

Biljana Čubrović and Tatjana Paunović (eds.), *Ta(I)king English Phonetics across Frontiers*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp. xvii + 205.

Reviewed by **ANASTAZIJA KIRKOVA-NASKOVA**¹
 Ss. Cyril and Methodious University
 Faculty of Philology
 Department of English Language and Literature
 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

As subtly suggested in its title wordplay, *Ta(I)king English Phonetics across Frontiers* is a collection of papers that altogether provoke a stimulating discussion on diverse issues about the current understanding of spoken English by researchers of different backgrounds, interests and approaches. The selected papers included in this volume were presented at the *First Belgrade International Meeting of Phoneticians* organized by Biljana Čubrović at Belgrade University in March 2008. The aim of the conference was to focus not only on those aspects of English phonetics, phonology, and EFL pronunciation which are well in line with the current phonetic/phonological theory but also on many practical aspects that in themselves are worthy of note simply by providing new empirical data and fresh viewpoints. Hence, issues covered in the papers include the description and development of English varieties and dialects, language contact through the lenses of L2 phonological acquisition, and the socio-cultural facet of speech considered in pronunciation instruction and everyday communicative usage. The book contains an introduction, fourteen chapters structured in two parts, a list of contributors and an index.

In the introductory chapter, the editors present the aims of the volume and outline the book organization by providing a brief chapter summary. Emphasizing the necessity of taking a very broad view of what 'spoken English' means today, the authors reveal their intention to do so by not dealing with the crucial theoretical issues but rather by appreciating the value and importance of the empirical findings rendered from various studies (smaller in scope) and by incorporating these small puzzles in the big picture of what English phonetics/phonology is today. Furthermore, they set out to draw attention to the developing changes in the usage of English in different communication contexts and by different speakers of English (as first, second, foreign and additional language) and advocate the validity and relevance of research into these matters.

Part I, *The Phoneme and Beyond*, opens with a chapter by Maja Marković entitled "Different strategies in acquiring L2 vowels: The production of high English vowels /i:, ɪ, u:, ʊ/ by native speakers of Serbian". The author questions the influence of L1 phonological knowledge on learner's acquisition of L2 similar phonological categories and presents the results of her study. She employs acoustic analysis of participants' productions of word lists containing English high vowels /i:, ɪ, u:, ʊ/ and Serbian high vowels /i, u/ in long and short syllables. Her findings reveal three different levels of L2 vowel category acquisition i.e. a) complete substitution (English /i:/ is almost exclusively

1 Kontakt podaci (Email): akirkova@t-home.mk

pronounced as Serbian /i/ lacking even the diphthongal realizations of this long vowel in final open syllables), b) partial modification (as observed in the production of /u:, ʊ/ which are not entirely acquired but closely approximated), and c) high level of acquisition or new category development (as demonstrated in the approximate native-like pronunciation of /i/ by Serbian speakers). Such results strongly support the claims of Flege's *Speech Learning Model* (Flege 1995; 2003) that while 'similar' sounds present greater difficulty to L2 learners, 'new' sounds are more easily acquired and developed into satisfactory L2 categories.

Chapter 2, by Takehiko Makino, deals with "Vowel substitution patterns in Japanese Speakers' English". Drawing on data from a corpus of speech recordings by experienced Japanese learners of English, Makino calculates the relative frequency of vowel substitutions in their speech. He further attempts to systematize these substitutions focusing on those vowels that cause considerable difficulty. Thus, his findings confirm the observations of previous studies regarding English vowel mispronunciation by Japanese learners and, in addition, point out to the pronunciation difficulties posed by postvocalic /r/ as a neglected feature of Japanese learner English.

Brian Mott, in Chapter 3, attempts to give "Practical advice on the transcription of the unstressed vowel system for non-native students of English". He argues that students of English faced with a task of making broad transcription of spoken text struggle with words containing FLEECE, KIT, FOOT and GOOSE vowels in unstressed syllable position, words with syllabic [l] and [n], and words ending in <-ible>, <-ity>, <-ness>, <-es> (after sibilants) and -ed (after alveolar stops). Such difficulty is greatly enhanced as dictionary representations are inconsistent across the two major reference systems i.e. the *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary (CEPD)* and the *Longman Pronouncing Dictionary (LPD)*. By comparing various entries from CEPD and LPD and considering the possible sources for the problem, Mott emphasizes that it is not always clear whether they are represented with a phonological or a phonetic symbol, which can eventually prove to be confusing for the students, and calls for greater clarity and compatibility when deciding on appropriate transcription solutions.

In Chapter 4, "English-Hungarian Interferences: Hungarian EFL learners and the English dental fricatives" by Erzsébet Balogh, the issue of novel L2 sound acquisition is tackled, in particular, the pronunciation of English dental fricatives by Hungarian learners. Upon giving her informants a reading task with voiced and voiceless dental fricatives and analyzing their productions, Balogh concludes that Hungarian EFL students are able and willing to learn these non-existing sounds in their L1 and, if so, they pronounce them correctly and consistently. However, when mispronunciation occurs, they are inconsistent in their choice of L1 phoneme substitute – the substitutes for the voiced dental fricative being more stable and usually /d, t/, whereas the substitutes for the voiceless dental fricative being more varied /s, t, f/ or sometimes a combination of two phonemes.

In Chapter 5, "Voiced labiodental fricative /v/ and some phonotactic statements regarding the English by Slovene speakers", Klementina Jurančič Petek, as part of a large-scale study, investigates L1 dialect interference with respect to an unusual tendency emerging in the English speech by Slovene learners, namely the pronunciation of word-final lenis labiodental fricative /v/. In the study, when considering the behaviour of

word-final voiced obstruents, speakers demonstrated typical final obstruent devoicing (fortition) – except for /v/→/f/, which was an expected result for the eastern Slovene regions, but not for the western Slovene regions, where v-vocalization in final position (/v→u/) is a characteristic both of the standard and the dialect. Jurančič Petek explains the reasons behind these findings within the framework of *Natural Phonology Theory* supporting Wieden's claim (Wieden 1993) that the L2 acquisition process proceeds in line with the universal processes (final obstruent fortition being a natural rule) and is unlikely to be affected by the unnatural rules of L1 (as is the case of Slovene word-final v-vocalization).

Alastair Wilson, in Chapter 6, describes "The phonetics and phonology of Darlington English", a northern provincial regional variety of British English. Wilson makes a detailed comparison of the segmental system of this variety to that of Standard Southern British English highlighting the characteristics typical of this dialect (vowels being analyzed in greater detail). He also points out the relevance of such studies for the preservation of regional identities.

Biljana Čubrović, in Chapter 7, turns to "The accentuation patterns of recent French loanwords in English" basing her analysis on a corpus of more than one thousand loanwords that entered English after 1800 as documented in the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, as well as on the native speaker responses obtained through a questionnaire distributed at the University of Reading. Looking into the matter within the framework of contact linguistics and taking into consideration factors such as syllable number, status in terms of prestige, and frequency of occurrence, Čubrović offers a classification of possible stress placement in French loanwords: a) loanwords which retain the French accentual pattern, b) loanwords with an unstable accentual pattern (further subdivided into loanwords with recommended late or early stress), c) loanwords which deviate from the French accentuation model, and d) complex loanwords i.e. French phrases (marked highly prestigious and retaining the French 'crescendo stress'). Čubrović concludes that while loanword phonology can give an insight into the complex relationships that govern suprasegmental changes in both languages, other socio-cultural phenomena, such as prestige, may also shed light on some intrinsic cross-linguistic prosodic processes.

Jane Setter centers Chapter 8 on the currently most burning issue in L2 phonetic research i.e. "L2 prosody research: Rhythm and intonation". She elaborates on the methodologies used in three studies where the obtained findings are discussed in light of pronunciation teaching and English use in international contexts. In the first study, speech rhythm is examined by measuring syllable duration of tonic, stressed, unstressed and weak syllables taken from speech samples of Hong Kong English (HKE), as a second language variety, and Russian English (RE), as a foreign language. When compared with British English speech samples, results reveal marked differences especially in the duration of weakened and unstressed syllables in HKE speakers, on the one hand, and greater use of prominent syllables by RE speakers, on the other hand – tendencies which affect information foregrounding and backgrounding in speech. In the second study, Setter examines the perception and production of intonation patterns as well as the communicative use of intonation by Chinese and Arabic learners of English using a PEPS-C test battery. Results show that while learners performed well on imitating

single word items, they performed badly on imitating longer intonation patterns and nucleus placement – a finding which supports Jenkins' claims (Jenkins 2000) related to the *Lingua Franca Core*, intelligibility, and the use of English as an international language. The third study evaluates native speaker judgments of HKE by distributing a questionnaire to British students at Reading University; the observations again point to intonation features as noticeably different from BrE. In sum, based on the results of these studies, one may conclude that intonation needs immediate attention in ELT materials. Setter, however, rightly indicates that such implication should not be taken for granted but rather be examined in light of aspects affecting overall intelligibility thus allowing for relevant focus areas to be integrated in pronunciation instruction.

In Chapter 9, Ken-Ichi Kadooka reflects on the "Patterns of clause intonation in English" and examines the interrelation between tone patterns and meaning. Analyzing the tonal classification within the framework of *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (five simple tones and two complex tone patterns), the author purports that English clause intonation, with its combinations of tonic, pretonic and secondary systems, is extremely complex – the complexity of which is especially observed when compared to the intonation systems of other languages such as Japanese and Chinese. With regard to these three languages, Kadooka offers a tripartite classification based on the phonetic-semantic interface.

Part II, *Phonetics and further beyond*, begins with chapter 10 by Mirna Vidaković who discusses the "Phonological features of advertising slogans in English and their translation into Serbian". First, the author explores the sound patterns in English that are being creatively used to enhance the advertising message including alliteration, assonance, rhyme and sound symbolism via onomatopoeia and phonesthesia. Then, she turns to unraveling the problems that arise when one is challenged to translating such rich slogans into another language. By analyzing a corpus of 370 slogans in the categories of food and drink from the 1980s onwards and their possible Serbian translations, Vidaković advocates the idea that the translator, presumably equipped with the same resources, should compromise in favour of the phonological effect of the message rather than its semantics when equivalent meaning and sound patterns are impossible to be conveyed.

Chapter 11, by Ružica Ivanović, entitled "On some phonological processes in English place names", compares the earliest recorded spellings of a representative sample of one thousand place-names in England to their current pronunciation. Ivanović observes that inconsistencies in the pronunciation of English place-names (quite often unpredictable in spelling) are due to the impact of various phonological processes including epenthesis, elision, metathesis, assimilation and vowel shortening in compounds. A special attention is given to the three pronunciations of place-names ending in <-chester> resulting from various language influences.

Tatjana Paunović, in Chapter 12, pursues the topic of "Pronunciation in EFL: Speaking 'with an accent'". She presents the results of an explorative study in which Serbian university students' attitudes on the acceptability and familiarity of different English varieties are looked into by obtaining data through a questionnaire. Paunović recognizes a discrepancy in the way the notions of 'native and non-native' have gained a more positive interpretation over the past decade and the informants' stereotypical responses. More precisely, the participants in the study expressed positive feelings for

the English language and the importance of 'good' pronunciation as well as a marked preference for the varieties they considered standard, namely, British (in terms of social status) and American English (with respect to solidarity), in contrast to the ones they considered sub-standard, for instance, Australian, Irish and other accented English varieties. Considering the pedagogical implications of these results, Paunović remarks that pronunciation in ELT today is no longer language exclusive but rather a socio-cultural phenomenon which encompasses issues such as language identity, choice of language variety use, motivation and success in L2 learning; hence, the relevance of attitude research is highlighted by the author.

Chapter 13, by Milica Savić, focuses on "Pronunciation instruction with young learners – does it make a difference?" and offers a fresh insight into a relatively neglected area of phonetic research. She investigates the role of different pronunciation teaching techniques (listen-and-repeat and awareness-raising activities practiced in the experimental groups and no/occasional explanation exercised in the control group) on the acquisition of English vowels by young Serbian learners. She notes that various studies dealing with the effect of pronunciation instruction on phonological acquisition have yielded contradictory results – the findings of the current study have, too, raised more questions than given precise answers. According to the analysis of learners' pre-instruction and post-instruction productions of English, contrary to the expectations, the no/occasional approach has had the best effect on the participants' performance. Savić interprets this as a) age-related i.e. systemic pronunciation at an early stage of L2 development does not facilitate better phonological acquisition, b) teacher's individual teaching style as a factor implying that language acquisition process is radically different in a classroom context, and/or c) the length of the instruction period might have not been enough for the process of restructuring of phonological categories to happen. Further research into these matters will hopefully clarify the picture.

In the final chapter (Chapter 14), Biljana Radić-Bojanić and Vesna Lazović explore "The reinforcement of sound-spelling connections with EFL students". By providing a battery of practical exercises, the authors seem to promote the idea that learning the spelling rules of a given language, as is the case with English, is a skill that needs to be built on gradually with constant focused practice through pronunciation exercises, thus strengthening not only students' writing but also their pronunciation and reading-aloud skills.

The range of topics covered in this collection provides an excellent panorama of the latest developments in the field of English phonetics and phonology but also psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and translation studies. One of the volume's greatest appeals is the fact that it presents a platform where both novice and more experienced and renowned researchers meet and share their ideas and empirical research. Although the length of the articles varies from brief and to the point to more extensive and informative, most of the papers are written within reasonable space still allowing the authors to offer an exhaustive and comprehensive account of their research, on the one hand, and the readers to follow their ideas with ease and interest, on the other. The quality of the papers is sustained throughout and is of the highest standard.

In sum, *Ta(l)king English across Frontiers* offers a wealth of knowledge from experts across numerous disciplines serving as a valuable resource reading for researchers and practitioners alike.

REFERENCES

- Flege, J. E. 1995. Second language speech learning: Theory, findings and problems. In W. Strange (ed.) *Speech Perception and Linguistic Experience: Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Cross-Language Speech Research* Timonium. MD: York Press, 233-277.
- Flege, J. E. 2003. Assessing constraints on second-language segmental production and perception. In A. Meyer and N. Schiller (eds.) *Phonetics and Phonology in Language Comprehension and Production, Differences and Similarities*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 319-355.
- Hardcastle, W. J. and J. Laver (eds.). 1997. *The Handbook of Phonetic Sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jenkins, J. 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: OUP.
- Laver, J. 1994. *Principles of Phonetics*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Pennington, M. C. (ed.). 2007. *Phonology in Context*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Wieden, W. 1993. Aspects of acquisitional stages. In B. Kettelman and W. Wieden (eds) *Current Issues in European Second Language Acquisition Research*. Tuebingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 125-135.

Angelika Goldstein and Biljana Golubović (eds.), *Foreign Language Movies: Dubbing vs. Subtitling – Schriften zur Medienwissenschaft*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr Kovac – Fachverlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur, 2009, pp. 224.

Reviewed by **MIODRAG VUKČEVIĆ**¹

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Department of German Language and Literature
Belgrade, Serbia

According to the title of this volume its main language, in this case English as the most frequent one to be translated from, determines the language of this review article. The book pertains to a wider interdisciplinary field of translation studies, or more specifically, foreign language films translation. At the same time, it represents a selection of topics that show a diversified potential of translation aspects. These aspects of translation studies explore linguistic expression possibilities manifested in films and incorporated into both dubbing and subtitling processes. Pointing out “technical limitations – i.e. demands imposed on translators by the medium” and aiming at “present[ing] current research and inventive advances in the science of translation using motion picture translation as an example” (p. 7) the authors and editors strive to document practical experiences in this field with the aim of transferring the knowledge, theory and practice of translation. This collection of papers establishes contact with a potentially wide

1 Kontakt podaci (Email): sm.vukcevic@neobee.net