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A foreign accent modeling activity based on learner-led contrastive analysis: L1-as-pedagogy in action

Increasing demand for multilingual, transcultural, inclusive and transformative foreign and second language (L2) education forces us to rethink the use of different activities, involving students' mother tongue (L1) in L2 classrooms, including activities based on Contrastive Analysis. This article introduces a *foreign accent modeling activity based on learner-led phonetological (phonetic-phonological) contrastive analysis integrated into task-based L2 pedagogy* as an instructional strategy to reinforce learners' phonological awareness and increase their self-esteem as bilingual persons by capitalizing on their expertise in L1 and L2. We present theoretical, pedagogical and linguistic rationales of the accent modeling activity, and discuss its design and implementation, based on the example of teaching Russian to French-speaking learners at low levels of proficiency. We close with a discussion of the foreign accent modeling activity as an example of *L1-as-pedagogy*, which reviews the principles of *contrastive teaching* in the light of approaches to *bilingual L2 learner's and teacher's identity* from poststructuralist applied linguistics.

Keywords: explicit teaching Russian L2 phonetics, bilingual L2 learner's and teacher's identity, cognitive turn of contrastive analysis, contrastive teaching, foreign accent, foreign accent modeling, L1-as-pedagogy, learner-led phonetological contrastive analysis, learner as constructivist, poststructuralist applied linguistics, task-based language teaching

Растущий интерес к мультилингвизму, транскьюрализму, «включенности» и «трансформативному обучению» в сфере преподавания иностранных языков (L2) заставляет нас переосмыслить использование в языковой классе родного языка (L1) учащихся. В том числе речь идёт о видах обучающей деятельности, основанных на контрастивном анализе. Статья имеет целью представить *моделирование иностранного акцента* как обучающий метод, основанный на принципах «задачной лингвопедагогики» и фонетологического (фонетико-фонематического) контрастивного анализа, в котором сам обучающийся (а не учитель) выступает «контрастивистом». Метод имеет целью развитие фонологического сознания учащихся и повышение их самооценки как двуязычных личностей, благодаря использованию их экспертных знаний и лингвистического опыта, в L1 и L2. В статье обсуждаются педагогические и лингвистические обоснования *моделирования иностранного акцента*, а также его дизайн и применение в языковом классе на примере преподавания русского языка франкоговорящим студентам на начальном уровне обучения. В заключение мы обсуждаем *моделирование иностранного акцента* как пример нового тренда в лингводидактике – *L1-как-обучающий-приём* –, который старается пересмотреть принципы «контрастивного обучения» в свете идей постструктуралистской прикладной лингвистикой о *билингвальной личности обучающегося и учителя*.

Ключевые слова: L1-как-обучающий приём, билингвальная личность обучающегося и преподавателя, задачный метод, иностранный акцент, когнитивный поворот в контрастивном анализе, контрастивный метод обучения, моделирование иностранного акцента, обучающийся как контрастивист, постструктуралистская прикладная лингвистика, фонетико-фонологический контрастивный анализ, эксплицитное преподавание фонетики КРИ



1. Introduction

Increasing demand for multilingual, transcultural, inclusive, and transformative foreign and second language (L2) education forces us to rethink the use of different activities involving students' mother tongue (L1), such as translation (cf. G. Cook, 2010; V. Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, Chap. 5–11; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2015; Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002; Huffmaster, & Kramersch, 2015; van Lier, 2011, pp. 15–19). Another crosslinguistic L2 instructional strategy is *contrastive teaching*, where the teacher involves learners in contrasting features of L2 and L1 (cf. James, 1996b, Chap. 6.3.3).

Contrastive L2 teaching sprang from the evolution of Contrastive Analysis (CA), a branch of applied linguistics focused on interlingual studies. CA aims “at producing inverted [...] two-valued typology (a CA is always concerned with a pair of languages)” (James, 1996b, p. 3) by identifying structural differences between languages. The so-called strong variation of the CA Hypothesis claims that L2 learners' difficulties result from the differences between L1 and L2 and can be predicted by contrasting the two language systems (cf. Banathy et al., 1966, p. 37; Lado, 1957, p. vii; Wardhaugh, 1970, p. 124–125; Whitman, 1970, p. 191, 194). The weak CA Hypothesis states that we can only explain, but not predict, learners' observed difficulties based on available linguistic knowledge (cf. Wardhaugh, 1970, p. 126).

For many researchers the occurrence of recognizable L1-specific foreign accents (such as a Russian accent in French, English or German) provides “some of the clearest evidence that knowledge of a first language (L1) influences the acquisition of a second (L2)” (Munro, 2008, p. 193) and that the strong CA Hypothesis can explain the difficulties in the phonetological¹ aspects of L2 acquisition that cause the foreign accent (cf. Derwing & Munro, 2005, 2009; G. Cook, 1999; V. Cook, 1996; König, & Gast, 2018; Lennon, 2008; Major, 2008; Munro, 2008; Ohata, 2004; Ringbom, 1994). Empirical research on contrastive teaching shows that providing learners with crosslinguistic phonetological information (cf. Kissová, 2020; Namaziandost, 2017; Ohata, 2004) proves to be more effective than instruction without it. Developing learners' phonetological awareness of the differences between L1 and L2 through contrasting their phonetological features, as a part of explicit phonetics instruction, contributes to improving both L2 sounds' discrimination and production and thus helps with foreign accent reduction (cf. Abrahamsson, 2012; Fernández, 2012; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010; Kennedy et al., 2014; Kivistö-de Souza, 2015; Piske, 2008; Saito, 2011; Sturm, 2013; Derwing & Munro, 2005).

Ironically, the early CA has served to support L2-only policy within the general trend toward protecting learners from contrasting/confusing L1 and L2: “The less reflection there is on language the better. Reflection allows comparison with the [mother tongue], and this produces only difficulty” (Billows, 1967, cited in Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 101). That is probably one of the reasons why early CA was suggested as a tool for developing teachers' – not learners' – awareness (Kramersch, 2007, p. 141) and concerned “with teaching over and above learning” (James, 1996b, p. 12).

¹ The term “phonetological” stands for “phonological” and “phonetic” when the distinction between them is not relevant. Cf. the use of the term “phonetological interventions” in L2 classrooms in Bailey (1983).

CA turned towards the learner with the emergence of the *Cognitive Turn in Contrastive Analysis* (Kupferberg, 1999) in the 1990s. This turn was influenced by new (neuro)cognitive conceptions of L2 acquisition (Hall & Cook, 2013, p. 9) describing L2 acquisition as a brain transformation process based on “crosslinguistic interaction” between fully developed (L1) and developing (L2) language systems (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p. 29). The cognitive crosslinguistic interactions depend on learners’ ability to *perceive* differences between L1 and L2, which are associated with *awareness* and *consciousness*, both metalinguistic and metacognitive (cf. James, n.d.; Jessner, 2006; Hasselgård, 2018; Van Lier, 2009). In response to this paradigm shift, CA has been redefined – with the focus on the learner – as a cognitive process that takes place “when two languages come into contact in the bilingual brain” (James, 1996a, p. 143). In promoting a crosslinguistic approach to developing learners’ awareness, researchers (cf. James, 1996a, 1996b, 2005, n. d.; Kupferberg, 1999; Kupferberg & Olshtain, 1996) have suggested extending CA’s traditional teacher-focused pedagogical applications to an explicit instructional method dubbed “contrastive teaching” (James, 1996b, Chap. 6.3.3). This method is viewed as supporting “authentic” L2 learning² and metacognitive reflection (i.e., reflection on knowledge and beliefs about one’s own cognitive processes) (cf. Hasselgård, 2018). James (n.d.) claims that “now the learner can become her own contrastivist since the two languages coincide in one individual at this cognitive or knowledge-based level” (p. 14).

However, the potential of learner-led CA analysis has been realised in contrastive teaching only partially. In theoretical description of contrastive teaching (cf. Kupferberg, 1999, p. 212) and empirical research on this method (cf. Ammar & Lightbown 2005; Kissová, 2020; Kupferberg, 1999; Kupferberg & Olshtain, 1996; Laufer & Girsay, 2008; Lucas & Yiakoumetti, 2019; Namaziandost, 2017; Sheen 1996; Ohata, 2004³), it was rather the teacher who provided learners with crosslinguistic information from a previous teacher- or researcher-led CA. To our knowledge, CA has never been suggested as a *learner-led practice*.

With the emergence of poststructuralist applied linguistics, critical L2 pedagogy, and the multilingual turn in L2 education (cf. Kramsch, 2012; Norton & Morgan, 2013), the discussion about foreign accent issues has shifted towards new directions, such as power relationships, identity, and social justice. Foreign accent has been recognized as an agent of translingual discrimination and negative emotionality, including foreign language anxiety and translingual inferiority complexes (cf. Dovchin, 2022, Ch. 4; Lippi-Green, 1997). The accent influences L2 users’ identity and L2 learners’ motivation in L2 classrooms (cf. Norton, 2000, pp. 46–49). According to the principles of poststructuralist L2 pedagogy, developing learners’ awareness of accent-related sociocultural issues through explicit metacognitive discussions could help prevent or reduce negative emotional development in L2 users (see Kostiučenko in this volume).

² Some researchers (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Clanfield & Foord, 2000; V. Cook, 2001; Thurbull & Arnett, 2002, p. 207) revise the concept of *authenticity*, which traditionally refers to language produced by and for native-speakers and associate it with this inherently bilingual cognitive mechanism of SLA and therefore with teaching techniques supporting the use of L1 in L2 classrooms. For more on *multilingual cognitive authenticity*, see Bondarenko (2022).

³ Ohata (2004) claims that the usage of CA in English L2 education to teach pronunciation meets a “the critical need for ESL/EFL teachers to become more aware of the impact that learners’ L1 backgrounds would bring to the learning of English pronunciation” (p. 2).

Based on *L1-as-pedagogy* (Bondarenko, 2023, p. 109–110), which combines the principles of *contrastive teaching* with approaches to *L2 learner/teacher’s identity* from poststructuralist applied linguistics, this article introduces a *foreign accent modeling activity based on learner-led phonetological CA integrated into task-based L2 pedagogy*. This instructional strategy aims to reinforce learners’ phonetological awareness and increase their self-esteem as bilingual persons by capitalizing on their expertise in L1 and L2.

At the beginning of the article, we explore two available phonological CA models to build a design framework for a phonetological CA suitable for learner-led contexts. The next part focuses on the design and implementation of the accent modeling activity, based on the example of teaching Russian to French-speaking learners at low levels of proficiency (A1–A2). In this part, we briefly discuss, among others, the pedagogical rationales of the accent modeling activity grounded in task- and content-based pedagogy. In the last part of the article, we present the foreign accent modeling activity as an example of *L1-as-pedagogy*, which reviews the principles of *contrastive teaching* in the light of approaches to *bilingual L2 learner’s and teacher’s identity* from poststructuralist applied linguistics.

2. Searching for a phonetic/phonological CA model for a learners-led CA

To design a classroom activity based on learner-led phonetological CA, we must decide on its linguistic principles and procedures: what and how to contrast. In this section we will explore existing models of CA and argue our choice of the model that best suits the learner-led context.

2.1 The simplified ‘strong version’ of CA

As was mentioned above, the “strong version” of CA, which focuses on predicting difficulties, has been recognized as working best for phonological aspects (cf. Lennon, 2008, p. 54). The simplified strong version of CA makes predictions based on a simple conceptual framework that refers to two types of transfer – negative and positive – and does not account for a hierarchy of difficulties (cf. James, 1996b, Chap. 2.4). Traditional strong CA involves the following steps: (1) describing L1 and L2; (2) selecting and (3) contrasting a part of described systems; (4) predicting difficulties (cf. Whitman, 1970, p. 191); as well as (5) validating the predictions through empirical observations of errors (cf. Al-khresheh, 2016, p. 335).

2.2 Linguistic models of phonetic/phonological CA

Two approaches to phonetic and phonological CA have been suggested in CA studies with regard to two major phonological theories (cf. James, 1996b, Chap. 4.3.3; Wardhaugh, 1967). The first is the “phoneme-and-allophone” approach (also known as “taxonomic phonology”). It comes out of descriptive (structural) linguistics and identifies two categories of problems with pronunciation: errors resulting from L1/L2 phonemic asymmetries, and those resulting from allophonic differences (cf. James, 1996b, p. 82; Wardhaugh, 1967). Conducting a “phoneme-and-allophone” CA involves 1) inventoring the phonemes of L1 and L2; 2) stating the allophones of

each phoneme of L1 and L2; and 3) stating the distributional restrictions on the allophones and phonemes of L1 and L2 (cf. James, 1996b, p. 82). The second approach is grounded in the principles of Generative Phonology (cf. Halle, 1957/1971; Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Kenstowicz & Kisseberth, 1979). The “generative phonology” model of CA is focused, among other things, on contrasting L1 and L2 phonological features (e.g., “labial”, “palatal”, “voiced”, “velar”, “dental”) that are believed to be universal for all languages, and generative rules that govern the occurrence of a specific phonological feature in speech production of specific morphological forms (cf. Fisiak, 1976, pp. 174–176).

Almost unanimously, researchers agree that the “phoneme-and-allophone” model is “the most practical and concrete” (Burgschmidt & Göty, 1971, p. 199) and thus more suitable for “practical applications in language teaching” (Kohler, 1971; p. 84; cf. Wardhaugh, 1967, p. 12; James, 1996b, p. 81–82; Yarmohammadi, 1996). However, we believe that the generative phonology model of CA demonstrates great potential specifically for learner-led CA, as it corresponds to the way in which phonetics is taught in a communication-oriented comprehensive Russian L2 classroom. Therefore, it responds better to how declarative knowledge about phonetics is structured in learners’ minds.

First, the crosslinguistic phonetological information provided to L2 learners often concerns phonological features. For example, to explain how to pronounce Russian dental [ʧ] (vs. European alveolar or denti-alveolar [l]), Russian dental [t] (vs. English and German alveolar [t]) or Russian soft consonants (vs. their hard equivalents that exist in learners’ L1), we draw students’ attention to specific articulatory features, such as “dental” vs. “alveolar”, or “palatalized” vs. “non-palatalized”, and avoid references to the notion of the phoneme. Second, there is certain resemblance between the concept of a “generative rule” and the pronunciation rules taught in L2 classrooms. Knjazev and Požarickaja (2011, p. 279) illustrate a typical “generative rule” – *A is transformed into B in context C* – through the example of the devoicing of Russian final voiced consonants (cf. Wardhaugh 1967, p. 14). Finally, in generative linguistics, phonology is considered as a part of grammar, because pronunciation rules influence the generation of morphemes and grammatical entities. This assumption is relevant for teaching inflected languages (including Russian), where phonological transfer plays an important role, especially at low proficiency levels, in processing grammar and recognizing grammatical errors (cf. Gosselke Berthelsen, 2021). For instance, French beginner learners of Russian frequently confuse the Russian vowel [ɨ] (ы) with the French vowel [e] (é). Their ability to correctly identify [ɨ] influences, for example, their ability to identify Russian plural forms ending in unstressed -ы (машины, университеты), and avoid the confusion with Prepositional forms -е (в машине, в университете). Learners frequently misidentify and misspell the final [ɨ] (ы) using the Cyrillic letter е.

2.3 Types of negative transfer

To make a prediction about a feature of a foreign accent, it is helpful to have an idea of how the human brain may react when confronted with unfamiliar sounds or speech rules. The most popular typology of L1-induced phonological errors is that proposed by Weinreich (1953; cf. Mayor, 2008, p. 67). Among the six types of errors distinguished by Weinreich (1953)⁴, *sound substitution* is, in our opinion, the most relevant for the accent modeling activity based on a simplified learner-led phonetological CA.

Substitution errors which occur when a learner uses the nearest L1 equivalent in the L2 are the most frequent in L2 acquisition (cf. Odlin, 2022, p. 38). They are also one of the most frequently addressed by the explicit teaching of phonetics, as well as one of the most salient features of an accent. Within the category of substitution errors, we also distinguish a specific kind of error that occurs when an L2 user substitutes an unfamiliar sound with “nothing”. For example, French learners of Russian who do not recognize the [j] ⟨й⟩ at the end of a Russian adjective with the unstressed endings *-ый/-ий* often pronounce and spell *добрый* and *русский* as *добры* and *русски*, respectively.

2.4 An eclectic model of phonetic/phonological CA for learner-led contexts.

Based on all the above considerations, for a learner-led foreign accent modeling activity, we suggest a simplified eclectic version of phonetic/phonological CA that combines features of both the “phoneme-and-allophone” (contrasting the L1 and L2 repertoires of phonemes) and “generative phonology” models (contrasting phonological features and generative rules), and mainly focused on substitution errors.

To make the linguistic terminology more accessible to non-linguists, we suggest employing the term “repertoires of phonemes or sounds” (*фонемы/звуки: репертуар*), where “sounds” and “phonemes” are synonyms, and the term “phonetic rule” (*фонетическое правило*) describes the contextual conditions for the occurrence of specific phonological transformations (e.g., de-voicing or reduction).

3. Accent modeling activity: design and implementation in Russian L2 classrooms

3.1 General context

The task-based foreign accent modeling activity was initially designed for and tested in four face-to-face elementary-level Russian language courses (A1.2) taught to French-speaking students at

⁴ Apart from sound substitution, Weinreich (1953, cited in Major, 2008, p. 67) distinguishes *phonological processes* (a learner using an L1 allophonic variant that does not occur in the same environment in the L2), *under- and over-differentiation* (the L2 has distinctions that the L1 does not, and vice versa), *reinterpretation of distinctions* (reinterpreting secondary or concomitant features as primary features), *phonotactic interference*, and *prosodic interference*.

the University of Montreal (Canada)⁵. To be able to act as “contrastivists”, learners had to have prior familiarity with basic phonetological features and rules of Russian. All these features and rules are traditionally taught during the first semester (A1.1) of comprehensive Russian L2 instruction. Thus, by the end of the first semester, learners of Russian are usually familiar with:

- the notion of stress and the basic reduction rules of unstressed vowels;
- the specific pronunciation of Russian vowel [i] (ɪ) and consonants which pronunciation may differ from the pronunciation of their equivalents in learners’ L1: <ɫ>, <r>, <ɕ:>, <t>, <d>, <ʑ>, <ʂ>, <ts>, <k>, <g>, <x> (л, р, ш, т, д, ж, ш, ч, к, з, х);
- the palatalized (soft) pronunciation of Russian consonants, the principles of marking softness in writing, and exceptions in regard to soft/hard pronunciation related to some phonemes (and letters), such as <ʑ>, <ʂ>, <ts>, <k>, <g>, <x>, <ɕ:>, <tɕ> (ж, ш, ч, к, з, х, ш, ч);
- the rules of devoicing of Russian voiced consonants

The accent modeling activity was thus used in the second semester of Russian L2 instruction to review and deepen learners’ explicit knowledge of Russian phonetics. This knowledge is very important for communicating in Russian, since it is supposed to serve learners as “monitor” techniques (cf. Krashen, 1982, Chap. IV), i.e., tools of self-control and self-correction, during oral production.

The same scenario was employed in all cases. Learners were invited to act as language experts on a movie set by advising a non-Russian-speaking actor who will play a role where he speaks students’ L1 (French) with a strong (i.e., easily recognizable) Russian accent (students’ L2)⁶. To help the actor, learners must conduct a contrastive analysis of L1/L2 phonetics to identify the differences, which can induce negative interferences (alias accent features). The final product of the activity is a list of pieces of practical advice for the actor. This activity provided an opportunity for using the teacher’s and students’ language identity and skills as a resource for contrastive analysis and to discuss sociocultural and identity issues related to accent.

In the following sections, we will present the pedagogical and linguistic (referring to CA studies) principles that provided a design framework for the accent modeling activity.

3.2 Task- and content-based pedagogy

At the macro-design level, the accent modeling activity is based on the principles of task-based language teaching (cf. R. Ellis, 2003; Hedge, 1993; Leaver & Willis, 2004; Nunan, 2006; Willis, 1996). First, the activity and its final product (a list of pieces of practical advice for the actor) relate to a real-word situation and have the potential to make a practical contribution to a professional community. For L2 learners well versed in linguistics (e.g., linguistics students learning Russian), the final product of an accent modeling activity could also be a contribution to a Wikipedia article on non-native pronunciation in Russian modeled after the article on non-native pronunciation in Eng-

⁵ The strategy was adapted for English-speaking students of Russian at the Novice Mid/High level (A1.2–A2.2) at the 2019 Summer Intensive Language Program of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (Monterey, USA), and has also been implemented with German-speaking students as part of an introductory course in the methodology of Russian L2 teaching at Heidelberg University.

⁶ The project was inspired by the real-life experience of the author of this article, who has had the opportunity to work as a language expert in the movie industry.

lish (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-native_pronunciations_of_English). Second, to accomplish the task, the learners must rely not only on their own resources (phonetological knowledge), but also on problem-solving skills (they must develop a strategy for action) that require higher cognitive functions (analysis, synthesis, and creation). Finally, learners act in both a collaborative and an autonomous manner and are responsible for their own voice and choice. In addition, some elements of content-based pedagogy (cf. Lightbown, 2014; Snow & Brinton, 2017; Stoller, 2002) were employed. During the activity, the learners were taught in L1 about some basic linguistic and cognitive aspects of the phenomenon of foreign accent.

3.3 Learner-led CA: procedure

At the micro-design level, the accent modeling activity is based on the principles of the simplified eclectic model phonetic/phonological CA described in the previous section. So, the learner-led CA within the accent model activity entails the following procedures.

*Procedure 1. Recall everything you know about **Russian vowel phonemes/sounds** (гласные фонемы/звуки: репертуар). Contrast the repertoire of Russian vowels with that of the vowels of your L1 (e.g., French). Which vowels exist in French and do not exist in Russian, and vice versa? Based on the identified contrasts, predict the difficulties a Russian user/learner of French may experience: which French vowels may be difficult for her to recognize/pronounce, which unfamiliar French vowels may she be inclined to replace with which from Russian (see Appendix 4).*

Based on the phonetics instruction received in the previous semester and their deductive skills, learners are expected to conclude that the French repertoire of vowel phonemes (sixteen) is much richer than that of Russian (six). Russian has only one mid back⁷ vowel phoneme <o>, one close back vowel phoneme <u>, and one mid front vowel phoneme <e>, while French has several equivalents for these Russian phonemes: <o> and <ɔ>; <u> and <y>; <e>, <ø>, <ɛ>, <œ> and <ə>. Additionally, in Russian, there are no nasal vowels, while French has four: <ɛ̃>, <ɑ̃>, <ɔ̃>, <ɑ̃>. By contrast, there is no <i> (ы) in the French repertoire of vowels. Regardless of how many French examples the learners recall, they will be able to predict that a Russian – like a Spanish or Italian – user of French will surely struggle with the French varieties of vowels and tend to pronounce Russian <u> for both <u> and <y>, Russian stressed <o> for both stressed <o> and <ɔ>, and Russian stressed <e> for stressed <e>, <ø>, <ɛ>, <œ>, and <ə>. Through not being able easily to identify the difference between nasal and non-nasal vowels, she may confuse the various French nasals, ignore their nasality or denasalize them.

*Procedure 2. Recall everything you know about the **phonetic rules** (фонетические правила) concerning Russian vowels. Do similar rules exist in French? Based on the identified contrasts, predict the difficulties a Russian user of French may experience (for example, she may tend to apply the same rules while speaking French).*

Learners are expected to recall the basic reduction rule of unstressed <o> and <e>, as well as of <a> (я) after a soft consonant (cf. *десять*). They may also recall that <i> (у) and unstressed <e>

⁷ Learners are not required to know the articulatory characteristics of sounds in L1 and L2, nor the International Phonetic Alphabet.

<e> are pronounced as [i] after the hard consonants <z>, <ʒ>, <ts> (ж, ш, ц): я живу, скажите, машина, инженер, тоже, Франция. Therefore, Russian users of French may tend to reduce the French equivalents of <o> and <e> in unstressed position and also pronounce [i] instead of [i], or unstressed [e] after <z> and <ʒ>, e.g., [zʲirǎ, mirci, kvakadil, ʒe campran/cǎrvǎ, tilifon, zʲinival] instead of [ʒerǎ, mɛvci, kvocodil, telefon; zə cǎrvǎ, ʒeneral] in the words *gérant*, *merci*, *crocodile*, *je comprends*, *téléphone*, *général*.

*Procedure 3. Recall everything you know about the repertoire of **Russian consonant phonemes/sounds** (согласные звуки/фонемы: репертуар) and contrast it with the repertoire of French consonants. Which kinds of consonants exist in Russian but do not exist in French? Are there consonants in French that are pronounced differently in Russian? Based on the identified contrasts, predict the difficulties that a Russian user/learner of French may experience.*

Learners are expected to recall that Russian consonants are divided into two groups: hard and soft (palatalized) consonants. They must also remember previously learned differences between Russian dental <ʈ> and French alveolar <l>, the Russian post-alveolar trill <r> and French uvular fricative <ʁ>, and the Russian hard pronunciation of <z>, <ʒ>, <k>, <g> vs. the French semi-palatalized pronunciation of the same sounds. Based on these differences, learners can presume that a Russian user of French may tend to pronounce Russian <ʈ> and <r> instead of French <l> and <ʁ>, and do not respect semi-palatalized pronunciation of French <z>, <ʒ>, <k>, <g>.

*Procedure 4. Recall everything you know about **phonetic rules** (фонетические правила) concerning Russian consonants. Do similar rules exist in French? Based on the identified contrasts, predict the difficulties a Russian user of French may experience (for example, she may be inclined to apply the same rules while speaking French).*

Learners are expected to recall the essential rule of concordance between Russian vowels and hard/soft consonants: the vowel <i> (ы) can be pronounced only after hard consonants, while the vowels <e> and <i> (е, и) are compatible only with soft consonants. The vowels <a, y, o> can be pronounced after both hard and soft consonants; this is the reason why the Russian alphabet has the double letters (а/я, у/ю, о/ё). In Russian, voiced paired consonants undergo a transformation (devoicing) at the end of a word that they do not in French. Therefore, a Russian user of French may tend to palatalize consonants preceded by <e> and <i> (é, i). For example, they may pronounce French *téléphone* and *du* as soft, [tʲiljifon] and [dju], rather than [telefon] and [dy]. They also may devoice final voiced consonants by pronouncing, for example, French *code* and *garage* as [kot] and [gavaʂ] instead of [kod] and [gavaʒ].

Procedure 5. Validate your predictions while making decisions by analysing 1) your personal experience of communication with native Russian users of French (or English/German), 2) your teacher's pronunciation of French (or English/German), if she is a native Russian speaker, and 3) the audio/video samples on offer of Russian natives speaking French (or English/German).

3.4 Design: stages

Based on the pedagogical and linguistic procedures described, the accent modeling activity comprises six stages (or sub-tasks) as presented in Figure 1 and explained below.

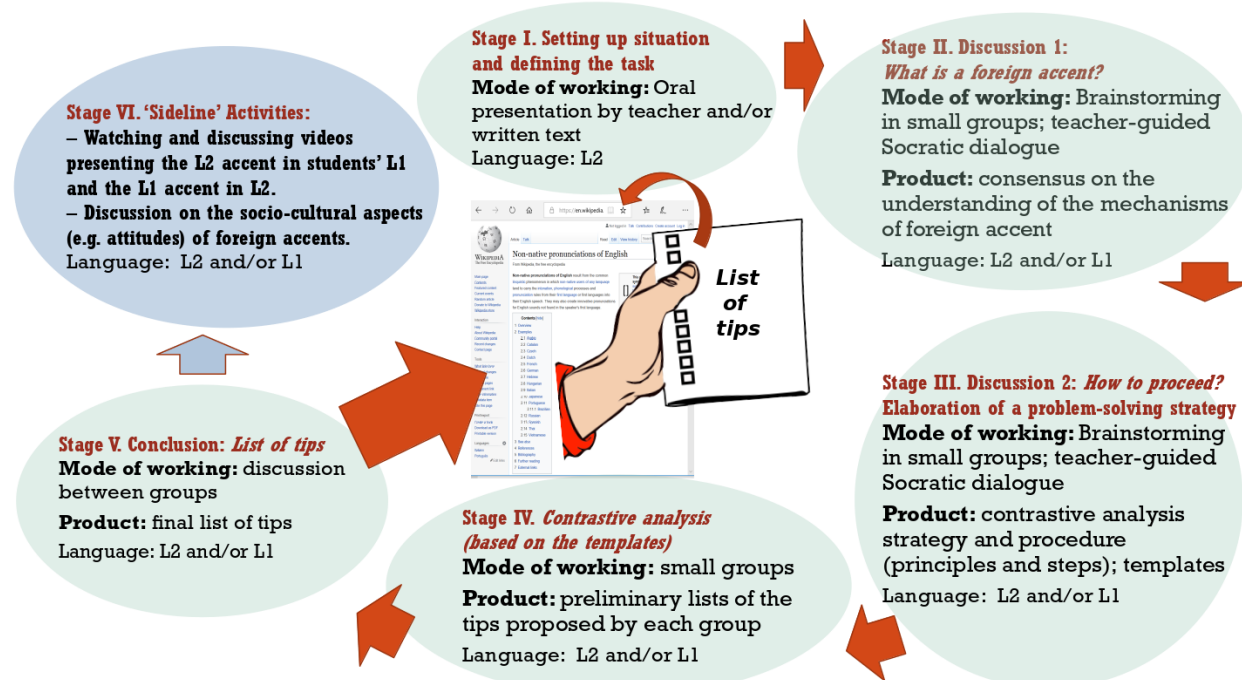


Figure 1. An overview of stages of the accent modeling activity (by Maria Bondarenko).

Stage I. Setting up the situation and defining the task. The initial stage of the activity is aimed at setting up the situation and defining the task, which is to provide tips on how to simulate a Russian accent in learners' L1. The teacher can introduce the context and the task orally or/and with a written support in L2 (Appendix 1 presents an example of a such text). As a prompt, the teacher can also suggest a video (e.g., a fragment from a movie) presenting a character speaking the students' L1 with a recognisable Russian accent.

Stage II. Discussion I. "What is a foreign accent?" The second stage consists of a teacher-guided discussion (optionally combined with brainstorming in small groups) on the phenomenon of accent viewed from a linguistic and a cognitive perspective. With the help of leading questions by the teacher in L1 or L2, learners come to a definition of the concepts of "negative and positive transfer" (*негативный и позитивный трансфер*) and (optionally) "inhibition" (*ингибция*). They also discover how the brain typically responds to unknown phonetic patterns either by ignoring or substituting them with a pattern known from L1. The insights from the discussion (the output of the stage) are summarized in a text in Russian that the learners read at the end of the stage (for an example, see Appendix 2).

Stage III. Discussion 2. "How to proceed to accomplish the task." The second part of the discussion entails brainstorming about how to accomplish the task. Working in small groups and encouraged by leading questions, learners formulate some basic principles for CA and decide: (1) what to analyze (letters or sounds); (2) which phonetological categories should be contrasted ("repertoires of phonemes" and "phonetic rules"); and (3) into which steps the CA process

should be broken down. As a final product of this stage, learners suggest (and the teacher validates) a template that they will use at the next stage of the activity (Appendix 3).

Stage IV. Contrastive analysis. Working together in small groups of two to three and using a template and other supporting materials (Appendix 2 and 3), learners produce a simplified phonological CA. Step by step, they contrast the L1 and L2 repertoires of vowels and consonants, as well as associated “phonetic rules”. They make predictions about the difficulties (potential accent features) that a Russian native speaker may experience when speaking students’ L1. Among the identified features, they select the most salient and the easiest to be taught to somebody who has never been introduced to Russian (such as a French-speaking actor). The product of this stage is a draft version of each group’s list of tips for actors (Appendix 3).

Stage V. Conclusion: List of tips. Learners compare their drafts with those of other groups and come up with a final simplified list of tips.

Stage VI. Sideline activities: Sociocultural aspects of non-native accents. At the final stage, learners listen to recordings of Russian natives speaking French (and other students’ L1) to validate their predictions about Russian accent features (e.g., the YouTube video “Важно ли произношение? Интервью с француженкой” and a fragment of the movie “12 стульев”, 1976). Then, they conduct, with the help of the teacher, a more general discussion on socio-cultural aspects of foreign accents, including the impact on the L2 user’s identity and her social contact. In addition, it can be suggested that learners listen to non-Russian individuals speaking Russian with a strong foreign accent and discuss the role of accent in the L2 culture. One of the additional supporting resources used in the project was the Russian parody on stereotypical representations of Russians in Hollywood movies. The video parodies the fact that actors playing Russians often speak Russian with a strong accent that affects the intelligibility of their speech. Another additional resource was the introductory part of the official video for the song “В Питере пить” (2015; 3:35–4:00) by the group “Ленинград”. The fragment portrays the frustrating experience of a non-natively Russian-speaking taxi driver, who is unable to give a voice command to his GPS, which does not recognize his (stereo)typical ‘Caucasus’ (e.g., Georgian, Armenian, Chechen) accent. While watching the videos, the students were given the task of identifying errors (including phonetic ones) that Russians may perceive as a ‘typical foreign accent’ in their language.

3.5 Notes on implementation

Note 1. Both L1 and L2 can be used as the language of discussion across all stages of the accent modeling activity, depending on students’ level of competence in L2⁸. According to the authentic parameters of the real-life oriented task, the final product should be written in students’ L1, since it is addressed to actors who are not familiar with Russian. However, should advanced learners and/or learners who are linguists wish to write the list of advice in Russian, they could be provided with linguistic tools to support this language function (*Если вам надо/вы хотите имитировать русский акцент (говорить по-французски с русским акцентом), вам надо/вам следует/вы должны произносить/вы произносите*).

⁸ For current discussions on L1 use in task-based and collaborative L2 pedagogy, see Adams & Ouver (2019) and Azkarai & García Mayo (2015).

Note 2. It is important to have a real brainstorming session on the linguistic and (neuro)cognitive nature of foreign accent. Guided by the teacher, students are expected to deduce the principles of CA on their own, based on common sense, their linguistic (meta)awareness and experience, and their problem-solving skills. Questions such as ‘What is a foreign accent?’, ‘Why do we speak an L2 with an accent?’, ‘Why is it so difficult to speak without an accent?’, ‘What makes you understand that somebody is speaking your mother tongue with a specific accent (e.g., with a Russian accent)?’ could initiate and guide this discussion.

Note 3. The use of a linguistic metalanguage (including the International Phonetic Alphabet) is not required to complete the task. The learners can get by with the simple metalanguage of phonetic rules usually employed in the Russian L2 classroom, including *фонетическое правило, трудность, ошибка, надо использовать, ударение*. However, the activity has its own vocabulary. It is thus recommended to introduce some key terms in the L2 for use throughout the activity (e.g., *фонема (звук), гласный, согласный, произношение, произносить, негативный и позитивный трансфер, ингибция, сравнение, анализ, сравнительный/контрастивный анализ*).

Note 4. Since learner-led CA challenges learners’ declarative (explicit) knowledge of L1 sound systems, learners (especially non-linguists) may need help with describing their native language, which they practice at an intuitive level. For example, students are likely to be unaware of the number of vowel phonemes in their L1. Appendix 4 shows an example of a supporting source that could help learners to compare the Russian and French vowel repertoires. Wikipedia articles on the phonological system of different languages can also be helpful.

Note 5. Although the last stage of the accent modeling activity is beyond the scope of CA, it is particularly important from a sociocultural point of view. This stage allows students not only to validate their hypothesis by observing Russians speaking their L1, but also to initiate a reflection on the social role of accent. To fuel this discussion, the teacher can offer additional authentic resources (articles, videos, news reports, songs). In a content-oriented curriculum, the accent modeling activity could serve as an introduction to a thematic block of inquiry and discussions focusing on the role of accent in the development of sociocultural identity and in the interaction between social groups in different cultures.

4. Discussion: foreign accent modeling as L1-as-pedagogy in action

The notion of L1-as-pedagogy (Bondarenko, 2022) has been proposed to describe “deliberate usage of L1” (V. Cook, 2001, p. 418) going beyond the traditionally defined marginal areas, such as explicit teaching, checking the meaning of words, and classroom management. L1-as-pedagogy promotes *contrastive teaching* that supports learners’ crosslinguistic awareness as an important factor of bilingual brain development, but it also acknowledges and capitalizes on the sociocultural bilingual identity of L2 learners. Speaking about translation in L2 classrooms, Malakoff and Hakuta (1991) point out the confluence of cognitive and identity-driven pedagogical benefits in crosslinguistic activities by saying that they “provide an easy avenue to enhance linguistic awareness and pride in bilingualism” (p. 163, cited in V. Cook, 2001).

L1-as-pedagogy thus suggests complementing the cognitive considerations *underlying contrastive teaching* (as described in the previous sections) with insights from the interdisciplinary research area of *poststructuralist applied linguistics* (cf. Pavlenko, 2002; Norton & Morgan, 2013), which reconceptualizes L2 acquisition as a *process of the transformation of people's (learners' and teachers') identity*⁹ and re-evaluates the role of L1 in the L2 classroom from both a sociocultural perspective and that of critical pedagogy.

The transformation of identity during L2 acquisition occurs through interaction with the environment (including the classroom environment) and involves cognitive and social losses and gains (cf. Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) as well as an adjustment of the relation of power that impacts L2 learners' sense of self and their motivation (cf. Norton, 2000, pp. 46–49). Considering L2 learning/teaching as a “highly political practice” (Norton, 2000, p. 47) that has always been involved in an “asymmetrical relationship of power” and “different forms of discrimination” (Pinner, 2018, p. 15), researchers have raised concerns about the domination of “monoglossic ideology” and “native-speaker-centrism” in L2 instruction throughout the years (Pinner, 2018, 14; cf. Kerr, 2016, pp. 415–416; Siegel, 2014; Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). In deconstructing this discriminatory monoglossic native-speaker-oriented ideology, some researchers have abandoned the concepts of “nativeness” and “monolingualism” and claim an alternative “multilingual SLA [second language acquisition – M.B.]” or a “bi/multilingual turn” as a paradigm shift in the field (cf. Kramsch, 2012; May, 2013; Ortega, 2013, p. 32; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 243). In order to acknowledge L2 learners' bilingual social identity, they also search for an alternative terminology for the practice of code-switching in the L2 classroom. For instance, the notions of the *multicompetent language user* instead of the *L2 speaker* (cf. V. Cook, 1999, pp. 187, 190; V. Cook, 2016, pp. 3–4), *linguaging* (Møller, 2019), *translinguaging* (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; van Lier, 2011, p. 14), or *heteroglossia* (Blackledge & Creese, 2014) have been suggested for a “multilingual discursive practice in which bilingual learners engage in order to make sense of their multilingual world” (García, 2009, p. 45).

From this critical perspective, the phenomenon of non-native accent has been described as a factor with a variety of possible socio-cultural consequences for L2 users, including accent detection, diminished acceptability, negative evaluation, stereotypes, and even accent-based discrimination (cf. Derwing & Munro, 2005, 2009; Dovchin, 2022; Flege, 1988; Giles, 1970; Kramsch, 2007; Lippi-Green, 1997; Munro, 2003, 2008; Tan et al., 2021). Moreover, in an L2 classroom, learners find themselves in a sensitive situation with respect to their place in the social hierarchy. They experience a significant loss in their ability to express themselves (cf. Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Even if this loss is assumed voluntarily, it affects their identity, social power, self-esteem (cf. Kinginger, 2004; Norton, 1995, 2000), and interactions with social groups (cf. Gill, 1994; Rahimian, 2018).

L2 teachers' linguistic profile has also been reviewed from the perspective of its capacity to influence teachers' identity and professional behaviour (cf. Árvá & Medgyes, 2000, p. 357; Balabakgil & Mede, 2016; E. Ellis, 2016; Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Pinner, 2014; Morgan, 2004). In

⁹ Cf. transformative pedagogy's notion of “identities in transition” (Hung & Chen, 2007, p. 154) and poststructuralist applied linguistics' notions of “learners as people” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) and “learners and teachers as peoples” (Pinner, 2016, p. 15).

opposition to “monolingual native-speakerism”, E. Ellis (2016) claims that L2 teachers may be native speakers but that they are not monolingual. Developing Morgan’s (2004) concept of “teacher identity as pedagogy”, L1-as-pedagogy suggests that not only L2 learners’ but also L2 teachers’ linguistic (multilingual) identities are always in transition through contact with L2 learners (among other things) and should be considered as an important variable of the L2 learning/teaching process and a potential pedagogical resource.

Viewed in the light of L1-as-pedagogy, the foreign accent modeling activity presented in this article not only supports the development of learners’ awareness, but also softens challenging power-related aspects to which the process of the development of a bilingual identity is tied. The activity puts learners in the position of an expert in both L1 and L2. It provides them with an opportunity to realize the value of their L2 knowledge in full and to enjoy the power of experts vis-à-vis people unfamiliar with the L2 (e.g., actors). Learners also benefit from their expert power in L1, including vis-à-vis the teacher (if the latter is not a native speaker of their L1). The teacher’s accent and experience in learning the students’ L1 may be used to validate students’ assumptions about the difficulties and features of Russian accent in their L1. It is possible that students will identify imperfections in the teacher’s pronunciation. This shift in power roles can help to increase learners’ motivation and establish a relationship of trust and partnership between them and the teacher. In addition, it helps them to come to terms with their having an accent themselves. The social-psychological effects that the accent modeling activity can produce on L2 learners meet the principles of poststructuralist transformative (Campbell et al. 2017) pedagogy that views the participants in an L2 course not as “non-native speakers,” but as “informed citizens” (Stoller, 2002) who are actively and consciously participating in the construction of their knowledge and identity based on their experiences and expertise.

5. Conclusion

In presenting the *foreign accent modeling activity based on learner-led phonetological CA integrated into task-based L2 pedagogy* and its linguistic and pedagogical rationale, we have sought to demonstrate the following:

First, the significance of the cognitive turn of CA for L2 education is that, while still supporting CA as an important means for developing the L2 teacher’s awareness, it provides an opportunity for shifting the attention towards the L2 learner, and therefore for giving CA a legitimate place in the L2 classroom as a learner-centered L1-based instructional methodology supporting cognitively authentic L2 learning and metacognitive reflection.

Second, the boldest dreams of the early proponents of *contrastive teaching*, in which learners figure as “contrastivists” (i.e., as active agents of CA as opposed to passive recipients of cross-lingual information provided by the teacher), have become reality thanks to the support of emerging postconstructivist applied linguistics focusing on learners/teachers’ bilingual identities as an important factor determining their motivation, their self-esteem, and the process of social integration. L1-as-pedagogy tries to bridge, at a theoretical and practical level, *contrastive teaching* supporting the (neuro)cognitive aspects of bilingual brain development and poststructuralist insights on socio-cultural aspects of L2 users’ bilingual identity. We believe that the cornerstone

of this bridge is the concept of learner-centredness, awareness and metacognitive reflection. They make it possible to integrate learner-led CA easily into task-, project- and content-based pedagogy.

Third, the foreign accent modeling activity, as an example of L1-as-pedagogy in action, demonstrates the feasibility of a task-based learner-led CA in the area of L2 phonetics instruction. This activity builds on both the learner's expertise in L1, her knowledge in L2, problem-solving skills, and explicit metacognitive reflection.

Finally, the implementation of a phonetological CA-based activity in L2 classrooms requires the teacher to be well versed in CA and in both the L2 and L1 phonetic/phonological systems. The fact that this is often not the case is, in our opinion, more of an institutional than an individual problem: pronunciation has been often referred to as “the orphan of L2 teaching” (Briton, 2019, n.p.; cf. Derwing, 2012; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Morin, 2007), specialized training in SLA and applied linguistics (including CA) and is rarely required for L2 teaching positions, and educational institutions rarely encourage teachers' interest in linguistics in general and phonetics in particular. Accordingly, students are not likely to be the only ones who benefit from CA-based activities. By implementing such an activity, the L2 teacher, too, has a chance to increase their linguistic awareness and train their skills in CA.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Supporting material for the STAGE II (Context presenting and task definition). Source: Maria Bondarenko

КОНТЕКСТ И ЗАДАЧА

Монреальская телекомпания хочет адаптировать новый телесериал на английском языке. Оригинальный язык сериала – английский, но в Квебеке этот сериал будет на французском языке. Жанр сериала – детектив. В сериале есть один персонаж. Это эксцентричный гений, как Шерлок Холмс, Эркюль Пуаро или Арсен Люпен. Он живёт в отеле. У него нет семьи, нет друга или подруги. И когда есть трудное криминальное дело, и местная полиция не может решить проблему, он играет роль консультанта. Этот человек 4 – русский эмигрант. Он говорит по-английски с акцентом. То есть у него есть сильный русский акцент.

Во французской версии телесериала его будет озвучивать франкоговорящий актёр. Актёр не говорит по-русски. Ему надо будет имитировать русский акцент. Вы – эксперты и хорошо знаете русскую фонетику. Ваша ЗАДАЧА – дать РЕКОМЕНДАЦИИ. Какие рекомендации вы можете дать актёру? Что конкретно актёр должен делать, чтобы имитировать русский акцент во французском языке?

Словарь: звук – son; озвучивать/озвучить – prêter la voix, должен; должна – il (elle) est obligé(e), задача (vs. задание) – tâche à résoudre; решать/решить – résoudre; чтобы + inf. – pour + Inf.

Грамматика: Instrumental après C (=avec): иностранный акцент – с иностранным акцентом

Appendix 2. Supporting material for the STAGE II (What is a foreign accent?) Source: Maria Bondarenko

ЧТО ТАКОЕ ИНОСТРАННЫЙ АКЦЕНТ?

Иностранный акцент в языке – это ошибка интерпретации. Мозг человека делает ошибку. Он интерпретирует неправильно чужой (неродной) экзотический элемент. Как и почему это происходит?

В нашем мозге есть (существуют) абстрактные модели (паттерны). На языке лингвистики это фонемы. Фонемы работают как «пароль». Они пропускают знакомые элементы и не пропускают незнакомые. Родной язык – это одна система (L1), один репертуар фонем. А иностранный язык – это другая система, другой репертуар фонем (L2). Если первый и во второй репертуар похожи (если в них есть общие элементы), тогда мозг легко узнаёт эти элементы. Лингвисты говорят, что происходит «позитивный трансфер».

Но когда в первом и во втором репертуаре есть разница (разные элементы), у нас могут быть трудности. Потому что наш мозг «не узнаёт» незнакомые элементы и «не понимает», как надо их интерпретировать. Мозг не может решить эту проблему, потому что для чужого элемента у него нет «паттерна», нет «пароля». В этом случае есть две возможности.

- 1) Мозг полностью игнорирует чужой элемент. Например, франкофоны не слышат звук Й в конце ДОБРЫЙ, РУССКИЙ.
- 2) Мозг ищет эквивалент (похожий элемент) в знакомой «родной» системе. Мозг «думает», что это правильный эквивалент. Человек не слышит разницу и думает, что это правильно. Но это ошибка. Например, как вы хорошо знаете, французское ухо часто интерпретирует русский звук Ы как Е. В конце слова СТУДЕНТЫ вы слышите и часто пишете букву Е.

«Ошибка интерпретации» даёт (порождает) иностранный акцент. Лингвисты говорят, что происходит «негативный трансфер».

Словарь: Мозг – cerveau; происходить/произойти – arriver (to happen); чужой (не свой, не родной) – autre, autrui; знакомый – familial, connu; похож, а, е, ы – semblable, similaire; общий, ая, ое, ые – commun; разница – différence; возможность – possibilité; узнавать (Ё-тип,

OBA s'en va)/узнать – reconnaître; пропускать/пропустить – laisser passer; порождать/породить – engendrer; искать/найти – chercher/trouver

Appendix 3. Template for CA Analysis filled with students' answers. Source: Maria Bondarenko

GABARIT D'ANALYSE

- PRINCIPE 1 : on analyse les sons et non leurs représentations graphiques (lettres), car un son peut être représentée par plusieurs lettres, et vice versa.
- PRINCIPE 2 : on compare les voyelles séparément des consonnes et on tient compte des processus phonétiques associés avec elles (ce qu'on connaît comme 'règles de prononciation')

ÉTAPE 1. (phonèmes) VOYELLES: RÉPERTOIRE

1.1. Combien de VOYELLES le cerveau russe (vs. cerveau français) distingue-t-il ? On sait que le cerveau russe distingue seulement SIX VOYELLES, et le cerveau français - 16 (!).

A/Я (<u>a</u>)	vs. <u>eu</u> français - a, a nasale
Y/Ю (<u>ou</u>)	vs. <u>eu</u> français - ou, u
Э/Е (<u>e</u>)	vs. <u>eu</u> français - é, è, è nasale, e, e nasale,
О/Ё (<u>o</u>)	vs. <u>eu</u> français - o, o nasale
И (<u>i</u>)	vs. -
И (<u>i</u>)	vs. <u>eu</u> français - i(=y)

Conséquence : lors de parler français, une personne russe a une tendance *d'ignorer la différence entre E, É, È et entre U et OU.*

Exemple : à la place de PAS DU TOUT - pas (dou)tous (note : comme les espanophones!)

1.2. On sait que le cerveau russe *ne distingue pas les voyelles nasales*

Conséquence : lors de parler français, une personne russe a une tendance

soit d'ignorer les voyelles nasales

Exemple : J'APPRENDS = (apprrs)

soit de dénasaliser les voyelles nasales, en rajoutant NNE

Exemple : QAUUND = (quanne); J'APPRENDS = (japprranne)

RÉCOMMANDATIONS À L'ACTEUR: pour simuler l'accent russe en parlant français:

- prononce É à la place de E : J'AI SAIS
- prononce OU à la place de U : PAS DOU TOUT
- prononce ANNE ou A à la place de AN : J'APPRANNE ou J'APPRA

ÉTAPE 2: VOYELLES: RÈGLES

2.1. Le cerveau russe fait AUTOMATIQUEMENT les replacements de TROIS VOYELLES dans la position NON-ACCENTUÉE

O non-accentué se prononce A

E, Я non-accentué se prononce И (=i)

Conséquence: lors de parle français, un Russe a une tendance de *continuer à faire la même chose*

RÉCOMMANDATION À L'ACTEUR: pour simuler l'accent russe en parlant français

- prononcez A à la place de O non-accentué: Montreal → Mantrial
- prononcez I à la place de E non-accentué: téléphone → tilphou

ÉTAPE 3. CONSONNES: RÉPERTOIRE

ÉTAPE 4 : CONSONNES : RÈGLES

ÉTAPE 5 : LISTE DE RECOMMANDATIONS (faciles à réaliser pour une personne non-familiarisée avec le russe)

Appendix 4. Supporting material for CA analysis: Russian vs French vowel repertoires. Source: Maria Bondarenko

A.1. Répertoire des voyelles

Le russe: 6 phonèmes voyelles

	antérieure	centrale	postérieure
fermée	i И	ɨ Ы	u У Ю
médiane	e Э		o О Ё
ouverte		a А Я	

COMPARER

Le français: 16 phonèmes voyelles

	antérieure	centrale	postérieure
fermée	i y		u
mi-fermée	e ø		o
moyenne		ə	
mi-ouverte	ɛ œ		ɔ ɔ̃
ouverte	ɛ̃ œ̃		a ɑ̃

POUR



définir ce qui causera des difficultés pour un Russe