

Perceptions of foreign- accented lecture-style speech:

Contributing to evidence-based language policy

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Theoretical framework
Research question & Hypothesis
Methodology & Results
Discussion & Limitations
Conclusion

Outline

- **FAS (foreign-accented speech)**
- **Processing fluency**
 - the *vampire effect*, where “the accent distracts the receiver from processing the central message” (Mai & Hoffman, 2014: 149)
 - empirical evidence:
 - BAD NEWS: few adult learners ever achieve native-like pronunciation in the L2 (Flege, Munro & MacKay, 1995)
 - GOOD NEWS: intelligibility and accentedness are partially independent (Munro & Derwing, 1995, cited in Derwing & Munro, 2015: 6-7)
- **Social marker (the *most salient*?)**
 - subconscious stereotyping

Theoretical Framework: Social Psychology

3

- **Subconscious bias against FAS**
 - **language-based discrimination → lower status ratings for FAS**
 - Miller & Hewgill, 1964
 - Brennan & Brennan, 1981
 - Bresnahan et al., 2002
 - Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010
- **Lecture-style speech & FAS**
 - Rubin & Smith, 1992
 - Kavas & Kavas, 2008

Theoretical Framework: Social Psychology

4

- ~~Ease of research~~

- 1) Changes in European higher education (Bologna Process)
- 2) Impact of FAS on perceived competence of teachers
- 3) Lack of evidence for policy decisions

Context: Why study FAS & lecture-style speech?

5

- ~~Ease of research~~

- 1) Changes in European higher education (Bologna Process)
 - Student & staff mobility
 - Competition, esp. to attract foreign students
 - Spread of CLIL & EMI, often lecture format
 - More NNS-NNS interactions

Context: Why study lecture-style speech & contexts?

6

- Ease of research

- 1) Changes in European higher education (Bologna Process)
- 2) Impact of FAS on perceived competence of teachers
 - « stronger » accent = less competent
 - parallel with ITAs
- 3) Lack of evidence for policy decisions

Context: Why study FAS & lecture-style speech?

7

RQ: How does foreign-accented speech affect the perception of a speaker's status, in relation to competence?

H: Native speakers will receive higher ratings for competence.

Research Question & Hypothesis

8

- 21 Czech & 19 French uni students listened (individually, on computer)
- 2-step perception test

Methodology & Participants

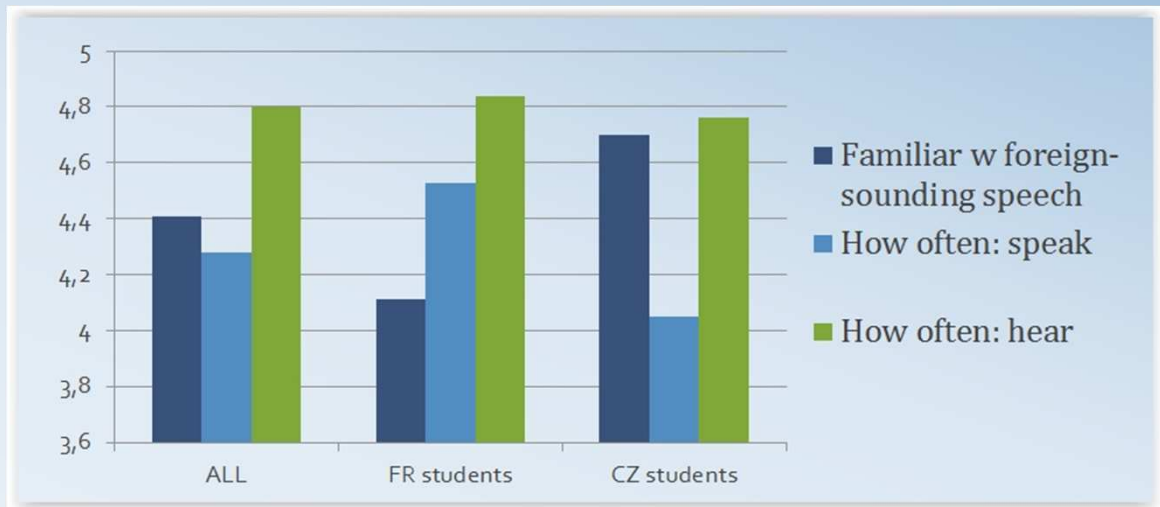
9

- *If you have studied another language : (mean = 2.51)*
- *... please name it and estimate your level: (mean = 4.63)*
*for 1st language listed

| <i>Had studied at least one language</i> | <i>Romance</i> | <i>Germanic</i> | <i>Slavic</i> | <i>Asian</i> | <i>Other</i> |
|--|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Fr students n=19 | 18 | 6 | 1 | 1 | |
| Cz students n=21 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 Celtic |

Participants: Relatively experienced language learners

10



music – watching – reading – other – f2f – online – gaming

Participants: Familiar w FAS

11

- 2-step perception test
 - Lecture-style passages
 - 1 female & 1 male speaker
 - NSs of French, Czech and English
 - Passages selected for each speaker:
 - short (ca. 15 words) + long (ca. 40 words)
- PRAAT script

Methodology : Perception Tests

12

- A-B preference for 1 of 2 speakers

In the first part, you will play the role of a **personnel manager who has to choose the better candidate to represent your company**. You are looking for a person who will have to acquire a lot of nontrivial knowledge about the company and who will be competent and trustworthy when representing the company in negotiations.

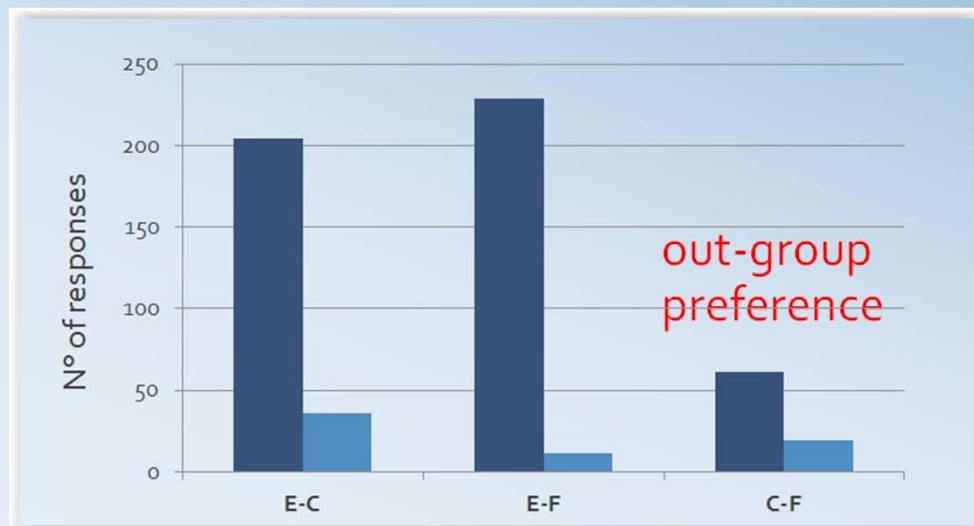
Obviously, personnel managers normally have a CV and other information about the candidates. Your task in this game is to **make the decision based only on the candidates' voice**.

In each case, you will hear **the same sentence read by two candidates**. Please circle the one who you regard as better for this position. You always make your decision between two candidates. For example, you would choose candidate B like this: 0. A **B**. Remember that we are interested in your first impression. That is why you will hear each candidate only once. The pairs of voices will be separated by a short piece of music.

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | A | B |
| 2. | A | B |
| 3. | A | B |
| 11. | A | B |
| 12. | A | B |
| 13. | A | B |

Step 1 Methodology

13



Step 1 Results

14

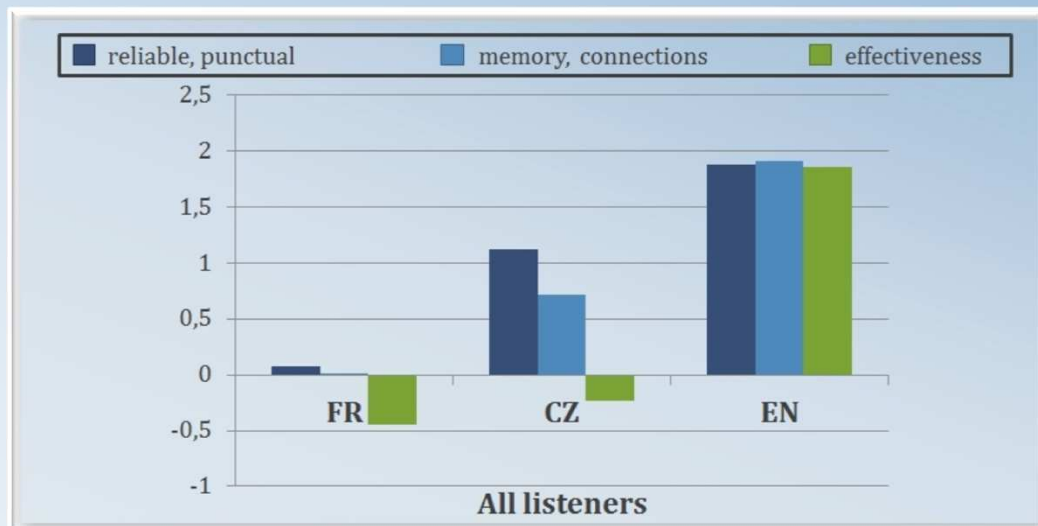
- longer statements evaluated for 3 dimensions of competence (McCrae & Costa, 1987)

As before, you will hear the set of sentences from each speaker once, and a short piece of music will be played between the individual speakers.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|----|---|---|---|----|-----|
| a) reliable, punctual | --- | -- | - | 0 | + | ++ | +++ |
| 1. b) memory, connections | --- | -- | - | 0 | + | ++ | +++ |
| c) effective, respected | --- | -- | - | 0 | + | ++ | +++ |

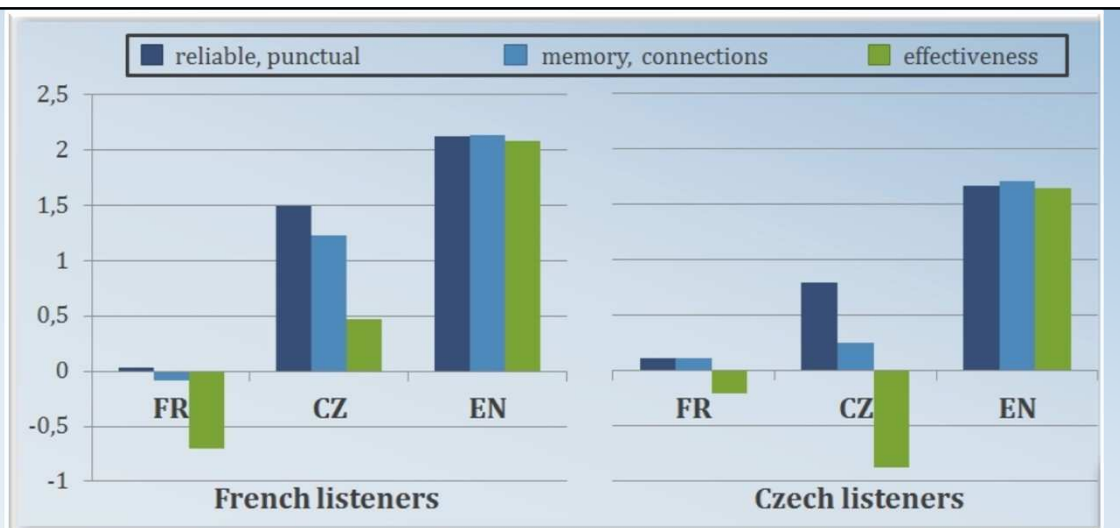
Step 2 Methodology

15



Step 2 Results: Mean of ratings for 3 dimensions

16



Step 2 Results: Mean of ratings for 3 dimensions

17

H: Native speakers will receive higher ratings for competence.



- Native speaker model endures
- All listeners harsh on their L1 for “effectiveness” dimension
- FR listeners: preference for EN natives AND for CZ speakers
- CZ listeners: pref. EN natives & were more lenient with FR speakers

Q: Status & strength of native speaker model?

Summary of Results & Analysis

18

- Effect size
- Stimuli
- Listeners

Limitations

19

- Effect size
- Stimuli
 - are the levels of accentedness comparable?
 - appropriate dimensions of competence for academic context?

Limitations

20

- Effect size
- Stimuli
- Listeners
 - native listeners?
 - nonnative listeners – level of English? Variety in MTs?
 - familiarity with foreign-accented English?
 - language learning: experienced or not? Variety in FLs?

Limitations

21

- Data: Profiles
 - NESs (n=10) + Dutch (n=19)
 - English proficiency
 - Familiarity with foreign-accented English
 - Language learning experience

Addressing Limitations: NESs & Dutch Data

22

- Data: Profiles
 - NESs (n=10) + Dutch (n=19)
 - English proficiency
 - Familiarity with foreign-accented English
 - Language learning experience
- Data (NESs only): Experiment results
 - Native speaker model preferred but less categorical than expected
 - Parts 1 & 2: Greater tolerance of FAS
 - Part 2: No negative ratings; positive ratings where FR & CZ listeners rated “own-accented” speech negatively

Addressing Limitations: NESs & Dutch Data

23



Processing effects & bias
 Can training help?
 If so, who?
 What kind?



Discussion: Implications for CLIL in European univs

24

- **Listener training**

- **Tolerant attitude:** Fraser, Speaking & listening in the multicultural university; Derwing & Munro, 2015 « perspective-taking exercises & carefully managed contact activities”
- **Processing fluency:** Derwing et al. 2002, explicit instruction on features of (Vietn)-accented speech; B-B, Bradlow & Wright, Accent-independent adaptation to FAS; *Jungle Listening*/R. Cauldwell

- **Speaker training**

- **Tolerant attitude : nativeness vs intelligibility**
- **Processing fluency**
 - *Clear Speech*, Bradlow & Bent 2008; phrasal stress, Hahn 2004; intonational groupings, Slater et al. 2015; ...
 - Instructional design (Geary 2004; Sweller 2006, 2008)

Address needs = Improve tolerance + ease

25

- Master 1 Psychology, USMB
- Not CLIL but a « potential » audience
- On-line component (Moodle) of *Jungle Listening*
- Data collection (quanti & qualit) before & after
- Attempt to modify
 - perception/cognitive processing
 - attitude
 - production (pronunciation & risk-taking)

Experiment, Autumn 2016

26



Conclusion

27

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28