

Perceived foreign accent in L1 production across elicitation tasks

This study aims at comparing foreign accent in the first language (L1) across elicitation tasks. Some bilingual speakers, especially when living in a second language (L2) immersion environment, show pronunciation differences in their L1 as compared to monolingual speakers, leading them to be perceived as having a foreign accent [e.g. 1;2]. This is referred to as ‘phonetic attrition’. Multiple acoustic-phonetic features can contribute to perceived foreign accent in the L1 and L2, segmental as well as prosodic [e.g. 3; 4]. The relative contribution of single features, including separate segments, to perceived foreign accent remains unknown.

In L2 research, differences in perceived foreign accent have been found between elicitation tasks, mainly between read speech and spontaneous speech [e.g. 5; 6]. However, the results of these studies are contradictory and show opposite effects, which can possibly be attributed to differences in preselected (difficult) content between tasks, in spontaneity and attention paid to speech and in length of the rated speech samples. No such comparisons have been made for L1 foreign accent. The present study aims at (1) comparing perceived foreign accent across elicitation tasks in L1 production, based on previous contradicting findings in L2 research and their possible explanations, and (2) at analysing production differences in acoustic-phonetic features between elicitation tasks. In addition, (3) the contribution of various segments to perceived foreign accent in read speech is explored.

References

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