Swedish Youths as Listeners for Diverse English Accents: Discussing the Method

Your feedback is of great value for us!! ☺

Background

Swedish Youths:
- Having high English proficiency through out-of-school input (mostly American English)
- Motivated to learn and use English
- Favouring American accents (Norrby, 2014)

However, little known about:
- *How are they as listeners for diverse English accents?*
- *Are they ready for international/globalised communication?*

Speakers

- Five university teachers: two from the Outer Circle, two from the Expanding Circle and one from the US (see Kang & Rubin, 2014)
- Proficient English speakers
- Carry the common features of their own varieties (see Deterding 2010, Zielinski 2008, Jeong et al. 2018)

Listeners

- Five intact classes (n =25 ~ 30 per class) of upper secondary school students on the academic track
- Each class will listen to one of the five speakers

Materials and Stimuli

- Set 1: Six 'What are their jobs? passages' from an English 5 national test
- Set 2: 20 true/false sentences from Munro & Derwing (1995)
- All speakers will read Set 1 and Set 2
- The stimuli = recorded readings

interact?

Listener Variables
(Questionnaire after the listening session)

- Language background (e.g. L1 and number of L2s)
- English grades
- Self-perceived English competence
- Ways of using English
- Experience with diverse English accents (e.g. Hansen Edwards et al. 2018; Kennedy and Trofimovich 2008)
- Attitudes towards different English accents (e.g, Kand and Rubin, 2014)

affect?   **affect?**

correlated?

4 Constructs

Listener intelligibility (LI)
- How much a listener actually understands the speaker's intended message (Munro & Derwing, 2006; Derwing & Munro, 2015)
- How to measure: the scores of comprehension questions for the 6 passages & transcripts of the 20 sentences

Listener Comprehensibility (LC)
- The ease or difficulty a listener experiences in understanding the speaker (Derwing & Munro, 2015)
- How to measure: a 9-point rating scale: '1' means 'very easy to understand' and '9' means 'very hard to understand', after every passage and sentence

Accentedness Perception (AP)
- A perception of how strong or heavy a foreign, or non-native accent is (Hansen Edwards et. al. 2018)
- How to measure: a 9-point rating scale: '1' means 'no non-native accent at all' and '9' means 'very heavy foreign accent', after each of Set 1 & Set 2

Accentedness Acceptance (AA)
- The degree of annoyance and irritability that the listener feels (Szpyra-Kozlowska 2014)
- How to measure: a 9-point rating scale: '1' means 'the accent is very pleasant to listen to' and '9' means 'the accent is very annoying and irritating', after each of Set 1 & Set 2

show phonological features difficult for Swedish youths?

Ways to remove training effect
for class-by-class listening session (each speaker→ one class)

- The room will be big enough to set individual listeners apart.
- Listeners will have their own computers and earphones
  →access to the stimuli on Survey Monkey
  →supervised to listen to each passage and sentence only once
- Sets 1 & 2 will be reverse-ordered for half of listeners.
- The six passages in Set 1 and 20 sentences in Set 2 will be randomly presented to each listener.

References

Derwing, T., & Munro, M. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Deterding, D. (2010). Variation across Englishes: Phonology. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 385-399). London: Routledge.

Hansen Edwards, J. G., Zampini, M. L., & Cunningham, C. (2019). Listener judgments of speaker and speech traits of varieties of Asian English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 40*(8), 691-706. doi:10.1080/01434632.2018.1549057

Jeong, H., Thorén, B., & Othman, J. (2018). Effect of altering three phonetic features on intelligibility of English as a lingua franca: A Malaysian speaker and Swedish listeners. *Asian Englishes,* 1-18. doi:10.1080/13488678.2018.1536817

Kang, O., & Rubin, D. (2014). Listener expectations, reverse linguistic stereotyping, and individual background factors in social judgments and oral performance assessment. In J. M. Levis & A. Moyer (Eds.), *Social Dynamics in Second Language Accent.* Berlin: De Gruyter.

Kang, O., Thomson, R. I., & Moran, M. (2018). Empirical approaches to measuring the intelligibility of different varieties of English in predicting listener comprehension. *Language Learning, 68*(1), 115-146. doi:10.1111/lang.12270

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.

Munro, M., & Derwing, T. (1995). Processing time, accent, and comprehensibility in the perception of native and foreign-accented speech. *Language and Speech, 38*(3), 289-306. doi:10.1177/002383099503800305

Munro, M., & Derwing, T. (2006). The functional load principle in ESL pronunciation instruction: An exploratory study. *System, 34*(4), 520-531. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.09.004

Norrby, C. (2015). English in Scandinavia: Monster or mate? Sweden as a case study. In J. Hajek & Y. Slaughter (Eds.), *Challenging the monolingual mindset* (pp. 17-32). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Szpyra-Kozlowska, J. (2014). *Pronunciation in EFL instruction: A research-based approach.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Zielinski, B. W. (2008). The listener: No longer the silent partner in reduced intelligibility. *System, 36*(1), 69-84. doi:10.1016/j.system.2007.11.004

UNIVERSITY WEST

Anna Elgemark (anna.elgemark@hv.se) & Hyeseung Jeong (hyeseung.jeong@hv.se)