

Title: 'The acquisition of speech rhythm and stop voicing by Greek learners of English: a pedagogical and linguistic approach'

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The aim of the research is to investigate the production of L2 speech rhythm and selected features of the stop voicing system among Greek learners of English before and after a specific pronunciation teaching intervention in a foreign formal language context of acquisition. For the purposes of the study two groups of speakers were examined, an experimental group who received pronunciation teaching intervention and a control group, who followed the regular classes at school without special pronunciation teaching intervention. Each group comprised students of three different ages (10-, 13- and 16-years old), in order to investigate the potential role of learners' age in relation to L2 phonological acquisition. Data on L1 Greek and English were also obtained. The pronunciation teaching included 51 pronunciation mini-lessons embedded in the regular English language course, following the methodology of Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), who proposed five stages of pronunciation teaching that range from controlled to free activities. Rhythm was quantified with the use of the *PVI* measure (Low, Grabe and Nolan 2000, Grabe and Low 2002), which examines the vocalic and intervocalic duration variability in a long stretch of speech. The acquisition of the durational correlates of voicing was measured with the use of waveform and spectrographic analysis of features in word initial and final stops. The results indicated that, generally before teaching, speakers resorted to L1 interference or to universal tendencies of language. After teaching, a change was reported for the speakers of the experimental, but not of the control groups. Great inter- and intra-speaker variability was reported, especially after instruction. Generally, improvement was found for the experimental groups, however, systematic target-like production was difficult to achieve. Also no clear global effect of learners' age was reported. A detailed analysis of the possible constraints in pronunciation accuracy, as well as the pedagogical implications of the findings are presented. The results are evaluated in relation to theoretical frameworks of L2 phonological acquisition.