



Accentability

[pronSIG_2020]

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Accentability:

increasing sensitivity to accent variability

Červinková Poesová, K. & Lancová, K.

CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM: Report on Non-native Pre-service Teachers'
Accent Attitudes and Beliefs

IN

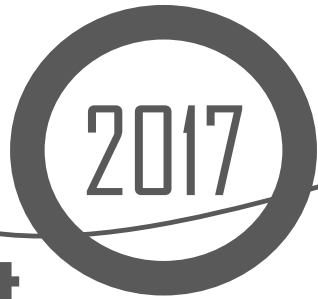
Kirkova-Naskova, A., Henderson, A., & Fouz-González, J. (Eds.)
(forthcoming 2021)

English Pronunciation Instruction: Research-based Insights



Use of Accent in Language Attitudes

Our Research TIMELINE



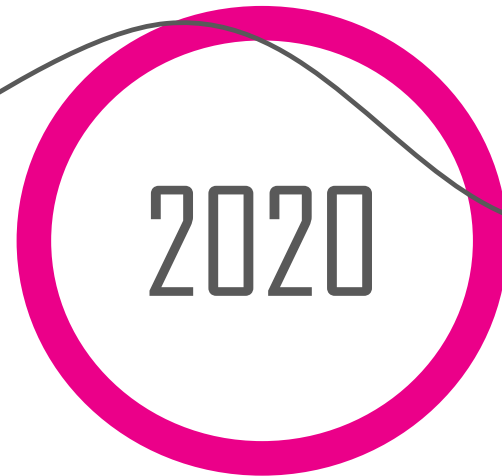
PROGRES Q17 project



Accent of One's Own



Cause for Optimism



Accentability
(PronSIG)



Nov 2018



OTÁZKY

ODPOVĚDI

257

Sekce 1 z 3

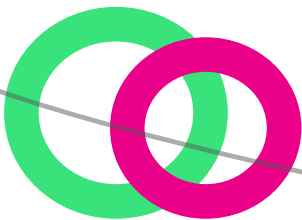
PROGRES Q17: Attitudes

Dear students,

Section 1:
Introduction
(10 questions)

Section 2:
Accent & Me
(22 questions)

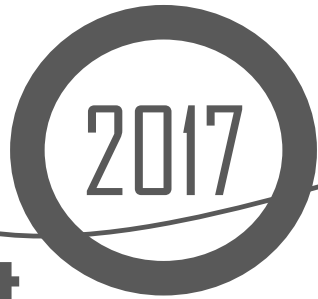
Section 3:
Accent & Teacher
(11 questions)

- 256 respondents
 - 5 study programmes
 - 22.9 years - average age
 - 77% women
 - 92% Czech nationality
 - 27% freshman students
- 



Use of Accent in Language Attitudes

Our Research TIMELINE



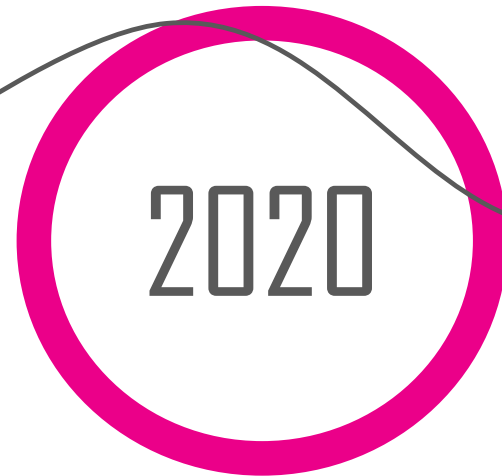
PROGRES Q17 project



Accent of One's Own



Cause for Optimism



Accentability
(PronSIG)



2019

CAUSE for OPTIMISM
EFL student & teacher
IDENTITY

db JOHN BENJAMINS
PUBLISHING COMPANY

> OUTCOMES

Reflective Assessment



Autumn
2020

Trial Implementation

Cross-curricular
Implementation

2021

SELECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES

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graph TD; A[SELECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES] --> B[Accent & Me]; A --> C[Accent & Teacher];
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Accent & Me

- desire to achieve native-like accent (96%)
- overall satisfaction with self-perceived mild accents (76%) → growing acceptance of non-native L2 identities
- passive > active exposure to diverse accents

Accent & Teacher

- accented-speech seen as rather undesirable feature in teaching profession
- double standards: L2 users & L2 teachers
- uncertainty about incorporation of non-native accents in English classes





PEDAGOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION: overview

- > Preparatory Phase (*Sensitization*)
- > Phase I (*Raising Awareness*)
- > Phase II (*Accent-ability; Devellopping unbiased identities*)

PREPARATORY PHASE: Sensitisation



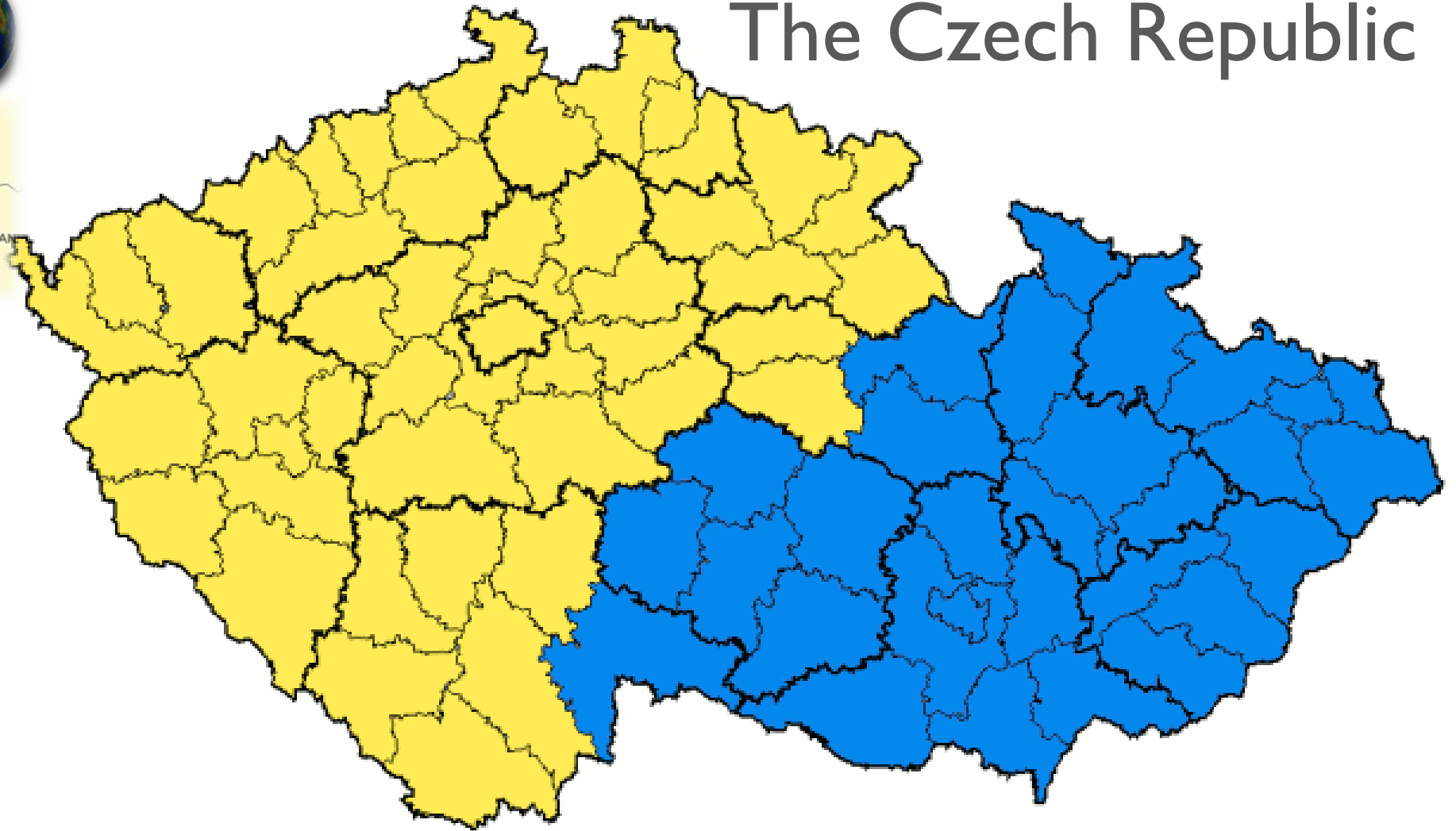
Sensitisation > Czech regional dialects/accents

- L1 accent awareness 
- > L2 accent awareness 
- Czech accent homogeneity 
- Czech native regional identity 





The Czech Republic



Bohemia

Moravia

CZECH DIALECTS



Sensitisation > Classroom Task

Czech vs Moravian Accent Variation

- **AIM:** *raising AWARENESS of LI context & improving ABILITY to IDENTIFY selected pronunciation features*

■ TASK DESCRIPTION:

- a/ Cz & Mor student reads sentence containing **target phrase** demonstrating contrast in Czech and Moravian final consonant pronunciation

“už ne” = not anymore

 u^ř ne > [u^řne]_(Cz) x [u³ne]_(Mor)

- b/ eliciting difference perception

- c/ pronunciation contrast phonologically established & sociolinguistically justified

PHASE I:

Raising Awareness



Awareness > Classroom Activity



Nativeness Perception Test

- **AIM:** *recognise (non-)nativeness & formulate intuitions about accents*

■ ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- a/ Ss listen to video soundtrack of 5 speakers of English determining their (non)nativeness → written individual answers
- b/ 2nd listening: Ss potentially specify speakers' nationality & state what helped them most with accent identification → written individual answers
- c/ correct answers feedback - video extracts viewing
- d/ feedback discussion in groups - written record of discussion outcomes

Awareness > Classroom Activity



Nativeness Perception Test



Julia Gillard
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Nicola Sturgeon
Jacinda Ardern
Vera Regan

Awareness > Classroom Activity



4 Corners

- **AIM:** *identify & formulate attitudes towards accents*

- **ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

- a/ 4 authentic views on accents placed in 4 corners
- b/ Ss asked to read them & choose one closest to their heart
(they remain in that corner)
- c/ Ss explain to their group why they identify with that attitude
- d/ Ss shortly present discussion outcomes
- e/ Ss can swap corners & justify their change of position

Alena: I am aware how hypocritical it is but I just don't like non-native accents and try to avoid them as much as possible personally as well as in my teaching.






Tereza: Transmission of information is more important than either pronunciation or impeccable grammar, but they make communication a more pleasant experience.




Chris: It is important to accept all accents around us, on the other hand, teacher should be good pattern of accent.

Paul: I think the quality of a teacher doesn't necessarily go along with perfect accent, if that's where you're going with these questions. I remember a great teacher at the university, whose pronunciation wasn't brilliant, but I didn't mind her having Czech accent.







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PHASE II:

Accent-ability



Accent-ability > Classroom Activity

Bank of Experiences

- **AIM:** *to be able to address accent-related issues sensitively in class*

■ **ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

- a/ Ss brainstorm comments they have received regarding their own accent
- b/ Ss brainstorm comments they have given regarding somebody else's accent
- c/ T creates a bank of accent-related experiences and suggests their classification
- d/ Ss read all comments – they find the most offensive, the most encouraging and the strangest one; Ss compare & discuss their choices
- e/ In groups, Ss are given set of comments & are asked to come up with supportive reactions & write them down
- f/ Ss perform short role plays (T – S)

Bank of Experiences: *example*

One year at a secondary school we got a Nigerian teacher for the English classes. We laughed at her and thought how bad her English was.

Bára (42), currently a university teacher

Qs for follow-up discussion:

What does this memory make you think of?

What might have been the feelings of the teacher?

What would you say to Bára and her teenage mates?

Accent-ability > Classroom Activity

Glad Game

- *AIM: implement Pollyana principle & develop positive approach towards mistakes*
- **ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**
 - a/ preparatory HW:
 - list at least 5 frequent Czech pronunciation mistakes in English
 - &
 - (where possible) match your list with similar pronunciation variants in native accents

Glad Game: *examples*

Czech mistakes

Czech rolling /r/

Cz. clear /l/ in all contexts

lacking foot-strut split

/θ/ pronounced as /f/

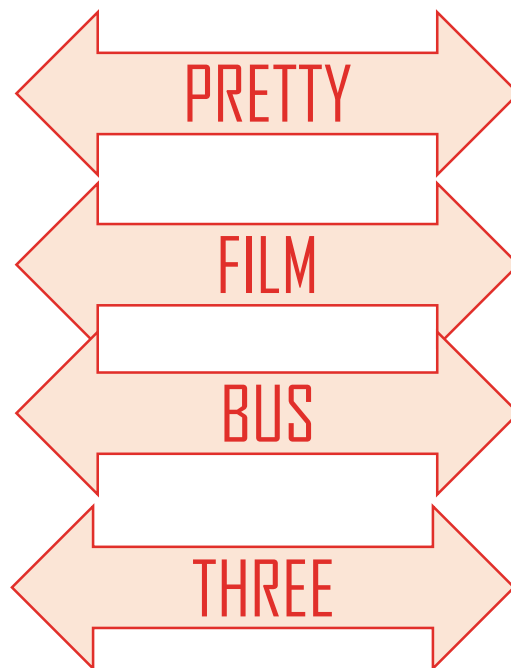
English equivalents

Scottish rolling /r/

Geordie clear /l/ in all contexts

dtto in North. En. Accents

Cockney Th fronting



Accent-ability > Classroom Activity

Glad Game

■ ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

b/ compare & discuss your HW in groups of 4

c/ compile group shortlist of top 5 mistakes + native equivalents

d/ role play in groups of 4 (T + 3 Ss):

Ss discuss a simple topic (e.g. favourite film) focusing on making top 5 mistakes

→ T has to decide what, when & how to correct kindly (using native accent equivalents as means of positive attitude building)

OR e/ reacting to hypothetical classroom situations > what if

The background of the slide features a teal-colored wall with several incandescent light bulbs hanging from red cords at various heights. Some bulbs are in sharp focus, while others are blurred, creating a sense of depth.

EXPECTATIONS & --- PERSPECTIVES

We expect to:

- enable pre-service teachers to address accent related issues confidently, objectively and sensitively
- raise Ss' awareness of their own biases and their influence on accent attitudes
- draw Ss' attention to accent variability

Short-term Perspective > piloting and modifying

Long-term Perspective > cross-curricular approach

- exposure & practice in different courses (both B.A. & M.A. programmes)
→ 'accentability' gradually developed + strengthened

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THANK YOU!

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