Putting the new 2018 CEF phonological control descriptors into context

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plan

Introduction
1. A few concepts
2. A few tools
3. The new CEFR CV phonological control descriptors
4. Get your hands dirty
Conclusion
1. A few concepts
Accent & accentedness

• “the way in which people in a particular area, country, or social group pronounce words” (https://dictionary.cambridge.org)

• “how closely the pronunciation of an utterance approaches that of a native speaker” (Kennedy & Tromovich 2008: 461)

• Does accent matter...?
Accent training: some issues

- Near-native proficiency:
  - Unattainable for most...
  - ...necessary for some
- Intelligibility / comprehensibility...
- ...credibility (Kennedy & Tromovich 2008, etc.)
- Learner age
- Time constraints
- Teacher knowledge & skills
  - (cf. EPIP, Frost & Henderson 2013)
- Models?
- Voice & identity
Perception & comprehension = active

• “Inner Voice” (Jones 1918)
• “whenever any sound agitates the Brain, there flow immediately spirits towards the Muscles of the Larynx, which duly dispose them to form a sound altogether like that, which was just now striking the Brain” (Cordemoy 1668: 9)
• “The hearing ear is always found close to the speaking tongue”. (Skipper et al. 2017)

From Evans & Davis 2015: 4778

• Active models 1950s
• See also: Patel 2008; Price 2012; Skipper 2014; Skipper et al. 2017, etc.
So what?

• Accent modification?
• Accent addition?
• Accent assessment?
  – (self- / peer- / expert-)
  – Noticing (Schmidt 1990; 2001; 2010)
  – Noticing the gap (Dörnyei 2009)
  – Building strategies
  – Objectives
2. A few tools
Descriptors

• Pb of subjectivity
• Guidelines
• A few examples
• Expert / peer / self-assessment
• Use with tasks (cf. ELLO, Frost & O’Donnell 2015):
  – Monologues (e.g. describing ad)
  – Dialogues (e.g. mobile phones, social media, etc.
  – Reading (e.g. Mallory text, The North Wind, etc.)
• Why not make your own? I did 😊
• Problem : pronunciation = language specific
  – L1 & Target language
Callibration (CEFR 2001)

• Scale development methodologies:
  – Intuitive
  – Qualitative
  – Quantitative

• Characteristics:
  – Positiveness; definiteness; clarity; brevity; independence;

• Qualities:
  – Multi-purpose; flexible; dynamic; user-friendly; non-dogmatic
IELTS pronunciation descriptors
(from “SPEAKING: Band Descriptors”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band 5</th>
<th>Band 6</th>
<th>Band 7</th>
<th>Band 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6</td>
<td>• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control</td>
<td>• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8</td>
<td>• uses a wide range of pronunciation features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained</td>
<td></td>
<td>• sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times</td>
<td></td>
<td>• is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Cambridge (PET B1 level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1</th>
<th>Grammar and Vocabulary</th>
<th>Discourse Management</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Interactive Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5  | • Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms.  
• Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar topics.  
| • Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation.  
• Contributions are relevant despite some repetition.  
• Uses a range of cohesive devices. | • Is intelligible.  
• Intonation is generally appropriate.  
• Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed.  
• Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly. | • Initiates and responds appropriately.  
• Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support. |

**Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.**

| 4  | Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.  
• Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about familiar topics.  
| Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation.  
• Contributions are mostly relevant, but there may be some repetition.  
• Uses basic cohesive devices. | Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels. | Initiates and responds appropriately.  
• Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support. |

**Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.**

| 3  | Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms.  
• Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.  
| Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation.  
• Repeats information or digresses from the topic. | Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features. | Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty.  
• Requires prompting and support. |

| 2  | Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms.  
• Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.  
| Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation.  
• Repeats information or digresses from the topic. | Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features. | Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty.  
• Requires prompting and support. |

| 1  | Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms.  
• Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.  
| Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation.  
• Repeats information or digresses from the topic. | Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features. | Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty.  
• Requires prompting and support. |

| 0  | | | | Performance below Band 1. |

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Intonation and Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>When reading aloud, pronunciation is highly intelligible.</td>
<td>When reading aloud, use of intonation and stress is highly effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>When reading aloud, pronunciation is generally intelligible with some lapses</td>
<td>When reading aloud, use of intonation and stress is generally effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>When reading aloud, pronunciation is not generally intelligible.</td>
<td>When reading aloud, use of intonation and stress is generally not effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>Descriptors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Form questions and requests appropriately and use intonation to communicate meaning. Speak fluidly with few errors in pronunciation or intonation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Speak clearly with few errors in pronunciation or intonation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pronounce words and statements clearly most of the time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pronounce words and phrases clearly but slowly some of the time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CEFRL descriptors for “PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL” (COE 2001; 17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C2</th>
<th>As C1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some critiques & suggestions...

• Harding 2013 (NS / NNS Rater test)
  – QTT data:
    • Phonological control scale (CEFR 2001)
    • Comprehensibility scale (based on Derwing & Munro, 1997):
      • Accentedness scale (based on Derwing & Munro, 1997):
  – QLT data: focus group (interviews)
  – Conclusions:
    • “CEFR phonological control scale is problematic“
• Horner 2013 “Towards a new phonological Grid”
• Frost & O’Donnell 2018 (“prosody descriptors”)
3. CEFR companion volume (CEFR CV): phonological control descriptors (COE 2018)
CEFR CV: salient points

• CEFR CV consultation
  – Conference Antwerp 2013 :
    • “Language Testing and the CEFR: Time for a New Framework?”
  – Pilot version 2016
    – New “Mediation” & better phonological control)
  – Consultation 2016-17
    • Google forms & mails...

• Launch
  – Published: English nov 2017, French jan 2018
  – Launching conference: 16-17 May 2018, Strasbourg
    • “Building Inclusive Societies through Enriching Plurilingual and Pluricultural Education”
## PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERALL PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL</th>
<th>SOUND ARTICULATION</th>
<th>PROSODIC FEATURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with a high level of control – including prosodic features such as word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation – so that the finer points of his/her message are clear and precise. Intelligibility and effective conveyance of and enhancement of meaning are not affected in any way by features of accent that may be retained from other language(s).</td>
<td>Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language with clarity and precision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout. Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.</td>
<td>Can articulate virtually all of the sounds of the target language with a high degree of control. He/she can usually self-correct if he/she noticeably mispronounces a sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by other language(s) he/she speaks, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.</td>
<td>Can articulate a high proportion of the sounds in the target language clearly in extended stretches of production, is intelligible throughout, despite a few systematic mispronunciations. Can generalise from his/her repertoire to predict the phonological features of most unfamiliar words (e.g. word stress) with reasonable accuracy (e.g. whilst reading).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Pronunciation is generally intelligible; can approximate intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels. However, accent is usually influenced by other language(s) he/she speaks.</td>
<td>Is generally intelligible throughout, despite regular mispronunciation of individual sounds and words he/she is less familiar with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from other language(s) he/she speaks on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.</td>
<td>Pronunciation is generally intelligible when communicating in simple everyday situations, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to understand specific sounds. Systematic mispronunciation of phonemes does not hinder intelligibility, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to recognise and adjust to the influence of the speaker's language background on pronunciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by interlocutors used to dealing with speakers of the language group concerned. Can reproduce correctly a limited range of sounds as well as the stress on simple, familiar words and phrases.</td>
<td>Can reproduce sounds in the target language if carefully guided. Can articulate a limited number of sounds, so that speech is only intelligible if the interlocutor provides support (e.g. by repeating correctly and by eliciting repetition of new sounds).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Your turn...

SUCCESS
SECRET No. 3:
IT'S HARD WORK!

The man who rolls up his shirt sleeves is rarely in danger of losing his shirt.

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Some examples

Eric Cantona talks Seagulls & Trawlers. Explanation included
To conclude

• Pronunciation is important:
  – Intelligibility / comprehensibility
  – Comprehension
  – Credibility

• Phonetics is complicated...

• Pronunciation isn’t hard to teach...

• ...and it’s fun

• Assessment (self- / peer- / expert- )

• Models

• Goals

• Accent addition / modification


http://www.coe.int/lang-cefr


**Frost, D. & J. O’Donnell. 2015.** “Success: B2 or not B2, that is the question (the ELLO project - *Etude Longitudinale sur la Langue Orale*)”. *Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité – Cahiers de l’APLIUT,34*(2.)


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Skipper, Jl., J. Devlin & D. Lametti. 2017. The hearing ear is always found close to the speaking tongue: Review of the role of the motor system in speech perception. *Brain & Language* 164: 77-105.


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Thanks 😊
Comments / questions?

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