

## The impact of a previously learnt foreign language on L3 phonological acquisition

Magdalena Wrembel (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

The present paper addresses the issue of variability in non-native accents of English by investigating the concept of a foreign accent in the acquisition of English as a third language. Third language phonological acquisition (TLA) is a relatively unexplored research area that goes beyond Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by acknowledging the complexity of cross-linguistic influence while learning more than one foreign language, which has become a commonplace in today's multilingual world. There is a growing recognition that the phonological acquisition of an additional foreign language differs from L2 acquisition owing to learners' prior linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness as well as language learning strategies (cf. Gut et al. forthcoming).

The study focuses on the phenomenon of a 'foreign language effect' or L2 status, i.e. the impact of previously learnt foreign language(s), rather than only the native tongue, on the phonetic performance in a third language (cf. Cenoz 2001, Hammarberg 2001, Hammarberg & Hammarberg 2005). The paper aims to test a hypothesis that L2 outweighs the transfer from L1 at the initial stage of L3 acquisition leading to L2-accented speech, however, this interference diminishes with the increase of L3 proficiency and gradual approximation to the target norms.

This contribution is a continuation of an on-going study based on a small corpus of non-native English speech incorporating 240 recordings of 60 Polish native speakers with German as L2 and English as L3 (cf. Wrembel forthcoming). The experimental design of the research includes foreign accent judgements performed by a group of expert listeners who were asked to rate selected speech samples for an overall degree of perceived foreign accent on a 6-point scale and to identify the native language of the speakers. An attempt is made to correlate the accent judgement ratings with the results of the auditory and acoustic analyses of the respective samples of L3 English performed by the present author and to point to some phonetic/phonological features that contribute to the perceptual impression of a foreign accent. Furthermore, the quantitative data analysis is supplemented by qualitative data from language biographies that were collected from the participants. The results are interpreted within the framework of various models proposed for multilingualism.

Finally, the paper discusses different factors that could have contributed to the interplay of L1 and L2 interference in the phonetic performance of L3 English including typological distance, L2 proficiency, recency of L2 use, special L2 status in TLA, learners' motivation and metalinguistic awareness.

- Cenoz, J. 2001. "The effect of linguistic distance, L2 status and age on cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition", in: Cenoz, J., B. Hufeisen, U. Jessner (eds.) *Cross-linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 8-20.
- Gut, U., G. Mehlhorn, M. Wrembel (eds.) forthcoming. Special Issue of the *International Journal of Multilingualism: Phonetics/Phonology in Third Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Hammarberg, B. 2001. "Roles of L1 and L2 in L3 production and acquisition", in: Cenoz, J., B. Hufeisen, U. Jessner (eds.) *Cross-linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 21-41.
- Hammarberg, B. & B. Hammarberg. 2005. "Re-setting the basis of articulation in the acquisition of new languages: A third-language case study", in: Hufeisen, B. & R. Fouser (eds.) *Introductory Readings in L3*. Tübingen: StauFFenburg Verlag.
- Wrembel, M. (forthcoming). "L2-accented speech in L3 production". *International Journal of Multilingualism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.