INTRODUCTION

THE CHANGING FACE OF L2 PRONUNCIATION RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Charles Nagle, John Levis, and Erin Todey, Iowa State University

This paper discusses changes in the field of L2 pronunciation over the past decade, including research studies, resources, and changes in methodology. To do so, it revisits the history of PSLLT over its 10 years as a conference by considering the inclusion of both research and teaching and the effects of the conference on the field of L2 pronunciation. This paper also describes changes in how L2 pronunciation research is being carried out and the general categories of the papers in the Proceedings of the 10th annual PSLLT conference.

INTRODUCTION

L2 pronunciation is a rapidly growing field, with increasing numbers of books, research articles, resources, conferences, and recognition in the larger field of applied linguistics. This growth has come with changes in the ways that pronunciation is understood, in the ways that it is being addressed in the classroom, in the ways that teacher training for pronunciation is studied, in the professional resources available for researchers of L2 pronunciation, in the expansion of concerns beyond L2 English to L2 pronunciation for other languages, and in changes in how research methodologies are evolving to address new questions.

In 2009, PSLLT debuted with 65 participants from approximately 12 different countries. That they all came to central Iowa in September was a good beginning for a new conference. Although the conference has always been about L2 pronunciation research and teaching in general, the first conference was heavily focused on English, not a surprising result given that pronunciation research at the time was also dominated by ESL/EFL/ELF concerns (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 1995). How far we've come since then, thanks to the organizers of the conference who have each put their mark on the shape of PSLLT, and to the researchers and teachers in this rapidly growing field! The 10th PSLLT conference attracted 195 participants from more than 25 countries. The numbers of L1 and L2 combinations for pronunciation learning and teaching has increased tremendously over the conference history, and the conference has become what its name suggests, a conference and proceedings about "second language pronunciation and teaching" and not a conference about one language. We increasingly see how L2 research on the learning of Chinese tones, Japanese pitch accents and length contrasts, Spanish Voice Onset Time, using stereotypes about French accent for better pronunciation, perception of Korean codas by Mandarin speakers, and a dozen other topics help solve the many puzzles about pronunciation learning and teaching, intelligibility, comprehensibility, accentedness, perception, and production. In other words, we are on the way to what we will become as a field, and the future is bright for the field and for PSLLT.

We believe that PSLLT has played an important role in the development of the field of L2 pronunciation over the past decade. Since the 1st PSLLT conference, we now have various structural changes in the field that are closely connected to the conference.

- Almost 300 proceedings papers available freely (https://apling.engl.iastate.edu/archive/)
- A growing community of researchers and teachers who know each other and collaborate on research
- A growing number of books by researchers and teachers who are regulars at the conference (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2015; Grantham O'Brien & Fagan, 2017; Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2017; Kang & Ginther, 2016; Kang, Thomson, & Murphy, 2018; Levis, 2018; Levis & Moyer, 2014; Levis & Munro, 2017; Moyer, 2013; Murphy, 2017; Pickering, 2018; Reed & Levis, 2015)
- A dedicated journal, the *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, now in its fifth year (https://benjamins.com/catalog/jslp)

CHANGES IN L2 PRONUNCIATION RESEARCH

Second language (L2) pronunciation research has flourished since the inauguration of the 1st PSLLT conference in 2009. The fact that we have now reached the critical mass of studies required for research synthesis and meta-analysis across a variety of substrands (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2015; Lee & Plonsky, 2015; Saito & Plonsky, 2019; Sakai & Moorman, 2018; Thomson & Derwing, 2014) is a sign of the growing disciplinary maturity of the field. As any field matures, so too do its methods and practices; thus, it comes as no surprise that the two most recent conferences (2017 and 2018) featured research methods workshops and colloquia focusing on multilingual corpora construction and L2s other than English. To a certain extent, these themes are a reflection of methodological and ideological transformations taking place in applied linguistics more broadly. For instance, over the past few years, we have seen a marked increase in publications on quantitative methods and standards, such as Plonsky's (2015) edited volume on the topic, Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) publication addressing effect sizes in SLA, and Porte's (2019) book on replication research in applied linguistics. Interest in transparent reporting practices has also grown. Many L2 journals now subscribe to the Open Science Framework, awarding badges for papers that include open data or materials, and last year *Language Learning* initiated registered reports, a new type of submission that promotes methodological rigor and transparency by moving peer review to the proposal stage before data has been collected (Marsden, Morgan-Short, Trofimovich, & Ellis, 2018).

Within the growing body of literature on research methods, participant sampling practices have garnered increased attention. For example, it is well known that the social and behavioral sciences oversample individuals from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) backgrounds, a tendency that could compromise the external validity and generalizability of research findings (e.g., Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; see Plonsky, 2017, for information specific to SLA). Beyond sociodemographic characteristics, one issue that is particularly relevant to L2 research is language sampling. Many L2 pronunciation studies involve English. In and of itself, a focus on English is not problematic since researchers are oftentimes interested in characterizing developmental patterns for speakers who share the same L1 and/or are acquiring the same L2. For example, there is a large body of work on L2 English speakers living and working in an English-speaking context (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh,

& Fleming, 2014), which reflects the sizable populations from which these speakers are drawn: the estimated 60 million individuals who speak a language other than English in the US (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015) and nearly 8 million in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). The opposite pairing scenario is also common. Many researchers focus on L1 English speakers who have learned another language predominantly through classroom instruction. These samples represent another population with which many of us work and to which our findings should generalize, such as the approximately 12 million K–12 students (American Councils for International Education, 2017) and 1.5 million postsecondary learners studying foreign languages in the US (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). In addition to studies addressing pronunciation learners, research about teachers and teacher education regarding pronunciation has heavily focused on those teaching English in ESL/EFL contexts (Breitkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Henderson et al., 2015; Macdonald, 2002), but this situation is beginning to change and we are learning about the pronunciation teaching beliefs and practices of those in non-English contexts (Huensch, 2018, 2019; Nagle, Sachs, & Zárate-Sández, 2018; Shehata, 2017; Zetterholm, 2017).

Given these trends, and the fact that this year's PSLLT included a colloquium on pronunciation in L2s other than English, we became especially interested in language sampling practices over the lifetime of the conference. We conducted an informal analysis of the languages included in conference studies published in the proceedings of the first conference (2009) and the programs of the fourth (2012) and tenth (2018) conferences ($n = 148$). If a study mentioned two L1s or L2s, we separated them into unique entries for the sake of analysis, and if the study mentioned more than two L1s, we coded the L1 as "Various" ($n = 20$). Overall, there were 17 unique L1s and 14 unique L2s, but there were only 7 studies that did not include English as either L1 or L2 (e.g., see De Meo, Pettorino, Vitalie, Cutugno, & Origlia, 2012 for Chinese learners of Italian). Figure 1 displays data for L1s and L2s that were mentioned at least twice. As is evident, we have made progress since the first conference, but there is still work to be done since English remains dominant.

One simple suggestion is to encourage colleagues working on other L2s, especially less commonly taught L2s, to attend the conference and present and publish their work, and those of us that regularly attend the conference might consider diversifying the L1s we sample, if not the L2s. Ultimately, we must reach a critical mass of studies including a variety of language pairs if we hope to derive widely generalizable findings and to shed light on the acquisition of features and phenomena, such as lexical tone and vowel harmony, that do not occur in the most frequently studied languages. At the same time, language pairs—and the dialects sampled within those pairs—is just one of many aspects of sampling to be taken into consideration.

Looking back on the past ten years, it is fair to say that PSLLT has become one of the premiere conferences for L2 pronunciation scholars, due in no small part to its integration of theory, method, and practice. Looking forward to the next decade of the conference, it seems clear that PSLLT will remain an important venue for pronunciation scholarship and will continue to grow to include a greater number of L2s.
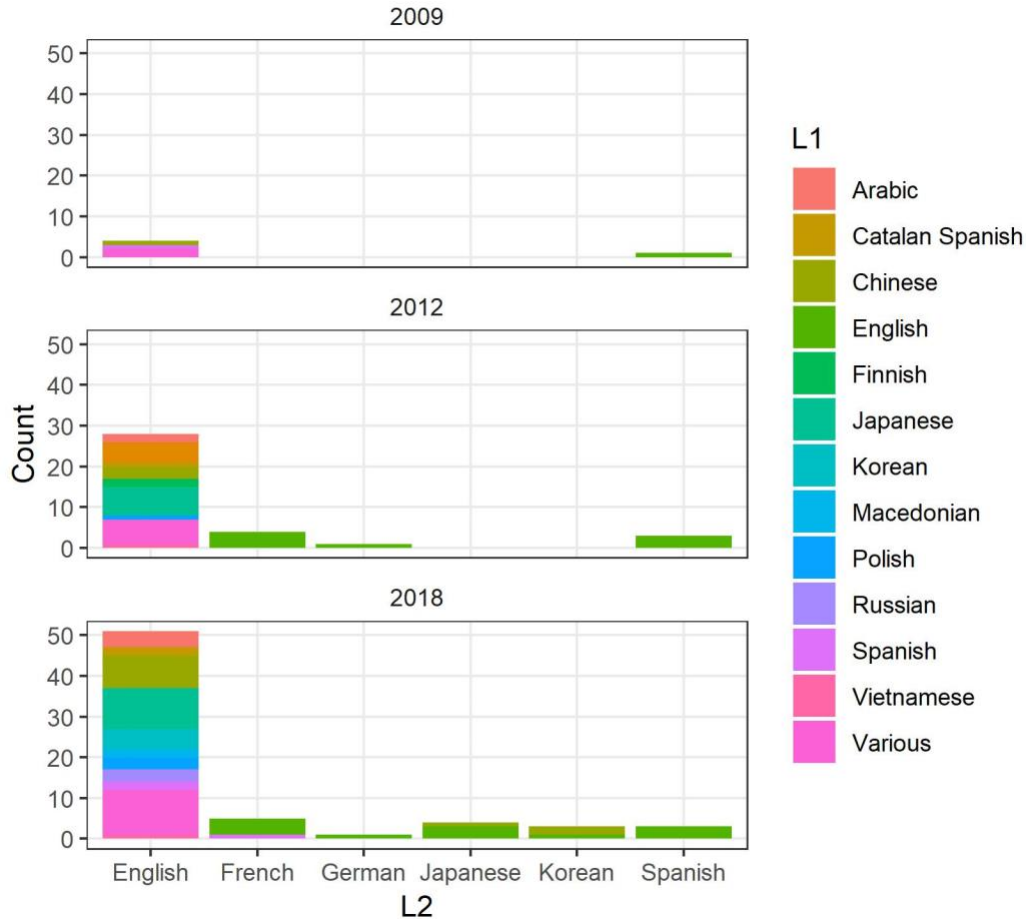
Figure 1. L1-L2 pairs in PSLLT proceedings papers (PSLLT 1) and abstracts (PSLLT 4 and 10).

THE PROCEEDINGS

This year's Proceedings, our 10th since the inauguration of PSLLT as a conference, includes nearly 50 entries. These include empirical and conceptual research, teaching tips, invited talks, research workshops, and reviews of pronunciation-related teaching technology. All but the last come from submissions to the conference proceedings.

Presentations are the largest category of papers and come from oral and poster presentations. Since the beginning, PSLLT has considered posters to be equivalent to presentations in importance, and the Proceedings often include nearly half of the papers submitted from poster presentations. Not all presenters write up their papers for the Proceedings for various reasons, including publishing their research elsewhere, having insufficient time, and feeling uncertain about how to write papers based on research presentations.

Teaching Tips, a category included since the 5th PSLLT conference, are short papers explaining ways to teach specific aspects of pronunciation for varied languages and the conceptual and/or research basis of the tips. Teaching Tips are presented in a roundtable format in which presenters stay at a round table and present their tip to a group of 8-12 participants for 7-8 minutes. At the

end of the time, a bell rings, and the participants move to another table, while the presenter does their Teaching Tip for another group. This fast-paced format ends the conference, and participants walk away from the 90 minutes with 8-10 new ideas for teaching pronunciation. The Teaching Tips also allow us to keep research and teaching concerns closely related, a critical connection for L2 pronunciation (Levis, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018; Levis & Wu, 2018).

The 10th Proceedings also include several Invited Talks. All previous plenary speakers and conference organizers were invited to give a talk on a topic of their choice with a longer time frame. Six presenters ultimately said yes, including two from the 1st PSLLT conference. Four of these are included in the Proceedings. The Proceedings also include Research Workshops. The pre-conference Research Workshops started in Salt Lake City in 2017. These workshops take place on Thursday afternoon before the official opening of the conference on Friday morning. They are included in the conference registration fee. Each year, they have attracted over 120 participants, a signal that they meet a growing need in the field. Two of these workshops are included in the Proceedings.

Finally, the Reviews come from work by PhD students in a course on Oral Technology and Communication at Iowa State University. They typically include reviews of little-known technology options and are included here to give them a wider readership. Reviews are often considered less important than other genres that are published, but their brevity and immediate interest to researchers and teachers suggest that they should be widely available. PhD students typically have a finger on the pulse of technology options that are currently in vogue, and their viewpoints make these a valuable addition, especially since most of the writers were involved in helping organize the conference and attended many of the sessions.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Charles Nagle is Assistant Professor of Spanish and Director of the Spanish Language Program at Iowa State University. His research spans three areas: how learners' pronunciation develops over time; the relationship between the perception and production of second language sounds; and, teachers' beliefs on pronunciation learning and teaching. He also published on research methods and statistics. His work can be found in venues such as *Language Learning*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and *Modern Language Journal*. At Iowa State, he teaches all levels of Spanish and upper-level Spanish linguistics courses. His email is cnagle@iastate.edu

John M. Levis is Angela B. Pavitt Professor of English at Iowa State University. He has taught and researched second language pronunciation and its teaching for many years. He is the founding editor of the *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, the founder of the Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference, and the co-developer of http://www.pronunciationforteachers.com/. He is co-editor of several books, including the *Handbook of English Pronunciation* (Wiley), *Social Dynamics in Second Language Accent* (Degruyter), *Critical Concepts in Linguistics: Pronunciation* (Taylor & Francis), *and Intelligibility, Oral Communication and the Teaching of Pronunciation* (Cambridge University Press). His email is jlevis@iastate.edu

Erin Todey is a Ph.D. student in the Applied Linguistics & Technology Program at Iowa State University where she studies English for Academic Purposes, discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics. Erin currently works as a writing consultant and the Peer Review Group Coordinator and Facilitator in the Center for Communication Excellence. She is also the co-editor for the *TESL-EJ* Media Reviews. Her email is eftodey@iastate.edu

REFERENCES

American Councils for International Education. (2017). *The National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey Report*. Retrieved from americancouncils.org/sites/default/files/FLE-report-June17.pdf

Breitkreutz, J., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal*, 51-61.

Burgess, J., & Spencer, S. (2000). Phonology and pronunciation in integrated language teaching and teacher education. *System*, *28*(2), 191-215.

Buss, L. (2016). Beliefs and practices of Brazilian EFL teachers regarding pronunciation. *Language Teaching Research, 20*(5), 619-637.

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (1996). *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Couper, G. (2016). Teacher cognition of pronunciation teaching amongst English language teachers in Uruguay. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, *2*(1), 29-55.

De Meo, A., Vitale, M., Pettorino, M., Cutugno, F., & Origlia, A. (2013). Imitation/self-imitation in computer-assisted prosody training for Chinese learners of L2 Italian. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 90–100). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2013). The development of L2 oral language skills in two L1 groups: A 7-year study. *Language Learning, 63*(2), 163–185. doi:10.1111/lang.12000

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., Foote, J. A., Waugh, E., & Fleming, J. (2014). Opening the window on comprehensible pronunciation after 19 years: A workplace training study. *Language Learning, 64*(3), 526–548. doi:10.1111/lang.12053

Foote, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 1-22.

Goldberg, D., Looney, D., & Lusin, N. (2015). Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 2013. Retrieved from https://apps.mla.org/pdf/2013_enrollment_survey.pdf

Heinrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 33*(2-3), 61–83. doi:10.1017/S0140525X0999152X

Henderson, A., Curnick, L., Frost, D., Kautzsch, A., Kirkova-Naskova, A., Levey, D., Tergujeff, E., & Waniek-Klimczak, E. (2015). The English pronunciation teaching in Europe survey: Factors inside and outside the classroom. In J. Mompean & J. Fouz-González (Eds.), *Investigating English pronunciation: Current trends and directions* (pp. 260-291). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Huensch, A. (2018). Pronunciation in foreign language classrooms: Instructors' training, classroom practices, and beliefs. *Language Teaching Research*, 1362168818767182.

Huensch, A. (2019). The pronunciation teaching practices of university-level graduate teaching assistants of French and Spanish introductory language courses. *Foreign Language Annals*, *52*(1), 13-31.

Isaacs, T., & Trofimovich, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Second language pronunciation assessment: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Multilingual Matters.

Jenkins, J. (2000). The phonology of English as an international language. Oxford University Press.

Kang, O., & Ginther, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Assessment in second language pronunciation*. Taylor & Francis.

Kang, O., Thomson, R., & Murphy, J. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook of contemporary English pronunciation*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lee, J., Jang, J., & Plonsky, L. (2015). The effectiveness of second language pronunciation instruction: A meta-analysis. *Applied Linguistics, 36*(3), 345–366. doi:10.1093/applin/amu040

Levis, J. M. (2005). Changing contexts and shifting paradigms in pronunciation teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, *39*(3), 369-377.

Levis, J., & Moyer, A. (Eds.). (2014). *Social dynamics in second language accent*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Levis, J. (2016a). The interaction of research and pedagogy. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, 2*(1), 1-7.

Levis, J. (2016b). Research into practice: How research appears in pronunciation teaching materials. *Language Teaching, 49*(3), 1-15.

Levis, J. (2017). Evidence-based pronunciation teaching: A pedagogy for the future. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, 3*(1), 1-8.

Levis, J. M. (2018). *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Levis, J. & Munro, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Pronunciation: Critical concepts in linguistics* (4 volumes). London: Routledge.

Levis, J. & Wu, A. (2018). Pronunciation-research into practice and practice into research. *CATESOL Journal 30*(1), 1-12.

MacDonald, S. (2002). Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, *17*(3), 3-18. Retrieved from https://www.researchonline.mq.edu.au/vital/access/services/Download/mq:35597/DS01

Marsden, E., Morgan-Short, K., Trofimovich, P., & Ellis, N. C. (2018). Introducing registered reports at language learning: Promoting transparency, replication, and a synthetic ethic in the language sciences. *Language Learning, 68*(2), 309–320. doi:10.1111/lang.12284

Moyer, A. (2013). *Foreign accent: The phenomenon of non-native speech*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (1995). Foreign accent, comprehensibility, and intelligibility in the speech of second language learners. *Language Learning*, *45*(1), 73-97.

Murphy, J. (Ed.). (2017). *Teaching the pronunciation of English: Focus on whole courses*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Nagle, C., Sachs, R., & Zárate-Sández, G. (2018). Exploring the intersection between teachers' beliefs and research findings in pronunciation instruction. *The Modern Language Journal*, *102*(3), 512-532.

O'Brien, M. G., & Fagan, S. M. (2016). *German phonetics and phonology: Theory and practice*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Pickering, L. (2018). *Discourse intonation: A discourse-pragmatic approach to teaching the pronunciation of English*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Plonsky, L. (Ed.) (2015). *Advancing quantitative methods in second language research*. New York: Routledge.

Plonsky, L. (2017). Quantitative research methods. In S. Loewen & M. Sato (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of instructed second language acquisition* (pp. 505–521). New York: Routledge.

Plonsky, L., & Oswald, F. L. (2014). How big is "big"? Interpreting effect sizes in L2 research. *Language Learning, 64*(4), 878–912. doi:10.1111/lang.12079

Reed, M., & Levis, J. (2019). *The handbook of English pronunciation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Saito, K., & Plonsky, L. (2019). Effects of second language pronunciation teaching revisited: A proposed measurement framework and meta-analysis. *Language Learning*. doi:10.1111/lang.12345

Sakai, M., & Moorman, C. (2018). Can perception training improve the production of second language phonemes? A meta-analytic review of 25 years of perception training research. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 39*(1), 187–224. doi:10.1017/S0142716417000418

Shehata, A. (2017). Teaching Arabic pronunciation to non-natives: Cognition and practice. In M. O'Brien & J. Levis (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 8th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*, ISSN 2380-9566, Calgary, AB, August 2016 (pp. 110-120). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Statistics Canada. (2016). *2016 census of population – Languages spoken at home*. Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/datasets/Index-eng.cfm?Temporal=2016&Theme=-1&VNAMEE=Language%20spoken%20at%20home%20%28263%29&GA=-1&S=0

Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2014). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A narrative review. *Applied Linguistics, 36*(3), 326–344. doi:10.1093/applin/amu076

U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *Detailed languages spoken at home and ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over for United States: 2009-2013*. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html

Zetterholm, E. (2017, December). Swedish for immigrants. Teachers' opinions on the teaching of pronunciation. In E. Babatsouli (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Monolingual and Bilingual Speech* (pp. 308-312). Chania, Greece.