

Learning about word stress in L2 acquisition

The *Computer-Assisted Listening and Speaking Tutor* (CALST, cf. Koreman et al., 2013) is a multi-lingual pronunciation training platform for learning new sounds and consonant clusters in the learner's target language (L2). In this talk, the extension of the platform with exercises for word stress will be presented.

Word stress can present a problem for L2 learners, because languages differ in their assignment of word stress: stress can be fixed, variable or lexical (van der Hulst, 2014), while some languages do not have stress at all. It is still quite unclear how L1 stress assignment affects the acquisition of word stress in L2 (e.g. Archibald, 1995).

For this reason, it has not been possible to base the selection of exercises on a contrastive analysis of L1 and L2, as it has been implemented for exercises for individual sounds and for consonant clusters. We therefore decided to reverse our approach: Instead of using contrastive analysis as a principle for selecting word stress exercises, we will use the learners' results to discover the principles behind L2 acquisition of word stress.

We have implemented word stress exercises varying the number and structure of the syllables in the words as well as their morphological complexity. These parameters are known to be typologically important for stress assignment (cf. Goedemans et al., 2015). All results for users with different L1's are logged, so that the errors can be analyzed in terms of the phonological properties of L1 and L2 word stress. In this way, CALST is used as a tool for discovering the (*morpho-*)*phonological* principles behind the acquisition of L2 word stress.

In addition, the *function* of word stress also appears to play a role (Kijak, 2009), and also the *phonetics exponents* of stress vary across languages (Lehiste, 1970). These issues will have to be addressed later.

References:

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