

Anna Jarosz: English Pronunciation in L2 Instruction: The Case of Secondary School Learners

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Anna Jarosz is an assistant professor who graduated from the English Studies Institute and the Italian Studies Department at the University of Łódź in Poland. Her professional interests lie in English phonetics teaching and learning as well as SLA in general. As indicated by the title, the key goal of this publication is to explore English pronunciation in L2 instruction to upper secondary school students. The study examines what happens during foreign language instruction before students begin their education at a university level. The aim is to bridge the existing gap in the research studies and to reveal a small fraction of the upper secondary school reality as well as the place and relevance of pronunciation in the context.

Anna Jarosz's doctoral thesis outlined in the current book is based on a longitudinal study that was intended to investigate the teaching of pronunciation as L2 to secondary school learners in Poland. The monograph consists of five chapters, a rich bibliography with more than three hundred sources, and appendixes. The first chapter, which is a theoretical chapter, focuses on the place of pronunciation instruction in the teaching of English, as well as different approaches and methodologies with an overview of the history of teaching pronunciation including Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) who distinguish between *Analytic-Linguistic Approach* and *Intuitive-Imitative Approach*. The latter approach was predominant until the late 19th century and was based mostly on the learner's ability to imitate the sounds and speech; while the former, refers students to phonetic charts, articulatory features of the sounds, by providing thorough phonetic instruction thereby making the process of acquiring the pronunciation of a foreign language less intuition-based. In teaching pronunciation, both segmental and supra-segmental features should be given importance however the supra-segmentals deserve a higher priority. Anna Jarosz has shown the growing consensus on the point of *comfortable intelligibility* rather than *nativeness* in pronunciation instruction, because nowadays, non-native users of English outnumber the native ones, and equally the listener is not necessarily a native speaker of English either. She states some views that target accent models are *native English accents* like *Received Pronunciation (RP)* or *General American (GA)* in pronunciation instruction. Between Non-Native and Native Teachers, native teachers are the most sought-after even if without any previous teacher training. Jarosz concludes this chapter by comparing phonetics to pronunciation. Pronunciation instruction, is often treated as part of the skill of speaking, while phonetics is understood as the practical use of vocal signals produced for communication.

Unlike the first chapter which is more theoretical, the second chapter explores the

practical means and approaches that are at English pronunciation teachers' disposal. This chapter deals with *techniques and tools* that are used in teaching and learning pronunciation, and it consists of three sections. The first section shows the historical background of pronunciation techniques in the past where pronunciation techniques included repetition, learner controlled practice, and recordings' analyses of the spoken performance of the learners, whereas instructional technology is the most essential tool of pronunciation teaching in the current process of L2 teaching. Although it is not advocated that technology is a replacement for the pronunciation teacher, nevertheless it is worth considering as a helpful tool for pronunciation instruction, (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 354). In this section, Anna Jarosz also shows their effectiveness in teaching pronunciation, as the most powerful technique where *songs, dialogues, tongue twisters*, are particularly attractive to and enjoyable for learners, (Szpyra-Kozłowska & Stasiak, 2003a). In the second section, the writer presents pronunciation teaching materials which are available for practical phonetics instructors. The teaching materials were classified according to the targeted model accent that practitioners wish to teach. While the majority of the textbooks (%70) offer British English (especially RP accent) as the model variety and only few of them deal with American English or others like Australian and New Zealand English, interestingly in electronic syllabuses (CD-ROM) American accent is dominant, Wrembel (2005). Jarosz also identifies some new and well-designed resource materials of teaching pronunciation that have been published during the past ten years. Finally, the last section of this chapter deals with the phonetic instruction component in EFL general textbooks which she describes as a useful mean for ambitious learners and as a guidance for less experienced teachers in their teaching process, (Cunningsworth, 1995). She affirms that a fine course book for teaching pronunciation should contain most of the phonetic components of suprasegmentals.

In the third chapter, Anna Jarosz highlights the attitudes of teachers about teaching pronunciation and learner's views towards learning pronunciation. According to ESL teachers, more training, knowledge of phonetics and phonology, better-organized course books, as well as teachers' preparation can all encourage and develop teachers of pronunciation. In addition, she has shown further factors affecting learning and teaching pronunciation. Age is one of the factors that has a direct relationship with learners of pronunciation, (young learners acquire better pronunciation). Yet another element is aptitude, which has a crucial role in the pronunciation learning process. Learners with good ears, conducting conversations with native speakers, relevant cultural background, and motivation (a desire and wish for learning) are among the highly salient features that contribute to mastering nativelylike pronunciation. Many strategies were observed for learning pronunciation, such as learner's autonomy which makes learners study by themselves outside the classroom setting, Penafiorida

(2002). In the last part of the chapter, Anna Jarosz recounts learners' attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. She denotes a number of studies that investigated the theme of teaching pronunciation among different proficiency groups. Students' attitudes towards the importance of pronunciation learning is fluency and accuracy in speech, and most of the learners consider pronunciation teaching as a difficult achievement. Advanced English students choose native accents with RP (Received Pronunciation), and between foreign-accented speech and the native model, the latter is preferred, which is corroborated by studies in Europe, although the study by Nowacka (2017) claims that contemporary students of English choose comfortable intelligibility rather than a natively like accent.

The methodology of the study, which is a longitudinal one-year action research study sets out in chapter four, was undertaken in a Polish upper secondary school where the author herself worked as a teacher of ESL. A detailed description of ten participants is included in the qualitative study. The chapter consists of two sections; the first section presents the curriculum design of the secondary schools in Poland and the *place of pronunciation* which is rather neglected and treated in a very marginal manner, due to the *limitations* and the *criteria of pronunciation assessment* in the curriculum design. The second part deals with the targets and motivation of the study and poses the research questions. It also discusses the contents of the course, the participants - all ten aged between 17 to 18 years old, two males and eight females who volunteered to participate in the study as well as the different methods carried out in the study. Four types of methods were used for data collection in the study, these are interviews, open and closed (Likert-scale) questionnaires, observation and pronunciation assessments (pre- and post-course) which are listed in the appendixes at the end of the book. The procedure of the collected data is also stated at the end of the chapter.

Chapter five contains three sections. In the first section which consisted of six sub-sections, the description of the result of each different method is reported in details. The aim of the *Open Pre-Course Questionnaire* is regarding the choice of the course content and material selection. The *Open Mid-Course Questionnaire* is about the evaluation of the syllabus and course content. The *Likert-Scale End-Course Questionnaire* intends to elicit the participants' responses with reference to their development of self-assessment and their level of pronunciation awareness. In *Observation*, the problems, issues and questions raised by the students during the pronunciation course are noted down. *Interviews* were carried out with the participants to obtain answers about their former studies in learning pronunciation. During the final method, which is *Recordings*, the participants' pronunciations are evaluated by the author and other raters who specialize in phonetics. The recording was reading a passage selected by the researcher. The second section is the analysis

of the study comprises of fully comprehensive explanations and answers to the four research questions raised in the study. Jarosz suggests that instruction of pronunciation should be integrated into all courses of English. She concludes that organized pronunciation teaching perfects the speaking skill and makes the learner more confident in speaking and fluency.

Overall, the aim of this study was to explore the practicality of pronunciation teaching in a Polish upper-secondary school. The material, techniques and guidelines are important and need to be implemented in the process of learning and teaching pronunciation. According to the study, there is a correlation between planned and systematic pronunciation teaching and students' performance, confidence and fluency/accuracy enhancement. It also sheds light on students' wish, motivation and the important aspects of pronunciation that they want to learn. The successfulness of the study is owed to the students' willingness to volunteer to participate in and attend the extra lessons of pronunciation. Furthermore, the study is deemed to be useful for teachers who are hesitant about paying more attention to pronunciation practice even though good pronunciation is what the students aim for. Since there are still teachers who need to realize the significance, necessity and value of pronunciation in teaching/learning L2, this study could encourage and inspire the aforementioned practitioners to involve pronunciation in their coursework.

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