Is Native speaker Pronunciation a challenge L2 learners need to overcome?
Question
Asked 6 da
Derrick McClure added an answer 3 days ago
A foreign learner does not need to acquire a perfect native-speaker-like pronunciation; but he/she DOES
Valentina Soboleva added an answer 4 days ago
Yes, I believe it is important for L2 learners to achieve native-like pronunciation. To my knowledge, for
47TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
FILLING THE GAPS

From being intelligible to being you

Pronunciation for all

Robin Walker

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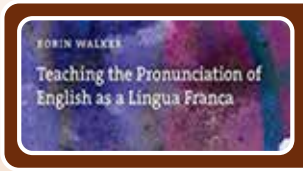
From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL



2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

4. From being intelligible to being you

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL

1960s – audiolingual method

Goals and priorities

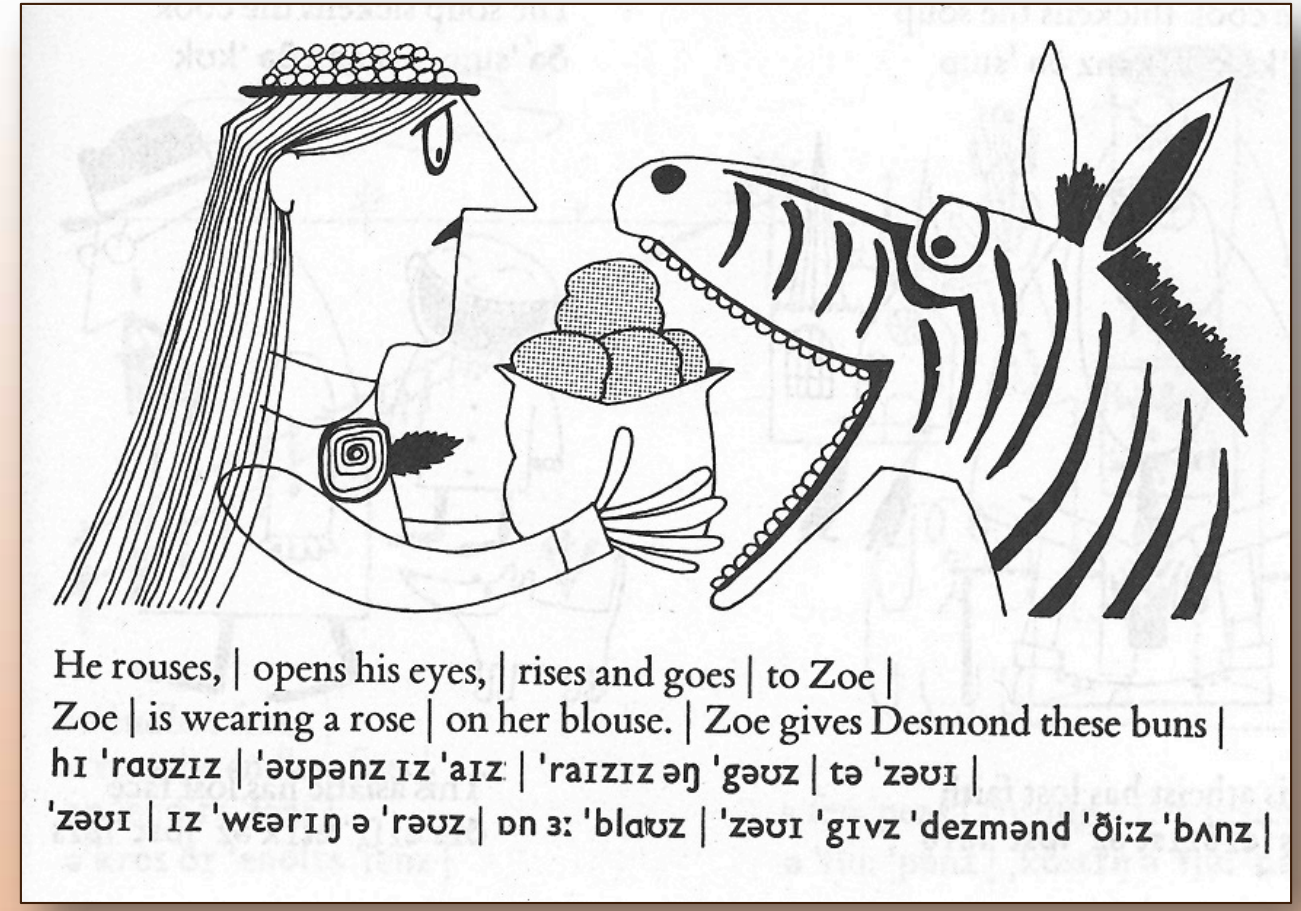
- Native-speaker competence
- Focus on phonemes (bottom-up)

Model

- Prestige native-speaker accent (RP or GA)

Tree or Three?
An elementary pronunciation course

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL



He rouses, | opens his eyes, | rises and goes | to Zoe |
Zoe | is wearing a rose | on her blouse. | Zoe gives Desmond these buns |
hɪ 'raʊzɪz | 'əʊpənz ɪz 'aɪz | 'raɪzɪz əŋ 'gəʊz | tə 'zəʊɪ |
'zəʊɪ | ɪz 'wɛərɪŋ ə 'rəʊz | ɒn ɜː 'blaʊz | 'zəʊɪ 'gɪvz 'dezmənd 'ðiːz 'bʌnz |

English Pronunciation Illustrated
Trim.
1975, CUP.

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL

1960s – Audiolingual method

- **Goal** = NS phonological competence
- **Priority** = individual sounds
- **Model** = standard NS accent (= **Norm**)
- **Deviation** = error = remedial teaching
- **Meaning** = secondary
- **Instructor** = NS with standard accent

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL

1980s – Communicative approach

- **Goal** = comfortable intelligibility
- **Priority** = suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm & intonation)
- **Model** = standard NS accent ≠ **Norm**
- **Deviation** = (interlanguage) error
- **Meaning** = important
- **Instructor** = NS with standard accent

Tree or Three?
An elementary pronunciation course

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL

Stress and Intonation

Low rise in Yes/No questions

Yes/No questions (beginning *Are, Have, Do, Can,* etc.) typically have a low rising intonation pattern. Practice sentences like:

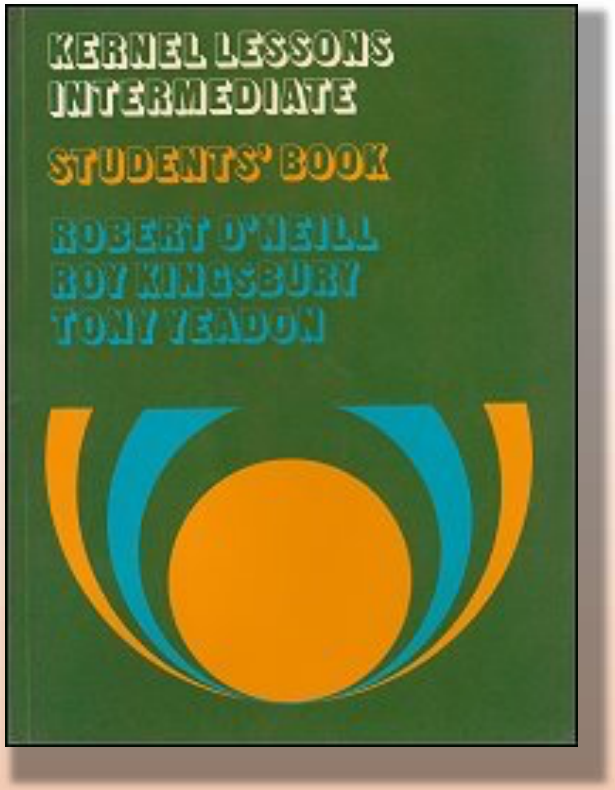
Do you LIKE ˏSWIMMING?
Do you ENJOY ˏMUSIC?
Are you INTERESTED in ˏSPORT?

Give substitutions for practice, using sports, interests and activities from the unit: *football, playing tennis, watching television, learning English,* etc. Pairwork gives practice in giving the answers, too:

S1: Do you ENJOY ˏMUSIC?
S2: YES, I ˋDO/NO, I ˋDON'T.
S1: CAN you ˏSING?
S2: YES, I ˋCAN/NO, I ˋCAN'T.

Contrast the patterns:

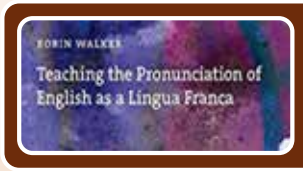
WHAT is he ˋINTERESTED in?
and: Is he INTERESTED in ˏLANGUAGES?



Kernel Two
O'Neill.
1982, Longman

From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL



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2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

2000s – ELF approach

- **Goal –** International intelligibility
- **Priority** – Competence in the *Lingua Franca Core*
  - ✓ consonants (except /θ/, /ð/, + /r/)
  - ✓ no deletion in initial & medial clusters
  - ✓ vowel length (inc. fortis clipping)
  - ✓ nuclear stress placement
  - ✓ accommodation skills

2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

2000s – ELF approach

Non-core features

- ✓ /θ/, /ð/, + /r/
- ✓ exact vowel quality
- ✓ word stress
- ✓ rhythm
- ✓ tones

- ❖ schwa & vowel reduction
- ❖ weak forms
- ❖ connected speech changes

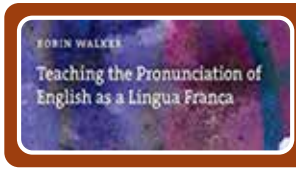
2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

Summary 2000s – ELF approach

- **Goal** = NNS-NNS mutual intelligibility
- **Priority** = Lingua Franca Core + accomm^{n}
- **Model** = any competent ELF user ≠ **Norm**
- **Deviation** = error *OR* accent
- **Meaning** = paramount
- **Instructor** = any competent ELF user

2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

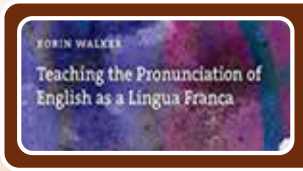
	EFL	ELF
1. Goal	Min. = comfortable intelligibility Pref. = near–NS competence	International intelligibility (NS norms 'irrelevant')
2. Priority	All consonants, all vowels, schwa, word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, weak forms, connected speech changes, tones …	The Lingua Franca Core + accommodation skills
3. Model	Standard NS accent (e.g. RP or GA)	Any ELF–intelligible accent (NNS or NS)
4. Deviation	= Error	= Accent or error
5. Instructor	Native speaker with target accent	Any speaker (NS or NNS) with an ELF intelligible accent



2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL



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3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

… bringing ‘the ideal down to the gutter with no check-point on the way’

Sobkowiak. 2005.

… offering L2 users ‘a broken weapon’

Prodromou. 2008.

… ‘inventing a new variety’ and ‘installing a fledgling ugly duckling’

Maley. 2009.

3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors, Council of Europe, September 2018, p47.

The [2001] phonology scale was the only CEFR illustrative descriptor scale for which a native speaker norm, albeit implicit, had been adopted.

In an update, it appeared more appropriate to focus on intelligibility as the primary construct in phonological control, in line with current research ...

3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

A. Student

I can see what you mean about being intelligible, and I don't especially want to sound like a native speaker, but I don't want to sound Spanish.

I can see what you mean about being intelligible but I've got students who are obsessed with Taylor Swift.

A. Teacher

3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

EFL

Learners' L1–
accented English

ELF/EIL

Standard
NS accent

Minimum
intelligibility

International
intelligibility

From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

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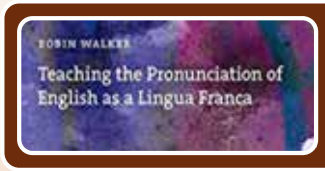

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3. Godzilla meets the Hulk

4. From being intelligible to being you

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

4. From being intelligible to being you

Beer

Fruit juice

Water

Tea

Wine

4. From being intelligible to being you

Kid's birthday party

Dubia

Atacama desert

Pacific beach

Fresh fish

4. From being intelligible to being you

Internationally intelligible English

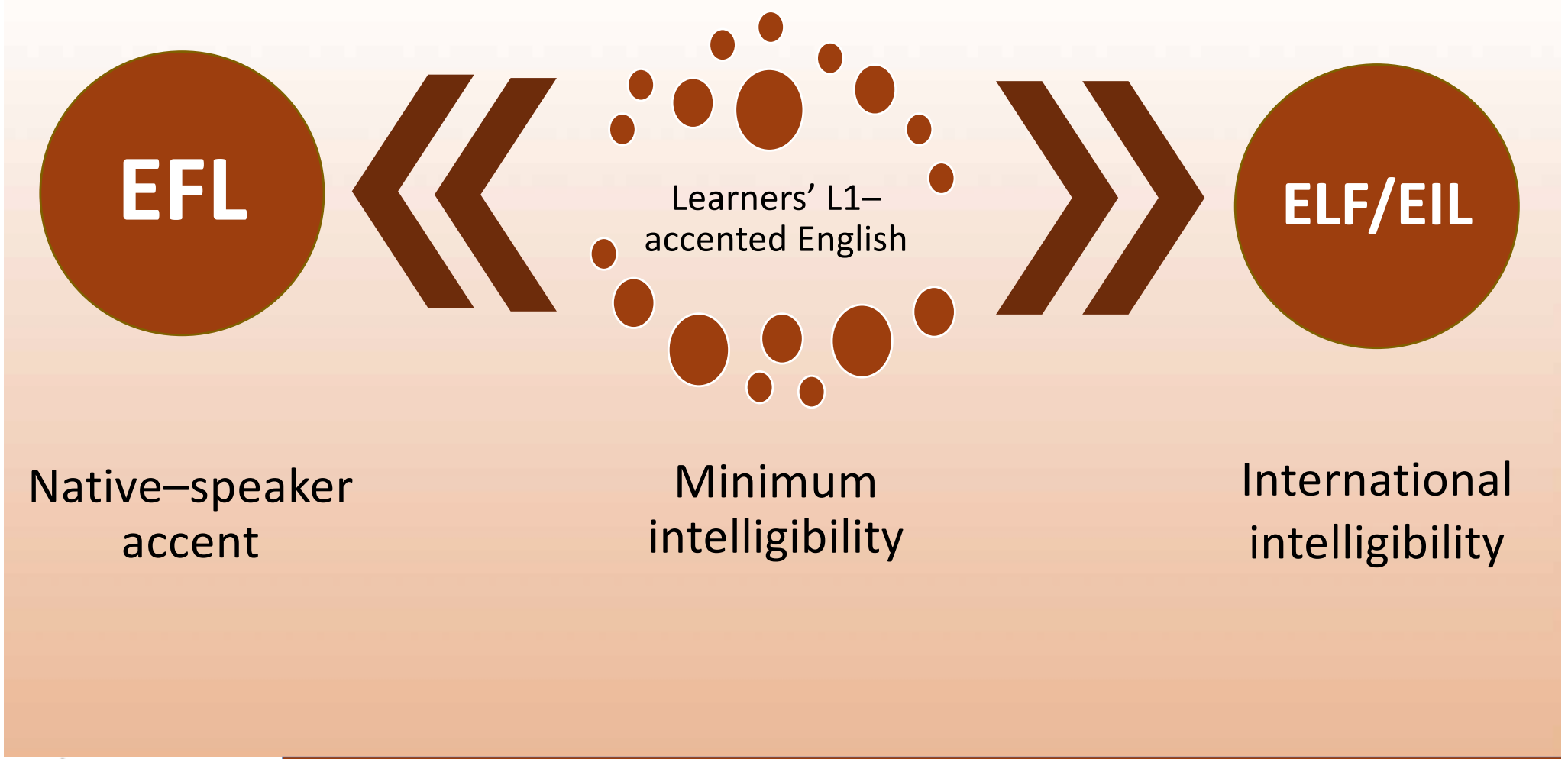
Iranian-flavoured English

Non-Spanish flavoured English

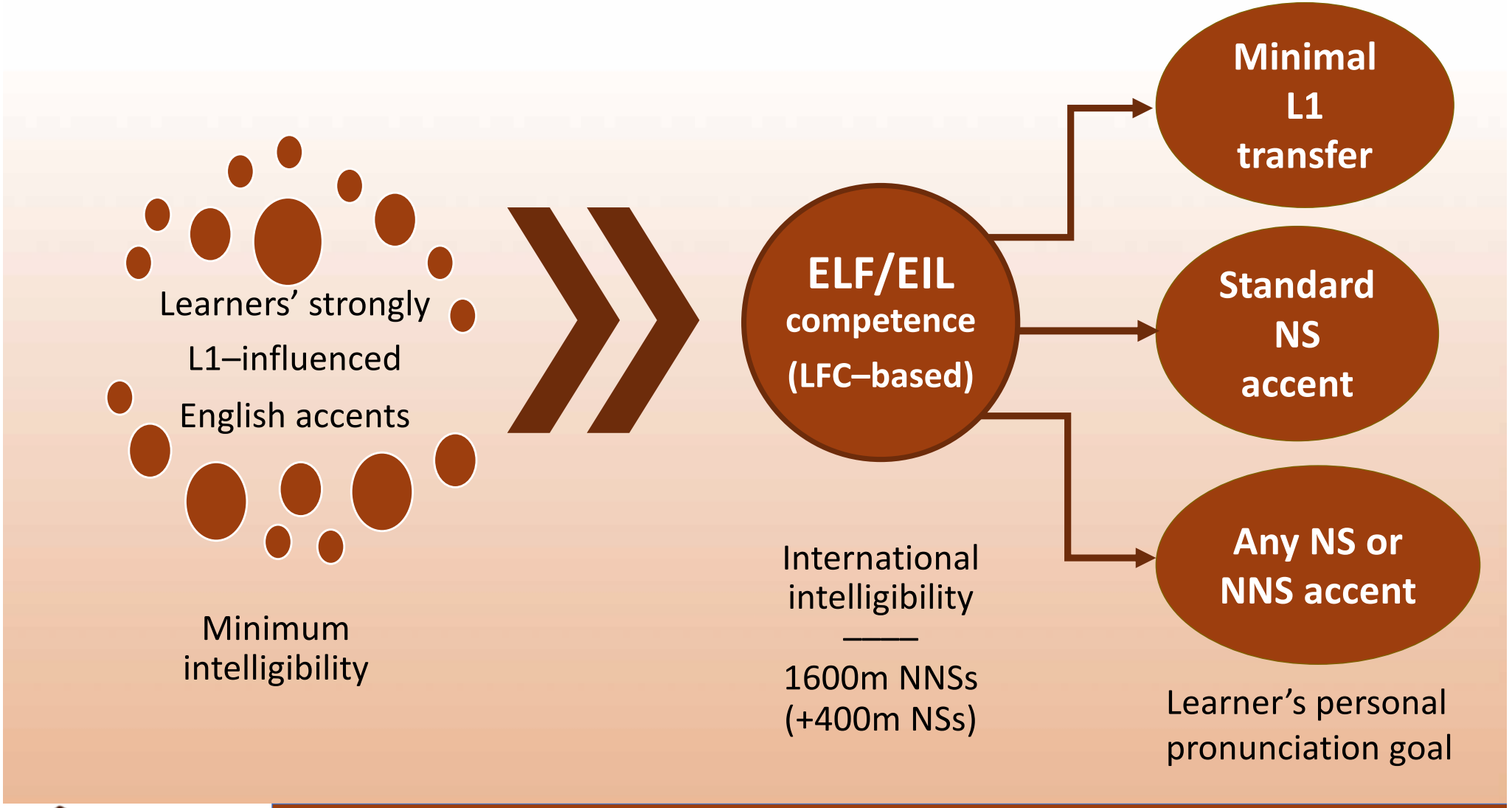
US-flavoured English

UK-flavoured English

4. From being intelligible to being you

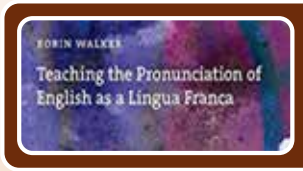


4. From being intelligible to being you



From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

1. Pronunciation teaching for EFL



2. Pronunciation teaching for ELF

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4. From being intelligible to being you

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

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Underlying principals

- Initial goal = international intelligibility
- A1-C1 focus = Lingua Franca Core +
- Production ≠ reception
- Accommodation skills
- C1 onwards – learners choose own goals

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

Components

Productive competence

- consonant sounds (variation 'th' & r)
- consonant clusters (avoid deletion)
- vowel sounds (especially length issues)
- sentence stress
- word stress

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

Components

Receptive competence

- dealing with accent variation
- decoding NS speech with connected speech features (e.g. weak forms, coalscence, …)

Accommodation skills

(= adjusting as a listener / to a listener)

4. From being intelligible to being you

(CEFR Overall Phonological Control A2 – Basic user)

Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, even though 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.

4. From being intelligible to being you

CEFR Phonological Control C2 – proficient user

Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with a high level of control [...] 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).

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Consonants			
Clusters			
Vowels			
Word stress			
Sentence stress & intonation			
Connected speech			
Receptive skills			
Accommodation			

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Production consonant and vowel sounds	Sufficient LFC competence so as to be understood comfortably by the listener, and despite the clear influence of the speaker's other language(s) in their pronunciation.		

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Production consonant and vowel sounds	Sufficient LFC competence so as to be understood comfortably by the listener, and despite the clear influence of the speaker's other language(s) in their pronunciation.	Consolidation of the LFC consonants, though some still influenced by the L1. Ability to deal with most 2/3- consonant clusters. Development of a stable intelligible, vowel set, though still noticeably influenced by the L1. Vowel length good.	

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Production consonant and vowel sounds	Sufficient LFC competence so as to be understood comfortably by the listener, and despite the clear influence of the speaker's other language(s) in their pronunciation.	Consolidation of the LFC consonants, though some still influenced by the L1. Ability to deal with most 2/3- consonant clusters. Development of a stable intelligible, vowel set, though still noticeably influenced by the L1. Vowel length good.	Fine-tuning of LFC consonants as per specific L1s. Stable, fully intelligible vowel set with very good control of vowel length, including fortis clipping (e.g. peas/peace).

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Consonants			
Clusters			
Vowels			
Word stress			
Sentence stress & intonation			
Connected speech			
Receptive skills	→	→	→
Accommodation			

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Receptive skills	The ability to deal with commonly encountered NS or NNS accents provided speech is slow and deliberate.		

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Receptive skills	The ability to deal with commonly encountered NS or NNS accents provided speech is slow and deliberate.	The ability to deal with carefully spoken English in a range of familiar NS & NNS accents that are not too marked.	

5. A syllabus for today's classroom

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5. A syllabus for today's classroom

	Phase 1 CEFR A1-A2	Phase 2 CEFR B1-B2	Phase 3 CEFR C1-C2
Receptive skills	The ability to deal with commonly encountered NS or NNS accents provided speech is slow and deliberate.	The ability to deal with carefully spoken English in a range of familiar accents that are not too marked. Ability to deal with NS English characterised by some use of weak forms and/or other connected speech changes, provided it is delivered with care at normal speed.	The ability to deal with a wide range of unfamiliar NS and NNS accents. The ability to deal with rapid, casual NS English (weak forms, reduced vowels, schwa, assimilation, coalescence, etc.)

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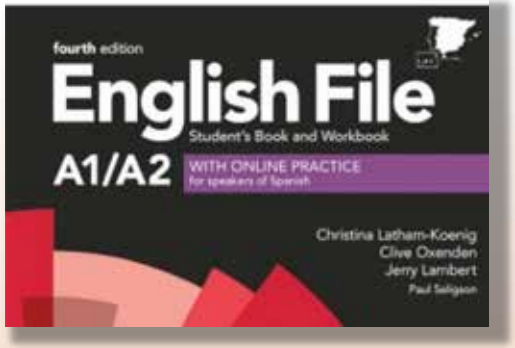

PRONUNCIATION

vowel sounds, word stress	
/ə/, consonant sounds /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, word stress	
/əʊ/, /uː/, /ɑː/, the alphabet, sentence stress	
final -s and -es	the letters ea
long and short vowel sounds	linking, /ʃ/ and /s/
linking	/ə/, sentence stress
third person -s	/aɪ/, /ɪ/, and /iː/
/ɜː/ and /ə/	/ð/ and /θ/, saying the date
sentence stress	/j/, giving opinions

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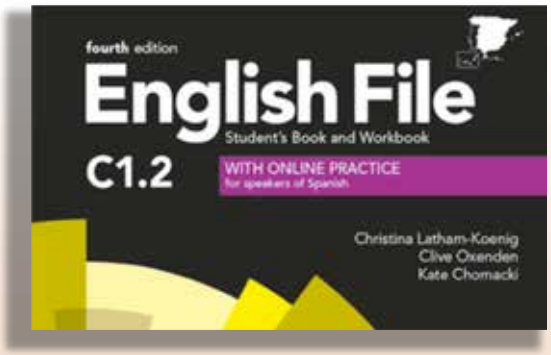

words that can be pronounced in two ways

consonant clusters with s

vowel sounds and spelling

stress and intonation

PRONUNCIATION

contractions

short and long vowel sounds

stress in multi-syllable adjectives

contrastive stress

understanding an accent

linking

From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

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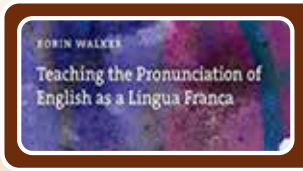

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From being intelligible to being yourself – pronunciation for all

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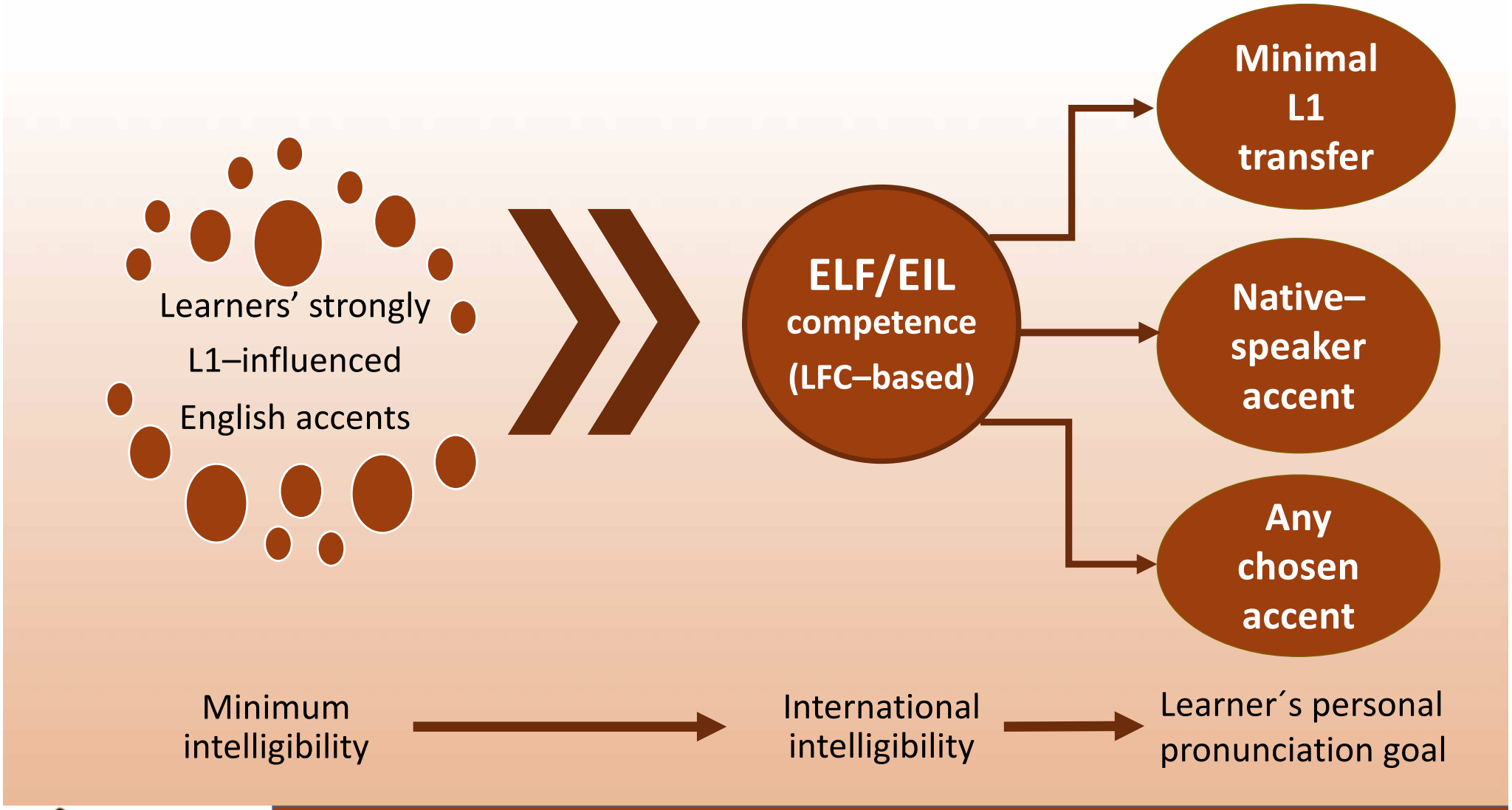


From being intelligible to being you – pronunciation for all

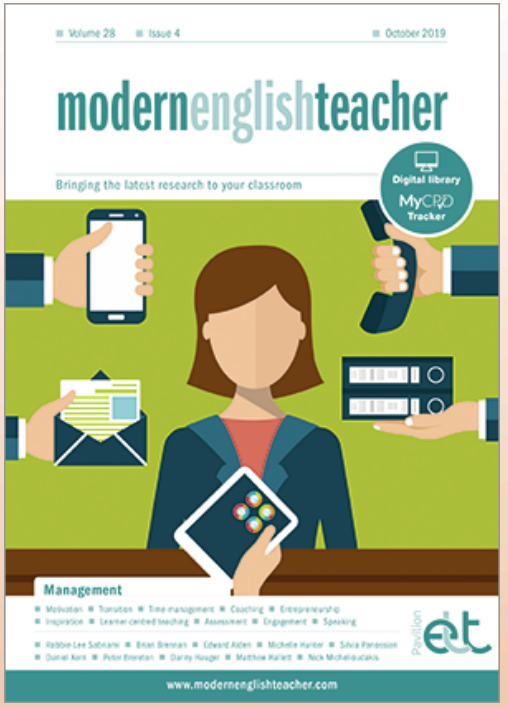
TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

From being intelligible to being themselves: pronunciation for today

Robin Walker suggests EFL and ELF approaches to pronunciation can work together.

1980s – EFL, pronunciation and the communicative approach

Modern English Teacher, 28.3, 2019



https://englishglobalcom.wordpress.com/articles/

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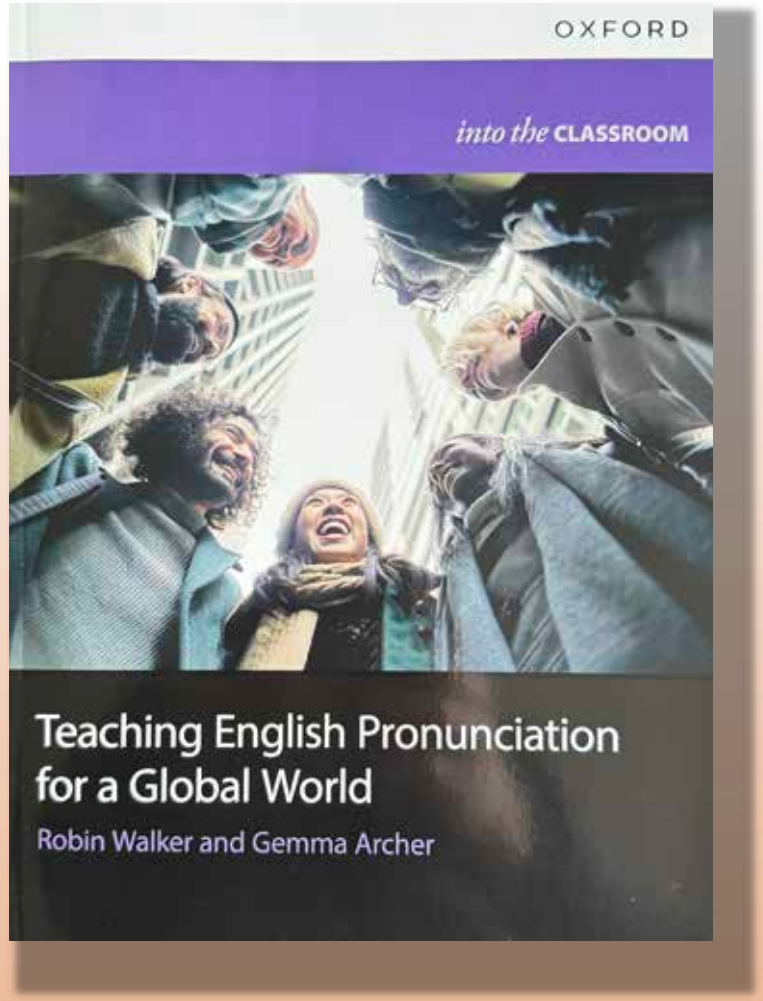

Teaching English Pronunciation for a Global World

Walker & Archer
2024, Oxford University Press

https://global.oup.com/academic/
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From being intelligible to being you

Pronunciation for all

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