Revisiting second language pronunciation teaching and assessment: Constructs, compatibilities, contradictions, cross-fertilization

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Second language (L2) English pronunciation teaching and assessment research has undergone major shifts over the past few decades. Pronunciation instructional goals and assessment targets have been revamped and rebranded, resulting in growing prominence and uptake in applied research and classroom and assessment settings. However, with accuracy- and intelligibility-focused constructs persisting, co-existing, and, in some cases, conflated, there are some unresolvable tensions and orientations that it is worthwhile underscoring to raise awareness and as a small step toward fostering respect for, or at least tolerance of, different research traditions within linguistics and applied linguistics and breaking disciplinary silos (Isaacs & Rose, 2021).

In the first part of this talk, I will argue for why considerations of construct validity in both low-stakes L2 pronunciation research contexts, and high-stakes L2 speaking/listening assessment settings should be fundamental for all pronunciation research. I will discuss sources of congruence and incongruence between key global constructs that are often used in pronunciation research, also in relation to defining appropriate standards and benchmarks for L2 teaching and assessment. Technological innovations and limitations and how that has shaped the focal construct by default, as compared to human-mediated and human-scored assessments, will also be discussed. In the second part of the talk, from the perspective of a researcher actively collaborating with colleagues researching methodological factors in health intervention research, I will reflect on what the field of L2 pronunciation can learn from conventions and practices in evidence-based medicine to chart bold new research directions. To do this, I will draw on relevant parts of Chalmers and Glasziou's (2009) categories of avoidable "research waste" in biomedical research as a springboard for discussing ways to promote greater research efficiency and quality in applied L2 pronunciation research. The primary focus is studies designed to investigate which instructional approaches work best and the nature and strength of the existing evidence. I will argue for the need for greater engagement with educational stakeholders throughout the research cycle, including by establishing a stakeholder-relevant applied L2 pronunciation research agenda.

Chalmers, I., & Glasziou, P. (2009). Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *The Lancet*, *374*(9683), 86-89. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60329-9

Isaacs, T., & Rose, H. (2021). Redressing the balance in the native speaker debate: Assessment standards, standard language, and exposing double standards. *TESOL Quarterly*, *56*(1), 401-412. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3041