

Teaching English Pronunciation to Adult Refugees: A Personal Narrative of a Graduate Student in Newfoundland

Juan Marcelo Zapata Rugel
Memorial University
jmzapataruge@mun.ca

Abstract

This narrative is based on the Experiential Learning portion of the course ED-6676 “Teaching ESL: Theory and Practice” at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). The practicum consists of imparting 6 hours of ESL lessons to a student appointed by the Association for New Canadians (ANC) in St. John’s. Designated students are usually refugees or economic immigrants to Canada and the lessons being provided are pro bono. The topics were chosen according to the level of English proficiency of the student, which in my case was Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 4, and included conversational themes ranging from social conventions, family and friends, nationalities and differences between the home country and the host country. A mix-method approach to ESL teaching was used, including Audio-lingual, Communicative language teaching, Computer-assisted language learning, Direct Method, Grammar-translation method, Language immersion and Task-based language learning. After reflecting on this experience, my conclusions stress the importance of self motivation and student enthusiasm about their learning process, besides the allocation of an enormous amount of study time and dedication, in order to succeed, both economically and personally, in North American Anglophone society.

Keywords: ESL, pronunciation, accent, refugee.

Introduction

So the question goes: How did I end up teaching English to refugees on “The Rock”, i.e. the island of Newfoundland? The story goes back to my first days in St. John’s, Newfoundland, in late August 2017. With a background in Aviation Instruction and years of ESL experience in sunny Florida and overseas I was more than enthusiastic about quickly finding a suitable part-time job in the field (due to immigration rules, getting a full-time job would not be possible for me until I earn a Canadian Master’s degree), but I was wrong. Although I managed to secure a Research Assistantship position a week after my arrival, something remarkably fast taking into consideration that Canada and the Island of Newfoundland were uncharted territories for me, landing an English Teacher job was a different kettle of fish as I had come to know. The demand for English courses in the City of St. John’s was close to nothing compared to other major cities in other Canadian provinces. Most people interested in learning English were international students trying to get admission to either the local College or University, a market share already in the hands of both the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and MUN respectively, whereas

the rest of potential learners, mainly economic immigrants and refugees, were for the most part enrolled in the government-sponsored ESL courses imparted by the Association for New Canadians (ANC).

So, after having some preliminary appointments with a key member of the teaching community at the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Career and Employment Development Advisors both at MUN and *AXIS* — a branch from ANC dedicated to provide employment programs for educated professionals —, and international doctoral students in MUN's Faculty of Education, doing a lot of listening, taking notes and following advice, the idea of volunteering as an ESL teacher was becoming each time more and more feasible to serve as a first step into mainstream ESL instruction. However, although things in Canada tend to go according to the book, it takes the newcomer longer than usual to flip through its pages, as I was about to start realising.

Before long I found myself approaching ANC and MUN's ESL centre — a Government sponsored Organisation and a University Department, respectively, that individually advertised the need for prospective volunteers in their corresponding websites —, and handing them out my updated CV, a document inspired by the prescriptions of the School of Graduate Studies at MUN's guide to effective Curriculum Vitae (CV) and cover letter writing, and which was carefully tailored to each of the addressees with the opportune recommendations provided by the *AXIS* Career services division, a manuscript aimed at standing out from the rest and that would finally pave my way through the ESL teaching road. The result: never got a reply or call back, even though I had been warmly welcomed at both places and my intentions were highly appreciated.

Fast forward 3 months and already into 2018, I was losing my faith in getting back to face-to-face ESL teaching — I had kept my usual online Aviation English lessons with student pilots in the US lest my Aeronautical knowledge erode with time, too. This term in particular I switched to campus-based instruction, in great part because of the opportunity to meet colleagues and professors — I was in Canada, after all. Professor Xuemei Li's Experiential Learning portion of her course on "Teaching ESL: Theory and Practice" would turn out to be my way into this elusive realm of community work: In cooperation with ANC, this tutoring experience of a minimum of 6 hours, a limitation conceived for classroom purposes but one that I personally preferred to bypass to the point of permanently extending my community involvement for the aforementioned reasons, aims at enticing class participants to put revised and discussed ESL theory into practice while getting involved in a particular Canadian ESL setting based on a student-volunteer match to be performed by a volunteer connection associate at ANC. Such experiment is worth trying, given the peculiarities of the volunteer recruitment process, which by this time many of my classmates had already started to realise, too.

By late February and after unsuccessfully being initially matched to a brother and a sister from Ethiopia in grades 7 and 6, respectively, who were looking for help in practicing spoken English — my favourite skill — and with their homework while learning about Canadian culture and available resources in St. John's, I was meeting "a guy from Syria", as the liaison associate put it, 28 years of age, who was looking for help in practicing spoken English and learning the Canadian culture and resources available in town. Although Canadian culture was not an unfamiliar topic to me, being a westerner and having lived in the U.K. and North America for

many years, I knew I had just been living in “The City of Legends” roughly for 6 months, and that since 2002 my accent had been labelled everything from “King’s English” to “indistinguishable European” to “South African” to “Australian” but certainly not “Canadian”, let alone “Newfoundlander”. Still, I was resolved to do my best to give this person the best impression I could about Canadian hospitality and sense of humour while at the same time demonstrating appropriate fitness for the job to be done for I was now representing Canada, and of course teaching him English in a very diligent and amiable manner. To my relief, my altruistic intentions were backed by Goto Butler (2007) whose study found that non-native accented English instructors were not a barrier to students’ ability to understand their teacher, a concept apparently shared by ANC volunteer recruiters, for the only qualification to become part of the program, according to their campus presentation, was “to be fluent” in the language.

First impressions last forever, so the saying goes, and this impression in particular was not an exception. This Syrian gentleman, as I like to call him, showed clear signs of having just escaped from a frightening place, perhaps experiencing some trauma along the way and now was seeking refuge in this safe haven we call Newfoundland, a somewhat realistic scenario that would definitely be adding an extra layer of difficulty when trying to reach my instructional goals. Upon being given the prerogative to choose whether to accept the match, I could not help but eagerly shaking my new student’s hand and getting down to work straight away. His CLB level was 4, Fluent Basic Ability as stated by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and as the intro session progressed, it was more than evident that it was time for my student to start learning everything from scratch and time for me to come up with the latest gadgets in my bag of tricks, i.e. the latest findings in ESL instruction combined with my own experience in teaching and learning foreign languages and proven know-how.

Immigrants, English and Pronunciation

Canada’s history of receiving refuge seekers goes back to pre-Confederation times (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2016). This tradition extends up to the present. For example, in 2016 the arrival of nearly 60,000 refugees was projected as part of the national immigration strategy (Canadian Immigration News, 2016), “fleeing hardship, global conflict, or persecution to seek safe haven in Canada.” (Miles & Bailey-McKenna, 2016, p. 110).

One of the major obstacles non-English speaking refugees have to sort out is to learn the language so that they can function in society (Stewart, 2010). A large group of immigrants coming to Canada in the past two decades have arrived with an “inadequate command” of the English-language (Zong, 2004, p. 2) and “unfortunately are failing to integrate meaningfully into the economy in large measure because of this” (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009, p. 26). Reasons for this phenomenon can be traced to maintaining their first language as their preferred means of communication at home, with their children and with their acquaintances (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009).

Likewise, most immigrant ESL learners report learning to speak as the most difficult aspect of learning English (Wang, 1999). Their perceived difficulty may vary ranging from pronunciation issues to getting access to meaningful language acquisition contacts to learn and practice speaking skills. In general terms, they have very limited social contact with native speakers (Hart & Cumming, 1997). Ironically, the ones who managed to have access to an English-speaking

environment complain that they often have to confront the reality of being unable to engage people in a conversation (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009). Attributed culprits for the lack of fully developed small talk skills may be the tendency in their settlement patterns to reside in areas populated by other immigrants who speak their same language. This leads to scarce motivation, especially for older immigrants, to learn the target language (D'Anglejan & Renaud, 1985). Although they need access to Anglophone social networks in order to practice and improve their speaking skills, they encounter difficulty gaining access to them because having a common language is a pre-established condition to enter these social circles (Peirce, 1993).

Furthermore, refugee students may be experiencing the consequences of trauma, which affects their mental health negatively (NCTSN, 2016). Trauma can be defined as an experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope. Traumatic experiences and repeated exposure to traumatic events can have profound long-term consequences, increasing the risk of low academic performance, engagement in high-risk behaviours and creating difficulties in peer and family relationships (Miles & Bailey-McKenna, 2016).

To curb the disadvantageous effects of not possessing the necessary skills to fully and positively integrate into society, social programs aiming for the fulfilment of essential survival language needs of refugees have appeared, and their reception regarded as generally positive (Leong & Collins, 2007). These social and academic support factors include literacy (phonemic and print awareness), numeracy (mathematical and reasoning), vocabulary (general and academic), language forms and functions, oral fluency, writing skills as well as providing services of a more personal aspect, like self-regulation techniques and problem-solving skills (L.E.A.D., 2016).

Besides taking the necessary steps to fully integrate into society via sharing the same language and producing it effectively, there is still an aspect of the spoken language that creates alienation and prevents an earlier amalgamation between locals and newcomers, for “the most obvious indication that someone is a second-language (L2) user is a tendency to produce speech with a “foreign accent” (Munro, 2003, p. 38). Even though many researchers agree that intelligibility and comprehensibility should be the primary goals of pronunciation instruction and not the eradication of accent (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Isaacs, 2008; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Levis, 2005), “negative attitudes toward foreign-accented speech have led to discrimination against second-language users in Canada” (Munro, 2003, p. 38). Telling who speaks with a foreign accent is apparently something wired in our genes, so to speak, to the point that even phonetically untrained listeners are able to detect a foreign accent in tiny segments of speech in as short as .03 seconds (Munro, 2003).

Speakers do not have to speak with a foreign accent to be perceived differently by their listeners: Even a Newfoundlander accent is considered the outlier among English speakers in Canada, giving way to a series of stories of children being teased by their peers at school because of their “Newfie” accent (CBC News, 2018). But not all foreign accents are equal, some accents are more prestigious than others. To support this view, a Harris Poll of 2,331 U.S. adults on accents and their reception was conducted, indicating that 49% of surveyees attributed an air of sophistication to anyone sounding British, whereas 51 % said that New York accent would imply the speaker was rude (Harris Interactive, 2010).

The Case for Teaching Pronunciation

Pronunciation instruction in the classroom is a hot topic for many and as such tends to provoke opinionated confrontations between their supporters and detractors due to factors that may affect students' oral production; especially when adult learners and non-native teachers are involved in the process.

Although most immigrants consider themselves to experience fairly favourable learning conditions as compared with learning English as a foreign language back home (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009), a recent federal evaluation of LINC programs indicated extremely limited improvement in speaking and listening skills as a result of language instruction. (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013).

In fact, many researchers have called for increased attention to this aspect of second language speech because of its importance not only to intelligibility, but also to social integration (Deng et al, 2009). Yet, some studies indicate that listening and speaking skills are underrepresented in many English language classrooms (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013) and in specialised literature (Deng et al, *ibid*) while others suggest that common problems of pronunciation instruction are the resistance many teachers portray to implementing it due to either a lack of instruction time (Gordon and Darcy, 2016) or formal training in pronunciation teaching (Lambacher, 2001; Breitreutz, Derwing & Rossiter, 2001; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; MacDonald, 2002; Munro, 2003). This observation is confirmed in Derwing and Rossiter (2002) in which several adult ESL learners reported they were not getting the pronunciation instruction that they needed and wanted, the majority of them perceiving pronunciation to be a contributing factor to their communication problems.

So, what approach should teachers have to pronunciation teaching if they are to hear their students' call? On the one hand we find Jenkins (2002) and Levis (2005) supporting the notion of a need for phonological norms and classroom pronunciation models for English as an International Language (EIL) based on tried and tested methods, focusing on intelligibility for non-native speakers, rather than for native speaker receivers. He proposed that a safe-for-all Lingua Franca Core (LFC) —rather than the controversial British Received Pronunciation (RP) or the influential General American (GA)— should be used as the basis for a phonological syllabus for EIL learners, stressing the role of the teachers to help learners understand that they should not necessarily work towards the goal of having a native accent, but instead towards achieving intelligibility in communication. In this respect, Sifakis and Sougari (2005) add that pronunciation instruction should be tailored to local conditions. After all, the ratio of native speakers of English to non-native speakers, now in the range of 1:2 or 1:3, is as wide as it ever has been, posing significant implications for ESL teaching and learning (Harmer, 2007).

Reasons why researchers and teachers should discourage adult learners from striving to reach native-like pronunciation standards abound and involve factors concerning not only the learners themselves, but also the social context in which the second language is learned (Wang, 1999). These important factors seem to be those over which teachers have the least influence (Purcell & Suter, 1980).

The critical or sensitive period is one of the most cited causes. Beyond a specific period in our lifetime, most likely after an individual's puberty stage has elapsed, age ceases to have a systematic effect on L2 acquisition but instead creates a great variability and a lack of linearity in

L2 attainment among adult learners (Johnson & Newport, 1989; Patkowski, 1980). This position is further strengthened by the indication that, before the age of 20, there is a steep linear decline in performance. After this point starts to level off, a rather steeper decline for the younger than the older arrivals (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). These declining outcomes with increasing starting age have been reported to be most strongly manifested in the aural-oral aspects of L2 proficiency (d'Anglejan & Renaud, 1985; von Elek & Oskarsson, 1973; Klein & Dittmar, 1979; Scott, 1994; Seright, 1985; Wang, 1998).

Second language learning and accentedness are tied to the concepts of identity and discrimination as well. (Munro, 2003; Gatbonton et al., 2005; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Moyer, 2007; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006).

Munro (2003) suggested that ESL instructors should take on a leadership role in promoting equity, both in and out of the classroom, by conveying positive attitudes about accented speech, an encouragement with a little hint of resignation in it, in some sense giving the idea that native-like pronunciation patterns are unlikely to be attained by most L2 learners (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009) and that gearing students' and teacher's efforts towards the accomplishment of those outcomes is more of an uphill battle.

Though these authors' research may give the impression that most of the research community has turned their backs to the possibility of removing a foreign accent from an L2 speaker, on the other hand we find Bongaerts et al. (2000) showing that some adult learners could indeed speak their L2 without a foreign accent, attributing these outcomes to strong motivation on the part of the learners, intensive instruction of English phonology, extensive exposure to L2 input and typologically relating L1's and L2's ingredients that when put together resemble the 'Army Method' with its combination of extensive mimicry, memorisation and over-learning of language patterns and forms (Torki, 2013).

The Experiential Learning

And so the first session came. We had a conversation for an hour or so and as my learner spoke, I tried to get as many cues as I could of what his knowledge of English was. The label "CLB level 4" was definitely not reliable at all to me in order to predict my interlocutor's language skills or capabilities. I had come prepared to the session so I showed him a couple of basic vocabulary exercises aimed for adult learners, e.g. Formal and informal salutation formulae, parts of the body and common adjectives and their corresponding opposites. As we were feeling more comfortable in each other's company, he began to guide me through the topics he had covered in class at ANC, mainly words and phrases related to being at a Doctor's appointment, emergency situations at home and a visit to the grocery store, topics which, judging by the amount of solved exercises and handouts filed in his binder, made me think they were just too little, given the fact that he had been attending this English course from 9am to 2pm, 5 days a week for the past 3 months. Yet, I had to remind myself to leave some room for misunderstandings between what I thought he meant and what he actually meant, just in case. Eventually, after some trial and error with supplementary vocabulary exercises and independent online material, I came to the conclusion that we needed something more structured and that could give us plenty of opportunities to practice listening and speaking skills above all due to reasons discussed in the previous part of this narrative.

Language classes should involve a variety of tasks drawing upon a range of skills to enhance fluency, even in low-proficiency level classrooms (Derwing & Rossiter, 2003) and activities should promote formulaic sequences and encourage paraphrasing, appropriate pause placement and rapid production (Guillot, 1999). That being said, the textbook of choice was *American English File First Edition Starter* by Clive Oxenden and Christina Latham-Koenig, published by Oxford University Press. The reasons for this selection, besides the series' strict alignment to the aforementioned principles, included the familiarity I had with the material, the British version at least, the fact that I had the whole digital collection at my disposal, a personal desire to uncover the intricacies of General American pronunciation patterns, a survival need to fulfil in my student about adopting a speech pattern and accent as close to the North American variety of the English language as possible, and finally following expert recommendations from peer reviewed ESL studies based on original research which regarded this series as one of the best English resources currently on the market, especially with respect to pronunciation coverage (Derwing et al., 2012), which is the focus of my teaching practice.

One of the renowned characteristics of this publication, one that I personally advocate, is the introduction of IPA phonetic symbols from the very first lesson, revealing to the reader the true focus of the series: Get your students talking (Oxford University Press Catalogue, 2018). A package divided into courses ranging from Starter — the one that I used with my student — to Level 5 is comparable to gradually ascending from A1 to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), leaving in our hands a detailed road map of the topics to cover and how to benefit from them for many sessions to come.

Although the presentation of IPA symbols from an early stage and its continuous referencing throughout the whole book were brilliant features, they were still way behind the emphasis that some other publications have placed on pronunciation, as is the case with Mauger's classic *Cours de Langue et de Civilisation Françaises (Hachette)*, in which not just every single word is presented in both French-Latin alphabet and IPA, but goes a step further using *liaison* or word link to raise the learner's awareness of higher language dimensions when it comes to segmentals and suprasegmentals, and the *Assimil method*, in which a similar approach to word link and segmentals is employed but in a rather less intimidating manner, i.e. using the Latin alphabet to convey an approximate idea of the way to pronounce stand-alone or strings of words. In any case, I took steps to highlight this language phenomenon to my student and constantly asked him to connect linkable words with drop lines even though this activity is not included as an exercise in the book.

Something that I realised while listening to the audio recordings was the emphasis the authors placed on exposing the listener to different types of World Englishes with audio extracts featuring fluent English speakers portraying international accents, giving the impression that no matter how the learner utters a word or phrase, their spoken production was considered acceptable provided the converser understood the message and interacted logically. Deterding in his 2005 work suggested that exposure to non-standard English accents could be an important aspect of an English language curriculum. That said, I will keep wishing to find Scouse, Geordie, Newfinese, American South or African American vernacular accents, to name a few, in future editions, combining in this way World Englishes and English dialects as part of the curriculum, just to spice things up a little.

As for my student, he presented the usual speech habits that are characteristic to native speakers of Arabic, in any of its modern varieties, who have not undergone specific pronunciation training, among them: Simplified use of vowel sounds and diphthongs, as in [e] for 'a' vs [ei], [o] for 'o' vs [oo], [ɛtʃ] for 'h' vs [ɛɪtʃ], at times evoking the sounds of West Indies English as in [dʒɑ' mɛ:kɑ] for 'Jamaica' vs [dʒə'meɪ.kə], extensive use of the rhotic [r] and [x] sounds, and inability to discriminate between [p] and [b], a classic Arabic feature, [s] and [z], [n] and [ŋ] and [ʔ] for [t] sounds. This last contrast was a bit surprising even for me because I was under the impression that the authors wanted their listeners to realise, perhaps unconsciously, that fluent speakers tend to gulp the final [t] sound in words like 'late', 'meet' and 'right', a real language phenomenon that in most publications goes inadvertent but one that may convey an air of informality on the part of the speaker. Couper's (2006) research investigated the teaching of segmentals, focusing on epenthesis (the addition of an extra sound) and absence (the dropping of a sound), finding that targeted instruction in these areas produced fewer learner errors as a result of raising the student's awareness of the difference between what they say and what native speakers say to help them identify the difference and practice the more accurate pronunciation (Lado, 1957).

We were able to cover a wide range of topics during the past month. We revised the verb *to be* in its simple present iteration in its corresponding affirmative, negative and interrogative cases, numbers from 0-10, 10-100, 100-1,000, word stress, countries and nationalities and how to introduce oneself at a social gathering. Each of these topics contained substantial listening and writing exercises so much so that the main objective of the series was palpable.

When the listening exercises contained recordings featuring speakers using a rather fast speech rate —I could tell by the frown on my student's face—, I replayed the recording but this time slowing down its tempo without altering the speakers' voice pitch, using the pc software *Winamp* and its add-on *Pacemaker* to suit the exact learner's listening rate and not an extreme lethargic, sluggish speed; a practice that has given me great results in the past with students for whom audio recordings presented a bit of a challenge to decode. This modification of the listening activity is based on Munro and Derwing's (2001) study of speech rate in which they demonstrated that listeners rated slow speech as more accented and less comprehensible than utterances produced at a normal rate, suggesting that the strategy of speaking slowly is unlikely to be effective for many second language speakers, citing the ideal speed as slightly faster than ESL learners' current rate but slower than the normal rate of a native speaker, a nice feat achievable with the right technology at your disposal.

We could feel engaged by the activities and each new exercise was as interesting as the previous one. Something that sprang to mind when correcting my student's homework on demonyms was the difficulties new learners of a language have to go through in their language acquisition process, particularly when dealing with murky distinctions, as is the case of "Peru" and "Peruvian" but not "Peruan", which, in a sense, is a much more logical assumption. On this note, Couper (2006) recommends to help learners to discover useful patterns and rules while giving feedback and providing opportunities for further practice. When asked about the reason for variants like that I classified them into "families" that use the same suffix as an inflection, such as: *Japanese and Vietnamese; Brazilian and Australian; and English and Finnish*, in other words the least complex ones, realising that even *Mexicoan, Chinese, Italian and Irish* may be logical extensions of the rule in the student's mind.

Although 6 hours is too little time to confidently expect results of any kind out of a teaching methodology and ANC's required time commitment to ESL volunteer activities is 2 hours a week, I have to admit that, unless the student (1) is enthusiastic about his learning and devotes an enormous amount of study time and dedication to it, (2) uses his second language outside the classroom (Dudley, 2007) and (3) has unintended and/or premeditated encounters with native speakers outside the classroom (Derwing, Thomson, and Munro, 2006), either through contact assignments or service placements (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002), besides (4) practising small talk so that he is able to start a casual conversation with local people (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008) in order to aid fluency, it will take considerable effort, resources and time to successfully integrate an individual, with the previously described characteristics and in his present language skill condition, into Canadian economy and society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

After examining both positions for and against the suitability, convenience and ultimate necessity of teaching English, stressing ideal pronunciation outcomes, the ups and downs of the ESL volunteer program, the Canadian reality and the survival needs of my student, and despite an overwhelming amount of research spreading sighs of resignation about the utility of centring teachers' efforts in modelling ESL students' pronunciation to an ideal standard, I must confess that I remain totally inclined to advocate, based on my life and work experience, for the benefits that adopting a prestigious L2 accent and intensive phonological training can give to a non-native speaker, both for their professional aspirations as much as for their personal satisfaction, and in which motivation and diligence might play the key role.

Suggestions in order to attain realistic goals and improve the outcomes of pronunciation training while decreasing the chances of accent discrimination (Munro, 2003), facilitating social interaction and diversifying/redirection ethnic group affiliation sentiments (Gatbonton, Trofinavich, 2005), although not abounding, can be summarised into: (1) implementing an explicit pronunciation instruction curricular component, particularly to curb the problems posed by the resistance many teachers have to its instruction due to lack of time (Gordon & Darcy, 2016); (2) using perceptual training (Gordon & Darcy, 2016) to improve student's perception and production of segmentals and suprasegmentals, which gains have been shown to transfer to the production domain, and also because a specific treatment designed to direct learners' attention toward specific features of the L2 may also facilitate its acquisition; (3) increasing the amount of self-study time (Allitt, 2010) with the notion that the brightest minds in history have been autodidact and that training studies, particularly language instruction, often require many hours of exposure to sounds, great amounts of discipline and a good deal of motivation on the learner's side; (4) operating under a broad (global) framework of instruction (Derwing, Munro, Wiebe 1998) that has proven to help learners improve comprehensibility, accentedness and fluency beyond the sentence level, extending into the whole narrative realm; all this besides (5) increasing efforts to secure stable funding for ESL initiatives that call for a reduction of student-teacher ratios (Karanja, 2007); (6) using expert recommended and reviewed textbooks for pronunciation instruction (Derwing, Diepenbroek, Foote, 2012) while (7) emphasising the instruction of prestigious accents.

As a final note, I must say that this project has been an opportunity for self-enrichment and growth in many aspects, ranging from the practice of my profession in a new environment to the

realisation of the multiple challenges newcomers and refugees have to go through in order to thrive and succeed, both professionally and personally, in a foreign land, trying to master a foreign language in the meantime.

The Author

Juan Marcelo Zapata Rugel (a.k.a. J.Z.) is a Master's student at the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada. He has professional teaching background as flight instructor, ground instructor and aviation English instructor in many aeronautical institutions in the USA and as ESL instructor in Latin America. Currently, he works as an ESL instructor and research assistant at Memorial University, and serves on the Board of Directors at TESL-NL Association.

References

- Abrahamsson, N., & Hyltenstam K. (2009). Age of onset and nativelikeness in a second language: Listener perception versus linguistic scrutiny. *Language Learning*, 59, 249–306.
- Allit, P. (2009). *The art of teaching: Best practices from a master educator*. Chantilly, VA: The Teaching Company.
- Bialystok, E., & Hakuta, K. (1994). *In other words: The science and psychology of second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bongaerts, T., S. Mennen & F. van der Slik (2000). Authenticity of pronunciation in naturalistic second language acquisition: The case of very advanced late learners of Dutch as a foreign language. *Studia Linguistica*, 54 (2), 298–308.
- Breitkreutz, J., Derwing, T., & Rossiter, M. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESL Canada*, 19 (1), 51-61.
- Burgess, J. & Spencer, S. (2000). Phonology and pronunciation in integrated language teaching and teacher education. *System*, 28, 191-215.
- Canadian Council for Refugees. (2016). *Brief history of Canada's responses to refugees*. Retrieved from <http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/canadarefugeeshistory.htm>
- Canadian Immigration News. (2016). *Government of Canada plans on admitting record numbers of new immigrants in 2016*. Retrieved from <http://www.cicnews.com/2016/03/governmentCanada-plans-admitting-record-numbers-immigrants-2016-037396.html>
- Couper, G. (2006). The short and long-term effects of pronunciation instruction. *Prospect*, 21(1), 46-66.
- D'Anglejan, A., & Renaud, C. (1985). Learner characteristics and second language acquisition: A multivariate study of adult immigrants and some thoughts on methodology. *Language Learning*, 35,1-19.

- Deng, J., Holtby, A., Howden-Weaver, L., Nessim, L., Nicholas B., Nickle, K., Pannekoek, C., Stephan, S., & Sun M. (2009). *English pronunciation research: The neglected orphan of second language acquisition studies?* (Working Paper No. WP05-09). Edmonton, AB: Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta.
- Derwing, T. M., Diepenbroek, L. G., & Foote, J. A. (2012). How well do general-skills ESL textbooks address pronunciation? *TESL Canada Journal*, 30(1), 22-44.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39, 379-397.
- Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Wiebe, G. (1998). Evidence in favor of a broad framework for pronunciation instruction. *Language Learning*, 48 (3), 393-410.
- Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Thomson, R. (2008). A longitudinal study of ESL learners' fluency and comprehensibility development. *Applied Linguistics*, 29, 359-380.
- Derwing, T. M. & Rossiter, M. (2002). ESL learners' perceptions of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System*, 30, 155-166.
- Derwing, T. M. & Rossiter, M. (2003). The effects of instruction on the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of L2 accented speech. *Applied Language Learning*, 13, 1-17.
- Derwing, T., Thomson, R., & Munro, M. (2006). English pronunciation and fluency development in Mandarin and Slavic speakers. *System*, 34(2), 183-193.
- Deterding, D. (2005). Listening to estuary English in Singapore. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 425-440.
- Diepenbroek, L. G., & Derwing, T. M. (2013). To what extent do popular ESL textbooks incorporate oral fluency and pragmatic development. *TESL Canada Journal*, 30(7), 1-20.
- Dudley, L. (2007). Integrating volunteering into the adult immigrant second language experience. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63, 539-561.
- Gatbonton, E., Trofimovich, P., & Magid, M. (2005). Learners' ethnic group affiliation and L2 pronunciation accuracy: A sociolinguistic investigation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 489-511.
- Golombek, P., & Jordan, S. (2005). Becoming "black lambs" not "parrots": A poststructuralist orientation to intelligibility and identity. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 513-534.
- Gordon, J., Darcy, I. (2016). The development of comprehensible speech in L2 learners. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 2(1), 56-92.
- Goto Butler, Y. (2007). How are nonnative-English-speaking teachers perceived by young learners? *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 731-755.
- Guillot, M-N. (1999). *Fluency and its teaching*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Longman ELT.
- Hart, D., & Cumming, A. (1997). *A follow-up study of people in Ontario completing level 3 of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program*. Toronto, ON: Modern Language Centre, OISE.
- Isaacs, T. (2008). Towards defining a valid assessment criterion of pronunciation proficiency in non-native English speaking graduate students. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64, 555-580.
- Jenkins, J. (2002). A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an International Language. *Applied Linguistics*, 23, 83-103.
- Johnson, N., & Newport, E. L. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21, 60-99.

- Karanja, L. (2007). ESL learning experiences of immigrant students in high schools in a small city. *TESL Canada Journal*, 24(2), 23-41.
- Kennedy, S., Trofimovich, P. (2008). Intelligibility, Comprehensibility, and Accentedness of L2 Speech: The Role of Listener Experience and Semantic Context. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64(3), 459-489.
- Klein, W., & Dittmar, N. (1979). *Developing grammars: The acquisition of German syntax by foreign workers*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Ladegaard, H. & Sachdev, I. (2006). "I like Americans...But I certainly don't aim for an American accent": Language attitudes, vitality, and foreign language learning in Denmark. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 27, 106-108.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Lambacher, S. (2001). A brief guide to resources for developing expertise in the teaching of pronunciation. *Prospect*, 16(1), 63-70.
- Latham-Koenig, C., Oxenden, C. (2009). *American English File Starter*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Literacy, English, and Academic Development program (L.E.A.D.). (2016). Programming for ELL/ESL Students. Retrieved from Calgary Board of Education website, <https://www.cbe.ab.ca/programs/supports-for-students/Documents/LEAD-Brochure.pdf>
- Leong, M., & Collins, L. (2007). *Bridging the gap: A framework for teaching and transitioning low literacy immigrant youth*. Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College.
- Levis, J. M. (2005). Changing contexts and shifting paradigms in pronunciation teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 369-377.
- MacDonald, S. (2002). Pronunciation – views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.
- Miles, J., & Bailey-McKenna, M. (2016). Giving refugee students a strong head start: The LEAD Program. *TESL Canada Journal*, 33(10), 109–128
- Moyer, A. (2007). Do language attitudes determine accent? A study of bilinguals in the USA. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28, 502-518.
- Munro, M. J. (2003). A primer on accent discrimination in the Canadian context. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 38-51.
- Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (2001). Modeling perceptions of the accentedness and comprehensibility of L2 speech: The role of speaking rate. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 23, 451-468.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2016). *Refugee trauma webpages*. Retrieved from <http://www.nctsn.net/trauma-types/refugee-trauma>
- Oxford University Press Catalogue. (2018). Retrieved from https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/adult_courses/american_english_file_second_edition/american_english_file_second_edition_starter/9780194776141?cc=ca&sellLanguage=en
- Patkowski, M. S. (1980). The sensitive period for the acquisition of syntax in a second language. *Language Learning*, 30, 449-472.
- Peirce, B. N. (1993). Language learning, social identity, and immigrant women. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, OISE, University of Toronto.
- Purcell, E. T. & R. W. Suter (1980). Predictors of pronunciation accuracy: A re-examination. *Language Learning*, 30(2), 271–287.

- Roessingh, H., Elgie, S. (2009). Early language and literacy development among young English language learners: Preliminary insights from a longitudinal study. *TESL Canada Journal*, 26(2), 24-45
- Scott, M. L. (1994). Auditory memory and perception in younger and older adult second language learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16, 263-281.
- Seright, L. (1985). Age and aural comprehension achievement in Francophone adults learning English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 455-473.
- Sifakis, N. C., & Sougari, A. (2005). Pronunciation issues and EIL pedagogy in the periphery: A survey of Greek state school teachers' beliefs. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 467-488.
- Stewart, J. (2010). *Supporting refugee children: Strategies for educators*. Toronto, ON: University Toronto Press.
- Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T.M. (2014). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A narrative review. *Applied Linguistics*. 36(3), 326–344.
- Torki, S. (2013). Teaching English as a Foreign Language: The Audio-lingual method. Retrieved from <http://cte.univ-setif.dz/coursenligne/TEFLCOURSE/ressources/The%20Audio-lingual%20Method.html>
- Von Elek, T., & Oskarsson, M. (1973). Teaching foreign language grammar to adults: A comparative study. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Wang, W. (1998). Age-related effects in adult second language acquisition: A study of Mandarin-speaking learners of English. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, OISE University of Toronto, Canada.
- Wang, W. (1999). Age and second language acquisition in adulthood: The learning experiences and perceptions of women immigrants. *TESL Canada Journal*, 16(2), 1-19.
- Zong, L. (2004). *International transference of human capital and occupational attainment of recent Chinese professional immigrants in Canada*. (Working Paper Series No. WP03-4). Edmonton, AB: Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration, University of Alberta.