

The influence of L2 status on L3 pronunciation

Abstract

Third Language Acquisition is a certainly more complex process than Second Language Acquisition due to the number of previously acquired languages which can create more opportunities of linguistic interference (Chłopek, 2011). Numerous studies suggest that it is mainly L2 that frequently serves as a predominant source of transfer (e.g. Hammarberg, 2001; Treichler et al., 2009). Although there may be a lot of explanations for this phenomenon, such as typological distance between languages or the order of language acquisition (e.g. Chłopek, 2011; Letica and Mardešić, 2007), one of the cognitive processes affecting TLA seems to be very influential and worth analysing. According to De Angelis (2005) non-native languages are usually classified as “foreign language” category in learners’ minds thus simply creating a cognitive association between them. As one’s L1 does not sound “foreign” it is usually excluded and blocked from this association. De Angelis (2005: 11) called this process an “association of foreignness”. It should favour non-native transfer giving L2 a privileged status. Hence the name of this variable: “L2 status”. L2 privileged status was observed as having a strong impact on L3 in TLA lexical and pronunciation studies (Llama et al., 2007; Lipińska, 2014a).

The aim of this study was to assess L3 speech in terms of foreign accentedness. A group of university students from Poland participated in the study. They were advanced speakers of English (L2) and upper-intermediate users of German (L3). They performed speaking and reading tasks which were recorded. The utterances were subsequently analysed by three German teachers from Poland and two native speakers of German who teach English as an L2, paying special attention to foreign accentedness resulting from either L1 or L2 influence. The results confirmed that L2 had privileged status in L3 speech production in comparison to subjects’ L1.

Keywords: L3 acquisition, L3 pronunciation, L2 status, language transfer

1. Introduction

For many years, second/foreign languages have been in the centre of attention as a crucial tool for communication. It worth noticing that L2 teachers often focus on vocabulary, correct grammar and some speaking activities, however one element tends to be forgotten. One must not forget that in order to communicate successfully, a language user needs to be understood correctly and their speech must be intelligible enough to convey the intended message (e.g. Komorowska, 2011). And, since all language users are not only speakers but also listeners, they need to be ca-

pable of understanding other people. In order to achieve it, they have to obey a set of rules (e.g. grammatical, lexical, but also pronunciation ones). It is really crucial, especially when the speakers are from different countries and thus do not share the same language backgrounds (e.g. a native speaker of a given language and a non-native speaker or two non-native speakers from various countries) and they are not characterized by the same or similar factors affecting their speech in a language they are using to communicate (e.g. Littlewood, 1994). It can be observed that L2 learners care a lot about grammatical (syntactic) norms and errors at all stages of proficiency, however they frequently forget that grammatical norm is not the only type of norm which needs to be considered if they want to approximate the native, e.g. English, models, and, moreover, they often disregard pragmatic, morphological, orthographic and phonetic norms (Sobkowiak, 2004). It is also a quite common situation when L2 learners care less for proper articulation and pay more attention to comprehension skills and grammatical rules. It is especially true when they have not been trained to discriminate major phonetic differences since the early stages of learning an L2 (Eddine, 2011).

2. Acquisition of a phonetic system of an L2

Although some scholars compare acquisition of phonetic systems of an L1 and an L2, both processes are considerably different. It must be highlighted that unlike L2 learners, native speakers of a given language are equipped with the knowledge concerning all the necessary phonological rules of this language. This knowledge is reflected in both sound recognition and sound production. Language learners, on the other hand, if they wish to be successful L2 users, can only acquire this kind of knowledge in the process of SLA (Gass and Selinker, 2008). However, it must be said that sound systems of various languages differ to a great extent and thus this task frequently may turn out to be very problematic, especially for adult language learners (e.g. Rojczyk, 2009; Rojczyk, 2010). It has been reported that some learners never master target language pronunciation at the satisfactory level (Littlewood, 1994).

Moreover, one must not forget that there is no ready phonological representation of an L2 automatically which could be available to a language learner, and hence, every L2 learner must construct their own phonological representation of a target language. There is also another problem here, namely the fact that the representation which learners construct could differ from the one constructed by native speakers of a given language (Ard, 1990).

What is more, there are some L2 sounds which turn out to be considerably more difficult to acquire than other sounds. This fact has been confirmed by numerous SLA studies. It is thought that a lot of difficulties which L2 learners encounter while learning some L2 sounds can be connected with the influence of their L1 phonol-

ogy. Although there is a popular assumption shared by non-linguists that learning a given L2 segment is easier when it is similar to a corresponding L1 sound, former research on L2 speech perception and production has shown the complex nature of the phenomenon of the sound perception. It has been observed that perceiving L2 sounds is not as simple as just deciding whether given segments in L1 and L2 are similar to one another or not. What is more, there are other linguistic and psychological factors which can contribute to the process of L2 segmental perception and production (Pilus, 2005).

3. PAM and SLM

Two models of speech production and speech perception are most popular in the context of difficulties that may be encountered by language learners who acquire a new language. The first of them is the *Speech Learning Model* by Flege (e.g. Flege, 1995) and the other one worth mentioning is the *Perceptual Assimilation Model* by Best (e.g. Best, 1994).

The first of the aforementioned models is the Speech Learning Model proposed and developed by Flege (1995). It is concentrated on the ultimate attainment of L2 production. It focuses on those L2 users who have been learning their L2 for a considerably long period of time and predicts that phonetic similarities and dissimilarities between a learner's mother tongue and their TL segments will affect the degree of success in production and perception of non-native sounds (Flege, 1995 reported in Rojczyk, 2009). It should happen as bilinguals are actually never able to fully separate their L1 and L2 phonetic subsystems (Flege, 2003). According to the SLM, the sounds in L2 are divided into two categories, that is *new* and *similar*. The "new" category means those sounds which are not identified by learners with any native sound. The "similar" category contains those sounds which are regarded to be the same as some of the L1 sounds (Brown, 2000). In this model phonetic similarity and dissimilarity are defined in terms of the acoustic and articulatory characteristics of the linguistically relevant speech sounds. Thus it can be said that the attainment of native-like production and perception of given L2 sounds is tightly linked to the phonetic distance between L1 and L2 segments (Flege, 1995; Rojczyk, 2010). According to the Speech Learning Model, L2 learners tend to be less successful in learning those L2 sounds which are "similar" to L1 sounds simply because the segmental similarity usually blocks the formation of a new phonetic category by means of the equivalence classification. On the other hand, those L2 sounds which are "different" or "new" in comparison to earlier formed L1 categories, encourage L2 learners to create new, separate L2 categories (Flege, 1995; Rojczyk, 2010).

Another aforementioned model is the Perceptual Assimilation Model by Best (e.g. Best, 1994; Best, 1995). This model explains that the difficulties which can be

encountered by L2 learners who are acquiring non-native speech sounds are simply determined by their perceptual limitations. The PAM says that L2 learners usually tend to classify sound contrasts in L2 into various categories, but depending on the degree of similarity between their native and new segments (Pilus, 2005). Similarity in this case is understood as the spatial proximity of constriction location and active articulators (Brown, 2000). Such classification of L2 contrasts determines how they will be assimilated to learners' native categories (Best, 1995; Pilus, 2005).

4. Third Language Acquisition

The process of Second Language Acquisition is very complex itself, however, learning (or acquiring) more than one foreign language is even more complicated. Although for many years acquisition of third or any additional language was classified as a part of SLA (e.g. Cenoz, 2000; Jessner, 2006), for the last twenty years Third Language Acquisition (TLA) has been described as a separate process, in some aspects clearly different from SLA (Chłopek, 2011). Even though in some areas the processes are very similar one to another, there are numerous differences between them. The greatest and most influential one is the number of previously acquired languages (or interlanguages), as they will probably create a lot of instances of noticeable linguistic interactions. Also the order of language acquisition in TLA plays a crucial role. It seems obvious that while during SLA the number of such configurations is rather limited (an L2 learner can acquire either two languages simultaneously or just one language after another), in the case of learning three various languages there are more possible configurations (for instance: all languages simultaneously, three languages one after another, L1+L2 first and then L3 or L1 first and then L2 + L3). Another important factor is the fluency in each of the acquired languages, as it also affects TLA to a great extent. All these factors combined together make third language acquisition a phenomenon more complicated and much more dynamic than second language acquisition (Chłopek, 2011).

5. Language transfer

Transfer between one's native language and their target language in the process of SLA is an obvious and thoroughly examined factor (e.g. Arabski, 2006). A lot of studies proved that transfer of linguistic properties from a learner's L1 into their L2 is one of pervasive features of the process of second language acquisition (Towell and Hawkins, 1994). Nevertheless, while in the case of SLA it is possible to encounter a rather limited number of possibilities of linguistic interactions (it can be either L1→L2 transfer or L2 intralingual interference; naturally, L2→L1 transfer is also possible, but this phenomenon is not as frequent as the two previous variants), in TLA,

as the languages are likely to affect one another in any plausible configuration, the number of transfer possibilities increases dramatically. For instance, for three languages the following configurations could appear: L1→L2, L1→L3, L2→L3, L2→L1, L3→L2 or L3→L1 (Chłopek, 2011; Ionin et al., 2011). What is more, although it is not a frequent phenomenon, also combinations of various languages can influence other ones (e.g. L1+L2→L3, L1+L3→L2 or even L2+L3→L1) (Chłopek, 2011). What is also very important, it has been shown that different languages may influence the other ones in completely various ways and, for instance, it is a frequent case that L2 affects L3 in ways that L1 will never do (Odlin, 2005).

The aforementioned factors suggest that L3 in its various aspects may be under the influence of both L1 and L2 and that this influence may be great. In numerous different studies the researchers have described various results in this matter. Depending on a research project, the language combinations used and language aspects analysed, they have proved that in the case of L3 acquisition, it is one's L2 that may serve as a predominant source of linguistic transfer (e.g. Hammarberg, 2001; Treichler et al., 2009) but in some instances it may also be a learner's mother tongue (e.g. Chumbow, 1981). Nevertheless, one must not forget that the order of language acquisition cannot be considered as an exclusive explanation in this case. Among vital factors in TLA one should remember about a typological distance between the analysed languages, as in some situations it may be even more influential than the very order of language acquisition (Letica and Mardešić, 2007; Chłopek, 2011). Typological distance is based on classifying languages according to their structural characteristics (Lammiman, 2010). In other words, the closer two languages are to one another, the more similarities they should share. This, in turn, can create significant difficulties to learners. What is more, De Angelis and Selinker (2001) discovered in their study that typological similarity between non-native languages is likely to provoke non-native transfer in non-native production. It has been proved by e.g. Lipińska's (2014a) study on lexical transfer in L3 production. This project confirmed that typologically closer L2 English affected L3 German more than L1 Polish did. The same happened in the case of L3 segmental production (Lipińska, 2014b; Lipińska, 2015) when subjects' L3 (German) vowels were acoustically close to their L2 (English) vowels and did not share so many similarities with their corresponding L1 (Polish) sounds.

6. The problem of L2 status

While explaining why one and not the other language is transferred to an L3 in a given context, numerous factors have been discussed. One usually names here: fluency and proficiency in both L2 and L3 (e.g. Bardel and Lindqvist, 2007; De Angelis, 2007; Lindqvist, 2010), recency of use of a particular language, degree of formality and age of onset (for overviews see, e.g. De Angelis, 2007; Falk and Bardel, 2010). Never-

theless, one factor seems to be very influential here. A lot of recent studies show that L2 can have a stronger effect on L3 than on L1 (e.g. Bardel and Falk, 2007; Bohnacker, 2006; Falk and Bardel, 2011; Leung, 2005; Rothman and Cabrelli Amaro, 2010). One of the most probable explanations in this situation is the so-called *L2 status factor*. It is defined by Hammarberg (2001) as “a desire to suppress L1 as being ‘non-foreign’ and to rely rather on an orientation towards a prior L2 as a strategy to approach the L3” (Hammarberg, 2001: 36–37). De Angelis (2005) says that non-native languages are classified as “foreign language” category in learners’ minds who create a cognitive association between them. Since a learner’s L1 does not sound “foreign” at all, it tends to be excluded and blocked from this association. This process has been called by De Angelis an “association of foreignness” (De Angelis, 2005: 11). It usually favours non-native transfer, giving L2 a privileged status. This phenomenon was observed quite early by Meisel (1983), who named it a *foreign language effect* (cf. also Ecke and Hall, 2000, where it is called *Fremdspracheneffekt*). Since then the L2 status has been perceived as one of the most influential factors that can determine the source of the transfer (L1 or L2) in studies on L3 vocabulary and pronunciation (e.g. Cenoz, 2001; De Angelis, 2007; Llama et al., 2007; Lipińska, 2014b).

7. Acquisition of a phonetic system of an L3

Regrettably, in comparison to L2 phonetic research, L3 pronunciation studies constitute a relatively new area of research and their number is comparatively limited (see e.g. Tremblay, 2008; Wrembel, 2010). However, this situation has started to change and since the beginning of 2000s there have been some attempts to explore the area of third language pronunciation in a greater depth. Obviously, the first branch which was assessed was mainly L3 learners’ production or perception in L3 (e.g. Tremblay, 2008; Wrembel, 2011; Lipińska, 2015) as well as examining to what extent L2 may influence the process of L3 acquisition (e.g. Tremblay, 2006; Wrembel, 2010). Nevertheless, as cross-linguistic influence in the case of acquisition of third language pronunciation is very complex, it has been proved that it is a much more complicated factor (Wrembel, 2011). However, more research is needed in order to explain how L1 and/or L2 may affect L3 pronunciation (Llama et al., 2007). Consequently, since acquisition of more than one foreign language is very common nowadays, L3 research needs to be extended in theory and provide clear further implications for classroom practice.

The first hypothesis states that a learner’s mother tongue serves as a predominant source of transfer in TLA (e.g. Ringbom, 1987). Research by Llisteri and Poch (1987) clearly confirms this hypothesis. In their study they made an acoustic analysis of L3 vowels produced by native speakers of Catalan and L2-Spanish. The results revealed that in that case L1 affected L3 production exclusively. One of Wrembel’s studies on L3 pronunciation (2013) lead to alike conclusions. The subjects in her study were na-

tive speakers of Polish, proficient users of L2-English and different-level speakers of L3-French. The study participants' speech samples were recorded and rated online by a group of experts. They evaluated informants' accent, intelligibility, acceptability and confidence level. The results showed that the participants' mother tongue was the dominant source of transfer, however L2's influence was also detectable.

However, other case studies suggested that especially at early stages of L3 acquisition, L2 wields a substantial influence on the L3 pronunciation (e.g. Marx, 2002; Williams and Hammarberg, 1998). Still, one ought to take into account the fact that the aforementioned studies were based on the speakers' impressions or on the judgements of a group of listeners who assessed speakers' overall accent (as being affected either by their L1 or their L2) and did not include an acoustic analysis of the produced sounds. Wrembel (2010) in her other study proved that in third language speech production, L2 mechanisms are frequently reactivated and in this way the transfer from one's mother tongue may be impeded. A group of native speakers of Polish, with L2-German and L3-English participated in her study. Their speech production was recorded and evaluated perceptually by 27 linguists. The subjects varied according to their proficiency in L3-English. The study results proved that one's second language exerted a more considerable influence on L3 speech production at the initial stages of third language acquisition, but became less prominent as L3 developed. Wrembel remarked, however, that the typological similarity between English and German could possibly affect the subjects' L3 speech production.

Another intriguing study was carried out by Tremblay (2008). This piece of research concentrated on an acoustic analysis of the VOT parameter in L3-Japanese speech of L1-English and L2-French users. The results revealed that one could observe noticeable evidence for L2 influence on L3. Another study on VOT in L3 was conducted by Wrembel (2011). She analysed the VOT in the L3-French speech of L1-Polish and L2-English users. Her piece of research suggested that there was a combined cross-linguistic influence of both L1-Polish and L2-English on study participants' L3 production. She highlighted that it offered a further evidence for a significant L2 presence in L3 phonological acquisition.

8. Current study

The aim of this study was to assess the degree of foreign-accentedness and the acceptability of L3 speech by Polish learners of English (L2) and German (L3) in a reading task. The main question was whether the subjects' L2 would affect their L3 speech production to a greater extent than their mother tongue and whether their L3 speech would be acceptable for native speakers and advanced users of German. The author's previous studies (Lipińska, 2014b; Lipińska, 2015) have shown that in the case of segmental production, the acoustic analysis revealed that English (L2)

and German (L3) categories of “problematic” vowels (such as /y/ and /œ/) tend to merge completely thus giving an impression of foreign, English-accentedness in German speech production.

9. Subjects

Fifteen fifth-year English philology students attending the Polish-English-German translation and interpretation programme were recruited at the Institute of English, University of Silesia, to participate in this study. The number of the study participants was rather limited as the aforementioned programme is the only one of this kind at the universities in the area, and hence is the only one which includes formal instruction in L2 English and L3 German pronunciation (and the number of students in the group is strictly limited). They were all female students and their age ranged between 23 and 25 years old (mean: 24, median: 24). All study participants were advanced speakers of English (C1/C2) and upper-intermediate users of German (B2). Thanks to a regular administration of tests in the practical use of English and German, a group of subjects characterised by a uniform level of proficiency in both languages could be selected. None of the informants reported any difficulties in communication with native speakers of English or German. Prior to the study, they had completed the whole university course in English pronunciation (2 years; 4 semesters) and the whole university course in German pronunciation (1 year, 2 semesters). That was the main difference between this project and the previous studies done by other researchers, in which study participants had not been formally trained in phonetics and phonology of their both L2s and L3s. All study participants volunteered and were not paid for their participation. None of them reported any speech or hearing disorders.

10. Procedures

The informants were asked to read short text passages in their L1, L2 and L3 (see Appendices 1 – 3). The passages were presented to them in a written form on a computer screen and the subjects’ utterances were recorded in a phonetic laboratory with the use of Praat 5.3.12 speech-analysis software package (Boersma, 2001) in order to ensure the highest quality of the recording. The files were stored in a computer’s memory, ready for further inspection. Between the text passages, the study participants saw questions in their L1, L2 and L3 which served as distracters and had to be answered in the same language as asked. They were supposed to change the subjects’ “language settings” (before the text passage in Polish, the speakers answered the questions in Polish, before the text passage in English, the speakers answered the questions in English etc.).

Subsequently the utterances in German were analysed by five experts. They consisted of two native speakers of German (working at German universities as English teachers; one holding a PhD and another one – a doctoral candidate) and three Polish teachers of German (L2) and English (L3). They were asked to rate the utterances according to their:

- English-accentedness,
- Polish-accentedness,
- acceptability
- intelligibility.

The experts' ratings were surprisingly similar – in most cases they agreed to a great extent.

11. Results

The assessment sheets for experts included four statements. The experts rated only the utterances produced in German. They had to mark the statements using a 5-point Likert scale with the response options: (*Definitely true*) 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (*Not at all true*). They were also asked to provide any comments about the study participants' pronunciation that may have come to their mind. The number of ratings was: 15 speakers x 5 raters = 75. The following figures show the results of the rating part of the study.

Figure 1. The English-accentedness in German speech production

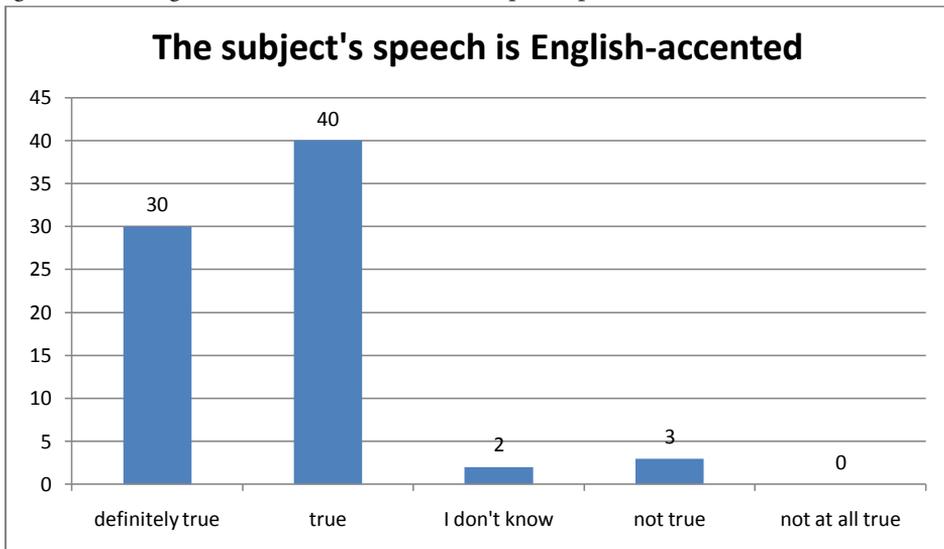


Figure 2. The Polish-accentedness in German speech production

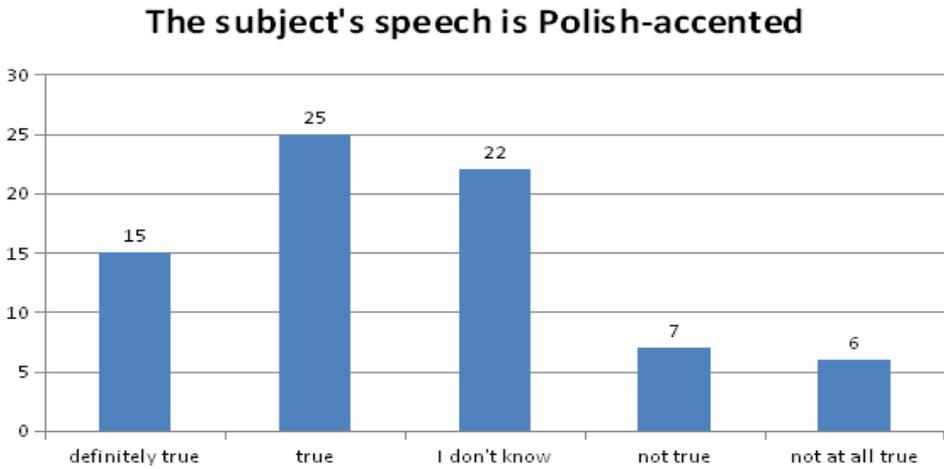


Figure 3. The acceptability of subjects' pronunciation in German

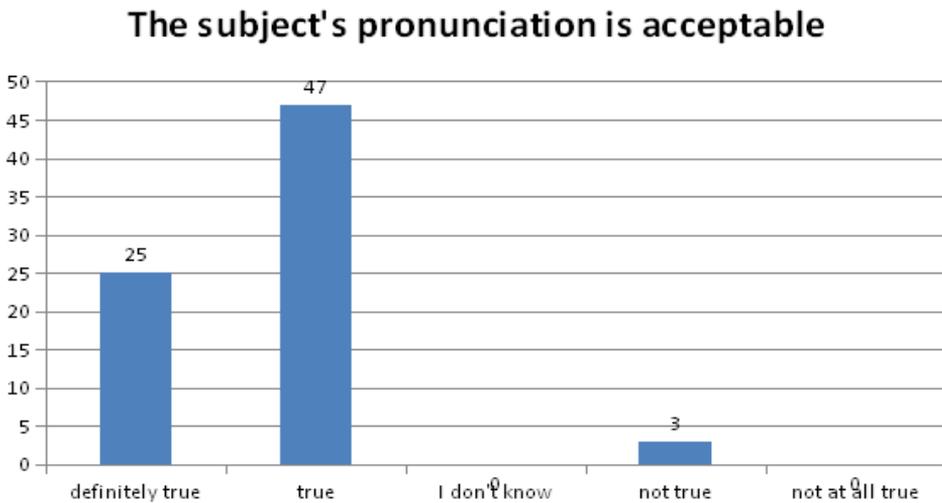
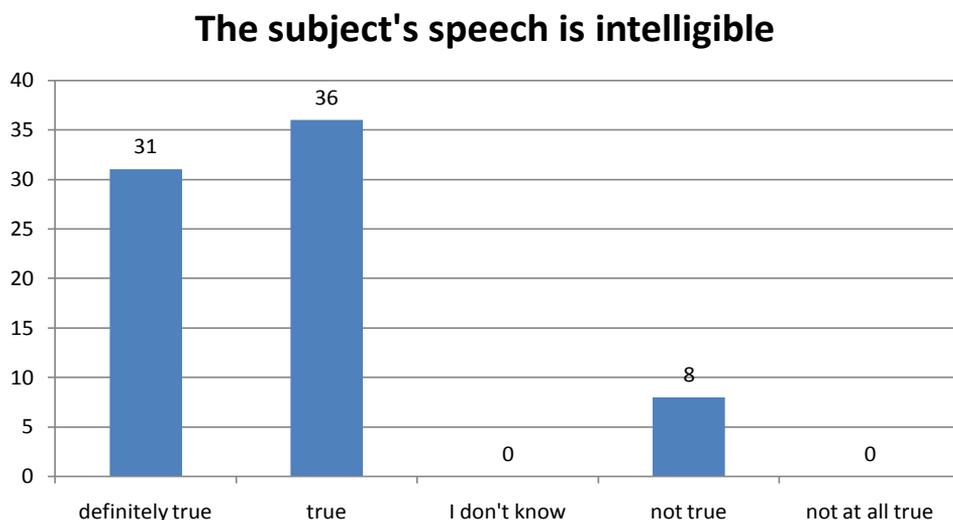


Figure 4. The intelligibility of subjects' speech in German



As can be easily noticed in the figures above, in most cases the raters were of similar opinions about the subjects' pronunciation. They also often agreed that their German pronunciation was more English-accented than under the influence of Polish. However, they were very tolerant and accepted the speakers' mistakes, rating their speech as acceptable and intelligible.

Moreover, the experts provided a set of comments concerning the subjects' pronunciation. Some of them are listed below.

- *A lot of speakers used a retroflex /r/ instead of German and /r/ which made them sound like Americans speaking German.*
- *The vowels were English-like (especially they couldn't pronounce correctly /y/).*
- *The speech was not very German in quality, but quite understandable.*
- *Some people used Polish /r/, but I could understand what they were saying.*
- *Sometimes they used correct sounds, but often turned to English consonants and vowels.*
- *They tried to sound "foreign" and "professional" but it wasn't German.*

It all suggests that the study participants in most cases wanted to avoid Polish-accentedness and tried to sound "foreign". It is also a proof of the influence of one of the cognitive processes affecting TLA, namely the *L2 status*. Naturally, some of the study participants were evaluated better than the others and their pronunciation was much more correct than the other speakers' utterances.

12. Conclusions

This is one of the new studies which contribute to the developing area of third language phonology by assessing production of L3 speech from the auditory perspective and by focusing on the influence of *L2 status* on L3 pronunciation. It was observed that the multilingual subjects involved in the study encountered difficulties in separating their L2 and L3 phonetic subsystems, as expected by e.g. SLM (Flege, 1995) while their L1 did not serve as the most influential source of phonetic transfer. It was especially detectable in the case of segments – vowels and consonants – which were usually English-like. In 70 cases the raters marked that the subjects' speech was influenced by L2-English, while only in 40 cases they were able to observe the influence of L1-Polish on L3-German (of course it was possible to choose both options as different aspects of speech could be affected by either Polish or English). There can be various explanations for this situation. The obtained results may naturally be connected to the impaired sound perception suggesting a kind of "similarity" between "new" and "old" sound categories or the insufficient phonetic training, but they are more likely to be attributed to the subjects' attempts to sound "foreign" (see: *L2 status*). Since they had started learning English much before they began to study German and were characterized by a higher proficiency in the first of those languages, it was English that was their prototypical foreign language. What is more, the course in English pronunciation lasted considerably longer than the course in German phonetics (4 semesters vs. 2 semesters) giving English the privileged status. And in speech production there is no time for the analysis of the utterance being produced and speakers automatically turn to their dominant languages and language habits.

However, it has to be added that although the subjects' pronunciation was not perfect, they were still intelligible to the raters who found their speech both acceptable and understandable. In 72 cases the specialists marked the subjects' pronunciation as acceptable and in 67 cases they decided it was intelligible. This suggests that even though foreign-accentedness may sound funny or awkward, it does not necessarily impair communication between native and non-native users of a particular language. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that even though the study participants had completed university courses in English and German pronunciation prior to the study, they all agreed that it was the first formal pronunciation training in their lives, and they had been learning English for an average of 11 years and German for an average of 7 years. And as numerous studies have already shown, phonetic training is actually absent in foreign language classes (e.g. Szpyra Kozłowska et al., 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Wrembel, 2002) and the situation of L3 phonetic training is in an even worse condition (Czajka and Lipińska, 2013). This might have contributed to the lack of stability in the new phonetic categories, encouraging the use of more prevailing phonetic forms.

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Appendix 1

The passage in German which the study participants were supposed to read.

Richtige Auswahl von Medien zu Unterrichtszwecken ermöglicht, dass sie gewisse Unterrichtsfunktionen erfüllen und dadurch auch den ganzen Lernprozess steuern und unterstützen. Das Lernen wird beispielsweise durch den Einsatz von elektronischen Medien intensiviert und seine Interaktivität wird dann gesteigert. Wenn die Lernumgebung multimedial ist, ermöglicht das den Lernenden offenes und kreatives Weiterlernen, sie werden dazu angeregt und motiviert. Neben der Motivationssteigerung unterstützen die Medien auch pädagogische Maßnahmen:

- *sie sind unabdingbare Voraussetzungen für Differenzierung wie auch Individualisierung des Unterrichts,*
- *wenn sie verwendet werden, werden die Schüler zu handelnden Personen, der Unterricht ist dann handlungsorientiert,*
- *selbstgesteuertes Lernen wird erfolgreicher, wenn die Lernenden eigene Spiel- und Arbeitsmittel herstellen.*

(from: <http://blog.tyczkowski.com/2014/12/funktionen-der-medien-im-fremdsprachenunterricht/#ixzz3sskzQZNO>, access: 15.03.2015)

Appendix 2

The passage in English which the study participants were supposed to read.

Reassessing the Impacts of Brain Drain on Developing Countries

Brain drain, which is the action of having highly skilled and educated people leaving their country to work abroad, has become one of the developing countries concern. Brain drain is also referred to as human capital flight. More and more third world science and technology educated people are heading for more prosperous countries seeking higher wages and better

working conditions. This has of course serious consequences on the sending countries. While many people believe that immigration is a personal choice that must be understood and respected, others look at the phenomenon from a different perspective. What makes those educated people leave their countries should be seriously considered and a distinction between push and pull factors must be made. The push factors include low wages and lack of satisfactory working and living conditions. Social unrest, political conflicts and wars may also be determining causes. The pull factors, however, include intellectual freedom and substantial funds for research.

(from: http://www.myenglishpages.com/site_php_files/reading_brain_drain.php, access: 15.03.2015)

Appendix 3

The passage in Polish which the study participants were supposed to read.

Stanisław Tym, Skrzyżowanie

Pół wieku temu w Warszawie życie wieczorne aktorów, reżyserów i pisarzy było uregulowane. Najpierw szło się do Spatifu w Al. Ujazdowskich, gdzie o północy szatniarz Franciszek Król zamykał lokal. Towarzystwo na ulicy kończyło rozmowy. Antoni Słonimski żegnany przez grupę Śliwonika i Brychta życzliwie kiwał im dłonią. Pewnego wieczoru westchnął głośno: – Panom to dobrze. Pójdziecie do domów, położycie się spać. – Czy mistrzowi dokucza bezsenność? – z troską zapytał ktoś z grupy. – Nie, ale ja się jeszcze przedtem muszę rozebrać, wykąpać... Prawie zawsze kilka osób szło jeszcze na Trębacką do piwnicy filmowców zwanej Ściekiem, skąd przed trzecią rano też trzeba było się ewakuować. I wtedy ci najdzielniejsi szli przez pl. Dzierżyńskiego (dziś Bankowy) do Teatru STS, gdzie bufet teatralny prowadziła niezmordowana Katarzyna Wicherkowska. Bezterminowo, czyli do ostatniego gościa. My, ludzie z zespołu, byliśmy u siebie. Ale pojawiali się też przyjaciele, znajomi. Pewnej nocy ktoś taki właśnie potknął się z nadmiaru wrażeń i łukiem brwiowym bęc w posadzkę. Nastrój się zwarzył.

(from: <http://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/spoleczenstwo/1605423,1,pies-czyli-kot.read>, access: 15.03.2015)

