



Dorota Lipińska

University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

Rethink Your Old Teaching Methods: Designing a Pronunciation Course for Adolescent Polish Learners of English

Abstract

Numerous studies (e.g., Lipińska, 2014; Majer, 2002; Nowacka, 2003; Sobkowiak, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, 2002; Wrembel, 2002) have shown that although teaching L2 pronunciation is included in university curricula, it is at the same time virtually absent at lower stages of education. Moreover, it has been noticed that teaching phonetics to younger learners is advisable and may be really effective (e.g., Lipińska, 2017c; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005). Undoubtedly, there are a lot of books and courses written by and for Polish learners of English, but they are dedicated to adults (e.g., Porzuczek et al., 2013; Sawala et al., 2011) or dedicated to international users (e.g., Baker, 2006; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010). But the materials and methods used while working with adult learners and university students are no longer applicable if one wants to teach phonetics in a different environment and create an attractive and efficient course for children or young teenagers, since, as for example Komorowska (2011) notices, each foreign language course has to be characterized by realistic goals and appropriate methods and components.

The aim of this paper is to present various methods and materials which can be successfully applied while teaching English pronunciation to 11–13-year-olds. They have been implemented in three groups consisting of such L2 learners, and their usefulness and effectiveness have been proven by studies on both speech production and perception (e.g., Lipińska, 2017d).

Keywords: foreign language learning, pronunciation teaching, teaching materials

Introduction

Gilbert and Levis (2001, p. 506) once remarked that pronunciation is “a field that has been notoriously data poor and anecdote rich.” And even though it may

seem to be a slight exaggeration, one has to be aware of the fact that teaching and researching L2 pronunciation has been neglected and underestimated for many years, and the situation has not changed until recent decades when a growing number of studies devoted to this topic could finally be observed. However, despite this noticeable growth in research, numerous scholars continue finding some areas of phonetic studies which require further and more detailed exploration (see, e.g., Schwartz et al., 2014). It may turn out to be crucial in the case of education, as well as foreign language teaching and learning, where results obtained from various studies are surprisingly seldom applied in practice.

Teaching L2 Pronunciation in Polish Schools

Undoubtedly, the status of L2 pronunciation teaching in Polish schools illustrates the aforementioned problem best. The interest in it started to grow in the early 1990s when more and more researchers from various academic institutions in Poland began to examine this matter. The studies have continued until now and their results have never been too optimistic. What has been proven is the fact that any pronunciation training is still virtually non-existent during foreign/second language classes at all educational levels lower than the academic one, and if any elements of phonetics are incorporated into language classes, they are of doubtful quality (e.g., Porzuczek, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002; Majer, 2002; Wysocka, 2003). What is also important, most L2 learners frequently claim to be dissatisfied with their own pronunciation skills and they are even more critical while assessing their current and former L2 teachers' pronunciation in English (for details see, e.g., Lipińska, 2014; Lipińska, 2017a; Majer, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002). Exactly the same situation has been observed for other languages, such as French (e.g., Deprez, 2008; Kotuła, 2015). It is especially worrying in the case of L2 teachers who (theoretically) should speak a given foreign language fluently since they serve as models for their students, also (or even above all) with regard to pronunciation (Waniek-Klimczak, 2006). Some interesting information could be found in Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2008) study. In her paper, she replicated and also contrasted her two previous pieces of research in which she first had analyzed a level of English classes in numerous Polish high schools, and second—assessed the level of the competence of English teachers from the same schools. The results of both studies demonstrated that in all schools where the research had taken place, there was no single class devoted to English pronunciation. Furthermore, only very few lessons contained single

elements of any pronunciation training. Besides, students from those schools highlighted that their teachers did not pay any attention to learners' pronunciation in L2, rarely corrected it, claimed that pronunciation was not an important part of language learning and frequently used a faulty pseudo-phonetic transcription (e.g., transcribing the word *a nurse* by teachers as "*e ners*"). What is more, also the teachers' pronunciation was described by their students as "full of errors" (for instance, it included incorrect vowel length, final devoicing of obstruents and similar easily detectable errors). Hence, one can easily draw a conclusion that low phonetic competence of foreign language teachers, as well as the lack of any classes devoted to second language pronunciation training do contribute to L2 learners' low phonetic competence in their target language. The question arises as to what causes this reluctance towards phonetic training. For instance, Baran-Łucarz (2006) attempted to find the explanation as to why pronunciation is neglected in foreign language teaching in Poland. Having interviewed numerous L2 teachers, the researcher noticed that they offer a lot of excuses. For example, they state that there are no resources that could be used in teaching L2 phonetics, that learners are not interested in it at all (a few researchers have been provided with quite the opposite opinions—see, e.g., Kotuła, 2015; Lipińska, 2015), that teaching pronunciation is fatiguing and that there are other, more important aspects of language that need to be taught. The last opinion seems to be shared by many foreign language teachers and has been proven in Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2008) study in which the author found out that most teachers find teaching grammar and vocabulary much more vital than phonodactics.

Some researchers attribute this situation to the more and more popular approach of "being just communicative" in an L2. This kind of attitude towards using an L2 has recently become favored by many language learners (and teachers). It has been suggested that L2 teachers ought to focus a lot on conversation skills, and avoid too much instruction in any other skills such as grammar, as they will be learnt anyway and by the way. Moreover, this attitude might be perceived as a consequence of a relatively low priority of pronunciation skills in various language examinations such as Polish Matura (the upper-secondary school leaving exam), American TOEFL and Cambridge ESOL examinations (Waniek-Klimczak & Dłutek, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003). It has to be noticed that general communication skills are regarded as the most significant and desirable ones in all of the exams mentioned above (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008).

Correct L2 Pronunciation: Still Necessary

Although the situation described in the previous section has continued for many years, it seems rather peculiar since it is very easy to notice that if anyone wants to communicate successfully in any language (native or foreign), they simply have to acquire (or learn) correct pronunciation patterns of this particular tongue (e.g., Komorowska, 2011). Among the most vital abilities here one ought to highlight understanding other speakers and being understood by other language users. To put it simple, in order to communicate successfully, an individual must develop speech which is intelligible enough to convey the intended message (see, e.g., Littlewood, 1994; Tarone, 1978; Beebe, 1984). It has been explained clearly by Gajewska (2011), who pointed out that inability to distinguish between foreign phonemes and incapability of reading and pronouncing newly acquired foreign words influence negatively the whole process of second/foreign language learning. Moreover, the author was even more intransigent in her opinion and claimed that a language learner with fossilized incorrect pronunciation is a learner to whom a lot of harm had been done by teachers. What is especially important according to her and what cannot ever be ignored is the learners' ability to perceive and produce those segmental contrasts which do not appear in one's mother tongue. Kotuła (2015) stated further that proper phonetic training should not be difficult to design and apply in practice because researchers, teachers, and instructors are mostly familiar with the most recurrent and persistent pronunciation difficulties encountered by L2 learners from particular countries.

On the other hand, language learners relatively often present the opinion that they do not really need correct pronunciation in their target language as they are not going to communicate with any native speakers of this language, but only with other non-native users because, for example, English is an international language. Here some polemic is needed indeed as, like a lot of scholars have remarked, the ability to speak a language correctly is crucial not only in the communication with native speakers of it, but also with those prospective other non-native users. The explanation for this claim is not surprising. Since most non-native users of a particular language do not come from the same country and do not share the same language background, that is, their mother tongues and their phonetic systems are different, their pronunciation must be in consequence influenced by completely unlike interlingual factors that create an impression of a so-called foreign accent which often makes the utterances unintelligible and thus hinders successful communication (Littlewood, 1994; Setter & Jenkins, 2005). But what is worth noticing is the fact that even those scholars who advocate teaching and learning English as *Lingua Franca* and who claim that some degree of foreign-accentedness does not impair communica-

tion still find some features of L2 pronunciation which have to be taught (such as some phoneme contrasts) and some L1-influences (e.g., L1 stress patterns) which need to be removed from L2 learners' speech in order to preserve effective communication and comfortable intelligibility (see, e.g., Jenkins, 2000). This is why no foreign/second language classes can be devoid of at least some pronunciation training.

Factors to Be Considered While Teaching L2 Pronunciation

There are a lot of teachers who claim that intensive language training should start as early as possible (Nikolov & Curtain, 2000). This view is usually connected with the Critical Period Hypothesis proposed by Lennenberg in 1967. It has to be mentioned that at the beginning, Lennenberg's theory was developed only with regard to the process of first language acquisition. The author claimed that there is a critical period when humans are sensitive enough to acquire a language which starts around the age of two and lasts until a child reaches the age of puberty. According to the theory, after this period the acquisition of one's mother tongue becomes basically impossible. Another matter which Lennenberg pointed out was the opinion that language function is gradually lateralized in the left brain hemisphere. He highlighted that it was this process that explained the existence of a critical/sensitive period for the emergence and establishment of a language (e.g., Lennenberg, 1967; Puppel, 1996). With the gradual growth of the popularity of the Critical Period Hypothesis, some scholars decided to extend the theories included in it to the process of second language acquisition. And thus the central hypothesis for L2 appeared. It stated that if the critical period is a real phenomenon, learning the second language after puberty must in consequence be much more demanding and complicated than before it (cf. Puppel, 1996). A number of researchers decided to test this hypothesis, but what was striking, the results obtained in those studies showed that the measurable differences between various aspects of L2 acquisition before and after the age of puberty were not as significant as they had been expected to be. Nonetheless, one aspect was crucial: in not all, but quite a few cases, the earlier the subjects started learning an L2, the better pronunciation in it they achieved (see, e.g., Krashen, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Klein, 1986; Millington, 2011; Oh et al., 2011).

This situation certainly needs some explanation. The reasons for such results may be different. To start with, the situation might have resulted from the process of fossilization of interlanguage phonology. Some scholars and researchers even state that fossilization of L2 phonology is preordained when

older learners, that is, adolescents and adults, start to learn an L2 (e.g., Wysocka, 2007). Sometimes one may have an impression that there are as many opinions on this matter as many researchers. While some of them (e.g., Scovel, 1969; Demirezen, 2010; Gumbaridze, 2012) still claim that no adult will ever be able to achieve native-like pronunciation in their L2, others state that although it may not be easy, it is still possible for adult language users to learn it, and there were cases when adults did achieve perfect pronunciation in their target language (TL; Tarone, 1978). Especially recent, acoustic research provides the evidence that correct pronunciation in an L2 is perfectly achievable if appropriate training is applied (see, e.g., Rojczyk, 2010a; Rojczyk, 2010b; Lipińska, 2013a; Lipińska, 2013b). What is more, Porzuczek and Rojczyk (2010) remarked that the latest studies (e.g., Burns et al., 2007; Hoonhorst et al., 2009; Rivera-Gaxiola et al., 2005) suggest that the contrary to the Critical Period Hypothesis and its assumptions, human capability of learning new, foreign sounds is not limited, impaired or lost after the age of puberty and that language learners are able to master L2 pronunciation at an advanced level even as adults. Quite a few recent studies also showed that incorrect fossilized pronunciation can be rehabilitated and improved (e.g., Acton, 1984; Demirezen, 2009). This is why one may ask the following question here: what is then the most probable reason for phonological fossilization still observed in some language learners? There are several plausible explanations for this situation. To begin with, there is a highly physiological approach to the aforementioned process. It is widely known that some human muscles and nerves practice the same set of pronunciation habits and movements for years and thus undergo a process of atrophy while they get older. This kind of a situation results in purely physiological problems in acquiring new pronunciation patterns as the articulators are “stiff” to a large extent (Tarone, 1978). Other proposed interpretations are of more psychological nature. For instance, Guiora et al. (1972) and Neufeld (1978) are in favor of the affective argument and highlight the adult learners’ potential lack of empathy with the native speakers and the culture of their TL or even possible negative attitude towards the language, speakers and culture. Krashen (1977), on the other hand, maintains that fossilization is tightly connected with the critical period in SLA, which is the one after puberty, when an individual tends to begin to *learn* language consciously rather than *acquire* it as children usually do.

Having taken the aforementioned arguments into consideration, more and more foreign language teachers are in favor of the “the earlier, the better” rule. They know that although teaching an L2 and its phonetic system at any age is possible, it is much easier and faster to teach correct pronunciation from the very beginning of L2 instruction than to correct fossilized pronunciation errors at later stages (e.g., Baker, 1996; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005). Over a hundred years ago, Otto Jespersen was probably the first to officially state that

“The very first lesson in a foreign language ought to be devoted to initiating pupils into the world of sounds [...]” (Jespersen, 1904, p. 145). What he added was the fact that no technical vocabulary or boring theory must be included in that first lesson and that pronunciation training can be interesting to young learners as it “contains nothing that they cannot understand, and nothing that is not useful for them [...] so that this dreadful phonetical science is not so terribly far beyond the horizon of ordinary children after all” (Jespersen, 1904, pp. 152–153). Also Gonet (2004) shares the same opinion. He criticized the fact that young L2 teachers from Poland frequently claim that teaching foreign pronunciation ought to start no sooner than at the secondary school. He highlighted that such thinking is wrong in the light of the physiological, psychological, and social constraints, as well as learners’ abilities and this kind of training ought to start much earlier. It also needs to be added that while young children are simply able to *acquire* correct pronunciation in their L2 thanks to the appropriate input—for example by listening to stories, songs, nursery rhymes or by playing games, teenage learners who are above thirteen years of age are already much more conscious learners (Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005) and they are really able to start *learning* pronunciation in the same way like they are instructed in L2 grammar or vocabulary.

The Issues Relevant to Teaching Materials Applied in L2 Pronunciation Training

As has already been mentioned, Baran-Łucarz (2006) noticed that language teachers have numerous excuses for not teaching L2 pronunciation and, for instance, they claim that there are no resources that could be used to teach phonetics. Actually, a lot of studies have proven something just the opposite. Moreover, there are quite a few manuals how to teach pronunciation which provide L2 teachers not only with the necessary know-how, but also with numerous ready-to-use full scenarios of classes and copious activities and exercises (e.g., Kelly, 2000; Laroy, 2004; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005; Porzuczek & Rojczyk, in press). With regard to pronunciation courses and manuals, they can be divided into two categories. First of all, there are copious publications written by native speakers of English and designed for international language learners (e.g., Baker, 2006; Gilbert, 2012; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010; Marks, 2013; Ponsonby, 1988; Roach, 2013). On the other hand, one can find volumes and programs written by and for non-native users/learners of English (e.g., Arabski, 1987; Bałutowa, 1965; Porzuczek et al., 2013; Reszkiewicz, 1981; Sawala et al., 2011 for Polish learners of English). Both these categories have

their advantages and drawbacks. While many teachers prefer courses written by native speakers of English justifying their choice on the grounds that native speakers of a particular language know it and its nuances best, they have to agree that it is impossible for one course to take into consideration all possible difficulties encountered by all potential learners who come from various countries and represent various L1s. And as Kotuła (2015) notices, language teachers are usually familiar with the most frequent pronunciation difficulties and mistakes displayed by L2 learners from their own countries. This is why textbooks and programs written and designed by non-native speakers of English can be tailor-made for particular groups of language learners and they may include appropriate L1-vs.-L2 comparisons, more exercises on problematic areas of phonetics and phonology, as well as lucid explanations regarding L2 production.

However, even the best course designed for a particular group of language users and based on requirements connected to learners' L1 may sometimes be insufficient. Learning and teaching practical phonetics necessitates patience, regular practice and a really individual approach to a learner. Having done exercises from a chosen textbook, it is worth turning to additional methods and resources which can help improve one's perception and production in an L2 (Porzuczek & Rojczyk, 2010).

Numerous scholars provide copious solutions to the aforementioned problem and nowadays, more and more new attractive methods of teaching L2 pronunciation are suggested. Apart from countless textbooks and courses which are designed to teach either British or American English pronunciation to learners from all over the world, one can find additional resource books with interesting pronunciation activities, games or quizzes (e.g., Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005; Vaughan-Rees, 2011). Also numerous technological aids are widely available and make phonetics classes more interesting to learners who could be bored by only traditional listen-and-repeat activities.

Among the new, helpful devices one can mention, for example, the use of the Learner Response System, so-called clickers (Baran-Lucarz et al., 2015; Cardoso, 2011). The studies showed that L2 learners were more relaxed during the classes where the clickers were used, they participated in the tasks actively and were very positive towards the new system.

Nowacka (2015) advocates using authentic materials retrieved from the Internet. Following Sobkowiak's (2003) remark that the use of original recordings can boost L2 learners' metaphonetic competence, in her paper she presented a variety of resources available online, grouped in five categories (designed for training segmental features, suprasegmental features, prosody, the spelling-to-sound correspondence and other accent-related issues). The results of the practical examination proved that a course in English phonetics and phonology supplemented with those materials was much more interesting

and convincing for the learners, enabled discussing numerous phonetic issues, stimulated phonetic discussion and pronunciation awareness. Also other researchers (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Rashtchi, 2011; Steinbrich, 2014; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015) suggested using authentic resources such as podcasts, cartoons, slogans or billboards in order to make pronunciation courses more realistic and appealing, as well as to make language learners more responsible for their own pronunciation and to enhance their receptive and productive skills.

Sundberg and Cardoso (2015) described another useful tool—a mobile application helping L2 learners improve their pronunciation in a target language with the use of pop music. As, according to Murphey (1992), the speech rate in English pop songs is approximately half of the rate in regular speech and because the music and lyrics are repetitive, pop music gets stuck in listeners' heads, which may be useful in language learning. The application itself is a base of various songs chosen according to particular criteria, such as vocabulary, genre, country of origin, etc., and divided into proficiency levels (basing on vocabulary level). Thanks to that, language learners can choose appropriate songs for their language fluency. The application allows for listening to music, following the lyrics, singing along and repetition of particular phrases that might be problematic for the users. The application needs now more testing, but the authors are optimistic and foresee that potential users should like it and the game-like approach to learning it offers.

Kotuła (2015) advocates using various free online programs and tools to improve virtually all aspects of L2 pronunciation, especially because they can be used not only in the classroom but also at home. In his study he focused on resources improving learners' pronunciation in French, but their equivalents can be found and applied for other languages as well. He described programs which concentrate on learning spelling-pronunciation relation, IPA, orthoepic competence, connected speech, elision, stress and intonation, segmental phonetics, tongue-twisters and many more. This suggests that the options of practicing L2 pronunciation are countless. Moreover, the researcher recommends watching short films available online and prepared by French teachers in which they explain complexities of French pronunciation.

Also Porzuczek and Rojczyk (2010) discuss numerous programs available on the Internet which help improve learners' pronunciation—this time in L2-English. They include exercises on sentence stress, tonic, intonation contours, nuclear syllables, phonemic transcription, vowel recognition, and acoustic properties of vowels. What is more, the researchers advise language teachers to use the Praat speech analysis software (Boersma, 2001) in order to assess and analyze learners' speech in an L2. Both segmental and suprasegmental features of a speech signal can be analyzed this way and compared to model speech. A teacher may thus explain learners' pronunciation errors and suggest solutions.

Rojczyk (2011) suggests using speech analysis software to help improve the VOT parameter produced by Polish learners of English. VOT is completely different in the two languages and Polish users of English find it particularly problematic to produce sufficient aspiration in English voiceless plosives and to refrain from pre-voicing in voiced plosives. Those aspects need to be extensively trained but learners often do not know whether their production is moving towards the native model. This is why the researcher describes how the Praat package (Boersma, 2001) and the spectrographic analysis can be practically applied in self-controlled foreign pronunciation training.

How to Design a Pronunciation Course for Young Teenagers?

As for example Komorowska (2011) notices, each foreign language course has to be characterized by realistic goals, as well as appropriate methods and components. This is why teaching materials which are suitable for adults and young adults are completely inapt for young teenagers who have different learning capabilities, interests, etc. Many studies show that L2 pronunciation is not taught at schools at all (e.g., Kotuła, 2015; Lipińska, 2014; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008) and that foreign language teachers claim that textbooks designed to teach English to teenagers do not include any elements of phonetic training (e.g., Lipińska, 2017b). Actually, it turns out not to be true as for example Lipińska (2017b) analyzed in her paper ten textbooks designed to teach English to 4th, 5th, and 6th grades of primary school in Poland and all of them included exercises on pronunciation training, in five out of ten titles the International Phonetic Alphabet was used and all the phonetic exercises were accompanied by audio recordings. What is more, the author described additional materials that could be used to teach English pronunciation to 10–14-year-olds. Nevertheless, a pronunciation course for young teenagers needs to be redesigned and cannot be copied from the academic one.

Classes Design

Classes designed for young teenagers have to be mainly determined by the age of such learners. 11–14-year-olds enter the age of puberty and hence share a lot of characteristics with both children and older teenagers. Their speech organs are still very adaptable and thus they are able to acquire correct pronunciation in their L2 at a native-like level, but they actually start to learn

skills rather than acquire them. It has both advantages and disadvantages as a lot can be now explained to those learners but the foreign language learning process becomes less natural and less similar to L1 acquisition. What is more, their spontaneity decreases slowly and since teenagers are very image-conscious, they develop anxiety to speak a foreign language when they know that they may make a mistake and their peers may laugh at them. Finally, their concentration spans are still relatively short in comparison to adult learners, which makes carrying longer classes (especially focused on one topic or skill) virtually impossible (e.g., Arabski, 1996; Harmer, 2006; Komorowska, 2011; Scrivener, 2011).

Having taken the aforementioned facts into consideration, pronunciation classes for young teenagers have to be well thought-off. To begin with, they cannot last as long as similar classes for adults. Not only academic 90 minutes, but even bare 45 minutes (like at school) of pronunciation exercises may be tiresome. It is better to incorporate shorter tasks more regularly, into practically every meeting with those learners. One or two interesting exercises can be really effective and will not put the teenagers off learning and practicing phonetics. Secondly, the topic and the range of vocabulary practiced during such pronunciation modules must be compatible with the material used to develop other skills, as well as interesting and accessible for adolescent learners. Thirdly, pronunciation classes for young teenagers have to be varied, dynamic, and interactive. Various tools ought to be used not only to enable both production and perception development, but also to engage different senses, to activate various parts of a brain and to provide teenage learners with entertainment necessary both to facilitate the process of learning and to create a positive association between phonetics and having fun. Last but not least, one cannot forget about the appropriate and varied teaching materials which can be used to teach L2 pronunciation young teenagers.

Materials and Resources

In contrast with popular opinions that there are very few phonetic recourses for children and teenagers available, one can find abundance of books, websites, and tools. Those suitable for 11–14-year-olds will be described briefly below.

General English Textbooks. As Lipińska (2017b) notices, nowadays practically all textbooks written for young teenagers include some elements of pronunciation training. Naturally, the amount of such training and the types of exercises vary greatly from one book to another. In some cases they are just listen-and-repeat tasks, in other cases they are more creative. One can find rhymes, chants, tongue twisters or poems, but also simple lists of words or

short sentences to repeat. In most books only segmental features are exercised (i.e., vowels and consonants), but there are also titles which comprise practice on suprasegmental phonetics (for instance sentence stress or intonation). The latter option is much better as it helps adolescent learners acquire natural, non-accented speech in their L2. Unfortunately, very few textbooks include the IPA symbols in either explanations or exercises. It is rather unprofitable as children and young teenagers can easily learn the IPA (e.g., in the form of games, encrypted messages, etc.) and the ability to read phonetic transcription is very useful in language learning (e.g., even while looking up new words in a dictionary). What is very helpful is the fact that in all cases pronunciation exercises are accompanied by audio recordings. They are sometimes included only in a class CD used by a teacher, but can also be found on a learner's CD or CD-ROM. This solution provides teenage learners with a correct, native model of L2 pronunciation. What is more, it is very convenient for language teachers since they do not have to read stimuli themselves, especially if they are not sure if their own pronunciation is perfectly correct.

This is why it is advisable to use pronunciation exercises included in GE textbooks for young teenagers during L2 phonetics classes. One can use such exercises included not only in the leading textbook, but also use some elements from similar publications. They are usually funny, accessible for the target group of learners, ready for use and accompanied by appropriate audio files. They can also serve as a good introduction to the topic and can be extended by some similar tasks either copied from books or prepared by the teachers themselves.

Primary Pronunciation Box. Designed for children and younger teenagers, this photocopyable resource book by Caroline Nixon and Michael Tomlinson provides a teacher with over sixty various activities and exercises (rhymes, chants, poems, puzzles, and games) which can be used in the classroom. The character and variability of activities make learning (and teaching) pronunciation really enjoyable. What is important is the fact that the book is divided into parts, according to learners' age, so teachers do not need to be afraid that some activities or exercises might be too difficult for a particular group of pupils. Another advantage is that each section/activity is accompanied by a clear, step-by-step lesson plan. It aims at explaining how to set the activity up and carry it out in the classroom, which is particularly useful for teachers who are not phoneticians or who are not very experienced but still would like to include some elements of phonetic training in their school curriculum. An audio CD is also included and it provides learners with correct, model pronunciation, as well as enables doing the exercises and activities. It is very convenient for a teacher as they do not have to read anything on their own, especially if they are not sure whether their own pronunciation in English is entirely correct. What is important for younger learners is the fact that all the worksheets are

accompanied by pictures which make learning more enjoyable and may be for instance colored later. The greatest advantage of the book is the fact that the activities can be slotted into any course since the book itself is not designed as a component of any particular course or series.

“Phonetics Focus.” Available at http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/, this website is full of not only various and attractive activities which can be done individually or team-vs.-team, but it also contains printable flashcards with IPA symbols accompanied by simple pictures. Thanks to it, materials downloaded from *Phonetics Focus* may be first used to explain the theory, present a discussed sound in isolation, provide examples of use and later they can be used during revisions, quizzes, and games. The interactive activities are best done with the use of an interactive whiteboard. It enables playing games together, dividing learners into competing teams, etc. This kind of training is really enjoyed by younger teenagers, especially if they can win a game and earn positive grades or small prizes.



Figure 1. Sample pronunciation games from http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/.



Figure 2. A sample printable pronunciation flashcard from http://cambridge-englishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/.

“ESL Tower: Pronunciation.” Another website containing plenty of pronunciation games is ESL Tower, available at <http://eslgamesworld.com/members/games/pronunciation/index.html>. It can be mainly used for group activities and team-vs.-team games. One of the most popular games on this webpage is Phonetic Vowel Quiz where the subjects are presented with the IPA version of a word and are asked to write an orthographic form of it. For each correctly spelled word a teacher can award a point and after a 10-word round the scores may be compared and one of the teams should win and get a small prize. The attractive form of a game helps young teenagers quickly learn and memorize the IPA symbols, as well as revise vocabulary.

Interactive Voice Recorders. While such tools as for example Praat (Boersma, 2001) are very useful, professional, and effective (e.g., Rojczyk, 2011), they are more suitable for adult learners than for young teenagers. Recording such learners in laboratory conditions would be too stressful and thus virtually impossible. Moreover, Praat’s interface is too difficult and old-fashioned for teenagers. Modern downloadable or online voice recorders based on easy, familiar words seem to be a much better solution for younger learners. Students can use them not only in the classroom, but also at home. Recording one’s own voice is advisable in order to control one’s pronunciation, check the potential

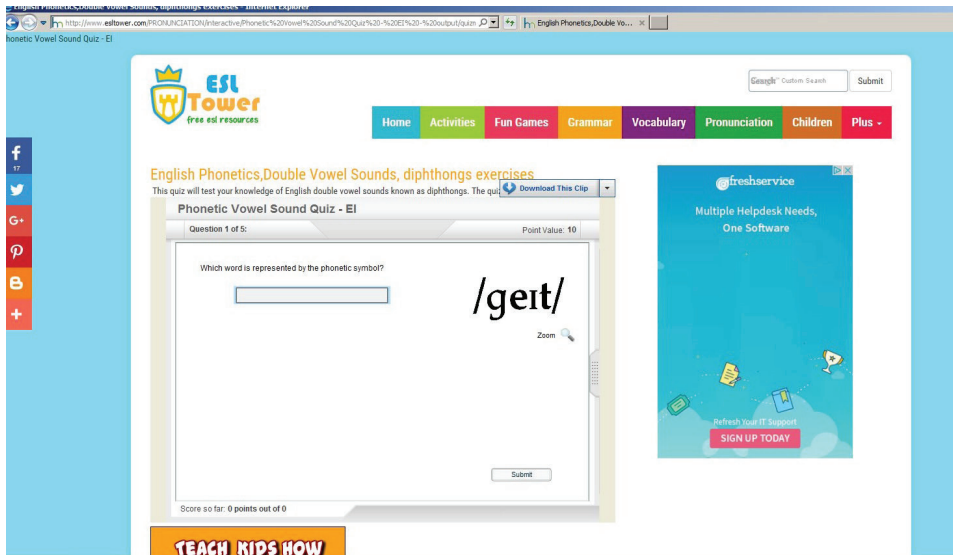


Figure 3. Phonetic Vowel Quiz for a diphthong /eɪ/ from <http://eslgamesworld.com/members/games/pronunciation/index.html>.

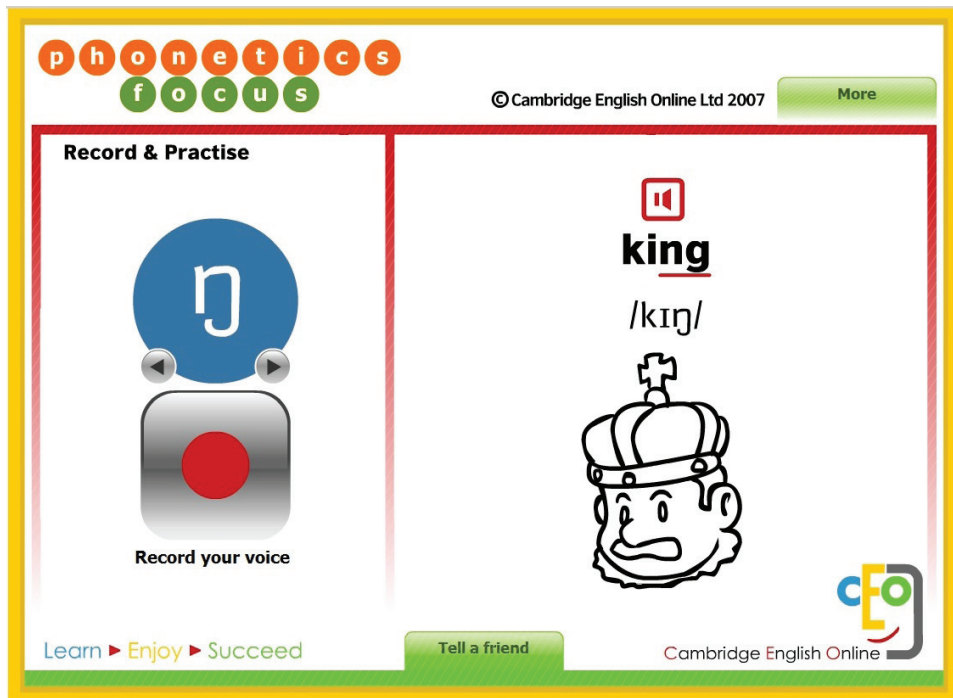



Figure 4. An interactive downloadable voice recorder with a listen-and-repeat function, retrieved from http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/.

mistakes and correct them. The obtained recordings are also very helpful to the teacher who can observe their students' gradual progress. However, the possibility to use those tools at home has an undeniable advantage—learners can try recording their utterances when no-one disturbs them and when no-one laughs if they happen to make a mistake. This is why a teacher should not only use voice recorders in a classroom, but also encourage their students to work with them at home.

Teachers' Own Resources. Finally, as most teachers prepare a lot of materials, handouts, and exercises on their own, it is relatively easy to create such attractions for young teenagers learning L2 pronunciation. They may develop speech perception, production or the ability to use the IPA. Those handouts can be not only educational but they might also provide students with a lot of entertainment. It is possible to create mazes, crosswords, puzzles or labyrinths. Below one can find a couple of proposals tested by the author and her students.

“Encrypted messages” constitute the first category of the aforementioned exercises. Having taught the basics of the IPA, the teacher can prepare simple (and gradually—more and more complicated) messages. It is enough to print them in the phonetic transcription form on small pieces of paper. They may be used as hints in such games as “Detectives,” “Treasure Hunt,” etc. They can also be used as commands that have to be carried out by the students in the classroom (they may draw such commands hidden in plastic shells for themselves or for their group mates). Naturally, before they perform any activities, L2 learners have to read the encrypted message out loud.



ðə ki: ɪz 'ʌndə ðə 'teɪbəl

Figure 5. “An encrypted message”—the author’s own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

“Secret coding” is more complicated and requires more work and a better command of the IPA. This kind of activity is widely used in textbooks and activity books for children and teenagers. However, there is only a simplest version of it. Every task is accompanied by a key/legend which provides language learners with the symbol-letter relation. In the phonetic version of secret coding, the legend consists of the symbol-IPA relation. Teenage learners need to use the symbols to transcribe the message first, then read the transcription and finally write the text in the orthographic form. Such task may be used just for fun, or it can be treated as a sort of competition—for example, the first team to transcribe and write the spelling of the text wins.

ɪ	æ	ə	ɔ	ɒ	θ	ʒ	ʃ	ʌ	ð
♥	*	♣	♦	♠	→	←	☺	☀	♪

♪♣ ▲*▶ ♪● □—*▲

Figure 6. “Secret coding”—the author’s own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

The final proposal here is the “Maze.” There may be various versions of this task; however, one of the simplest and most educational at the same time is presented below. In one table a teacher puts numerous words containing the same letter, but realized by various sounds. A group of words has to share that sound. The learners have to find the way out through the “maze.” First of all, they learn correct pronunciation of a few words. Moreover, this task raises their awareness that the same letter may be read differently and that there is no simple spelling-pronunciation relation. Figures 7 and 8 show a maze where language learners are asked to find words in which the letter “a” corresponds to the “ash” vowel (Figure 7—an empty “maze” and Figure 8—a solved task).

cat	salt	hall	India	Poland
bat	catch	chair	Arkansas	bald
call	match	lack	angel	restaurant
ball	aunt	mad	Jessica	car
Pakistan	Barbara	bad	pack	bar
sauce	canary	table	flat	fasten
Maria	giraffe	marble	lamp	favourite
Sally	tall	maple	sat	black

a = /æ/

Figure 7. “The maze”—the author’s own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

cat	salt	hall	India	Poland
bat	catch	chair	Arkansas	bald
call	match	lack	angel	restaurant
ball	aunt	mad	Jessica	car
Pakistan	Barbara	bad	pack	bar
sauce	canary	table	flat	fasten
Maria	giraffe	marble	lamp	favourite
Sally	tall	maple	sat	black

a = /æ/

Figure 8. “The maze”—the author’s own pronunciation task for young teenagers (solved).

Naturally, the possibilities of preparing creative and attractive pronunciation tasks for teenage learners are practically countless and every teacher can invent something interesting. The proposals described above are just examples and ought to be treated as inspiration, not a completed list.

Summary

In conclusion, there are multiple ways of teaching L2 pronunciation to young teenagers efficiently. Since they are still braver and more open to novelties than adults, as well as they love playing and having fun, pronunciation training can be slipped into their classes in the form of games, quizzes, and competitions. Moreover, it can be also taught just like any other skill since young teenagers are old enough to start learning a language consciously. What must not be forgotten is the fact that a course in phonetics designed for young teenagers must be different than the one created for late teenagers and young adults. First of all, the materials, methods, and vocabulary used must be adjusted to the target learners so that they are attractive and comprehensible. What is more, pronunciation classes cannot be too long and ought to be connected with the topics discussed during other (e.g., grammar or vocabulary) modules being taught at a particular moment during the foreign language course. Finally,

the teacher should apply a global approach to the training and concentrate on speech production, perception, and spelling-sound correspondence at the same time.

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Dorota Lipińska

Überlegen wir unsere bisherige Lehrmethoden. Die Entwicklung des Aussprachelehrgangs für Englisch lernende polnische Teenager

Zusammenfassung

Zahlreiche Forschungen (z.B.: Lipińska, 2014; Majer, 2002; Nowacka, 2003; Szpyra-Kołowska u.a., 2002; Szpyra-Koźłowska, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, 2002; Wrembel, 2002) haben folgendes nachgewiesen: obwohl die Aussprache in universitären Lehrplänen berücksichtigt ist, wird sie auf niedrigeren Bildungsstufen immer noch nicht unterrichtet. Es ließ sich erkennen, dass nicht nur die Phonetik den jüngeren Schülern beigebracht werden soll, sondern dass dieser Unterricht äußerst effektiv sein kann (z.B.: Lipińska, 2017; Nixon u. Tomlinson, 2005). Die Buchhandlungen haben ohne Zweifel im Angebot mehrere Lehrwerke für fremde Aussprache oder auch ganze Aussprachelehrgänge in der Zweitsprache, die von Polen für Polen geschaffen wurden (z.B.: Porzuczek u.a., 2013; Sawala u.a., 2011) als auch die für internationale Sprachbenutzer geschriebenen Lehrwerke (z.B.: Baker, 2006; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010), die aber den eine Fremdsprache lernenden Erwachsenen gewidmet sind. Wie man weiß, eignen sich die bei der Arbeit mit Erwachsenen oder Studenten gebrauchten Lehrmaterialien und Methoden nicht zur Arbeit mit Kindern und Teenager. Die letztgenannten brauchen zwar verlockende und altersgemäße Lehrmethoden und Übungen, denn jeder Fremdsprachelehrgang muss, so Komorowska (2011), durch realistische Zwecke und richtig angepasste Methoden und Bildungselemente gekennzeichnet sein.

Der vorliegende Beitrag bezweckt, verschiedene Methoden und Lehrmaterialien darzustellen, die bei der Didaktik der Aussprache im Englischen als Zweitsprache in den Gruppen von 11-13 jährigen Schülern verwendet werden können. Diese wurden schon in drei solchen Gruppen getestet und deren Effizienz wurde sowohl hinsichtlich der Sprachproduktion als auch Sprachperzeption in den Gruppen von jüngeren Teenager nachgewiesen (z.B.: Lipińska, 2017).

Schlüsselwörter: Fremdsprachenunterricht, Ausspracheunterricht, Lehrmaterialien für Fremdsprachenunterricht