

L2 accent and pronunciation: a survey on teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and classroom practices

Prof. Laurent Rasier, University of Liège, laurent.rasier@uliege.be

Prof. Germain Simons, University of Liège

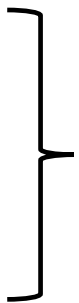
Tom Peters, University of Liège



Introduction

- Part of a large research projet on the place of pronunciation in the L2 classroom in the French-speaking part of Belgium
 - Teachers' perspective: official guidelines, attitudes, beliefs, classroom practices
 - Learners' point of view: attitudes, needs, anxiety, norm(s), feedback / correction
 - Propose and test new, evidence-based tools for pronunciation teaching to non-native speakers, esp. Francophone learners of English and Dutch (no German at the moment)
- Structure of the presentation:
 - General context: linguistic landscape and educational system
 - Some insights from earlier research on pronunciation teaching to (Francophone) L2 learners
 - The survey
 - Method
 - Preliminary results
 - Conclusions

Belgian context

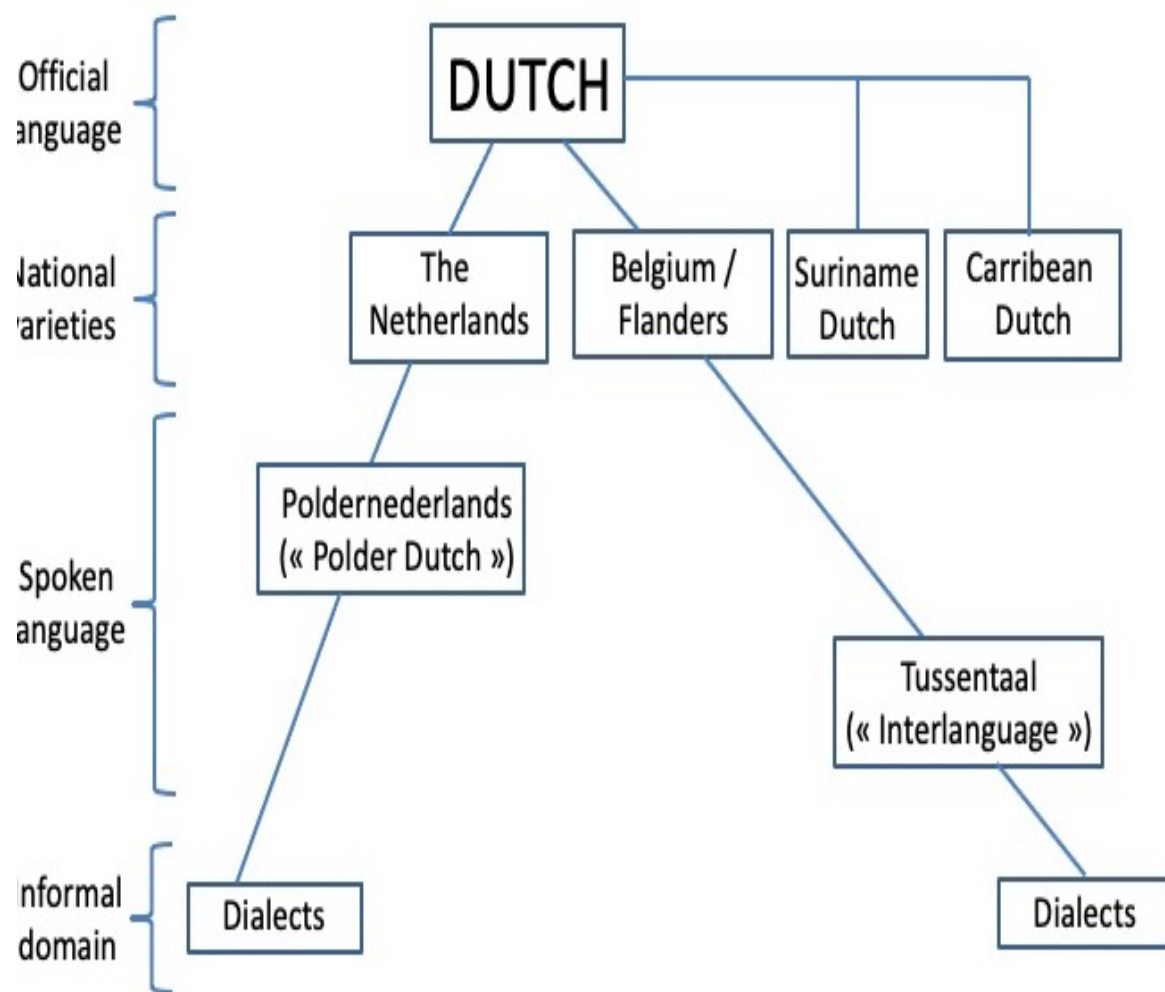
- Three « cultural » (and linguistic) communities defined in terms of language use:
 - Dutch-speaking community
 - French-speaking community
 - German-speaking community

Educational competences, esp. the organisation of L2 teaching (e.g. target languages, objectives, method)
- French-speaking community:
 - Choice of L2: Dutch, English, German (+ Spanish)
 - Method: « traditional » guided L2 instruction vs. immersion programs (Dutch, English)
 - Main objective: acquisition of **communicative** competence

Earlier pronunciation research in French-speaking community

- Mainly studies of Dutch as a foreign language (see e.g. Hiligsmann 1998; Hiligsmann & Rasier 2012; Rasier 2006, 2011, 2015, 2018; Rasier & Hiligsmann 2007)
 - Little information on L2 acquisition of English and German by Belgian-Francophone learners
- What we have as far as L2 Dutch is concerned
 - Descriptive studies of pronunciation difficulties (see Hiligsmann 1998; Hiligsmann, Degrave, Van Goethem & Rasier 2023; Rasier 2006 for an overview)
 - Analyses of official documents, teaching materials, and classroom practices (see Rasier 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2015)

L2 Dutch data in the French-speaking community of Belgium



- **Official teaching programs:**

- Gradual evolution from notions such as « standard language only » to « general language » and « **intelligibility** »
- More room for **variation** but within the general language
- Productive model vs. Perceptive model (esp. with respect to « intermediary / in-between varieties » in the spoken language)

- **Teacher training programs:**

- Room for linguistic variation / diversity
- Belgian Dutch no longer stigmatized as a deviation from the norm and therefore unsuitable for (L2) language teaching
- Productive model vs. Perceptive model

- **Teachers' classroom practices:**

- Little attention paid to phonetic correction and if there is, then focus on segmentals
- Conservative attitudes and declared practices towards variation
 - Focus on de standard language
 - Little attention paid to other varieties, most of the time receptively

- **Teaching materials:**

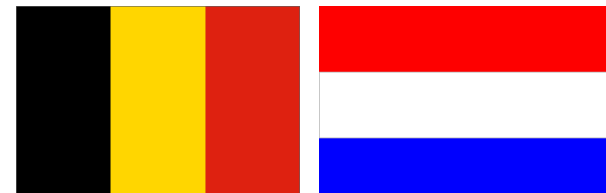
- Also gradually broadening their scope

Earlier pronunciation research in French-speaking community: From normative works to ...



Earlier pronunciation research in French-speaking community: From normative works to ... introduction of variation ...

- Teaching materials: room for Belgian Dutch and variation



Earlier pronunciation research in French-speaking community: From introduction of variation ... to pluricentrism

- Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch version of the same text book



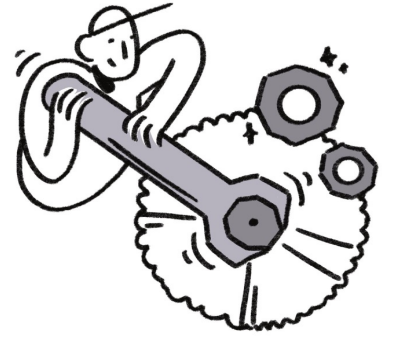
Quick summary as far as Dutch is concerned

- Gradual paradigm shift from the « standard language / « native-speaker model » towards more openness for non-standard varieties.
- Differences between language varieties in terms of
 - Focus on prestige varieties, even if there is also a growing interest in varieties besides the standard language
 - Scarcity of resources specifically paying attention to variation and non-standard varieties of Dutch
 - Their presence in the classroom
 - Reluctance of teachers to teach other varieties than the standard language (teach as taught?, scarcity of resources?, lack of self-confidence?)
 - Distinction between production and perception

New project

- Extension of our earlier research on the L2 acquisition of Dutch
 - Focus on L2 acquisition and teaching of **English** to Francophone learners (+ comparative dimension)
 - Combined / **mixed** perspectives
 - Teachers' perspective (compared to literature): official guidelines, attitudes, beliefs, classroom practices
 - Learners' point of view: attitudes, needs, anxiety, norm(s), feedback / correction
 - **Variety of data elicitation techniques**: content analysis of official documents, textbook analysis, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, experiments
 - Development and **experimental** validation of new, evidence-based tools for pronunciation teaching

The survey: structure preliminary version



- 40 claims from literature
- 9 sections (4Q + 36Q)
- 1 section = 1 theme

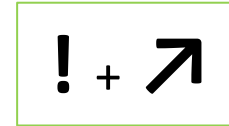


- Headmasters, acquaintances, university assistants, friends
- 57 answers
- Possible biases

Good Pronunciation: What is it?



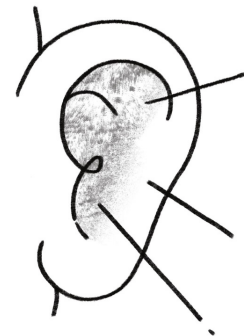
- Pronunciation entails acquiring a phonological and phonetic system (and its social representations), at different levels, that is, production/perception and segmentals/suprasegmentals (Detey et al., 2016, p. 19).



 /'grædʒ.u.eɪt/ 

- Comprehensibility and intelligibility

The listener



What can I as a teacher aim for and how?



- Two goals: intelligible or native-like
↳  Literature // NNSs

! learners' needs

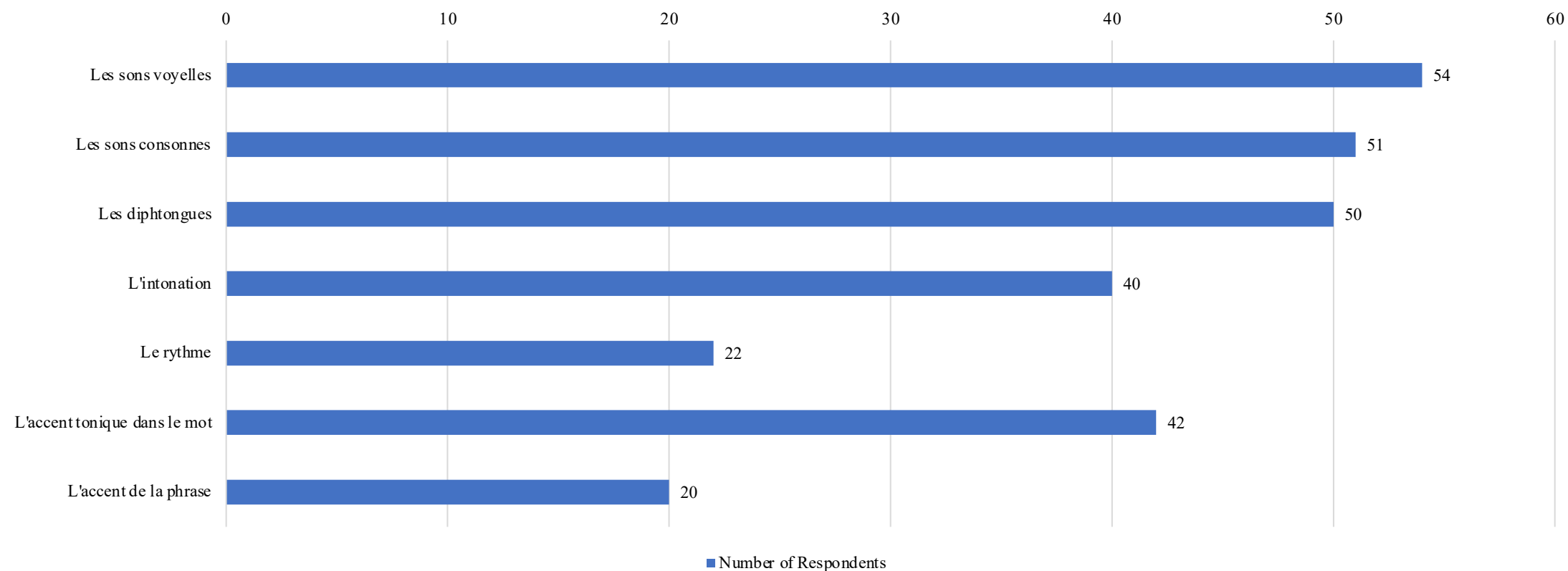
- Importance of contexts
- Teacher > input

What contributes most to intelligibility?

Teachers' focus in the classroom

Pronunciation Element Focused on in EFL Classes

(Q10) Quel(s) élément(s) enseignez-vous en prononciation anglaise ?



Intelligible pronunciation

What about accents?



- “accent” associated with “individual difference”

➔ Everyone has a “good” one.

>< unintelligible

- Noticeable

< ~~education and intelligence levels~~

< bodily/language as well as social components / dimension

L1

Elements outside the LFC

Identity projection

Belonging

- “... L2 learning entails choices, in this case, perhaps between the reward of being efficient in the L2 ... and the cost of not marking the right identity (Gatbonton et al., 2005, p. 504).”
Being approved Discrimination
Prompt adapted speech

Variety of accents in the classroom?

Frequency of Accents Used in Listening Comprehensions

Q27) Lorsque vous faites des compréhensions à l'audition en classe d'anglais langue étrangère, quel(s) accent(s) ont majoritairement les locuteurs ?

Numbered Item	Jamais		Parfois		Souvent		Toujours	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Un accent natif (anglais, américain, australien, etc.)	0	0	1	1.8	27	47.4	29	50.9
2. Un accent non natif (français, espagnol, allemand, etc.)	17	29.8	39	68.4	1	1.8	0	0

Techniques: How do I as a teacher teach pronunciation? (literature)

Phonetic notations

(Fouz-González & Mompean, 2021, p. 309)

Technology and apps

(Busà, 2007, pp. 177-178; Fouz-González, 2020, p. 64; Thomson, 2011, p. 753)

Drama

(Galante & Thomson, 2017)

Mirroring

(LaScotte & Tarone, 2022)

Shadowing

(Foote & McDonough, 2017)

Perception

(Iverson et al., 2012; Thomson, 2018)

Feedback (Saito & Lyster, 2012)

Figure 1

Physical skills

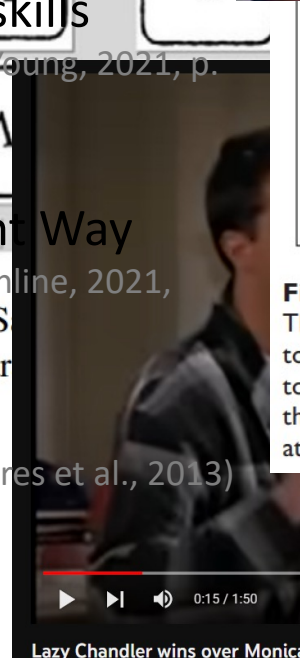
(Messum & Young, 2021, p. 173)

The Silent Way

(silentway.online, 2021, FIGURE 2)

(right).

VTM (Billières et al., 2013)



Implicit or explicit approach to pronunciation? (teachers' point of view)



Implicit

- 54.4% preference
- Aloud readings and oral performances

→ Input exposure (Simons et al., 2014, 2016),
internalising voices (Moreno, 2016)

Explicit

- 86% preference
- “Contrastive” activities (e.g. categorical perception)
- IPA, keywords, transcriptions
- Feedback

→ Articulatory Approach (Billières et al., 2013a), phonological awareness (Venkatagiri & Levis, 2007), explicit instruction (Gordon & Darcy, 2016)

Teaching activities

Frequent Pronunciation Activities in EFL Classes

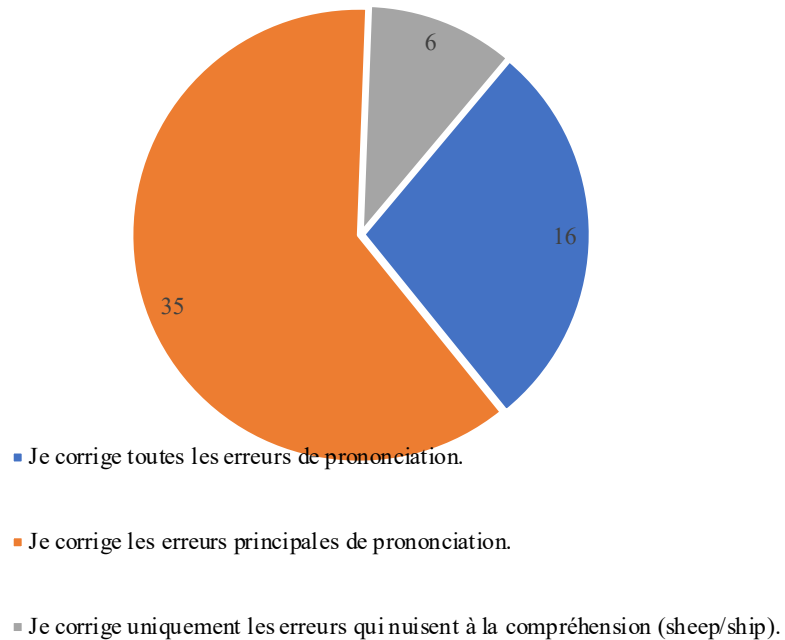
Q16) Quelle(s) activité(s) utilisez-vous pour enseigner la prononciation anglaise ? Veuillez en sélectionner 3 en fonction de leur fréquence d'utilisation (1 = la moins fréquente ; 3 = la plus fréquente).

Item	Frequency Level					
	1		2		3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Des répétitions en chœur	16	28.1	2	3.5	3	5.3
Exercices de discrimination	2	3.5	7	12.3	6	10.5
Activités d'expressions orales	4	7	13	22.8	10	17.5
Exercices d'imitation d'un modèle	9	15.8	4	7	4	7
Des transcriptions phonétiques (symboles -> mots écrits en anglais)	2	3.5	2	3.5	3	5.3
Des transcriptions phonétiques (mots écrits -> symboles phonétiques)	1	1.8	0	0	1	1.8
Des transcriptions (input oral -> mots écrits en anglais)	0	0	3	5.3	0	0
Clarification par l'enseignant d'un point de prononciation	4	7	10	17.5	6	10.5
Théâtre	0	0	3	5.3	1	1.8
Lecture à voix haute	7	12.3	4	7	18	31.6
Activité de répétition individuelle après un feedback du professeur	4	7	6	10.5	4	7
Virelangue (ex. Les chaussettes de l'archiduchesse sont-elles sèches ?)	5	8.8	1	1.8	1	1.8
Visualisation des sons et des accents via des ondes sonores	2	3.5	0	0	0	0
Exercices se basant sur les capacités physiques	0	0	2	3.5	0	0

Frequency of feedback?

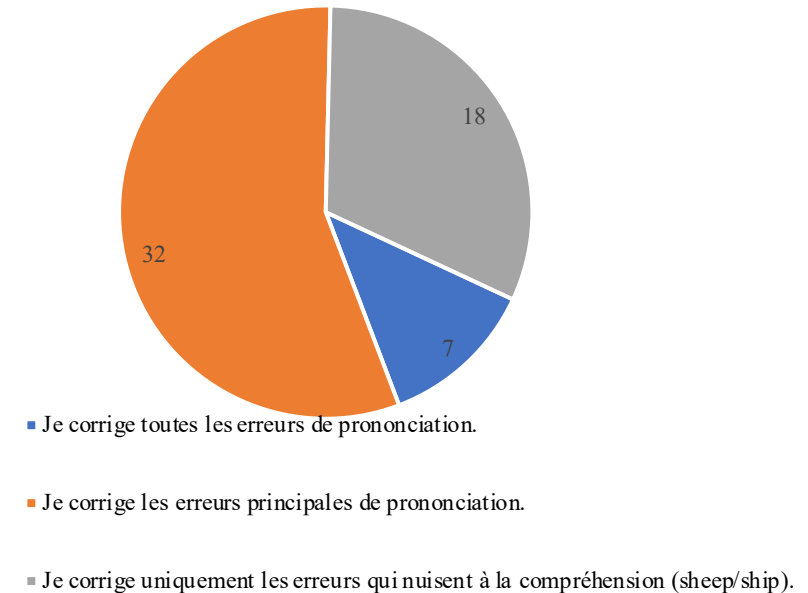
Mistakes Corrected During Spontaneous Speech Acts

Q23) Lorsqu'un élève fait des erreurs de prononciation durant une activité d'expression orale spontanée au cours d'anglais langue étrangère, que faites-vous ?



Mistakes Corrected During Aloud Readings

Q24) Lorsqu'un élève fait des erreurs de prononciation durant une lecture à voix haute au cours d'anglais langue étrangère, que faites-vous ?



Preferred way(s) of giving feedback (correction)?

Frequency of Feedback Types

Q25) Lorsque vous corrigez une erreur de prononciation anglaise, que faites-vous ?

Numbered Item	Jamais		Parfois		Souvent		Toujours	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Demande de clarification	5	8.8	24	42.1	24	42.1	4	7
2. Extraction de l'information	8	14	22	38.6	24	42.1	3	5.3
3. Reformulation par le professeur	0	0	2	3.5	31	54.4	24	42.1
4. Feedback métalinguistique	11	19.3	19	33.3	25	43.9	2	3.5
5. Répétition par le professeur sur un ton indiquant une erreur	12	21.1	8	14	27	47.4	10	17.5
6. Je ne corrige pas l'erreur.	34	59.6	22	38.6	1	1.8	0	0

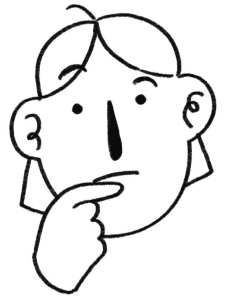
What do teachers give feedback on?

Focus of Feedback

Q26) Lorsque vous faites un feedback sur la prononciation anglaise d'un élève, sur quel(s) élément(s) le faites-vous porter ?

Numbered Item	Jamais		Parfois		Souvent		Toujours	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Les sons voyelles	0	0	16	28.1	27	47.4	14	24.6
2. Les sons consonnes	3	5.3	19	33.3	22	38.6	13	22.8
3. Les diphtongues	0	0	13	22.8	32	56.1	12	21.1
4. L'intonation	4	7	19	33.3	27	47.4	7	12.3
5. Le rythme	12	21.1	26	45.6	12	21.1	7	12.3
6. L'accent tonique	7	12.3	12	21.1	24	42.1	14	24.6
7. L'accent de phrase	20	35.1	24	42.1	10	17.5	3	5.3

Conclusions: ELT survey



- Intelligible pronunciation + accent deletion
 - BBC Pronunciation as a point of reference (“norm”)
- 2 levels addressed, segments
- Need of
 - Linguistic training (input)
 - Methodological training (phonetic correction)

- Little variety / diversity in terms of “models”: often or always NSs, little room for non-native accents
- Oral performances and aloud readings
- IPA and short keywords: (not) used (much)

Conclusions: ELT survey vs. L2 Dutch data

- More attention paid to pronunciation in ELT than L2Dutch
 - Recent / ongoing changes in the Dutch speaking area, which non-native teachers may not be familiar (enough) with
- Focus on « communication » and « intelligibility » in both cases
 - Phoneme-centered teaching with little place for prosody
 - Little place for phonetic diversity / variation in the classroom (>< textbooks)
- Marked preference for an explicit approach (if any in the case of L2 Dutch)
 - Feedback mainly on segmentals (+ some prosodic features in ELT data)
- Things lacking in teacher training
 - Linguistic training (input)
 - Methodological issues regarding phonetic correction / feedback

Thanks for your attention!

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