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Introduction to special issue: New directions in pronunciation theory and practice
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Generally speaking, pronunciation is perceived as a difficult area by both teachers and learners. Like listening, pronunciation is sometimes neglected in the process of language teaching in favour of reading and writing, which are rather more likely to lead to success (Setter, 2008). On the one hand, confidence with pronunciation allows learners the interaction with native speakers that is so essential for all aspects of their linguistic development. On the other hand, poor pronunciation can mask otherwise good language skills, condemning learners to less than their deserved social, academic and work advancement. Despite widespread agreement about the importance of pronunciation teaching, pronunciation is the aspect of language that receives least attention. The reason is not unwillingness to teach pronunciation, but uncertainty as to how best to help learners (Fraser 1999). Even though research has also established that pronunciation plays a central role in speech intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 2005), and teachers and learners believe in its value (MacDonald, 2002), pronunciation is rarely incorporated into instructional objectives, and when it is taught can still be done so in an ad hoc fashion. In agreement with Fraser (2011), it is essential to continue to seek additional effective methods and approaches so that we can assist learners independently to develop the communicative competence needed in today's tertiary environment. Over the last few years there has been an increase in the amount of research into pronunciation teaching (see meta-studies by Saito, 2012; Lee, Jang, & Plonsky, 2014). However, pronunciation learning and teaching research needs to have a clearer theoretical basis and to be pragmatically directed at the learner and the classroom. Understanding what is new in pronunciation theory, and the supporting research, and what this means for classroom practice was the focus of the recent one-day AALL 2nd Pronunciation Symposium at UNSW (Canberra).

The symposium brought together a vibrant group of teachers and scholars expressing a passion for pronunciation teaching. During the event, a total of 16 presentations, including two keynotes were presented. The opening keynote speech was presented by Graeme Couper who explained the classroom implications of Cognitive Phonology (combined with Socio-Cultural Theory it takes a holistic approach, starting with the learner's perceptions and drawing on his/her cognitive capacities), showing how this theoretical position provides a great deal of explanatory power when analysing what it is that makes pronunciation teaching effective. He suggested two particular variables are critical to its success, viz. Critical Listening and Socially Constructed Metalanguage and explained how these can be realised in practice through classroom activities.

The second keynote speech was presented by Michael Carey who suggests an L1 point of reference (L1POR) as a theoretical starting point. Carey's keynote was based on one of the articles included in this special issue (Carey, Sweeting, & Mannell) *An L1 point of reference approach to pronunciation modification: Learner-centred alternatives to 'listen and repeat'*. The L1POR initially develops the learner's cognitive and motor sensory awareness of their L1 phonology as a scaffold towards developing an acceptable, comprehensible approximation of the target speech sounds. Carey et al. challenge the status quo of commencing pronunciation instruction with listening exercises, arguing speech production needs to precede perception training within the sequence of instruction. This is in contrast to Couper's theoretical approach which sees the relationship between perception and production as a complex one with both facilitating concept formation, and not necessarily requiring a particular sequence.

What Carey and Couper have in common is that they are calling for teachers to have a greater understanding of the nature of speech, especially the dynamic role of speech perception and production (or production and perception) and they believe in focusing on the learner's L1 as a starting point. This is of course sound pedagogy: to start with what the learner already knows. Both approaches, although they have clear differences, focus very strongly on the learner and

the holistic nature of learning pronunciation. This theme of the whole body experience and a focus on the learner was also apparent in a number of the presentations, including haptics, focusing on the learner's perspective, and contextualising pronunciation for the learner in meaningful ways, to name a few. A number of these ideas are taken up in the papers published in this special issue. We are excited to be able to present the articles that make up this volume, including articles presented at the Symposium and articles from other established authors. They have been organised according to the following two themes:

Production can inform perception

- Gary Linebaugh and Thomas Roche present a paper, entitled, *Evidence that L2 production training can enhance production*. This article concludes that production can inform perception in the case of perceptually assimilated sounds, and targeted training in articulation can enhance perception of those sounds. Their study shows that learners use somatosensory awareness and auditory feedback from their own speech to more sharply delineate phonetic boundaries.
- Michael Carey, Arizio Sweeting and Robert Mannell present a paper entitled, *An L1 point of reference approach to pronunciation modification: Learner-centred alternatives to 'listen and repeat'*. The L1POR takes a non-nativist approach to pronunciation instruction and offers practical learner-centred alternatives to 'listen and repeat'. In line with Linebaugh and Roche, Carey et al. argue that speech production needs to precede perception training. The approach initially develops the learner's physical awareness of their L1 phonology as a scaffold towards developing an acceptable approximation of the target speech sounds.

Social issues in pronunciation learning

- Shem Macdonald presents a paper entitled, *"The tutor never asked me questions": Pronunciation and student positioning at university*. This article describes strategies to be used with university students who use English as their additional language and puts forward a model for understanding pronunciation and its role in speaker identity formulation. Theory underpinning this model is based on sociolinguistic work on speaker identities as formulated through spoken interactions.
- John Levis' contribution to this volume, entitled, *Learners' views of social issues in pronunciation learning,* considers the nature of pronunciation improvement and its relationship to social interaction. He examines the beliefs and attitudes of L2 advanced learners of English who volunteered for additional tutoring due to concerns about their pronunciation. Levis presents their perspectives and goals for pronunciation learning and reveals a number of inconsistencies in their views. This study suggests that teachers need to be more explicit with learners in making them aware of key factors and strategies leading to pronunciation improvement. It also concludes that teachers need to know more about how pronunciation can be improved and what the goals of any instruction should be.

Also included in this volume is a review by Arizio Sweeting of Jolanta Szpyra-Kozłowska's book published in 2014 entitled, *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction: A Research-Based Approach.*

The aim of this special issue and the related symposium is to explore new directions in pronunciation theory and practice. Certainly during the symposium there was a great deal of debate about theoretical positions and the possible ways in which they might be reflected in classroom practice. It is hoped that in considering the evidence and arguments presented in this issue, readers will participate in the debate as they reflect on their own classroom practice and ways in which it might be modified.

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