acquisition projects, postgraduate students involved in second language acquisition research, and researchers and teachers in general whose interests include a second language acquisition component.

Full details of all the books in this series and of all our other publications can be found on <http://www.multilingual-matters.com>, or by writing to Multilingual Matters, St Nicholas House, 31–34 High Street, Bristol BS1 2AW, UK.

**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

*Series Editor: David Singleton*

# **The Acquisition of L2 Phonology**

Edited by

Janusz Arabski and Adam Wojtaszek

**MULTILINGUAL MATTERS**

Bristol • Buffalo • Toronto

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

The Acquisition of L2 Phonology / Edited by Janusz Arabski and Adam Wojtaszek.

Second Language Acquisition: 55

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Second language acquisition. 2. Grammar, Comparative and general--Phonology.

I. Arabski, Janusz. II. Wojtaszek, Adam.

P118.2.A323 2011

418--dc22 2011015591

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13: 978-1-84769-375-4 (hbk)

**Multilingual Matters**

*UK:* St Nicholas House, 31–34 High Street, Bristol, BS1 2AW, UK.

*USA:* UTP, 2250 Military Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150, USA.

*Canada:* UTP, 5201 Dufferin Street, North York, Ontario, M3H 5T8, Canada.

Copyright © 2011 Janusz Arabski, Adam Wojtaszek and the authors of individual chapters.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher.

The policy of Multilingual Matters/Channel View Publications is to use papers that are natural, renewable and recyclable products, made from wood grown in sustainable forests. In the manufacturing process of our books, and to further support our policy, preference is given to printers that have FSC and PEFC Chain of Custody certification. The FSC and/or PEFC logos will appear on those books where full certification has been granted to the printer concerned.

Typeset by Techset Composition Ltd, Salisbury, UK.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by the MPG Books Group.

# Contents

Contributors. ....	vii
Introduction. ....	xi
<i>Janusz Arabski and Adam Wojtaszek</i>	

## Part 1: Phonetic Analysis

1	Second Language Acquisition: The Articulation of Vowels and the Importance of Tools in the Learning Process . . . . .	3
	<i>A. Naser Eddine</i>	
2	On Phonetic Negative Transfer from Chinese to English . . . . .	16
	<i>L. Xiaorong and G. Jian</i>	
3	Understanding L2 and the Perspicacious Pole . . . . .	27
	<i>L. Shockey</i>	
4	Perception of the English Voice Onset Time Continuum by Polish Learners . . . . .	37
	<i>A. Rojczyk</i>	
5	The Productive and Receptive Acquisition of Consonants and Connected Speech by Polish Students of English. . . . .	59
	<i>M. Nowacka</i>	

## Part 2: Phonological Analysis

6	The Role of Phonological Awareness in Beginning Reading: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective . . . . .	77
	<i>M. Kusiak</i>	
7	Aspects of Phonological Strength: Evidence from Language Acquisition. . . . .	93
	<i>A. Bloch-Rozmej</i>	
8	The Role of Phonemic Awareness in the Development of L1 and L2 Reading. . . . .	108
	<i>L. Piasecka</i>	

**Part 3: Pedagogical Perspectives**

- 9 Phonological Issues in Second Language Acquisition Studies:  
Focus Areas and Implications for FL Instructional Practices . . . . . 123  
*D. Gabryś-Barker*
- 10 PDI as a Tool of Phonetic Enhancements to Graded  
E-Readers . . . . . 138  
*W. Ferlacka and W. Sobkowiak*
- 11 Suprasegmentals: Tools for Increased Language Teacher  
Effectiveness . . . . . 159  
*T. Gregersen*
- 12 Students' Successes and Failures in Learning Foreign  
Language Pronunciation: Insights from Diary Data . . . . . 165  
*M. Pawlak*

## Contributors

**Anna Bloch-Rozmej** is affiliated with the Celtic Department and the History of English Department in the Institute of English at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin as well as the Institute of English at the Holy Cross University in Kielce. She specializes in linguistics, phonology in particular. She is author of numerous articles devoted to the phonology of the Celtic languages, English, German and Polish, published both in Poland and abroad. Her latest monograph is 'Melody in Government Phonology' exploring the phonological phenomena pertaining to the sub-segmental structure of sounds. Other areas of interest involve methodology of English teaching and phonetics.

**Wiesława Ferlacka, PhD** presently a freelance researcher. For the past 25 years, an EFL private tutor. In her short academic career, she has supervised tens of BA and MA theses, lectured on US and British literature, literary criticism, translation studies and business English, EFL didactics, methodology, as well as descriptive grammar. Her research focus is on e-lexicography and its application in teaching reading, discourse analysis, EFL phonology and electronic tools for language learning. In search for first-hand experience in e-education, she has also made some use of SL and Skype for teaching English to foreigners in exchange for German and Hebrew lessons.

**Danuta Gabryś-Barker** is a Professor of English at the University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland, where she lectures and supervises MA and PhD theses in applied linguistics and second language acquisition. She also works as a teacher trainer at Teacher Training College in Gliwice. Her main areas of interest are multilingualism (especially at the level of mental lexicon and syntax), neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics (modalities and learner profiles). As a teacher trainer she lectures on research methods in second language acquisition and TEFL projects. Her major concern is the role of action research in teacher development. Prof Gabryś-Barker has published over seventy articles nationally as well as internationally and a book *Aspects of multilingual storage, processing and retrieval*, Katowice: University

of Silesia Press, 2005. Recently she has edited a volume *Morphosyntactic Issues in Second Language Acquisition*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2008. A book *Action research in teacher development* edited by her and published by University of Silesia Press is about to come out.

**Tammy Gregersen** an English/Spanish bilingual, earned her PhD in linguistics at the Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso in Chile. She is currently a professor of TESOL at the University of Northern Iowa where she specializes in second language acquisition methodology, individual differences and nonverbal communication. She has published in distinguished peer-review journals such as the *Modern Language Journal*, *Foreign Language Annals*, *The Teacher Trainer*, *Language Teaching Research*, *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, *The International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *Lenguas Modernas*, and *Signos*. She has also traveled extensively presenting papers, conducting workshops and teaching in international post-graduate programs in countries such as Spain, France, Portugal, Russia, Poland, and Chile.

**Gao Jian** associate professor, graduated from the English Department of Siping Teacher's College, Jilin, China. Now he is teaching in the English Department of Educational Institute of Jilin province, China, where he holds the position of the office director. His major fields are general linguistics and teaching methodology. His latest publication is *The importance of Teaching English Phonetics*, and he also was involved in the project *On the differences of Chinese and English Phonetics*.

**Monika Kusiak, PhD** is a senior lecturer in the Institute of English Philology at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. She teaches courses in methodology and psycholinguistics. Her interests include reading in a foreign language, classroom discourse analysis and the role of a first language in foreign language learning. She has written numerous articles in scholarly journals and edited two books about different aspects in foreign language education. She has also co-authored three coursebooks for Polish EFL learners and the handbook for foreign language teacher trainees.

**Abeer Naser Eddine** engages in the study and improvement of didactic methods and practices in second language acquisition. She is interested in world Englishes and English as a lingua franca, she attempts to provide hands-on techniques that render learning more accessible, targeted and effective. She holds a PhD in Language Sciences from the University of Grenoble, France. She has worked in higher education teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses (ESP/TESOL). Her research interests include learner corpus analysis and applied linguistics.



**Marta Nowacka** teaches Descriptive Grammar, English Phonetics and Introduction to Linguistics at the University and Teacher Training College in Rzeszów. Her doctoral thesis 'Phonetic Attainment in Polish University and College Students of English: a Study in the Productive and Receptive Pronunciation Skills' (2008) was written under the supervision of Professor Szpyra-Kozłowska at Maria-Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. She is a co-author of an English pronunciation practice book 'How Much Wood Would a Woodchuck Chuck?' (Mańkowska et al., 2009). Her main interests in applied linguistics are in particular foreign-accented speech and teaching phonetics to foreigners.

**Mirosław Pawlak** is Professor of English in the English Department at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts of Adam Mickiewicz University in Kalisz, Poland. His main areas of interest are SLA theory and research, form-focused instruction, classroom discourse, learner autonomy, communication and learning strategies, grammar learning strategies, individual learner differences and pronunciation teaching. His recent publications include *The place of form-focused instruction in the foreign language classroom* (2006, Kalisz–Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University Press) and several edited collections on learner autonomy, language policies of the Council of Europe, form-focused instruction and individual learner differences.

**Liliana Piasecka, PhD hab.** Is an academic teacher, applied linguist, researcher and teacher trainer at the Department of English, University of Opole, Poland. Her research interests include second/foreign language acquisition issues, especially L2 lexical development, relations between L1 and L2 reading, gender and identity. She is also involved in training teachers of English as a foreign language, hence her concern for the prospective teachers' linguistic expertise, sensitivity to their learners' needs, and reflectivity about their own teaching practices. She has published two books, over 40 articles, and co-edited a collection of essays. She has supervised over sixty MA theses.

**Arkadiusz Rojczyk** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Silesia in Poland. His research concentrates on production and perception of second language speech, speech analysis and resynthesis. He is currently working on spectral and temporal parameters in perception and production of English word stress by Polish learners. He is also a co-author of a grant from Polish Ministry of Science for devising a new course in English pronunciation for Polish learners.

**Linda Shockey** holds a PhD from the Ohio State University (Columbus, Ohio). She specialises in acoustic and articulatory phonetics and aspects of phonology, such as Online Phonology, and the phonotaxis of syllables.

She has also co-edited a collection of articles which appeared as *In Honor of Ilse Lehiste*, Foris, 1988. She also published *Sound Patterns of Spoken English*: a concise, to-the-point compendium of information about the casual pronunciation of everyday English as compared to formal citation forms. She is currently a Pronunciation Linguist at the BBC in London.

**Włodzimierz Sobkowiak** is professor of English philology at the School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. Over the 33 years of his academic career he has been researching and teaching EFL (especially phonetics), humorology, lexicography, and ICT for EFL applications. In recent years he has focused on Second Life as a MUVLE for EFL. As Wlodek Barbosa he offers regular tuition in EFL pronunciation in this virtual world.

**Luo Xiaorong** associate professor, graduated from the English Department of Siping Teacher's College, Jilin, China. Now she is teaching English in the Foreign Language School of Changchun University of Science and Technology Jilin, China, where she holds the position of the office director. She is interested in the field of the second language acquisition and she has published several papers: *On Interference in Second Language Learning*, *Understanding Unsuccessful Translation of Public Signs in My Hometown, Changchun China*, among others. She is also involved in two projects: *The Changes in Language in China with the Development of Social Economics*, and *The Function of Gestures in Teaching Listening*.

# Introduction

JANUSZ ARABSKI and ADAM WOJTASZEK

The volume is a collection of 12 chapters focused on various aspects of acquisition of the L2 phonological system. The authors represent five different nationalities, although the majority of them are Polish. They are researchers and practitioners, applied linguists and teachers, who share their experience and knowledge related to the leading theme of the book, which has been divided into three major parts.

The first one, titled *Phonetic Analysis*, revolves around selected aspects of second-language production and perception, including reports on five stimulating studies of language learners in both naturalistic and formal-educational settings. In the second part, a more abstract and comparative perspective is taken in order to provide accounts for observable tendencies in learner behaviour in the light of recent theories modelling the route of L1/L2 pronunciation and reading ability development. Its title, *Phonological Analysis*, reflects the shift of focus towards a more theoretical domain of abstract conceptualisations of the acquisition of L2 phonology. The third part, *Pedagogical Perspectives*, will be of major interest for those language teachers who believe that the mastery of native-like or highly intelligible pronunciation is an important asset and component of L2 education. It consists of four contributions of high practical value for those practitioners who find it worthwhile and stimulating to base their actions on the latest outcomes of scientific research.

The scope of the volume is fairly broad, but definitely not exhaustive. It was not the editors' purpose to cover all important theoretical models or directions in L2 phonology research; instead, the contents highlight a selection of up-to-date motifs in the area. The approach to the selection and organisation can be compared with two other volumes: *Focus on Phonological Acquisition* (Hannahs & Young-Sholten, 1997) and *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition* (Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2008). Both these publications present a choice of contemporary theoretical approaches to acquisition of L1 and L2 phonology, illustrated with examples from several different languages. In its structure, the present volume resembles Hansen Edwards and Zampini (2008), and it could even be treated as a

form of supplement and expansion to the issues included there. Its editors make it clear in the Introduction that although the book aims at presenting a comprehensive overview of the field, the limits related to a reasonable size and length of the publication led them to abbreviated treatment of certain themes (Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2008: 9). Some of them have been developed in the present collection.

The first chapter summarises its author's experience, both as a learner and as a teacher, related to the acquisition of the phonetic productive skills of French learners of English. Abeer Naser Eddine focuses mainly on the vowel system, which turns out to be one of the major challenges facing French learners. Alongside reporting on a case study illustrating the problem, the author also provides the reader with a collection of useful hints related to the creative use of various tools and materials in the process of teaching the English vowel system.

In a similar vein, Luo Xiaorong and Gao Jian summarise major challenges awaiting Chinese learners on their route to the mastery of English pronunciation. The paper starts with a brief comparative outline of English and Chinese segmental phonetics, pointing to the areas of potential difficulty, which are later examined for evidence of negative phonetic transfer. The authors point to an interesting variability in this phenomenon related to different dialectal backgrounds of the learners, showing how dialectal differences may lead to systematic discrepancies in the L2 phonetic attainment.

After two initial chapters focusing on production, the third chapter by Linda Shockey offers an interesting and stimulating account of the differences in speech comprehension between different groups of learners of English. The contribution first outlines outcomes of a study performed on Greek and Polish learners, placed against the background of native speakers of English, to develop into a discussion of factors potentially accounting for the differences. The author convincingly argues for an explanation enrooted in the phonotactic features of the languages in question.

The fourth chapter describes a very interesting study, in which Arkadiusz Rojczyk managed to demonstrate how the manipulation of the Voice Onset Time (VOT) following an initial fortis plosive sound may lead to an elaboration of very precisely measurable differences between English native speakers and different groups of Polish learners of English. The study focuses on an important aspect of the English phonetic input processing, described by many scholars.

The final chapter in the section by Marta Nowacka combines the two perspectives represented earlier, focusing both on production and perception of English consonants in connected speech by Polish learners. It reports on a three-year longitudinal study, which shows both the route of development of the items selected for the study, as well as the hierarchy of the most problematic areas, established thanks to the investigation. An

additional value of the contribution lies in an extensive list of references to the literature on the subject in the initial part of the chapter.

In the initial chapter of the second section, Monika Kusiak explores the implications of an interesting division of orthographic systems into 'Chinese' and 'Phoenician' types, introduced by Baron and Strawson (1976), for the development of phonological awareness in the process of learning to read in a given language. Subsequently, three English language coursebooks are evaluated against the background of factors contributing to the optimal development of phonological awareness. This ability is seen by the author as an indispensable condition of successful growth of productive and receptive skills.

Anna Bloch-Rozmej seems to move in the opposite direction. She uses evidence from L1 acquisition by Polish and English children as support for theoretical conceptualisations of phonological strength within the non-derivational framework of *Government Phonology*. The implications related to the sequence of acquisition of the constructs can easily be adopted into language teaching syllabi.

Liliana Piasecka returns to the issue of phonological awareness, touched upon by Monika Kusiak, to expand the discussion with some more references and to illustrate the problem of negative transfer, detected in Polish learners of English. They are shown to employ their L1 strategies in deciphering and interpreting English orthography. The necessity of extensive training in the area of spelling–pronunciation interface of L2 is expressed.

The final section of the volume starts with Danuta Gabryś-Barker's comprehensive overview of the subject area within the pedagogically oriented perspective. She presents a selection of recently published research articles in a number of important journals in order to show which topics are most up-to-date and what is the position of L2 phonetics and phonology research relative to other areas of investigation. This contribution is of significant value for both researchers and language teaching practitioners. The former will find there numerous references to important recent contributions, while the latter will benefit from the useful guidelines provided by the author, concerning practical applications.

Wiesława Ferlacka and Włodzimierz Sobkowiak present a very useful tool for enhancement of graded e-readers with phonetically related content. They perform an analysis of a corpus of graded e-readers with the use of Phonetic Difficulty Index (PDI) developed by Sobkowiak (2006), to support and expand the usefulness of those valuable materials and to help the teachers in their more effective use.

Tammy Gregersen turns to suprasegmentals and their importance in marking and recognition of a number of important psychological traits in the learners. In her subjective and personal account she shares some of her most important experiences as an applied linguist, researcher and teacher.

The final chapter by Mirosław Pawlak rounds up the volume with a presentation of the learners' perspective on the process of acquisition of L2 phonology. After an extensive introduction, providing the reader with an excellent review of the literature, the author moves on to discuss diary data collected from his subjects. The discussion is enlightening and intriguing for both researchers and teachers, as they are informed of many aspects of the struggle in which the learners are engaged on their way to development of intelligible L2 pronunciation, which seldom surface in more quantitative research designs.

All in all, the editors hope that the volume will be received as informative and inspiring for many readers, no matter whether they represent the more theoretically oriented or the more practically focused readership. Both language scientists and language teachers should find in it many interesting threads to follow. With this expectation we encourage you to explore the contents.

## References

- Baron, J. and Strawson, C. (1976) Use of orthographic and word-specific knowledge in reading words aloud. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 2, 386–393.
- Hannahs, S.J. and Young-Scholten, M. (1997) *Focus on Phonological Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hansen Edwards, J.G. and Zampini, M.L. (2008) *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sobkowiak, W. (2006) *Phonetics of EFL Dictionary Definitions*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

*Part 1*

## ***Phonetic Analysis***