Biljana Čubrović and Tatjana Paunović (eds.), *Exploring English Phonetics*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, pp. xii + 256.

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Exploring English Phonetics is a selection of papers presented at the second Belgrade International Meeting of Phoneticians, which took place at the University of Belgrade in March 2010.[2] The volume consists of sixteen papers by authors from eight different countries. The book is divided into two sections; the first one, *Phoneme and beyond*, comprises eight papers, and is focused largely on segmental and prosodic properties of English speech; the second section, *Applied Phonetics and beyond*, shifts the focus to EFL pronunciation teaching, but also deals with issues regarding the methodology of phonetic research relevant to EFL teaching.

In Chapter 1 Brian Mott revisits traditional Cockney. The data Mott examined consisted of recordings of twelve individual words containing the English monophthongs in the phonetic context /h_d/ spoken by three men from London, aged 55, 63 and 67. The author first provides an introduction to Cockney, or rather to the continuum between the extreme basilectal version of the traditional London accent and the less broad "Popular London" variety. He cites examples of the core features present in traditional London speech, explicitly stating that his paper in no way deals with the features of the Multi-cultural London English (MLE), a fairly recent variety common nowadays in Inner London (Torgersen, Kerswill and Fox 2010). Mott's analysis of the data consisted of measuring the first two vowel formants for each monophthong by using the computer program Plotformant. He then proceeds to compare the obtained results with those from similar studies of RP speech, namely Wells (1962) and Deterding (1997). In this way Mott can be said to combine traditional dialectology and experimental phonetics.

In Chapter 2 Maja Marković and Bojana Jakovljević try to tackle the controversy regarding the phoneme /v/ in Serbian, with the added perspective gained from contrasting the situation in Serbian with that in English, while also looking at the transfer in Serbian L2 English speech. The authors start by giving a short introduction to the problem stemming from the discrepancy between the phonological behaviour and phonetic fact regarding /v/ in Serbian.

They then move to presenting the results of the experiment they conducted, which included an acoustic analysis of a number tokens of /v/ in the speech of two English speaking and two Serbian speaking informants, with the English subjects being asked to pronounce the English tokens only, and Serbian subjects pronouncing both Serbian and English tokens. The English speakers' production of /v/ in terms of the manner of

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2 For the collection of papers from the first BIMEP conference see Čubrović and Paunović (2009).

articulation was consistent, the sound being a non-sibilant fricative in all positions. The Serbian speakers' production, however, vacillated between the sonorant and fricative manner of articulation, the former being especially common in intervocalic environments. Regarding transfer, Serbian speakers tended to conform to the native production in terms of regressive assimilation, but their intervocalic /v/ remained a sonorant.

In Chapter 3 Bojana Jakovljević examines the VOT of word-initial plosives in Serbian and British English, focusing on the transfer in Serbian L2 production of English. The subjects were two native speakers of English and five native speakers of Serbian, while the corpus included words with stops followed by two types of vowels, /iː/ and /ɒ/ in English, and their Serbian counterparts /i̯ː/ and /ô/. Jakovljević found that, as expected, Serbian phonologically voiced stops /b d g/ had negative VOT, while the English counterparts were largely devoiced. The voiceless stops, again as expected, had appreciably shorter VOT duration in Serbian than in English. Another well-known effect that was confirmed was the relation between the VOT and the place of articulation, which as the author rightly puts it, "can be considered as universal". In terms of L1 interference, Serbian speakers tended to produce English word-initial /b d g/ with considerable vocal fold activity, displaying negative transfer. On the other hand, their production of the voiceless stops varied, with some speakers showing signs of hypercorrection, displaying higher VOT values than native speakers, but generally without the presence of a strong L1 transfer.

In Chapter 4 Biljana Čubrović, similarly to the previous paper, investigates the transfer in VOT values in word-initial stops, focusing, however, only on the three voiceless stops. Čubrović's research study included two male and two female (upper) intermediate EFL learners, and took into account nine different phonetic environments, depending on the following vowel. The findings of this study and an earlier mirror study Čubrović conducted suggest that aspiration is "acquired gradually", which leads her to conclude that "it is a phonetic phenomenon worth insisting upon in an EFL classroom". Although, as with the Jakovljević's study in Chapter 3, the conclusions, as Čubrović rightly points out, "may only be considered tentative due to a relatively small sample used".

In Chapter 5 Takehiko Makino seeks to expand the current description of the weak forms used in American English connected speech, using the data from Buckeye Corpus of Conversational Speech (Pitt et al. 2007), noting that far too often the descriptions of weak forms found in literature focus on relatively formal styles of speech. As a starting point, he uses Obendorfer (1998), the most comprehensive list of weak forms in English according to Makino, which he supplements with the data from LPD3 and EPD17. His findings suggest that words "where," "gets," "our," "most," "which" and "went" all include a considerable number of forms with a reduced vowel or without vowels at all, and that they should be added to the list of words with weak forms. Also, Makino suggests some additional weak forms for words such as "a", "an", "been", "was", "have", "do" and "from".

In Chapter 6 Isao Ueda and Hiroko Saito examine the misplacement of the nuclear stress in Japanese-accented English. Their experiment included fifteen students majoring in English who were given the same task twice with one year interval between

the recordings during which the students had no formal education in this area. The subjects were asked not only to read the sentences, sixteen each, but also to underline the word on which they thought the nucleus should be placed, thus providing the authors a chance to compare "production" with "knowledge". The results indicate that by and large little improvement was made during the intervening year; however, the authors cite a previous study by Saito in which 22 students were explicitly taught basic rules for nucleus placement in English, after which there was a dramatic improvement in the students' pronunciation.

In Chapter 7 Ken-Ichi Kadooka introduces the concept of a Punch Line Paratone, a subtype of Paratone, the phonological counterpart of paragraph in written language. He cites six phonetic characteristics of the Punch Line Paratone, and focuses on the one, namely the pause before the beginning of the punch line. Kadooka compares and contrasts the style of telling jokes in Japanese and English, concluding among other things that Japanese jokes tend to be performed in a slower tempo.

In Chapter 8, from a purely theoretical viewpoint, Vladimir Phillipov ponders intonation as a linguistic sign. The author consults different approaches, quoting authors such as Saussure, Smirnitskij, Bally, Labov, Halliday, Bolinger and others, concluding that intonation "does fall" [...] within linguistics proper", and that it "does not lag behind its segmental counterpart but autosegmentally points to it".

Opening Part II of the book is a chapter by Tvrtko Prćić in which the author delineates what he sees as the best approach in teaching pronunciation to ENFL[1] university students, which Prćić calls "usage-enriched descriptivism". This integrated approach involves complementing descriptivism with what Prćić calls "modernized prescriptivism". The author puts forward some theoretical and methodological aspects of descriptivism and prescriptivism, and then moves on to describe the main principles characterizing "modernized prescriptivism", as well as specific examples of its practical application.

In Chapter 10 Ingrid Pfandl-Buchegger, Milena Insam, and Isabel Landsiedler discuss the concentrated listening as an approach to language learning. The authors first introduce the basic tenets of Alfred Tomatis' audio-phonology theory, which posits a connection between speech perception and speech production and according to which selective hearing is a reversible process, and the perceptual capacity can be re-trained, and learners' auditory differentiation improved through specific listening training. The authors then proceed to describe an L2 teaching project named FauvoT organized at the University of Graz, in which they tried to apply the principles of Tomatis' theory. According to the findings presented, focused listening as a means of accelerating language learning could be a very efficient teaching tool for L2 acquisition.

In Chapter 11 Tatjana Paunović argues for a mixed methodology approach, stating that phonetic research could "benefit from widening the perspective to include qualitative methods of analysis, particularly when conducted in the context of English language learning and teaching". She points out that the two approaches need not be regarded as competitive but as complementary, and that furthermore all research can be placed on a quantitative–qualitative continuum. Paunović illustrates the point

1 ENFL stands for English as the nativized foreign language, a term proposed by the author.

using the example of three recent phonetic studies of hers and suggests specific ways of incorporating qualitative perspective into phonetic research.

In Chapter 12 Klementina Jurančič-Petek discusses how different test types may influence research results. She draws data from a large-scale investigation of Slovene primary and secondary school pupils' pronunciation of English (PES: Jurančič Petek 2007), and compares her findings with those of authors such as Labov, Dickerson and Flege, paying due attention to the fact that some of them studied L1 and/or L2 adult speech. Strikingly, the pupils often had fewer mistakes in free speech than in different reading tasks, for which Jurančič-Petek offers several possible explanations in the paper.

In Chapter 13 Anastazija Kirkova-Naskova and Dimitar Trajanov describe a web-based project used for investigating Macedonian learners' pronunciation of English. A total of 17 Macedonian first and second year students of English were given free speech tasks designed to elicit informal speech. The samples thus obtained were included in an online questionnaire administered to 14 native speakers of English, who all had at least some expertise in phonetics. The native speakers were asked to judge the pronunciation of students from Skopje, and comment on specific features of Macedonian-accented English. Generally, the raters showed a higher degree of tolerance to L1 transfer in the production of vowels, rather than consonants, the highest frequency of perceived sound deviations being indicated for final obstruent devoicing and stopping of the dental fricatives. The authors deem this approach to phonetic experiments "ideal for the promotion of research in less developed countries [...] where people and resources are always limited".

In Chapter 14 Rastislav Šuštaršič reports some frequent mistakes made by Slovene students of English in the oral exam in English Phonetics Theory. He classifies the identified problems into ten different types, trying to glean the reasons for their repeated occurrence. In this way, the author suggests, teachers can get very important feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching, "in particular with regard to how certain descriptions and explanations may be confusing or unclear for a number of students".

In Chapter 15 Snezhina Dimitrova and Tsvetanka Chernogorova address the issue of different models for teaching English pronunciation to university-level EFL learners. After briefly considering pros and cons of the Lingua Franca Core model proposed by Jenkins (2000), the authors go on to report the results from several surveys given to students of English at Sofia University, which were aimed at gauging attitudes towards different models of English pronunciation. According to their results, "British English" was viewed as "the best" accent of English. However, even though judged as the most desirable accent, it was also deemed the hardest to acquire. On the other hand "American English" was thought of as not only easy to learn, but also, interestingly, as the easiest to comprehend.

Finally, in Chapter 16 Galina M. Vishnevskaya describes a study that investigated the perception of accented speech. Forty students of University of Boston, USA, and fifty students of Ivanovo State University, Russia participated in the study, which showed that native speakers generally had a more tolerant view of accented speech. Throughout the paper Vishnevskaya emphasizes the role and importance of intonation in the perception and production of accented speech, and concludes that the "goal of phonetic research nowadays is to give a description of intonation in a cross-cultural

perspective, as a linguistic category possessing its own phonetic features and functions in oral native and non-native 'lingua franca'".

Exploring English Phonetics covers a range of topics that can be of interest, as the editors put it, not only to phonetic researchers but also to EFL teachers, and even, in part, to a wider audience. In the introduction they appropriately emphasize that most chapters in this volume "deal with English spoken and learned by speakers of other languages, thus highlighting both the current status of English as the language of world-wide communication, and the international orientation". Most countries from which the authors of the papers come belong to what Braj Kachru in his famous classification of World Englishes has called the "expanding circle". However, this book is not only by the EFL researchers for the EFL researchers, but should be of concern to anyone interested in what a diverse, international perspective can bring to the table.

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