

Workshop

“Chinese Accents and Accented Chinese”

Nordic Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai

9-10 October 2014

Organization

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Jeroen van de Weijer, Shanghai International Studies University

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Program

Thursday 9 October 2014

Supra-segmental Phonetics

- 9:00-9:20 **Coffee/Tea**
- 9:20-9:30 **Opening**
Marjoleine Sloos
- Session A**
- Chair:** *Luo Mingqiong* 骆明琼
- 9:30-10:15 **Talk 1** “Intonations and Emotions in English by Speakers of Shanghai dialect”
Jie Liang 梁洁
- 10:15-11:00 **Talk 2** Sentence intonation of Chinese-accented English”
Wenjun Chen 陈雯珺
- 11:00-11:25 **Talk 3** “A study on the intonation of Shanghainese”
Binjun Ling 璧君 凌

- 11:25-11:50 **Talk 4** “A study on the intonation of Shanghai-accented English”
Xue Mei 薛梅 & Weikang Zou 邹维康
- 11:50-13:50 **Lunch**

Session B

Chair: *Jocelyn Hardman*
- 13:45-14:30 **Talk 5** “English Language Learning Narratives of Chinese Students at a Dutch University”
Michelle Mellion-Doorewaard
- 14:30-15:15 **Talk 6** “Urumqi acquisition of Mandarin Tones”
Xinlu Yang 杨新璐
- 15:15 **Tea Break**
- 15:45-16:30 **Talk 7** “Predicting judged fluency of consecutive interpreting from acoustic measures” *Wenting Yu 虞文婷 & Vincent van Heuven*
- 17:15 End of the program

Dinner

Program

Friday 10 October 2014

Segmental Phonetics and Phonology

9:00-9:30 **Coffee/Tea**

Session C

Chair: *Wenjun Chen* 陈雯珺

9:30-10:15 **Talk 9** “The perception of Chinese accented English”
Jocelyn Hardman

10:15-11:00 **Talk 10** “Perception and Production of Mandarin final nasals by
Shanghainese speakers”
Luo Mingqiong 骆明琼

11:00-11:45 **Talk 11** “A study of the acquisition of tone by American learners of
Chinese”
Qing Ma 马青

11:45-13:45 **Lunch**

Session D: Phonology

Chair: *Wenting Yu* 虞文婷

- 13:45-14:30 **Talk 12** “Danish accented Chinese: some predictions”
Lei Wang 王磊
- 14:30-15:15 **Talk 13** “Bias in second language perception: a neurolinguistic approach”
Marjoleine Sloos 司马莱娜
- 15:15 **Tea Break**
- 15:45-16:30 **Talk 14** “The role of UG in second language acquisition”
Jeroen van de Weijer 耶鲁安
- 16:30-17:15 **Round the Table discussion**
- 17:15 End of the program
- Dinner**

Intonations and Emotions in English by Speakers of Shanghai dialect

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The talk presents an experimental study on the role of intonation in terms of linguistic versus paralinguistic function. The study consists of two experiments: a controlled experiment on phonetic realization of the focus in English declarative and interrogative sentences and an acoustic analysis on the emotional intonation in the theatrical performance by Chinese students.

Sentence intonation of Chinese-accented English

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Intonation is the “music” of a language, and is perhaps the most important element of a good accent. Chinese accented English involves special features on the pitch pattern in speech flow. This paper uses statistical analyses for identifying characteristics on pitch pattern of sentence utterances in English spoken by Chinese, statistical significance of pitch pattern differences between Chinese English and Native English speakers is evaluated depending on fluctuation ratio of pitch line in sentences. Results suggest that pitch ranges in Chinese English are actually wider than those for English speakers and pitch lines in sentences in Chinese English are less flat than those for English speakers. While it is known to all that Chinese accented English sounds flat in intonation, the results of this research indicates that Chinese English speakers have enough (or even more) rising and falling in cadence in English sentence Utterances.

References

- Bolinger, D. 1958, A theory of pitch accent in English [J]. *Word*, 14(2/3):109-149
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A study on the intonation of Shanghai-accented English

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Shanghainese-accented English reflects Shanghai EFL learners' intrinsic features on English supra-segmental features. The present paper presents an experimental study on the intonation of Shanghainese-accented English.

Chinese EFL learners often have a dialectal background, which leads to complexity in teaching and learning of English phonetics as a result of negative transfer of the mother tongue. One of the main non-Mandarin dialects in China is the Wu-dialect in Jiang Zhe (including Shanghai). Students there are supposed to be strongly affected by their dialect and they can't produce intonation types, stress, and focus intonation rightly. This raises the questions: Which characteristic features in Shanghai intonation will be transferred into English? Which prosodic features do Shanghai EFL learners use to arrive at the production of stress? According to the result of focus intonation of Chinese-accented English in pilot study, what characteristic features of focus intonation in Shanghainese-accented English?

In this paper, we will describe the characteristic features of the Shanghainese and English intonation. We made hypotheses as follow: The intonation types of the Shanghai EFL learner will be less varied than that of native speakers, but more closed to the native dialect as a result of negative transfer of the mother tongue. The Shanghai EFL learner will use more single manner such as depending merely on rising pitch. On the stress production, the Shanghai EFL learner will not be able to produce stress aligning with the stress rules in English.

English Language Learning Narratives of Chinese Students at a Dutch University

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Many Chinese students come to study at Dutch universities to acquire knowledge. To do so they must rely on the English they have learned. As we witness the agency with which this group seeks to improve its lot, the question arises as to whether or not it is well-equipped to meet this challenge. Is the students' English proficiency adequate, particularly when it comes to communicative skills such as speaking? Learning English is not just learning a new language, it has an impact on the person as a whole (Gao Yihong, 2009). What kinds of dilemmas occur when these students enter a new culture and how does this affect their sense of self and identity? How do they construct their identities during their English language learning experiences? (Bian Yongwei, 2009)?

Ten Chinese students from various disciplines were interviewed about their language learning experiences before and after arriving in the Netherlands. When interpreting these narratives it soon becomes clear that it is not only a matter of learning English, but it involves understanding who the learners are and how they are linked to the learning community. It appears that learners are influenced by their personal histories of language education as 'agency is mutable and may transform in response to ongoing and anticipated activity' (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 239). In keeping with Lantolf's activity theory, we conclude that the process of SLA for students is not only about becoming more proficient in English but more about 'developing, or failing to develop, new ways of mediating and maintaining relationships' with others (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001: 145).

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Yongwei, Bian. 2009. The More I Learned, The Less I Found My Self, in Lo Bianco, J., Orton, J. and Gao, Y. (ed.). 2009. *China and English: Globalisation and the Dilemmas of Identity*. : Bristol/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Urumqi Younger speakers' Acquisition of Standard Mandarin Tones

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The Urumqi Mandarin dialect has three tones, whereas Standard (Beijing) Mandarin has four tones. In recent years, younger speakers of Urumqi dialect started to use Standard (Beijing) Mandarin in their daily life because of the promotion of Standard Mandarin. We investigate how they acquire the tones in Standard Mandarin, especially the rising tone (T₂) which lacks a counterpart in Urumqi Mandarin. We will show that these younger speakers initially use Urumqi tones in Standard Mandarin (but for different lexical sets). At that stage, the production of T₁, T₃ and T₄ approximates Standard Mandarin relatively well. However, T₂ is merged with T₃. In the second stage, unmerger of T₂ and T₃ occurs, which is characterized by a distinction between early (T₂) and late (T₃) low turning points in the dipping tone. In the third stage, further disambiguation occurs by lowering the lowest turning point in T₃. However, the final rise of T₂ is still missing. We assume that raising the final part of T₂ will be the final step to be taken in the near future.

Predicting judged fluency of consecutive interpreting from acoustic measures

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The present study presents an experiment to investigate 1) whether judged fluency correlates with judged accuracy of consecutive interpreting performance and 2) whether and how judged fluency can be predicted on the basis of acoustic measures such as automatically calculated temporal measures of speech quality. In the experiment, ten raters judged six major quality measures related to accuracy and fluency of the consecutive interpreting performance recorded from seven BA trainees and five MA trainees. The recorded interpretations were then analyzed acoustically by means of the speech analysis tool of PRAAT. The pauses detected by PRAAT and the disfluencies transcribed and labelled manually were automatically calculated by the text analysis computer program of AWK, based on which 12 acoustic measures of fluency were calculated. The results show that 1) there is a strong positive correlation between judged accuracy and judged fluency in consecutive interpreting; 2) there are strong correlations between judged fluency and the objective acoustic measures of fluency in consecutive interpreting; and 3) effective speech rate appears to be the best predictor of judged fluency in consecutive interpreting. The other important determinants of judged interpreting fluency are number of filled pauses, articulation rate, and mean length of pause. Apparently, effective speech rate is a powerful predictor of perceived fluency because it incorporates three aspects of fluency, i.e. speed fluency, breakdown fluency and repair fluency. The results have practical implications for developing automatic assessment of fluency and quality of delivery in consecutive interpreting testing.

The intelligibility of Mandarin-accented English to Indian, Korean, Chinese, and American listeners

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Since China, India, and Korea constitute the top three nations sending graduate students to the US for advanced degrees, this study investigated the intelligibility of Mandarin-accented and American English to Indian, Chinese, Korean, and American listeners. A psycholinguistic word-recognition-in-noise study investigated the effects on intelligibility of speakers' L1 and segmental pronunciation accuracy and how this varied by listeners' L1 and word familiarity. Participants included 6 male graduate students (Chinese & American) as speakers and 72 male and female graduate students (Indian, Chinese, Korean, & American) as listeners.

A series of logistic regression mixed-effects models revealed that speaker L1, listener L1, and word familiarity were significant predictors of intelligibility. Speaker segmental accuracy did not significantly predict intelligibility at the "TA-certified" proficiency level. Consequently, for academic purposes, attention should be paid to increasing both international and American listeners' discipline-specific vocabulary. In addition, both international and American university students should receive the linguistic perception training necessary to accommodate the range of accent diversity that has become a reality of academic settings today. Finally, pronunciation training that focused on the alignment of the segmental level with higher levels of prosody, rather than segments alone, would be more beneficial to a wide range of international listeners.

**A Study on the Perception and Production of Mandarin Syllable-final Nasals by Local
Shanghai People**

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Shanghainese and Mandarin are two major Chinese dialects, which belong to the Wu Dialect group and the Northern Dialect Group respectively. In my study, I find that in Mandarin Chinese (MC), there are two nasal phonemes: coronal nasal /n/ and velar nasal /ŋ/. But in Shanghainese, there is only one nasal phoneme: /N/. It has three allophones, [n], [ŋ] and [ñ], which are complementary in distribution. This study then makes the hypothesis that MC syllable-final nasals pose a problem for local Shanghai people in both perception and production. This study justifies the hypothesis with the following experiment: inviting 5-10 local Shanghai people to finish a paper with two major items: listening comprehension and reading aloud of words and short passages in MC. The first item is multiple-choice questions, and the second one an oral test, which will be recorded by the experimenter. The validity and accuracy of this experiment are decided by the choice of the subjects, the design of the test and the analysis of the experiment results.

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A study of the acquisition of tone by American learners of Chinese

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While acquiring Chinese tones, American learners internalize a system of phonological rules which governs their tone production. This interlanguage phonological system is not randomly developed, but constructed with the learners' phonological knowledge of Chinese language and their mother language, and with their perceptual processing and motor control of tones as well. This study is aimed to reveal some phonological rules of American learners' interlanguage in respect of Chinese tones. It examined the role of language transfer in the construction of interlanguage phonology, including the interaction between syllable structure transfer and tone production, the interaction between the voicing of consonants and tone production, etc. The speech data of American speakers, speaking Chinese, were audiotaped for transcription and analysis. Close inspection of the data analysis also manifested the important roles of language markedness, motor control other than language transfer in interlanguage phonology.

Danish accented Chinese: some predictions

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Studies examining the production and perception of non-native speech usually aim to describe the deviation from the native speech and predict difficulties in the acquisition of production and perception. Theoretical models like Perceptual Assimilation Model and Speech Learning Model have proposed that learner' acquisition of L2 sounds is mainly determined by the degree of similarity between the sound categories of the L2 and their first language. It is striking to see what difficulties a L2 learner with a complete different L1 background will encounter in the acquisition of L2 sounds. Chinese serves as an interesting case study for L2 acquisition among native speakers of Danish, in that Danish is considerably different from Mandarin Chinese in terms of consonant inventory, vowel inventory and more importantly, Chinese is a tone language in which pitch is used to signal lexical meaning. Although Chinese language acquisition by foreign learners is well-documented, the production and perception of Standard Mandarin by Danish learners are rarely investigated. Based on our observations, Danish learners of Chinese undergo tremendous difficulties such as the inability to discriminate *tai* [t^hai] and *cai* [ts^hai]. In the present study, we will make predictions about the production and perception of the L2 segments by comparing Danish and Chinese phoneme inventories, paying particular attention to the obstruents.

Bias in second language perception: a neurolinguistic approach

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The perception of language with L2 accent easily leads to bias. Expectations regarding the accent and the accuracy of language performance (which may or may not be justified) play a role in L2 perception: the listener perceives what she *expects* to perceive, rather than the actual sound. Recent studies into accent-induced bias concentrate on general accuracy ratings and on segmental perception. We now raise the question to which extent the perception of *tone* is affected by accent-induced bias. On top of that we will for the first time investigate the neural correlates of accent-induced bias.

The proposed research focuses on the effect of Danish accent on the perception of Mandarin tones among native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The context will be varied (Danish accented or unaccented speech) and the accuracy of the tones will be varied as well (accurate tones and inaccurate tones). The effect of perceptual accuracy of tone will be investigated among two subject groups: Mandarin speakers with exposure to Danish (in Denmark) and Mandarin speakers with no exposure to Danish (in China). We hypothesize that accent leads to less accurate perception such that correctly pronounced tones in accented speech are more likely to be perceived as incorrect than in unaccented speech. We also expect Mandarin speakers with exposure to Danish to be more tolerant to incorrect tones than Mandarin speakers without exposure to Danish. This will be examined in a behavioural study and in an MMN paradigm in a combined EEG-MEG study.

On the Role of Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition

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In this exploratory presentation I discuss the question of whether Universal Grammar has a role to play in the explanation of (phonetic) mistakes in second (or foreign) language acquisition. I argue that it doesn't: first, the concept of UG is hard to define and seems too elusive to be of much use in L2 acquisition studies. Second, where the concept has been invoked, alternative explanations are available that are simpler, more general and therefore preferable.