

NordAc³

Nordic Research
on Accent, Acceptability and Acquisition

Workshop, Kiel University, 21 March 2019



Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

Institut für Skandinavistik, Frisistik und
Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ISFAS)

Venue

Westring 400, room 0.3.70
Kiel University
Kiel, Germany

Organizers

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NordAc³ is organized as the concluding workshop of the project *Danish as a Neighbour Language: Pronunciation Competence in Danish in German Schools* (Kiel University, 2015–2018).

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Welcome

Welcome to/willkommen in/velkommen til/välkomna till Kiel!

It might not be self-evident why a workshop that deals with Nordic Research on Accent, Acceptability and Acquisition is held at a German university. The answer is twofold.

First, Kiel lies – literally – on the edge of the Nordic-speaking area, due to the existence of the Danish minority in the northern part of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, where Danish is in fact recognized and protected as an autochthonous minority language.

Second, Danish is regularly taught as a foreign language at many schools in Schleswig-Holstein, with about 5,000 pupils attending Danish classes. This is a fairly unique situation, as Schleswig-Holstein is the only place in the world (outside the Nordic countries) where Danish is a regular school subject. Danish teachers usually have a master's degree from Kiel University or its neighbour institution in Flensburg.

The acquisition of Danish as an L2 arguably depends on the acquisition of Danish phonetics – quite a challenge, to say the least, and a vital one: You won't get anywhere speaking Danish until your pronunciation is acceptable to L1 speakers. Minimizing one's accent while maximizing the acceptability of one's L2 is therefore one of the main goals in the acquisition of Danish as an L2.

NordAc³ is intended as a multilingual workshop. Danskere, nordmenn, svenskar och finländare er rigtig gode til engelsk, men også til å forstå hverandres språk (om de försöker). Please feel free to use any of the Continental Scandinavian languages or English during presentations, discussions, coffee breaks, lunches, drinks, and dinner. In this case, any accent will be acceptable.

We hope you'll enjoy the workshop – if you have any questions, please let us know.

Lisa & Steffen

Call for papers

Recent years have seen an increasing interest in studies on L2 pronunciation. This includes studies that focus on the relationship between L2 pronunciation and sociolinguistic aspects such as the social and communicative acceptability of L2 speakers (van den Doel 2006; Pilott 2016; Thomson 2018). Also, the importance of teaching L2 pronunciation and teachers' skills in this context are increasingly emphasized (Derwing et al. 2014; Thomson & Derwing 2015).

While the majority of studies address widely used languages, most notably English, NordAc³ approaches this topic with a regional focus on research from the Nordic countries or on the Nordic languages. The two-day workshop brings together scholars working on sociolinguistic, phonetic, and acquisitional aspects of L2 pronunciation, with particular emphasis on the discussion of

1. current empirical findings:

- Which perspectives on L2 pronunciation, including the use of listener ratings, are being discussed in current studies?
- Which fundamental implications for teaching purposes can be drawn from recent L2 pronunciation studies?

2. methodological aspects:

- How can different dimensions of pronunciation (especially acceptability) be defined and measured?
- How can the mutual influence of different dimensions be measured, e.g. the influence of accent on acceptability?

3. the relevance of research on L2 pronunciation for teaching:

- What do teachers need to know? What should we teach teachers?
- Which aspects of L2 pronunciation in general and which language-specific phenomena in particular should be part of teacher education?

We welcome 20-minute contributions (20 minutes for presentations plus 10 minutes for discussion) in English, Danish, Norwegian, and

Swedish. Please send your abstracts (max. 400 words excluding references) by 30 November 2018 to Lisa Tulaja (l.tulaja@isfas.uni-kiel.de).

References

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Programme

Wednesday, 20 March 2019	
19:00	Pre-workshop drinks <i>Längengrad</i> , Schwedenkai 1
Thursday, 21 March 2019	
9:00	Registration opens Workshop venue, <i>Westring 400</i>
9:30	Opening remarks
9:45	Consequences of accentedness (Ocke-Schwen Bohn, Aarhus)
10:20	Hyperkorreksjon og frekvens i tilegnelsen av et større vokalinventar <i>Cecilie Slinning Knudsen (NTNU, Trondheim)</i>
10:55	Coffee break
11:10	“Pronunciation is important, but hard to teach.” Teachers’ perspectives on teaching Swedish for immigrants <i>Elisabeth Zetterholm (Stockholm)</i>
11:45	Udtalefejl af tyske dansklørnere: L1-bedømmelse af <i>accentedness</i> , <i>comprehensibility</i> og <i>acceptability</i> <i>Lisa Tulaja (Kiel)</i>
12:20	Lunch break
14:20	Lyssna och upprepa: uttal, uttalsövningar och begriplighet <i>Hanna Heinonen (Jyväskylä)</i>
14:55	The importance of investigating pronunciation teaching techniques: What do we actually know about the usefulness of tongue twisters? <i>Elina Tergujeff & Mikko Kuronen (Jyväskylä)</i>
15:30	Coffee break
15:45	Representation, processing and articulatory proficiency in English as a second language <i>Malin Toften Mangersnes (Universitetet i Agder, Kristiansand)</i>
16:20	Final discussion
17:00	Closing remarks
19:30	Workshop dinner <i>Jack’s Kitchen</i> , Westring 399

Abstracts

Consequences of accentedness

Ocke-Schwen Bohn (Aarhus)

This contribution attempts to provide a taxonomy of the consequences of (foreign) accented speech. Examples from published and unpublished work on listener reactions to nonnative speech are used to exemplify the overall classification of its effects into linguistic-communicative processing cost on the one hand, and social and psychological cost on the other. Both types of cost can be examined in a number of ways. For processing cost, these are comprehensibility, acceptability, and measures of intelligibility, and this contribution highlights both well-documented and possible relations between these aspects of processing cost. The nonlinguistic cost of (foreign) accented speech can be roughly classified as resulting in biases regarding the personality or the social characteristics of the speaker. The contribution will provide examples of how these consequences have been examined, which will result in a discussion of the relation between (aspects of) the two types of cost and the usefulness and appropriateness of different methods used to study the consequences of accentedness.

Hyperkorleksjon og frekvens i tilegnelsen av et større vokalinventar

Cecilie Slinning Knudsen (NTNU, Trondheim)

Det norske språket har et stort vokalinventar, noe som kan være en kompliserende faktor for innlærere av norsk som andrespråk. Dette innlegget setter fokus på fenomenet hyperkorleksjon som kan forekomme når man tilegner seg nye vokalkategorier og ser det i lys av Exemplar Theory (Lavie 2007). Exemplar Theory sier blant annet at en kategori er summen av dens eksemplarer (forekomster) og at frekvensen er en viktig faktor for kategoriens relative styrke i språket.

Denne hyperkorleksjonen ble observert i Knudsen (2013), hvor tilegnelsen av de norske vokalene /y/, /ɥ/ og /u/ hos innlærere av norsk med mandarinkinesisk som morsmål ble undersøkt. Denne gruppen oppfattet /u/ utover både morsmåls- og andrespråkgrensene, og de «utryddet» nærmest /y/-kategorien til fordel for den nye /ɥ/-kategorien. Dette kan ikke forklares med transfer fra morsmålet alene da endringene i vokalkategoriene i andrespråket norsk ikke tilsvarer grensene til morsmålskategoriene.

Analysen i Knudsen (2013) benyttet seg av L2LP-modellen (Escudero 2005), som er utviklet for å kunne redegjøre for hvordan andrespråksinnlærere tilegner seg nye lyd kategorier. Denne er basert på The Gradual Learning Algorithm (Boersma & Hayes 2001), som lener seg på semantisk læring i lyd tilegnelse. I optimalitetsteori, teorien som ligger til grunn for de ovennevnte modellene, forklarer man transfereffekt fra morsmål til andrespråk ved at språktilegneren begynner med morsmålsrangering av hertzverdier for lyd kategorier, og deretter omrangerer disse i møte med nye språk.

I Knudsen (2014) ble det konkludert med at det er den norske /y/-kategorien som er vanskelig å tilegne seg, til tross for at førstespråket mandarin også har en /y/-kategori. Ingen hypotese eller konklusjon ble gitt, men senere arbeid ser til Exemplar Theory for videre forskning.

Referanser

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“Pronunciation is important, but hard to teach.” Teachers’ perspectives on teaching Swedish for immigrants

Elisabeth Zetterholm (Stockholm)

An intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation, but not necessarily without a non-native accent, is of importance for communication. However, it seems that many language teachers think it is hard to teach pronunciation, mostly depending on their own lack of knowledge about how to teach it. Comments from a web-based survey with questions concerning teachers’ experiences of teaching Swedish for immigrants show that pronunciation pedagogy is hardly featured in their pre-service teacher training (Zetterholm under review). Results from the survey in the Swedish context are in accordance with studies in English-speaking countries showing that there is an underrepresentation of pronunciation instructions in teacher education (Breitkreutz, Derwing & Rossister 2001; Foote, Holtby & Derwing 2011; MacDonald 2002).

Teachers, who have knowledge about language-specific phonology and prosody in the target language, as well as a metalinguistic approach in their teaching can give explicit feedback and motivate learners. Comparing and explaining differences and similarities between languages and possible cross-linguistic transfer make it easier to understand language features and relations between languages. In Swedish, the rounded fronted vowels, initial consonant clusters, quantity contrasts and word stress are generally pitfalls for second language learners of Swedish (Bannert 2004; Zetterholm & Tronnier 2017). Preliminary results from an ongoing study on Swedish listeners judging second language Swedish speakers’ pronunciation indicate that prosodic features seem hard to achieve for an intelligible pronunciation. Listeners’ judgements show no clear correlation between perceived foreign accent and comprehensibility (Zetterholm & Abelin under review). This corresponds to an earlier study by Munro & Derwing (1995). Quantity contrasts in stressed syllables are shown in Swedish orthography through cues such as double consonants. However, analyses show great variation between second

language learners of Swedish in their production, indicating a possible transfer from their first language (Zetterholm & Tronnier under review). Results from the studies raise questions about the teaching of Swedish for immigrants, not least in relation to teachers' perspectives.

References

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Udtalefejl af tyske dansklørnere: L1-bedømmelse af *accentedness*, *comprehensibility* og *acceptability*

Lisa Tulaja (Kiel)

Det danske sprogs relativt komplekse fonetik (Grønnum 2009), dets forskellighed fra det tyske lydinventar (Höder 2016) og afvigelsen fra ortografien leder til vanskeligheder i udtalen for tyske lørnere. Disse vanskeligheder viser sig i form af udtalefejl, dvs. divergenser fra den sproglige norm, som påvirker kommunikationen med L1-talere. Ph.d-projektets empiriske undersøgelse går ud på at kortlægge specifikke udtalefejl af tyske dansklørnere og graden af deres påvirkning på kommunikationen med danske L1-talere.

I projektets første trin blev tyske dansklørneres sprog optaget og deres udtalefejl evalueret både kvalitativt og kvantitativt. I projektets andet trin blev treogtyve af disse specifikke udtalefejl præsenteret til 192 danskere i en ratingstudie. L1-raterne skulle bedømme både fejlfulde stimuli af tyske dansklørneres sprog og fejlfrie kontroloptagelser af L1-talere og meget fremskredne tyske dansklørnere i forhold til dimensionerne *accentedness* og *comprehensibility* (Munro & Derwing 1995; Derwing & Munro 2015) og i den mindre hyppig fokuserede dimension *acceptability* (Thomson 2018).

Resultaterne viser, at L1-raterne tydelig kan adskille fejlfrie og fejlfulde stimuli og at de forskellige fejl bliver bedømt på forskellig måde. Mens næsten alle fejlfulde stimuli bliver bedømt ens *accented*, varierer værdierne i de to andre dimensioner. Resultaterne peger ud på, at *acceptability* og *comprehensibility* korrelerer.

Foredraget fokuserer på undersøgelsens design og fremlægger operationaliseringen af de tre undersøgte dimensioner. Derudover diskuteres resultaterne som bidrag til forskningen om *acceptability* og hvilke praktiske implikationer der kan formuleres for danskundervisningen.

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- Grønnum, N. 2009. *Fonetik og fonologi. Almen og dansk*. København: Akademisk Forlag.
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Lyssna och upprepa: uttal, uttalsövningar och begriplighet

Hanna Heinonen (Jyväskylä)

Ett lättbegripligt och lyssnarvänligt uttal har ställts som ett mål för uttalsundervisningen i flera kontexter (t.ex. Levis 2005). Det viktigaste är en välfungerande kommunikation mellan talare och lyssnare. Begripligheten som mål står i läroplanen för gymnasieskolan i Finland för svenskt uttal (GLGY 2015), men det har dock inte blivit helt nått – ett lättbegripligt svenskt uttal är ingen självklarhet för alla finskspråkiga gymnasister (Heinonen 2017).

I denna presentation resonerar jag kring L2-uttalets begriplighet och speciellt uttalsövningarnas relation till den. Presentationen baserar sig på en läroboksanalys av 10 nyss upplagda gymnasieböcker i svenska, vars resultat sammanknyts med resultaten av tre tidigare empiriska studier om finskspråkiga gymnastisters L2-svenska uttal: 1) om dess upplevda begriplighet, 2) om satsbetoningen, som visade sig vara avgörande för begripligheten och 3) om satsbetoningens realisation hos finskspråkiga talare jämförd med svenskspråkiga talare (Heinonen 2017; 2018; u.u.).

Sambandet mellan dessa tre empiriska studier och läroboksanalysen finns i uttalsövningar. Det framkom i läroboksanalysen att det inte fästs mycket uppmärksamhet vid satsbetoningen i uttalsövningarna. I centret verkar stå enstaka ljud och ord som inläraren vanligen *lyssnar och upprepar*. Denna typ av övning kan dock leda till en försämrade satsprosodi (t.ex. Jones 1997), vilken i de tidigare empiriska studierna noterades karaktärisera mindre begripliga talprov. Detta och andra samband behandlas närmare i presentationen.

Alla dessa fyra studier har pedagogiska implikationer. De ger ny information om finskspråkiga talares svenska uttal och med hjälp av den kan uttalsundervisningen och -materialet utvecklas så att de bättre fyller kraven för ett lättbegripligt och lyssnarvänligt uttal.

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The importance of investigating pronunciation teaching techniques: What do we actually know about the usefulness of tongue twisters?

Elina Tergujeff & Mikko Kuronen (Jyväskylä)

L2 pronunciation and related issues are gaining increased interest among applied linguists, but classroom-based research is still rare. Studies on the usefulness of different pronunciation teaching techniques would be particularly welcome (Derwing & Munro 2015: 25). Techniques are various, and many of them have been in use for decades. The same techniques are introduced repeatedly in textbooks and teaching guides. Curiously enough, empirical evidence of the usefulness of these techniques can be weak or non-existent. In this presentation, we are going to discuss the importance of gaining research-based information on different techniques and approach the topic by taking a closer look at what we actually know about one of the “classics” – namely, tongue twisters.

Tongue twisters such as *she sells seashells on the seashore* or the Swedish *sju sjösjuka sjömän sköttes av sju sköna sjuksköterskor* are usually read repeatedly with an ever-increasing tempo until articulatory collapse, making inevitable failure a key characteristic of the technique (Somoff 2014). Tongue twisters seem to be popular in many teaching contexts, but the technique has been criticised as well. Derwing & Munro (2015: 106), for example, do not recommend tongue twisters, as they may cause extreme frustration for learners. Similarly, Nation & Newton (2009: 82) are strongly against using the technique, calling it a “cruel and unusual punishment” for learners.

Most importantly, the criticism includes that there is no evidence of tongue twisters facilitating L2 pronunciation learning any better than practising with regular sentences. Turumi et al. (2016) were able to demonstrate that tongue-twister training leads to better results than no training at all, but according to our knowledge, no research has been able to offer convincing results either for or against the usefulness of

tongue twisters over more authentic teaching materials. In fact, most publications on the topic seem to be based on the researcher's impressions instead of testing learners' development.

We will conclude our discussion by presenting our contribution to solving the obvious problem of pronunciation teaching techniques being under-researched. We hope that our previous work on using *the kazoo* for teaching Swedish prosody (Tergujeff et al., in press) and our ongoing research on tongue-twister training for learning Swedish segments will encourage other researchers to take up on classroom research and to recommend it to their students as well.

This research is part of a project called *Fokus på uttalsinläringen med svenska som mål- och källspråk* (FOKUS, see www.jyu.fi/fokus), funded by the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland 2015–2019.

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Representation, processing and articulatory proficiency in English as a second language

Malin Toften Mangersnes (Universitetet i Agder, Kristiansand)

This project investigates the role of articulatory proficiency in second language English word production and language switching. Measures of language proficiency significantly predict word production latencies and the ability to switch between languages. However, to date such proficiency measures have rarely included articulatory proficiency. We focus on speech rate and articulation measures. These measures are used contrastively to compare first language (L1 Norwegian) and second language (L2 English) productions, both at the individual level and as an experimental variable in picture naming tasks.

We are interested in the extent to which speakers modify their articulation of speech sounds that are not a part of their L1 when speaking in their L2. Since the speakers are from different L1 dialect backgrounds and may have a different target L2 pronunciation (e.g. American or British), quantifying proficiency by obtaining ratings from native English speakers or comparing their phonetic articulations to a native English “norm” is problematic. Instead, the acoustic difference between a L1 phoneme (e.g. /u/ or /ʉ/) and L2 (e.g. /ʊ/) phoneme is used to look at whether the speaker treats these as two different sounds in articulation or not.

Flege’s Speech Learning Model (1995, 2007) describes L2 speech learning through the process of establishing new phonetic categories. Initially, L2 learning of unfamiliar speech sounds are perceived as allophones of existing L1 categories, but as the learner gains experience with the language, new L2 phonetic categories may be formed and eventually produced. Within this framework L1 and L2 representations are part of two separate subsystems existing in a common phonological space. The phonetic measures (formant frequencies) obtained from participants in my project are placed in a vowel space to investigate the degree of overlap between L1 and L2 production categories.

While all participants are expected to be quite proficient in their L2, there will be variation in language proficiency, exposure, dominance and use. Bilingual language profiles are examined using a version of the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) (Marian, Blumenfeld, & Kaushanskaya, 2007), modified to include self-ratings of accent proficiency and attitudes towards first and second language accent. Objective measures of language proficiency are collected through paired L1 – L2 proficiency tests and picture naming and language switching tasks.

The workshop presentation will discuss some of the problems encountered when searching for a suitable way of defining and measuring proficiency, focusing on the group being studied and what the measures should quantify.

References

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Other events

Pre-workshop drinks

When:

Wednesday, 20 March, 7 p.m.

Where:

Längengrad, Schwedenkai 1. The bar is on the 4th floor of the building.

How to get there:

Walking from Kiel Central Station (*Kiel Hbf*) takes about 10 minutes. Some buses stop at *Schwedenkai* (bus 81 from the university), or *Seegarten Ostseekai* (buses 61 and 62 from the university).

Workshop dinner

When:

Thursday, 21 March, 7:30 p.m.

Where:

Jack's Kitchen, Westring 399, directly opposite the workshop venue.

Practical information

How to get to Kiel

By plane: Hamburg Airport is the nearest international airport. Take the *Kielius* bus to get from and to Hamburg Airport and Kiel Central Station. Connections and tickets (also in English): www.bahn.de/autokraft/view/angebot/kielius_en/kielius-ueb-eng.shtml

By train: Kiel Central Station (*Kiel Hbf*) is served by regional, IC, and ICE trains. Connections and tickets (also in English and Danish): www.bahn.com.

How to get to the workshop venue

The venue is at **Westring 400, room 0.3.70**.

By bus: From Kiel Central Station (*Kiel Hbf*) take bus 50, 60S, 61, 81, or 91 and get off at *Universität* or *Universität Westring*. Connections (also in English and Danish): www.bahn.com.

Tickets have to be purchased from the bus driver (cash payment only). One-way tickets within the city are € 2.60, whole-day tickets € 7.80.

If you are staying at Berliner Hof, the hotel will provide you with a ticket that is valid during your entire stay.

You'll need cash

Unlike the Nordic countries, there are still many places in Germany where you'll have to pay in cash. There are ATMs in banks (typically *inside* the building) and public places such as the central station.

WIFI

You have access to the *eduroam* network at the workshop venue.