TEACHING THE PRONUNCIATION OF

ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Suggestions for constructing a syllabus for Finnish learners

Master's Thesis

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Kieltä ei voi puhua ääntämättä sitä, minkä vuoksi ääntäminen luonnollisesti kuuluu osaksi vieraan kielen oppimista ja opettamista. Ääntämisen kuten minkä tahansa kielen osa-alueen opettaminen perustuu valittuun malliin ja standardiin. Suomalaisessa englannin kielen opetuksessa ihanteellisena mallina ja tavoitteena on tähän saakka useimmiten käytetty britti- ja/tai amerikanenglannin niin sanottua standardisoitua muotoa, joka on kodifioitu lukuisissa oppaissa, sanakirjoissa ja oppimateriaaleissa. Tästä mallista poikkeamista on pidetty virheenä ja esimerkiksi vahvan aksentin ilmenemistä epätoivottavana tai jopa nolona.

Tiedetään, että natiivin kaltaisen aksentin omaksuminen vieraassa kielessä on äärimmäisen harvinaista erityisesti silloin, jos opiskelu on alkanut vasta aikuisiällä. Täysin *ymmärrettävän* ääntämyksen voi kuitenkin oppia, vaikka aksentti poikkeaisikin syntyperäisen puhetavasta. Onkin alettu kyseenalaistaa tarvetta vedota natiivien ääntämykseen normina varsinkin sellaisissa tilanteissa, joissa englantia käytetään ei-englanninkielisten välisessä viestinnässä eli niin sanottuna *lingua francana*. Tällöin tärkeintä on ymmärrettävyys ja tilannesidonnaisuus natiivi-aksentin omaksumisen sijaan.

Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman lähtökohtana on ollut uuden oppimateriaalinen luominen. Materiaali on tarkoitettu ääntämisen opettamisen apuvälineeksi erityisesti suomalaisille englannin opettajille ja heidän oppilailleen, ja sen keskeisinä ajatuksina ovat sisällön priorisointi, englannin näkeminen kansainvälisenä kielenä ja käytännönläheisyys. Näin ollen se poikkeaa useista perinteisistä ääntämisen opetuksen oppaista, jotka pohjautuvat natiivimalleihin ja englantia äidinkielenään puhuvien viestintäkonventioihin.

Asiasanat – Key words pronunciation teaching, English as an international language, English as a lingua franca, English language teaching
Säilytyspaikka – Depository Kielten laitos
Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1   INTRODUCTION

> Yksimielisiä ollaan yleensä siitä, että opetuksen alkuvaiheessa juuri oikeaan ääntämiseen on kiinnitettävä mitä suurinta huomiota. On nimittäin osoittautunut hankalaksi ja vaikeaksi niiden laiminlyöntien korjaaminen, jotka johtuvat siitä, ettei heti alusta alkaen ole kyllin tarkattu ääntämistä. Näin ollen muodostuukin, varsinkin englanninopetuksen alalla, ensimmäisen alkeisopetuksen päätehtäväksi juuri ääntämisopetus. (Biese 1932: 1-2)

> [It is usually agreed that at the early stages of teaching utmost attention ought to be paid to accurate pronunciation. For it has proven troublesome and difficult to correct those problems that have been caused by neglect. It therefore seems that the primary focus of teaching English for beginners should be on the teaching of pronunciation.]

So begins a guide to teaching pronunciation to Finnish learners of English in the early 1930s. It explicitly highlights the importance of accurate pronunciation, which at the time most likely meant adhering to the norms of the standard English spoken in England. Reasons for studying English in Finland in those days might have included a desire to travel to the British Isles (or perhaps even America) and to understand local people and texts. In 2012 English continues to be taught in classrooms in Finland, and pronunciation is still considered to be an essential skill. However, the 1930s had not yet seen the global expansion of English and its implications on language teaching.

If measured by geographical prevalence and by the number of people who use it on a regular basis, English is the most widespread language in the world today. At present there are more than 400 million native English speakers and an estimated 500 million to billion second language speakers (Crystal 2002: 2). In many countries English is used side by side with other languages, as opposed to it being the sole means of communication. In fact, those to whom English is a first language represent only a minority of all people who use English. In Europe, English has become the language of choice in such domains as business, education and science (Kirkpatrick 2007: 163-165). The vast majority of academic publications are written in English and studying English as a foreign language has increased in classrooms all over Europe. The global trend is similar: international organizations, communications, publishing and travel industries operate predominantly in English and a substantial portion of today's popular music and films are made in English (McKay 2002: 12-17).

The development of English into a global language has given birth to the terms English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as an International Language (EIL), both of which involve the notion of English as a language that is more and more used in interaction between non-native speakers. For the purposes of the present study, it is necessary to specify these terms. Sometimes ELF is distinguished from EIL by excluding native speakers: English is used as a lingua franca only if none of the interlocutors are native speakers, whereas EIL includes native speakers as well. However, Modiano (2009: 60) maintains that "when a native speaker of English uses his or her English with a group of people for whom English in an L2, it is used in that capacity as a lingua franca by the native speaker as well." In the present study, ELF and EIL are treated as synonyms, neither of which excludes native speakers. Yet EIL is the preferred term since, as Modiano (2009: 64) points out, it associates perhaps better with the concept of situational adaptation which is central when discussing the use of English in global settings.

While the position of English as the primary global language is rarely disputed, the study of ELF/EIL and its significance on language teaching is still in its early stages (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2007: 155, McKay 2002: 41, Seidlhofer 2005: 62). However, the changes in where English is used, by whom and for what purposes have become an area of active research and interest among scholars. One field of busy dialogue is the teaching of English to speakers of other languages and the so called ownership of language, that is, who is entitled to set standards for language learning and teaching. To this day English learners all over the world have been encouraged to pursue the native models of British and American English. However, many would agree with Kirkpatrick (2007: 3), who maintains that:

> As many learners of English worldwide are learning English to communicate with fellow non-native speakers, the appropriateness of native speaker models and the cultures associated with them needs to be questioned. (Kirkpatrick 2007: 3)

The challenging of native models brings us back to pronunciation. As Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 277, 280) note, non-native English teachers have traditionally been unwilling and insecure to teach pronunciation. This may be due to a belief that in

order for them to teach pronunciation, they should be able to speak like native speakers. Moreover, Jenkins (2000: 3) contends that pronunciation has been marginalized in language teaching as a result of the communicative approach. In sum, it seems that pronunciation is not valued enough in language pedagogy and that the native models remain to be treated as norms.

The present study draws its motivation from the notion that like most learners of English in the world, also Finnish learners are likely to need English in interactions with other non-native speakers. Perhaps they will encounter foreign tourists and exchange students in Finland, backpack around the world, embark on study exchange programs or find themselves in a workplace with multinational staff. Whichever the case, they need to learn comprehensible pronunciation and their teachers have to be able to teach it. However, it appears that today learners, and perhaps also teachers, are somewhat left to their own devices as far as pronunciation teaching is concerned. While textbooks on pronunciation pedagogy are widely available, they tend to adhere to native norms and lack information as to which models to teach to, in this case, Finnish learners and on what grounds. Moreover, they are usually designed for interactions that involve native-speakers and regard acquiring their communication strategies and cultural conventions as the target.

This study attempts to answer the question of how to teach pronunciation of English as an international language by means of constructing a teaching material package. It seems evident that pronunciation teaching needs to be developed and the present study seeks to implement the many suggestions that have been made. The standpoint is therefore practical: in practice, how to both restore the importance of pronunciation in teaching and to design a pronunciation syllabus in a manner that best serves the needs of Finnish learners. The study is structured so that chapters 2-4 review relevant literature on the matter, chapter 5 presents the specific aims of the material and chapter 6 discusses its success. The material itself is included at the end of the study.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 constitute the previous research and findings upon which the

teaching material is based. Chapter 2 summarizes the main differences between Finnish and English and focuses on those elements in English that have been shown to be particularly challenging for Finnish speakers. Its aim is not to include extensive descriptions of the sound systems of the two languages since it would go beyond the scope of the present study as well as contradict with the underlying theme: the prioritization of content in order to be able to focus on comprehensibility and practicality. More detailed accounts for any essential pronunciation items are therefore incorporated into the material package itself, where considered necessary. Chapter 3 looks at the discussion on EIL/ELF so far and such topics as interculturalism, identity, non-native teachers, pronunciation models, transfer and language attitudes. Finally, Chapter 4 trails the development of pronunciation teaching from methodological choices and learner variables to designing a syllabus.

2   CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION FOR FINNISH LEARNERS

This chapter gives a brief overview of the main differences between the phonologies of English and Finnish by focusing on those sound contrasts that have been shown to cause the most problems for Finnish learners (see e.g. Peacock 2005 & Paananen-Porkka 2007). Section 2.1 examines vowel sounds and diphthongs, section 2.2 continues with consonant sounds, and section 2.3 concerns prosody in speech, that is, stress, rhythm and intonation. Please, note that:

1) When written in slashes (e.g. /s/), the focus is on the fact that the sound in question is a *phoneme*, that is, if it is replaced with another phoneme in the word, the meaning changes.
2) When written in brackets (e.g. [sɪp]), the pronunciation of entire words or phrases is in focus, and phonemes are often contrasted with others in a similar phonetic environment. Brackets can also denote *allophones*, that is, different realizations of a phoneme.
3) For the sake of clarity, an attempt has been made to use such words as examples that have a similar pronunciation in both 'standard' British and American English. Variation due to regional differences is noted when necessary.

2.1 Vowels

Ladefoged (2005: 26) defines a vowel as any sound that occurs in the middle of a syllable and is produced by nothing restricting the breath stream. English has, at minimum, 10 basic or pure vowels (Odisho 2003: 48, Peacock 2005: 104-106), while Finnish has eight of them (Phonetics of Finnish). However, in English vowels usually provide the first clue in recognizing different accents (Ladefoged 2005: 27), and it is virtually impossible to describe the vowel system of English at any general level that would minimize regional variation. The number of vowels is thus determined by the variety in question and vowel charts will look different depending on whether they represent Received Pronunciation (RP), General American English (GA), Scottish

Standard English, and so forth (e.g. Peacock 2005: 104-106). GA, for instance, has 14 to 15 different vowels and the so called BBC English up to 20 (Ladefoged 2005: 28-31). These numbers include diphthongs such as the vowel sounds in words *bite* [baɪt] and *boy* [bɔɪ]. A diphthong is a sound whose vowel quality changes within a syllable but because it occurs in only one syllable it is classified as a vowel (Ladefoged 2005: 29).

Partly the same vowels can exist in, for instance, RP and GA, but the places in which they occur may differ (see Table 1).

Table 1. Vowel differences between RP and GA

Phoneme	Example of use in RP	Example of use in GA
/i/	*beat*	*beat, here*
/ɪə/	*here*	
/æ/	*cat*	*cat, path*
/ɑ/	*path, car*	*car, stop*
/ɒ/	*stop*	

As can be deducted from the examples in Table 1, vowels do not only differ in quality. Instead, they may be of different lengths and 'colorings' depending on what consonants they occur together with (Peacock 2005: 100). For instance, GA is a rhotic accent which means that /r/ is always pronounced regardless of its position in a word (Odisho 2003: 119). As a result of this, vowels preceding /r/ in words such as *fur*, *beard* or *party* are affected by the so called /r/-coloring which alters the pronunciation of the vowel by bringing it closer to the /r/ position (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 104). Finnish vowels do not change in quality although the distinction between short and long vowels is considerable, whereas the vowels in English tend to have spectral alterations along with changes in length (Zampini 2008: 226). Consequently, Finnish learners might have trouble with recognizing vowel sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue.

In English, vowels are characteristically reduced in quality when not stressed (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 43). However, whether the reduced forms are considered separate from full vowels or different forms of the same sound is debatable. Full

vowel sounds are produced by using three physical variables, or articulatory dimensions: tongue height, tongue position (front/back) and lip form (round/spread) (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 45). Reduced vowels, on the other hand, only differ in tongue position. In any case, reduced vowels are extremely common, in fact, the mid-central reduced vowel /ə/ or the *schwa* is the most common vowel in both American and British English (Ladefoged 2005: 29). It usually appears in small words like *a, the* and *to* as well as in unstressed syllables in words such as *about* and *around* (Ladefoged 2005: 29, Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 108).

As regards vowels, the distinction between /i/ and /ɪ/ is particularly problematic for Finnish learners of English, and Peacock (2005: 92-93) mentions three reasons for this. First, while the Finnish /i/ and the English /i/ are similar, the English /ɪ/ is somewhere between the Finnish /i/ and /e/, which makes it difficult for Finns to both perceive and pronounce. Second, spelling complicates the matter since both vowels are usually spelled with an *i*. This often makes learners assume that there is only one sound and they identify it with the /i/ in their mother tongue. Third, although Finnish speakers are able to distinguish between short and long vowels quite easily, they may experience difficulty in recognizing differences in *quality* and conclude, erroneously, that the English /i/ and /ɪ/ correspond to the Finnish [ii] and [i], respectively. Thus they should be provided examples of words that only differ in quality, not length as in *beat* [bi:t] vs. *bid* [bɪd].

With regards to the teaching material, it appears that when discussing vowels, learners' attention should be drawn to regional variation and the inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation. Vowel sounds do not seem particularly difficult to pronounce as such. Nonetheless, the fact that vowel sounds may differ greatly between different varieties of English needs to be addressed. As to spelling, Wells (2005: 103-104) notes that non-native speakers tend to cling to the written form of words more than native speakers do, which often leads to pronunciation errors. For this reason, it should be emphasized that, unlike in Finnish, sounds can have several different spellings in English.

2.2 Consonants

In comparison to vowels, there is much less variation in consonants among different regional varieties of English (Ladefoged 2005: 49). Consonants are usually classified by using three criteria: phonatory status (or voicing), place of articulation, and manner of articulation (Odisho 2003: 35). In short, these categorizations tell us whether the consonant is produced with the vocal cords vibrating or not, where the sound is made and how the breath stream is restricted in the vocal tract (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 42). For example, the consonant sound /b/ at the beginning of *ball* can be described as a voiced bilabial stop in contrast with the /p/ sound at the beginning of *Paul*, which is a voiceless bilabial stop. Both sounds are produced in the front part of the mouth by using the two lips that stop the air stream briefly before it is released. Thus they only differ in their phonatory status.

For most Finnish learners, English sibilants are the most difficult sounds to learn (Peacock 2005: 16). Sibilants are a group of consonants where a stream of air is first forced through a narrow gap (=formed by the tongue) and then over a sharp obstacle (=teeth) (Ladefoged 2005: 166). Whereas Finnish has only one sibilant /s/, English has four: /s/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, as well as the affricate counterparts /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ of the last two (Peacock 2005: 14). A minimal group consisting of English sibilants could look, for example, as follows:

    1) *sue*   [su:]   "to institute legal proceedings"
    2) *zoo*   [zu:]   "a place where live animals are exhibited to the public"
    3) *shoe*   [ʃu:]   "one of a matching pair of coverings shaped to fit the foot"
    4) *chew*   [tʃu:]   "to bite repeatedly"
    5) *Jew*   [dʒu:]   "a person whose religion is Judaism"
                   (Definitions adapted from the Collins English Dictionary 2.0)

Sibilants are characterized by high acoustic energy and rounding of the lips, and even if the sibilant /ʃ/, for instance, did not exist in the phonology of a language it may have other uses such as the use of ʃʃʃʃʃʃʃʃʃ ('shhhhhh') as a request for others to quiet down (Ladefoged 2005: 167). In English, sibilant sounds are common and the ability to distinguish between them is of great significance. As an example, Peacock

(2005: 16-17) maintains that, in his opinion, learning to pronounce palato-alveolar sibilants /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ is considerably more important for Finnish speakers than, for instance, intonation. He also remarks that since sibilant sounds may cause trouble even in isolation, the instruction on sibilants should start at isolated sounds, then move onto simple words and only finally to more complex ones.

In comparison to Finnish, a distinct feature of the English phonology is the voicing of consonants (Peacock 2005: 50). In short, vocal folds vibrate when producing voiced consonants and do not vibrate when producing voiceless consonants (Ladefoged 2005: 201). Table 2 includes those consonant sounds in English that have voiced counterparts and demonstrates the functional load they carry.

Table 2. Voiceless and voiced consonant sounds in English

Voiceless	Voiced	Contrastive examples	IPA
/k/	/g/	*crow* vs. *grow*	[krəʊ] vs. [grəʊ]
/p/	/b/	*peak* vs. *beak*	[pi:k] vs. [bi:k]
/t/	/d/	*time* vs. *dime*	[taɪm] vs. [daɪm]
/s/	/z/	*sip* vs. *zip*	[sɪp] vs. [zɪp]
/ʃ/	/ʒ/	*cash* vs. *casual*	[kæʃ] vs. [kæʒuəl]
/tʃ/	/dʒ/	*cheap* vs. *jeep*	[tʃi:p] vs. [dʒi:p]
/f/	/v/	*feel* vs. *veal*	[fi:l] vs. [vi:l]
/θ/	/ð/	*thigh* vs. *thy*	[θaɪ] vs. [ðaɪ]

The first three sounds in Table 2, /k/, /p/ and /t/ are classified as stops (also sometimes referred to as plosives or occlusives). They appear in both Finnish and English, however, in English they are aspirated in order to separate them from the voiced stops /g/, /b/ and /d/, respectively (Peacock 2005: 51). Aspiration refers to a puff of air that is audible particularly if /k/, /p/ or /t/ sounds occur at the beginning of a word or a stressed syllable (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 62-63). Finnish /p/ and English /p/ do not therefore sound quite the same, nor do the Spanish /p/ and the English /p/, for example (Ladefoged 2005: 135), and Finnish speakers who fail to

produce aspirated stops might be misheard to mean, for instance, "buy" instead of "pie" or "Gavin" instead of "Kevin".

Voicing at the end of words is a more complicated issue because in contemporary English length has partially come to indicate the contrast that traditionally was to be found in the voiced/voiceless distinction (Peacock 2005: 62). Peacock (2005: 62) uses the example of the final alveolar sibilants in the words *race* and *raise*. The phonetic descriptions for them in dictionaries are usually [reɪs] and [reɪz], which indicates a single difference: voicing of the last sibilant. However, today most English speakers would distinguish between the two by listening to the length of the central diphthong [eɪ], which is 80 per cent longer in *raise* than it is in *race*. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 66) also note that while vowels are longer before voiced fricatives and affricates, voiceless fricatives and affricates are longer after short vowels, and thus the total length of *race* and *raise*, for instance, is practically the same.

Other consonant distinctions especially challenging for Finnish speakers are the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, and the separation of /v/ from /w/. The consonants /θ/ and /ð/, that is, the initial sounds in words *thick* and *the* do not exist in Finnish. However, they are not particularly problematic for learners to produce in isolation (Peacock 2005: 87). Difficulties arise when the dental fricatives occur together with other fricatives, in which case even native speakers tend to drop them and pronounce, for instance, *clothes* as [kləʊz] instead of [kləʊðz]. According to Peacock (2005: 87) the main difficulty for Finnish learners is when /θ/ and /ð/ appear in unstressed syllables in words such as *the*, *this* and *with*. The reason is that Finnish speakers tend to pronounce the dental fricatives by moving the tongue so far front that it shows between the teeth, which again takes such a long time that it causes the speech rhythm to suffer.

The /v/ vs. /w/ contrast is difficult for Finnish learners partly because of spelling. The /w/ sound does not appear in Finnish and, according to Peacock (2005: 78-79) Finns tend to pronounce it as a labio-dental, that is, with the upper teeth touching the lower

lip. This is often interpreted as a /v/ by listeners and what has proven to be of immense help for learners is to tell them to imagine that instead of /w/ a word begins with a Finnish /u/ which is similar to the English /w/. It seems that the spelling of /w/ might therefore lead into an assumption that /v/ and /w/ are 'relatives', whereas /w/ is in fact closer to the Finnish /u/ and is never pronounced by using the teeth.

To summarize, consonants seem to be far more challenging for Finnish learners than vowels. Sibilants, aspiration and voicing as well as the /v/-/w/ distinction and dental fricatives have been shown to be particularly problematic. It appears that learners should be made aware of the importance of distinguishing between different consonants on account of the misunderstandings that might occur if one is accidentally replaced with another. Moreover, more attention ought to be given to consonant sounds in longer and more complex words than just minimal pairs, as it is easier to pronounce sounds in isolation than it is in actual speech.

2.3 Prosody

Prosody is a term that covers the use of intonation, volume, tempo and rhythm in speech (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 200). These aspects of pronunciation are also referred to as suprasegmentals since they appear not only at sound level but in syllables, word boundaries and as features of longer stretches of speech. Different facets of prosody are interconnected, for instance, the rhythm in English is a consequence of stress (Odisho 2003: 94). This section approaches prosody by first looking at stress in 2.3.1, then by moving onto rhythm in 2.3.2 and finally by examining intonation in 2.3.3.

2.3.1 Stress

Stress in language can concern stress within a word or within a sentence, sometimes referred to as *stress* and *accent*, respectively (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 20). Word stress regards the stress patterns of individual words, that is, which syllables are the most emphasized. Length, loudness and pitch can all be manifestations of word

stress, and stressed syllables are thus pronounced with more energy (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 131). In Finnish, word stress always falls on the first syllable, whereas the stress patterns in English are more complex and irregular (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 20).

The word stress in English can be depicted by dividing syllables into three levels: *strong*, *medial* and *weak*, or *strongly stressed*, *lightly stressed* and *unstressed* (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 132). For example, in the word *organization* all three levels are present: strong stress falls on the fourth syllable *za*, medial stress on the first syllable *or*, while the second, third and fifth syllables *gan*, *i* and *tion* are weak, in other words, they are not stressed. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996:144) suggest the use of visual aids in illustrating the different levels to learners:

● ● ● ● ●
OR gan i ZA tion
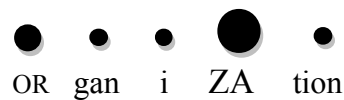
Similarly, Odisho (2003: 95) recommends the employment of visual or auditory techniques such as tapping on a desk in order to demonstrate word stress.

In English, a stressed syllable can occur anywhere in a word, which makes word stress a difficult topic to turn into basic rules (Peacock 2005: 130). Explanations for word stress patterns can be found in the historical origins of words as well as in the sentence context (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 133). For instance, words with Germanic origin tend to have stress on the first syllable, and the stress in words such as *hand-out* is determined by their grammatical role in a sentence:

1. *Please, help yourselves to a HAND-out.*
2. *I need to hand OUT these questionnaires.*

Certain word endings such as *-ation*, *-astic* and *-bility* are always stressed, as are usually syllables following a prefix (Peacock 2005: 131). However, clues related to spelling are somewhat complicated, and exceptions and differences between regional varieties exist.

Paananen-Porkka (2007: 61-64) describes the functions of sentence stress, which are similar in both Finnish and English. Sentence stress is a means to divide speech into comprehensible units that are not too long for the listener to process. It can also

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convey contrastive or emphatic information and thus fall on words that are, for instance, contrasted with the information in the previous sentence. For example, the following phrases change in meaning due to differences in sentence stress placement:

1. *We never spend our holidays at home.* (= normal)
2. *WE never spend our holidays at home.* (= contrastive -> *But our parents do*.)
3. *We NEVER spend our holidays at home.* (= emphatic -> *But I think we should*.)

Similar to word stress, sentence stress concerns stressed and unstressed units of speech (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 21-48). Sentence stress tends to fall on lexical items rather than grammatical words, and many grammatical items such as *him, the* and *than* have weak and strong forms depending on their role in a sentence.

2.3.2 Rhythm

The rhythm of English is a product of word stress and sentence stress (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 152). English is often described as a stress-timed language, which means that the time between stressed syllables is always somewhat the same (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 14). Finnish, on the other hand, is usually considered a syllable-timed language in which syllables occur at regular distances, not only stressed syllables (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 62). The recurrence of certain units of speech at regular intervals is referred to as *isochrony* (Peacock 2005: 145). However, the division of languages into stress-timed and syllable-timed has been questioned and criticized, and, for instance, non-isochronous features have been observed in English (e.g. Paananen-Porkka 2007: 32-43).

Due to the differences in the rhythmic patterns of their mother tongue and the target language, Finnish learners of English often have trouble in acquiring English speech rhythm. Paananen-Porkka (2007: 65-70) summarizes these difficulties as follows:

1) learners use too little variation in pitch when marking stress, i.e. they speak monotonously
2) the distinction in length between stressed and unstressed syllables is insufficient

3) trouble in producing reduced vowels, particularly in word final positions and placing stress on each syllable

4) pauses are long and common

5) pauses occur in wrong places

6) learners speak at a slow rate

Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 154) note that learners of English, particularly those whose mother tongue is syllable-timed, may believe that their speech is most comprehensible if they put similar effort and emphasis on each syllable. However, native speakers can find this as having a negative impact on intelligibility and grow tired of listening to speech that is not rhythmically divided into appropriate units of information.

Another feature of English speech rhythm is the change that often occurs at word boundaries where sounds may be altered depending on the sounds that occur together with them (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 157). Linking and assimilation are examples of such procedures that manifest in connected speech. Linking connects the last sound of a word or a syllable to the first sound of the following one (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 158). For instance, the phrase *my own* in speech tends to include a glide and be merged into my ʸ‿ own. Similarly, some varieties may add an /r/ sound between two vowels, for example, *media event* becomes media /r/ event. Assimilation is common in English, and a typical example would be the palatalization of alveolars when followed by a /y/: *He hates‿your hairdo*, where the pronunciation of the underlined word boundary becomes [tʃ].

In 2007, Paananen-Porkka conducted a study among six Finnish adolescent learners of English in order to examine the deviance from native norms in English speech rhythm. In addition, the purpose was to find out what type of reactions the speech samples would prompt in native English speaking listeners and whether they found rhythm to have an effect on intelligibility. The results of the study indicate that the learners paused and hesitated excessively and in inappropriate places, which the native speakers found to be detrimental to intelligibility to an extent (Paananen-Porkka 2007: 344). In part the rhythmic anomalies were due to incorrectly stressing

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unstressed syllables, and while none of the participants produced English that was completely unintelligible, Paananen-Porkka (2007: 354-355) suggests various implications for the teaching of pronunciation at the comprehensive level. First, attention should be paid to pausing and pragmatic ways to indicate hesitation. Second, teachers ought to employ tools such as computers or video-recorders to make pupils aware of the possible problems in their pronunciation. And finally, teachers should be trained in phonetics and the analysis of pronunciation.

2.3.3 Intonation

Intonation regards the pitch patterns of speech that, in English, can convey syntactic, semantic or attitudinal information (Odisho 2003: 59). As a feature of pronunciation, intonation is highly context-dependent, and the pitch pattern of any given utterance is directly connected to the situation it occurs in and to the intentions of the speaker (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 175). Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 184) describe intonation as a melodic entity where the voice rises and falls between different levels of pitch within an utterance, depending on its role as an indicator of grammatical features or emotions and attitudes.

Odisho (2003: 106-107) states that intonation can be analyzed by using two dimensions: pitch height and pitch direction. Pitch height is a continuum between high and low pitch, which are always relative and vary between people: adult males have a lower pitch than adult females. Pitch direction indicates the movement of pitch and is usually described as rising, falling or level, or a combination of these. For instance, a rising-falling intonation in a phrase such as *she's gone* indicates certainty, whereas a rising intonation in the same phrase turns it into an uncertain yes/no question (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 184-185). As a general rule, a falling intonation signals completeness that does not require an answer, while a rising intonation prompts a yes/no answer (Ladefoged 2005: 24-25).

Punctuation marks can act as a means to signal suprasegmental features in speech (Odisho 2003: 14). As an example, Odisho (2003: 108) states that a comma, a semi-

colon, a colon and a period indicate pauses of different lengths. A period usually represents the longest pause as well as a falling intonation, while a comma stands for the shortest pause. Similarly, question marks and exclamation points denote a rising or a falling intonation, respectively. However, Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 194-195) note that in some cases punctuation marks do not consistently stand for a specific pitch pattern, and therefore intonation should be illustrated to learners by using other visual aids as well.

Derwing (2008: 354) reports of studies indicating that non-native speakers who have not acquired intonation patterns characteristic of native English can be considered to have negative personalities due to their pronunciation. Odisho (2003: 106) regards intonation as the most challenging part of pronunciation to teach, and Jenkins (2000: 43-44) characterizes rhythm and intonation as "the last stronghold of a foreign accent", while admitting that intonation has little grammatical importance. Intonation does therefore seem to be a feature of pronunciation that may cause such reactions in listeners that the speaker did not intend for. It is, however, perhaps not the most essential aspect of pronunciation in terms of intelligibility, and thus an example of a language item that may not be necessary to include in the primary syllabus for learning English as an international language, which is under focus in the next chapter.

3   SPEAKING ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

This chapter examines the phenomenon of English as an international language and particularly its phonological aspects. Section 3.1 looks at the recent discussion on EIL and interculturalism in foreign language learning, 3.2 touches upon the discussion revolving around non-native teachers of English, and section 3.3 compares different models that have been proposed for teaching English pronunciation. Section 3.4 concerns transfer, that is, the impact of one's first language on the outcome of learning other languages and discusses accent and intelligibility. Finally, section 3.5 examines language attitudes.

3.1 Issues raised on EIL, interculturalism and identity

McKay (2002: 5-6) justifies the position of English as an international language by using the following criteria: 1) English has a substantial number of both native and non-native speakers, 2) it is used for wider communication both internationally and locally within countries and communities, and 3) it is recognized in most countries either as an official language or by the encouragement to study English. The term *international language* was initially defined by Smith (1976, as cited by McKay 2002: 11-12) as a language used in border crossing communication. Smith and McKay both insist that learning an international language differs from learning other languages in that an adherence to cultural information is not a principal objective. For instance, learners need not adopt the cultural norms of countries where English is spoken as the primary language (e.g. the UK and the USA). Instead, EIL functions as a means to convey one's ideas and culture to others and thus its ownership and use are not attached to any specific countries.

The implications of EIL on language teaching have become a popular topic for discussion. Matsuda (2009: 169-170) speaks from the Japanese point of view and argues that "Teaching English as an international language … requires a mindset that is significantly different from the approach traditionally used in English language teaching (ELT) that positions English as the language of UK and/or United States

and its people". Similarly, McKay (2002: 5) contends that if English is to be taught as an international language the goals of teaching must convey that choice. The changes in the approach to teaching tend to refer to the importance given to native speaker norms. Jenkins (2000: 1) maintains that the English language teaching pedagogy has not kept pace with the global development of English as an international language, and there continues to be a reluctance to give up native speaker norms and standards.

Communicative competence (CC) has for long been considered a central goal in foreign language teaching (see section 4.1 for more). Coperias Aguilar (2007), however, questions communicative competence as a target for foreign language learning since it relies at large on a native speaker model, particularly as regards linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural competences. Coperias Aguilar considers the CC an impossible target and instead welcomes the notion of Intercultural Communicative Competence. She considers it more suitable to serve in today's communication world as it views the intercultural speaker as a reference point, not the native speaker. Moreover, Kirkpatrick (2007: 10) reminds that linguistic and communicative competence is difficult to define and that, for example, an English speaker from England might not be communicatively competent in Australia despite his or her native speaker status.

Another aspect of the study of EIL is the question of what it means to be an intercultural speaker. In a discussion over the matter, House (2007: 10-11) highlights the close connection of language and culture by stating that "the vocabulary of a language reflects the culture shared by its speakers." Thus even if a native-like pronunciation was reached, in order for one to pass as a member of the target culture one should also be aware of the specific cultural references that words and expressions can hold. House (2007: 14-15) continues by suggesting that being an intercultural speaker means being in between two languages and cultures, and hence *creating* a third. So instead of forever attempting to reach an ideal speaker level of the target language (and its culture), value should be attributed to "the possession of more than one set of linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge in one and the same

individual" (House 2007: 14-15).

While the relationship between language and culture is difficult to deny, the question of *what to teach* about culture is not as easily answered. McKay (2002: 82-83) maintains that no particular country and its culture should be presented as the only basis of cultural knowledge for EIL learners. Furthermore, it is not enough to have knowledge about a culture if the knowledge is not applied to tasks that develop cross-cultural communication skills. Instead, learners should be invited to draw comparisons between the target culture and their own and to gain awareness of variation in culture. Moreover, cultural materials should not only be seen to refer to materials from other countries but also to materials from the learners own culture (McKay 2002: 88). In accordance with this view, Kirkpatrick (2007: 193-194) summarizes what he considers the key elements of an English as a lingua franca approach to teaching: 1) students attention is drawn to those elements in language that are most likely to cause intelligibility problems, 2) as to culture, emphasis is on cultural differences and their impact on communication, and 3) communication strategies are included in order to enhance cross-cultural encounters. Furthermore, Kirkpatrick (2007: 7) asserts that a choice for a model is also a choice for a culture: choosing British English, for instance, as the only linguistic model allows for British culture to become a part of learning as well.

Learners' identity is a recurring topic in EIL discussions. While European language classes currently employ various different methods, it is generally agreed that communicative competence or cross-cultural communicative competence should remain the main objective, and traditionally British English and its standards have had a strong foothold in European language teaching (Modiano 2009: 59-60). However, Modiano (2009: 64-65) challenges the native speaker model as it can be disadvantageous to learner identity: the pursuit of an ideal native speaker model is an attempt to achieve an identity other than the learner's own, and instead Modiano (2009: 72) would rather promote teaching that would both enhance the European identity and function in global use.

Identity is also connected to the willingness to acquire a certain accent or to preserve one, which leads us closer to the phonological aspect of EIL. Paananen-Porkka (2007: 76) asserts that "the desire to affiliate with people sharing the same native language or with native speaker's of L2 is reflected in the way he or she speaks the L2." For instance, the choice of consciously retaining traces of one's first language in the L2 pronunciation may be due to an inclination to uphold one's national or ethnic identity. Moreover, peer pressure either in the L1 or the L2 group may affect the way in which a learner pronounces the L2: either by adjusting to the pronunciation norms of the L2 or by resisting them. However, there is also skepticism regarding such a notion of threatened identity and whether there is actual evidence that it would lead one to consciously decline to learn native-like pronunciation (Remiszewski 2005: 295).

As to pronunciation in particular, Schwartz (2005: 177) characterizes the on-going discussion on EIL phonology in the following words:

> The fact that English has come to be used as a language for international communication, frequently involving exclusively non-native speakers, has established rival camps in the area of English language pedagogy. A particularly heated debate has come out of recent proposals to ease the task of mastering English sound structures, in which certain features of English pronunciation are to be emphasized in teaching the language, while other are given less attention. (Shwartz 2005: 177)

Indeed, opinions expressed over the matter are manifold and can roughly be divided into those in favor of formulating a variety of English specifically suited for people who learn it for use in international contexts, and to those who see no reason to move away from the traditional native-speaker models in teaching English, and in particular, pronunciation. The pioneering attempt to pin point the areas in pronunciation that cause most intelligibility problems in EIL interactions is Jenkins' book *Phonology of English as an International Language* (2000) and the so called Lingua Franca Core (LFC): the sounds and suprasegmentals that her research showed to be of most importance for mutual intelligibility in interactions between non-native speakers of English.

Section 3.3.3 is dedicated to the LFC and the discussion that it spurred but for

understanding EIL phonology, Jenkins (2000: 25-68) recognizes two essential concepts: *acceptable* inter-speaker variation and *beneficial* intra-speaker variation. Inter-speaker variation refers to language variation between people and between regions. It is often considered negative: deviance of the (native) norm is an error. However, Jenkins (ibid.) holds inter-speaker variation to be acceptable and predictable. Intra-speaker variation, on the other hand, concerns the variation within a speaker. Each person has the ability to use their language in more than one way. In interaction, speakers utilize this ability by moving towards the speech of their interlocutor. In EIL, intra-speaker variation is to do with situational adaptation and accommodation, and therefore it can be seen as a beneficial quality and skill.

3.2 The non-native teacher

Most English teachers in the world would not classify themselves as native speakers of English (Canagarajah 1999, as cited by Andrews 2007: 149). In other words, like their pupils, they have learned English as a second or foreign language and speak another language as their mother tongue. Their work as teachers of English is thus by nature English as an international language in practice and there is no reason to assume that they were incompetent to teach the language. However, it is common that native and non-native teachers of English are compared and the former are often preferred for various reasons in, for instance, hiring teaching staff (McKay 2002: 41-42). Andrews (2007: 149) contends that the favoring of native speakers has caused a global identity crisis among non-native teachers who can experience an inferior self-perception of their skills as teachers in comparison to their native colleagues.

The present material is aimed at a specific target group and teachers who primarily work in a 'home setting', that is, in their home country with pupils most of whom share a language background with the teacher. Today it is, however, not unusual to encounter teachers who have traveled to other locations to work as English language educators, and Holliday (2009: 25) draws attention to the discrimination they might experience when competing for work with native-speaking teachers. It is apparent that decisions and judgments are not made purely on linguistic bases. Instead, they

can also be driven by complex ideological and political underpinnings even to the extent that *linguistically* native-like teachers may not be considered 'native enough' if they do not possess other attributes stereotypically associated with nativeness such as a Western nationality or even white skin color (Holliday 2009: 25-27).

The notion of native speakers' superiority as teachers has been labeled 'the native speaker fallacy' by Phillipson (1992: 193-199), and it involves the idea that a language is somehow owned by its speakers. Native speakers can therefore dictate what language use is appropriate, acceptable or correct, while non-native speakers do not have similar power. McKay (2002: 42) notes that, as to teachers, such a view gives meager significance for pedagogical expertise and instead values pronunciation skills and intuition. It is nevertheless a common belief that native and non-native teachers have different strengths and weaknesses (Andrews 2007: 145). For example, native speakers may be perceived to have better oral skills and a wider command of vocabulary (McKay 2002: 43).

Andrews (2007: 149-150) points out that the term 'non-native' teacher as such has been criticized since it emphasizes what non-native teachers lack instead of acknowledging what they possess. For example, non-native teachers tend to have better knowledge *about* language. Furthermore, a non-native teacher of English has a similar background with his or her students in learning a new language and can therefore relate to their learners and anticipate the difficulties they might encounter. McKay (2002: 45) also emphasizes the fact that non-native teachers present a model for learners that has relevance to their social and cultural surroundings, something that is impossible for a native speaker. It has even been voiced that a teacher whose mother tongue is the same as their pupils' and who has successfully learned to speak the language they are teaching is the *best* possible model for language learners (Preston 2005: 55).

In Finland, few teachers of English are native speakers and a Finnish teacher of English might even be unaware of the active discussion about the distinctions between native and non-native teachers. However, it can be speculated that the

insecurities Finnish teachers may have are similar to those among Japanese teacher trainees as reported by Matsuda (2009). In Japan, the English teaching pedagogy has traditionally heavily adhered to native (American and/or British) models, which Matsuda considers disempowering to Japanese teachers who might, for instance, regard their own accent inferior if it deviates from the native norm. The possible dilemma for Japanese (and Finnish) teachers might thus be that they are expected to teach something such as English pronunciation, while at the same time they feel that their own skills are not up to par with the native model that they are supposed to teach.

As has been shown and as McKay (2002: 41-46) maintains, non-native teachers are often, unjustly, considered inferior to their native colleagues. However, there is also criticism towards such a division. For instance, Coperias Aguilar (2007: 69) insists that the best language teachers are those who can draw learners' attention to the links between their own culture and other cultures and teach critical awareness towards otherness. Whether the teachers are native or non-native speakers is therefore irrelevant as such. Moreover, Kirkpatrick (2007: 195) asserts that teachers of English should be multilingual and aware of their students' backgrounds. They should also have an understanding of the role of English in the country they work in and be sensitive to their students' needs.

3.3 Models for pronunciation

Kirkpatrick (2006: 71-81) presents three models for learners of English that can be used depending on the learners' background and the country they live in. The models are a *native-speaker* model, a *nativized* model and a *lingua franca* model. This section examines these models by focusing on how they are relevant to Finnish learners: the traditional native-speaker models of British and American English (3.3.1), the notion of a Euro-English variety (3.3.2) and the lingua franca model and specifically the Lingua Franca Core (3.3.3).

3.3.1 Traditional native models RP and GA

Received pronunciation or RP has been the most sought after model for pronunciation in Europe over the past century (Przedlacka 2005: 18). It is thought to be the most popular model particularly because it has been widely codified and plenty of materials are readily available (Kirkpatrick 2007: 71-81, Przedlacka 2005: 29, Trudgill 2005 :93). The name 'Received Pronunciation' stems from the accent that British children were taught to use in private schools (Kirkpatrick 2007: 17). RP is thus associated with England yet in remains regionally neutral within England in comparison with local dialects (Przedlacka 2005). In Britain, RP is used particularly in broadcasting and therefore it is sometimes referred to as the BBC English, Queen's English or Oxford English (Mesthrie et al. 2000: 24).

RP has strong connotations as to its speakers' social status and it is sometimes regarded as a stable variety that is resistant to change. However, Przedlacka (2005) maintains that such beliefs are merely myths and points out several examples of both diachronic and social variation within the RP accent. While RP is still considered a superior accent by some, Kirkpatrick (2007: 17) asserts it has lost much of its prestige and many people in England today have no difficulty using their local accents. In fact, RP has been shown to elicit negative reactions especially from younger generations in Britain and the use of the accent can be interpreted as an attempt to draw attention to a speaker's social 'superiority' (Przedlacka 2005: 25-26).

General American or GA is somewhat the American counterpart to RP as it is considered the standard accent of the US and is usually taught to foreign learners of English. However, a single prestigious accent does not exist in the United States and therefore GA cannot be seen as an American equivalent to RP in all respects (Mesthrie et al. 2000: 24). Even though the use of the term GA is common, Preston (2005) maintains that it does not, in fact, exist. Instead, it is the variety of American English that has the least number of negative stereotypes attached to it. Also Kirkpatrick (2007: 67) questions the notion of a general accent in the US mainly because of the metropolitanization and distinct varieties that are, as a result,

developing in American cities. He does, however, regard American English as the most powerful variety in the world (Kirkpatrick 2007: 55), which might have implications on the popularity of RP in English language teaching.

While RP and GA are usually the two 'standard' models offered to learners of English (also in Finland), there is also criticism of their dominance in teaching (Li 2009: 81). First, it cannot be proven that either RP or GA was superior to other accents nor that one of them was easier to learn than the other (Remiszewski 2005: 306). Second, providing one common explanation for their superiority, Kirkpatrick (2007: 6) notes that sometimes certain native varieties are regarded better because they are older than, for instance, varieties that are spoken in Africa and Asia, and are therefore thought to be purer. However, Kirkpatrick (2007: 37) maintains that since English is characteristically a diverse language, choosing one native model for learners is doing them a disservice and instead they should, particularly if English is to be taught as an international language, be made aware of its global variation.

3.3.2 Local/nativized models and Euro-English

Local/nativized models of English usually refer to the varieties of English that are used in countries where English is an official language but not necessarily the only one, and where local languages are used alongside English. This means that English is used as a second language in multilingual communities, particularly in such domains as education, work and the media (Crystal 2002: 2). Nativized varieties such as Indian English, Ghanaian English and Singapore English have been influenced by local languages and they may vary from the so called 'standard' or native varieties in several linguistic aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and cultural patterns of discourse (Kirkpatrick 2007: 1-23).

In Finland, English does not have an official status nor is there a variety that could be labeled Finnish English. A local model of English is therefore not an option for Finnish learners. However, according to Kirkpatrick (2007: 165), this may not always be the case: "Most scholars agree that the increased use of English in Europe

will lead to a variety or varieties of Euro-English, although their emphases and predictions differ". He also remarks that in some European countries such as the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries English does, in fact, already have such a high profile that some would consider it a second language. Modiano (2009: 66) describes the so called Euro-English as an "extension" of EIL with lexical and phonological variation as well as mixing of British and American varieties.

The shift from native models to local ones has already started in some parts of Europe. Modiano (2009: 65-66) discusses the changes in the national English curricula in Sweden. While British and American English used to be the only acceptable norms for language teaching, the official approach since 1994 has been that English is learned primarily for international communication purposes and instead of adhering to the norms of specific standard varieties the focus is on multiculturalism and the growing English speaking world. Modiano (ibid.) continues by stating that Europe is moving closer to defining English as an international language and further from using native models (BrE and AmE) as the starting point. Finland as a Nordic country would naturally be a part of such a transition, while the current emphasis still seems to lie on loyalty toward the native model.

3.3.3 Lingua franca model and the Lingua Franca Core

Holliday (2009: 21-22) describes EIL (/ELF) as follows: "An outcome of the English as a lingua franca movement is the idea that there might be a reduced code which is sufficient for the purposes of communication between 'non-native speakers' in international settings." In 2000, Jenkins reported of research she had conducted with the aim of localizing those specific sounds of English that are most crucial for successful communication of meaning. The data were collected over a long period of time using various methods (Jenkins 2000: 132) and the findings were named the Lingua Franca Core (LFC). From a pedagogic point of view, Jenkins (2000: 123) describes the LFC as her "attempt ... to scale down the phonological task for the majority of learners, by leaving to the individual learner's discretion and to later acquisition outside the classroom the learning of peripheral details, and focusing

pedagogic attention on those items which are essential in terms of intelligible pronunciation."

Jenkins (2000: 134-157) narrows the phonological core for EIL as consisting of the following four features: 1) most consonant sounds, 2) appropriate consonant cluster simplification, 3) vowel length distinctions and 4) nuclear stress, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Lingua Franca Core (adapted from Jenkins 2000: 134-157 and Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 476)

1	Most consonant sounds	all consonant sounds apart from /θ, ð,/ and the dark, velarized *l* [ɫ]
		/r/ pronounced wherever it occurs in a word
		aspiration of voiceless stops /p, t, k/ in word-initial positions
2	Appropriate consonant cluster simplification	sounds are not omitted in word-initial clusters
		in word medial-clusters, only certain omissions are acceptable
3	Vowel length distinctions	ability to distinguish between short and long vowels
4	Nuclear stress	contrast in sentence stress (e.g. I bought a CAR. vs. I BOUGHT a car.)
	Non-core, that is, not essential for mutual intelligibility	vowel quality, weak forms, connected speech, word stress, rhythm and pitch movement

The last row of Table 3 clearly shows that the LFC excludes several features that have traditionally been regarded important in pronunciation teaching. The impulse for embarking upon LFC research seems to have been quite practical: Jenkins (2000: 2) explains that it seemed necessary to alleviate both teachers' and learners' workload by focusing on "what is convenient for teacher to teach" and "what is effective for learners to learn". Overly detailed descriptions of the pronunciation of English would therefore appear redundant for most learners. Jenkins (2000: 95) admits that the LFC is contrived to an extent as it does not exactly follow any one existing variety of

English. She does, nonetheless, point out that such a core does already exist among all native speakers of English.

Since its release the LFC has prompted numerous responses, both supportive and critical. For instance, Seidlhofer (2005: 67) acknowledges that no subsequent studies have disputed the core items as such and gives the LFC credit for not regarding deviations from the native norm as errors. Also Trudgill (2005: 88, 93) agrees that the notion of prioritizing phonological features is a positive development, however, he remains unconvinced of the true need for a lingua franca model. Trudgill (2005: 87-93) maintains that the question is not whether to use native models or not but to what extent it is reasonable to use them. He states that the sensible choice is to continue using native models for pronunciation, while remembering that a perfect command of native pronunciation is not likely to be acquired. Similarly, Remiszewski (2005) is concerned by the lingua franca approach as he sees it as lowering the bar and discouraging learners from pursuing native-like pronunciation by telling them that they should be satisfied with less. Jenkins (2009: 14-15), however, regards many such responses as involving misinterpretations of the aims of the LFC. For instance, she says that the guiding objective was never to make learning pronunciation *easy*. Instead, it was to pin point the most crucial features in terms of intelligibility and to focus on them.

3.4 Transfer, accent and intelligibility

It is a widely accepted fact that a person's first language (L1) has its impact on second/foreign language learning, including pronunciation (Derwing 2008: 349). For instance, Japanese learners of English tend to have difficulty in distinguishing between and producing the liquid consonants /r/ and /l/ since in Japanese the two are allophones (Bradlow 2008: 287-308). Finnish learners, on the other hand, would not have trouble telling the two apart as they are phonemes in Finnish, although they might struggle with the several sibilants in the English language that do not exist in Finnish. Language transfer and one of its consequences, *accent,* are discussed in this section together with the notion of intelligibility.

Accent is a common term to describe the way in which a person pronounces a language. Language cannot be spoken without pronouncing it, thus everybody has an accent (Andersson & Trudgill 1990: 127). However, the term accent tends to be used of ones that differ from our own and reveal that the speaker hails from somewhere else. For example, Ladefoged (2005: 2) notes that "An accent is always what the other person has; we seldom view ourselves as speaking our native tongue with a particular accent". Sometimes the term *accent* is confused with intelligibility or comprehensibility, although they can be considered separate aspects of oral output (Munro 2008: 196-197).

Odisho (2003: 111) explains how accents can be divided into subgroups based on their cause and possible implications. One division is *intralanguage* versus *interlanguage*. The former refers to accents within one language. It is usually the result of regional variation and present in all living languages. The latter describes the possible effects of a person's first language on second or foreign languages, and is therefore of more relevance to the present study. For example, a person who speaks Finnish as his/her first language usually has a different sounding accent when speaking English than a Swedish person would have. This type of accent is simply referred to as foreign.

Foreign accent is one evidence of language transfer, and although there was a time when it was classified even as a speech disorder, today it is perceived as highly predictable for second language learners, particularly if they learn a language at a later age, and as something that as such need not be a problem (Munro 2008: 193-194). A foreign accent is usually detectable to any speaker regardless of one's linguistic knowledge. Munro (2008: 195) lists the following as clues for accented speech: "the omission or insertion of phones, the substitution of one phone for another, or the production of phones that differ at the subphonemic level from native-like segments".

Accents can also be categorized as phonetic or phonological, depending on the extent

to which they deviate from the standard of any particular variety (Odisho 2003: 112). A phonetic accent does not change the meaning of a word but might hinder its intelligibility and cause confusion in the listener, sometimes prompting requests for repetition. A phonological accent, on the other hand, alters the meaning of a word as the speaker has trouble producing the correct sound. For instance, if a Finnish speaker failed to pronounce the initial sound [ʃ] in the word 'she' and instead pronounced it as 'sea', the meaning of the word would change, the cause being his or her phonological accent.

Scheuer (2005: 116) notes that it is important to distinguish between accent and intelligibility and to remember that having a foreign accent does not automatically make anybody's speech unintelligible. In addition, while pronunciation is a common cause for intelligibility problems (Seidlhofer 2005: 66), it is hardly the only one. In his criticism of the Lingua Franca Core, Trudgill (2005: 80-81, 95) points out that in many cases foreign speech can be difficult to comprehend not because of its sounds as such but because of its speed as well as cultural references that might not be familiar to the listener. In intercultural communication situations native speakers should thus speak at a lower rate and avoid the use of idioms, colloquialisms and very formal language. Similarly, Seidlhofer (2005: 71) maintains that successful ELF/EIL users avoid the same aforementioned features that are typical of specific native speaker communities including, for instance, weak forms and elision. In addition, they are skilled at accommodating and adjusting their language so that it is at level with the listener's. The command of such *situational adaptation* is, in terms of language pedagogy, at the core of the EIL approach and its pragmatic aspect (Modiano 2009: 64).

There seems to be unanimity as to intelligibility being the main concern of pronunciation teaching. Yet, as Munro (2008) remarks, there has been little research on L2 intelligibility and how it can be assessed. Most often intelligibility is evaluated by acquiring listener feedback: listeners (either L1 or L2 speakers) of speech samples determine whether they think the samples are intelligible or not and to what extent. Their perceptions are, however, affected by, for example, the spoken passage,

familiarity with words that they hear, whether they share the L1 with the speaker and whether they are accustomed to hearing L2 speech. Therefore assessments of comprehensibility/intelligibility and also accentedness are always *perceived*. For this reason, Munro (2008: 213) maintains that in interaction the listener should also take on an active role and be willing to acknowledge that it may be possible to develop one's perceptive skills.

3.5 Language attitudes

Since every person speaks with an accent and is able to recognize accents that sound different, it comes as no surprise that accents can prompt various reactions in listeners, specifically when they differ from their own. One aspect of accents is their prestige in society. Gupta (2006: 97) explains that "in all English-using places there are high-prestige and low-prestige accents: accents have high or low prestige because hearers associate their speakers with particular social groups which have high or low prestige". However, the social prestige of an accent only comes across to speakers within the same community, not internationally (Gupta 2006: 97). Similarly, there are no accents that are universally more aesthetic or pleasant than others. In a study by Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 133-136), it was shown that English people considered Birmingham and London accents most unpleasant to listen to. However, this was not because of their absolute unpleasantness but because of the negative connotations they produced in the listeners in regards to the people from those areas. For American listeners, on the other hand, the results were completely different as they were not aware of the social connotations of the two variants.

The association of assumed attributes to language varieties usually touches upon language prejudice which, by Kirkpatrick's (2007: 14-15) definition can be described as a tendency to regard some varieties of a language more intelligent or better than others. Kirkpatrick (ibid.) refers to China as an example. British English used to be the desired model for Chinese learners 20 years ago, whereas today most of them would prefer American English. Partially such language attitudes can be related to other prejudices towards, for example, ethnicity. However, they are not based on any

factual information on the superiority of certain varieties. Kirkpatrick (2007: 197) also points out that although it is virtually impossible to be completely unprejudiced, particularly people working in the field of linguistics and language teaching should be able to treat their own prejudice as simply prejudice, and strive to see beyond it.

Language attitudes manifest also as negative reactions such as irritation or distraction. There have been some signs of non-native speakers being less tolerant to strongly accented speech than native speakers (Munro 2008: 212). Nevertheless, in a discussion on native-speakers' relevance to pronunciation teaching, Scheuer (2005: 115-117, 125) contends that strongly foreign-accented speech tends to irritate native speakers and that L2 speakers with such features in their speech might encounter scornful responses. Scheuer (2005:126) proceeds to express a concern over the possible repercussions of the EIL approach:

> advising learners of English to disregard the unfriendly response their pronunciation provokes, simply because this response in [sic] not politically correct, means preparing them for functioning in an ideal, rather than real, world (Scheuer 2005: 126)

However, the complexity of this matter is apparent since even a command of native-like pronunciation does not seem to solve the problem. Research by Giles and Smith (1979, as cited by Preston 2005: 56) has shown that while adopting a slightly similar accent as one's native speaking interlocutor's is met with approval, moving too close to it tends to be disliked.

A recurring argument that questions the ELF movement is that while its supporters base the need for a simplified model of English on learners' interests, learners' actual opinions on the matter have not been widely surveyed, and some studies imply that native pronunciation models are still preferred to others (Li 2009: 82). For example, Janicka et al. (2005: 287) report of Polish learners who have expressed a desire for native pronunciation models for various reasons. Li (2009: 82) notes that in Hong Kong learners often favor RP over a local accent and McKay (2002: 70-71) refers to a study conducted among Austrian learners who have been shown to opt for the traditional native model instead of a local one. As a result, it can be speculated

whether learners have more positive attitudes towards traditional native models because they are aware of other people's prejudice against non-native accents, or whether they truly have the aims of acquiring native pronunciation for whichever reason. In any case, Seidlhofer (2005: 64) predicts that the attitudes towards ELF will change with time in the same way as American English has come to be accepted as a model over the past decades. Finally, in addition to the choice for a language model, there are several other decisions a teacher needs to make when designing a pronunciation syllabus. Such methodological choices are discussed in the next chapter.

4   PRONUNCIATION PEDAGOGY

This chapter discusses past and present methods in pronunciation pedagogy, beginning with an overview of the methodological development of the field in section 4.1. and moving onto how current methods serve the needs of learners of different ages and personalities in section 4.2. Finally, the considerations for setting goals for both teaching pronunciation generally and for individual learners are dealt with in section 4.3.

4.1 Methodological development

Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 2) state that in comparison to such areas of language as grammar and vocabulary, the study of pronunciation began much later, and thus language teachers have often been better skilled at the teaching of the first two. Pronunciation pedagogy has since developed into two approaches: the intuitive-imitative approach and the analytic-linguistic approach. The intuitive-imitative approach relies on the learner's imitation based on heard models of spoken language. It does not therefore involve specific information and teaching *about* pronunciation. The analytic-linguistic approach, on the other hand, employs various aids such as phonetic symbols and images of speech organs. Today the two approaches complement rather than exclude each other.

Initially the teaching of pronunciation was designed to mimic the natural acquisition process of a child's first language (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 3). For instance, the so called Direct Method was based on observing and imitating a model. The method falls under the category of naturalistic methods which share the notion that language should only be listened before an attempt to speak is feasible. Knight (2001: 148) continues by explaining how as part of the Reform Movement of the late 1800s and along with the establishment of phonetics as a science, a more analytic approach to teaching pronunciation took hold, and in particular phoneticians called for a more thorough education in phonetics for both teachers and learners. The Reform Movement challenged the grammar-translation methods and promoted a scientific

approach to language teaching. The International Phonetic Alphabet was also created at this time and it provided a practical tool for the teaching of speech sounds.

At the beginning of the 20th century the so called Oral approach was developed in the UK and what distinguished it from previous methods was its heavy focus on context, that is, learning a language in meaningful situations (Knight 2001: 149). In the 1940s and 50s an approach called Audio-Lingualism was established and pronunciation was at the core of language teaching (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 3-5). In Audiolingualism the explicit teaching of pronunciation also involves the so called minimal pair drills, in which learners are taught to listen to sounds and to distinguish between minimal pairs, that is, word pairs that vary in only one phoneme such as *deep/dip* and *sheep/ship*. As part of the cognitive approach of the 1960s, however, teaching grammar and vocabulary was preferred over pronunciation since native-like pronunciation was seen as an unachievable objective.

Several humanistic methodologies emerged in the 1970s and what they had in common was a holistic view of the learner as well as of the learning environment (Knight 2001: 152-158). The Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia and Total Physical Response methods all aimed at tapping into learners' emotional and/or physical resources in order to enhance the outcome of learning. Community Language Learning also emphasized the learners' responsibility of their own learning and used a technique called human computer in teaching pronunciation (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 7). This meant that the learners' successful utterances were recorded on tape and could be played back to them if they wished to further practice the pronunciation of specific sounds. According to Knight (2001: 152), none of the humanistic methodologies established a solid foothold in language teaching but their value lies in broadening the approach from purely linguistic to a more holistic one.

At present language learning is considered to be primarily about communication (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 7, Knight 2001: 155). Knight (2001: 155) defines communicative language learning as an umbrella term whose "desired outcome is

that the learner can communicate successfully in the target language in real situations, rather than have a conscious understanding of the rules governing that language". Celce-Murcia's (2007) model for communicative competence consists of six areas which can be further divided into sub-components. These competences are presented in Table 4 along with a specification on how pronunciation and knowledge of phonology can be seen to connect with each one. Pronunciation can thus have several functions that serve wider purposes than simply pronouncing a single word correctly and it plays, along with other areas of language, an important role in constituting communicative competence.

Table 4. The connection of pronunciation to Celce-Murcia's (2007) six constituents of communicative competence

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	PRONUNCIATION
Discourse competence	forming a meaningful, coherent utterance
Sociocultural competence	politeness in speech; awareness of phonological language variation
Linguistic competence	segmental and suprasegmental knowledge of phonology
Formulaic competence	fixed phrases and collocations that may, for example, support acquiring prosody
Interactional competence	conversation strategies (e.g. interruptions); non-verbal communication; non-linguistic utterances
Strategic competence	awareness of one's own cognition, especially learning

Although one must have a command of pronunciation in order to communicate effectively, it can be argued that focusing on meaning over form has overshadowed the specifics of pronunciation (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 10). At its simplest the teaching of pronunciation has been limited to repeating words after the teacher or a recorded speech sample. Such a 'listen and repeat' method may be sufficient for some learners but hardly provides enough information for all. And while behaviorist methods such as drilling may today be considered outdated, habit formation is a considerable facet of acquiring pronunciation and instead of being neglected it

should be combined with multisensory and multicognitive methods (Jenkins 2000: 32; Odisho 2003: 5, see more in the next section). The selection of appropriate teaching techniques is affected by, for instance, learners' age, and different methods are discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.2 Learner's age and personality

It is mostly agreed that when a child acquires his or her first language, the so called *critical period* is a time before which the acquisition needs to take place in order for it to be successful (Lightbown & Spada 2001: 36, Odisho 2003: 5). While the specific timing of the period remains unsettled, a general notion that it puts forward is that children have a special ability to acquire a language but, with age, that ability gradually diminishes. Thus adults who start learning a foreign language are more unlikely to ever reach native-like proficiency particularly with regard to pronunciation.

The distinction between acquisition and learning is not clear cut, and some argue that all language learning is acquisition to an extent, or that the two overlap (Odisho 2003: 11). Odisho (2003: 5-6) describes child language acquisition as subconscious, automatic and effortless in comparison to adult language learning that is conscious, mechanical and effortful. In addition, child language acquisition is typically context-driven, holistic and facilitated by ample input, reciprocity and communication. In other words, children benefit from the amount and quality of input, whereas adult learners of a foreign language tend to have limited opportunities to use language in meaningful situations. Moreover, adult learners often have the habit of expecting relatively complex language already at the early stages of learning, and difficulties might lead to feelings of embarrassment (Lightbown & Spada 2001: 36).

Although the critical period in language learning is a generally accepted concept, there have been studies that question the critical period theory in *second* language learning. Lightbown and Spada (2001: 36-42) report of studies that indicate adults' and adolescents' superiority at the early stages of second language learning,

particularly at acquiring grammar and vocabulary. However, children are likely to exceed in the later stages should they be exposed to sufficient input. Nonetheless, age as a biological factor does not predetermine overall success in learning a language, even if native-like mastery might for most be an improbable result (Odisho 2003: 11).

Since virtually all children acquire their first language with ease, there have been attempts to transfer the patterns and conditions in which they do so to second language learning, in the hope of reaching a similar outcome. One example of a method striving to imitate child language acquisition is immersion education, which Skehan (2001: 76) describes as a "learning environment which is supportive, and where bilingual teachers provide ample content-based input while allowing learners to produce language at their pace". In Europe, the so called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) similarly refers to teaching curricular subjects in another language than the learners' own, and it is considered to have a positive impact on learning communication and oral skills (European Commission 2011). However, although immersion as a comprehension based method has been shown to improve learners' receptive skills, its effectiveness regarding productive skills remains uncertain (Harley and Swain 1984, as cited by Skehan 2001: 76).

Odisho (2003: 9-10) maintains that the teaching of pronunciation should rely on both bottom-up and top-bottom methods. Traditionally teachers have focused on the former, that is, moving from smaller units of language to larger ones: from single sounds to syllables, words, sentences, and finally discourse, although often with less devotion to the larger phonological segments. The integration of a top-bottom approach is necessary because it draws attention to the overall articulatory settings of a language. English, for example, is a centripetal system where vowels are reduced to schwas when unstressed. For this reason, if teaching is limited to individual sounds such as vowels in isolation, and does not involve their behavior in actual speech, learners may struggle with both comprehending and producing longer stretches of utterances.

Approaches to teaching pronunciation that take particularly adult learners' needs into account tend to give priority to the multisensory and multicognitive aspects of pronunciation (e.g. Odisho 2003). Odisho (2003: 8) contends that "an integration of auditory, visual and tactile/kinesthetic techniques is indispensable for the proper mastery of speech, in general, and pronunciation, in particular". Thus pronunciation is not only a matter of hearing. Instead, it also has a visual dimension and is closely linked to physical gestures and sensations. In teaching, the multisensory facets can be targeted by, for instance, drawing learners' attention to the facial or bodily movements that go together with specific sounds or suprasegmental features of speech (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 295-298).

A multicognitive approach to teaching pronunciation concerns the thinking processes that are involved in perceiving and producing speech sounds, and it emphasizes the necessary cognitive skills and abilities needed in mastering pronunciation. Odisho (2003: 12) refers to the central cognitive aspects of pronunciation as "the triangular base of pronunciation", which includes the perception, recognition and production of sounds. These three processes are closely linked to the three stages of learning: registration, retention and retrieval, as well as to the three types of memory capacity: sensory, short-term and long term (Odisho 2003: 12). The dynamics of all these procedures are depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates the multitude of cognitive processes involved in pronunciation.
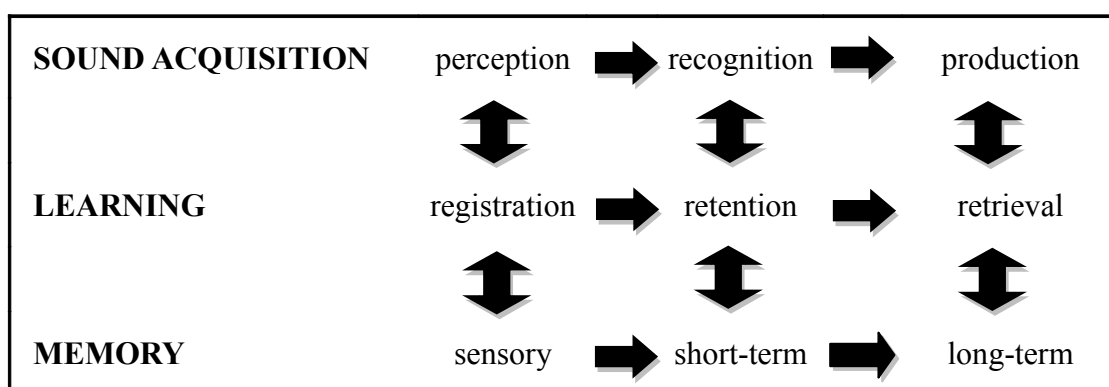

Figure 1. Three-stage cognitive sequencing in learning pronunciation
(adapted from Odisho 2003: 12-13)

Memory is a critical factor in learning pronunciation and multicognitive methods are particularly suitable for adults for the reason that they support the long-term retention of phonological information. Odisho (2003: 12) underlines the distinction between memorization and retention by explaining how difficult it can prove for adults to merely memorize sounds that as such do not carry meaning. However, categorizing or analyzing information provides learners with more ways to reach long-term retention. In summary, Odisho (2003) describes the cognitive complexity of acquiring and remembering sounds as follows:

> ...in order to perceive a sound one has to be exposed to it at least in passing through the sensory memory; to have it registered, at least temporarily, it should be stored in the short memory; however, in order to retrieve and produce a sound at will, it has to be retained and consolidated in the long-term memory through rehearsal. (Odisho 2003: 13).

While multisensory and multicognitive methods can contribute significantly to adults' learning, there is no reason to assume they would be ineffective with younger learners. Few children or teenagers who live in monolingual communities have the similar exposure to the target language as children acquiring their first language, let alone opportunities to interact in the target language. However, as with any syllabus the planning has to be generated by learners' needs and preferences, which are discussed in the next section.

4.3 Determining goals and targets

All learning has a target, and as to pronunciation, the target of learning can vary depending on both learners' personal preferences and objectives defined in the curriculum or by the teacher. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 319-325) suggest the following variables as those that determine how a pronunciation syllabus ought to be designed: *learner, setting, institutional, linguistic* and *methodological* variables. These variables are now briefly described and then assessed against the Finnish framework on which the present study concentrates.

Learner variables refer to differences in learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds,

previous language education, learning style and current pronunciation skills (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 320). By forming an idea of learner profiles the teacher can predict which areas are most likely to cause difficulties for learners. In Finnish schools the majority of learners are Finnish speaking and form a somewhat homogenous group in that regard. However, an increasing number of immigrant children are attending Finnish schools and as a result learners' language backgrounds might vary a great deal more.

Derwing (2008: 356) notes that there are advantages and disadvantages to both classes with mixed L1 learners and classes that consist of learners who share a mother tongue. It is easier to design tasks for a homogenous L1 class, while it might hinder the teacher's awareness of individual difficulties. In a mixed L1 class, on the other hand, learners are exposed to more variation in input which may improve their comprehension skills, while it is more challenging to create beneficial tasks for all learners. In any case, in the beginning it is necessary to conduct a needs analysis in order to map and assess the individual pronunciation and/or comprehension difficulties among a group of learners (Derwing 2008: 351-352).

Individual learner variables can also concern learners' motivation and attitudes towards learning a language (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 320). As part of his acculturation model, Schumann (1986, as cited by Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 18-19) proposed different types of motivation that play a role in acquiring a second or foreign language. Integrative motivation refers to a desire to become a full member of the target culture and might therefore indicate a strong willingness to acquire native-like pronunciation. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, concerns the need for learning a language in order to achieve something else such as an opportunity to study or work abroad. One might hypothesize that the latter would be more common among Finnish learners of English, although due to the dominance of English language in today's popular culture, young learners in particular might strive for a native-like pronunciation of English. In fact, Andrews (2007: 163) points out that even in multilingual groups the learners' own target varieties might vary and for some native speaker proficiency is the ultimate goal.

The *setting variables* of language teaching can fall into one of two categories: the foreign language setting or the second language setting (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 321). Learning English in Finnish schools classifies as the first since English is not an official or native language of Finland. However, a national survey published in 2009 by the Jyväskylä unit of Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG) shows that the vast majority of Finns recognize the importance of English and have studied the language for several years in their lives. Moreover, it is easy to find English language materials in Finland as well as hear English on TV, radio and in cinema since dubbing foreign language productions is not customary to Finland. Thus the home setting of Finnish learners of English provides them with an easy access to English and makes the EFL/ESL distinction slightly inaccurate.

Institutional variables are linked to educational policy in terms of teacher training and curricula for learning languages, as well as the materials and equipment available for teaching. Finnish teachers in basic (grades 1-9) and upper secondary education follow the national core curriculum (NCC) in which the general targets for learning foreign languages are specified. The curricula share aspirations with the notion of communicative competence by heavily emphasizing the interactional nature of language. The curriculum for basic education has different objectives for English than other foreign languages, and a focus on oral production is said to be the main objective for young learners at grades 3-6. Furthermore, speech strategies such as non-verbal communication and asking for clarification are listed as skills that they should achieve (*NCC for Basic Education* 2004: 138-141), even if pronunciation skills are not explicitly mentioned. Awareness of the main varieties of English is a specific target at grades 7-9, although no actual varieties are named. Instead English is continuously referred to as the *target language* and its culture.

The Finnish national core curriculum for upper secondary schools (*NCC for Upper Secondary Schools* 2003) does not include specific objectives for different foreign languages. The same goals and course descriptions can therefore be applied to, for

example, English, German and French. The following is given as a general objective for learning any foreign language at the upper secondary level:

> Instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills: it will provide them with skills and knowledge related to language and its use and will offer them the opportunity to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language is spoken. In this respect, special attention will be given to European identity and European multilingualism and multiculturalism. (*National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools* 2003: 102)

As to specific language varieties or areas, the National Core Curriculum thus takes no distinct stance, unless the desired emphasis on the European context was to be interpreted as a preference towards European English, or English in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The choice of language variety seems to be therefore shifted to both the teachers and the learning materials they choose to employ.

When constructing a syllabus and determining which pronunciation items to include, that is, focusing on the *linguistic variables*, it is useful to look at both learner profiles as well as the general target of learning. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 327) note on the selection and arrangement of objectives that "whatever is deemed as having the greatest impact on the learners' comprehensibility and fluency should receive the highest priority". Traditionally, pronunciation teaching has begun on the phonemic level and focused on the segmental aspects of phonology (Celce-Murcia 1996: 323). However, suprasegmentals have recently received more attention and their impact on intelligibility cannot be disputed (Derwing 2008: 353, Munro 2008: 210). According to Odisho (2003: 10), the current trend is maintaining a balance between segmental and suprasegmental levels of pronunciation and focusing on meaningful items and phrases.

According to Munro (2008: 197), there is a demand by teachers for specific instructions on which aspects of pronunciation are more vital than others in order to support the notion of communicative competence and thus intelligibility between interlocutors. However, while Jenkins' (2000) research on the notion of a Lingua Franca Core was a significant step towards gaining this information, as yet there is

no consensus on the matter (Derwing 2008: 352). Derwing (2008: 359) suggests that for now listener feedback is perhaps the best way to assess learners' progress. Lastly, *methodological variables* concern the methods of teaching that are considered the most apt at any given time by teachers and institutions (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996: 325). At present communication skills seem to be the main objective of all language learning, and pronunciation teaching ought to be intertwined into meaningful and relevant contexts.

To summarize, the current focus of language teaching is primarily on communication. The teaching of any aspect of language is therefore somehow connected to communicative competence and to how learners can best be prepared for real-life interactions in a second or foreign language. Specific methodological choices are determined by learner variables such as age, personality and L1 as well as learners' personal goals and targets. As to pronunciation, suggestions have been made to involve both bottom-up and top-bottom methods as well as broadening the traditional listen-and-repeat method to the use of multicognitive and multisensory methods in order to enhance the learning and memorizing of speech sounds. Finally, syllabus planning is affected by national curricula and objectives that have been set for language teaching in institutions.

5   AIMS OF THE MATERIAL

The present study is built around the task of creating a material package about how to teach pronunciation of English to Finnish learners. This chapter presents the specific goals of the material in section 5.1, specifies the target group in 5.2, and clarifies the structure of the material itself in 5.3.

5.1 Starting points

The objectives of the teaching material are threefold, in keeping with the research background in chapters 2, 3 and 4. First, an emphasis is on *prioritizing* information. As English is spoken in a multitude of accents in endless kinds of situations and contexts, it is necessary for a teacher to critically assess the possible models for pronunciation and to be able to explain the choices they make. Moreover, it is useful to consider the role of transfer in learning pronunciation and to predict which aspects of English phonology are more likely to cause difficulties for, in this case, Finnish speaking learners of English. Second, the goal is to incorporate the notion of *English as an international language* into teaching pronunciation. Lastly, the material aims at finding a *practical* approach to teaching pronunciation. In other words, it attempts to speak of phonetics and speech sounds in a manner comprehensible to both teachers and, particularly, learners of any age or skill level. These three objectives are now further divided into smaller aims.

Prioritization

Textbooks on teaching pronunciation are hardly difficult to find. On the contrary, very exhaustive materials are available on the sound systems of different English varieties and how to teach them. However, this is where the choice of a pronunciation model becomes the problem. If English is to be taught as an international language, pronunciation teaching cannot be based on only one native variety such as Received Pronunciation or General American. Instead, it should familiarize learners with the global variation in the English language. Furthermore,

many textbooks on pronunciation are hundreds of pages long and include *every* aspect of pronunciation. However, it is impossible, and unnecessary, to include such a large amount of detailed information in the curriculum, and teachers would need to choose which aspects to teach as most relevant.

Pronunciation is an aspect of language teaching that is often found difficult (Setter & Jenkins 2005: 1). However, my personal experience is that future teachers of English in Finland are not specifically trained to teach pronunciation during their teaching practice. While the topic may be raised in discussion, no particular instructions or recommendations are provided as to which pronunciation model to use or how to teach pronunciation. As a result, it would seem that the decisions on how to approach pronunciation teaching are left for each teacher to make for themselves. Furthermore, English teachers might assume that learners are able to 'pick up' pronunciation as they hear English on, for instance, tapes. In fact, a recurring opinion expressed during teacher training was that a teacher should be careful when correcting a pupil's pronunciation since it might be considered discouraging. However, it may be that there are also pupils who shy away from speaking English because they have problems with the pronunciation and who might benefit from a more thorough teaching and practising of pronunciation. Prioritization in this material is thus related not only to prioritizing pronunciation items in teaching but also to prioritizing pronunciation itself in the curriculum.

English as an international language

In Finland, the teaching of pronunciation (or any aspect of English) has traditionally been based on British English and the RP. Certainly, American English has gained recognition and popularity as well, and most textbooks used in Finnish schools come equipped with recordings in the two 'standards': British and American English. In addition, the latest textbook series introduce many other native varieties of English such as Australian English and Indian English. However, what is often lacking altogether is non-native speakers of English even though they could be seen as encouraging examples of people with a similar linguistic and cultural background as

the learners and who have been able to become efficient users of English.

In this material, particular attention is given to the notion of English as an international language. Mutual intelligibility is therefore considered the primary target in pronunciation instead of, for instance, accent reduction or native-like pronunciation. Another aim is to acknowledge and challenge language attitudes people might have towards (foreign) accents. However, the material does not join any 'camps' in the discussion on whether non-native speakers should be taught native standards or, for instance, the Lingua Franca Core. Wells (2005: 101-102) points out the problem with such a dichotomy in Poland, where learners want to be able to communicate in English with both native and non-native speakers, and should therefore not be asked to choose between the two. Similarly, while Finnish learners most likely will use English as a lingua franca with other non-native speakers, it would seem strange to assume that they would not be motivated to interact with native English speakers as well. For this reason, the incorporation of EIL into pronunciation teaching in the material does not mean entirely removing or disregarding native models but regarding non-native accents as equally acceptable.

Practicality

One of the goals of the material is to present English pronunciation in a way that is easily comprehensible to both teachers and learners. Phonetics can appear complicated with its symbols and terminology, yet it is an unavoidable part of learning any language and the purpose was to design step-by-step lessons and activities on how pronunciation could be taught and practiced in the classroom. After all, while it is undoubtedly beneficial for any teacher of languages to educate themselves on phonetics and phonology, it may not be so simple a task to translate and pass the information to learners.

Practicality also relates to keeping in mind the reality of Finnish schools. Teachers are obligated to follow the national curricula and they are faced with limitations regarding time and equipment. It is therefore essential to teach pronunciation not

only as isolated sounds or as something extra that is only touched upon if time allows but as a part of, for instance, communication tasks and exercises through the use of meaningful language and phrases. Furthermore, it should be considered important to give learners feedback on their pronunciation and to give it significance by also considering testing learners' pronunciation as a sub-skill in their oral language proficiency.

In terms of methodology, the learning material incorporates methods that take into account various types of learners. Multicognitive and multisensory methods cater for those who perhaps are not able to simply reproduce sounds after hearing them on tape. Thus, while pronunciation is foremost a matter of speech perception and production, learning can be enhanced by the use of other sensory channels as well. In addition, special attention is given to those who struggle with learning pronunciation and might therefore benefit from a more thorough teaching in, for example, small group tuition sessions. Overall, understanding learner variables ought to be the main concern at the beginning of teaching in order to find methods that best suit the needs of any given group of learners.

5.2 Target Group

The main target group of the material is Finnish teachers of English as a foreign language who teach English in their home country, as well as the people they teach. The material entails discussion about the effect of Finnish as a first language on learning English as well as about the differences in the phonology of the two languages. However, as the notion of English as an international language underpins the entire material, it includes, for example, exercises on how language attitudes can affect learning. The material does therefore touch upon other languages and accents as well, and could be beneficial also for learners of different backgrounds, which is useful particularly for teachers who have in their classes learners with immigrant backgrounds.

As to the learners' age, the material is not limited to any specific age group. Instead,

it includes suggestions for how different tasks could be shaped for younger or older learners and information on how age affects the learning of pronunciation. The sounds of a language are always the same and a young learner can learn the same sounds as an adult. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that, for example, all 16-year-old learners can master pronunciation even if they had been studying English since they were 10 years old. They might need revision of the very basics and therefore the material is meant to be used as a reference whenever learners of any age struggle with certain aspects of pronunciation.

The present study attempts to benefit both teachers and learners. Most teachers in Finland are non-native speakers of English and might experience difficulty in teaching pronunciation if they feel they cannot achieve a native-like pronunciation themselves. Teachers may feel as if the language was a possession of native speakers and they themselves could never reach a similar knowledge of it. At the same time they are expected to teach and evaluate learner contributions on a matter such as pronunciation where native-like model has generally been the only acceptable target. The material supports the notion that non-native speakers have their own variety of English and need not sound like a native-person in order for them to be proficient and perfectly intelligible. Furthermore, the material differs from pronunciation exercises in, for instance, most textbooks used in Finland in that it discusses reasons for choosing a particular language variety as a pronunciation model instead of simply using the one that has been used the most in the past.

5.3 Structure and contents

The teaching material includes approximately 30 lessons worth of tasks and exercises. Since pronunciation is taught continuously, the material is not meant to be studied from beginning to end within one term but to be used as a source for teaching pronunciation when there seems to be a need for it. However, the material includes what is seen as the core items of English pronunciation for Finnish speakers in particular, and thus it is recommendable that all the topics are discussed at some stage. In addition, there are some lesson plans for learners with particular difficulty

with pronunciation that could be used in small group tuition sessions.

The topics and pronunciation items have been chosen on the strength of both research into what Finnish speakers tend to find difficult in pronouncing English and on the LFC. In addition, the notion of EIL is taken into account through the incorporation of such themes as identity and language attitudes. Methodological choices focus on employing several sensory channels in order to support various types of learners. Hence, the core topics and objectives of the material are:

1) Methodological and pedagogical choices
    1. Individual goal-setting and assessment
    2. Focus on perception and listening in addition to production
    3. Use of multisensory and multicognitive methods to respond to different learners' needs
2) Teaching English as an international language
    1. Normalizing (also non-native) variation and thus supporting learner identity
    2. Acknowledging language attitudes
    3. Practicing accommodation skills for real life speaking situations
3) Individual sounds
    1. Consonants: sibilants, aspiration of /k/, /p/ and /t/, /w/ and /θ/ vs /ð/
    2. Vowels: regional variation in vowels, vowel length, unstressed vowels and the schwa /ə/
    3. Highlighting the difference between spelling and pronunciation
4) Prosody
    1. Sentence stress
    2. Connected speech phenomena such as weak forms and blending with focus on receptive skills
    3. Word stress
    4. Intonation

The material itself is divided into four units which are further divided into chapters. It needs to be emphasized that although one chapter, for example, is titled "Consonants", it does not include all consonant sounds of English nor do all the sounds receive equal attention. On the contrary, and as was stated above, choices have been made as to which consonants are considered more important than others on the account of prioritizing content. It has to be pointed out, however, that while any choices have been made based on research from several sources, teachers might still have different perceptions of what is more important than something else in teaching pronunciation. Therefore each teacher ought to look at the entire material first and then make their own decisions as to how to utilize it. In sum, the underlying aims of the material are in keeping with those put forward by Wells (2005: 109, emphasis added):

- "to concentrate on the matters that most impede **intelligibility**, while **encouraging fluency** and **confidence**
- **not to neglect** the need to interact with NSs; […]
- to exploit the findings of contrastive analysis to help **pinpoint likely areas of difficulty**"

6   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study set out to re-evaluate the role of pronunciation in English language teaching, particularly in the Finnish framework. The main objective was to create a material for teachers with three main goals. First, the target was to prioritize learning content by means of contrastive analysis and by predicting which pronunciation items are most likely to cause difficulties for Finnish learners and should therefore be given main attention. Second, the material attempted to incorporate the notion of English as an international language into teaching. English is increasingly used in interaction among people with varying language backgrounds and for this reason the teaching of English ought to prepare learners for such situations. For pronunciation, EIL can, for instance, mean focusing on comprehensibility and accommodation skills instead of such traditional goals as a native-like accent. Finally, the overall intention was to create a material that could be utilized in practice and that had taken into consideration methodological choices and learner variables.

The notion of EIL and the research into its implications on teaching are actively evolving and an attempt was made to base the study on the current understanding and findings on the matter. However, there are questions that remain unsolved and therefore, if the the material was to be recreated ten years later, some of the topics might be dealt differently. In terms of further research, it is useful to consider the incorporation of EIL into other aspects of language teaching. The present study focused on pronunciation, and some parts of it overlap with other facets of speaking skills as well as with pragmatics. In addition, EIL research can offer new approaches to teaching, for example, writing skills and cultural topics and there is a demand for new materials.

Designing materials for teaching is a complex task in which one needs to consider many features from methodology to learner variables and from defining the target group to assessing whether the material will work in real learning situations. In addition, there is an aspiration to create something original that has not been done before. The inspiration for the present study stemmed from a need to deepen the

understanding of phonetics and how to best teach it to learners of English. Another objective was to create something that had relevance to the real classroom. The best feedback would therefore be from teachers and learners who had tried out the different tasks in practice. Without such feedback, at this point the success of the material can only be based on self-assessment.

As to originality, the teaching material includes both original ideas but also ideas of others that have been adapted and further developed, and naturally acknowledged. Many traditional methods are still valid and therefore some tasks might seem even surprisingly conventional. Some of the tasks are also incomplete, which means that they require the teacher to find, for instance, audio material before they will be able to carry out the task. This can be seen as a deficit, however, one can also be rather certain that the teacher knows his or her class better than a material designer can, and is therefore the best person to choose the additional material they wish to use. Moreover, this is due to copyright issues and the problem of referring to online sources that may only be available for an indefinite period of time.

Despite the genuine wish to create something relevant and useful it has to be remembered that the reality of classrooms tends to be rather different from the imagined ideal of those who design materials. In an ideal situation all learners are highly motivated and somewhat homogeneous as regards their skills and backgrounds. The classroom is without distractions, personal problems do not interfere with learners' concentration and time is a plenty. However, it goes without saying that this is hardly the truth. Groups have the habit of being heterogeneous in many aspects: skill-levels, study motivation and ambition. In fact, those who share their teachers' passion for the subject are a small minority. Consequently, teachers must choose those topics for teaching that they consider the most important and teach them ways in which they believe will best meet the needs of their pupils. Whichever the case, hopefully this material for teachers can spawn an interest in rethinking pronunciation pedagogy and in considering the inclusion of the notion of English as an international language in language teaching.

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[taŋkero] GOES GLOBAL

Teaching the Pronunciation of
English as an International Language
A material for teachers of Finnish learners

Hilla Hietanen

2012

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

What the material is about

Tankeroenglanti, or *tankero English* is a term that every now and then surfaces in the Finnish media to refer to English that is spoken with a distinctly Finnish accent. Wikipedia tells us that the term was coined in the 1970s to describe the English pronunciation of then prime minister, Ahti Karjalainen, during a state visit to Kenya. This small historical anecdote has something in common with a study[1] I came across when looking for literature for this teaching material. The title of the study included the phrase "*I don't want to sound like Mika Häkkinen"*, and in one sentence it illustrates the attitude that this material is trying to change.

For some reason, it appears to be a common perception that English spoken with a 'Finnish accent' is something to be embarrassed about. Criteria such as comprehensibility, grammatical correctness or functionality in communication don't seem to suffice if the pronunciation isn't close enough to those native of the British Isles or North America. And whether or not this notion of a somehow less intelligent sounding accent was only something silly invented by the media, it is also apparent in the teaching of English in Finland.

Learners of foreign languages need to learn pronunciation. But they don't usually learn it like children learn to speak their mother tongue: by picking it up as they grow, by listening to and interacting with people close to them. Instead, the traditional pattern is to listen to tapes in a classroom and repeat words after the teacher. To some learning is easy: you hear sounds and you repeat them. However, for some and I dare to guess for most, it is not that simple. Sounds can be different from those in your first language. It may be difficult to distinguish between different sounds. Attempts to repeat after a recording or the teacher might result in getting your tongue in a twist and in feeling frustrated. Perhaps you don't want to speak at all, especially in front of other people. In any case, it is extremely rare for a learner to reach a native-like pronunciation. Perfectly *intelligible* pronunciation, on the other hand, is a realistic and likely target.

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1   Vaarala, T. 2010. *"AI DOUNT VANT TU SAUND LAIK MIKA HÄKKINEN": Finnish Upper Secondary School Students' Perceptions on English Pronunciation.* Bachelor's Thesis at University of Jyväskylä.

Everything above relates to the three goals of this material:

1) Pronunciation is seen as a teachable skill that should be prioritized more in the curriculum.
2) English is taught as an international language, that is, it is seen as a language not to be spoken with native speakers alone, but to be used primarily in intercultural communication between non-native speakers. Intelligibility is therefore the principal target and assessment criterion rather than acquiring a native-like accent.
3) Teaching pronunciation should take different types of learners into consideration and use methods that best meet the learners' needs and personal goals.

Who the material is for

This material was designed to benefit teachers of Finnish learners, and of course the people that they teach. The material is based on research on Finnish-speakers learning English and what has been shown to cause most problems, as well as on research on speaking English as an international language (or a *lingua franca*), where mutual intelligibility is regarded as the main objective. For this reason, it does by no means include *everything* one might need to know about phonetics and pronunciation. Instead, it is a suggestion for what can be seen as the *core* items that Finnish learners should learn.

There is no specific target group in terms of learners' age or skill level. Some of the tasks suit young beginners and some are better suited to more advanced learners. Pronunciation and the sounds of English are, however, always the same regardless of how old or how skilled the learners are, and therefore it is left to the teacher's discretion to decide whether and how to utilize any given tasks or ideas. The teacher knows his or her pupils the best and is the right person to evaluate what is important in teaching. For the same reason, some of the tasks require the teacher to look for extra material themselves and choose material that seems best for their purposes.

How to read the material

The material consists of four units: *1 Starting points – planning a pronunciation syllabus, 2 Being an English speaking Finn, 3 The Building Blocks – individual sounds* and 4 *The Big Picture – prosody*. These four units cover some the following topics:

1 Starting Points – planning a pronunciation syllabus: What is the teacher's role in teaching pronunciation? How to set targets and goals for pronunciation teaching? What kind of methods to use? How to test and evaluate pronunciation skills? How to support those that find pronunciation particularly difficult?

2 Being an English Speaking Finn: How to familiarize learners with the many varieties of English? What to consider when communicating with other non-native speakers of English? How to deal with language attitudes? How to prepare learners for real-life communication situations?

3 The Building Blocks – individual sounds: Which sounds to teach and how? Are some more important than others? What to consider when teaching speakers of Finnish?

4 The Big Picture – prosody: How to turn single sounds into speech? How to gain fluency? What is prosody and how can it be taught?

The four units have been further divided into chapters that focus on a specific topic. Each chapter follows a pattern of *What, Why*, and *How*:

WHAT gives a brief summary of the topic.

**WHY** explains why it's important.

HOW provides concrete ways to approach the topic in class in the form of tasks and exercises.

Finally, David Abercrombie (1956: 87) says that all language teachers are phoneticians whether they like it or not. I have not even attempted to create an all-inclusive reference on phonetics and pronunciation, and I strongly recommend that each teacher further educate themselves on these topics and construct a pronunciation syllabus that best suits their own needs. Personally, this project has been immensely interesting and relevant to my future as a teacher, and I hope it will inspire any (past, present or future) teachers who read it to start thinking about the role of pronunciation in their teaching and to find their inner phonetician.

Hilla Hietanen

Unit One

STARTING POINTS – PLANNING A PRONUNCIATION SYLLABUS
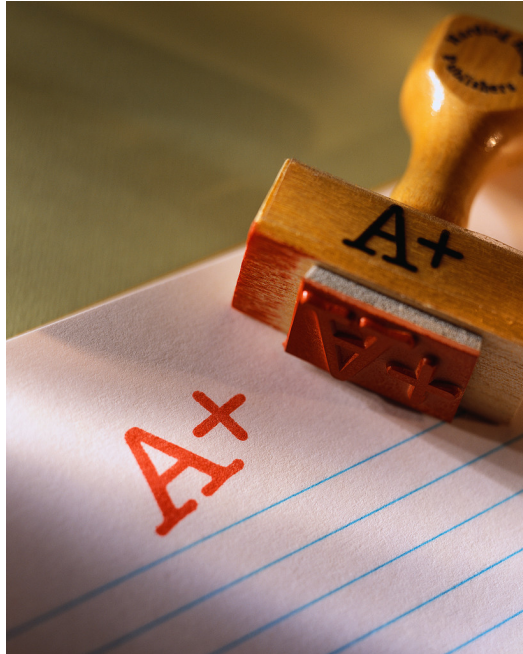
This unit includes topics that a teacher can consider when planning pronunciation teaching from mapping the current level of learners' pronunciation skills to assessing them. It also includes suggestions as to which methods to use so that learners with different learning styles can benefit from the teaching. Finally, there are some ideas for small group tuition sessions when a learner has particular difficulty with pronunciation.

CHAPTERS:
The teacher as an example setter
Needs analysis
From perception to production
Assessment – test what you teach
Small group tuition

The teacher as an example setter

WHAT: In Finland, most children grow up hearing and seeing English everywhere: on TV, in movies, on the internet. However, for some of them their English teacher might be the first person they consciously view as a model of an English speaker. It is therefore important to think about the way in which you promote English in your class and what kind of an example you give out to learners.

WHY: Young learners in particular tend to look up to their teachers. They consider the teacher to be a model, an example and a person who is an expert in what they teach. For this reason it is important that a teacher realizes the possible consequences of his or her own actions in the classroom.

HOW:

1) Set an example

As a teacher you must, naturally, speak English in class. However, sometimes teachers use tapes as primary models for pronunciation and, for instance, only use recorded *native* models as pronunciation targets. Yet as a teacher of English you are, of course, able to speak English yourself. And if you are going to teach pronunciation, you should know what you teach in practice. This does not mean that you have to sound like the native speakers on tape. Quite the contrary, it is reassuring for the learners to know that they are not expected to sound like the people they hear in, for instance, American sitcoms.

As a teacher you are perhaps the first and the closest model of an English speaker to some of your learners, and therefore you should set an example of a person who is not afraid to speak English and who is not afraid to say that it is normal to make mistakes and sound the way you do. It is also useful to think of what *not* to say. If one supports the notion that there is more to learning English than trying to mimic native speakers, it should be conveyed in the things that are said and valued in class. Be careful not to speak negatively about a Finnish accent (or any other accent for that matter) and make sure you assess pronunciation in terms of intelligibility, not in terms of sounding native.

2) Share your experiences

Like your pupils, you have probably had to work to learn to pronounce English and you have had your own ways of practicing. Consider sharing your experiences with your class as they can probably relate to you more than to the native speaking people they hear on TV or on tapes. Also give them practical tips on how to practice pronunciation. Or ask them to think of their own ideas and share them with the class. You can compile a tip list of ideas, for example:

<u>Ideas for practicing pronunciation:</u>

- read out loud at home alone
- read out loud to a family member or a friend
- exaggerate
- break long words into pieces: *i–ni–tial → i–ni–tiall-y → i–ni–tia–li-ze → i–ni–tia–li–za-tion*
- practice difficult sounds in front of a mirror
- look for opportunities to use English
- speak English with your friends for fun
- make a phone call in English (it can even be imaginary!)
- record and listen to your own speech
- memorize poems, riddles or lyrics of songs
- turn practicing into a routine: make a list of a few difficult words or tongue-twisters and read them out loud three times every morning
- make a list of sounds that you are good at pronouncing and another one of those that you still find difficult

Young learners in particular tend to be creative and the most important thing is to send out the message that pronunciation is something that everyone can practice and get better at.

Needs analysis

WHAT: As with any teaching situation, the learners' needs should serve as the starting point also in pronunciation pedagogy. A so-called needs analysis means surveying your learners' skill level and their ideas about pronunciation in order to find out which areas are particularly problematic and need to be targeted in teaching.

WHY: While classes in Finland are still mostly homogenous and it is therefore easy to predict which pronunciation items are most likely to cause difficulty, there are always individual differences. Conducting a needs analysis at the beginning of a term or a course helps the teacher become aware of each learner's current level and help them set individual learning objectives. Moreover, especially in cities there are more and more learners with varying language backgrounds, and an analysis will also help to find out where their difficulties lie.

HOW:

1) Start-of-term questionnaire

This type of a questionnaire can be used to ask pupils about their thoughts and feelings about pronunciation and speaking English. Although as a teacher you are able to hear what kind of problems a learner might have, it might be useful to obtain more detailed information as to what your learners find easy or difficult in order for you to be able to target the problem areas in your teaching. The pupils should be reminded that the answers are not evaluated and they do not affect their grading, it's just a tool for you to develop your teaching.

Appendix 1 includes an example of a questionnaire designed to map learners own thoughts about pronunciation related issues. It is in English, but can be translated into Finnish if it is used with young or beginning learners.

2) Spoken sample

If time allows, it's a good idea to acquire spoken samples from each learner, particularly if the course's focus is on speaking skills. This can be done in a language lab where you record the samples, or so that one

pupil at a time reads a text while others are engaged in other activities in the language lab or somewhere else.

a) Give the learner a text that has words that should be familiar to him/her, for instance, a chapter you have gone through in class. However, try to make sure that the text includes various speech sounds, for instance, different sibilants.

b) Give the learner some time to study the text. Then ask him/her to read it out loud. While listening, make notes as to which sounds the learner has a good command over and which might need more work.

c) After the learner has finished, ask them to mark on the text the parts that they thought were difficult or that they weren't sure about.

d) Give the learner feedback preferably instantly, and suggest that they focus on whichever items they may struggle with.

e) Finally, go over the whole group's performances and see if there are any recurring problems in order to see which pronunciation items you might need to go over in more detail or revise. You can use this type of a sample also as a starting point for individual assessment, more on which in the section about assessment.

From perception to production

WHAT: Pronunciation problems most often rise from difficulties in perception. In other words, learners do not only have difficulty producing sounds but they are also unable to distinguish them. It is therefore important to practice and test perception and to utilize different sensory channels in teaching.

WHY: It may seem as if there was not enough time in the classroom for teaching pronunciation. You know the drill: you're about to go over a new chapter, ask the pupils to open their books and look at the list of new words. Then you ask them to repeat them after you, twice if the word is particularly tricky. Then you listen to the chapter on tape and then the pupils read it. Such a listen-and-repeat pattern is common in a language class but it shouldn't be the only one.

Some learners are naturals: they hear a sound and they can figure out how to pronounce it. However, my guess is most learners are not. Asking somebody to repeat a word in a foreign language after hearing it once or twice and then expecting them to master it could be compared to showing them a diver perform a reverse from a 3-meter springboard in the tuck position and then asking them to climb up to the tower and repeat it. Result: failure. Speech is transient, it goes past too quickly for many learners to perceive, particularly in an environment such as a classroom with lots of distractions. Learning takes time, words have to be broken into smaller pieces and the sounds have to be analyzed and practiced. This is particularly true of mature learners, but not all children are naturals either.

HOW:

1) Employing the senses – the multisensory approach

Pronunciation teaching should, at least every now and then, employ the following three sensory channels: HEARING – SEEING – FEELING. The last two may often be neglected although they can support learning pronunciation.
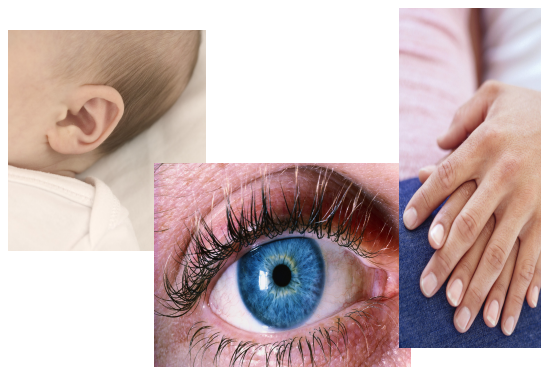
In practice, this means that the learners' attention is drawn to the physical gestures and sensations that go together with specific sounds. For example, vision is needed when observing how the mouth, tongue and teeth are positioned when pronouncing and contrasting different sounds. For instance:

/v/   lips are flat, upper teeth touch lower lip
/w/   lips are round

You can ask learners to describe what they see when they look at you pronounce sounds or when they look at each other. You can also give them a mirror and ask them to pay attention to what their mouth looks like when they say different sounds and words. It might even be useful to draw pictures of the speech organs. You can also produce 'mute' sounds so that you pretend to say a word but do it without a sound. Then the learners are only left with what they can see. Finally, you can go over different sounds together and keep practicing ones that are difficult.

Eyes can also support the learning of suprasegmentals. For instance, word and sentence stress can be seen as nods or head movements that occur simultaneously with a stressed syllable. Such gestures may not be easily noticeable unless attention is deliberately drawn to them but they can support some learners in understanding the prosodic patterns of English. For slightly more advanced learners, you could play a video where a person speaks English and ask the learners to look at the way his or her head moves as they speak. Can they notice a pattern?

In addition to vision, the sense of touch can be utilized in pronunciation teaching. Both young and more mature learners can benefit from specific instructions as to how it should *feel* like to pronounce certain

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sounds. Following are some examples:

Aspiration: place your hand in front of your mouth, can you feel a puff of air when you say /f/, /t/, /p/, /k/ or /θ/? What about when you say /p/ or /k/ at the beginning of a Finnish word like *pallo*? Is there a difference?

Voicing: gently place your fingers on your throat where the vocal cords are. Then start saying p-p-p-p-b-b-b-b-p-p-p-p-b-b-b-b etc. Can you feel the vocal cords vibrating when you pronounce /b/? What about /k/ and /g/, or /t/ and /d/?

Sensations: can you say /ð/ or /z/ so strongly it tickles your tongue? Then you're doing it right.

2) Focus on listening and oral production

Language teaching has sometimes been criticized for relying too heavily on written language. Oral skills are often taught by reading ready-made phrases off paper and new words are learned by reading them in a textbook. Even pronunciation tasks seem to be mostly about reading words and studying pronunciation in its written form. As a result, some learners feel insecure and even lost if they are left without the written text although in real situations speaking isn't about reading out loud. What if you tried to shift the focus away from books by activities where you don't need them as much? The following are some ideas on how to try to make learners feel more confident without the support of written language:

- LEARN WORDS BY LISTENING
  New words don't always have to be taught by writing them down. Children who are learning their mother tongue don't learn words by reading but by listening. Especially young learners and beginners can benefit from this type of an activity since non-abstract words are easy to demonstrate in pictures or concrete objects. For instance, ask learners to sit in a circle. Bring objects or pictures with you, in this example the topic is fruit and vegetables. Start teaching the words by picking up a fruit and saying its name by enunciating very carefully: *Banana. B-b-b-b-a-naaah-na. Banana.* Then ask the pupils to start repeating the word too, with plenty of repetition and practice. After you've gone through all words you can continue to focus on pronunciation by asking them to group the items so that, for example, words that begin with the same sound go in the same

group: banana+bean, pear+peach+plum etc. Then they can group those that end in the same sound: onion+lemon, orange+cabbage, plum+mushroom etc. This type of exercise forces the pupils to *listen* very carefully and it also trains their memory.

- GET ACTIVE
The multisensory approach to teaching pronunciation can involve incorporating physical activity into learning. Young learners in particular will enjoy being allowed to move and jump during class. Demonstrate and exaggerate both the sound and the action and ask your class to do the same. For example, teach consonants by associating certain movements with the sounds:

> /b/ is for ***b***ouncing like a ***b***all
> whereas
> /p/ is for ***p***icking berries
>
> /g/ is for ***g***rowing tall
> whereas
> /k/ is for ***c***limbing up a rope
>
> /d/ is for ***d***ancing in a ***d***isco
> whereas
> /t/ is for ***t***ip-***t***oeing
>
> /ʃ/ is for ***sh***ivering like you're very cold
> whereas
> /s/ is for hi***ss***ing like a ***s***nake

Now, as you introduce new words or revise old ones, show the class a picture and ask them to start doing the correct movement as soon as they remember which 'letter' (actually the sound) the word begins with when they say it out loud. Or if they can't remember, start doing the movement yourself and see whether it helps. Such a physical dimension to teaching may improve learning and particularly support memorizing words and sounds.

- BROKEN TELEPHONE
Broken telephone or *Chinese whispers* is a game known all over the world. What you do is ask your pupils to stand in a line or a circle. Then you whisper a word or a phrase to one pupil who then whispers it to the person next to them and so on. Or you can show the phrase to the first pupil who then passes it on. Finally,

the last one repeats what he or she has heard to everybody else. Often the phrase changes quite drastically and might even turn out to be something quite funny. The purpose of this task is to highlight the importance of clear pronunciation as well as train receptive skills.

- ORAL WORD QUIZ
Assign a word test as usual but instead of the traditional written test, tell your class it's going to be an oral one. Practice the words together beforehand so that the learners get many chances to learn how to pronounce them. The actual test can be done one by one in a separate space if possible. However, due to time restrictions it might be a better idea to have a less serious test with the whole class. For instance, ask your learners to stand up. Then ask them to the raise their hand if they know the word you ask them. If they answer correctly, they are allowed to sit down. In order to avoid any kind of humiliation, it might be a good idea to let less strong pupils answer first. You can also ask the same word many times, so that towards the end even the last ones standing will remember them. The quiz is finished when everyone has sat down.

- RECITATION
Recitation might sound intimidating but it's simply a task where you have to learn something off by heart. Provide your class with little texts or tell them to choose one themselves. It can be, for example, a poem, a joke, lyrics of a song or a (part of a) monologue. Depending on your class you can ask them to recite their text to a classmate so that the situation is less frightening. Or if they are willing they can recite it to the whole class. It's good if the teacher has a copy of the text so that he or she can both check how well the pupil remembers it and help them in case they forget. You can also use recitation as part of an oral test. In any case, the objective is to memorize a piece and to deliver it without the support of a written text.

Assessment – test what you teach

WHAT: Testing is a part of formal learning and a way to monitor whether the outcome of learning is as has been expected. Testing must correspond to what has been taught, and vice versa. Test what you teach, and teach what you test. This chapter is about how pronunciation can be assessed and tested.

WHY: Assessment tends to give any aspect of learning extra value in learners' minds. If they know they will be assessed and tested they probably have a different view on the importance of the matter than if they knew there would be no formal evaluation. It is therefore worth thinking when and how oral skills (and pronunciation as part of it) should be assessed. This chapter does not involve oral tests as such since they are not strictly speaking about pronunciation alone. Instead there are suggestions for evaluating pronunciation.

HOW:

1) Individual goal setting and development

If you have conducted a needs analysis (see p. 8-9) and obtained speech samples from your learners, you can use the samples as a tool in setting individual learning targets together with the learner. Go over the learner's performance together with him/her and discuss what you both think needs more work. Try not to focus on too many things at a time: if the learner struggles with basic sounds, focus on them. If he or she is more advanced, concentrate on fluency and intonation, for example.

After a period of time during which pronunciation has been practiced, ask the learner to read a similar text they did during the needs analysis and evaluate how the learning goals have been met. This kind of individual monitoring is time consuming and that is why it is probably best suited to comprehensive school where one teacher continuously teaches the same class or to a high school course with an emphasis on speaking skills.

2) Evaluation criteria

Pronunciation does not have to be tested as an isolated skill and in most cases it is not. Instead it is often evaluated as a sub-skill in oral tests or, for example, when assessing oral presentations. As part of a course that focuses on speaking skills, it is certainly possible to design a test that also has a section on pronunciation itself. However, in most cases pronunciation assessment can be combined with any kind of oral production. The important thing is to establish criteria for the assessment and to make sure learners know the criteria they are being evaluated against.

A part of the notion of English as an international language or English as a lingua franca is that the primary focus should be on mutual intelligibility. Therefore pronunciation and other speaking skills should be assessed so that speech that is intelligible is given high marks, not speech that sounds native, although the two don't exclude each other. Thus it is important not to sanction a 'strong foreign accent', for example, if it does not impede with intelligibility.

Appendix 2 includes a suggestion for an assessment table that can be used when assessing pronunciation in either presentations or discussions. It has been divided into three categories: 1) Command over individual sounds, 2) command over prosody (sentence stress, speech rate and word stress) and 3) accommodation skills (control over difficult vocabulary, use of voice and response to audience). These subcategories are assessed as either 1) excellent, 2) operational or 3) needing more work. The three grades can be elaborated as follows:

> 1) Excellent – very or mostly intelligible, pronunciation enhances communication of message, takes audience into consideration.
> 2) Operational – mostly or sometimes intelligible, main points of message are communicated, an attempt to take audience into consideration.
> 3) Needs work – sometimes or hardly intelligible, several parts of message remain unclear, no response to audience.

In addition, there is space for clarification and comments. The 3-stage assessment scale can be expanded since it is somewhat crude. However, this particular assessment table is more about precise feedback and overall performance than actual numerical grading, and therefore it is recommendable to give the learner detailed feedback.

Small group tuition

WHAT: You might teach learners who have particular difficulty with pronunciation and who might benefit from a more thorough guidance. They might approach you themselves or you can offer them your help outside regular class-hours.

WHY: Learners who find pronunciation difficult might do so for various reasons. First, they don't often experience problems with the production of sounds alone but also with the perception. Second, they may feel inhibited in a classroom and enjoy learning more in a small group or alone with the teacher. Finally, there may not always be time to focus on the very specifics with the whole class, and in a small group you can take the time to go over whatever feature needs attention.

HOW:

1) Can you hear the difference?

Before any sound can be produced it has to be *heard*. The purpose of this task is to make sure the learner is able to hear and distinguish between different sounds.

Ask the learner to produce words with sounds they have difficulty with. This example involves the sibilants /s/ and /ʃ/.

    a) SUN   vs   SHINE
    b) SUNSHINE

If he or she has trouble with the first words (probably with the second one *shine*), start by contrasting the sounds in isolation:

    sss ʃʃʃ sss ʃʃʃ sss ʃʃʃ sss ʃʃʃ

Ask the learner to repeat after you. Exaggeration helps with the recognition. Once they are able to produce the sounds, start using them in words again. If the learner continues to produce, for example, *sun**sh**ine* as 'sun**s**ine', show them what you hear. Ask them to continue saying the word and then repeat their pronunciation back to them. Then contrast that with the correct pronunciation. Again, exaggerate if

necessary: *sunshhhhhhine*. Once they are able to produce the sound in a word, you can move on to more challenging words and phrases.

You will probably notice that it's much easier for the learner to produce, for instance, /ʃ/ in isolation or when it's the first sound of the word. However, it gets trickier when /ʃ/ occurs together with other sibilants:
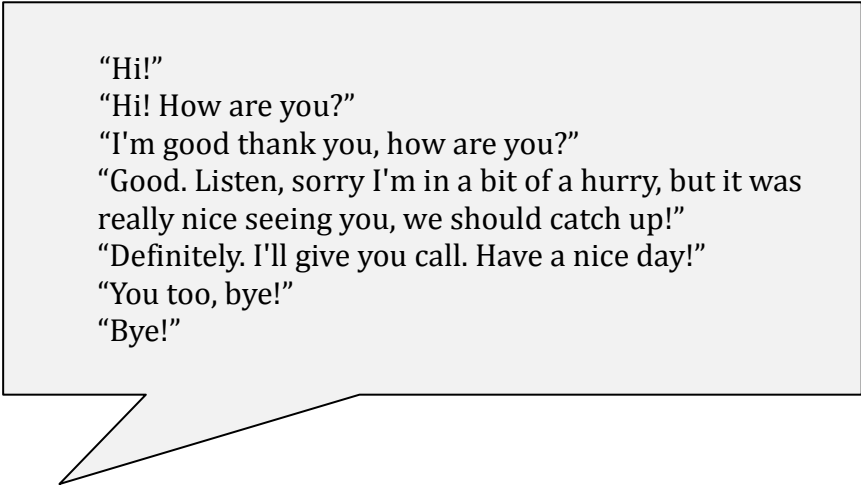
> SENSATION
> SOUP KITCHEN

It might not be a good idea to use words with several sibilant sounds (/ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/) before they have individually been practiced because they are likely to be difficult as well.

2) Relevant learning

When a learner struggles with acquiring pronunciation (or any aspect of language for that matter), it seems best to focus on the most essential subject matter. In other words, if pronunciation skills can be combined with the learning of other things, it might be that the learner will find it easier to see why it is important to learn something. On the other hand, if pronunciation is always handled as an isolated skill, it may remain that way in the learner's mind. Of course, mechanic skills may need very specific attention. However, the more that attention could then be expanded to actual language-use in real life the better.

Pronunciation is often taught by pronouncing single words out loud. It might, however, be useful to also practice longer phrases, especially those that often occur in speech and connotations. Let's take a simple dialogue:

> "Hi!"
> "Hi! How are you?"
> "I'm good thank you, how are you?"
> "Good. Listen, sorry I'm in a bit of a hurry, but it was really nice seeing you, we should catch up!"
> "Definitely. I'll give you call. Have a nice day!"
> "You too, bye!"
> "Bye!"

A simple dialogue like this could take place anywhere. It is somewhat informal but includes many very basic phrases one needs in every day life and also many such pronunciation items Finnish speakers often find difficult:

- Blending and linking
  - "How are you" not pronounced as three separate words but more like "how-a-<u>youu</u>" or "how-<u>a(r)</u>-you" (stressed syllable underlined)
  - Similarly, "I'm in a bit of a hurry" is not usually said with equal emphasis on each word, but rather as "Im-ina-<u>bid</u>-av-a-<u>hur</u>ry" or "Im-ina-<u>bit</u>-ava-<u>hur</u>ry".
- Individual sounds
  - sibilant /tʃ / in "catch up"
  - /θ/ in "thank you"
  - aspiration of /k/ and /t/ in "catch", "call" and "too"
- Intonation
  - The high pitched greetings "Hi!" and "Bye!" tend to be more emphasized than Finnish greetings

It's not necessary to learn to produce all these items. However, knowing about some of the connected speech phenomena in English may make understanding speech easier. Finally, this type of a task can certainly be useful to any learner, depending on their skills and wishes. Also chapters in textbooks can be utilized in pronunciation teaching, which is to show that one material can be used for teaching several aspects of language.

Unit Two

BEING AN ENGLISH SPEAKING FINN

The second unit consists of topics that have to do with the notion of English as an International Language. They include introducing different varieties of English to learners as well as considerations for discussing language attitudes in class. Moreover, there are ideas on how to prepare learners for actual interactions and what to do when communication proves to be difficult.

> **CHAPTERS:**
>
> **Getting used to variation**
>
> **Working on language attitudes**
>
> **Navigating through speaking situations**
> **– accommodation and adaptation**

Getting used to variation

WHAT: Because of the fact that English is the most widespread language in the world, also variation in the English language is rich. As a result, people speak English in accents that might differ from each other to a great extent.

WHY: In language classes, foreign languages are often depicted as stable and standardized. However, in reality all languages are spoken in various accents and dialects, which might come as a surprise to learners if they have only been exposed to minimal variation. English accents can vary to the extent that even native speakers have trouble understanding each other. A New Yorker might not be able to decipher a Glaswegian accent nor an Australian speaker Texan ones. For learners of English, it is therefore important to learn about variation. Moreover, if English is to be taught as an international language, non-native speakers should not be excluded. At the moment what happens is that you sometimes see chapters in textbooks which are supposed to be spoken by a Finnish person (for instance, an interview of a real person), yet the person you hear on tape is clearly not Finnish.

HOW:

1) Ample input

Many of the latest textbook series come equipped with recordings in a delightful number of accents. You might still want to look for audio material with more variation, and especially incorporate non-native accents since they are often not included in textbooks. You can find such material quite easily on the internet by looking for interviews, news broadcasts, presentations and panel discussions, to name a few.

If you use, for example, a clip with a Finnish person speaking English, the exercise doesn't have to be about that person's accent. You can use the clip as a regular listening comprehension task but what is important is that learners will see somebody who shares their language and cultural background and is efficiently communicating in English. This example clip is with no other than Mika Häkkinen. In an episode of Top Gear, he was interviewed about why Finns are so successful in motor sports. The program has no mention of language, it focuses on meaning.

(In fact, I have personally never heard a foreigner make fun of a 'Finnish' accent, in comparison to the hundreds of times I've heard a Finnish person do so.) The interview does touch upon the taciturn nature of Finns, but that is a whole different story.

<u>Listening comprehension task</u> (middle school or high school level)

1) Watch the clip online
2) Prepare questions that learners need to answer after watching the clip, for example:
   1. Why is Finland a good place to practice and learn driving?
   2. Why is Michael Schumacher mentioned?
   3. Why are Finns so skilled at driving?
   4. What is the trick Mika Häkkinen is teaching James May called?
   5. How does Mika Häkkinen explain the concept of *sisu* to James May?
3) Go over the answers together, then discuss how Finland was presented in the clip.

In this exercise, in addition to being exposed to non-native input, learners see Finnish culture being discussed in English, something that they themselves probably will do one day. A central concept in teaching English as an international language is teaching about culture, which also includes teaching about learners' own culture.

2) Recognition and observing

It is hardly necessary (and even impossible) for a learner to be able to recognize different English varieties and know about their specifics. It is, however, inevitable that he or she will come across various kinds of accents and will need to figure out their phonological patterns in order to be able to understand them. It is therefore possible to elaborate on an exercise where learners are asked to recognize accents by simply asking them *how* they were able to tell different ones apart. There is plenty of material available for this type of a task, this example uses two speech samples of American and British English by one person, which is probably rather unusual. The speaker is actress Gillian Anderson, and the following was printed of her accent in a newspaper:

> *"The first surprise is Gillian Anderson's accent. I have heard about how she can slip from English to American as effortlessly as silk runs through fingers. Indeed, by way of*

research, I have watched her being interviewed by Jay Leno (for whom she adopted an American accent) and Michael Parkinson (an English one). I even know how and why she does this – she lived here until she was 11, moved there until she was 35, then, five years ago, came back to live here. Still, nothing quite prepares you for sitting opposite FBI Special Agent Scully and hearing the head girl of Cheltenham Ladies' College."

*(*Farndale, N. 2009. Gillian Anderson interview for 'A Doll's House' in *The Telegraph online edition)*

The two interviews mentioned in the article are easily obtainable online. Show them (or parts of them) to the class without telling them anything about her background or about what the task is about. Then ask if anyone had noticed anything. If no-one answers, play the clips again and ask them to pay attention to the accents. Once you've established that her accent changes from British to American, play the clips again and ask your class to write down words they think were pronounced specifically in a British or an American accent or to describe in other ways how they were able to recognize the difference. Finally, go over their answers together and point out the most common differences between an English accent and an American one. For example:

- *can't* pronounced either as [ka:nt] (BrE) or [kænt] (AmE)
- /r/ dropped in BrE but pronounced in AmE at the end of words
- in AmE, /t/ is often pronounced as /d/ in words like *writer*
- vowels and diphthongs sound different in the two varieties

3) Imitation

Mimicking different accents is a classic source of material for stand-up comedians, who often excel at recognizing and reproducing the most distinguishing features of an accent and turning it into entertainment. In class, you can use stand-up sketches to add some humor to learning. While it is important not to judge people based on their accent, there is no harm in having a little fun at the expense of language variation.

Slightly older learners (middle school or later) will be able to understand at least parts of stand-up comedy sketches and also perhaps appreciate the humor. You can find plenty of clips online, a few examples of comedians include:

- Russell Peters (Indian English)
- Trevor Noah (African accents or 'black' English)
- Robin Williams (Scottish English)

Such clips can be showed as a 'snack' during a lesson, or, like in this case, as an introduction to the topic of language variation. Ideally, learners would feel encouraged to try a bit of imitation themselves. This kind of a task suits learners who are extroverted and daring and enthusiastic about performing. It's therefore important to create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere in class and not to force any learner to participate if they clearly don't want to. They'll probably enjoy just listening, too.

1) Familiarize learners with different accents. This can be done during earlier lessons or at the beginning of the same lesson. Choose three to five accents (e.g. American, English, Australian, Irish, Welsh, Scottish, Indian, French, German, Russian, Finnish, Swedish, Spanish, Chinese varieties).
2) Ask for volunteers to participate in a task.
3) Write the names of the accents on a small piece of paper (for example, 'A German', 'A Texan' and 'A Scotsman').
4) Ask the groups to make their own story and act it out (with time for planning and practicing). You can give them a situation in case they find it hard to come up with one. For example, they could be "Three foreigners trying to find a map of Finland", or "Three strangers stuck at an airport due to a snowstorm". The important thing is that they remember their roles but do not reveal them to anyone else, not even the other members of the group.
5) When it's time to act out the situation, ask the rest of the class to try and see whether they can guess where the people in the story come from. Hopefully the different accents will make the situation funny and also surprising as the performers don't know what the other people in the group will sound like.
6) Finally, give a big round of applause and see whether anybody guessed right.

Working on language attitudes

WHAT: Speaking with an accent can cause a reaction in the listener and an accent can tell us something about the speaker. Learners of English (or any foreign language) can feel insecure if they think they can't pronounce the language and that other people view them negatively. Furthermore, we can be prejudiced towards people due to their accent and think that if somebody speaks in a certain way it must mean that they also think in a certain way.

WHY: Language attitudes are not based on facts about some language varieties' superiority, because no accents are better than others. For the aims of this material language attitudes are relevant because it may be that Finnish learners of English fear that if they sound 'Finnish', they are seen as less intelligent or less skilled at English. Or, they can have that kind of an attitude towards other people's accents. This section includes ideas on how language attitudes could be touched upon in class and hopefully be changed.

HOW:

1) Discussion time

Divide the class into small groups or pairs. Show them a list of questions and topics regarding language attitudes and Finnish English. The questions and the discussion can be in Finnish or in English depending on the learners' skills. The point is to get them thinking about language attitudes.

Example questions:

1. Who, in your opinion, is good at English? Can you mention a person you think speaks English well?
2. What makes a *good* English speaker? List at least 5 points.
3. What is *good* pronunciation?

(continues on next page)

4. Can you remember any cases in the media where a Finnish person's English skills were criticized or praised? What reasons were given for this?
5. Do you think it's easy to understand a fellow-Finn speaking English even if he or she sounds *Finnish*? Or is it difficult?
6. Do you think there are accents that are more beautiful or better-sounding than others? Why?

Finally, have a class discussion where you listen to the groups' thoughts and comment on them. Hopefully they will begin to think about the distinction between sounding native and sounding intelligible.

2) Role models

Consider giving your class homework in which they have to think of a Finnish (or other non-English speaking) person they admire and who needs to speak English as part of their work or life. Examples could be:

- Athletes
- Artists and musicians
- Actors
- Politicians, business people, journalists or TV-personalities
- Family members, teachers or friends

You can ask learners to write about the person they have chosen. Or they could tell about the person to their classmates in pairs or small groups or to the whole class. You can ask them to find a clip of the person speaking English or look for something he or she has written in English. Or you can do all these. In any case, ask them to focus on how English is a part of the person's life, in what kind of situations they might need English, and whether they think the person is good and skilled at using English.

You can also reverse the situation and ask what they think about foreign-born people who have moved to Finland and learned to speak Finnish. If they can't think of any you might suggest people such as Roman Schatz, Neil Hardwick, Keke Armstrong or another person they might have heard of. Also ask your class if they have friends with immigrant backgrounds. They don't usually sound like native Finnish speakers but does that make them *less good* as speakers? Does accent really matter?

Navigating through speaking situations - accommodation and adaptation

WHAT: Foreign language learning today focuses on communication. In other words, the most essential thing we can teach is how to communicate in real-life situations. We also know that it is impossible to teach anybody to flawlessly succeed in any imaginable situation. We can, however, teach them what they can do when they experience difficulties.

WHY: Accommodation skills are at the core of teaching English as an international language. Having said that, they are also not the easiest thing to teach because they are so context-dependent. In a nutshell, this chapter consists of ideas on how to prepare learners for situations that are difficult: when they talk to somebody who they can't understand, or somebody who can't understand them. How to survive in such situations and get one's message across.

HOW:

1) What to do in case of communication malfunction

Everyone must have experienced difficulties in understanding or being understood in conversation in a foreign language. In such a situation, the best idea is to try and find a polite way to express your problem. Or when somebody has difficulty understanding you, you might have to change the way you speak and adjust to the situation. This task is about thinking about polite ways to express that you haven't quite understood what somebody is trying to tell you.

Ask learners to form small groups and start thinking about how they would act in a situation where they cannot understand somebody who speaks English or if somebody cannot understand their English. Ask them to write their suggestions down. Next, tell them to assess their suggestions on the basis of politeness. Are their suggestions polite, and could they be made more polite in order not to offend the speaker. To sum up, start collecting the groups' suggestions on the blackboard:

When you don't understand somebody.		When you're not being understood by somebody.	
Polite	**Not-so-polite**	**Polite**	**Not-so-polite**
I'm sorry, could you speak a bit more slowly? Could you write that word down for me, please? Could you repeat that, please? Etc.	I can't understand what you're saying. Your accent is really difficult to understand. Your English is very different from what I'm used to. Etc.	Please let me know if you want me to explain something again. Would you like me to spell that for you? Are you familiar with this word? Etc.	No-no, you've misunderstood me. You haven't understood me correctly. Can't you understand English?? Etc.

In addition to concrete phrases, discuss other ways to adapt to the situation:

- speak more slowly
- avoid very formal or colloquial words
- try to use synonyms, when possible
- don't forget non-verbal communication
- enunciate particularly carefully

2) Follow-up: Politeness and clarification phrases game
(adapted from Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 491-492)

Once you have listed useful, polite phrases for problems in spoken interaction, turn the phrases into playing cards (see Appendix 3 for an example set of cards).

Divide the class into pairs, small groups or teams. Provide each person or each team with a set of playing cards. Give them a topic for discussion and ask them to use (or 'play') as many cards as they can. The person/team who uses the most phrases in the discussion is the winner. Please note that, although such a discussion is always contrived to an extent, it should be monitored that the phrases are used in appropriate places and not just for the sake of the game. This can be done by the teacher or by pupils who have been assigned to do so. At the discretion of the 'judge', extra points can be awarded when wishes for clarification are appropriately answered.

Unit Three

THE BUILDING BLOCKS
– INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS

Unit three focuses on individual sounds of English. It begins with ideas on how to teach the inconsistencies between spelling and pronunciation in English through different tasks and activities. There are also suggestions for teaching the IPA symbols. Actual consonant and vowel sounds are examined so that first there are considerations as to which sounds are most important to Finnish learners, and second there are ideas for classroom exercises.

CHAPTERS:
Spelling vs pronunciation
The IPA
Consonants
Vowels

Spelling vs pronunciation

WHAT: English is notorious for the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation. Sounds can have several spellings and similar spellings can be pronounced in many ways.

WHY: Finnish and English differ to a great extent in this matter. In Finnish, written symbols correspond to single speech sounds with far fewer exceptions than in English. Finnish learners therefore need to be made aware of the sometimes absurd seeming spelling vs pronunciation -discrepancy of English. It has been shown that learners of English tend to cling onto the written form of words, which often leads to pronunciation errors.

HOW:

1) Memory game with homophones

All learners are familiar with memory games where you have to find two cards with the same picture. In addition to exercising one's memory, a memory game can be designed to teach homophones. In this game, the player has to find two cards with words that are pronounced in the same way but spelled differently. This game helps learners to understand that words with different spellings can be pronounced as *exactly* the same.

Ask your pupils to form pairs or small groups. This can also be played with the whole group if the cards are placed on a document camera or the blackboard. Each group needs one set of cards, cards are laid on the table word side down. Taking turns, players turn over two cards. They have to pronounce the two words on the cards. If they find two homophones in one turn, they get to keep the cards. Whoever has most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

If the game is played in groups, the other players can act as judges of whether the two words are in fact pronounced the same way. If they aren't sure they can ask the teacher for help. After finishing the game, you can ask the learners to think of more homophones and to write them down.

The game can easily be adjusted to learners of different levels by choosing more difficult words:

Comprehensive school: THERE – THEIR, MADE – MAID, HI - HIGH
High school or later: COLONEL – KERNEL, MEDAL – MEDDLE, RAIN-REIGN

You can find an example of the game cards in Appendix 4.

Note: It is probably a good idea to use homophones that are more or less dialect-independent, unless you particularly want to specify that in some dialects two words such as *Mary* and *marry* can be homophones whereas in others they are pronounced differently.

Hint: You can easily find lists of homophones on the internet.

2) Puns

Puns are play with words. Puns utilize words with several meanings or words that are pronounced the same way yet spelled differently. English is a particularly fruitful language for making puns due to the inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation, and puns can be a fun way to increase learners' awareness of the matter.

Make a list of puns (see an example in Appendix 5). Try to focus on ones with homophones: words that sound the same but are spelled differently. Show the puns to the class one at a time or print them on a hand-out. First ask the learners to read the sentence out loud and to see whether they can find the pun. Then ask them to explain why it's funny (or is it?). Then ask them to write the pun in its second meaning. For example:

> She's happy to make a pair of pants for you,
> or at least sew its seams.
> ***
> She's happy to make a pair of pants for you,
> or at least <u>sew its seams</u>.
> ***
> She's happy to make a pair of pants for you,
> or at least <u>so it seems</u>.

If your pupils are into puns, you can give them a list of homophones and ask them to come up with their own puns as homework.

3) Spoken language in writing

English is spoken quite differently than its written form might suggest. However, sometimes English is written so that it resembles the spoken language more, particularly in fictitious texts and dialogues. The distinction between the spoken and the written form can be demonstrated by an extract of such a text. The following examples are from the popular Harry Potter -books:

> *'Orrible, eh? An' you know what Black did then?' Stan continued in a dramatic whisper.*
> *'What?' said Harry.*
> *'Laughed,' said Stan. 'Jus' stood there an' laughed. An' when reinforcements from the Ministry of Magic got there, 'e went wiv 'em quiet as anyfink, still laughing 'is 'ead off. 'Cos 'e's mad, inee, Ern? Inee mad?*
> (J.K. Rowling 1999: 35. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.* London: Bloomsbury)

> *'Everyone gather round the fence here!' he called. 'That's it – make sure yeh can see. Now, firs' thing yeh'll want ter do is open yer books-'*
> *'How?' said the cold, drawling voice of Draco Malfoy.*
> *'Eh?' said Hagrid.*
> *'How do we open our books?' Malfoy repeated. He took out his*
> *copy of The Monster Book of Monsters, which he had bound shut with a length of rope. Other people took theirs out, too; some, like Harry, had belted their book shut; others had crammed them inside tight bags or clamped them together with bullclips.*
> *'Hasn' – hasn' anyone bin able ter open their books?' said Hagrid, looking crestfallen.*
> *The class all shook their heads.*
> *'Yeh've got ter stroke 'em,' said Hagrid, as though this was the most obvious thing in the world.*
> (J.K. Rowling 1999: 35. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.* London: Bloomsbury)

These kinds of extracts can be used to show the difference between spoken and written language. Certainly, they also depict different accents and dialects. Give your class a few extracts and ask them to write the spoken language in 'standard' English. Then go over any

pronunciation related phenomena you can find in the text. For example, the phrase

Jus' stood there an' laughed.

shows how word boundaries can merge in speech. Instead of saying distinct words *just-stood-there-and-laughed,* we often hear the words blend. Similarly, the phrase

Cos 'e's mad, inee, Ern?

demonstrates stressed and unstressed syllables in English, as well as common fixed phrases in colloquial speech: *isn't it* turns into *ain't it* (=inee).

The IPA

WHAT: The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) can be used to present speech sounds in a written form. In a language like English, this is particularly useful since the standard spelling is very misleading when compared to how words are pronounced.

WHY: Most textbooks pay some attention to the teaching of the phonetic alphabet. If nothing else, the symbols appear in the vocabulary lists. In fact, there is probably no need to teach the whole alphabet to all learners. However, some of the symbols are very useful and can be studied with young learners as well. This chapter includes ways to incorporate the IPA into teaching pronunciation.
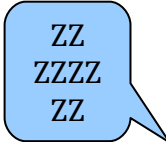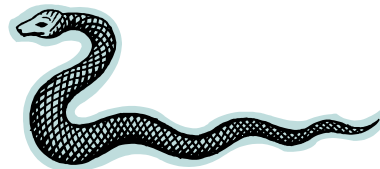
HOW:

1) Getting to know the symbols

There are different ways to introduce the IPA to learners. You can, for example:

Associate a symbol with a shape or a natural sound:

$$\int = \text{SHHH}$$

$$z = \text{ZZ ZZZZ ZZ}$$

Point out that some symbols follow a logical pattern that is easy to understand and that helps with pronunciation:

$$t\int = t + \int \qquad d\math...$$

$$t\int = t+\int \qquad d\text{ʒ} = d+\text{ʒ}$$

Note that sometimes symbols can be misleading:

W is a double U, not a double V,
also the pronunciation is closer to 'u'

Utilize the Finnish language when possible:

æ cf. the Finnish Ä

For sounds that don't exist in Finnish, try to come up with a description together with your pupils:

Ə - almost like the Finnish Ö, 'mixture' of different vowels, indefinable, mumbled etc.

Note that dictionaries, for instance, may use different ways to mark word stress:

[ə'baʊt]   or   [əb<u>aʊ</u>t]

Some learners might find learning the IPA tedious and unnecessary, in which case you can recommend that they create their own way of writing down the pronunciation of a word. The main point is that they understand the difference between spelling and pronunciation in English.

2) IPA Bingo

This exercise requires the learner to connect a sound that is heard with the correct IPA symbol and also draws his or her attention to the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation. The task is quite challenging and therefore it should only include symbols that have been taught and which you might want to quickly revise before starting the game.

Provide the class with empty bingo sheets or ask each of them to draw

one on paper. Then ask them to enter nine IPA symbols that you have chosen and that they are familiar with in the bingo squares. For example:

z	ʃ	p
tʃ	b	dʒ
ʒ	k	s

Then start reading out words, one at a time. Repeat each word many times. The learners are supposed to circle the corresponding IPA symbol when they hear it in a word. For the example bingo above, the list of words could be:

**show   car   genre   zipper   pale
sun   joke   bean   cheek**

The target sounds in this list are all at the beginning of the word. For more challenge, you can choose words where their places vary. Make sure a word doesn't include more than one sound used in the game. Once a learner gets three in a row they shout out 'bingo'. When they do, make sure to check that they have marked the correct symbols. Finally, write down the words and pronounce them together.

Consonants

WHAT: When it comes to single sounds, consonants differ less among different English varieties than vowels. However, they do differ greatly from those in Finnish and there are many consonant sounds in English that don't exist in Finnish at all. This section is a suggestion of the 'core' consonant sounds that are of the greatest importance to Finnish learners and ways in which to teach them.

WHY: Consonant sounds tend to be crucial in distinguishing between words. For instance, the minimal pairs sip/ship, thick/tick and Paul/ball only differ in the initial consonant sounds yet they mean quite different things. Certainly, in real situations the context provides clues for the listener so that even if they heard "The sip leaves in two hours," they would conclude that the person means "the ship". However, difficulties in pronouncing consonant sounds may cause insecurity and reluctance to speak English even though it is possible to learn to pronounce them through practice and rehearsal.

HOW:

1) Prioritizing

On the basis of research that has been done on Finnish speakers speaking English and on the core sounds of English as a lingua franca, it can be suggested that the most important learning items about consonant sounds are:

1. the sibilants: /s/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /z/
2. aspiration of /p/, /k/ and /t/ in initial positions
3. /w/
4. /θ/ and /ð/

The consonants /f/, /v/, /b/, /g/ and /d/ are not included since they are somewhat similar in English and Finnish and do not cause as many difficulties as the above sounds. The sibilant /s/ is also similar in the two languages, however, it is included in the 'core' because it is necessary to contrast it with the other sibilant sounds. The consonants /r/ and /l/ are somewhat different in Finnish and English, however, the Finnish pronunciation is comprehensible also when used

in English and therefore they are not included in the 'core' items.

The four items are those that tend to be problematic either because learners find it difficult to perceive and/or produce them or because they tend to be confused with other sounds. For example, it is important to learn to pronounce aspirated /p/, /k/ and /t/ sounds because their Finnish equivalents are not aspirated and can therefore be confused with their voiced English counterparts /b/, /g/ and /d/, which as such are not usually difficult for Finnish speakers.

It is important to remember that this selection has been made by focusing on intelligibility. If somebody pronounces the consonant /r/ as it is pronounced in Finnish, they will certainly sound foreign to a native speaker. Regardless of that they will also most likely be understood. It is, of course, not wrong to learn the 'softer' /r/ and many learners do pick it up even if it was not specifically taught to them. In any case, focusing on the correction of an 'erroneous' /r/-sound is not essential in terms of intelligibility, whereas focusing on 'erroneous' sibilants can be.

2) Activities with minimal pairs

As with any sound, it is important to ensure that learners can perceive it before they are asked to produce it. This can be done, for instance, by using minimal pairs, which are a traditional and old tool in pronunciation teaching and for a reason. Minimal pairs emphasize the difference that a single sound can make in terms of meaning, and they can be utilized in many ways in the classroom. The following are some ideas:

- ✓ CHECK BOX
  Provide learners with a table of minimal pairs in either words or pictures, the latter suiting beginners better as simple objects are easier to depict in images (see Appendix 6 for a sample). Then start saying the words and ask your class to check the box next to the word that they heard. Or read both words and ask them to write down 1 next to the word they heard first and 2 next to the word they heard second. If the learners can hear the difference, they are able to perceive the consonant sounds. After you have finished, practice pronouncing the words with the class. Go over any difficult sounds with time and explain with the help of images and descriptions (see chapters 'From perception to production' and 'Small group tuition' for more information.) Then ask them to do the same exercise in pairs or groups, so that one person reads the words and the other

checks the boxes again depending on what they hear. Finally, ask them to see if their partner heard what they intended them to hear. If not, they now know the sounds they need to practice more.

✓ QUICK REACTING
This task suits young learners or beginners, because it works well with basic words such as animals and everyday objects. This task requires careful listening and perception skills and enhances quick association of a spoken word with an image because, ideally, it skips over the Finnish translation step.

Provide learners with a set of picture cards. Plan it so that there are at least some minimal pairs such as bear/pear, cherry/Jerry, pop/Bob, soap/soup etc. Tell them to pick the image that corresponds to the word you say as quickly as possible and raise the card in the air. This task can be turned into a competition as well: the first to pick up the right picture is the winner.

Alternatively, you can tell learners that they will need a pencil and a blank piece of paper. Then tell them to quickly draw an image that comes to their mind when they hear the word you say.

Vowels

WHAT: Unlike consonants, vowels differ greatly between different varieties of English. That's why there is no general way to present the English vowel system because then we would have to choose a specific variety. This section looks at the challenges that Finnish learners might have when acquiring the vowels of English.

WHY: As to vowels, the difficulties learners might experience have not got so much to do with the ability to produce them. Certainly some vowels that do not exist in Finnish might be difficult for learners to perceive but overall the difficulties stem more from the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation as well as the variation among accents. For these reasons it is important to draw learners' attention to language variation and have them understand that there can be various realizations for both written vowels and spoken vowels.

HOW:

1) Prioritization

As was done with consonants, there is also a core of vowels that can be considered of the greatest importance for Finnish speaking learners. However, with regard to vowels the core is not as much a matter of which vowels to focus on and which not to focus on but rather about what vowel-related phenomena to emphasize to learners. The following are the core topics suggested for Finnish learners in this material:

1. Vowel variation between English varieties
2. Vowel length
3. Unstressed syllables and particularly the unstressed *schwa* /ə/
4. The inconsistencies between spelling and pronunciation

Vowel variation is a part of language variation and something that most learners are aware of at least on some stage. Except for the very beginners, learners are probably familiar with the basic differences between, for example, British and American English and how words like *can't, not* and *rather* are pronounced differently in the two varieties. What they might not realize, however, is that vowels differ immensely between also other English varieties than the standard British and

American varieties might imply. It is therefore important to expose learners to language variation and different vowel systems. As for teaching vowels, it has been shown that distinctions between short and long vowels, that is the understanding of vowel length, is essential for mutual intelligibility whereas it is less relevant which vowel system learners choose to follow as long as they follow it consistently.

Spelling complicates the learning of vowels because of the notoriously inconsistent spelling system of English. A previous chapter was dedicated to spelling but it is useful to look at spelling also when discussing vowels. Finally, vowels touch upon connected speech phenomena in that vowels can change when they are in unstressed positions. While Finnish speakers are used to the fact that vowels in Finnish are always pronounced the same way regardless of their position, in English vowels may be reduced to schwas depending on their position in a word.

2) Activities with vowels

- ✓ WORKING WITH RHYMES
  A fun way to study vowels is through poetry and rhymes. Children's riddles and nursery rhymes can be utilized with older learners as well. There are also rhyme-dictionaries available and the internet is a treasure trove for material. The most creative task is of course to ask the learners to write their own poems. Give learners a topic or a few, and a minimum length for a poem. Tell them it has to rhyme, and ask them to pay attention to how the spelling of vowels can be misleading.

- ✓ EXAGGERATION
  The pronunciation of vowels can be supported by exaggerations and, for example, silly gestures or facial expressions that go together with vowel sounds (including diphthongs). Learners might find it difficult to tell vowels apart in normal speech if they are asked to look at the positioning of the lips and mouth. However, through exaggeration (from both the teacher and the learners) and practice they may be able to learn pronouncing vowels more easily.

Unit Four

THE BIG PICTURE – PROSODY

The final unit is about prosody: the phenomena that have to do with larger units of speech than individual sounds. The focus is on perceptive skills through tasks that are attended to draw learners' attention to the prosodic nature of English. The unit begins with a discussion on sentence stress, continues with connected speech phenomena such as strong vs. weak forms, and ends with chapters on word stress and intonation.

> **CHAPTERS:**
> **Sentence stress**
> **Connected speech phenomena**
> **Word stress**
> **Intonation**

Sentence stress

WHAT: Sentence stress refers to the emphasis given on parts of speech in order to divide the sentence into segments that are easy for the listener to process, and sometimes because some parts of the sentence are contrasted with or have more importance than others. Languages have different ways to convey this kind of prominence, and for successful communication learners should be familiarized with the phenomenon.

WHY: In research on English as an international language, sentence stress and particularly contrastive stress is given much importance. Sentence stress usually falls on lexical rather than grammatical items such as as articles and prepositions. The following dialogue is an example of the use of contrastive sentence stress (stressed parts in bold):

"I tried to phone Alexandra yesterday, but she didn't answer her phone."
*"Did you try her **home** number?"*
*"No, **I** only tried on her **cell**, **Susan** tried her home number but she didn't answer that either.*

Sentence stress in this dialogue conveys the idea that the stressed parts are contrasted with others: *home number* instead of *cell phone number*, *I* instead of *Susan*. The speakers respond to each others' stressed items and provide more information because of it. For learners of English, it is important to recognize and produce sentence stress correctly due to its importance in communication.

HOW:

1) Responding to sentence stress in pairs

This exercise helps learners to practice both recognizing and practicing sentence stress. They are given sample sentences and responses so that they have to respond to each others' stress, and they will receive immediate feedback on their success from their partner.

Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair with two handouts (see Appendix 7).

Explain the exercise:

1) Person A begins by reading the first sentence out loud (Part 1).
2) Person B responds to the sentence by choosing a reply a)-f) (<u>not meant to be read in order!</u>)
3) Person A responds back by choosing a reply a)-f).
4) Finally check that you both selected the same letter a)-f).
5) Switch roles so that Person B reads their sentence (Part 2).
6) Repeat parts 2)-4).
7) Switch roles again and this time choose a different respond a)-f).
8) Go on until you have used all responses a)-f).

2) Follow up – create your own sentences

After learners have been given a chance to practice sentence stress with model sentences, they can be asked to create their own sentences. Ask each learner to create a sentence using the following pattern:

1.-3. compulsory

1. Someone or something
2. Does, did, is doing, has done, will do etc... (any tense will do)
3. Something (object)

+

4.-7. optional

4. With someone
5. Somewhere
6. At some time
7. For some reason

For example: 1. My brother 2. is writing 3. a book about fishing 4. with his best friend 5. at their office 6. today 7. because they are both huge fans of fishing.

Then ask them to read their sentences to their partners, who, following the pattern of the first exercise, come up with responses.

Connected speech phenomena

WHAT: Each language has its own *sound* that is the result of many things: rhythm, intonation, pitch, and the ways in which words are connected to other words. English has its distinct features such as the stressing of only some syllables and rules as to how words are linked together.

WHY: Many topics in this chapter are such that will distinguish a native speaker from a non-native but will not necessarily affect intelligibility. Therefore it is not the target to learn to speak in a way that follows all the native patterns. Instead, the main focus is on perception. In order to be able to understand English, it is good to be aware of at least the most common phenomena of connected speech.

HOW:

1) Mumbles and exaggerations
(inspired by Moilanen 2002: 82)

Choose any text, for instance, a section of a chapter of the textbook you use in class. Ask students to underline words they think count as *content-words*, that is, words that are **not** grammatical: articles, pronouns, prepositions, auxiliaries etc. Then ask them to read the text so that the underlined words are spoken out loudly as if exaggerated, and the ones they didn't underline are spoken quietly, in a mumbled voice. If you wish, you can also mark the word stress in longer words. This exercise can be carried out at any level. The following is an example from a high school level textbook, with emphases added:

> A South African, an Australian and a New Zealander sat next to a deep river, fishing. Suddenly a strong wind came up and blew the South African's hat into the river. The three sat there, looking at the floating hat. "That's my favourite hat", said the South African, but made no move to get up. The Australian and the New Zealander continued fishing in silence. They all looked at the hat, which was slowly starting to sink. Finally the New Zealander got up, put down his fishing rod, and said "I'll get it for you mate". To the astonishment of the other two, he walked over the water, picked up the hat, and brought it back to the river bank. He didn't even get his feet wet. After a while the Australian looked at the South African and said: "Typical Kiwi. Can't even swim!"
> (Daffue-Karsten et al. 2006: 78)

Do not worry too much if you or your students disagree on which

words to underline and which not to. The point is just to make learners realize that in English it is typical to 'swallow' or as if hop over words that are more grammatical than relevant to the content.

2) Common phrases and collocations
(adapted from Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 214-215)

Many fixed expressions and sayings in English include unstressed, 'little' words that are sometimes hardly audible. The purpose of this task is to emphasize to learners the weak/strong distinction in English, so that they would be more familiar with and conscious of it when they hear speech.

This task can be conducted in many ways. You can either show the phrases one by one in a slide show or on the blackboard or you can make a handout that the learners work with. Or you can start one way and finish by doing the other. If you show the group one phrase at a time, ask them to think about the word that is missing. For example:

What__shame!   cup___tea

If you choose to create a hand-out, you can design it so that the learners connect the two parts:

Connect the phrase and the missing word:

1. I___help.   a) as
2. not___ all   b) at
3. cup___coffee   c) can
4. What___surprise!   d) do
5. What___you want?   e) on
6. Who___you?   f) than
7. as soon___possible   g) of
8. ___a minute   h) a
9. better___before   i) are
10. right___time   j) in

Finally, summarize a list of 'little' words and point out that they are often unstressed and therefore sometimes difficult to hear:

3) Finding similarities

As to connected speech, one can find similarities between Finnish and English. For instance, in spoken language (and especially the way young people speak) it is common to clip and blend words in both languages. Look at these examples:

> don't you → "dontcha"
> aren't you → "arentcha"
> won't you → "wontcha"

They are equivalent to such Finnish blends as *etsä, ettekste, etsie, etsää.*

> isn't it → ain't it → "innit" or "inee"

Similarly, in Finnish people often say *eikse, eiksoo* or *eiksni.*

These examples are of course dialect-specific. Not all English speakers use such pronunciation nor do all Finnish speakers. However, if learners struggle with the inconsistencies between what they see on paper and what they hear, it can help them to point out that they probably do, in fact, do the exact same thing with their own language. To reverse the situation, you can ask them how a foreigner who was learning Finnish might struggle if they heard phrases like "ehämietiiä or "tuutsäkäymäähuomen" instead of "Enhän minä tiedä." and "Tuletko sinä käymään huomenna?".

Finally, this is a great opportunity to revise other common blends and abbreviations in English: I've, you've, we've, would've, I'll, he'll, I'd, you'd, should've, I'm, he's, it's etc.

Word stress

WHAT: In Finnish, word stress always falls on the first syllable of a word. In English, on the other hand, it can fall on any syllable and the location of the stressed syllable can change depending on the grammatical role of a word in a sentence (e.g *a REcord* vs *to reCORD*). The rules of word stress in English are quite complex, however, certain endings provide useful clues.

WHY: Word stress is not as essential for mutual intelligibility as other aspects of prosody. However, it is one of those pronunciation items that are quite widely included in textbooks, possibly because it is easy to demonstrate on paper. For Finnish learners, word stress is probably not among the most difficult things to learn. The difficulties might have more to do with storing the information in long term memory.

HOW:

1) Inductive exercises

Word stress often falls on certain endings. For example, endings *-ation*, *-astic* and *-bility* are always stressed. Or, more precisely, the following vowels or diphthongs: *sensation, fantastic* and *credibility,* since it's always the vowel sounds that are stressed. This task is about giving learners a chance to figure out such rules themselves.

Start by giving learners a list of words:

COMPENSATION	ABOUT	ABILITY
REALISTIC	DETERMINATION	FANTASTIC
BEAUTIFUL FLEXIBILITY INTENTION		ACOUSTIC
AJAR	DETENTION AWAY	REALITY

Then ask them to group the words so that similarly stressed words go to the same group (you may want to revise the concept of word stress before this exercise):

- Words ending in -(vowel)+tion: compensation, determination, intention, detention
- Words ending in -(vowel)+stic: realistic, fantastic, acoustic

- Words ending in -(vowel)+lity: ab<u>i</u>lity, re<u>a</u>lity, flexib<u>i</u>lity
- Words that begin with a schwa /ə/: ab<u>ou</u>t, aw<u>ay</u>, ac<u>ou</u>stic, ab<u>i</u>lity, aj<u>ar</u>

Note that some words can belong to more than one group. Next, ask them to think about the stress in the following words:

RECORD   TRANSFER   PROJECT   TRANSPORT   PRODUCE

Unless they already know that with some words the place of the stressed syllable depends on the word's grammatical function, they will probably have disagreements on where the stress falls. Then ask them to think of the same thing in the following sentences:

- Usain Bolt holds the world record for the 100m sprint.
- The album was recorded in England.

- We are working on an interesting science project.
- The images were projected on the screen.

- I like to cook with fresh organic produce.
- The studio has been able to produce many box office hits.

See if the learners can come up with the rule themselves: in nouns the stress falls on the first syllable and in verbs it falls on the second. This exercise is by no means an exhaustive account of word stress in English. However, the fact that learners need to think of word stress patterns themselves may enhance learning and in particular memorizing what they have learned.

2) Images and other aids for teaching word stress

Multisensory methods can also be incorporated into the topic of word stress. For example, stressed syllables and non-stressed ones can be illustrated by using different sized objects. This also helps with understanding how words are divided into syllables:

A BOUT   RI DI CU LOUS   CON FLICT
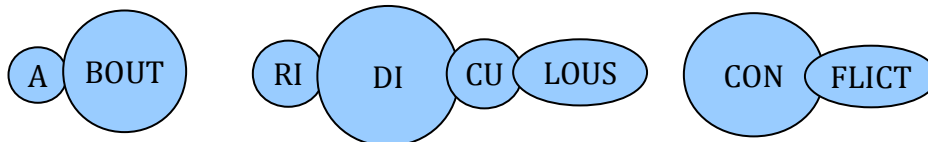
In addition to visual clues, word stress can be depicted by, for instance, clapping hands together or tapping the table with a pen.

Intonation

WHAT: Intonation is a term used to describe the pitch patterns of a language. The 'melody' of a spoken phrase can convey other meanings than the actual words might imply, and languages differ in the ways in which intonation is used. For example, a rising intonation can be a way to distinguish a question from an otherwise certain statement such as "You're late." (falling intonation = this is a fact). "You're late?" (rising intonation = this is a fact but also a request for an explanation).

WHY: Intonation has less relevance to mutual intelligibility and more to the speech conventions of specific communities. Finnish intonation patterns are quite different from those in English, and Finnish learners might be reluctant to alter the way speaking feels natural and comfortable to them. However, it is wise to inform learners that some listeners may attach negative associations to intonation that they find different (for example, monotonous). In this chapter, focus is again mostly on perceptive skills and making learners aware of the possible meanings of different pitch patterns.

HOW:

1) Focus on listening

Look for audio material that is in terms of content and vocabulary clearly above the learners' level. For young learners you can use recordings intended for high school learners and for high school learners you can try radio plays, for example. Audio books are particularly useful in teaching intonation since they often have dialogue and therefore intonation patterns that are common to spoken interaction. The point is not to understand precisely *what* is said, but what can be concluded when focusing on pitch changes in speech.

a) Find phrases in the recordings that clearly convey meaning through intonation: questions, surprise, amazement, disappointment, admiration, anger, orders etc.

b) Ask the learners to take a blank paper and write numbers from, for instance, 1 to 5, depending on the number of phrases you are using. Then play the phrases on tape, preferably each several times, and ask

them to draw a line that follows the intonation as they hear it, for example:

1.

2.

c) Also ask them to think whether they can tell what the speaker in each phrase is feeling or how they are reacting or what they are trying to do.

d) Finally, go over the learners' answers and see whether they agreed with each other. Then draw conclusions on what some of the basic intonation patterns in English are. For instance, a rising intonation for questions and statements that require an answer or that express surprise, and a falling intonation for complete sentences. Also note that there are differences between different varieties of English.

The purpose of this task is not so much to teach learners to use intonation in their own speech. That is something beyond the scope of this material since it is not central for teaching EIL. Instead, the focus is on what learners can understand from speech by listening to intonation alone, which hopefully will enhance communication.

2) Dabbling in intonation

Intonation can be described as the melody of speech, and therefore music and musical instruments can be helpful in teaching pronunciation. This task is about encouraging learners to try and see what they can do with their voice alone, not by words as such. Give them a basic word all of them know: 'Hello.' Then ask them to start repeating the word and trying to convey meaning and emotion by only saying that word. Exaggeration is encouraged. For example:

Hello – *serious and a bit rude*
Hello – *formal and polite*
Hello! – *happily surprised*
Hello? – *question, is somebody there?*
Hello! – *angry and frustrated, trying to catch attention*
hello – *whispering*
Helloooo – funny
etc.

Hopefully learners will gain confidence in using their voice in new ways and also understand the way intonation can affect meaning.

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APPENDICES

1 Start-of-term questionnaire

Name: _____

Circle the alternative closest to your opinion:

1. It's easy to repeat words after hearing them:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

2. It's easy to remember how words are pronounced:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

3. It's difficult to hear where a word ends and another one begins:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

4. Sounds in English are so different I don't know how to say them:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

5. I like to speak English:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

6. I feel embarrassed when I have to speak English:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

7. It confuses me when people pronounce words in different ways:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

8. It's easy to pronounce one or two words, but it's difficult to speak longer sentences:

                    almost always   sometimes   never

9. I think it's impossible to learn to pronounce English:

                    yes   no

10. I think pronunciation is taught enough:

                    yes   no

11. How would you like pronunciation to be taught?_____
_____
_____

2 Assessment table for evaluating pronunciation in a presentation or a discussion

PRONUNCIATION ASSESSMENT			
INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS			
1 Overall command of consonants Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
2 Overall command of vowels Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
PROSODY			
3 Sentence stress & prominence Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
4 Speech rate Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
5 Word stress Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
ACCOMMODATION			
6 Control over difficult words Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
7 Use of voice Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
8 Response to audience Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work
9 **OVERALL PERFORMANCE** Comments:	excellent	operational	needs work

3 Politeness and clarification phrases playing cards

Asking for clarification, expressing uncertainty:

I'm sorry, could you repeat that?	Could you speak more slowly, please?	I'm not sure I understand.
Did you mean...?	Could you spell that word, please?	Does that mean...?
Please, could you explain that once more?	I didn't quite follow the part where...?	Could you explain the word..., please?

Answering to clarify:

This word might not be familiar to everybody, it means the same as...	Let me explain again.	My point is that...
That's not quite/exactly what I mean.	What I'm trying to say is that...	

Ensuring that the message was understood:

Do you know that word?	Is this clear?	Would you like me to explain that again?
Do you have any questions?	Should I speak more slowly?	Please, let me know if you don't understand something.

4 Memory game with homophones

WAY	SERIAL	NOSE	THEIR	THYME
NIGHT	RAP	SUITE	KNOW	HI
ROLE	THERE	KNIGHT	WEIGH	WRAP
CEREAL	NO	HIGH	OUR	TIME
KNOWS	ROLL	SWEET	HOUR	

5 Puns

1.	Where do you find chili beans? At the North Pole.
2.	When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.
3.	What do you call a country where everyone drives a red car? A red carnation.
4.	Why can't a bicycle stand on its own? Cause it's two tired.
5.	Let's talk about rights and lefts. You were right, so I left.
6.	How do celebrities stay cool? They have many fans.
7.	No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
8.	She's happy to make a pair of pants for you, or at least sew its seams.

Source: http://www.jokesclean.com

6 Minimal pairs with consonants worksheet

1	bin			pin
2	sew			show
3	cheap			jeep
4	shin			chin
5	carry			Gary
6	tuck			duck
7	thick			tick
8	shoe			zoo
9	ferry			very
10	wheel			veal
11	seal			zeal
12	thigh			thy

A

Part 1:

JAMIE BOUGHT A HOUSE IN TORONTO LAST SUMMER.

No, I'm sure...
a) ...it was **Jamie.**
b) ...he **bought** one.
c) ...it was a **house**.
d) ...it was in **Toronto**.
e) ...it was **last** summer.
f) ...it was in the **summer**.

***
Part 2:

Oh, but I thought...
a) ... your **friend** saw a rat in the basement yesterday.
b) ... you **caught** a rat in the basement yesterday.
c) ... you saw **two** rats in the basement yesterday.
d) ... you saw a **mouse** in the basement yesterday.
e)... you saw a rat in the **attic** yesterday.
f) ... you saw a rat in the basement **today**.

B

Part 1:

Oh, but I thought...
a) ...**Jade** bought a house in Toronto last summer.
b) ...Jamie **rented** a house in Toronto last summer.
c) ...Jamie bought an **apartment** in Toronto last summer.
d) ...Jamie bought a house in **Montreal** last summer.
e) ...Jamie bought a house in Toronto **this** summer.
f) ...Jamie bought a house in Toronto last **spring**.

***
Part 2:

I SAW A RAT IN THE BASEMENT YESTERDAY MORNING.

No, ...
a) ... **I** saw it.
b) ... I only **saw** it.
c) ... it was only **one** rat.
d) ... I'm sure it was a **rat**.
e) ... it was in the **basement**.
f) ... it was **yesterday**.