

INTRODUCTION

- Critical reviews focus on various aspects of technology for pronunciation training, i.e. the potential of e.g. CAPT, MALL, RALL, MOOCs, ASR assessment or chatbots ([Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019*](#)), visual feedback tools ([Bliss et al., 2018](#)), as well as trends ([Fouz-González, 2015](#)) and directions for the future of technologies ([Grantham O'Brien et al., 2018](#)).

- Exemplary content of **web-based tools & accents included:**



- Practitioners focus on how existing technologies may be adapted for pron training to offer various kinds of accent stimuli: *Twitter & Youglish* ([Kartal & Korucu-Kis, 2020](#)); *Windows Speech Recognition* ([McCrocklin, 2019](#)); *Google Cloud Speech API* ([Molenda et al., 2018](#)); iPods & shadowing audio dialogues ([Foote & McDonough, 2017](#));

- Mobile apps as tools which may facilitate pron training: English File Pronunciation App ([Fouz-González, 2020](#)); 105 iOS apps researched ([Kaiser, 2018](#));
- However, only individual apps offer content focusing on various dialects of English: *The English Dialects App* ([Leeman et al., 2018](#))



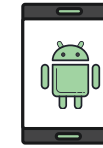
Technology for pronunciation training and accents?

Beata Walesiak

University of Warsaw
beata.walesiak@uw.edu.pl

@bea_wal

@bea_wal_



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research addresses the following RQs:

- **Do prestige native speaker models abound in free Google Play Store apps for pronunciation training?**
- **What are the other varieties in the remaining apps?**

METHODS



2.9 m



1.82 m



0.45 m (statista.com)

Education apps share: Google Play Store: 9.11%, App Store: 8.68%

- Keywords used to screen for pronunciation training apps: **pronunciation, English pronunciation, accent, English accent**;
- **1000 apps scraped** (4 x 250 apps) with a bespoke Python script *Walscrp* (© P. Walesiak);
- Duplicates filtered out by unique app ID; paid apps **excluded**. Content analysis further excluded: non-pron apps, non-English apps, dictionaries, translators and audiobooks; poorly functioning apps, fake apps;
- For the resulting **subset of 296 apps**, app descriptions were screened for the target language variety (model).

RESULTS

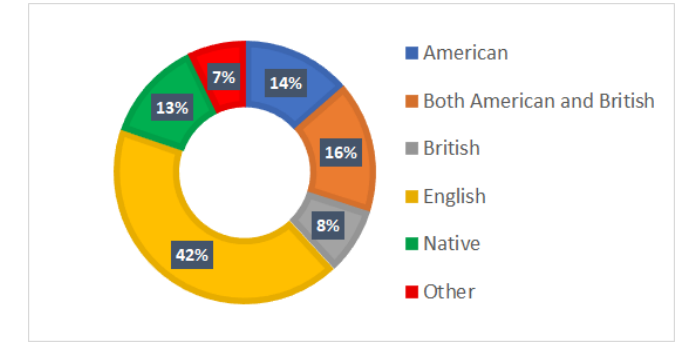


Figure 1. Pronunciation models in the app descriptions.
(n = 296)

app type	no of apps	name - accent(s)
TTS and/or SR	15	Apps with *Google TTS and/or SR - various accents
accent coaching	1	<i>The Accent Kit</i> - UK (Cornwall - free), US, 'the rest of the world' accents
music	1	<i>Learn Languages with music</i> - various accents (songs)
videos	1	<i>English Conversation Courses</i> - various accents (Youtube videos)
podcasts	2	<i>Aussie English, Aussie Slang & Pronunciations</i> - Australian English
accent quiz	1	<i>English Dialects</i> - quiz about various UK accents

Figure 2. Other varieties (7%) - by app type.
(n = 21)

CONCLUSIONS

- Prestige native speakers are more predominant in the apps researched.
- **More auditory research will follow to explore what 'English' and 'Native' stand for in the app descriptions.**
- Local accents underrepresented in the apps, however, more flexibility allowed if SR api used (cf. [WaveNet](#)).
- More keywords necessary for further research.
- More cooperation between app developers and experts recommended to ensure equality and inclusion of both native and non-native models;