

## **RESEARCH IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION AND INTONATION**

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 L1 and L2 to identify differences between them and so, it was assumed, to highlight areas where L1 transfer errors were likely to occur. Later in the century, pronunciation teaching research began to move on both by embracing more sophisticated approaches to interlanguage phonology, taking universal, developmental, and other processes into account as well as transfer (see, e.g., the range of research interests documented in Ioup & Weinberger, (1987) and by focusing increasingly on suprasegmental features along with segmental. Still more recently and radically, a number of researchers have ceased treating pronunciation as a somewhat isolated, self-contained linguistic and pedagogic phenomenon, but are forging links with research into other aspects of language and language teaching and also maximizing the opportunities offered by technological advances. This chapter will outline these latest developments in pronunciation research and explore the extent of their influence on pedagogy.

(Jenkins, 2004)

### **How are pronunciation variants of spoken words recognized? A test of generalization to newly learned words.**

One account of how pronunciation variants of spoken words (center-> “senner” or “sennah”) are recognized is that sublexical processes use information about variation in the same phonological environments to recover the intended segments [Gaskell, G., & Marslen- Wilson, W. D. (1998). Mechanisms of phonological inference in speech perception. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 24, 380–396]. The present study tests the limits of this phonological inference account by examining how listeners process for the first time a pronunciation variant of a newly learned word. Recognition of such a variant should occur

as long as it possesses the phonological structure that legitimizes the variation. Experiments 1 and 2 identify a phonological environment that satisfies the conditions necessary for a phonological inference mechanism to be operational. Using a word-learning paradigm, Experiments 3 through 5 show that inference alone is not sufficient for generalization but could facilitate it, and that one condition that leads to generalization is meaningful exposure to the variant in an overheard conversation, demonstrating that lexical processing is necessary for variant recognition.  
(Pitt, 2009)

### **Theory and practice of teaching discourse intonation.**

Discourse intonation attempts to explain how intonation patterns in English affect the communicative value of speech, through the use of falling and rising tones along with changes in pitch. The teaching of intonation seems to sit naturally with communicative language learning, but it is not an easy aspect of English to incorporate into the EFL classroom. This paper reports on a study conducted at a language school in Japan, which aimed to establish a balance between the aspects of discourse intonation that could survive in the classroom and those that would help students to better understand spoken English. The study finds support for the teaching of some features of discourse intonation but also suggests that some features are too subtle to survive in practical teaching.

(Chapman, 2007)

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(Jenkins, 2004)

### **The reality of stress-timing.**

According to some accounts, the linguistic reality of stress-timing in English is questionable and the existence of this type of language rhythm is rejected as a perceptual illusion. In this article, the temporal characteristics of English are re-analysed in the light of current linguistic research, and a range of implications for pronunciation teaching are set out.

(Barrera-Pardo, 2008)

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